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Iranian girls in World Weightlifting Championships for first time Page 3



Iran, Italy to enhance technological innovation exchange Page 7



Culture minister visits family of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh Page 8



LEGACY

Biden Iran policy may prove an exact replica of that of Trump

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Rouhani: JCPOA is not renegotiable

TEHRAN – In a press conference on Monday, President Hassan Rouhani said the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, “is not renegotiable”.
 Rouhani said Iran will not accept any pre-condition for the reactivation of the JCPOA.
 “Either all implement or do not implement the JCPOA. If all implement it we also implement it,” Rouhani said forcefully.
 Now that U.S. president-elect Joe Biden has signaled that he intends to rejoin the

nuclear deal certain officials, including German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, have tried to link the implementation of the nuclear agreement with Iran’s defensive missile program and its regional influence.
 The U.S., under Trump, unleashed the “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran in 2018, when it unilaterally left the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
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South Pars phase 11 drilling operations officially begin

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Monday ordered the official beginning of the drilling operations for the first well of Phase 11 of Iran’s giant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf waters, Shana reported.
 As reported, an offshore drilling rig, belonging to Mapna Drilling Company, was settled at the mentioned phase’s SPD-11B platform on November 6.

The mentioned drilling rig is going to dig 12 descriptive-development wells in the mentioned phase for extracting about one billion cubic feet of gas per day.
 In the first phase, by drilling and completing five wells and installing the SPD-11B platform, the initial production capacity of this phase will reach 500 million cubic feet (equivalent to 14 million cubic meters) per day.
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Leader’s “Enemiology” introduced at Baghdad fair

TEHRAN – An Arabic translation of “Enemiology”, a book written by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has been introduced at the Iraq International Book Fair in Baghdad.
 The book has been published by the Office for the Preservation and Publication of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei’s Works.
 Gholamreza Abazari, Iran’s Cultural Attaché in Baghdad, introduced the book at the fair.

Speaking at the ceremony, Abazari said that introducing the book near the martyrdom anniversary of Commander Qassem Soleimani is a good opportunity for the two nations of Iran and Iraq to get to know their common enemies.
 Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of IRGC, was assassinated during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.
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Indigenizing petchem catalysts to pave way for realizing surge in production

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI
 As the Iranian economy is moving away from reliance on external sources towards self-sufficiency, many of the country’s economic sectors including oil, gas and petrochemicals are taking serious measures for meeting their technological needs from domestic sources, and the petrochemical sector has been a pioneer in this regard.

As the second-biggest source of revenue for Iran, the petrochemical industry is one of the most important pillars of the country’s resilient economy and one of the main suppliers of foreign currency for the country so this industry’s self-sufficiency has been put on the agenda for more than two decades.

The development of the industry became even more significant since the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on the country’s oil industry back in November 2018.

In addition to various equipment and machinery, in its most recent efforts for complete independence, the Oil Ministry has initiated several comprehensive programs for the indigenization of the knowledge for producing major catalysts used in the petrochemical industries.

Catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction in the process of creating a petrochemical product; the catalyst itself is not consumed in the catalyzed reaction and can continue to act repeatedly. Because of this, only very small amounts of catalyst are required to alter the reaction rate in most cases.

Catalysts are very expensive substances and currently, the country is spending millions of dollars every year on importing such products into the country, producing such catalysts inside the country would make a huge difference in the profitability rate of the petrochemical plants.

Iranian petrochemical industry is currently using 40 different types of catalysts which cost the industry \$260 million annually.

In this regard, the country’s Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC) has played a very significant role in collaborating with domestic knowledge-based companies for working on innovative research projects for producing the mentioned catalysts.

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Archaeological evidence may reshape history of Yazd

TEHRAN – Recent archeological findings have shed new light on the history of Yazd, the UNESCO-registered oasis city in central Iran, proposing its antiquity may go down in time more than previously thought.

“Potteries have [recently] been found in Yazd which archaeologists believe belong to the Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE).... If their hypothesis is proven, the history of Yazd dates back to the pre-Islamic times,” Yazd province’s tourism chief announced on Sunday.

The potteries were found during restoration works on qanats (subterranean aqueducts)... Of course, it is also possible the pottery pieces had been brought there from another place but it is less likely due to their large volumes, Mostafa Fatemi explained.

“Our archaeologists attribute their history to the Parthian period, but this hypothesis must be proven. So we need a license to conduct a

comprehensive archaeological survey.”
 It is widely believed that Yazd had probably been an area of transit, rather than an area for the emergence of the prehistorical settlements due to its arid climate, and severe water scarcity, he explained.

The oasis city of Yazd is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains. Its historical structure enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Described as the “noble city of Yazd” by Marco Polo, Yazd is widely believed to date from the 5th century CE. It stands on a mostly barren sand-ridden plain about 4,000 feet (1,200 meters) above sea level. Since Sassanian times Yazd has been famous for beautiful silk textiles that were rivaled in later periods only by those of Kashan and Isfahan. The city is still a major center of silk weaving.

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U.S. protests: 33 arrested as protesters clash in Washington, DC

At least four people were stabbed Saturday night amid post-election protests in Washington, according to the DC Metropolitan Police Department’s public affairs office.

DC Fire and EMS transported at least nine from the protest area Saturday evening, including the four stabbing victims, who were said to be in critical condition, according to DC Mayor Muriel Bowser’s office; two police officers with non-life-threatening injuries and two people with minor injuries, the public information office said Saturday night. DC Fire and EMS later confirmed it assisted an additional assault victim at 11th Street and F Street NW, CNN reported.

In all, eight members of the Metropolitan Police Department suffered injuries in connection with the demonstrations, according to an update from the office Sunday.

At least 33 people were arrested, the office

said. Among them was a 29-year-old from Northwest Washington who was arrested on a charge of assault with a dangerous weapon.

Members of the Proud Boys yell in front of a hotel during a protest on December 12 in Washington, DC.

Large groups of protesters and counter protesters gathered earlier in the day outside the Supreme Court and at Freedom Plaza to protest the presidential election results. Most individuals were not wearing masks.

Six people were arrested for assault on police officers, 10 were arrested for simple assault, four for riotous acts, two for crossing a police line and one for possession of a prohibited weapon -- a Taser, the mayor’s office said.

Videos circulating on social media showed scuffles and small fights had broken out sporadically, but the large gatherings were mostly peaceful.

GreenMetric puts Iranian universities on world’s top 100 list

TEHRAN – The University of Zanjan and the University of Kashan are listed among the top 100 green institutes worldwide announced by the University of Indonesia Green Metric overall ranking 2020.

The UI GreenMetric World University Ranking is an initiative of Universitas Indonesia which is being launched in 2010. Current criteria being used to rank universities were not giving credit to those that were making efforts to reduce their

carbon footprint and thus help combat global climate change.

So, the world’s green universities are ranked according to six deciding factors contributing to sustainability including setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste and water management, transportation, and education worldwide.

Some 41 universities of Iran were listed among 1,000 green institutions in the ranking.

While Wageningen University and Research

of the Netherlands came in first with a total score of 9,150, the University of Zanjan ranked 54th with a total score of 7,925, and the University of Kashan was placed 97th in the list with a score of 7,550.

The University of Oxford and the University of Nottingham came in second and third respectively.

Among Asian countries, the Chinese Weifang Institute of Technology placed first, while the University of Zanjan came 15th.

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Russian expert says U.S. deserves no trust

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
 TEHRAN – Noting that Israel doesn’t trust even its closest ally, the United States, a Russian analyst says Washington is not trustworthy at international level.

Adlan Margoev, an analyst at the Institute for International Studies, tells the Tehran Times that “the U.S. deserves no trust for its stance on international agreements.”

Now that Trump has lost the race for the White House for a second time many hope that the incoming Biden administration would change policies and repair Washington’s reputation.

Trump withdrew the United States from a lot of international agreements such as the Paris Accord, JCPOA, and so on.

President-elect Biden has raised the motto of “America is back” which means he will try to reverse many of President Donald Trump’s unilateral policies, especially against Iran.

In this regard, Margoev, also an analyst at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations from MGIMO University, emphasizes that Democrats, although slam President Trump for pulling out of the nuclear deal, “they do not perceive the deal as a final solution.”

The following is the text of the interview:
How do you assess the U.S. administration’s behavior at international level, given that Washington has withdrawn from many international deals such as the JCPOA?

A: The U.S. deserves no trust for its stance on international agreements. Despite the fact that Democrats criticized President Trump for the withdrawal from the JCPOA, they do not perceive the deal as a final solution.
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Veteran photojournalist Sobhanqoli Kohanbani dies at 76

TEHRAN – Veteran photojournalist Sobhanqoli Kohanbani, who was mostly famous for his photo collections of the Islamic Revolution and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, died on Sunday at his home in Tehran. He was 76.

He was suffering from a kidney disease over the past few years, his son, Soheil, told the Persian service of IRNA.

Kohanbani began his career in photojournalism working for IRNA during the 1970s.

Rouhani: JCPOA is not renegotiable

European sensitivity over propagandist's execution is instance of interference in Iranian internal affairs, president says

1 → Rouhani also slammed certain European countries for making interventionist remarks on the recent execution of a counterrevolutionary figure in Iran, noting that their apparent sensitivity on this issue amounts to interference in Iran's internal affairs.

"We have death sentence in our law and some people are executed. Why they show so much sensitivity over one person? This does not have a good meaning and has an interventionist undertone," Rouhani told a press conference attended by domestic and foreign correspondents, according to Press TV.

In clear reference to statements made by France and Germany in condemnation of the death sentence of Rouhollah Zam, who ran a seditionist and counterrevolutionary website against the Iranian government and nation, Rouhani added, "They [Europeans] say this person has been working to serve our interests."



"When they are showing so much sensitivity ... it is not in their favor and is not in favor of anybody else," he said, adding, "Iran has a judicial power and its judiciary is independent from the executive.... This person has not been executed without a judicial verdict and it has been handed down by a court of law."

"Their problem is with the Judiciary's verdict. We will continue to act within framework of our laws and regulations and I don't think that this issue would harm Iran's relations with Europe," Rouhani added.

Iran on Sunday summoned French and German ambassadors to Tehran to protest statements made by their respective countries on the execution of Zam.

Zam was hanged on Saturday after the Supreme Court affirmed his conviction on the basis of spreading "corruption on earth" among other charges, which bought him a death sentence by the Islamic Revolution Court back in June.

He was also convicted of committing offenses against the country's internal and external security, spreading lies, abetting economic disruption, spying for the intelligence services of France and one of the regional states, cooperating with the hostile U.S. government against the Islamic Republic, participating in propaganda activities against the Islamic establishment on behalf of counterrevolutionary groups, fueling violence during the 2017 riots, insulting the sanctities of Islam and acquiring illegitimate wealth.

Zam also provoked the people to resort to violence in the riots. **"Trump's economic war against Iran has failed"** Rouhani also said the economic war waged by the administration of the outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump against the Islamic Republic through the imposition of the toughest sanctions has been a total failure.

"One of the goals that the [Iranian] administration pursues is to defeat sanctions ... because Trump's economic war has failed and the entire world has owned up to this [fact]," Rouhani said.

Following its much-criticized exit, Washington has been attempting to prevent the remaining signatories from abiding by their commitments in order to kill the historic agreement, which is widely viewed as a the most important diplomatic achievement of the 21st century.

Following its withdrawal, Washington targeted the Iranian nation with the "toughest ever" economic sanctions in order to bring it to its knees, but the country's economy keeps humming and is getting back on its feet.

"The whole world is putting pressure on the United States to return to the JCPOA, so that the deal could be activated again," the president said, adding, "One of the main services of the 12th [Iranian] administration ... was that it used all its power to prevent destruction of the JCPOA."

"Trump did his best to destroy the JCPOA and some people wanted to do this inside the country as well, but we sought to keep the JCPOA alive," Rouhani asserted.

He added that the main reason behind the failure of Trump in its drive against Iran was coordination and cooperation between Iran and other countries, especially the remaining signatories to the JCPOA, within the international bodies, which caused every plan forwarded by Trump to those organizations to run aground.

He noted that the JCPOA was not a "flawless" agreement and has some problems, but "it is also an unprecedented deal in Iran and the region."

