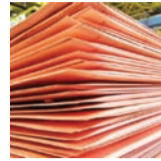




General: Iran closely watching U.S. B-52H bombers Page 2



Saeid Alihosseini named Iran's junior weightlifting coach Page 3



Copper cathode production rises 7% Page 4



64 health projects inaugurated in South Khorasan Page 7

#FreeZakzaky

5 years since the Zaria Massacre

See page 5

File photo



Iran, Afghanistan to finalize 'strategic document' soon: deputy FM

TEHRAN – Seyed Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister of Iran for political affairs, has said Iran and Afghanistan have all but finalized a strategic document that will set the stage for deeper ties between the two countries. The deputy foreign minister underlined the importance of intensive consultations between the two countries, saying Iran and Afghanistan are neighbors and share common interests and concerns.

"Afghanistan has been involved in many problems and the Iranian people and government have always stood by the Afghan people and government," he told Iran Press on the sidelines of his visit to neighboring Afghanistan. Araghchi traveled to Afghanistan to hold high-level talks with Afghan officials. He met with his Afghan counterpart Mirwais Nab. *Continued on page 3*

Iran-Europe business forum to be held on Dec. 14-16

TEHRAN – Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) is organizing an online Iran-Europe business forum in collaboration with the European Union (EU) which is due to be held during December 14-16, an official with the organization announced. According to Mirhadi Seyedi, the TPO deputy head for export market development, during this three-day event more than 60 Iranian and European officials will deliver speeches and companies from the

two sides will hold online B2B meetings. This investment conference will be run by the UN's International Trade Center - an agency jointly managed by the United Nations and the World Trade Organization - and the TPO. The main purpose of this event is to create a suitable environment for companies on both sides to engage in trade-economic interactions, Seyedi said. *Continued on page 4*

Director Majid Majidi calls U.S. sanctions on Iran crime against humanity

TEHRAN – Majid Majidi, whose "Sun Children" is Iran's submission to the 2021 Oscars, has said that the U.S. sanctions on Iran over the past 40 years have been a crime against humanity. He made the remarks in a master class he held at the Hainan International Film Festival in China last Friday. The festival also screened "Sun Children". He added that the people of Iran have been through hard times because of the

cruel U.S. sanctions over the past 40 years. He said that Iran wants independence and want to stand on their own, but the U.S. cannot accept that and has chosen sanctions. He also remarked that the U.S. has even imposed sanctions on the supply of medicine to Iran and one of the reasons behind the high death toll of COVID-19 in Iran is because of the sanctions. *Continued on page 8*

'Iran heritage sites on way to be more tourist-friendly'

BY AFSHIN MAJLESI

Iran is to formulate and develop additional tourist-friendly policies to satisfy the needs and demands of domestic, and international travelers, deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri told the Tehran Times on Sunday.

"Important historical and cultural [heritage] sites, especially the ones inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, should adopt all-inclusive tourism plans in addition to their conservation and restoration strategies."

Citing some examples, the official noted: "Authorities of each tourism destination should be able to predict travelers' demands, their physical and mental needs; for instance, suitable spaces should be determined for taking a break during visits, for [drinking] tea and coffee, taking photographs, buying souvenirs and"

"Travel destinations should be equipped with the state-of-the-art amenities and technologies along with proper signs and information boards....," the official added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official attached great importance to the specialized tourism approach the country is pursuing more than before.

"This specialized tourism approach warns us against mass tourism, which has its disadvantages and shortcomings.... And, in this regard, sightseeing tours could be more beneficial to local communities and their economy."

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

He also reminded the tourism industry can effectively follow the goals of sustainable development. "Sustainable development can be fostered when all of us as tourism-service providers are familiar with the principles and approach of sustainable development and fully implement them."

"I hope Iran's tourism industry makes steady progress sustainable tourism goals, day by day towards... Now that we are in a crippling coronavirus situation and all tourism industry stakeholders inside and outside the country are using this opportunity to review and renew previous processes."

Continued on page 6

National Nurses Week to be celebrated in Iran

TEHRAN – National Nurses Week will be held throughout the country from December 16-22. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic, Iranian nurses have been at the forefront of the fight against the disease.

Over the last 10 months, about 50,000 nurses have been infected with COVID-19, more than 80 of whom lost their lives.

Maryam Hazrati, the deputy health minister for nursing, said in May that some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country were at the forefront of the coronavirus fight.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, about 1,733 nurses, including faculty, graduate nursing students, retired and volunteer nurses, have offered to care for infected patients and provide counseling and training services at hospitals, Hazrati emphasized.

A total of 673 volunteer nurses were offering specialized counseling, she added.

She also emphasized that a number of nurses have also been sent to non-hospital centers, such as nursing homes, to prevent COVID-19 spread.

The average ratio of nurses to hospital beds in the country is now 1.02, which is far from the standard level, and we hope to reach the required standard in the next five years, Hazrati said, adding, the standard ratio of nursing to bed, which includes nurses, paramedics, operating room nurses, anesthetists, paramedics, is 2.3 people per hospital bed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised the Iranian nurses for playing an effective role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic during the 8th "Triad Meeting" of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), and the WHO which was held online on June 16-18.

U.S. protests: Shooting, stabbings as Trump supporters, opponents clash across U.S.

Pro-Donald Trump demonstrators have clashed with counter protesters in some U.S. cities with one person being shot in Olympia, Washington and 23 people being arrested in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday night, pro-Trump "Proud Boys" protesters and "Antifa" counter protesters brawled in downtown Washington, with police officers using pepper spray to disperse them.

Earlier in the day, nearly 200 members of the Proud Boys - a violent far-right group - had joined the marches near the Trump hotel, with many of them wearing combat fatigues, black and yellow shirts and ballistic vests and carrying helmets and flashing hand signals white nationalists often use.

In the state capital, protesters included Trump supporters, Black Lives Matter activists and people opposed to restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Proud Boys protesters shouted insults at

Antifa demonstrators and burned Black Lives Matters flags.

A gun was fired by a Proud Boy demonstrator, striking a counterprotester, but Olympia police secured the area.

Both groups are now in front of the Capitol, with one person from the Trump supporters and Proud Boys group trying to throw down in a fight with one particular counter protester. WSP stands by, forming a line between groups and the legislative building.

"Both sides have heavily armed individuals in the groups," said Washington State Patrol Sgt. Darren Wright. "We've had sporadic confrontations throughout the day."

Meanwhile, "March For Trump" protesters clashed with counterdemonstrators in the nation's capital, with pro-Trump marchers chanting, "Four more years" and, "We want Trump."

Turkey says it respects Iran's sovereignty after Erdogan controversy

TEHRAN – Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu called his Iranian counterpart on Saturday evening to assure him that his country respects the Islamic Republic of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

During the phone conversation, Cavusoglu underlined the close and friendly relations between Turkey and Iran, and highlighted Ankara's definite policy of good neighborliness, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

He also assured Zarif that Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdogan fully respects Iran's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Cavusoglu was referring to Erdogan's controversial poem that he recited on Thursday during a parade in Baku. The poem implies that the Azeri-populated Iranian provinces of Azerbaijan were part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

"They separated the Aras River and filled it with rocks and rods. I will not be separated from you. They have separated us forcibly," the poem says. Aras is a border river between the Republic of

Azerbaijan and two ethnic-Azeri Turk majority provinces in Iran.

Cavusoglu explained that President Erdogan had not been aware of the sensitivities surrounding the lines he recited in Baku and associated the poem only with Lachin and Karabakh, which is why he recited it in the recent event in Azerbaijan.

For his part, Foreign Minister Zarif underscored the significance of friendly relations between the two neighbors that signify mutual respect. *Continued on page 2*

The difference between Biden and Trump is a matter of style: professor

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A professor from Hamline University doubts that the Joe Biden administration would make strategic changes in U.S. foreign policy.

"It is not clear that the Biden administration views U.S. strategic interests that much different than the Trump administration," David Schultz tells the Tehran Times.

After Biden defeated his rival Donald Trump in the presidential race, political observers have focused on American new policy under the Democratic president. Will Biden make a big shift in U.S. political behavior in the world in general and West Asia in particular?

Israel and Saudi Arabia developed a close relationship with the U.S. administration under Trump's presidency. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Trump as "the best friend of Israel" after he congratulated President-elect Biden.

He thanked the outgoing Trump for raising relations between Israel and the United States where it reached its climaxes.

Saudi-U.S. relations witnessed their honeymoon during Trump's term. In May 2019, the Trump administration issued an emergency declaration to push through an \$8.1 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan without congressional approval.

However, it is expected that the president-elect to adopt a more traditional policy, return to the JCPOA (the official name for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal), and focus on human rights that have been grossly violated by Saudi Arabia against its citizens and Yemenis as well as by Israel against Palestinians during the Republican president. *Continued on page 5*



Fakhrizadeh family receives 'highest' military award

TEHRAN – The family of top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was awarded the highest military award signed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

During a visit to the assassinated scientist's family, the Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri awarded the family the first-class "Order of Nasr", which is signed by the Leader. *Continued on page 3*

Iran's deputy FM meets Hamid Karzai in Kabul

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with former Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul on Saturday evening to discuss relations between the two neighboring countries.

During the meeting, the two sides expressed satisfaction over the friendly relationship that exist between Tehran and Kabul and emphasized that such relationship should be strengthened, IRNA reported.

Araghchi and Karzai also exchanged views about the Afghan peace process.

Earlier in the day, Araghchi also met with Abdulla Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's peace council.

At that meeting, the two sides discussed the peace talks, the progress of the Doha negotiations, the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in establishing peace in Afghanistan, and relations between the two countries.



Araghchi also met with his Afghan counterpart Meerwais Nab on Saturday, when he voiced hopes that the comprehensive document for long-term cooperation between the two countries will be finalized and be signed soon.

The two sides discussed the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban and the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in establishing a regional consensus on the political and security situation in Afghanistan.

They also exchanged views about expanding political, economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Also on Saturday, Araghchi met with Afghanistan's National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib. They discussed bilateral issues, security, and the peace process in Afghanistan, according to Mehr.

Araghchi emphasized Tehran's support for the Afghan government and constitution.

It came days after Iran and Afghanistan inaugurated a strategic railway that connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Herat.

The railway project began in the fiscal year of 2007-2008. It included four parts, of which Iran was in charge of completing three, including two on its own soil and one on the Afghan soil.

During the Thursday inaugural ceremony, which was held via a videoconference, President Rouhani hailed the brotherly relations between the Iranian and Afghan nations, saying the inauguration of the Khaf-Herat railway will bolster the two countries' ties.

"Today is a day of greeting, a day of blessing and a day of commencement for the two great nations of Afghanistan and Iran," Rouhani said during the ceremony.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani also expressed satisfaction over the inauguration of the railway project, saying it was the outcome of the two countries' tireless efforts to bring prosperity to both sides.

He said the completion of the project in spite of problems created by the coronavirus pandemic is a clear example of the two sides' national will to ensure development and economic progress.

MPs: Erdogan's remarks undermine regional peace, stability

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian lawmakers condemned Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's remarks about Iran, stressing that they are detrimental to peace and stability in the region.

Members of Iran's Parliament, in a statement on Sunday, denounced the recent anti-Iran provocative poems recited by Erdogan in Baku.

The statement emphasized that the Turkish President's rhetoric is against regional peace and stability.

The Turkish president traveled to Baku on Thursday to attend a military parade of Azerbaijani forces on the occasion of the liberation of the Armenian-occupied territories.

At the ceremony, which was also attended by Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, Erdogan read out poems including separatist sentiments about the Aras River which runs along the Iran-Azerbaijan border.

Zarif on his Twitter account, blasted Erdogan's provocative poems in Baku on Thursday, warning him that such remarks would undermine the sovereignty of Azerbaijan Republic.

