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Rouhani says happy over Trump's leaving, but 'not excited' over Biden's coming

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani has said his administration is "not excited" about U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's victory, but it's happy about the defeat of Donald Trump.

"Some say you are excited about Biden's coming [into power]. No, we're not excited, but we're very happy about Trump's leaving," Rouhani said at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

He described Trump as a person who even blocked the provision of vaccines to patients because he did not adhere to any moral and humane principles.

The remarks came two days after the U.S. Electoral College voted to confirm the final electoral result of 306 to 232 in favor of Biden.

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ICCIMA offers suggestions to amend next year's budget bill

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Research Center, after examining the strengths and weaknesses of the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2021), has proposed eight practical suggestions to amend the bill.

The government submitted the administration's draft of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year to Majlis on December 6.

The private sector had earlier stated

that the budget bill is important to them from two perspectives: the impact of the budget on macroeconomic variables and its impact on the business environment.

Following the submission of the bill to Majlis, ICCIMA called on the private sector and their specialized committees as well as the provincial chambers of commerce to submit their expert opinions and suggestions on the bill to the ICCIMA Research Center.

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Iranian elements re-endorsed as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

TEHRAN – Two Iranian elements of 'Naqqali, Iranian dramatic story-telling', and "traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf" have gained approval to remain on the UNESCO list for the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The seals of approval were secured on Tuesday during the fifteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is running online from

December 14 to 19.

"Iran is proud to have succeeded in protecting Naqqali as a very valuable Iranian element and it will be continuing to do so... I thank all the people, activists of intangible cultural heritage, and all related cultural institutions," CHTN quoted Mohammad-Hassan Talebani, the deputy minister for cultural heritage affairs, as saying on Tuesday.

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Iran and Turkey must use their geostrategic potential in face of Zionism: Turkish politician

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
 TEHRAN – Dogan Bekin, vice president of the New Welfare Party in Turkey, is of the opinion that Tehran and Ankara must use their "geostrategic potential" to confront global Zionism.

Noting that the stability of Iran is equivalent to the stability of Turkey, Bekin tells the Tehran Times that "Iran and Turkey must use their geostrategic potential to eliminate the threat of global Zionism."

The following is the text of the interview:

1. What is your comment on purpose of poem Erdogan recited during a parade in Baku on December 10? Why did it lead to misunderstanding?

Erdogan recited a poem during a parade in Baku, especially in a sensitive period that we have enemies who are waiting to exploit opportunity to undermine Turkey-Iran ties, especially the Zionist-minded global powers.

I think Mr. Erdogan's should avoid any kind of attitudes and behaviors that may create potential crisis, especially when global forces make every effort to divide us, and instead of using provocative language which may affect Iran-Turkey relations, we must use converging and unifying language to achieve our common ambitions.

The poem that Mr. Erdogan recited during the Baku parade was actually written for the purpose of condemning the Russian invasion, and reading a few selected couplets instead of reading this poem in a holistic manner, of course, distorted the meaning and led to misunderstanding.

2. How was the reaction of Turkish media to Iranian media and Foreign Minister Zarif's stance toward Erdogan's remarks in the Baku parade?

It is always possible to find malicious voices that turn subject of poetry into an opportunity trying to find a basis for separating policies and damage the relations between the two countries. The important thing is that common understanding prevails, while Zionist forces want to take advantage to spoil ties of Iran and Turkey. Therefore, we think silence is better in such a sensitive period.

Here we need to see the actual totality, Turkey and Iran's historical ties necessitate being two strong countries in the region.

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Iran among top 20 Asian migrant countries

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
 TEHRAN – Iran was placed 16th among the top 20 Asian migrant countries in 2019, and the fifth top country by total refugees and asylum seekers in 2018, according to the 2020 World Migration report released by International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The overwhelming majority of people migrate internationally for reasons related to work, family, and study— involving migration processes that largely occur without fundamentally challenging either migrants or the countries they enter.

In contrast, other people leave their homes and countries for a range of compelling and sometimes tragic reasons, such as conflict, persecution, and disaster. While those who have been displaced, such as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), comprise a relatively small percentage of all migrants.

The current global estimate shows that there

were around 272 million international migrants in the world in 2019, which equates to 3.5 percent of the global population.

In 2019, most international migrants (around 74%) were of working age (20 to 64 years of age). Europe and Asia each hosted around 82 million and 84 million international migrants, respectively— comprising 61 percent of the total global international migrant stock combined.

International Migrants Day
 In 1990, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Each year on December 18, International Migrants Day is marked to highlight the contributions made by the roughly 272 million migrants, including more than 41 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the challenges they face.

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U.S. protests: Armed activists seized three blocks of a North Portland residential neighborhood

A group of guards watch the entrance to a barricaded section of road in North Portland. They're armed, masked, and dressed in black—from their balaclavas to their boots to their bulletproof vests. It's intimidating, but they're also laughing with each other, which gives the barricade a feeling similar to entering a nightclub. Can you walk in or will the bouncer tell you to scram?

It's actually a site of protest and siege: what the guards will later name the Red House Eviction Defense, or RHED. It takes the shape of a series of street obstructions that cut off three blocks of road from regular car and foot traffic. At the center of the blockades stands the Kinney family home—known as the "Red House on Mississippi"—home to a Black Afro-Indigenous family for three generations.

For six days, the activists guarding the gates have defied City Hall, chased off police, and captured national attention by occu-

pying these blocks in a campaign to defend the three-bedroom house from seizure due to foreclosure.