The president pointed to years of negotiations between Tehran and the P5+1 group of countries, which led to the conclusion of the landmark nuclear agreement, saying that he knew no country, which had held talks with six countries and managed to succeed.

"Although the JCPOA was hobbled [after U.S. withdrawal from the deal], it brought disgrace upon the U.S. and Trump three times at the United Nations," he said.

Rouhani says would not allow anybody to delay termination of sanctions

Rouhani emphasized that his administration would not allow certain individuals within the country to delay the termination of sanctions and would resist against them

"Sanctions should be terminated and this is the right of the [Iranian] people," he asserted.

"The U.S. must return to its previous obligations [under the JCPOA] and as we have previously announced, if they return to all their obligations, we will also resume compliance with our commitments," the Iranian chief executive pointed out.

In response to the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA, Tehran has so far rowed back on its nuclear commitments five times in compliance with Articles 26 and 36 of the nuclear deal, but stressed that its retaliatory measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the mutual trade from the U.S. sanctions.

Araghchi meets Oman FM, lauds Muscat's balanced approach

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi held talks on Monday morning with Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyed Badr Al Busaidi in Muscat and praised Oman's balanced approach toward regional and international issues.

Araghchi visited Muscat to participate in the seventh session of Iran-Oman strategic consultation committee, the Iranian embassy in Muscat said in a press release.

Pointing to the importance of continued consultations between the officials of the two countries and the high status of Oman in Iran's foreign policy, Araghchi said the holding of the committee meeting at the current time is of high importance.

Oman's foreign minister also said the two countries have ample potential to develop ties, especially in areas of economy and trade.

Al Busaidi also expressed hope that in view of the new international conditions a ground will be created for better understanding and dialogue between regional countries over pressing issues in the region.

Oman and Iran share close diplomatic, economic, and military ties. The sultanate of Oman acted as an intermediary between Tehran and Washington during the Barack Obama administration.

Now that Obama's vice president Joe Bid-



en is to take the helm at the White House it is assumed that the role of Oman comes to light again.

As Oman and Iran share sovereignty of the Strait of Hormuz, Muscat has been pragmatic about cooperating closely with Iran on a host of regional issues, according to the Atlantic Council.

Moreover, a key pillar of Oman's foreign

policy has been to balance its Arab neighbors and Western allies on one side and Iran on the other.

While some officials in some of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council states propagate Iranophobia, the concern in Muscat pertains to Saudi Arabia's quest for hegemony in the greater Arabian Peninsula. Thus, a growing partnership with Iran has enabled Oman to

counter-balance the Saudi kingdom, the PGCC's powerhouse, which has not always respected the sovereignty of the Council's smaller states.

In his first remarks since ascending to power this month, the Sultanate's new head-of-state affirmed that post-Qaboos Oman would continue adhering to the foreign policy principles that Muscat has embraced since 1970. "We will follow the same line as the late sultan, and the principles that he asserted for the foreign policy of our country, of peaceful coexistence among nations and people, and good neighborly behavior of non-interference in the affairs of others." Like his predecessor, Sultan Haitham is committed to promoting the peaceful coexistence and economic integration of all Persian Gulf states, including Iran.

Since Sultan Haitham ascended to power in Oman, the Iranian leadership has taken significant steps to demonstrate Tehran's commitment to supporting him and preserving the Islamic Republic's close relationship with Muscat. Two days after Oman's new leader took the throne, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent him a congratulatory message which stressed the "mutual trust" between Muscat and Tehran. Rouhani said, "I hope that the bilateral relations during the era of your leadership would further grow in all fields with wisdom and discernment."

Scientific independence is source of power: IRGC chief

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — While most politicians and analysts consider politics, economy, or culture as the main source of independence for nations, "scientific independence is a source of power for a nation," IRGC Commander Hossein Salami said on Monday.

Talking in a ceremony at Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, the major general said a country cannot be considered important how much big it's geographical size would be because economic resources are limited but a country can create new potential through science.

"A country will become great if it develops scientifically," the senior commander remarked.

He warned what makes Iran vulnerable to foreigners is "dependence".

"We have enemies who are making strenuous efforts to keep us 'small and underdeveloped,' because a country



that remains undeveloped will be weakened and will be forced to surrender. But if a country gets rid of the sci-

entific domination of foreigners and produces its basic needs it will remain alive and prosperous even if it comes under global boycott," the IRGC chief commented.

He added, "Today the enemies have slapped cruel sanctions on us and even do not give medicine to us and assassinate our scientists."

The general was openly referring to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh outside Tehran on November 27, a scientist who played a key role in manufacturing test kits for the Coronavirus.

When a person active in science is assassinated it means that the enemy "has targeted our scientific development and power and the place that the enemy focuses on that is our strong point."

The senior commander said the enemy is now using medicine, food, water, and treatment as a pressure tool against Iran.

Ex-diplomat suggests Iran should diversify its relations

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — A former diplomat believes that Iran should diversify its relations with the outside world.

"Iran should have a 'diverse basket of relations' with different countries," Ghassem Moheb-Ali tells IRNA in an interview published on Monday.

He points to developments in the West Asia region and the imminent transition of power from the Republicans to the Democrats in the U.S., saying active regional players in West Asia (Middle East) and extra regional powers, such as the U.S., Russia, China and European countries, are seeking to play their role in the region.

With regard to developments in the U.S. and a possible change in Washington's policy in West Asia, these players are seeking to "promote" their status or lessen "likely losses or costs," says Moheb-Ali, the former Iranian Foreign Ministry director general for West Asia affairs.

Arab-Israeli coalition against Iran The former diplomat says certain governments such as Saudi Arabia, Benjamin Netanyahu's government in Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are worried about the incoming Joe Biden administration and they think that Biden will return to the JCPOA (the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal) or Iran and the U.S. will reach a new agreement and this has caused Donald Trump's allies in the region to "get closer to each other".

"These countries have formed a coalition that its purpose is to discourage the Biden administration to return to the JCPOA, or if it intends to return to the JCPOA or reach a new agreement, it would meet their demands or interests and consider their views."

Biden served as vice president in the Barack Obama administration.

The former Foreign Ministry official describes the situation in the West Asia region

dynamic and says, "The Zionist regime, Saudi Arabia and certain elements of the Trump administration such as Pompeo like to create a new crisis or clash in the Middle East so that the next American government would not be able to fully materialize its policies or spend a lot of its time and energy for resolving it."

Arab states highly skeptical of Biden administration

Arab countries are highly pessimistic about the Biden administration and are fearful of his possible policies as the president-elect has announced to change foreign policy toward these countries and that his government will not back the Saudi-led war on Yemen and will stop logistical and intelligence support for the coalition, the former diplomat argues.

The Saudi-led war on Yemen which started in March 2015 has created the worst humanitarian disaster in the modern history. It has pushed more than 10 million people to the verge of starvation and displaced millions.

Moheb-Ali says the Democrats have announced that they will not give "carte blanche" to countries such as Saudi Arabia and that Riyadh will not be able to do whatever it wished during the Trump era.

"Therefore the U.S. will not sell arms to Saudi Arabia like the past and will put observation of human rights as main criterion in United States' relations with other countries."

Contrary to Moheb-Ali's argument, an Assistant professor from Coastal Carolina University (CCU), rules out any major change in U.S. military support for Saudi Arabia under Biden's presidency as the kingdom has been a close U.S. ally for several decades.

"Saudi Arabia has been a close ally for several decades, so I would not expect any major changes in the U.S. position," Christopher J. Ferrero tells the Tehran Times.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said on December 5 a resolution to a bitter dispute with Qatar seemed "within reach" after Ku-

wait announced progress towards ending a row that Washington says hampers a united Persian Gulf front against Iran.

The United States and Kuwait have worked to end the dispute, during which Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have imposed a diplomatic, trade and travel embargo on Qatar since mid-2017.

U.S. President Donald Trump's senior adviser Jared Kushner held talks in Doha in early December following a visit to Saudi Arabia.

"We have made significant progress in the last few days thanks to the continuing efforts of Kuwait but also thanks to strong support from President Trump," Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud told a Rome conference via videolink, according to France 24.

Moheb-Ali says the move to engage Qatar shows that the Saudi kingdom wants to just focus on certain issues in order to prevent volatility in its foreign policy.

The former diplomat says in his second term as president, Barack Obama did not have a good relationship with certain Persian Gulf Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia and "these countries think that the administration of Biden will make a return to the policies of those days."

"The littoral Persian Gulf Arab countries think that the administration of Biden will return to supporting civil movements. This is the same policy that the administration of Obama adopted during the Arab Spring while the relationship between the Trump government with these countries was based on signing economic deals."

He adds certain PGCC states do not like Biden to rejoin the JCPOA and that is why they are trying to "reduce their differences" and deal with Iran and the U.S. with a "united position".

Erdogan filled with illusion since the Arab spring



Asked about Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's approach toward developments in the region, Moheb-Ali says Erdogan's mind was filled with an illusion which dated back to about 100 years ago, an indirect reference to the Ottoman Empire.

With such an illusion the Erdogan government founded its policies based on Muslim Brotherhood's Islamism and pan-Turkism which their merger has created a kind of "ambition" in Ankara.

The former Foreign Ministry director general for West Asia affairs says it is based on such an ambition that Turkey has been interfering in Libya, Egypt, and Syria and even playing a role in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue to find a foothold for itself and realize "its old wish" to extend Turkey's influence that would even extend to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

On the effects of Trump's foreign policy on West Asia, he said the Trump administration weakened NATO and by following unilateralist approach it undermined multilateralism and in such a situation Turkey as a NATO member found an opportunity to develop its relations with Russia and also tried to extend its influence in West Asia.

Judiciary: U.S. holding 15 Iranians hostage

The United States is holding as many as 15 Iranians hostage under the pretext of bypassing American sanctions against the Islamic Republic, an official at Iran's Judiciary says.

Ali Baqeri, the Judiciary's deputy for political affairs who also heads the government branch's High Council for Human Rights, made the remarks to Iran's Jam-e Jam newspaper in an interview published on Monday.

"The Americans take Iranians hostage under hollow pretexts, seeking to exchange them with criminals of American nationality, who

are staying in Iranian prisons," he said. "This is outright hostage-taking," the official added.

He noted that the prisoners are among roughly 3,500 Iranians who were being held in prisons abroad, adding that the Islamic Republic was "seriously pursuing" their cases.

Baqeri also addressed the issue of the country's legal efforts aimed at consigning to justice those behind the assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

General Soleimani was assassinated in

a U.S. drone strike targeting his convoy in Baghdad in early January as he was on an official visit to the Iraqi capital.

Iran has issued arrest warrants against President Donald Trump, on whose direct orders the assassination took place, and other American officials behind the killing.

The Judiciary has been tasked with following up the prosecution of the perpetrators through domestic and international channels.

Baqeri said Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi has formed a panel to pursue the case.

According to the official, the Islamic Revolution Court is responsible for addressing international cases has also granted legal representation rights to six countries that have somehow been involved in the assassination.

These countries are, therefore, required to provide necessary cooperation with Iran in order to both alleviate ambiguities surrounding the case and gather further evidence related to the assassination, he noted.

(Source: Press TV)

DECEMBER 15, 2020

POLITICAL TEHRAN — As Joe Biden's foreign policy team mull over their options on the Iran nuclear deal, experts and Iranian officials warn that any attempt to use Donald Trump's sanctions as leverage or delay the lifting of these sanctions will only complicate the situation around the 2015 nuclear deal.

During his election campaign, U.S. President-elect Joe Biden professed that he will rejoin the Iran nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — in case he wins the United States presidential election in early November. He won the election but he largely refrained from drawing up his blueprint for rejoining the nuclear deal. Instead, he vaguely said that he still believes that the White House should return to the JCPOA, but he also said that this return would be hard, remarks that have been widely interpreted as a tactic to back down on his professed promise to rejoin the Iran deal.

In a September op-ed for CNN, Biden wrote, "I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern."