Also, the Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned Turkish Ambassador to Tehran Derya Örs over the remarks made by Erdogan during his visit to the Azerbaijan Republic.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that Derya Örs has been summoned after Erdogan's "meddlesome and unacceptable" remarks made during his trip to Baku.

"Tehran has expressed its 'strong protest' against such remarks, urging the Turkish government to offer explanations as soon as possible," Khatibzadeh said.

"The era of claiming lands and warmongering empires has long ended," an official at Iran's Foreign Ministry said during the meeting with the Turkish diplomat.

Meantime, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Mojtaba Zonnouri blasted Erdogan for remarks during his visit to Azerbaijan Republic, calling on him to apologize to Iran.

"If Erdogan had not failed in literature, geography and history, he would have realized that the poem (he recited during the ceremony in the Azerbaijan Republic) had been said to mourn the separation of Azerbaijan from its homeland (Iran)," Zonnouri wrote on his twitter page on Saturday.

He asked Erdogan to take lesson from Saddam's fate and rapidly apologize to the united and zealous Iranian nation.

General: Iran closely watching U.S. B-52H bombers

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A top Iranian general has warned the U.S. military that the Iranian armed forces are closely watching the B-52H bombers which the Pentagon sent to the Persian Gulf days ago, according to IRNA.

"All movements of regional and trans-regional forces, including the flying of B52 bombers at a distance of more than 150 kilometers from the country's air borders in the south of the Persian Gulf, are monitored and the country's integrated air defense base monitors their movements moment to moment," Brigadier General Ghader Rahimzadeh, the second-in-command of Iran's Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base, said on Saturday.

The air defense analyzes these movements, and devises and implements proportional plans after learning about the enemies' potential targets and behavior, Rahimzadeh explained.

He added that Iran's airspace "is our redline and, as enemies have experienced in the past too, the smallest violation will be met with the air defense forces' crushing and fiery response."

The U.S. military on Thursday flown two B-52 bombers in a show-of-force mission in the Persian Gulf amid mounting tensions in the region in the final weeks of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

"Potential adversaries should understand that no nation on earth is more ready and capable of rapidly deploying additional combat power in the face of any aggression," General



Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of the U.S. military's Central Command, said in a statement on Thursday.

"We do not seek conflict, but we must remain postured and committed to respond to any contingency," General McKenzie said, according to the New York Times.

The flight comes on the heels of the assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhriadeh late last month.

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

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 assassinated five other Iranian scientists. It killed Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahrari, Darioush Rezaeienejad, and Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan. Israel also attempted to assassinate Fereydon Abbasi, Iran's head of the Atomic Agency, but it failed.

The Thursday mission also included aircraft from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain. It came days after the U.S. military moved

the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier, along with other warships, back into the Persian Gulf.

Former Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan warned last month that a full-fledged war could break out between the U.S. and Iran. Dehghan said while Iran is ready to defend itself, it does not welcome war.

"A limited, tactical conflict can turn into a full-fledged war," he said. "Definitely, the United States, the region and the world cannot stand such a comprehensive crisis," Brigadier General Dehghan said in an interview with the Associated Press last month.

"We don't welcome a crisis. We don't welcome war. We are not after starting a war," he said. "But we are not after negotiations for the sake of negotiations either."

Dehghan's remarks came after the New York Times cited four current and former U.S. officials as saying that Trump has asked senior advisers in an Oval Office meeting whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks.

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

German ambassador summoned to Foreign Ministry

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Following the European Union's statement regarding the execution of Amad news operator Ruhollah Zam, the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday summoned the German ambassador to Tehran.

The ambassador was summoned to the ministry because his country is currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

During the protest rallies in Iran in December 2018,

Zam urged the people to take arms against the government through his news channel based in France.

Zam launched Amad News in 2015. The channel frequently posted fake news stories and provoked violence with the aim of creating instability in the country.

Zam was executed on Saturday. The execution came days after the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence against him.

"The Supreme Court has considered this case and the ruling

issued by the Islamic Revolution Court has been approved by the Supreme Court," Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili said on Tuesday.

Earlier this year, Esmaili announced that Zam was charged with "corruption on the earth", a term used to describe capital crimes within the Islamic Republic's judicial system.

Back in October 2019, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced that Zam had been arrested during a complicated intelligence operation.

New Indonesian envoy hails historic ties with Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Jakarta's new ambassador to Tehran, Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro, has hailed the historic relations between Indonesia and Iran, saying the bilateral relations in the fields of culture and commerce date back to centuries ago.

Yuliantoro made the remarks during a webinar attended by Indonesian citizens of Iran on Friday, after submitting his credentials to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

During the webinar, he asked Indonesian citizens of Iran to become ambassadors of public diplomacy in Iran in order to further deepen the ties between the two nations. He expressed his country's readiness to



deepen cultural relations with Iran, saying the two countries have vast untapped potential for establishing cultural communications.

Pointing to the coronavirus pandemic, the envoy said Iran has a great capacity for producing equipment to fight the deadly virus and enjoys a successful experience in fighting with the disease.

The Indonesian ambassador expressed the hope that the two sides expand their cooperation in the fight against the coronavirus.

During the webinar, a number of representatives of different Indonesian groups residing in Iran also expressed their views on different issues.

The representative of Indonesian students living in Iran welcomed the new ambassador and spoke about the situation of Indonesian students living in Iran.

A representative from the Indonesian Women's Association in Iran also spoke at the virtual meeting and expressed gratitude for the actions of the Indonesian embassy in supporting Indonesian families residing in Iran, especially for the embassy's timely actions in providing some basic goods for families residing in Iran.

During the webinar, which had nearly 100 participants, the representative of the Gusdurian community in Iran referred to the scientific activities of Indonesian citizens in Iran and the effective academic cooperation between the prominent universities of the two countries and expressed the hope that these relations would be more serious during the new ambassador's tenure.

Basij experts call for implementation of strategic action plan

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Basij experts have called for the implementation of the "Strategic Action Plan to Lift Sanctions and Safeguarding Interests of Iranian People", a plan that was passed into law by the Parliament earlier this month.

The Basij experts of nine complexes within Iran's nuclear industry issued the statement on Thursday.

"Now that several years of talks to lift the cruel sanctions against the Iranian people have not been fruitful, the path to overcoming sanctions and making them ineffective is open to us," they wrote.

The experts said success in that path requires national will and unity, adding that the scientific and technical efforts of nuclear and defense scientist Martyr Mohsen Fakhriadeh and other nuclear martyrs will be followed by his comrades.

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

The bill became a law as the oversight Guardian Council approved it after asking the parliament to make some amendments to it. It will oblige the AEOI to install advanced



centrifuge machines, to increase the monthly output of enriched uranium for various peaceful purposes with different purity levels by at least 500 kg.

The parliamentary ratification also obliges the AEOI to stop the Additional Protocol to the NPT if sanctions are not lifted within a specific period of time.

The Additional Protocol allows for surprise and unannounced inspections.

Iranian lawmakers accelerated the process of passing the

nuclear bill following the assassination of Fakhriadeh and even described the bill as one of Iran's options to respond to Israel by speeding up nuclear activities.

"We, Basij experts of nine complexes of the country's nuclear industry, consider this statement on the Strategic Action Plan to Lift Sanctions and Safeguard Interest of Iranian Nation as enforceable after proceeding legal procedure and being approved by the Guardian Council," the experts said.

They added that the action plan has also been ratified by the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council.

The Basij experts further called on the Rouhani administration to implement the law as a slap on the face of the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear agreement — namely France, Britain and Germany — for their recent stance against Iran's nuclear program.

It came after the European trio voiced concerns about Iran's plan to install additional, advanced uranium-enriching centrifuges at Natanz nuclear facility.

"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 three countries said in a statement last week.

Turkey says it respects Iran's sovereignty after Erdogan controversy

I → Zarif also expressed hopes for the expansion of bilateral relations on the basis of mutual trust.

Following Erdogan's recitation of the controversial poem, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Turkey's ambassador to Tehran to protest the Turkish president's "interventionist and unacceptable" remarks.

"Today, Friday, December 11, 2020, the Turkish ambassador in Tehran was summoned to the Foreign Ministry by the Assistant Minister and Director General of Eurasia, and while expressing strong

protest, it was underlined to the ambassador that the Islamic Republic of Iran wants an immediate explanation from the Turkish government," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Friday.

"During the summoning, the Turkish ambassador was informed that the era of territorial claims and warmongering and expansionist empires was over," he added.

Earlier on Friday, Zarif also responded to Erdogan's poem, saying that the poem was wrong.

"Pres. Erdogan was not informed that what he ill-recited in Baku refers to the forcible separation of areas north of Aras from Iranian motherland. Didn't he realize that he was undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan? NO ONE can talk about OUR beloved Azerbaijan," the chief Iranian diplomat tweeted.

In another tweet, which he wrote in Persian, Zarif said: "They didn't tell Erdogan that the poem that he wrongly recited in Baku is related to the forcible separation of areas north of Aras from Iranian motherland."



Iran, Afghanistan to finalize 'strategic document' soon: deputy FM

1 → Afghan National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib, Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, and former Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

Araghchi pointed to the connection between Tehran and Kabul, saying that peace and stability in neighboring Afghanistan directly affect Iran.

"This association shows that peace and stability in Afghanistan is peace and stability in Iran and that the well-being of the Afghan people is directly related to the progress of the Iranian people, and this is a strategic fact," the deputy foreign minister said.

He added, "I think all the people of Afghanistan acknowledge that the source of the country's problems in the last 40 years has come from different places and from other countries."

According to Araghchi, the damage that Afghanistan has suffered over the last 40 years has not been from Iran.

Araghchi said he had traveled to Kabul to discuss a comprehensive strategic document between Iran and Afghanistan, and hoped that this round of talks in Kabul would be the final round, as good progress had been made on the document. The Iranian deputy foreign minister said that the strategic document between Iran and Afghanistan consists of 5 parts, 4 of which have been finalized, and only the security part of the document remains, which will be finalized soon.

"We hope for a final conclusion on the Comprehensive Strategic Document today," Araghchi noted.

According to the deputy foreign minister, the strategic document will outline the prospect of long-term relations between Iran and Afghanistan and will play an important role in strengthening the two countries' relations.



Araghchi also underlined the need for the Afghan peace talks in Doha to be protected from foreign interference.

"The Afghan peace talks in Doha are negotiations between the Afghans themselves and no country should interfere in the details, and ideally, the talks should be inside Afghanistan and of course, only Afghans should decide in this regard," the top diplomat pointed out.

Iran dubious about U.S. intention in Afghan peace talks

In a separate interview with state news agency IRNA, Araghchi also said Iran is dubious about the United States' intention in Afghan peace talks.

Araghchi said the U.S. intervention in other countries is intended to secure the U.S. interests and advance their agenda for the other countries.

Iran welcomes the efforts of any country which aims to help the peace process in Afghanistan, the Iranian official said, however, noting that he is doubtful about the U.S. good faith.

Iran-Afghanistan relations were given a boost on Thursday after Iran inaugurated

the Khaf-Herat railway, which links eastern Iran to western Afghanistan. The railway was welcomed by both sides as a step toward deepening ties between Tehran and Kabul.

Araghchi said the railway will lead to economic prosperity on both sides, while Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described it as a border bridge.

"The Khaf-Herat railway's significance is not only for Iran & Afghanistan, but for the greater region. As a gateway that'll boost trade and people-to-people exchanges, it will also contribute to regional stability & development. Turning our frontiers into bridges is a priority," Zarif said in a tweet.

His Afghan counterpart Mohammed Haneef Atmar responded to Zarif's tweet by saying that the railway serves peace and stability in the region.