They argue the foreclosure resulted from confusing, predatory lending practices and is the latest case of racist gentrification in the historically Black neighborhood of Albina. They also entered a fraught Kinney family legal saga that included reports of animal abuse on the property and the eldest son's assertion that he is a "sovereign citizen" outside the reach of the U.S. court system.

The eviction defense was a remarkable escalation in activist tactics—the seizing of a residential neighborhood by an armed resistance to the legal system. By Dec. 13, it appeared to have worked: The Kinney family raised enough money to buy back the house, and Mayor Ted Wheeler brokered a deal to remove the barricades.

Symphonic poem "The Soldier" to commemorate Commander Qassem Soleimani

TEHRAN – The Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality plans to release "The Soldier", a symphonic poem composed in memory of Commander Qassem Soleimani on his first martyrdom anniversary.

Quds Force chief Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

Arman Mehrian is the composer of the symphony, which is in its post-production stage.

The director of the music office of the organi-

zation said that the composition has taken three months to complete and its different parts will be recorded at Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), which is also contributing to this project.

After his martyrdom, Soleimani has become the subject of several films, theatrical productions and festival programs.

In February, only one month after his martyrdom, the courtyard of Tehran's City Theater Complex hosted some open-air performances named "The Soldier" on the military life of the

commander.

The play, which was performed in three acts, was written by Amir-Hossein Shafiei and directed by Pejman Shahverdi.

The first act of the play was dedicated to Soleimani's leadership of Iranian forces during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

His role in the victory of the Lebanese in the Israeli 33-Day War of 2006 was spotlighted in the second stage.

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Iranian footballer Salimi optimistic about women's progress

BY FAROKH HESABI
 TEHRAN – Saba Salimi started her career as a futsal player and soon became a star in women's futsal. She says that women football in Iran has progressed over the last few years.

Her technical skills caught the Iranian football coaches' eyes, and she opted to continue as a footballer and it changed her career.

By joining FC Marxal from Azerbaijan, Saba wrote her name in Iranian football's history book as the first Iranian woman to play football abroad in a European country.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, the football player explained her current situation.

"Due to the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, including Azerbaijan, the football matches have been suspended, and the teams do not train right now. The country has tightened its quarantine regime to curb the spread of the virus. So, I came back to Iran with the permission of Marxal club's officials. These days I train individually to keep myself ready for the beginning of the Azerbaijan women's league," the 23-year-old player said.

In response to rumors that she has no intention of returning to Azerbaijan anymore, Salimi said: "These rumors are completely false and fake! I'm under contract with my club, and I'm certainly return to Azerbaijan whenever Marxal club calls me to join my teammates and start training sessions. I'm happy with my condition at Marxal club, and I'm looking forward to the end of coronavirus restrictions to return to football once again."

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Exemplary researchers, technologists honored

A special ceremony was held in Tehran on Tuesday to honor exemplary researchers and technologists of the country.

Top academicians in the fields of nuclear technology, genetics, biotechnology, and medical science were appreciated for their efforts.

During the ceremony, supporters of research and technology, top publications, and accelerators of cooperation between the industry and the academic sectors were honored, as well.

Iran voices concern over U.S. nuclear tests

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Kazem Gharibabadi has voiced concern about the United States' decision to conduct nuclear test explosions, saying such moves will jeopardize the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security.

Gharibabadi made the remarks while addressing the 55th session of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Preliminary Commission in the Austrian capital on Tuesday.



"Iran supports the objectives stipulated in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with the ultimate goal of disarmament, as well as general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control," he said. "We also strongly believe that stopping all explosive tests of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosions, as well as ending the quantitative development and qualitative improvement of these weapons, is the first necessary step towards nuclear disarmament," the envoy added.

Gharibabadi condemned Washington's approach on the non-proliferation regime and expressed concern over the possibility of the U.S. conducting nuclear test explosions.

He underlined that a possible resumption of the tests would breach a treaty on the moratorium on such practices, and also violates the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian envoy touched on Saudi Arabia's nuclear program and called on the kingdom to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Saudi Arabia's clandestine nuclear program, which had been revealed by whistle-blowers, was confirmed more than two months ago by satellite images showing a large compound, in a suspicious location in the middle of the desert.

The Wall Street Journal uncovered the facility constructed in a remote area in Saudi Arabia for extracting uranium yellow-cake from uranium ore. Ironically, the facility is located near a solar-panel production area.

Observers say such undeclared nuclear capabilities in the hands of the KSA are extremely worrying, in light of the abysmal Saudi human rights record.

Back in October, Iran called on the international community to hold Saudi Arabia responsible for its covert nuclear activities.

"It is unfortunate to see hostility from countries like Saudi Arabia, while Iran has always offered peace plans to stabilize our region," Iran's permanent envoy to the UN General Assembly First Committee said on October 12.

"However, they have not accepted these peace demands and have instead continued their failed policies on military solutions to confront Iran, in addition to their vicious attempts to accuse Iran," Heidar Ali Balouji added.

Balouji also said Iran's nuclear activities are completely transparent, and Iran fully cooperates with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Islamabad can play unique role in saving JCPOA: Pakistan's president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Pakistan's President Arif Alvi has said Islamabad can play a unique role in salvaging the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially recognized as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



"The Pakistani government, especially Prime Minister Imran Khan, can play a unique role in maintaining order as well as addressing misunderstandings between Tehran and Washington," Alvi said in an interview with the Pakistani South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI).

In a speech at a joint meeting of the National Assembly and Senate on August 20, the Pakistani president appreciated Iran's support for Pakistan's regional positions.

During the interview with SASSI, Alvi also said Pakistan can play a very good role in China-U.S. ties.

Even now the role of Pakistan in regard to the Muslim Ummah has been very positive, the president said.