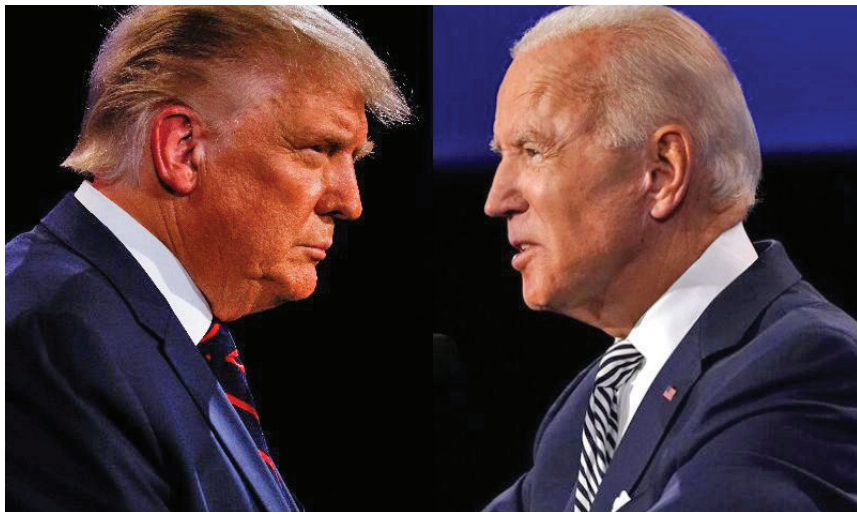
In early December, nearly a month after the U.S. election, Biden commented on his Iran policy for the first time after the election, saying that he still stands by his views on the nuclear deal that were articulated in the mid-September op-ed.

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

Asked whether he still stands by his views on the deal that he expressed in the op-ed for CNN, Biden answered, "It's going to be hard, but yeah."

Biden reiterated this position in a recent interview with CNN in which he said that he thinks he will have "very difficult" issues dealing with Iran.

"He [Trump] has pulled out to get something tougher, and what have they done? They've increased the ability for them to have nuclear material. They're moving closer to the ability to be able to have enough material for a nuclear weapon. And there's the missile issues," Biden said, adding, "All those things, I think, are going to be very difficult. But I know one thing: We cannot do this alone. And that's why we have to be part of a larger group, dealing not only



Legacy

Biden Iran policy may prove an exact replica of that of Trump

with Iran, but with Russia, with China and a whole range of other issues."

These remarks fueled speculation that Biden might renege on his campaign promise of rejoining the JCPOA or seek to use Trump's sanctions on Iran as leverage to secure a longer and better deal with Iran, the very same deal that Trump failed to reach.

Press reports suggest that Biden may have already reneged on his professed promise. Israeli newspaper Israel Hayom reported on Monday that several advisers to the future U.S. president have been pushing for a new approach that favors embracing some of President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" policy components.

According to the newspaper, among some of Biden's advisers, there is a belief that adopting a conciliatory tone toward Iran would be counterproductive. Citing officials in Biden's orbit, it added that it would be a mistake to squander the gains of the outgoing administration by turning back the clock in one fell swoop and returning to the deal along the terms set by the official document.

"Instead, they call for using the tough U.S. sanctions that have been imposed over the past several years as leverage against Iran

so that it agrees to amend the nuclear deal," Israel Yayom claimed.

But this strategy was strongly contested by experts, who say that using the Trump sanctions as leverage won't work with Iran.

"Punishing the target country regardless of its behavior does not create leverage; it destroys it. That's what the Trump administration has done by reneging on its obligations under the JCPOA, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, even though Iran was fully complying with its own obligations," wrote Paul Pillar, a former U.S. intelligence officer, in an essay published by Responsible Statecraft.

He added, "The current suggestion about the Biden administration trying to exploit the Trump-imposed sanctions is merely the latest version of a notion heard in this country throughout the four-decade history of the Islamic Republic of Iran — that by exerting pressure just a little longer, the Iranian rulers will cry uncle over whatever issue we want them to cry uncle about. That notion has not worked for the last four decades. It clearly has not worked over the last four years. There is no reason to expect it to work over the next four."

According to Pillar, some American voices are pushing the Biden administration into taking advantage of the Trump sanctions by using them as leverage to somehow squeeze out of Tehran an agreement more favorable to the United States than the JCPOA.

Biden and his foreign policy team seem to be playing into the hands of these voices by refusing to articulate their Iran policy and announce the U.S. return to the JCPOA. While Iran has made it clear that the U.S. return to its commitments under the JCPOA does not need any new negotiations and thus easy, Biden has been suggesting that the U.S. rejoining the Iran deal would be hard, a claim that raises serious questions about Biden's strategy toward Iran. Will Biden use Trump's legacy of sanctions and coercion to extract new concessions from Iran? Will Biden seek to delay the lifting of sanctions in an attempt to wait until Iran blinks first?

These questions are particularly important given Biden's silence on the JCPOA. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said in recent days that the U.S. return to the deal does not take any time and it can be done easily and without new negotiations.

"The return to the JCPOA does not need any time and negotiations, but will. That illiterate businessman [Trump] scribbled a paper and announced his withdrawal from the nuclear deal. The next one [Biden] can take a paper to sign so as to return. It only needs a signature," Rouhani said in a cabinet session last week.

However, it seems the Biden team does not see things that way, a move that prompted President Rouhani to warn against setting preconditions for U.S. return to the JCPOA. Speaking in a press conference on Monday, Rouhani said Iran has no precondition for the U.S. return to the JCPOA and Iran will also accept no preconditions. He also said that other issues such as Iran's missile program and its influence in the region are irrelevant to the JCPOA.

The Iranian president also pointed to the speculation that Biden may continue Trump's legacy by not lifting sanctions quickly.

"The government will not allow some people to want to delay the end of the sanctions. Some people want to delay the end of the sanctions. We will not agree to this even for an hour and a minute and we will stand against them. Sanctions must be broken, this is the right of the people. America must return to its previous commitments, and we have said many times that if everyone returns to their full commitments, we will return to our full commitments," the president noted, according to state news agency IRNA.

Parliament speaker congratulates Venezuelan counterpart on election

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's Parliament Speaker — Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has congratulated the newly-elected President of the National Assembly of Venezuela Diosdado Cabello on his parliamentary success.

In a message to Cabello, Ghalibaf said, "I would like to sincerely express my best congratulations on the occasion of successfully holding the parliamentary election of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela."

The speaker said the strategic policy of Iran and Venezuela is to protect independence and counter the domineering measures of the United States and its cruel sanctions. He underlined the important role of parliamentary ties in boosting the friendly relations between Tehran and Caracas.

Ghalibaf also expressed hope that bilateral cooperation in different fields would be expanded more than ever by using parliamentary diplomacy and the potential capabilities of the two countries.

Iran-Venezuela relations have deepened in recent months. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has paid a visit to the Latin American country. In early November, the chief Iranian diplomat began a regional tour that included three Latin American countries. In Venezuela, Zarif met with President Nicholas Maduro, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, and Vice President Delcy Rodríguez.

During and after the visit, top Venezuelan officials hailed the strategic relations between Iran and Venezuela.

"Today 5 November, I had the pleasure of receiving the visit of the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Javad Zarif. A visit that underlines the unwavering spirit of the strategic relations of cooperation and solidarity between Iran and Venezuela," the Venezuelan president said in a tweet after meeting Zarif.

In late November, the Venezuelan foreign minister said that his country is going to boost the strategic relations with Iran.

"Considering the dimensions of the two countries' development, Iran and Venezuela are two powers that, despite this geographical distance, have more in common than can be imagined," Arreaza told Iran's state news agency IRNA.

Referring to Zarif's recent tour to Caracas and also the export of Iranian oil to Venezuela, the top Venezuelan diplomat said despite U.S. cruel sanctions and the limitations caused by COVID-19 in the world, exchange of political delegations, trade interactions, and strategic cooperation between two countries have not been affected.

Arreaza added, "I believe that Iran and Venezuela have become a clear example of how we can unite despite all the problems and aggression, and this is what has led to the development of our bilateral relations in recent years and will grow much more."

According to the chief Venezuelan diplomat, the Venezuelan and Iranian delegations are meeting uninterrupted, even in the difficult circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic in order to increase cooperation and focus on priority areas.

On the other hand, Iran hailed Venezuela as a partner of Iran.

"Cuba and Venezuela are among the political partners of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Latin American region, which have long had extensive political cooperation in bilateral, regional and international sectors," said Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, adding, "Venezuela is one of our country's main destinations for the export of technical and engineering services, and the Iranian private sector has implemented or is implementing various projects in this country."

Bolivia plans to reopen embassy in Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Bolivia's top diplomat — said that his country is seeking to reopen the Bolivian embassy in Tehran to rebuild the relationship with Iran.

Bolivia Foreign Minister Rogelio Mayta has said that Bolivia today wants to rebuild the relationship frozen by the de facto government of Jeanine Añez with Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Nicaragua and Iran, Prensa Latina reported on Sunday.

In a statement on Sunday, Mayta affirmed that the Bolivian state must have relations with all the countries within the framework of respect for sovereignty, and pointed out that the Venezuela resumption is in progress.

"We must advance unity of the region and that is why we must talk with all nations," the Bolivian foreign minister said while regretting the decisions taken by the Executive headed by Jeanine Añez.

He also said that Bolivia is going to resume political relations and appoint Bolivian ambassadors in those nations.

Mayta added that in the case of Cuba "we will also work to recover agreements such as the export of lumber and other products."

The foreign minister underlined that there are many agreements with the Caribbean Island that must be resumed. He also addressed Europe, where he made particular emphasis in the case of Russia, a nation with which there is an "excellent level of dialogue, understanding and cooperation."

Regarding the relationship with Iran, he said that they will seek to achieve the reopening of the Bolivian embassy in the Islamic Republic, which is one of the most critical against the foreign policy of the U.S. administration.

Prensa Latina also said that Mayta be-

lieves that the former officials, whom he called "coup plotters," followed political instructions from the United States.

Bolivia's new president, Luis Arce, has made good on his pledge to restore relations with Iran and Venezuela a few days after he assumed office. During a formal ceremony in La Paz in November, President Arce received the credentials of the new ambassadors of Iran and Venezuela, reestablishing diplomatic relations damaged by the previous de-facto government led by interim president Jeanine Añez, according to a statement issued by Bolivia's government.

Writing on Twitter, Arce said he was restoring bilateral relations with Venezuela "to strengthen strategic ties for the good of our peoples." He said the same was being done with Iran and that "they are always welcome in Bolivia. We will continue to strengthen common projects."

The restoration of diplomatic ties between Tehran and La Paz came two days after Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif attended Arce's swearing-in ceremony as part of a tour of several Latin American nations that included Venezuela and Cuba.

The chief Iranian diplomat visited Bolivia in early November and was received by the speaker of the Bolivian parliament. He met with Luis Arce and later participated in his swearing-in ceremony.

Following his victory in Bolivia's presidential election, Arce vowed to re-establish all relations.

"We are going to re-establish all relations. This government has acted very ideologically, depriving the Bolivian people of access to Cuban medicine, Russian medicine, and advances in China. For a purely ideological issue, it has exposed the population in a way unnecessary and harmful," Arce said.

Leader agrees with president's request to extend discussion on FATF

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has given the nod to a request by President Hassan Rouhani to extend the time of discussing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) conventions.

Two of FATF conventions — the Palermo and Terrorist Financing Conventions — have not been ratified yet, and were put on the shelf for some time.

But the government of Rouhani seems to be once again pushing for enacting them. Last week, Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of the Expediency Council, said



that the Rouhani cabinet is working to return the FATF conventions to the Council. Rezaee also said that the Rouhani cabinet has sent a letter to the Leader in this regard.

On Monday, Laya Joneydi, the vice president for legal affairs, confirmed that the cabinet sent a letter to the Leader, saying Ayatollah Khamenei has given the Council the green light to discuss the FATF conventions.

According to Joneydi, the Rouhani government has presented "legal solutions" to pave the way for ratifying the FATF Conventions.

SPORTS

Iranian girls in World Weightlifting Championships for first time

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iran Weightlifting Federation will send junior girls to the 2021 IWF Junior World Championships for the first time.

Iran Weightlifting Federation vice-president Maryam Monazami said that the girls are training with strict health protocol.

"We're going to send our girls to the prestigious event for the first time. We are sure they can win medal in the competition," Monazami said.

The 2021 IWF Junior World Championships will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from March 5 to 18.