"I agree with my brother @JZarif and believe it is a key piece of our regional connectivity vision for peace, stability and shared prosperity. We thank Iran and appreciate support from Italy," Atmar tweeted.

The 222-kilometers-long Khaf-Herat

railway is part of the Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

During Abdullah's recent visit to Iran, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that the connection of the Iranian and Afghan railways would strengthen economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister's visit to Afghanistan came after the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry paid a visit to Afghanistan. Earlier in October, Abdullah traveled to Iran to seek support for the Afghan peace talks. The Afghan peace negotiator met with several high-ranking Iranian officials including President Rouhani.

"The leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran consider the success of peace in Afghanistan to be in the interest of the region and the world and they comprehensively support a peace process that is led and managed by Afghanistan," Abdullah said after he held talks with Iranian officials.

Rouhani expressed hope that lasting peace and security will be established in Afghanistan and that the people of this country will live in peace.

"It is important that the people of Afghanistan achieve a real peace after years of war and conflict to maintain their achievements, and the solution to this problem is political talks and intra-Afghan negotiations," the Iranian president said during the meeting with Abdullah.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister said that the strategic document between Iran and Afghanistan consists of 5 parts, 4 of which have been finalized, and only the security part of the document remains, which will be finalized soon.

Iran will not accept new nuclear deal: MP

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Jalil Rahimi Jahanabadi, a member of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has ruled out any possibility of Iran agreeing to a new deal on its nuclear program.

"Iran's position on the JCPOA is quite clear. There is a consensus in the establishment in its entirety on the nuclear deal that Iran demands that all JCPOA parties should return to the deal and implement it unconditionally," the lawmaker said, according to the Parliament's news agency ICANA.

Rahimi Jahanabadi also referred to the upcoming meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, which is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, saying that during the meeting the two issues should be discussed.

"It is expected that Mr. Araghchi, as Iran's representative, underline two issues in the JCPOA Joint Commission meeting. First of all, he should reiterate that the JCPOA is the best deal. Second, Iran will not accept a new deal and negotiations," the lawmaker said, adding that Iran should tell the 4+1 that it will return to its past activities if the Westerners fail to implement their commitments.

4+1 refers to France, Britain, Russia and China as four permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany. First it was referred to as 5+1, before Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the multilateral agreement.

On Saturday, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister of Iran for political affairs, announced in a statement that the Joint Commission will hold a meeting at the level

of deputy ministers and political directors.

The meeting will be held via videoconference. Araghchi said he will represent Iran in the meeting.

Earlier on November 30, the European Union External Action Service said in a statement that the meeting will be held in Vienna.

"A meeting of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) will take place in Vienna on 16 December. The Joint Commission will be chaired on behalf of EU High Representative Josep Borrell by the Secretary General of the European External Action Service Helga Maria Schmid and will be attended by the representatives of E3+2 countries (China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom) and Iran," the EU statement said.

According to the statement, the meeting will discuss ways to preserve the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

"Participants will discuss ongoing work to preserve the JCPOA and how to ensure the full and effective implementation of the agreement by all sides, including in preparation of exchanges at Ministerial Level," the statement said.

According to the lawmaker, while the United States and Europe failed to uphold their obligations under the JCPOA, Iran was the only party that complied with its commitments. "In these circumstances, Iran took measures in the area of [uranium] enrichment because we believe that implementing the deal one-sidedly is wrong," Rahimi Jahanabadi remarked.

The lawmaker also pointed to a recent law that requires

the Iranian government to substantially increase nuclear activities in case other parties to the nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — failed to live up to their commitments.

"In the Parliament's law it was mentioned that if the Westerners implement their JCPOA commitments and the Parliament's National Security Committee certifies their compliance, then Iran will have no reason not to return to its JCPOA commitments," Rahimi Jahanabadi pointed out.

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 the 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.

Fakhrizadeh family receives 'highest' military award

1 → Order of Nasr is a military award of Iranian armed forces which is awarded by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to recognize distinguished logistics contribution and support of the troops, according to the Mehr news agency.

Fakhrizadeh, a prominent nuclear scientist, was assassinated more than two weeks ago.

On November 27 at 14:30, the convoy of Fakhrizadeh suddenly came under attack 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 officials have vowed to take revenge against Israel.

"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," President Hassan Rouhani said following the assassination.

But Rouhani also said that Iran will not fall into the "trap" of the enemies.

"The Iranian nation is wiser and smarter than to fall in the trap of the Zionists (Israel). They are after chaos and sedition. They should understand that we know their plans and they will not achieve their ominous goals," the Iranian president said.

Iran summons French ambassador over comments on Zam execution

POLITICAL TEHRAN — French Ambassador to Iran Philippe Thiebaud was summoned to the Iranian foreign ministry on Sunday for the French Foreign Ministry's statement on the execution of Amad News operator Ruhollah Zam.

The French ambassador was summoned to hear Iran's objection to France's statement on Zam.

In a statement on Saturday, the French foreign ministry condemned "in the strongest possible terms" the execution of Zam, calling it an "unacceptable act that goes against the

country's international commitments."

Iran's Foreign Ministry also summoned the German ambassador to Iran on Sunday over the EU's criticism of the execution of Zam. The ambassador was summoned to the ministry because his country currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

The execution came days after the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence against Zam, who was arrested by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in October 2019.



Iran's Yemen peace initiative still on the table: diplomat

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Ali Asghar Khaji, a special assistant to Iran's foreign minister for special political affairs, announced on Sunday that Iran's Yemen peace initiative is still on the table.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran declared since the beginning of the aggression on Yemen that the solution should be political, and that is why it presented a balanced initiative of four articles for a solution," Khaji told al-Masirah TV.

He added, "Some countries in the region believed that they could end the Yemeni issue militarily within three or four months without granting any political privilege to the other Yemeni parties."

The Iranian diplomat also pointed to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen due to the war.

"The military war in Yemen constituted the largest humanitarian crisis of the century, claiming the lives of thousands of children and women and spreading

famine," he remarked, adding, "The aggressors against Yemen have not achieved their goals despite the passage of six years since the military aggression. Rather, the Yemeni people have been able to create an equation of balance, deterrence and strength in their favor on the scene."

Khaji expressed hope that the countries of the region, America and the enemies of Yemen would stop the war and take into account the Iranian peace initiative.

"We hope that the countries of the region, America and the enemies of Yemen will realize that war cannot be the solution, and Iran's initiative to stop the aggression, lift the siege and start the Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue is still on the table as a basic solution," Khaji noted.

According to the Iranian diplomat, the Yemenis have the capabilities, courage and military ability to confront the occupiers and aggressors, and they do not need Iran.

SPORTS

Iran's NCO President Amiri Salehi arrives in Muscat

SPORTS TEHRAN — President of Iran's National Olympic Committee Reza Salehi Amiri arrived in Omani capital Muscat on Sunday to participate at the 39th Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) General Assembly.

The OCA General Assembly will vote to choose the winning city to host 2030 Asian Games on Wednesday.

Salehi Amiri is accompanied by Nasrollah Sajjadi, Iran's Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Summer Games, and Peyman Fakhri, Chef de Mission for Sanya 2020 Asian Beach Games.

Doha and Riyadh vie for the hosting rights of the 2030 Asian Games. Qatar 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.

Last week, 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.

Saeid Alihosseini named Iran's junior weightlifting coach

SPORTS TEHRAN — Former Iranian superheavyweight weightlifter Saeid Alihosseini was named as the country's junior team head coach.

He will prepare the team for the 2021 IWF Junior World Championships which will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from March 5 to 18.



Alihosseini returned to the field in August 2017 after eight years suspension and won two silver medals at the 2017 World Weightlifting Championships in Anaheim, United States and 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia, respectively.

The Iranian superheavyweight announced his retirement from the sport in last year's November after losing hope of competing in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

On Sunday, Iran Weightlifting Federation introduced Alihosseini as the junior team head coach.

The 2021 competition will be a Gold Level Qualification event for the Tokyo 2020 (2021) Olympic Games.

Esteghlal beat Shahr Khodro to go top of IPL

SPORTS TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team defeated Shahr Khodro 2-0 on Matchday 6 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Sunday and went top of the table.

Sobhan Khaghani scored an early goal for the visiting team in Mashhad's Emam Reza Stadium.

In the 25th minute, Shahr Khodro midfielder Erfan Masoumi was shown a straight red card for a reckless tackle on Esteghlal's player.

Mohammad Daneshgar scored Esteghlal's second goal in the 45th minute to seal a 2-0 away win for the Blues.

Tractor defeated Machine Sazi in Tabriz derby 1-0 thanks to Mehdi Ghanbari's injury-time goal.

Esteghlal went top of the league with 11 points on goal difference ahead of Sanat Naft.

Persepolis to play Ulsan Hyundai in 2020 ACL final

SPORTS TEHRAN — Persepolis of Iran will meet South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai Motors in the final match of the 2020 AFC Champions League on Saturday.

On Sunday, Ulsan football team defeated Japan's Vissel Kobe 2-1 at the Al Sadd Sports Club in Doha, Qatar.

Hotaru Yamaguchi scored for Vissel Kobe in the 52nd minute but his goal was cancelled out by Yoon-Bit-garam's 81st minute strike before the match went into extra-time.

Junior Negroa was tripped by Vissel Kobe goalkeeper Daiya Maekawa one minute from time and the Brazilian converted his penalty to seal a 2-1 win for the Korean team.

Ulsan Hyundai, who claimed the title in 2012 for the first time, will play with Iranian giants Persepolis on Dec. 19 at the Al Janoub Stadium in Doha, Qatar.

AFC confirms Iran to host Bahrain and Iraq in Tehran

SPORTS TEHRAN — Dato' Windsor John, the AFC General Secretary, in a letter to Mehdi Mohammad Nabi, General Secretary of Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), has confirmed that Iran can host Bahrain and Iraq at the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

Iran will have to play Bahrain on June 7, 2021 and host Iraq on June 15 in Tehran in Group C.

Media reports had already suggested that Iran will play their remaining matches in neutral venues.

Iran sit third in the group and the matches are very important to Dragon Skocic's team.

Iran are seeking a third consecutive appearance at the FIFA World Cup Finals but back to back defeats to Bahrain and Iraq in Group C of the Asian Qualifiers left the Central Asian side third in the standings, although they have a match in hand.

Copper cathode production rises 7%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Production of copper cathode in Iran increased 7.1 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 previous year. Copper cathode output hit 188,900 tons in the first eight months of the present year, while the figure was 176,300 tons in the same time span of the past year.



Production of copper cathode, which stood at 250,000 tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), is planned to reach 280,000 tons in the present year.

Iran has seen its copper exports doubled in the past Iranian calendar year despite a series of bitter sanctions imposed by the United States aimed at hampering the Islamic Republic's trade of lucrative metals.

Naqavi appointed as new managing director of IRENEX

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Ali Naqavi was selected as the new managing director of Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), IRNA reported.

Naqavi replaced Ali Hosseini, the second managing director of IRENEX, who served in the post for eight years.

Enjoying 15 years of activity in Iran's capital market, Naqavi was previously the deputy managing director of Iran Energy Exchange for the executive affairs.

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

Issuance of industrial unit establishment permits up 45%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — According to the latest data released by Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), 25,108 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which mark a 45.4-percent increase year on year.

The estimated investment making for these units is 3.12 quadrillion rials (about \$74.5 billion), up 48.6 percent compared to the figure for the past year's same time span.



The units are predicted to create jobs for 563,270 persons, indicating 41.2 percent growth year on year.

As previously announced by the ministry, the issuance of permits for setting up industrial units in the country increased 16 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2020).

Most of the issued permits were related to the food industries; and Semnan, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi were the provinces receiving the highest number of permits.