Earlier, Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said, "We believe the policy of engagement with Iran should be preferred over any sanctions and that is why we had supported the JCPOA."

He added the JCPOA represented a good example of how difficult issues can be addressed through diplomatic engagement and negotiations. "All parties to the JCPOA should adhere to the commitment made under the agreement."

JCPOA Joint Commission holds online meeting

Foreign ministers from JCPOA parties to hold talks on Dec. 21

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Joint Commission of the JCPOA was convened in Vienna on Wednesday. It was attended online by deputy foreign ministers and political directors from Iran, Russia, China, Britain, Germany, France and the European Union.

The EU was represented by Helga Schmid, the secretary general of the European External Action Service.

Chaired by Schmid, the meeting was meant to prepare informal talks among the foreign ministers on December 21.

It was the first meeting of the Joint Commission since Joe Biden won the U.S. presidential election. Biden has promised to return to the JCPOA.

The JCPOA, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was inked in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — China, France, Russia, the UK and U.S. — plus Germany, together with the European Union.

But on May 8, 2018, the outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the landmark pact and slapped sweeping sanctions on Iran as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign



against Tehran. The Trump administration imposed a total ban on Iran's oil export.

After waiting for a year and seeing no action by the remaining parties, especially the European trio (known as E3), Iran said its strategic patience is over and started to gradually reduce its commitments to the JCPOA.

Trump ditched the nuclear deal despite the fact that the JCPOA is endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

According to the JCPOA, Iran agreed to scale back its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions. Iran has repeatedly said if the remaining parties to the deal

honor their commitments, it will immediately reverse its decision.

The meeting also took place more than two weeks after the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, mainly blamed on Israel through a collusion with the Trump administration.

It came also after the Iranian parliament approved a legislation obliging the government to accelerate nuclear activities if the signatories to the JCPOA refuse to resume economic and financial trade with Iran.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed and obligated to implement legislation approved by the parliament after they have undergone legal processes," Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who represented Iran in the Joint Commission, said after the online meeting.

"Instead of condemning the cowardly assassination of Iran's prominent nuclear scientist, the three European governments condemned the legal punishment of a guilty individual," added Araghchi in an open reference to the execution of Rouhollah Zam, the operator of the Amad News website which incited violence in the 2017 riots.

Ghalibaf calls for closer interactions with Russia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has called for closer interactions with Russia, given the current state of the world and the region.

Ghalibaf made the remarks in a phone conversation with the Chairman of Russia's State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin on Tuesday, Mehr reported.

During the phone call, the two sides discussed expansion of parliamentary ties and recent developments in the region and the larger world.

Ghalibaf highlighted the strategic relations between the two countries, saying the Iranian Parliament is ready to enhance parliamentary ties with Russia.

Iran and Russia's parliaments should play their role well in strengthening and consolidating ties between the two nations, the speaker said.

Underlining the close relationship that exists between the parliament speakers of the two countries, Ghalibaf expressed the hope to visit Russia at an appropriate time and exchange views with the Moscow authorities.

According to Ghalibaf, Tehran and Moscow can play a common role in various fields based on the great potential of the two sides.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian speaker highlighted the need for continued consultations between the officials of the two countries.

For his part, Volodin underscored the importance of parliamentary relations between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Fortunately, he said, high-level meetings and talks are taking place between the two parliaments, and such relations have played an important role in developing and facilitating relations between the two countries.

Referring to the initiative of the joint high parliamentary commission, Volodin expressed the hope that the third meeting of the Iran-Russia joint parliamentary commission would be held in near future, taking into account the conditions caused by the coronavirus.

Volodin also described the relations between Iran and Russia as privileged and strategic.

He added the Russian parliament and government are



ready to continue to expand comprehensive talks and cooperation with Iran on expansion of political, parliamentary, economic, cultural as well as important regional and international issues.

Iranian ambassador strongly condemns report by some British MPs

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to London has censured a report by a number of British parliamentarians, saying it backs regime change in Iran through "maximum pressure" campaign introduced by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Writing on his Twitter account on Wednesday, Hamid Baeidinejad said the architect of the "maximum pressure" strategy who was defeated in the November election and is being driven out of the White House should serve as a lesson for them.

"We condemn in its strongest term a report



issued on developments regarding Iran by a few UK MPs. This report is not more than

advocating regime change through maximum pressure policy against Iran, while the main architect of this failed policy is driven out of the White House," Baeidinejad tweeted.

The tweet by the ambassador came after the MPs said the British government should designate Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.

According to Independent, the House of Commons foreign affairs committee argued in the report that the influential branch of the Iranian military should face sanctions.

Referring to the IRGC, committee chair-

man Tom Tugendhat claimed, "The group's destructive philosophy and violence within Iran and across the region make a compelling case for it to be singled out for sanction."

The committee's report also said the UK government should work with the U.S. to encourage Iran to play a "positive, constructive and predictable role" as a regional power.

They said the UK's strategy should send a clear message that "Iran's destabilizing activities are unacceptable because they adversely impact the region and its people, but that, when the time comes, the door is open for diplomacy."

Araghchi dismisses claim on contact with Biden's rep. in Oman

TEHRAN (MNA) — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has dismissed rumors of contact with the representative of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden during his recent visit to Oman.

In a note on Tuesday, Araghchi explained the details of his recent visit to Oman and called the speculation about meeting with the new U.S. president's representative in Oman a fantasy.

"After a two-day trip to Kabul, I had a four-hour trip to Oman on Monday to hold the 7th Joint Strategic Consultative Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Oman," he said.