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

Katerina Hatzidaki becomes the first foreign coach in Iran

SPORTS TEHRAN — Greek coach Katerina Hatzidaki has reportedly reached an agreement with Mahram basketball women club.

She has most recently worked at Greek team Eleftheria Moschatou but will travel to Tehran to work with Mahram, sportime.gr reported.

Hatzidaki will join the Mahram coaching staff and also work in the club's academy.

The Greek coach worked five years in Turkey as Hatay coach and helped them win two Super Cups and reached the semifinals of the Eurocup twice with the team.

Mahram and Narsina are favorites to win Iran's women league in the current season.

Iran's Haratian proud of appointing ACL medical officer

SPORTS TEHRAN — Dr. Zohre Haratian, AFC and FIFA medical and doping control officer, who has been in Qatar since the beginning of the AFC Champions League East Zone competitions, is proud of being appointed as the first women Medical Officer.

Dr. Haratian, along with Dr. Bahar Hassanmirzaei from Iran, Dr. Janis Ann Figueroa Espino-De Vera from the Philippines, and Dr. Liesel Geertsema from New Zealand, made history by becoming the first women Medical Officers to be appointed in an AFC men's club competition.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Haratian talked about her new experience.

"I've worked as the FIFA doping control officer since 2011 and have been in six different FIFA World Cup competitions including 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018 editions of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup, and also in the qualifying round of the 2018 FIFA World Cup that I was the FIFA control doping officer in the match between Iran and China at Azadi Stadium. So, I've already had the experience of working in men's events held by FIFA. But the AFC had never appointed women as medical officers in men's competitions, and it was the first time that it happened. Due to my experience working in the forefront battling against the COVID-19 and my other medical backgrounds, I was invited to these competitions," Haratian said.

Haratian is also head of Iran football Medical Assessment and Rehabilitation Center (IFMARC), approved by FIFA as FIFA Medical Center of excellence since 2015.

"Given the fact that IFMARC controls and oversees all the medical issues of Iran Professional League (IPL), the job is so challenging, and the decisions are so important. For someone like me, who works with a big and challenging organization such as the men's football league, doing international duties is not that much difficult. Obviously, the experiences you gain in league competitions will help you to keep yourself up to date to handle domestic and international duties in the best way possible," she explained.

Regarding Qatar's health and safety procedures, Dr. Haratian said: "The level of screening and safety protocols conducted by Qatari officials are great and perfect. During the past month that I've been in Doha, we were never allowed to step out of our hotel, and we can just go to the venues and come back to the designated hotel. Besides, multiple tests are conducted once every three or four days, begun before the teams' arrival and continued during their presence in competitions," Haratian went on to say.

When asked about the safety and health points that can be used in the Iranian domestic competitions, she said, "It's undeniable that we have learned lots of valuable lessons from the high standards of safety and health set in the AFC Champions League matches. However, due to the fact that we restarted the previous season of IPL and finished it, and then started the new season during the coronavirus pandemic, I can proudly say that we have done an excellent and acceptable job considering the difficult condition of the league matches. You should consider that the AFC Champions League matches are held in a centralized format, but the Iran league games are in home and away format."

"I'm thrilled that an Iranian woman is among the first lady doctors who participate in a men's tournament in Asia. I hope that it paves the way for other Iranian women who are experts in sports medicine issues. I'll do my best to be a good representative for my country and make it possible for other women to take another step forward in football. I think our women should boost their self-confidence to be more active in this field and to show their abilities," Haratian concluded.

Foolad Sirjan finish top at Iran volleyball league's first half of season

SPORTS TEHRAN — Foolad Sirjan defeated Khatam Ardakan 3-1 (25-23, 25-23, 19-25, 25-23) on Monday to finish as the top team in Iran Volleyball Super League at the first half of the season.

Foolad Sirjan, headed by Mohammadreza Tondraevan, sit top of the table with 33 points, one point ahead of Urmia Shahrdari.

In the other matches, Urmia Shahrdari eased past Qazvin Shahrdari 3-0 (25-21, 25-19, 25-19), Sepahan cruised past Housan Ramsar 3-0 (25-19, 25-20, 25-20), Paykan Tehran swept past Rahyab Melal 3-0 (25-11, 25-19, 25-18), Labaniyat Haraz defeated Shahdab Yazd 3-0 (25-21, 26-24, 25-18) and Shahrdari Gonbad beat Urmia Azar Battery 3-0 (25-21, 25-18, 26-24).

The second half of the season phase was scheduled to be held in five weeks but the exact time of the matches will be announced after a meeting with the clubs' representatives.

At the end of the preliminary round, eight teams will qualify for the final round. In this stage, the first team will take on the eighth-placed side, the second team play seventh-placed, the third-placed meet sixth-placed and the fourth-placed team take on the side lying fifth, Iranvolleyball.com reported.

A total of 14 teams are participating in the 31st edition of Iran volleyball league.

Aluminum ingot production rises over 52%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Production of the aluminum ingot in Iran rose 52.2 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year.

The data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) indicate that the country's aluminum ingot output stood at 271,300 tons during the eight-month period of this year.



Production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase 63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Iran's major aluminum producers produced 275,716 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The country's aluminum ingot production in the past year fell eight percent in comparison to the figure for its preceding year.

The data show that among the country's top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance registering a four-percent rise during the mentioned period.

On April 23, during the inauguration ceremony of Iran's biggest aluminum production complex (in the central Fars province), the former industry minister said the country's aluminum production is expected to be doubled with that unit going operational.

The official put the value of the Iranian mining industry's production at about \$22 billion, saying that the country is relatively self-sufficient in minerals and a great deal is also exported every year.

He went on underlying the country's capacities in the sector, saying that Iran is ranked 18th among the world's top aluminum producers, and with this new plant going operational the country will climb four places to stand at 14th place.

Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Iran-Europe business forum postponed

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran-Europe business forum, which was due to be held through webinar during December 14-16, is postponed.

Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) had been organizing the forum in collaboration with the European Union (EU).



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."

TEDPIX loses 31,000 points on Monday

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 31,652 points to 1.484 million on Monday.

Over 14,822 billion securities worth 76.835 trillion rials (about \$1.829 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index fell 25,427 points, and the second market's index dropped 55,836 points.

The index had gained 36,000 points, or two percent, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on December 11).

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



After a period of correction, the index has been recently climbing. A market analyst told IRNA on December 2 that the index is expected to resume its upward trend and reach 1.6 million points by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (December 20).

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

South Pars phase 11 drilling operations officially begin

1 → In the first phase, by drilling and completing five wells and installing the SPD-11B platform, the initial production capacity of this phase will reach 500 million cubic feet (equivalent to 14 million cubic meters) per day.

Later on, by drilling and completing seven other wells, parallel with the initial production, the total rich gas recovery from the platform will increase to one billion cubic feet (equivalent to 28 million cubic meters) per day.

Engineering and technical monitoring and supervision of all the mentioned operations will be carried out by Iranian experts and engineers.

■ Iran won't need permission to raise oil output

Speaking in a ceremony held for the beginning of the drilling operations in South

Pars Phase 11, Zanganeh emphasized that Iran is able to export 2.3 million barrels of oil on a daily basis, saying: "Increasing oil production is Iran's right and we don't need anyone's permission to do so."

"If sanctions are removed and the necessary resources are provided to rehabilitate some of our older wells whose production has been reduced, the exports of 2.3 million barrels of oil per day can be achieved," he said.

Development of the South Pars phase 11 was officially started in May after several years of hiatus due to various financial and technical issues.

In November 2016, Iran signed a \$4.8 billion agreement with a consortium including France's Total, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Petropars, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), on development of



Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh speaks in a ceremony held for the beginning of the drilling operations in South Pars Phase 11.

phase 11, however Total and CNPCI pulled out of the project in 2019 due to the U.S. sanctions.

Currently, Petropars is developing the phase 11 project after its partners left the contract.

The South Pars phase 11 project will have a production capacity of 2 billion cubic feet per day or 370 000 barrels of oil equivalent per day. The produced gas will be fed into

Iran's gas network.

South Pars is the world's largest gas field, covering an area of 3,700 square kilometers of Iran's territorial waters.

The giant field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.

Indigenizing petchem catalysts to pave way for realizing surge in production

1 → The PRTC's Managing Director Ali Pajouhan announced on Monday that over 70 percent of the catalysts needed in the country's petrochemical industries are going to be indigenized by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 20, 2022).

Stating that his company has awarded mass production licenses to six research projects for producing innovative products in this industry, Pajouhan noted that several new contracts for implementing such research projects are also going through final processes to be signed with various domestic knowledge-based companies.

He mentioned the license for a heavy polyethylene production line in Tabriz Petrochemical Complex with a capacity of 310,000 tons per year as one of the mentioned projects and said this production line will also include a catalyst production unit.

Emphasizing that by granting domestic licenses, in addition to saving the costs of getting the licenses from abroad, all engineering stages will also be carried out inside the country, he added: "One of the most important advantages is to use the potential of domestic companies and to prevent the outflow of capital in this field."



"Because when a license is issued by a foreign company, the company urges the customer to buy some equipment exclusively, but when the license is issued inside the country, in addition to reducing costs, more equipment is also indigenized because it is not necessary to buy equipment from the companies suggested by the licensor."

Back in March, Pajouhan had said that the National Pet-

rochemical Company (NPC), in collaboration with domestic companies, is planning to indigenize the knowledge for producing nine major catalysts used in the petrochemical industries within the next two years.

"Currently, the knowledge for producing 16 of the mentioned 40 types has been indigenized which would save the country \$105 million every year." The official said, adding, "We plan to produce over \$100m worth of petrochemical catalysts annually, by the end of the Iranian calendar year of 1400."

Mass production of petrochemical catalysts would also mean that Iran could become an exporter of such products and besides the significant increase in the revenues from the industry, further cement its role as one of the world's and region's major petrochemical producers.

With abundant hydrocarbon reserves and new private sector investments, Iran is working hard to broaden the scope of its petrochemical industry, and indigenizing the catalysts needed in this industry would be a huge step toward the realization of the motto of the current Iranian calendar year which is named the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Over 4m tons of basic goods stored at Iranian ports

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Secretary of the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's Market Regulation Headquarters said over seven million tons of basic goods are already stored at the country's ports and loaded on vessels waiting to be unloaded.

Speaking in a meeting of the mentioned headquarters on Monday, Abbas Ghobadi said over \$20 billion has been paid by the government to the country's importers of which \$4.2 billion was for basic goods.

Referring to the recent turmoil in the country's markets the official said: "The

reports of today's meeting show that the approved price of vegetable oil is constantly being assessed in stores and the price of chicken is close to the approved price. Reports provided by the Agriculture Ministry have also raised hopes that chicken and egg prices will reach the approved price in the coming days."

Ghobadi went on to say that since the beginning of this Iranian calendar year (March 20), about 14 million tons of basic goods, including 25 items of essential commodities, have been imported into the country, of which seven million tons have



been cleared in the current quarter of the year (September 22- December 20).

Back in October, the Central Bank of

Iran (CBI) reported that the bank supplied \$6.124 billion for importing basic commodities and medicine in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21).

Based on CBI data, the bank will supply a total of \$8 billion for the imports of basic goods in the current Iranian calendar year, of which \$5.5 billion is going to be allocated for major consumable goods like corn, oilseeds, crude oil, meal, barley and wheat, over \$1.5 billion will be supplied for the imports of medicine, and about \$1 billion is going to go to the imports of medical equipment.

"Preparing 7th National Development Plan should be based on a regional view"

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Representatives of the Iranian private sector, in a meeting of the heads of the country's chambers of commerce, called on the government to prepare the Seventh National Development Plan with a regional viewpoint.

The meeting of the Council of Heads of Chambers was held in the presence of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) board members as well as the secretary generals and heads of provincial chambers of commerce, ICCIMA portal reported.

The attendees of this meeting discussed the country's current economic issues and problems regarding the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2021), as well as the issuance of commercial ID cards along with the Seventh National Development Plan.

In the meeting, the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, emphasized that the Seventh National Development Plan should provide the basis for the development of the



country's economy, saying: "The ICCIMA Research Center is reviewing this plan in collaboration with the country's economic experts and the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) to make specific proposals for a better preparation of

the mentioned plan."