The acting head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has recently announced that 991 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar 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 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 Salehnia had 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 had stated.

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 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.

GDP growth turns positive in H1

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati announced that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth (both with and without oil) has become positive, IRIB reported.

"Today's report of the Economic Accounts Department of the Central Bank indicates that the country's GDP growth in the first six months of the current year (March 19-September 20) was positive with and without oil," Hemmati wrote in

a statement.

According to the report, the country's GDP excluding the oil rose 1.4 percent in the mentioned period, while the figure increased by 1.3 percent with oil included.

Iran's economic growth in the first and second quarters of the current year with oil were -2.9 percent and +5.1 percent, respectively, and economic growth without oil in the mentioned quarters was -0.6 percent and +3.2 percent, respectively, Hemmati said. In its latest World Outlook Report titled



"The Long and Difficult Ascend" published in October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) put the Iranian economic growth in 2020 at 3.2 percent.

The international body's estimation of Iran's economy improved 0.1 percent in this report compared to its previous report published in June.

Iran-Europe business forum to be held on Dec. 14-16

1 → "Creating the ground for new developments in this field can lead to the restoration of trade relations between the two sides and many opportunities will be provided for the development of our country's non-oil exports," he added.

Facilitation of the imports of capital goods and intermediaries from Europe and paving the way for attracting foreign investment, diversification of export markets as well as establishing joint ventures were also mentioned among the goals of this event.

The Europe-Iran Business Forum, which is funded by the European Union, will be the first of its kind in two years, according to a statement by the organizers.

International conferences on Iran's economy, trade, and banking sectors had surged following the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran, the U.S., European Union, Russia, and China, but they virtually disappeared after Trump pulled the U.S. out of the accord in 2018 and renewed sanctions



on the Islamic Republic.

President-elect Joe Biden has pledged to return the U.S. to the Iran accord, which was brokered by the Obama

administration when he was vice president. He's said that he wants Iran to return to full compliance with the deal in exchange for the U.S. doing the same and lifting sanctions.

The Milan-based European House-Ambrosetti is also supporting the event, which will be hosted on the company's online conference platform, the statement said.

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

In late October, European Commission spokesperson for foreign affairs issues, Peter Stano, told the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview that the removal of sanctions is an "essential part" of the 2015 nuclear agreement.

He points to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell's remarks in a debate in the European Parliament on October 7 in which he said, "Iran had legitimate expectations that the 'nuclear deal' would result in more concrete economic benefits."

Exhibitions to be resumed in compliance with safety protocols

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has allowed the country's exhibition events to be held in compliance with health and safety measures until the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), an official with Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) announced.

According to Mohammad Javad Ghanbari, deputy director of IIEC, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, exhibition centers will be able to operate in yellow and orange zones, ISNA reported.

Although some physical exhibitions were allowed to be held in Iran following the reduction of the number of coronavirus cases in the Q2 of the year, with the second wave of the pandemic starting, once again, all exhibitions scheduled to be held in the remaining months of the year had been canceled.

As reported, this time only specialized exhibitions will be held to introduce products, and a limited number of visitors will be able to attend on an official invitation basis.

The National Coronavirus Control Headquarters has announced health

conditions and protocols for holding new exhibitions, and events will be able to operate only if these protocols are observed.

The National Coronavirus Control Headquarters also requires the exhibition centers to control the national ID of the visitors to prevent the entry of people who have been checked positive for Covid-19. Earlier, IIEC's former managing director had said that the number of exhibitions in the current Iranian calendar year declined by 40 percent due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Referring to the cancellation of all exhibitions in the first quarter of this year (March 20-June 20) due to the outbreak of coronavirus in the country, Bahman Hosseinzadeh said: "The first event this year was the exhibition of medical and healthcare achievements in the battle against the coronavirus which was in Khordad [third Iranian calendar month (May 21-June 20)]."

Back in June, after months of hiatus, Tehran hosted an exhibition on the country's medical and healthcare achievements in the battle against the coronavirus outbreak.

The exhibition called "Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements" kicked off at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on June 13.

Weekly value of trades increases 53% at IME

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Over 860,000 tons of commodities worth nearly \$375 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on December 11), indicating a 53-percent rise in value and a 70-percent increase in weight.

The IME market performance was eye-catching within the said period, as the industrial trading floor of the exchange saw transactions of 471,000 tons of products, including steel (463,000 tons), copper (3400 tons), aluminum (1890 tons) and gold (24 kilograms) and many other products worth nearly \$225 million.

The petrochemical market of the exchange operating both domestic and export trading floors registered trading 396,000 tons of goods, including vacuum bottom (140,000 tons), bitumen, polymers (65,000 tons), chemicals, lube cut (22,000 tons), insulation, base oil, argon and sulfur (15,000 tons).

In the same period, the side market of the IME traded 590 tons of over the counter commodities.

As previously reported, over 1.918 million tons of commodities worth 200 trillion rials (about \$4.761 billion) were

traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the eight Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 22-November 20).

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

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

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

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

In late April, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026).

Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

Heads of joint chambers of commerce meet to discuss trade with neighbors

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Heads of Iran's joint chambers of commerce with neighboring countries gathered on Saturday to discuss ways of boosting trade with First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri, the government's portal announced.

Addressing the meeting, Jahangiri underlined the significant role of the neighboring countries in Iran's foreign trade and exports and said: "According to statistics, 65 percent of Iran's exports in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) were made to neighboring countries, so it is necessary for Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) to develop a clear and precise plan for cooperation with each of the neighboring countries and put its implementation on the agenda."

Referring to the important role of Iran's joint chambers of commerce with neighboring countries in the development of trade, Jahangiri said: "We must give special importance and place to joint chambers of commerce."

Solving the problems that the traders and businessmen are facing requires careful and coherent follow-up and joint chambers of commerce can play a decisive role in



First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri (L) and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (R) in a meeting with the heads of Iran's joint chambers of commerce with neighboring countries on Saturday

this regard, he added.

He called on the heads of the joint chambers of commerce to identify the main shortcomings and obstacles facing

the development of trade relations with neighbors and asked them to propose practical and workable solutions to eliminate these issues while considering the government's limitations.

Emphasizing that the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to develop economic relations with the neighboring countries, the First Vice President added: "Neighboring countries are the main export destinations for our country and we must provide the necessary conditions for expanding cooperation with these countries while setting priorities."

Jahangiri stressed the need to provide the necessary infrastructure for cooperation with neighboring countries, saying: "Despite all restrictions, efforts were made to connect the country's national railways to the railways of neighboring countries, and effective steps were taken in this regard."

The meeting was also attended by the heads of ICCIMA, the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and the Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister for Economic Diplomacy.

The heads of the joint chambers also expressed the most important issues and problems facing the traders and called for the removal of internal barriers and restrictions and integrated management in foreign trade.

Goreh-Jask pipeline project saves Iran €500m

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The implementation of Iran's strategic Goreh-Jask oil pipeline by domestic contractors has saved the country over €500 million, Managing Director of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) said.

The first phase of the mentioned pipeline project, which will provide the country with an alternative route for crude oil exports that are currently transferred through the Strait of Hormuz, has reached nearly 80 percent of

physical progress and is nearing completion based on the schedule.

According to Touraj Dehqani, the implementation of the project so far has created direct jobs for 8,000 people, while providing indirect job opportunities for over 15,000 people as well.

Dehqani stated that the first phase of this project with a capacity to transfer over 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day will be ready for operation by the end of the current Iranian

calendar year (March 20, 2021).

So far, more than 780 kilometers (km) of pipes have been delivered to the site and more than 400 km of piping has been carried out, the official said.

According to the plan, the entire pipeline, which is about 1,000 kilometers, will be installed, tested, and operational by the yearend, he added.

Goreh-Jask project, which is aimed at expanding the oil transport capacity in the

south of the country to one million barrels a day, was inaugurated in late June by President Hassan Rouhani.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the project, President Rouhani said this project was currently the country's most strategic project.

"We hope that exports from Jask will begin as the government's most strategic project by the end of this [calendar] year (March 20, 2021)," the president noted.

5 years since the Zaria Massacre

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN – The followers of Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaky in Gombe staged a rally to mark the fifth anniversary of the cruel attack on Sheikh Zakzaky and thousands of his followers by the Nigerian regime.

The attack is known as the Zaria Massacre. In a report on April 22, 2016, Amnesty International said mass slaughter of hundreds of men, women and children by soldiers in Zaria and the attempted cover-up of the crime demonstrates an utter contempt for human life and accountability.

Amnesty International published evidence gathered on the ground revealing how the Nigerian military burned people alive, razed buildings and dumped victims' bodies in mass graves.

"Those who were badly injured and could not escape were burned alive," the amnesty said.

According to Abna News Agency, the peaceful protesters called for the release of Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife Malama Zeenah. Hundreds of Gombe family members took part in the protest on Saturday, December 12, and condemned the Zaria Massacre.

Sheikh Zakzaky, who is in his mid-sixties, lost the sight of his left eye in the 2015 raid by security forces. The attack also left more than 300 of his followers and three of his sons dead. His wife also sustained



Hundreds protest in Gombe on the fifth anniversary of the Zaria Massacre by the Buhari regime

serious injuries during the raid.

Zakzaky has been kept in custody along with his wife and a large number of his followers ever since.

Earlier this year, the IMN (the Islamic Movement in Nigeria) accused the Nigerian government of having poisoned Zakzaky in

jail after "large and dangerous quantities of lead and cadmium have been found in his blood."

Back in August, the couple was transferred to India to receive medical care. Days later, however, they had to return to Nigeria after they had "lost all faith" in

the prospect of receiving proper treatment there, according to the Islamic group.

"Since that return, the sheikh and his wife have been largely held incommunicado. No contact with their legal representatives was given and only a minimal contact with doctors and even that only after the sheikh's wife became seriously ill in detention," the IMN said.

In December 2019, Nigerian authorities transferred Zakzaky and his wife to a dilapidated prison, where many detainees have so far died due to lack of medical attention.

A high court ordered the Department of State Services on Thursday to transfer the cleric and his wife to the Correctional Center in Kaduna state, northwest of the country.

IMF members warned on Thursday that any attempt to take the couple anywhere other than a hospital will put them in further jeopardy.

The IMN described the move as a "mischievous" attempt by the government to humiliate "our leader, Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, and subjecting him to further hardships."

The IMN said the facilities at the Kaduna Central Prison are dilapidated.

The group said it is the same prison where some survivors of the December 2015 raid perished due to a lack of medical attention.

Figures like Soleimani foiled U.S. plans to redraw N Africa, WA: geopolitical expert

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN – Anthony Cartalucci believes that figures like Soleimani - and in a wider sense - the efforts by the Iranian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Russia have already foiled the U.S. plans to redraw North Africa and West Asia (Middle East).

The U.S. terrorist forces assassinated Lt. General Qasem Soleimani, who was among the key figures in the fight against terrorism in Syria and Iraq in the past several years, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) in an airstrike ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump at Baghdad's international airport on January 3, 2020.

General Soleimani was hailed as a charismatic brave hero in Iran and beloved by the troops. He devoted his life to defend Iran's national interest in the region so he is considered as a national hero for Iranian people regardless of their different political and religious tendencies. He is also viewed by the world's freedom-seeking people as the key figure in defeating ISIL, the world's most notorious terrorist group, in the Middle East (West Asia) battles.

To know more about the issue on the threshold of Lt. Gen. Qasem Soleimani's assassination, we reached out to Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Anthony Cartalucci. Following is the text of our interview with him:

■ How do you assess the U.S. act based on international law?