He described the trip as "intensive and very useful," adding, "Among the countries of the Persian Gulf, Iran's relations with Oman have always had a special feature and importance."

Referring to rumors circulating in social media regarding contact with U.S. officials, the diplomat said, "The storytellers who talk about imaginary meetings do not seem to have a clear understanding of the current situation."

Following Araghchi's visit to Oman, some media outlets claimed that meeting with the new U.S. president's representative was among the Iranian deputy foreign minister's trip to the Arab neighbor.

This is while Iran had previously dismissed similar rumors.

Back in November, the New York Times claimed that Araghchi had tried to pass on to Biden's advisers through intermediaries Tehran's insistence that the United States return to the 2015 nuclear deal unconditionally before any talks resume.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry immediately denied the claim, saying the report was completely made-up. The ministry said that no direct or indirect contact had been made between Tehran and the Biden camp.

Rouhani says happy over Trump's leaving, but 'not excited' over Biden's coming

President Rouhani describes Trump as a person who even blocked the provision of vaccines to patients because he did not care about moral and humane principles

1 Speaking from Wilmington, Delaware, Biden declared that "the rule of law, our constitution and the will of the people prevailed. Our democracy — pushed, tested, threatened — proved to be resilient, true and strong."

Rouhani said, "The next U.S. administration can decide for itself. The path is open. If it wants to choose the right path, it's ready. If it wants to choose the wrong path, it's also ready."

Earlier this month, Biden reiterated in a New York Times interview that the U.S. would rejoin the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), if Iran returns to strict compliance.

Under the JCPOA, which Iran signed with six world powers in 2015, Iran agreed to

scale down its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Biden said a return to the agreement, which would include lifting the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, would serve as a "starting point to follow-on negotiations".

Trump unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018, and has since imposed a campaign of "maximum pressure" sanctions against Iran.

Elsewhere in his Wednesday remarks, Rouhani said, "We hope that the message of the American people's vote is clear to the new U.S. administration and that they know that this vote is for adhering to law, not law-breaking."

He said Iran is after the establishment of

security and stability across the world and seeks constructive interaction with countries that choose the path of interaction.

In remarks on Tuesday, Rouhani said Trump's actions against the Islamic Republic were based on his illusions.

"Trump did not recognize the capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran at all and acted on his own illusions," Rouhani said at a meeting of the government's economic coordination headquarters in Tehran.

He said the nation's resistance in the face of sanctions and the failure of Trump's economic war against Iran proved "great realities" to the world and to Iran's foes.

President Rouhani also urged Iran's enemies to abandon the wrong and failed policy



of sanctions against Tehran once and for all. Trump's defeat in the November presidential election was mainly the result of his failure in the economic war on Iran in addition to his other foreign policy failures, he added.

Clear message

Ayatollah Khamenei urges nullifying rather than removing sanctions

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has addressed a range of domestic and foreign policy issues in a meeting with a group of the organizers for commemorating the anniversary of the martyrdom of the martyrs of resistance Lieutenant General Haj Qasem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

The meeting came a few weeks before the first anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani and his comrade al-Muhandis near Baghdad's international airport earlier this year. The two martyrs were assassinated in an American drone strike on January 3 that was ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump. The strike brought Iran and the United States close to an all-out war as General Soleimani was an influential figure in Iran and beyond. In response, Iran showered a U.S. airbase in western Iran with missiles, causing brain injury among dozens of American servicemen.

However, Iran said time and again that the ultimate revenge for the assassination of General Soleimani would be far more important than a missile strike on a U.S. base. It would be the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the missile strike on the American airbase of Ain al-Asad was another slap on the face of America.

But the tougher slap, the Leader said, would be the soft victory over the superficial hegemony of arrogance and the expulsion of the Americas from the region. The former needs the determination of our young revolutionaries and devoted elites, and the latter needs the determination of all nations and the resistance policies, the Leader pointed out.

Ayatollah Khamenei stated, "Millions attending Martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi's funerals in Iraq and Iran was the first severe slap to the U.S. But the worse one is overcoming the hegemony of arrogance and expelling the U.S. from the region. Of course, revenge will be taken on those who ordered it and the murderers."

He added, "Martyr Soleimani defeated the front of arrogance both during his life and with his martyrdom. The U.S. president said they spent \$7 trillion in the region without achieving anything. The U.S. failed to achieve its goals in Syria and Iraq. The hero behind this major task is General Soleimani."



The Leader called the assassination of General Soleimani a "historic incident."

"The martyrdom of General Soleimani is a historic incident. He is a national hero for Iranians and the Islamic nation. That's why Iranians from different backgrounds - even those least expected - honor him. He was the one who promoted the model of Resistance among Islamic nations," Ayatollah Khamenei said, according to the khamenei.ir.

He also addressed the issue of taking revenge for the assassination of General Soleimani, saying that this revenge is surely going to happen.

"Those who ordered the murder of General Soleimani, as well as those who carried this out, should be punished. This revenge will certainly happen at the right time," the Leader said.

Iran should become strong in all areas'

In his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei also gave the Iranian officials a set of advices that if implemented, would make Iran immune to foreign pressure.

The first advice is that Iran should become strong in all areas, including in the defense, science and technology sectors.

"Because as long as we are not strong the enemies will continue to commit aggressions against [us.]," the Leader said.

The second advice is that Iranian officials must not trust the enemies.

"My definite advice is that do not trust the enemy. Do not trust the promises of the enemy to resolve the people's problems and build the country's future. Because these are not the promises of good people. Rather they are the promises of the villains. You should not forget enmities. You saw what Trump's America and Obama's America did to you. Hostilities aren't particular to Trump for them to end with him going. Obama's America also did bad things to you and the Iranian nation," the Leader said, noting that the Europeans also did not comply with their commitments towards Iran.