"What we have seen over the years in terms of development plans has been the preparation of a single prescription for all provinces. While we believe that in formulating the seventh development plan, the view of planners should be regional," Shafeie stressed.

The ICCIMA head further explained: "Each province is different in terms of natural resources, and for this reason, first provincial development plans should be formulated according to the capacities of each province and then a comprehensive national plan should be prepared and implemented based on these sub-plans."

The head of the Iran Chamber also stressed that in formulating the seventh development plan, the concentration of power in the center of the country should be dissolved and the role of governors and provincial organizations in different regions should be increased and they should participate in drafting the seventh development plan.

Over 104,000 tons of products exported from North Khorasan Province

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The director-general of the customs department of North Khorasan Province, in northeast of Iran, announced that 104,772 tons of commodities valued at \$30.584 million have been exported from the province during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20).

Javad Jafari said the eight-month export indicates a seven-percent drop in weight and a 15-percent fall in value, year on year, as 113,138 tons of commodities valued at \$35.809 million had been exported from the province during the same period of time in the previous year.

The official named Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Italy and Iraq as the main export destinations of the province's products in the said time span.

Jafari further announced that 4,973 tons

of commodities worth \$27.613 million have been imported to North Khorasan during the first eight months of this year, showing a 52-percent growth in weight, and a 78-percent rise in value.

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

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

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

According to Mirashrafi, the imports in the said period declined one percent and

18 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

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

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

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

According to the IRICA head, the top five



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

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

Russian expert says U.S. deserves no trust

1 → Instead, while enjoying the leverage that the Trump administration gained over Iran by reintroducing sanctions, they seek a new deal that will cover pretty much the same issues that the Trump administration raised with regard to the expansion and extension of the JCPOA.

Iran is a signatory to the NPT and its nuclear activities are subject to the most intrusive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, yet Western countries have focused on Iran and neglecting Israel and other regimes that possess nuclear weapons. Why?

A: The problem is not about the nuclear program. Had Iran enjoyed even half of the volume of relationship that the West has with Israel, there would be no issue with its nuclear program. All their concerns are based on the threat perception: they don't believe Israeli nuclear weapons pose any threat to the West but don't have similar confidence in Iran's foreign policy and military capabilities after the Islamic revolution.

How do you assess the repercussions of the Nov. 27 assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh? Do you think



it would affect Iran's nuclear program?

A: Iran's nuclear program is wider and stronger than any individual involved in this network. However, the perpetrators of this assassination have to face the responsibility

for this outrageous crime. What I feel worried about is the initial goal of those who are behind the assassination — to derail any diplomatic effort between Iran and the West. By simply rejecting the IAEA access

to nuclear facilities and speeding up the enrichment, Iran is not going to address the problem, and I hope 2021 will be the year of reviving diplomacy.

Why did E3 fail to confront American unilateral policies and sanctions on Iran and now they are talking about constraining Iran's missile capacities?

A: E3 never stopped talking about Iran's missile capabilities as they share the threat perception with the United States. Moreover, Europeans have lacked the strategic culture and capabilities to conduct truly independent and self-sufficient policies since the end of World War II. This is why there's little expectation from the E3 that they would change their current position.

What are the main functions and advantages of nuclear technology when it comes to peaceful goals?

A: Providing the population with clean electricity and advanced healthcare are the key functions of nuclear technology. Whatever technology or capabilities go beyond these goals and accelerate without proper transparency measures may raise questions from the international community.

Mess with Texas via mail-in ballot? States secede from presidential vote

By Ramin Mazaheri

The United States corporate-dominated media has found that the easiest way to shape news coverage on the scores of legal challenges to the 2020 presidential election is to only report on them when the cases have lost.

After all, the more newspaper inches given to objective discussions of widespread voter fraud allegations equals the more chances an average American starts to think the election was rigged. This theory presumes that the average American is so docile and programmable that they have already completely forgotten the mainstream claims which dominated the previous four years: that the election was rigged (by Vladimir Putin).

Not reporting until a court rejects an integrity challenge also allows for a superior "I-knew-it-all-along" tone, combined with open accusations of lunacy on the part of the aggrieved party.

More than a month after the vote the party (Republicans) remains tremendously aggrieved: top pollster Gallup just reported that 83% of Republicans say that reports of Biden being the president-elect are not "accurate". Yes, it's an oddly-worded poll, but so many U.S. wordsmiths have been purposely opaque since election day.

It's always been easy to roll one's eyes at the smug tone because such condescension will drop to the ground lack a bag of bricks with just one Supreme Court loss, after all. Yes, the widespread U.S. belief prior to November 3, 2020, was that their elections were poorly designed, poorly funded, poorly run, poorly counted and porous in many other ways besides, but I always thought the biggest post-election day challenge would be over the exact issue which has led to the totally unprecedented situation of states suing other states over accusations of ruining the election's integrity:

Texas - now joined by 17 other states as this went to press - is suing the states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia and Wisconsin over mail-in ballots.

I'll show that the U.S. Constitution makes it clear their case should at least be heard by the Supreme Court. The state-on-state nature already takes the case directly to the top.

The Supreme Court always had to rule on the unprecedented expansion of mail-in balloting.

What's so interesting about "democracy with U.S. characteristics" is how the nine justices of the Supreme Court are allowed to be so very, very removed from U.S. society. They debate in private; they grant media interviews very rarely, they don't have to say much in court (Justice Clarence Thomas went from 2006 to 2016 without publicly asking a question), nor do they even have to give public reasons for many of the momentous decisions they make (they just rejected a key vote fraud case in Pennsylvania with one sentence, but more accurately only one word: "denied"). It's not the Holy See of Rome, but it's close.

But it's not closes regarding the holiness, because what this unaccountable and unelected regime of nine holds sacred is merely the 18th century U.S. Constitution, something which is currently losing luster worldwide by the minute.

Some, not all, of these justices are Wahhabi-like in their insistence that the document is "dead" (and perfect in its deadness), in that it must be followed both to the letter and in the spirit of the bygone (allegedly golden) age in which it was written.

Given this ideological reality doesn't it seem clear that executive branch orders by some governors, or even just their secretaries of state, to massively and controversially flood their states with mail-in ballots violated the U.S. Constitution - even if these actions were approved by some in the judicial branch - because they often did not get legislative branch approval? Article I, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution states: "The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature..."

Texas' lawsuit thus asserts: "The four states exploited the COVID-19 pandemic to justify ignoring federal and state election laws and unlawfully enacting last-minute changes, thus skewing the results of the 2020 General Election. The battleground states flooded their people with unlawful ballot applications and ballots while ignoring statutory requirements as to how they were received, evaluated and counted." The suit claims the vote in Texas was tainted by the vote in Pennsylvania, etc.

People may notice that Article I, Section 4 does not talk about "Elections for President", but the U.S. elects their president by an Electoral College, not direct vote. It is regularly inferred that this clause also applies to the

presidential vote, but it is actually addressed in Article 2, Section 1: "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows: Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors..." Again, it's the state legislature which decides how to decide to "appoint" (not "elect") Electoral College "Electors", and Article 2, Section 1 is cited in Texas' lawsuit.

I wish I could find more good media reports on this case to better inform my opinion but - as I began - you just can't find much objective journalistic discussion on the U.S. voter fraud causes. No well-known anti-Trump media I saw ever even broached Article 2, Section 1 - even though it was named in the lawsuit - all they had was hysterical and completely unobjective denials that the Texas lawsuit doesn't even attempt to make a coherent argument. And yet: the Supreme Court gave the defendant states less than 48 hours to respond to Texas' lawsuit - by 3pm on December 10.

The suit also says the expansion made the vote insecure, but forget about all the alleged vote machine tampering, the purported "smoking gun" videos, the reported 1,000 testimonies making accusations of election malfeasance - all of that either has the evidence or it doesn't. Maybe there was a huge conspiracy of voter fraud, or maybe there wasn't. The nation's top intelligence official, the Director of National Intelligence, John Ratcliffe, just said that all issues of election fraud must be investigated and only then would we see "whether there is a Biden administration". Will they all be properly investigated? This is America, so all we can say for sure is that no matter what happens America will insist that they are the spotless beacon the world should follow.

But the question of mail-in ballots - this enormous change to the U.S. voting system which inspired seemingly thousands of complaints by Donald Trump on Twitter, as well as from many regular American citizens - this is the dispute which has the power to immediately invalidate the 2020 vote.

I say: yes, it should invalidate the vote - that is, if Americans want to follow the rules of the antiquated and fundamentally aristocratic American system.

America is not a modern democracy, nor is it accountable - don't expect the Supreme Court to rule in favor of the outsider Trump.

Yes, pro-Trumpers were wrong to wait until after the election - to see if their candidate lost - before bringing this suit, but who's to say that elite Democrats wouldn't have forced some of their own governors to do the same thing if Biden was the projected loser? How can judges rule on a case which was never brought before them? The bottom line is that checks and balances are what make democracy "democracy", whether that democracy is Athenian, American, Chinese socialist or Iranian Islamic, and one person should not be able to change the fundamental nature of how elections are held, even if that person is a state governor or secretary of state, and even if a state judge says their change is ok.

Modern democracies have (at least) three branches for a reason, but it's ok that mail-in ballots were often routed around the legislative branch?

(I often say Iranian democracy has revolutionarily created a "Supreme Leader branch". I'd also say the massive influence of the internet/digital age gives more credence to making the unofficial "Fourth Estate" - the media - an official branch. What's wrong with more than three branches, other than: But the bourgeois West doesn't do it?)

The re-routing (and some state legislatures, such as Nevada, did approve a sweeping expansion to mail-in ballots) of democratic processes into the hands of one person should be seen as a continuation of what Western democracy truly is: liberal strongmanism. This process



became out in the open with Dubya Bush's phony war on Iraq and the Patriot Act, continued with the ignored anti-austerity elections in Greece, is part and parcel of Emmanuel Macron's "rubber bullet liberalism" war on France's Yellow Vests, and was seen in 2020 when some U.S. governors essentially said: We want Trump out so badly that we'll change the elections by fiat to do it.

(Corona was not a valid excuse in November, because by then 2020 had seen many nations successfully and safely hold elections.)

A coronavirus vaccine was announced just two days after Biden declared victory; after months of refusals - which have fiscally disemboweled the U.S. lower classes - Democrats finally agreed to negotiate on their heretofore totally inflexible 2nd stimulus position as soon as the calendar turned from election November to December; Facebook, Twitter and the U.S. mainstream media currently censor the average Republican's election reflections as if these citizens were calling for a second Holocaust.

Those are not conspiracy theories but are listed to reveal how truly terrible and power-monging the political and cultural elite is in the United States. They overreach their power time and time again, no matter how negative the effect on their domestic public or the rest of the world.

Such persons wanted Trump out, and I'm not saying that they engaged in a massive conspiracy of election fraud to do so - I'm saying that they obviously changed the fundamental nature of the election to do so.

In the U.S. states decide individually how elections are run, but there should have been formal legislative debate about any huge changes to the election format and not merely a gubernatorial order reflected upon in private by a judge. It was undemocratic political overreach in a nation full of people who have been conditioned to believe that the boss/CEO/president can and should be able to fire/personally enrich/sanction at will.

There are enough "strict constructionists," originalists" or (as I call them) "American Salafists" currently on the Supreme Court to see the logic of Texas' argument. However, I do not think the Supreme Court will find in favor of Texas - the power-holders in the U.S. system are fundamentally anti-Trump, I think 2016-2020 has proven ad nauseam.

Trumpism was vindicated in a grassroots way - like it or not - on November 3rd, but there are no "Trumpist" judges in the top court. Who knows, maybe Trumpism will last long enough that one day there will be, but for now what all Supreme Court judges are is merely typical American conservatives. The idea that even though Supreme Court justices are the most untouchable persons in American society and yet they will bend over backwards to please Trump is, I think, a major (but common) fallacy.

It's clear that the 2020 election was drastically changed (just look at how voter turnout suddenly was the highest in 120 years), and it's clear that legislatures often did not fulfill their check and balance role, and it's clear that "strict constructionism" was not something invented by Justice Anthonin Scalia but is an ideology which has been widely discussed since the very beginning of the American republic... all that will be thrown out to throw out Trump, I predict.