A: The U.S. murdered Lt. General Soleimani in the middle of its illegal occupation of Iraq, without justification, outside every conceivable measure of international law, and in direct violation of not only U.S. and international laws - but in violation of Iraq's laws and without Iraq's consent. Virtually every aspect of the targeted murder/assassination was illegal and in every conceivable way.

But considering Washington's track record of carrying out crimes internationally - from assassinations to full-scale invasions - this sort of crime has been "normalized" and unfortunately little has or will be done about it - especially in the still very ineffective, dysfunctional United Nations.

■ How do you see Soleimani's role in fighting against U.S. and Saudi backed terrorism?

A: It was clear that Soleimani - and in a wider sense - Iran was key to fighting the self-proclaimed terrorist group the "ISIL" and Al Qaeda's various affiliates not only in Syria alongside Russian and Syrian forces - but also in Iraq and beyond. And while the U.S. claims it is also fighting these groups it is clear that their growing confrontation with Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Russia is owed to this latter coalition's efforts to eliminate terrorist organizations the US. has used for years as proxies across the region.

The assassination was an ugly act and ultimately made in vain - since Iran's efforts against these terrorist organizations have continued and will continue. Soleimani wasn't just a skilled leader but he was part of an effective institution that



has continued his work since the U.S. assassination.

■ How do you see his role in defusing the U.S. plots to redraw the map of the region?

A: Figures like Soleimani - and in a wider sense - the efforts by the Syrian, Iranian, Iraqi, and Russian governments have already foiled the U.S. plans to redraw North Africa and the Middle East (West Asia). While Washington's destructive policies will remain a threat to this region for many years to come, it is clear that their days of transforming the region at will are long over and that a process of evicting uninvited U.S. influence from the region has begun.

Nobody should touch hazardous U.S. vaccines

By Stephen Lendman

The U.S. has been doing everything it can since Iran's revolution ending a generation of U.S.-installed fascist tyranny since 1979. For over 40 years, the U.S. has done all it can to undermine Iran in all ways possible.

As bad as things have been by U.S. policies against Iran the Trump regime exceeded the worst of its predecessors. Since Trump came to office in January 2017 he's thrown everything in the world at Iran, trying mainly to immiserate its people. That's what the sanctions are all about.

The sanctions do nothing to harm, sanctions on any country do nothing to harm the ruling authorities. They do a great deal of harm to the country's economies. They mostly harm the people, ordinary people of the country, and the aim of the sanctions is to make ordinary people suffer, thinking they'll rise up against the ruling authorities and do America's dirty work for it, but it never turns out this way.

In all the years or decades or whatever that the sanctions have been imposed by the U.S. or other countries and other nations, I think always failed.

There was only one example, one exception, and the one exception was South Africa and



apartheid, and there was a lot that went into that. Apartheid ended really but it formally ended but it continued anyway in a new form, but that was the only time that sanctions had any effect on changing a government in power.

Every other time especially U.S. sanctions against Iran, Russia, China Venezuela, and North Korea, it never did a thing to change policy, except to harm the people of the country, and their economies.

The U.S. is preventing Iran from getting vaccines to treat COVID.

Why U.S. vaccines are hazardous Well, number one, COVID is another form of seasonal flu, influenza. Doctors will say, knowledgeable doctors will say, and knowledgeable scientists that anybody healthy does not need to take a vaccine. Absolutely, nobody should touch a U.S. vaccine. They're highly toxic and dangerous to human life, human

health and welfare, to human life as well.

Vaccines usually take eight to 10 years to develop. Rush development in the U.S. has taken that timeframe and compacted into about six to nine months, cutting corners, using rigged samples of individuals to come up with a high rate of effectiveness, an artificial high rate of effectiveness.

All these vaccines are very dangerous. The only COVID vaccine I know about -- it may be the best of the lot -- it was what Russia developed. Why? Because Russia worked on its vaccine for many years, many years, so the result it came up with called Sputnik Five is easily the safest in the world. It certainly is worlds apart different from the hazardous U.S. vaccines. Stay away from them. Nobody should touch them.

Iran shouldn't want anything to do with them but Russia is there to help. And its Sputnik vaccine is being manufactured. Probably the demand is greater than the supply. But Russia could help Iran by supplying its Sputnik Five vaccines, and that's the source Iran should turn to for help, certainly not the U.S. for anything and the U.S. will not give Iran any help at all. Didn't before Trump came to power, didn't under him, and under Biden-Harris, I expect much of the same thing. It'll be wrapped in new rhetoric, whatever,

but it'll still be a very hostile policy against Iran. The same policy is used by the U.S. against all countries they do not control. That's the issue. The U.S. does not control Iran so that's the reason the U.S. is hostile toward the country.

It's also to neutralize Israel's main regional rival. But of course, Iran is very hydrocarbon-rich, oil and gas and the U.S. wants its grubby hands controlling those resources.

All those things are the reason why the U.S. is so hostile towards Iran. Will it succeed? No. If it hasn't succeeded in over 40 years, it never will again. One day, Iran will be rising more than it is now and the U.S., as it deserves, will end up again where it belongs, in history's dustbin.

Stephen Lendman, born in 1934 in Boston, started writing on major world and national issues began in summer 2005. In early 2007, radio hosting followed. Lendman now hosts the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network three times weekly. Distinguished guests are featured. Listen live or archived. Major world and national issues are discussed. Lendman is a 2008 Project Censored winner and 2011 Mexican Journalists Club international journalism award recipient.

(Source: Press TV)

The difference between Biden and Trump is a matter of style: professor

1 → ■ "A lot of distrust"

Biden has pledged to rejoin the JCPOA that Washington agreed to when he was vice president if Iran also agrees to return to full compliance. However, diplomats and analysts say it is unlikely to happen smoothly because skeptical adversaries want additional commitments from each other.

Nevertheless, "there is a real possibility of the Biden administration wanting to enter a re-negotiated treaty with Iran on its nuclear program. Remember, Biden was part of the Obama administration and he was critical in the original deal," Professor Schultz notes. "However there is a lot that needs to happen on both sides of Iran and the U.S. to make it happen. There is a lot of distrust between the two countries."

Meanwhile, it seems unlikely to expect the Biden administration to cherish the deal with Iran overnight or predict that Biden would turn his back on Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Asked about the possibility of change in U.S.-Israel ties, Schultz says, "I do not see the basic relationship between Israel and the U.S. to change. However, the U.S. may seek to re-balance its relationship with Israel, especially if there is a new prime minister."



The Saudi crown prince, Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS), has enjoyed absolute freedom in light of his personal relationship with Trump, but the prince who is in charge of running affairs in the kingdom will have to walk in a more cautious way after the Democrats take over January 20.

However, the American political expert believes that "the relationship with Saudi Arabia will probably not change much with it viewed as a check on Iran (at least from the U.S. perspective)."

Regarding Iran-U.S. tensions after the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA and imposed sweeping sanctions on Tehran, the question is that if Iranian authorities would trust the U.S. again what would guarantee that the upcoming U.S. next administration won't behave like the Trump administration?

Noting that the best predictor of the next president's foreign policy is to look at the previous president's foreign policy, Schultz says, "It will not be easy for Biden to make major changes, at least immediately, and it is not clear that the Biden administration views U.S. strategic interests that much different than the Trump administration. It will be more a matter of style."

Anyway, Iranians blame the U.S. as the main source of problem in West Asia as Washington has been supporting Israel blindly and follows a policy of Israel "First".

In this regard, the American academic is of the opinion that the U.S. and Israel are historic allies with many political, economic, cultural, and religious connections.

"Those connections seem to be powerful definers of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East (West Asia) and until Israel adopts a different perspective on its security needs I do not see much change in U.S. policy toward the region," Schultz concludes.

Words from readers

He was 14 years old. You may not have heard about him on your local TV station or in your hometown newspaper.

The reasons are:

- A) His killer was not a Muslim.
- B) The victim was neither a Jew nor Westerner and
- C) He was just a Palestinian and that is the ugly truth!

Ali was a teenager who was killed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) in the illegally occupied West Bank while peacefully protesting against Israeli land theft in the Mughayer village near Ramallah.

Ali's life was cut short when the IOF soldiers fired at youth protesters marching in their village. Ali died after being shot 5 times in the stomach in execution-style and 4 other youths were seriously injured.

Who can remember when world leaders from around the world marched in Paris to offer condolences and expressed their solidarity with the people of France after the Paris attacks? I can't help but wonder about their hypocrisy for ignoring the cold-blooded murder of Ali and other crimes committed against the Palestinian people. Except when it comes to Israel, world leaders get jelly-legged. I can't help but wonder now about their hypocrisy.

Israel has been forcing thousands of Palestinians out of their land in defiance of international law to build houses for Jewish settlers.

Even though children enjoy special protection under international law, the IOF continues to kill and imprison Palestinian children on a daily basis. As long as the world is silent about the occupation crimes, Ali will not be the last Palestinian to be killed by the IOF and illegal Jewish settlers.

My heart goes to Ali, his four injured friends, and all their loved ones. Meanwhile, rest in peace, Ali Abu Aliya!

Mahmoud El-Yousseph
USAF Retired Veteran
Westerville, Ohio

More than 100 arrested at Paris protest against security bill

Paris police have taken nearly 150 people into custody in what quickly became a tense protest against proposed security laws, with officers wading into the crowds of several thousand to haul away suspected troublemakers.

On Saturday, police targeted protesters they suspected might coalesce together into violent groups like those who vandalized stores and vehicles and attacked officers at previous demonstrations, al Jazeera reported.

The interior minister said police had detained 142 people. Long lines of riot officers and police vehicles with blue lights flashing escorted Saturday's march through rain-slickened streets.

They hemmed in protesters, seeking to prevent a flare-up of violence. A police water cannon doused demonstrators at the end of the march, as night fell.

Thousands of marchers were protesting against a proposed security law that has sparked successive weekends of demonstrations and against a draft law aimed at combating "radicalism".

The security bill's most contested measure could make it more difficult to film police officers.

It aims to outlaw the publication of images with the intent to cause harm to police.

Resistance News

Hamas: Israel implementing annexation plan by escalating demolitions

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Hazem Qassem, Hamas's spokesman, said that Israel's open war against the Palestinian presence topped by the policy of house demolitions requires the acceleration of a unified national position based on a joint strategy of struggle.

"The escalation of house demolitions, the increase in settlement building and the confiscation of lands, all these indicate a gradual implementation of the annexation plan", he escalated.

Qassem stressed in a written statement on Saturday the need for the Palestinian Authority to implement the outcomes of the meeting of the Secretaries-General of the Palestinian factions and to accelerate the activation of popular resistance.

He explained that the implementation of the annexation plan occurs under the cover of normalization agreements with some Arab regimes, warning that normalization agreements will encourage Israel to escalate its aggression against the Palestinian people.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs announced that the occupation demolished and seized more than 52 Palestinian homes within two weeks.

Qassem underlined that Israel practices racial discrimination against the Palestinians in its ugliest form, in a clear disregard for all human laws and norms.

The Hamas official pointed out that the escalation of demolitions and confiscations confirms once again, "The Israeli occupation is implementing a policy of ethnic cleansing in the full view of the whole world."

Reports issued by institutions affiliated with the United Nations revealed that Israel had demolished and seized more than 689 homes in Jerusalem and the West Bank since the beginning of this year 2020.

Hera trading group need business consultant in Iran.

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Heratradingiran@gmail.com

'Iran heritage sites on way to be more tourist-friendly'

→1 "We are also striving to be able to effectively identify weaknesses by reviewing existing policies and programs, and to move towards sustainable tourism with a stronger determination and a more professional view."

Teymouri also stressed the need to re-analyze target markets, redefine tourism products and improve the level of e-services during the coexistence with the coronavirus and post-corona world.



Vali Teymouri

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. So it will undeniably try its best to achieve a relatively ambitious goal but when that happens the travel industry is likely to look more altered.