"The three European countries have displayed utter malice and duplicity too," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

Over the past few weeks, tensions between Iran and the three European countries - France, Germany and the UK (E3) - that are signatory to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have sharply worsened after they called for new negotiations with Iran on the nuclear and non-nuclear issues such as Iran's defensive missile program and its regional influence.

Following the U.S. election, the E3 foreign ministers held a trilateral meeting in Germany to coordinate their positions on Iran. After the meeting, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas made remarks that were indicative of a possibly new European policy toward Iran.

"A return to the previous agreement will not suffice anyway. There will have to be a

kind of 'nuclear agreement plus,' which is also in our interest. We have clear expectations of Iran: no nuclear weapons, but also no ballistic missile program that threatens the entire region. Iran also needs to play a different role in the region," Maas said in an interview with the German magazine, Der Spiegel. He added, "We need this agreement precisely because we distrust Iran. I have already coordinated with my French and British counterparts on this."

The Leader responded to the E3 calls for missile and regional talks, saying the Europeans had no right to call for such negotiations.

"The Europeans are constantly taking stances against Iran. While they are making the most improper interferences in the region's issues, they tell us not to interfere in the region. And while France and Britain possess destructive nuclear missiles and Germany is moving in this direction, they tell us not to possess missiles," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a recent meeting with high-ranking officials.

Directly addressing the Europeans, the Leader added, "What business is it of yours. Correct yourself first and then make remarks."

During his Wednesday meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei called on Iranian officials to refrain from pinning hope on the lifting of sanctions and, instead, work to nullify the sanctions.

"Lifting sanctions is in the enemy's hands. Nullifying them is in ours. We should work more on nullifying than removing them. I don't say we shouldn't pursue removing sanctions. But sanctions that were supposed to be lifted according to the JCPOA, 4 years ago, have intensified," he said.

This is the second time in less than a month that the Leader underlines the need to nullify the U.S. sanctions on Iran rather than removing them. In late November, he said that Iran had tried to remove the sanctions but they were not removed.

"There are two ways to tackle sanctions: 1) removing sanctions 2) nullifying and overcoming them. We tried the first option, removing sanctions, by negotiating for a few years, but to no use. The second option may have difficulties in the beginning but will have a favorable end," the Leader pointed out in November. "If succeed, through hard work and innovation, in overcoming the sanctions and the other side witnesses how sanctions were nullified, it will abandon sanctions gradually."

SPORTS

Iranian footballer Salimi optimistic about women's progress

SPORTS Salimi is an energetic right-winger who contributes to both attack and defense. She will probably be one of the Iranian national team's key members when the team restart their training camp.

She is happy with the progress of women's football in Iran and hopes for more success to come in the way of ladies' football. "The development of women's football in our country has been quite impressive during recent years. However, we still need and expect more support. The supports must be in various areas, such as media coverage of women's competitions, sponsorship, and financial issues regarding players' and coaches' contracts. We don't demand equal payments as men, something that is conducting in many countries. Still, at least we expect more support and attention to women's football, and sports in general, from Iranian officials," Salimi said.

CAS rejects appeal over Alekasir's ban in ACL final

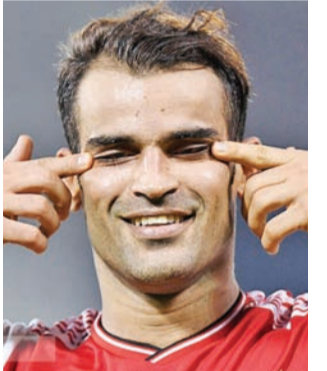
SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football club appealed against Issa Alekasir's suspension in the 2020 AFC Champions League final but Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has upheld the ban, meaning the forward will be absent in the match against Ulsan Hyundai.

Alekasir was handed a six-month ban prior to the Champions League semi-final against Saudi club Al Nassr for a «discriminatory gesture».

"The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has banned Issa Alekasir, of Persepolis FC, from taking part in any kind of football-related activity for six months for violating Article 58.1 of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code (2019 Edition)," the AFC said in a statement. "The ban will take effect immediately."

The Iranian club filed an appeal with CAS against Alekasir's ban but the case has been dismissed.

Persepolis iconic midfielders Ehsan Pahlevan and Vahid Amiri are also absent for the match.



Fans allowed into stadium to watch ACL final

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Qatar Football Association (QFA) have reached an agreement to allow local spectators into the stadium for the 2020 AFC Champions League final match.

The-afc.com reported that the further details on the match day protocols for fans will be finalized in the coming days.

Iran's Persepolis will play Ulsan Hyundai from South Korea on Saturday in Al Janoub Stadium in Doha, Qatar in what promises to be a classic battle.

Increasing the stakes, this year's final will be the first time the Continent's most sought after club prize will be decided over a single leg since 2012 and the first decider since 2010 to be staged in a neutral venue, as part of the AFC's commitment to ensure the health and wellbeing of all players, teams and match officials and all stakeholders against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The enticing Final looks set to be a memorable affair between Asia's best clubs from the East and West both equally determined to cement their place in Asian football history and claim one of the richest Continental club prizes in world football.

Persepolis were made to work hard for their spot in the Final after a slow start in the Group Stage in February, but hit the ground running after the West restart in September to finish as leaders of Group C.

The Iranian giants grew stronger with each battle, registering impressive victories over 2011 AFC Champions League winners and home favorites Al Sadd and Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the knockouts before displaying nerves of steel to overcome Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr on penalties in a nail-biting Semi-final to seal their second Final appearance in three years.