This article has not been pro-Trump or anti-Trump, it is reminding how very drastic the actions of anti-Trump power-holders in the U.S. have been. They changed the nature of the 2020 vote, and they don't want to admit that, and the Supreme Court is not likely to unconservatively ok a shocking, once-in-three-lifetimes reversal to the 2020 presidential vote - not because of the chaos and alienation it would cause among the 99%, but because American democracy is and has always been expressly designed to protect the elite, not the people/workers/lower classes.

By the way, the only presidential vote which ever mattered at all takes place in less than a week - the Electoral College votes on December 14th. I think this year's general election on the presidential vote has provided a more interesting - yet legally meaningless - diversion than it normally does, don't you?

Ramin Mazaheri is currently covering the U.S. elections. He is the chief correspondent in Paris for Press TV and has lived in France since 2009. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in the U.S., and has reported from Iran, Cuba, Egypt, Tunisia, South Korea and elsewhere. He is the author of 'Socialism's Ignored Success: Iranian Islamic Socialism' as well as 'Till Ruin Everything You Are: Ending Western Propaganda on Red China', which is also available in simplified and traditional Chinese. (Source: Press TV)

Russia-U.S. relations unlikely to change under Biden administration'

Relations between Russia and the United States are unlikely to be changed if Democrat Joseph Biden becomes president, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Sunday.

"Regrettably, we see no cardinal changes in terms of the improvement of bilateral relations after the change of, so to say, participants in all these electoral processes, after reshuffles in the White House," she said in an interview with the Fetisov program on the Zvezda television channel. "We have no cardinal anticipations in terms of scene changes."

According to Zakharova, the United States' foreign policy towards Russia is still geared to its containment and the situation will not change under a new administration because it will be focused primarily on the domestic agenda.

The Russian diplomat noted that it matters little for Russia who becomes the U.S. president after all, what matters for it is bilateral cooperation between the two countries. "Frankly speaking, it is not the person that matters for us. We have our own president. What matters for us is the Russian-US relations, bilateral cooperation on global matters," she explained.

China urges EU to stop 'irresponsible remarks'

China said on Monday the European Union should stop making "irresponsible remarks" after it called for the release of all those arrested for reporting in China in a statement on a detained Chinese national working for Bloomberg News.

China's foreign ministry said on Friday authorities had detained Haze Fan, who works for the Bloomberg bureau in Beijing, on suspicion of endangering national security, Reuters reported.

The European Union called for authorities to grant Fan "medical assistance if needed, prompt access to a lawyer of her choice, and contacts with her family." It also called for the immediate release of all those detained in China in connection with their reporting.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a daily news conference in Beijing that Fan's legal rights and interests were guaranteed.

Hackers spied on U.S. Treasury emails

Hackers believed to be working for Russia have been monitoring internal email traffic at the U.S. Treasury and Commerce departments, according to people familiar with the matter, adding they feared the hacks uncovered so far may be the tip of the iceberg.

The hack is so serious it led to a National Security Council meeting at the White House on Saturday, said one of the people familiar with the matter, Reuters reported.

U.S. officials have not said much publicly beyond the Commerce Department confirming there was a breach at one of its agencies and that they asked the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the FBI to investigate.

National Security Council spokesman John Ulyot added that they "are taking all necessary steps to identify and remedy any possible issues related to this situation."

The U.S. government has not publicly identified who might be behind the hacking, but three of the people familiar with the investigation said Russia is currently believed to be responsible for the attack. Two of the people said that the breaches are connected to a broad campaign that also involved the recently disclosed hack on FireEye, a major U.S. cybersecurity company with government and commercial contracts.

Explosion hits tanker off Saudi Arabia's Jeddah

A shipping firm says an explosion has hit a fuel tanker off Saudi Arabia's Jeddah, a key Red Sea port and distribution center for oil giant Saudi Aramco.

The BW Group said in a statement that the ship suffered a blast early Monday after being hit by "an external source". According to the report, the Singapore-flagged BW Rhine saw all 22 sailors on board escape without injury.

The firm warned it was possible some oil had leaked out from the site of the incident.

Dryad Global, a London-based maritime intelligence firm, also reported the explosion.

The United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations, which is linked to the British navy, called on ships in the area to "exercise extreme caution." No one immediately elaborated on the cause. The Saudi authorities have yet to confirm the blast.

Last month, an explosion rocked a Greek-operated oil tanker docked at Saudi Arabia's southern port of Shuqaiq. The Riyadh-led military coalition blamed the attack on Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement, which has not commented on the incident.

This week's blast comes as Yemeni forces have been conducting retaliatory attacks against Saudi Arabia over the kingdom's bloody military campaign against their impoverished nation.

Resistance News

Haneyya calls for building real partnership in Palestinian arena

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Head of Hamas's political bureau Ismail Haneyya has called for building a genuine political, national and field partnership between the Palestinian rivals, affirming that his Movement will continue to make efforts to achieve that.

In televised remarks on Sunday on the occasion of Hamas's founding anniversary, Haneyya stressed the need for rebuilding the institutions of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in order to achieve real partnership in the Palestinian arena.

He pointed out that "the 33rd founding anniversary of Hamas came in the midst of huge developments and changes in the region that have a profound impact on the Palestinian cause and the Arab and Islamic regions."

The Hamas official also asserted that his Movement would continue the strategy of developing and building its capabilities in the Gaza Strip and would work together with the Palestinians from all spectra in the West Bank "to stimulate the resistance and its spirit in the West Bank."

Iran still choice of Iraqis seeking health, medical services

TOURISM TEHRAN – Despite coronavirus restrictions, Iran is still a destination for Iraqi nationals who are willing to receive health and medical services in the Islamic Republic.

“Even in the current situation in which travels are highly overshadowed by the coronavirus outbreak, a significant number of Iraqis still travel to Iran pursuing medical treatments,” Ilam province’s tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbezadeh said on Monday.



“Most of the health travelers – who come to Iran from Iraq – are seeking cosmetic surgeries such as the rhinoplasty and hair transplants,” the official noted.

Medical tourism is the only traveling sector active in Ilam province, which shares its western border with Iraq, he stated.

Many domestic experts believe that medical tourism in Iran is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency, however, all forecasts and preparations in this field have changed.

Iranian hospitals admitted nearly 70,000 foreign patients over the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018 – March 2019) and it made an economic contribution of around \$1.2 billion to the country, according to the medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health.

According to available data compiled by the tourism ministry, some two million Iraqi nationals visited Iran during the first seven months of the Iranian calendar year 1397, turning the country into Iran’s largest source of tourists.

Tourism can’t wait for vaccinations to become a widespread reality: UNWTO

TOURISM TEHRAN – The tourism sector cannot wait for the coronavirus vaccinations to become a widespread reality, members of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) have stressed.

“As vaccinations for the COVID-19 virus begin to be administered... and while recent breakthroughs serve to boost confidence, the tourism sector cannot wait for vaccinations to become a widespread reality,” the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee concluded in its last time session in 2020.

The meeting was focused on ensuring efforts to restart tourism are coordinated and harmonized in terms of cross-border travel both pre and post-vaccine.



UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili called for more explicit affirmation from governments and international organizations that safe travel is possible and so tourism can restart responsibly.

Earlier in September, Iran’s tourism minister Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced responsible tourism is a workable solution for holidaymakers to get assured of safe traveling during the coronavirus pandemic.

“Therefore, one of the solutions that can help us in the time of coronavirus is adopting smart travels or responsible travels,” the minister explained.

The virtual meeting of the Committee was hosted by Portugal ahead of its presidency of the council of the European Union, beginning in January.

Mobile phone registry to be simplified at Tehran airport

TOURISM TEHRAN – Mobile phone registry will go online for inbound passengers arriving at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport.

“As of 21 December, all mobile phones will be registered online, and the time for the face-to-face process will be reduced to less than one minute,” the deputy director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has said.

“The decision is made for the welfare of incoming passengers at Imam Khomeini International Airport, and to prevent the spread of coronavirus,” IKAC News quoted Mehrdad Jamal Arvanaghi as saying on Monday.

All mobile phones which are entered from July 2 to December 20 have been registered in person, but from that time on all passengers have to fill passenger declaration and write the phone’s IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) – A 15 digit number that you can find in the phone’s box, the official explained.

With the implementation of Iran’s National Mobile Registry Plan back in October 2017, people must register all new mobile phones to be eligible for use in the country. This law is to fight smuggling phones to Iran. As a result, all people who want to use their phones for more than one month in the Islamic Republic will need to register their phones as a way to pay the customs fees.

Archaeological evidence may reshape Yazd history

➔ With its winding lanes, forest of badgirs (windcatchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region.

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

Yazd is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground



areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that

destroyed many traditional earthen cities. It survives today with its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad.

Saffron plantation expected to augment agritourism in Zanjan

TOURISM TEHRAN – Saffron farming has been amplified in the tourist areas of the northwestern Zanjan province to develop agritourism in the region.

Saffron production and harvest, which started about three years ago across the west-central province, shows a significant boom this year, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand said on Monday.

So far saffron bulbs have been harvested from over 62 hectares of farms mostly near historical cities of the province such as Abhar, Soltanieh, Khorramdareh, and Zanjan, the official added.

Saffron farming could have a great impact on attracting tourists and generate income for the local people and farmers, he said.

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

Major saffron producers of Iran are located on the east



side of the country. If you would like to see the biggest market, head to Mashhad, which is also known for its religious importance.

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might also include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services

(farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

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

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltanieh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

In late January, Zanjan was designated as a “world city of filigree” by the World Crafts Council after the WCC assessors visited various craft workshops, stores, exhibits, and bazaars of a city in a two-day itinerary last December.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting fine, pliable metal threads and soldering them at their points of contact with each other with a metal groundwork.

Human factor behind fortress destruction in Abarkuh, expert says

TOURISM TEHRAN – A human factor is behind the destruction of the Firuzabad fortress, which was severely hit by devastating floods last week, head of Yazd province’s department for the cultural heritage and tourism has said.

The floods combined with heavy rains inflicted over 70 percent damage to the mudbrick monument, which is located in Abarkuh county of the province, Mostafa Fatemi said on Monday.

Due to the rain, two embankment dams, which are located further away from the historical fortress, were broken and caused the flood that damaged all the historical and residential buildings in the region on its way, the official noted.

The cultural heritage department was unaware of the existence of the dams, and those water structures were constructed with-



out any coordination with, or permission from, the relevant organizations, near such an important region that is full of historical and ancient monuments, the official added.

That is why the human factor is taken into account, as the castle has been standing for more than a century and there has been no flood in this region for at least the past

200 years, so there was no possible way for cultural heritage experts to predict the flood, he explained.

Dating back to the late Qajar era (1789–1925) and early Pahlavi period (1925–1979), the Firuzabad fortress is one of the few residential fortresses in the country.

Cultural heritage experts have estimated the flood caused some 100 billion rials (about \$2.4 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) damage to the historical monuments dotted in the region.

Not long ago, the fortress had undergone a restoration project to put the monument on the tourism map of the region, Fatemi said.

He also noted that although some walls and ceilings collapsed under the water pressure, the amount of damage was less than expected, however, there is still moisture inside the building, which could cause further damage.

Firuzabad fortress was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 2007.

From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest. Fortresses were designed primarily to defend territories in warfare and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today’s archaeologists.

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

Restorers finish three years of work on Bastam historical complex

TOURISM TEHRAN – After almost three years of effort, a comprehensive restoration project is complete on the Bastam historical complex, which is situated in a small town of the same name near Shahroud in north-central Semnan province.

A budget of 15 billion rials (about \$357,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been spent on the project which aimed at repairing, strengthening, and preserving different monuments located in the complex, Hamed Adel, director of the complex, said on Monday.

Most of the budget was spent on repairing Bayazid Mosque, one of the most important structures in the complex, which had suffered damages over years, the official added.

Bastam historical complex includes the holy shrine of Mohammad Ibn Jafar Sadegh (AS), Bayazid Bastami tomb, Bayazid Monastery, Bayazid Mosque, Eljaito Iwan, Ghazan Dome, Jame Mosque, Kashaneh Tower, and Shahrokhieh School, which were built in different eras from Seljuk era (1037–1194) to Qajar period (1789–1925).