Some \$19m paid to support tourism businesses in Khorasan Razavi province

TOURISM TEHRAN — The Iranian government has so far paid 800 billion rials (\$19 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the north-eastern Khorasan Razavi province, deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The province's tourism industry, mostly its accommodation centers, have taken 32 trillion rials (about \$761 million) hit from the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) over previous months, Yusef Bidkhori announced on Sunday.

However, the government has allocated a total of three trillion rials (\$71.4 million) of subsidy facilities to this province, which is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country that is to be paid step by step, the official added.

He also noted that there are 2700 active tourism units across the province, while unfortunately, almost 18,000 employees in this sector have lost their jobs over the coronavirus pandemic.

Before the coronavirus puts everything on lockdown, the provincial capital of Mashhad played host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe to visit the imposing, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.



A man sprays disinfectant at a hall within the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad.

Almost 40 million Iranian pilgrims and travelers visited the city during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 19).

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted around the holy shrine. The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded.

In late October, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri said that a new support package to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic was approved by Iran's National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

He also announced that depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (some \$3,800) to nine billion rials (some \$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The seeds of civilization

Carleton S. Coon and first systematic cave explorations in Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — Paleolithic sites in Iran are known primarily from caves and rock shelters in the central Zagros mountain range along with a few sites on the Caspian Sea coast and scattered sites on the desert plateau. They were predominantly attractive living places for the hunter-gatherers and early cave-dwelling man.

The first systematic investigations of Paleolithic archaeology in Iran was carried out in the mid-20th century by American anthropologist Carleton Stevens Coon (1904–1981), who was a professor of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, lecturer and professor at Harvard University, and the president of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, according to Encyclopedia Iranica.

Between 1925 and 1934, Coon conducted fieldwork in North Africa, the Balkans, Ethiopia, and Arabia. In 1948 he left Harvard to become professor of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and curator of general ethnology at the University Museum. Beginning in the next year, he conducted excavations in Persia, Afghanistan, and Syria.

Coon published numerous general works on anthropology and the ethnography of Islamic peoples from Morocco to Afghanistan. His interest in the origin of races and fossil man led him to undertake in 1949 the first systematic search for Paleolithic remains in Iran, where he carried out excavations at the Hunters' Cave at Bisotun, at Tamtama Cave near Urmia, and at Khunik Cave near Birjand in Khorasan. The latter two caves yielded a few atypical Mousterian artifacts and the one at Birjand also some animal bones indicating that it had been used as a warm-weather hunting site.

The Hunters' Cave produced a full range of the Mousterian stone-tool industry in association with bones of gazelles, red deer,



Entrance to Tamtama Cave, a Paleolithic-era shelter for the hunter-gatherers, is seen near Lake Urmia, northwest Iran.

and equids, as well as a fragment of a human arm bone (called "Neanderthaloid" by Coon).

The site, located above the famous Bisotun spring, was probably a camping spot for hunters. In 1992 this site was still the only fully published Paleolithic excavation site in Iran.

Coon concluded in 1957 that the Persian plateau had probably been an area of transit, rather than an area for the emergence of the earliest Upper Paleolithic. It appears that Persia had already assumed the role it has continued to play ever since, that of intermediary between the cultures of the Near East, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

In 1949 and 1951 Coon also excavated what he called "Mesolithic" caves (the term has now been replaced by "Epipaleolithic") in

the cliffs on the southeastern Caspian shore near Sari: the Belt Cave (Ghar-e kamarband) and Hotu Cave.

The caves became habitable around 9800 BC., as the Caspian Sea retreated about 10 km toward the present shoreline. A variety of local animals were eaten, including seals, sheep, goats, gazelles, voles, and birds.

The Belt Cave produced bone tools, hand stones and querns, microliths, and heavier blades and flakes. Hotu Cave contained amorphous flakes and pebble tools, but no microliths. This difference in the remains from adjacent sites remains unexplained.

The discovery of partial skeletal remains of six people is the only known evidence for the human Epipaleolithic population of the territory that is now Persia. These individuals

are described as fully modern, tall, with well-formed muscles; they probably lived about forty years.

The bodies, sprinkled with red ocher, represent the earliest deliberate burials known in the region. These burials were both primary and secondary in nature and date to between 7000 and 6500 BC.

Coon thought in 1957 that these remains reflected a form of incipient Neolithic culture, as simple pottery, polished stone, and some domesticated goats and sheep were found in the same levels, but it is now clear that this material overlaps the Neolithic of the western Zagros at Ganj Dareh.

According to the late Prof. Ezzat. O. Negahban, a more detailed picture of early cave-dwelling life has been developed for the Zagros region where traces of cave dwellers from the Lower Paleolithic to the Middle Paleolithic, Upper Paleolithic, and Epipaleolithic periods have been found. That's because the Zagros highlands have generally been subject to more Stone Age research and investigation than have the Alborz mountain range.

The Paleolithic or 'Old Stone Age' begins with the first stone tools some 2.5million years ago in Africa, and it ends with the Neolithic or 'New Stone Age,' essentially at the beginnings of agriculture. The Paleolithic is conventionally divided into Lower, Middle, Upper, and Terminal or Epi-Paleolithic periods. The Paleolithic is known almost exclusively from lithic artifacts—stone tools, classified in conventional ways into types that are diagnostic of the various periods.

There is virtually no information about the perishable tools and devices made of wood, fiber, or skins that may have been in use. Layers in archeological sites typically contain quantities of lithics, bones of animals that were hunted and consumed, and the ash from domestic fires.

Attention devoted to forgotten archaeological hill southern Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — A demarcation project has been commenced on Tepe Mafinabad in southwest Tehran province, expecting to shield the archaeological hill from further damage.

The mapping and demarcation project is to protect the ancient hill, which is situated in Eslamshahr, from any possible damage, and to prevent it from any illegal construction in its surrounding areas, provincial tourism official Morteza Adibzadeh announced on Sunday.

A guard booth will be installed at the ancient site... and it will be free of the construction debris scattered around, the official added.

The hill, which dates back to the 4th and 5th millennium BC, was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1998.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Ray in which signs of settlement dates from 6000 BC, is often considered to be Tehran's predecessor. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Tehran has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, and Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

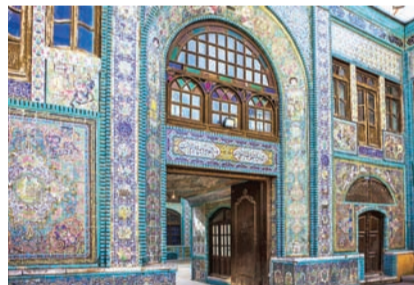


Moaven al-Molk Tekyeh to be shielded against moisture to avoid decay

TOURISM TEHRAN — A plan for groundwater disposal is being prepared for the Qajar-era (1789–1925) Moaven al-Molk Tekyeh in the western Kermanshah province to protect the historical structure against erosion.

The Tekyeh has always had a problem with moisture as it has been built in the path of groundwater, and this moisture has caused a lot of damage to the building and especially to its tilework, provincial tourism chief has said.

The tiles, which decorate the interior space of the structure, have been continuously restored for several years and so far hundreds of square meters of these tiles have



been repaired, Omid Qaderi announced on Saturday.

However, part of the problem has been

solved by directing groundwater into a reservoir and then pumping the collected water into the nearby rivers, the official added.

He also noted that a restoration project on the other parts of the building is planned to be implemented in the near future.

Due to its special architecture and unique tilework, Moaven al-Molk Tekyeh has always been a popular destination for art lovers and history buffs.

The monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1975.

During Muharram, apart from mosques, each neighborhood sets up its establishment for the ceremonial processions of the month

known as Tekyeh (or Tekkiyeh), which are venues for gathering of mourners known as 'heyat' (literally meaning group or delegation) who honor the life of Imam Hussein (AS).

Tekkiyeh (stemming from the word eteka, meaning backup or reliable) was historically a staying place for visiting pilgrims and dervishes who relied on the goodness of the benefactors for daily sustenance. Today Tekkiyehs, however, are specific locations for mourners who meet and participate in religious gatherings after which they head out on the streets in groups known as dasteh (literally meaning cluster) to parade a dramatic mourning.

225 research projects conducted on Iran's tourism, cultural heritage within year

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Center have carried out 225 research projects on tourism and cultural heritage of the ancient country over the past year, an official with the center announced on Sunday.

A total of 225 research projects have been done from the mid-December last year until this year's Research Week, which is commemorated from December 12 to 18, Manijeh Hadian said.

The projects, which aimed at identifying, introducing, reviving, and protecting the works related to Iranian history and cultural heritage, have implemented paying attention to the national priorities, she explained.

She also noted that the projects include researches related to archeological excavation, historical regions demarcation, intangible heritage documentation, endangered languages and dialects, traditional arts, and preserving UNESCO-tagged properties.

The official also reminded of restrictions for public gatherings in the coronavirus era, adding the pandemic has



catered for more cyber interactions amongst the experts.

While the outbreak of the coronavirus has affected our lives in every possible way, this difficult condition has also created opportunities for researchers and scholars to share their findings as well as scientific and professional resources through cyberspace, regardless of where they live, the

official added.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to c. 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (550–330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa and Chogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

A peek into Iranian traditional houses, mansions

(Part 7/8) **TOURISM** TEHRAN — In the traditional Iranian architecture,

many of the decorative elements act like a false ceiling or retaining wall in order to prevent humidity from penetrating buildings or reduced thermal exchange.

In other cases, these decorations reduced the intensity of sunlight by reflecting various colorful spectrums or creating bumps and dimples. Further to serving protective purposes,

the presence of decorations in Iranian houses which were a place for mental and physical tranquility also had the function of catalyst.

The presence of tranquilizing pictures along with the smooth move of Islamic drawings had a great influence in achieving this goal. As a matter of fact, Iranian houses were a place for development of spirit and physical calm.

Another point which must be considered is the presence of the culture of hospitality in

her influence in house architecture. Based on the teachings of Islam and the native culture of this land, Iranian people have always been hospitable and created the best architectural spaces for their guests. The most beautiful, glorious and active decorations were those used in such spaces.

Light and color are among factors which have played a major role in Iranian traditional architecture. In Iranian architecture, investigation of the influence of light and color on the

volume and structure has always constituted a major part of various stages of building and her realization. Unfortunately, blind mimicry of western architecture has given a beautiful yet meaningless space to contemporary Iranian architecture.

Some researchers assert that the value and importance of living space has been investigated and studied from various psychological, phenomenological, sociological and behavioral-environmental aspects.

Gorgan Bay at risk of disappearance within a decade

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — If the backward trend of the Caspian Sea level continues, Gorgan Bay will be completely dried up by the next decade.

Covering an area of about 400 square kilometers, the Gulf of Gorgan also known as Gorgan Bay is the largest gulf in the Caspian Sea. It is located at the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea near the cities of Behshahr, Gorgan, and Sari and is separated from the main water body by the Miankaleh peninsula and extends until the Ashuradeh peninsula.

Experts on climate change and global warming believe that uncontrolled water withdrawal of aquifers, reduced rainfall, and increased evaporation are the most important reasons for the drying up of Gorgan Bay.

According to the latest scientific data presented by the National Cartographic Center, the drying rate of Gorgan Bay is worrisome.

The fluctuation of the Caspian Sea water level and its impact on the surrounding ecosystems over recent years raised concern, evidence shows that the Caspian Sea level began a rising trend in 1978 and rose by 2.5 meters, and since 1995, the level of the Caspian Sea has decreased by about 1.5 meters, Homayoun Khoshnavan head of the international project on the effect of Caspian Sea fluctuations on coastal environment said.

These fluctuations that occurred during this short period of time for the Caspian Sea imposed significant threats to Gorgan Bay and Miankaleh Wetland, he added.