Meanwhile, Ulsan Hyundai have hardly put a foot wrong in their route to the final, having scored more than any other team in the tournament with 21 goals, winning every match since restarting their campaign in Qatar.

The 2012 Asian club champions eliminated Melbourne Victory and Beijing FC in the knockouts before an outstanding comeback saw them overcome this season's debutants Vissel Kobe in extra-time on Sunday.

Milad Ebadipour has great respect for Vladimir Alekno

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iranian international outside hitter Milad Ebadipour says that newly-appointed coach Vladimir Alekno is a great coach and everybody respects him.

Alekno, who leads Zenit at the moment, was appointed as Iran coach in November to lead the Persians in the Olympic Games, where they are drawn in Pool A along with Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela.

"Working with such a trainer will be an honor for us. In my opinion, Alekno is one of the best in his profession in the world. He proved it at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, where he led Russia to a gold medal. Alekno is a great coach that everyone respects. We can learn a lot from him. He definitely has an idea how to lead our team," Ebadipour said in an interview with Polish site sportowefakty.wp.pl.

"I talked to Zenit outside hitter Bartosz Bednorz about Alekno. He told me the Russian coach is a serious person and a good man," the 26-year-old player who was granted Polish citizenship in August went on to say.

Ebadipour believes that Iran can win a medal at the Olympic Games in Tokyo under leadership of the Russian coach.

"We want to be in top four. We play for medal. Our first match will be against powerhouse Poland but the victory will not make us reach the quarter-finals, and the loss will not destroy our chances. I think that each match is very important in the Olympics if you want to fight for medal," he concluded.

JCPOA Joint Commission meeting is regular and usual: Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, says the Joint Commission of the JCPOA (the official name for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal) is going to hold a normal and usual meeting.

"This meeting is one of the regular and usual meetings of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA, which is held every three months at the level of deputy ministers and political directors of JCPOA parties to review the implementation process and obstacles to the implementation of commitments by the parties," Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Wednesday morning.

He also said that the meeting will be held via videoconference due to Covid-19.

"Given the considerations related to Covid-19, this meeting will be held according to the schedule and via videoconference like many international meetings today, Wednesday, December 17, at 13:30 Tehran time," the spokesman noted.

Earlier this week, Saeed Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister of Iran for political affairs, announced that the Joint Commission will hold a meeting at the level of deputy ministers and political directors of the 4+1 (France, Russia, China, the UK, and Germany).

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

In late November, the European Union External Action Service said in a statement that the meeting will be held in Vienna. The statement said that the meeting will discuss ways to preserve the deal.

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

The Joint Commission is holding the meeting amid tensions between Iran the European Union over the execution of Rouhollah Zam, the operator of the Amad News website. The European signatories to the JCPOA denounced the executions as unacceptable, which prompted Iran to summon the French and German ambassadors to Tehran.

The Europeans refrained from participating in a business forum aimed at promoting Iran-Europe business relations due to Zam's execution. But an EU foreign service spokesman said that the execution of Zam will not negatively affect the JCPOA Joint Commission.

"I wouldn't mix the two issues," the EU spokesman said on Monday according to euobserver, adding, "You cannot

connect it [the JCPOA], or link it, or even compare it with the objectives of the [postponed EU business] forum."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also said that Zam's execution was unlikely to damage Iran-Europe relations. "I see it as unlikely that the case will damage Iran and Europe relations," the president said.

The Wednesday meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission is the first meeting after Joe Biden won the U.S. presidential election in November. During his election campaign, Biden said he would rejoin the deal if he won the election. After the election, he also said that he still stands by his views that he will rejoin the nuclear deal even though he said that doing so will be hard.

The U.S. has withdrawn from the JCPOA but its role in the nuclear deal will be discussed in the Wednesday meeting, according to Mikhail Ulyanov, the permanent representative of Russia to international organizations in Vienna.

"The meeting of the Joint Commission on JCPOA at the level of political directors in virtual format will start in 1 hour. The main topic is how to preserve the nuclear deal and ensure its full and balanced implementation. The role of US in this regard will inevitably be discussed," the Russian diplomat said in a tweet on Wednesday ahead of the meeting.

Rouhani congratulates Kazakhstan on National Day

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has sent a congratulatory message to his Kazakh counterpart Kassym-Jomart Tokayev congratulating him on National Day of Kazakhstan.

"I cordially congratulate your excellency and the people of your country on the 29th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan," Rouhani said in the message.

The president said Iran-Kazakhstan relations have been deepened for the good of the two nations.

"Over the past years, the relations between the two nations have been developed and deepened in the interests of the two nations. I hope that with joint efforts and

the use of existing capacities, we will see the strengthening of friendly relations between the two countries in all areas," Rouhani noted, according to the official website of the Iranian president. Rouhani also underlined the need to continue consultations between Iran and Kazakhstan.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Kazakhstan have common responsibilities and interests in strengthening regional stability and security and Islamic solidarity. In this regard, continuous consultations between the two countries at different levels are essential," the Iranian president said.

At the end of his message, Rouhani wished the Kazakh president health and success.

On Wednesday, Kazakhstan celebrated its 29th anniversary of independence.

Iran rejects any sabotage act in the Red Sea

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, has said that Iran rejects any sabotage act in the Red Sea after a fuel tanker was hit by an explosion at the Saudi Arabian port of Jeddah.

Responding to the explosion, Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Wednesday, "The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects any move and sabotage activities against the safety and security of navigation and the freedom of international trade."

The spokesman also expressed hope that the countries of the region would increase their efforts to enhance cooperation to ensure maritime security,

combat piracy and counter illegal trade.