The prominent Persian mystic Bayazid Bastami lived in the historical city of Bastam, which is located six kilometers north of Shahroud. The monastery was a simple place where

he studied and prayed.

Ghazan Khan, the 13th-century ruler of Ilkhanate in Iran, is buried in the Ghazan Dome, which is a square building with 7.5 height and a dome covered with turquoise tiles.

Jame Mosque is another building from the complex with a beautiful plastered altar that was restored during the Qajar period.

Kashaneh Tower is a tower connected to the Jame Mosque. It has a cellar that is connected to the top of the tower through a staircase that runs through the interior wall of the tower. The outer covering of the building has collapsed but the lower covering (the current dome) is untouched.

Shahrokhieh School has been built for the use of seminary students with 28 rooms on two floors.

The school also has a very interesting plan and about 28 rooms on two floors, which have been built for the use of students of religious sciences.

The school has a mosque, an iwan, and a zurkhaneh, a special traditional place where men practice heroic sport.

A peek into Iranian traditional houses, mansions

(Part 8/8)

HERITAGE TEHRAN – A house is a spatial unit which combines a set of personal territory features and creates a personal space, a territory that protects us from others inspections and investigations.

It is a place for social life which is confirmed and recognized sociologically. Further to being a safe place for individuals, it is a place for the social unit called family. Thus, a house is a place in which a group of intimate and close people live. The house is appreciated as the main vector of society and as a place where identities are formed and memories begin to be created. A house is the center of intimacy. Intimacy creates personal relationships far from the eyes of people and helps us get out of our solitude and get in touch with each other.

Regarding to the light, the history of architecture is in line with creation of windows and

penetration of day light into buildings which resulted in light, air, heat and cold for houses. Since the early days, bright and shining objects that remind humans of lively and spiritual entities have been respectable. Nearly in all religions, light has been the symbol of divine wisdom and the element of all goodness and purities and moving from darkness to light has been considered to be the main goal.

Since Iranian architecture considers houses as a respectable territories and spaces in which all demands are fulfilled, it includes psychological factors as well. Traditional architects were also aware of the psychology of colors and applied them in a certain order and rule. Color comprehension mechanism is so complicated. In order to determine the use of color architecture through associations and tacit meanings, we require a limited comprehension of the science hidden beyond colors and the science of looking at colors.

In Iran, architecture is directly linked with religious, cultural and mystical affairs. These affairs are observed with various functions separately in public (mosques and traditional schools) or private (house) spaces. Thus, the quality of architecture in these places has been completely different.

Configurations of architecture are created through lightening of cohesive surfaces. Ceiling windows create a special type of lightening which is itself and inseparable part of volumetric space. These openings are directly associated with structure, walls and volumes.

The status of decorative arts in Iranian architecture is rooted in combination of Iranian culture, religion and art which has evolved as time passes by. Using natural elements in Iranian architecture is mostly a metaphorical method. The glory and beauty of Iranian architecture especially in the Islamic era depends upon its decoration. Using all

types of decoration such as brick work, plaster modeling, tile work, mirror work and drawing has been common in the whole Islamic era and it has progressed in line with the facilities of each period.

Light and refraction of color caused by light were used in the Islamic culture to create benchmark spaces and especial concepts in places. In traditional architecture and Islamic culture, light is a symbol of god and divine light. In Iranian traditional houses, colors were not used merely for decoration; but other elements were also used in place of color to make the environment colorful and using broken mirrors reflects the color of the environment to the internal spaces.

Light with various qualities influences the psychological and social space of an individual in his life. The large spectrum of light whether physical or spiritual is used consciously in traditional Iranian architecture.

Iran, Indonesia review trade opportunities in health sector

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and Indonesia started the fifth joint meeting to review trade opportunities in the health sector virtually on Monday.

Held with the support of the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and the Indonesian Ministry of Health, the event will run through December 17.

It includes three main programs of virtual exhibitions, business-to-business meetings (B2B), and specialized seminars on medicine, medical equipment, and health services.

Developed with the aim of creating technical and commercial interactions between the two countries, the event focuses on the introduction and presentation of advanced technologies between the two countries in the field of medicine and active ingredients, telemedicine, robotic surgery, artificial intelligence in COVID-19 diagnosis and medicine sector accelerators in the field of biotechnology.

According to the nanotechnology development headquarters, a meeting will be held at the same time in Indonesia, with the presence of officials from the Ministry of Health of the two countries, to review the rules and regulations for the registration of drugs and medical equipment.

COVID-19 protective equipment
With the outbreak of coronavirus, Iran surged its production to meet the country's need for self-protective equipment along with medical and pharmaceutical items to fight



against the virus.

Iran is one of the top five manufacturers of coronavirus antigen-based rapid detection kits in the world; as homegrown antibody rapid test, which can detect coronavirus in 15 to 20 minutes, was unveiled in Tehran on November 17.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times in September that some of the knowledge-based companies reached a production

capacity of more than 200-300 thousand diagnostic kits per day, which surpassed the country's need for diagnostic kits, and there is a great export potential.

Pointing out that multiplying the production of COVID-19 equipment led to significant measures that led to foreign currency saving for the country, he said "it also helped us cope with problems and not to run out of equipment because no matter how much money we gave, no country had

the equipment to sell."

He also announced that two types of diagnostic kits are now mass-produced by knowledge-based companies, first one is the RT-PCR tests, 8 million of which are being produced per month; while the other is serology-based tests that a total of 400,000 are being manufactured monthly and is expected to reach up to 2 million.

At present, 40 advanced ventilators are manufactured daily in the medical equipment sector, he explained.

Knowledge-based companies can produce any medicine effective in countering coronavirus or approved by the scientific committee within a week to 10 days, he noted.

Mehdi Kashmiri, director for technology and planning at the science ministry, said in July that about 450 knowledge-based companies were active in the country for manufacturing protective equipment and treatment products to fight the coronavirus.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the products manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

Iran, Italy to enhance technological innovation exchange

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The webinar of scientific interactions between Iran and Italy will be held on December 17.

The event aims to emphasize the exchange of science and technology between universities, science and technology parks, and research institutes of the two countries.

Organized jointly by the Iran-Italy Scientific Cooperation Working Group affiliated to the Ministry of Science, the webinar is held with the cooperation of Italian Company for Innovation, Cooperation, and Internationalization (SPICI s.r.l.), and Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance (CSEF), University of Naples, one of Italy's most important public universities.

Promoting science and technology cooperation between universities, research institutes, and science and technology parks of Iran and Italy, introducing Iran's Research and Technology Week, presenting new achievements of Iranian research and technology, scientific diplomacy to expand research cooperation, technology and innovation between the two countries and study of science and technology ecosystem focusing on the potentials of cooperation between the two countries are among the topics to be discussed at the event.

In addition to the conference, a virtual tour will be presented with the aim of briefly introducing the 21st exhibition of research, technology, and market achievements of Iran. Members of the working group of scientific cooperation between Iran and Italy and representatives of Italian and Iranian universities, research institutes, and knowledge-based companies will attend the event.



The aim is to make science and technology policy, and in this regard, the event facilitates the cooperation of technology producers and investors so that the parties can enter into negotiations directly based on their expected interests and protocols.

Technology development in Iran
Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

Currently, some 5,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

In recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology has been supporting knowledge-based companies active in the production of sanctioned items.

Sourena Sattari, the vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times that "U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2021).

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year."

To date, 42 knowledge-based companies with a total value of 2.8 quadrillion rials (nearly \$66.6 billion) have been listed on the stock exchange and they will soon turn into the biggest businesses in the county, Sattari said.

GreenMetric puts Iranian universities on world's top 100 list

1 → In the 2019 ranking, the University of Zanjan was listed 43rd, while the University of Kashan was the second Iranian institute in the list with a rank of 143rd.

Iran increases share of world's top universities
Times Higher Education has published its annual ranking of the world's top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

Some 21 Islamic countries were also listed in the ranking, however, Iran holds the

highest share with 47 universities. With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

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

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

Two Iranian universities have been ranked

among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities for July 2020.

Moreover, 7 Iranian universities have been listed among the best 1000 worldwide; including, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology.

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

The Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed 36 Iranian universities in the list of over 1,000 major



universities worldwide in 2020 compared with 26 universities in 2019.

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

FAO takes step to support green projects in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), supports Iran to enhance capabilities to adapt and mitigate climate change, providing a training opportunity for Iranian experts.

Enhancing knowledge and skills of experts, scaling up climate investment for the agricultural and rural development sectors, leveraging partnerships with global funding bodies, and building climate-resilient development pathways are among the measures FAO has taken.



In this regard, a five-day workshop was held on December 5-9, providing the experts with requisite vision, understanding, tools, and hands-on training on developing climate rationale, collecting required data and information, assessing project idea, concept note, and full proposal; representing over 20 Iranian entities and divisions from both public and private sectors.

Besides, the attendees were trained on critical project-formulating concepts including Paradigm shift, Theory of Change (TOC), Simplified Approval Procedures (SAP), and Performance Measurement Framework, according to the six criteria for the Green Climate Fund investment.

Within this workshop, the national approval process for accessing GCF funds was also reviewed and discussed by the participants. This assessment process, which is called the No-Objection Procedure (NOP) is an evaluation method developed for the National Designated Authority (NDA) at the Department of Environment. NOP will enable NDA to evaluate, assess, and score all prospective concepts and projects who wish to access GCF funds.

Being partnered with the Department of Environment and the Green Climate Fund, "FAO is committed to supporting Iran's National Designated Authority (NDA) and respective stakeholders to engage with the international bodies and to access the climate finance to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change and boost climate-resilient development in the country," emphasized Gerold Bödeker, FAO Representative to Iran in his remarks delivered at the workshop.

Reiterating the fact that "FAO stands ready to assist Iran as it raises its ambition on climate action," Bödeker further underscored that the "Organization works closely with its international and national counterparts to build a good understanding of global green-climate approval process modality and criteria among engaged stakeholders in the country."

FAO, being the lead UN agency in promoting climate-smart approaches, practices, and techniques in the agriculture sector, implements the project "Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Programme of Iran," supporting the country in its efforts to preserve the environment and biodiversity, and build the resilience among millions of rural family farmers.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 83) (Source: saadifoundation.ir)

to telephone, to phone	تَلْفَن زَدَن	ت
cellphone, [همراه]	تَلْفَن هَمراه /ه	تا آ خرف اضافه
mobile phone	تَلْفَن هَمراه	تا آ خرف ربط
contact n	تَماس	تا آ واحد شمارش
to contact	تَماس گِرِفْتَن	تاریخ
exercise	تَمَرین	تاکسی
(جمع: تَمَرینات, تَمَرینها)		تَبَدیل
fast	تَنَد [تُنَد]	تَبَدیل کردن (په)
the sign /ان/	تَنوین	تَبخینه
you sing	تُو	تَخفیف
in; at	تَو کُننداری	تَر = تو + را
can	تَوایستن - تَوان [تَوایستن - تون]	تَرافیک
to answer	تَواب داذن	تَوَضیح
		تَوَضیح [تَوَضیحات]
tea	تَی [تَی] جای [تَی]	تَوَضیح داذن
why	تَی چَرا /tɛrɒ/	تَوَلَد
how	تَی چَطُور /ow/	تومان [تَوَمَن]
(what + manner)	تَی چَطُور [چَطُوری]	تَهران
how much	تَی چَقَدَر /ʔeqadr/	تَهرانی
(what + amount)	تَی چَقَدَر [چَقَدَر]	تَهرانی
what	تَی چَکار [چَکار]	ت
boiled	تَی چَلُوخُورِشَت [چَلُوخُورِشَت]	تَپه اسم
rice and a kind of stew		ت
boiled	تَی چَلُوکَباب	ت
rice with roast meat		ت
how many; several	تَی چَند [چَند]	ت
fork	تَی چَنگال	ت
because; since	تَی چُون	ت
what	تَی چِه = چی	ت
four	تَی چَهَار /ʔɛhɒr/ [چَهَار]	ت
fourteen	تَی چَهَارده [چَهَارده]	ت
crossroad	تَی چَهَارراه [چَهَارراه]	ت
Wednesday	تَی چَهَارشَنبِه /ʔɛɒrʃɒnbɛ/ [چَهَارشَنبِه]	ت
four hundred	تَی چَهَارصَد /ʔɛɒrsɒd/ [چَهَارصَد]	ت
forty	تَی چَهل [چَهل]	ت

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Martyr Soleimani made efforts to bypass U.S. medicine sanctions: health minister

Over the past year, martyr Qassem Soleimani supported and made efforts to bypass the sanctions imposed by the U.S. so that people do not feel lack of medicine and medical equipment, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Monday.