An important point is a change in pH or acidity of the soil and water environment, which affects the lower level species of the food pyramid and causes the extinction of phytoplankton and zooplankton, he noted, adding, there are many living things in the lower levels, which will directly affect the animals in the higher levels of the food pyramid, and this will lead to a lack of prey and diversity of species, such as birds.

So that today the population density of many birds that lived in Gorgan Bay and Miankaleh wetland decreased from 1.2 million birds to 380,000 birds.



That is an alarming event happening in an ecosystem because it challenges the function and poses a serious impact on humans which is then reflected in economic, social, and environmental areas, he further explained.

Faezeh Salami, a cartographic expert, said that the Bay's area amounted to 400 square kilometers, 100 square kilometers of which have dried up, which means that 27 percent of the bay is lost over the recent years.

For each centimeter decrease of the water level of the Caspian Sea, about one square kilometer of the area of Gorgan Bay has shrunk; so that with the increasing trend of global warming and climate change, sea level reduction, the need for continuous monitoring of the Caspian Sea and Gorgan Bay is more important.

Dredging, an effective solution
Analysis of data from the latest field research by professors of marine sciences shows that dredging the canals leading to Gorgan Bay is the most effective way to save this valuable aquatic habitat.

Jafar Azizpour, a faculty member of the National Institute of Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences said that normally, 2.7 cubic meters of water enters Gorgan Bay every second. Dredging the canals leading to this water area increases the

inflow of water by 18 cubic meters per second and the amount of water flowing into Gorgan Bay will reach 3.6 cubic meters per second.

If no action is taken to revitalize Gorgan Bay, it will suffer the fate of Lake Urmia and the cities around the bay will be affected by dust, he lamented.

The sand and dust storm generated from dried up Gorgan Bay can take about one thousand micrograms of dry air to the upper level of the atmosphere, which if it is seven meters per second, this dust will affect an area up to 50 km, he stated.

Hamid Alizadeh Lahijani, the president of the national institute for oceanography and atmospheric science, said that lack of attention to the reduction of the Bay level due to factors such as the Caspian Sea shrinking level, closure of communication routes, high accumulated sediments, and seagrass growth will turn this bay into an inland wetland.

The rate of evaporation is twice as much as the amount of rainfall, and the inflow of rivers entering the Bay, even under natural conditions, is not enough to compensate for its water shortage. Under these circumstances, facilitating the exchange of water in Gorgan Bay from natural routes is necessary to prevent the dryness, he explained.

Issa Kalantari, head of the Depart-

ment of Environment also in October announced the management and rehabilitation of Miankaleh wetland and Gorgan Bay as one of the priorities of the national headquarters for wetlands conservation and management and emphasized the Caspian Sea inflow into Gorgan Bay.

Kalantari also considered the use of new technologies and especially remote sensing knowledge in determining the exact volume of reservoir water in the country's wetlands in order to grant the water right of the wetlands and determining the ecological effects of water fluctuations, as well as data produced in different months of the year.

Valuable ecological complex

Gorgan Bay was designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value) along with Miankaleh Wetland.

The bay and its surrounding area are recognized as a valuable ecological complex in the world which had a direct impact on the livelihood of local communities in addition to conserving the marine life cycle.

Ashuradeh Island, which hosts a variety of native and migratory birds throughout the year, was also introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

\$2m earmarked to revive Gulf of Gorgan

However, in July, a budget of 9 trillion rials (nearly \$2.1 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) was earmarked to revive the Gulf of Gorgan.

The Ports and Maritime Organization, the Department of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Energy are tasked with taking executive measures to save Gorgan Bay within 5 years.

According to the oceanographic studies, the most important solution to save Gorgan Bay is dredging canals, dredging the rivers leading to the Gulf of Gorgan, and providing water rights of the rivers will be other executive strategies to save the Gulf.

64 health projects inaugurated in South Khorasan

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 64 health projects were put into operation on Sunday in eastern South Khorasan province.

A total of 1.1 billion rials (about \$26 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) have been spent for the implementation of these projects, which included emergency base, laboratory, rural health center, roadside rescue center, dialysis centers, CT scans, and equipping hospitals with operating rooms, ICUs, maternity wards, and blood banks.

According to the Ministry of Health, 1,400 health projects will be opened throughout the country by May 2021.

Jafar Sadeq Tabrizi, the director of the health network department at the Ministry of Health, has said the health network has been playing a key role in fighting the coronavirus pandemic mostly through equipping medical centers and implementing Family Physician programs across the country.

Currently, 31,400 Health Houses and 7,400 health



centers are providing services to over 20 million villagers nationwide, with 630 healthcare providers, he highlighted, adding, therefore, 97 percent of the country's rural population is covered by the primary health care system.

Pointing out that 93 percent of the urban residents are covered by the health networks in the country, he said that 3,987 physicians and 12,032 health care providers (dentists, nurses, midwives, and health professionals in the fields of environmental health, nutrition, mental health, etc.) provide services to 54 million people.

Family Physician program

In 2005, Family Physician (FP) program was started, which targeted almost 25,000,000 citizens residing in rural areas, and piloted in two provinces of Fars and Mazandaran.

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.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

81% of bus drivers responsible for fatal accidents in 2 months

The number of public transport fleet accidents has increased significantly over the last two months, and 81% of bus drivers were to blame for fatal road crashes, Traffic Police chief has announced. Over 90 percent of the whole transfers across the country are done by ground transport system, while air, rail and sea transportation hold a small share, Mehr quoted Seyed Kamal Hadianfar as saying on Tuesday.

Last year, 19 million rides have been delivered transferring over 290 million passengers, mostly through the bus transportation fleet under the Municipalities supervision, he stated.

He went on to say that bus drivers spend more time driving exceeding standard hour due to low income, which increases the risk of road crashes.

Referring to the importance of technical inspection for the bus fleet, he noted that all the buses operation in the country's transportation system must undergo inspection and ensure the passengers' safety, as well as limiting the drivers to spend more time offering service.

۸۱ درصد رانندگان اتوبوس در تصادفات فوتی دو ماه گذشته مقصر بوده اند

رئیس پلیس راهور ناجا، گفت: در ۲ ماهه اخیر تعداد تصادفات ناوگان حمل مسافر افزایش قابل توجهی داشته و در تصادفات منجر به فوت و جرح ناوگان عمومی حمل مسافر، ۸۱ درصد رانندگان اتوبوس مقصر بوده اند.

سردار سیدکمال هادیانفر، افزود: بیش از ۹۰ درصد از جابجایی ها در سطح کشور از طریق زمینی صورت می پذیرد و درصد کمی را حمل و نقل های هوایی، ریلی و دریایی تشکیل می دهد. در طول سال ۹۷، ۱۹ میلیون سفر با ۲۹۰ میلیون مسافر صورت پذیرفته است که عمده آن از طریق پایانه های صورت پذیرفته که مدیریت آن بر عهده شهرداری هاست.

رئیس پلیس راهور ناجا افزود: رانندگان به علت میزان درآمدشان بیش از ساعت مقرر رانندگی می کنند که ریسک تصادف را بالا می برد.

وی با اشاره به لزوم کنترل ناوگان حمل مسافر از میدا گفت: کنترل های فنی اتوبوس ها پیش از شروع سفر موضوع حساسی است. اتوبوس می بایست به صورت دقیق از لحاظ سلامت فنی، رعایت ساعت کاری استاندارد توسط راننده و... مورد بازبینی دقیق قرار گیرد.

UN secretary general urges all countries to declare climate emergencies

Governments around the world should all declare a state of climate emergency until the world has reached net zero CO2 emissions, the UN secretary general, António Guterres, has told a summit of world leaders.

At least 38 countries have already declared such a state of emergency, often owing to their vulnerability to the impacts of climate breakdown, which are already being felt.

"Can anybody still deny that we are facing a dramatic emergency?" Guterres said on Saturday. "I urge all others to follow."

Declaring an emergency would require countries to step up their actions on greenhouse gas emissions urgently. An increasing number of governments have a target to reach net zero emissions by around the mid-century, but few have detailed plans on how to get there.

Many countries are also pouring money into high-CO2 activities as they strive to recover from the coronavirus crisis and recession. Guterres noted that G20 countries were spending 50% more in their stimulus packages on fossil fuels and CO2-intensive sectors than they were on low-CO2 energy.

"This is unacceptable," he told the online Climate Ambition Summit, co-hosted by the UN, the UK and France. "The trillions of dollars needed for Covid recovery is money that we are borrowing from future generations. This is a moral test. We cannot use these resources to lock in policies that burden future generations with a mountain of debt on a broken planet."

More than 70 world leaders, civil society activists, business chiefs and city mayors are attending the Climate Ambition Summit, which marks five years since the landmark Paris climate agreement.

Under the Paris agreement, countries are bound to keep global temperature rises well below the 2C above pre-industrial levels that scientists regard as the outer limit of safety, with an aspiration to limit global heating to 1.5C, which should avoid the worst of the ravages of climate breakdown.

However, the commitments to reduce emissions that countries made at Paris were insufficient, and would result in catastrophic heating of more than 3C. The agreement contains a ratchet mechanism by which nations must update their commitments every five years. The first deadline is now looming, on 31 December, and at Saturday's summit world leaders are supposed to come forward with strengthened plans, called nationally determined contributions (NDCs), to cut emissions by 2030.

The UK has come forward with a goal of cutting emissions by 68% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels. The EU on Friday confirmed its pledge of a 55% cut by 2030.

Many other countries, including China, Japan and South Korea, have come forward with longer-term goals of reaching net zero emissions by 2050 or 2060.

World's largest iceberg on course to crash into South Atlantic Island

The world's largest iceberg is currently on course to crash into a South Atlantic Island, and could cause significant damage to local wildlife should it become grounded near the island.

The "A68a" iceberg - which Nasa estimates to be roughly the size of Devon - or six times the size of London - broke off from the Larsen C ice shelf in Antarctica in 2017.

It is currently travelling through the Southern Antarctic Front towards the island of South Georgia, according to the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. Current tracking predicts that it will land at Clerk Rocks, which sit 35 miles southeast of South Georgia.

There is a possibility, however, that the iceberg will disintegrate as it gets flooded with water on its course. It has been seen to be crumbling and cracking as it travels, the Independent reported.

South Georgia and the Sandwich Islands are a UK overseas territory, which sit in the southern Atlantic Ocean about 800 miles southeast of the Falkland Islands.

While there are scientific research bases located on the islands, it is an inhospitable environment and there are no permanent residents.

Government officials have been tracking the 4,200-square-km iceberg closely with the help of the British Royal Air Force, who conducted a reconnaissance mission over the iceberg capturing photos and videos of the large mass.