On Monday, Saudi Arabia announced that a ship was hit by an explosion in Jeddah.

Citing an official spokesman at the Saudi Ministry of Energy, the official Saudi Press Agency said that a fuel transport ship, anchored in the fuel terminal in Jeddah, was attacked by an explosive-laden boat in the early hours of this morning.

"The attack resulted in a small fire, which emergency units successfully extinguished. The incident did not result in any casualties, and there was no damage caused to the unloading facilities, nor any effect on supplies," the agency said.

Intelligence minister briefs Parliament on Fakhrizadeh assassination

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Intelligence Minister Seyed Mahmoud Alavi held a meeting with the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Tuesday to brief the committee members on the latest activities of the Intelligence Ministry.

"During this meeting, the intelligence minister presented a report on his performance in the field of security, countering the enemy's influence, foreign surveillance and technical issues," said Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the parliamentary committee.

Amouei said the minister briefed the lawmakers sitting

on the committee about the ministry's efforts concerning the assassination of top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

On November 27 at 14:30, the convoy of Fakhrizadeh suddenly came under attack on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers east of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on the day of the assassination that the attack was carried out

with "serious indications of Israeli role." Since then, several Iranian officials have vowed to take revenge against Israel.

Amouei said Alavi also briefed the lawmakers on the measures the Intelligence Ministry has taken against the enemies.

"There was also a report on actions against the enemy's intelligence services. A report on the case of Abdullah Chab of the al-Nezal movement was also presented," Amouei said.

The MP added that the Intelligence Ministry surveillance shows that the enemies have made heavy financial and media investments to culturally influence Iran.

Alumina powder output climbs 2.3%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Production of alumina powder in Iran increased 2.3 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.

Production of alumina powder reached 156,000 tons during the eight-month period.

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

Saffron exports exceed \$117m in 8 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian saffron farmers exported 192 tons of their products worth \$117.5 million to foreign destinations during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, over 85 percent of the mentioned exports were made to five major customers of the Iranian saffron, IRNA reported.



Hong Kong with 53,147 kilograms (kg) worth \$36.831 million of imports, Spain with 33,180 kg worth \$21.528 million, the United Arab Emirates with 31,414 kg valued at \$18.7 million, Afghanistan with 17,992 kg and a value of \$11.270 million, and China with 18,598 kg and a value of \$10.782 million were Iran's top saffron buyers in the mentioned period.

Vietnam, France, Italy, Australia, Bahrain, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, India, Switzerland, Malaysia, Turkey, Indonesia, Portugal, Japan, South Africa, Denmark, Greece, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Austria, Russia, New Zealand, Mauritius, Azerbaijan, Philippines, Poland, Norway, Romania, Kenya, Lebanon, Estonia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Pakistan, Croatia, USA, and Kazakhstan were also mentioned as other buyers of Iranian saffron.

Iran is one of the world's top saffron producers and over 90 percent of its production is exported to foreign destinations.

Based on a multilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) and three of the country's banks in early October, 10 trillion rials (about \$238.09 million) was allocated for supporting the saffron industry.

The MOU was signed by PBO's Deputy Head Hamid Pour-Mohammadi and the managing directors of Agriculture Bank, Mellat Bank, and Export Development Bank of Iran.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Pour-Mohammadi noted that the mentioned funding would be provided to saffron producers and processors in the form of bank facilities to support the production of saffron and the packing and processing of this product which has been impacted by the outbreak of coronavirus.

According to the official, the interest rate of the mentioned facilities would be 18 percent, of which PBO has agreed to pay three percent.

TEDPIX drops over 14,000 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 14,868 points to 1.413 million on Wednesday.

Over 13.437 billion securities worth 138.641 trillion rials (about \$3.3 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

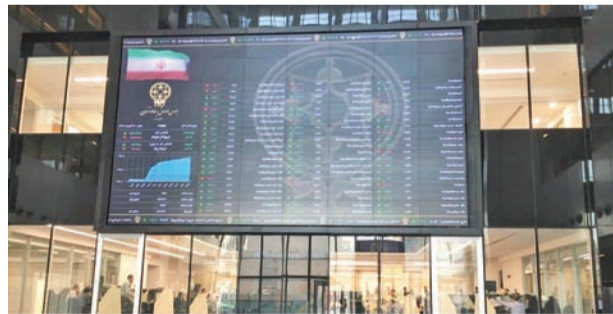
The index had gained 36,000 points, or two percent, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on December 11).

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.



Referring to the return of the uptrend to the stock market, Eshtiaqi said: "One of the factors affecting the uptrend in the stock market is the sharp correction of the index and stock prices in the market, which has once again motivated investors to re-enter the stock market."

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

"The market is not facing any fundamental issues currently, but shareholders should not be expecting surprising growth like what we saw in the first few months of this year," he said.