After the U.S. government imposed new sanctions on Iran, despite their lies about not sanctioning medicine, food and medical equipment, they put the highest pressure on us to procure medicine and medical equipment, he lamented.

"I wrote two letters to the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom to inform him of the American crime against humanity.

However, General Soleimani was the one who helped greatly to import medicine in different ways," he explained.

وزیر بهداشت: شهید سلیمانی برای شکستن تحریم‌های دارویی تلاش کرد

سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت گفت: شهید قاسم سلیمانی در یک سال اخیر بسیار ما را همراهی و حمایت کرد تا توانستیم از مسیرهای مختلف حلقه تحریم‌ها را بشکنیم تا مردم در خصوص دارو و تجهیزات پزشکی با مشکل زیادی روبه‌رو نشوند. نمکی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا افزود: بعد از اینکه آمریکایی‌ها تحریم‌های جدیدی را به ما تحمیل کردند و علیرغم دروغشان مبنی بر تحریم نبودن دارو، غذا و تجهیزات پزشکی، اما بیشترین فشار را به ما در زمینه تهیه دارو و تجهیزات پزشکی آوردند. "در همین زمینه نیز من دو نامه به آقای تدروس - دبیرکل سازمان جهانی بهداشت نوشتم که این کار آمریکایی‌ها جنایت علیه بشریت است. شهید قاسم سلیمانی یکی از افرادی بود که به شدت کمک می‌کرد که این حلقه تحریم را بشکنیم و از هر راهی که می‌توانیم برای مردم دارو تهیه کنیم."

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Every religion has its distinct characteristic, and the distinct characteristic of Islam is modesty.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Leader's "Enemiology" introduced at Baghdad fair

→1 "The two nations have much in common on religious, historical and cultural issues, however, fighting terrorism has also been added to the issues," he said.



Front cover of the original version of the book "Enemiology" written by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The book provides new insights for the two nations to learn more about their joint enemies and fight against them, he added. The Office for the Preservation and Publication of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's Works is attending the fair with a number of Arabic versions of books by the Leader at the fair running until December 19.

"Driving Lessons" director Marzieh Riahi on Asiatica festival jury

→1 TEHRAN — Marzieh Riahi, the director of the acclaimed Iranian short movie "Driving Lessons", has been selected as a member of the jury for the 21st Asiatica Film Festival in Italy.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival, which is directed by Italian actor and filmmaker Italo Spinelli and his collaborators in Rome, will go online from December 18 to 22.

Riahi is a member of the Network for Promotion of Asian & Asia Pacific Cinema (NETPAC). She is also the founder and director of Short Film News, an independent news website for short and documentary cinema.



Iranian filmmaker Marzieh Riahi in an undated photo.

She was also a member of the jury at the 23rd Kolkata International Film Festival in 2017 and the 10th Third Eye Asian Film Festival in Mumbai, India in 2011.

Her latest short "Driving Lessons" has been screened in dozens of international festivals across the world.

The film tells the story of Bahareh, a young woman who, according to Iranian law, must have a man from among her relatives accompany her on driving lessons so she and her male instructor won't be alone.

Earlier in October, the film won the award for best short film at the 22nd edition of the Religion Today Film Festival in Trento, Italy.

It also won the Fox and Goose jury 2nd prize at the Hebden Bridge Film Festival in England.

The 25th Aichi International Women's Film Festival in Japan honored the film with its audience award in September.

"Driving Lessons" was named best short narrative at the 21st Through Women's Eyes International Film Festival (TWE) in Sarasota, Florida, the U.S. in March.

The Asiatica Film Festival intends to build an ideal bridge of communication between Italy and the Asian continent.

Italy's Asiatica Film Festival director, Italo Spinelli, visited the 13th Cinéma Vérité, Iran's major international documentary film festival, in December 2019.

In addition, Iranian filmmakers have also been frequent visitors to the Asiatica Film Festival.

In 2016, the festival opened with a screening of Asghar Farhadi's Oscar-winning drama "The Salesman".

In addition, "Castle of Dreams" by Reza Mirkarimi and Kamal Tabrizi's comedy film "Sly" were screened in the official competition of the event.

Culture minister visits family of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh

CULTURE TEHRAN — Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi on Sunday visited the family of the nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was assassinated in a terrorist attack last month.

He called Fakhrizadeh a scientist who enjoyed both the virtues of martyrdom and science together.

"In the religious teachings, science enjoys a very high value, but the other value mentioned in Islam is the virtue of martyrdom. These two create a special fertility in the field of social knowledge," the minister said.

He noted that the assassination of Fakhrizadeh was a great loss, adding that if science and martyrdom are combined together, the value will be twice as much.

The minister added that Fakhrizadeh's wish for martyrdom finally came true and that the people of Iran have always honored the martyrs.



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi (2nd L) visits the family of the nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh at their home in Tehran on December 13, 2020.

He said, "Before his martyrdom, Fakhrizadeh was not much known amongst people but now those who have been working with him talk about his many good moral values."

Addressing the martyr's wife, he said, "Your speech after his martyrdom and your resistance has been very influential and indicates that the path of the martyrs of Karbala and Hazrat Zeinab (SA) [sister of Imam Hussein (AS)] still continues."

On November 27, 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.

Vocalist Mohammad Motamedi releases free album to celebrate Yalda



A poster for vocalist Mohammad Motamedi's new album "Lover Tehran".

ART TEHRAN — Vocalist Mohammad Motamedi has released his new album "Lover Tehran" for free to celebrate the Iranian tradition of Yalda Night, which will fall on December 20 this year.

The album has been composed by Mohammadreza Chraghali with songs by Sajjad Azizi-Aram and was recorded with the support of the Tehran Municipality.

Earlier in December 2019, Motamedi released a single named "Yalda" with a song by Bahman Mohammadzadeh to observe Yalda Night, the last evening of autumn and the beginning of winter, which is celebrated by Iranians wherever they live.

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

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

People on Yalda Night are usually served with fresh fruits and a mixture of dry fruits, seeds and nuts in floral bowls.

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

Iranian cultural and religious traditions have always been observed by Motamedi.

In April, he released songs from his album "Monajat" ("Prayers") on his Instagram page every day with the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan.

He chose the verses by the Persian poet Sadi and the prayers are named "Praise Be to God" for the program. He performed the song based on monajatkhani (prayer reciting), a style of recitation that has long been practiced during Ramadan and has turned into a major ritual in the holy month.

Motamedi has also collaborated with maestro Ali Rahbari in the project "My Mother Persia", which has been recorded by the Antalya State Symphony live in a concert.

Books on oral history of Iran-Iraq war published

CULTURE TEHRAN — A collection of 80 books containing personal experiences of Iranian veterans during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war has recently been published.

The Research Center and Archives of Sacred Defense in Tehran, which is the publisher of the collection, will introduce the books during a special ceremony at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran today.

"The center has published the books with the objective of passing on the events of the war as experienced by those individuals who took part in it," National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) director Ashraf Borujerdi said in a press release on Monday.

Brigadier General Bahman Kargar, the head of the Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values, is expected



Officials of the Research Center and Archives of Sacred Defense unveil a collection of their books in a file photo. (DEFAPress.ir/Mohsen Ranginkaman)

to attend the ceremony that will be covered live on the website of the center," he said.

"People will get to know what great efforts were made to preserve and keep this country alive by reading these books," she added.

"The main point is that we should learn about the war and pass on our findings about the issue to people," she said.

"This country has been through the war for eight years, every moment of it needs to be recorded and preserved for the future, and people should be aware of it," she noted.

Early in April, the Research Center and Archives of Sacred Defense gave free access to a collection of military atlases of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The PDF copies of 20 military atlases of the war have been published on the official website of the center.

One of the atlases is dedicated to Operation Beit-ul-Muqaddas that Iran carried out in 1982 to liberate its southwestern city of Khorramshahr, which had been captured by Iraqis on October 26, 1980 during the early months of the war.

The collection also includes an atlas of Sarallah Brigade, which at one time was commanded by Martyr Qassem Soleimani.

Another atlas from the collection is about the effects of the war upon Iranian cities.

In a new movement launched after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Research Center and Archives of Sacred Defense has provided free access to a number of its invaluable resources.

The center has also offered a collection of 1600 UN documents on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. All the materials can be downloaded from the official website of the center.

David Treleaven's "Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness" published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of David A. Treleaven's book "Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing" has recently been published by Arjmand Publications in Tehran.

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

From elementary schools to psychotherapy offices, mindfulness meditation is an increasingly mainstream practice. At the same time, trauma remains a fact of life: the majority of people will experience a traumatic event during lifetime, and up to 20% will develop posttraumatic stress. This means that anywhere mindfulness is being practiced, someone in the room is likely to be struggling with trauma.

At first glance, this appears to be a good thing: trauma creates stress, and mindfulness is a proven tool for reducing it. But the reality is not so simple.

Drawing on a decade of research and clinical experience, psychotherapist and educator Treleaven shows that mindfulness meditation, practiced without an awareness of trauma, can exacerbate symptoms of traumatic stress. Instructed to pay close, sustained attention to their inner world, survivors can experience flashbacks, dissociation



Front cover of the Persian translation of David A. Treleaven's "Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness".

and even retraumatization.

This raises a crucial question for mindfulness teachers, trauma professionals and survivors everywhere: How can we minimize the potential dangers of mindfulness for survivors while leveraging its powerful benefits?

"Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness" offers answers to this question. Part I provides an insightful and concise review of the histories of mindfulness and trauma, including the way modern neuroscience is shaping our understanding of both. Through grounded scholarship and wide-ranging case examples, Treleaven illustrates the ways mindfulness can help, or hinder, trauma recovery.

Part II distills these insights into five key principles for trauma-sensitive mindfulness. Covering the role of attention, arousal, relationship, dissociation and social context within trauma-informed practice, Treleaven offers 36 specific modifications designed to support survivors' safety and stability. The result is a groundbreaking and practical approach that empowers those looking to practice mindfulness in a safe, transformative way.

Treleaven is a trauma professional whose work focuses on the intersection of trauma, mindfulness and social justice. Trained in counseling psychology at the University of British Columbia, he received his doctorate in psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies. He has been studying mindfulness for twenty years and has a private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Iranian-French webinar to discuss Persian language's role in intercultural dialogue

ART TEHRAN — An Iranian-French webinar to discuss the role of the Persian language in the intercultural dialogue will be held on Friday evening.

The webinar named "Persian Language, Instrument of Intercultural Dialogue" will stream via Zoom application from 6 to 7 pm under the auspices of the Franco-Iranian Center, Negarestane Andisheh Cultural Institute and University Center for Iranian Studies and Research in Alsace (Centre Universitaire d'Etudes et de Recherches Imaniennes d'Alsace - CUERIA).

Farideh Alavi, a professor of the French language at the University of Tehran, will be speaking at the colloquium.

She has done research and has written numerous publications in the fields of French, Persian and comparative literature. Her publications focus on French Romanesque literature and comparative literature. She is the author of books on the Nouveau Roman, and articles on French and Persian novels created over the twentieth century.

Hossein Beikbaghban of the University of Strasbourg, who is also the president of

the CUERIA, will also attend the conference.

French Iranologist Francis Richard, who is an expert on ancient Persian manuscripts, will also deliver a speech. He is the former curator of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and former director of the Islamic arts section of the Louvre Museum.

Iranian essayist Mohammad Ziar, who is a bilingual poet and translator, will also take part in the webinar. He is the author and translator of a dozen books in Persian and French.

Vahid Yaghoubi of the Franco-Iranian Center will also give a lecture.



A poster for the webinar "Persian Language, Instrument of Intercultural Dialogue".