"The sheer size of the A68a iceberg means it is impossible to capture its entirety in one single shot," British officials said in a statement.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 82)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Spanish female name.....	پترا	after.....	بعد از
father.....	پدر	some.....	بعضی /ba'zi/
grandfather.....	پدربزرگ	loud.....	بلند / بلند [مبت]
	(جمع: پدربزرگها)	loud; aloud.....	بلند / بلند [فید]
nurse.....	پرستار	yes.....	بله /bale/
Iranian female name.....	پروین	paragraph.....	بند
post.....	پست [پست]	Bangladesh.....	بنگلادش
postal.....	پستی	to be.....	باش / هست / است
boy; son.....	پسر	Bosnia.....	بوسنی
cousin.....	پسرعمو (جمع: پسرعموها)	to.....	به
son of one's paternal uncle.....	پنج	instead of.....	به جای /be'jaye/
five.....	پنج	Iranian male name.....	بهمن
translation.....	ترجمه	پنجاه /h/.....	پنجاه
to translate.....	ترجمه کردن	window.....	پنجره
Turkish.....	ترکی	Thursday.....	پنجشنبه /pan'sanbe, sam/
the sign.....	تشدید	cheese.....	پنیر
holiday.....	تعطیل /ایم (جمع: تعطیلات)	a city in South Korea.....	پوسان
closed.....	تعطیل /مبت	money.....	پول
	تکالیف: جمع تکلیف	pedestrian.....	پیاده (جمع: پیادهها)
repetition.....	تکرار	on foot.....	پیاده /فید
to repeat.....	تکرار کردن	to get off.....	پیاده شدن (از)
assignment.....	تکلیف	to dismount (from).....	پیشگفتار
	(جمع: تکالیف، تکلیفها)	preface.....	پیوسته
telephone.....	تلفن	joined.....	پیوسته

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best among you is the one who doesn't harm others with his tongue and hands.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Khanian, Rahimizadeh from Iran shortlisted for Hans Christian Andersen Award

A R T TEHRAN — Author Jamshid Khanian and illustrator Pejman Rahimizadeh, both from Iran, have received nominations for the 2022 Hans Christian Andersen Award as the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) has announced the shortlist in Basel, Switzerland. The Hans Christian Andersen Award, which is called the Nobel Prize for children's literature, is the highest international distinction given to the creators of books for young people.



Photo: This combination photo shows Iranian illustrator Pejman Rahimizadeh and author Jamshid Khanian.

Given biennially by the IBBY, the Hans Christian Andersen Awards recognize lifelong achievement and are given to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made an important and lasting contribution to literature for young people. Rahimizadeh, whose artwork has embellished "The Lovely Hero of Our Story", "Mad and the Well", "Arash", "Rustam & Esfandiar" and many other bestsellers, was shortlisted for the award in 2016. Khanian is a researcher and a playwright. Among his credits are "A Half Day in the Interrogation Room" and "Compass". He is also the author of several stories, including "Money" and "Where Is My Joseph", which have been translated into English, Russian and Polish. Khanian and Rahimizadeh were nominated for IBBY's long list by the Children's Book Council of Iran, and then they were shortlisted for the honor along with 60 other candidates from 32 countries according to a press release the IBBY published last Wednesday.

Both Rahimizadeh and Khanian have previously been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious Swedish honor to promote children's and youths' literature in the world. Iranian writer Farhad Hassanzadeh received a nomination for the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

The winners of the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award were Jacqueline Woodson from the U.S. as an author and Albertine from Switzerland as an illustrator.

Each winner receives the Hans Christian Andersen Medaille, a gold medal with the bust of Andersen. Medals are presented at the biennial IBBY congress.

The patron of the Andersen Awards is Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, and the awards are sponsored by Nami Island Inc.

"KeepStep" tops at GaLA 2020

A R T TEHRAN — "KeepStep" from Iran has been selected as best game in the Academic Serious Game Competition of the Games and Learning Alliance Conference (GaLA) in France.

The game has been developed at the Tabriz Islamic Art University and CARLab.

It is composed of several games that have been developed to help people with multiple sclerosis (MS) strengthen their feet by their movements during the game instead of the regular exercise and physical therapy for feet.

Another Iranian game "TizRun" and Kosmos Klikker GO developed at the Rudolf Berlin Center and the University of Amsterdam were also nominated in the category.

The competition winners were announced in the Laval Virtual World on Thursday during the award ceremony at the Dance Hall.

"IfSimulation" from the French company My-Serious-Game was picked as best game in the Business Competition, while "ASL Fingerspeller" from Glasgow College in Scotland won the award in the Student Competition.

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

The two Iranian games were also offered at the showcase.

The conference and exhibition are organized every year by the Serious 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.

Jalal Literary Awards announce top writers of war literature

A R T TEHRAN — The organizers of the 13th edition of the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards, Iran's most lucrative literary prize, have announced the top writers of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

This year, the organizers initiated a special category named "Forty Years of the Sacred Defense Fiction" to honor the authors of the foremost stories created about the war over the past four decades.

One of the writers is Habib Ahmadzadeh, the author of the acclaimed novel "Chess with the Doomsday Machine" and a book of short stories, "A City Under Siege".

Hamid Hesam, the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year in 2018, is another author picked by the organizers. He is the author of "When the Moonlight Was Missing", "Just Be a Servant of Hussein" and "Immigrant from the Land of the Sun".

Also included are Ahmad Dehqan, one of Iran's foremost war writers and the author of "A Vital Killing" and "Bearing 270 Degrees",



This combination photo shows images of the authors selected as top writers of the Sacred Defense fiction at the 13th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards.

Mohammadreza Bayrami, the writer of the acclaimed novella "Barren", and Rahim Makhdomi, the author of "The Entry-Forbidden Commanders", which is a compilation of stories from 30 Iranian commanders.

David Amirian, Golali Babai, Akbar Sahrai, Davud Ghaffarzadegan, Qassemali Ferasat, Majid Qeisari and Ali Moazzeni are other top writers of this section.

The organizers selected the writers during a poll of 19 journalists and representatives of the media active in the literature arena.

This program has been designed to highlight the high position of the Sacred Defense in the history of contemporary Iranian literature.

Ebrahim Mohammad Hassanbeigi, Hamid Hessem, Mohammadreza Sharafi-Khabushan, Mostafa Jamshidi, Ali Changizi, Abolfazl Horri, Morteza Sarhangi, Maryam Moshref and Mohammadreza Bayrami are the members of the selecting committee for the prize.

Ebrahim Hassanbeigi is also collaborating as the academic secretary.

Director Majid Majidi calls U.S. sanctions on Iran crime against humanity



Photo: Iranian director Majid Majidi (C) holds a master class at the Hainan International Film Festival in the Chinese city of Sanya on December 11, 2020.

A R T This has no name but a crime against humanity, he said.

He also expressed thanks to the people and government of China for their support of the Iranian nation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Majidi will be doing his next project on the coronavirus pandemic in China.

In his interview with the China Global Television Network (CGTN) on Wednesday, he said that he will be traveling to Yunnan Province in southwest China after the festival to scout for potential locations for his upcoming movie. This follows a trip to the eastern city of Hangzhou for the same purpose.

Majidi said the film centers on a little girl during the coronavirus crisis, without giving more details. He added that the cast will be all Chinese.

This is not the first time that the director has taken part in the Chinese film circuit. Last year, Majidi served as one of the seven jury members at the 9th Beijing International Film Festival.

The child labor drama "Sun Children" is also one of Iran's submissions to the foreign language film category of the 78th Golden Globe Awards.

The movie tells the story of 12-year-old Ali and his three friends. Together, they work hard to survive and support their families, doing small jobs in a garage and committing petty crimes to make fast money.

"Sun Children" has been acclaimed previously in several festivals. The film won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February.

It was named best film in the international competition of the 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan in late October. Majidi was also crowned the best director.

The movie brought Ruhollah Zamani the award for best actor and Majidi the Zaven Qukasian, a Golden Butterfly.

Zamani was named the best young actor at the 77th Venice Film Festival, winning the Marcello Mastroianni Award in September.

Sardinia Film Festival picks five shorts from Iran

A R T TEHRAN — Five short movies by Iranian directors are competing in the 15th Sardinia Film Festival underway in the Italian city of Sassari on Sardinia Island.

The films are "Nail" by Mehdi Barqzadegan, "Saba" by Mohammadreza Khavari, "Dad" by Mohammad Keivanmarz, "The Cycling Wind" by Nazanin Sobhan Sarbandi and "The Factory" by Ali Rahimi and Mohammad-Amin Sharifi.

"Saba" is a highlight of the lineup. In the course of Iran's ban on women's presence in football stadiums, Saba, 22, disguises herself as a boy to sneak into the stadium at her father's suggestion.



"Dad" by Mohammad Keivanmarz.

Her father takes her to a traditional cafe instead of the stadium. Asking her how hard it is to hide her true identity, he lets her - now impersonating a boy - in on the secret that he realized he could not be a man anymore when Saba was three, but he had to hide it for years to let her daughter feel that she has a father.

On the pretext of helping her enter the stadium, he creates a situation where his daughter has to put herself into his shoes, thereby hiding her true identity. He then tells her that he intends to continue living with his true identity from now on.

Another highlight is the animated film "Dad", which is about a young boy that tries to attract the attention of his

father, who is in depression. "The Cycling Wind" tells the story of a young wind that comes into possession of a bike, which helps the wind to blow even faster without expending much energy and to truly enjoy its time.

The animated movie is a production of Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.

The story of "The Factory" is set in an abandoned building where some addicts are using drugs.

A large number of shorts are competing in the Sardinia festival, which will be running until Tuesday. The festival is running online and is free for everybody.

Berlin exhibit "What Fruit It Bears" showcases works by Mostafa Sarabi

A R T TEHRAN — Works by Iranian artist Mostafa Sarabi are on view in a group exhibition "What Fruit It Bears" underway at the Peres Projects gallery in Berlin.

Works by artists, including Xinyi Cheng, Dalton Gata, Nicholas Grafia, Hugh Hayden, Stanislava Kovalcikova, Emily Ludwig Shaffer and David Rappeneau, are also on view at the exhibition.

"What Fruit It Bears" is an exhibition project presenting works by artists whose practices are radically individual defying categorization, and yet together represent the present time.

This exhibition presents approaches to figuration, which seek equilibrium in understanding both oneself and the collective path forward.

Many of these works were made this year and respond to the tumult that every individual has experienced globally.



A painting by Mostafa Sarabi displayed in the Delgosh Gallery in Tehran in June 2020.

As one emerges from isolation, this presentation proposes a future in which personal identity is both celebrated and supported by a renewed appreciation for community and solidarity.

The selected works explore the force of the unutterable and the variances in what one does not have language to express. Employing diverse languages of figuration, text and abstraction, the artists presently expose the body, skin and landscape as contested sites, located across both natural and cultural categories.

Using the body as a departure point to think about vulnerability, the individual, community and society, these works map the figure as a projection of inner life, of cultural and social experience to express identity and the many ways that it is constructed.

The exhibit opened on December 4 and will be running until January 15, 2021.

Iranian bookstores offer "An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes"

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Brock Clarke's "An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England" has recently been published by the Nimaj publishing house in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Elham Askari.

A lot of remarkable things have happened in the life of Sam Pulsifer, the hapless hero of this incendiary novel, beginning with the ten years he spent in prison for accidentally burning down Emily Dickinson's house and unwittingly killing two people.

Emerging at age twenty-eight, he creates a new life and identity as a husband and father. But when the homes of other famous New England writers suddenly go up in smoke, he must prove

his innocence by uncovering the identity of this literary-minded arsonist.

In the league of such contemporary classics as "A Confederacy of Dunces" and "The World According to Garp", "An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England" is an utterly original story about truth and honesty, life and the imagination.

Sam Pulsifer has come to the end of a very long and unusual journey, and for the second time in his life he has the time to think about all the things that have and have not come to pass.

Clarke is the author of seven books of fiction, most recently a collection of short stories, "The Price of the Haircut". His novels include "The Happiest People in the World" and "Exley", which was a Kirkus Book of the Year, a finalist for the Maine

Book Award and a longlist finalist for the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

"An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England" was a national bestseller, an American Library Associate Notable Book of the Year and a New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice pick.

Clarke's individual stories and essays have appeared in The New York Times Magazine, Boston Globe, Virginia Quarterly Review, One Story, The Believer, Georgia Review, New England Review and Southern Review, and have appeared in the annual Pushcart Prize and New Stories from the South anthologies, and on NPR's Selected Shorts.

He lives in Portland, Maine and teaches creative writing at Bowdoin College and at the University of Tampa's low residency MFA program.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Brock Clarke's "An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England".