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

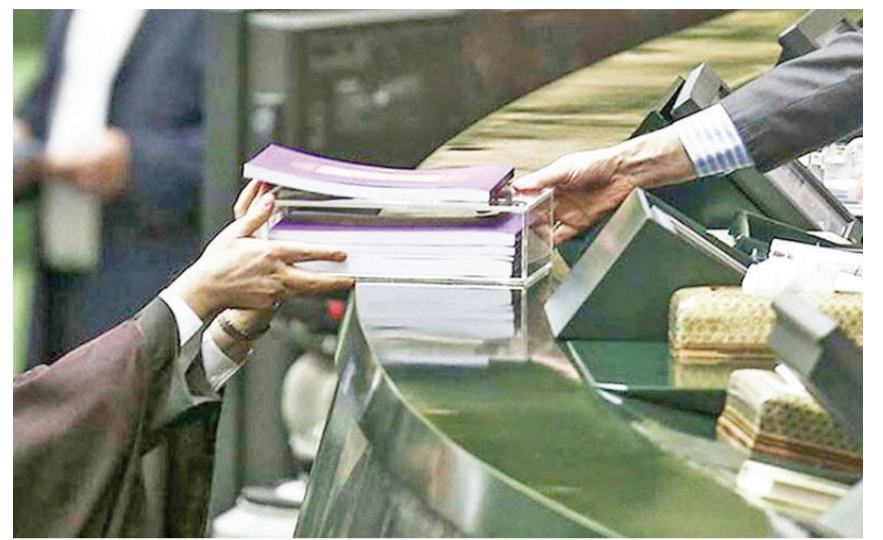
ICCIMA offers suggestions to amend next year's budget bill

ECONOMY TEHRAN — After reviewing the mentioned opinions, the research center has presented its final assessment and evaluation on the 1400 budget bill.

Uncertainty about the realization of the oil export resources set in the bill, excessive counting on the National Development Fund (NDF), tax increases and pressure on the private sector, the ambiguity of the government's foreign currency and supportive policies, issues

related to awarding development projects and lack of transparency, as well as uncertainty about the quality of the budget allocated to government-owned companies were some of the issues that the private sector pointed out about the next year's budget bill.

Redefining the budget structure based on the country's production capacities and not just resources from oil and gas exports, modifying the government ex-



penditures and expenses, clarifying the government's foreign currency and support policies in the upcoming year, and elimination of any budgetary use of National Development Fund (NDF) resources, providing a report on the justifications for forecasting a 55-percent tax increase

for legal entities, as well as considering the support for national production and encouraging investment and production, especially export products in the budget bill, were some of the suggestions provided by the ICCIMA Research Center for amending the bill.

Iran has great capacities to expand renewable energy market: energy min.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Wednesday that the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region's market for such energies.

In a video message in the 5th edition of Iran's International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition (Iran REC 2020), Ardakanian said: "Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc., the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development of the country's renewable energy sector."

"In recent years, the global renewable energy market and its governing policy frameworks have been developing rapidly and by installing 177 GW capacity of new renewable power plants with more than \$282 billion of investment in this field during 2019 (up one percent from the previous year), the total installed capacity of renewable power plants across the world has reached 2,533 GW."

Ardakanian said that wind and solar power plants with 622 and 584 gigawatts, respectively, have the highest ca-



capacity among renewable energy sources.

According to perspectives set in the Renewable Energy Roadmap (REmap) scenario presented by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the share of renewable energy could reach more than 30 percent in the global energy basket by 2030, he said.

The currently available technologies can make it possible to increase the share of renewable energies in the global energy mix to 36 percent by boosting energy efficiency as well as improving access to energy sources.

Like other developing countries, Iran is taking serious measures for expanding its presence in the global renewable energy scene.

The country is implementing several joint projects with the neighboring countries including Afghanistan in this regard.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for seven percent of Iran's total energy generation, versus natural gas's 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

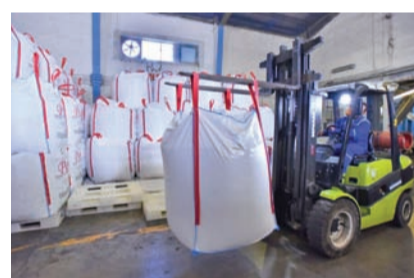
Back in October, the country's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA) announced that 28 new renewable power plants are going to be inaugurated across Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Iranian petchem industry introduces 2 new products

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's Karoon Petrochemical Company (KPC) has unveiled two new products, making the country the world's second producer of the mentioned items after the U.S. IRIB reported on Wednesday.

As reported, the production lines of the mentioned products, namely MDA and KHR-45, were officially launched with the aim of meeting the needs of downstream sectors and completing the value chain of the country's petrochemical sector.

Speaking on the sidelines of the unveiling ceremony, KPC Managing Director Alireza Sediqzadeh said: "These two products, which were imported into the country so far, are used as raw materials for the polyurethane industry, mainly for the production of foams



used in the car seats, home appliances, office furniture, and mattresses."

stating that the goal of Karoon Petrochemical Company in the year of "surge in production" has been diversifying products, Sediqzadeh said: "Since the beginning of this year (March 20), we have introduced

six new products to the market that play an important role in diversifying and completing the value chain of petrochemical products."

According to the official, so far the country imported up to \$30 million worth of KHR-45 every year to meet the domestic need.

"With the production of MDA, Iran has become the world's second producer of the mentioned product after the U.S.," he added. Back in November, KPC had unveiled two other products that will save the country \$27 million annually.

The petrochemical industry is playing a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, so that based on official data petrochemical exports constitute the second-largest hard currency earner in Iran after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already make up nearly 33 percent

of the country's non-oil exports.

Head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi said the country's petrochemical products basket is going to be more diversified by the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025).

The official noted that major development plans were underway for diversifying the country's petrochemical output considering the wide range of feedstock available.

"The macro development planning that the company is currently making for the petrochemical industry is beyond the second and third leaps of the industry, and we expect the company's projects directorate to follow up and help achieve these plans," Mohammadi said in early September.

Manufacturing of refrigerators, freezers increases 29%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The manufacturing of refrigerators and freezers has increased 29.2 percent in Iran during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data show that 1.334 million sets of the mentioned products have been manufactured in the eight-month period.

Iran has targeted manufacturing of 12 million sets of home appliances in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry had announced in early October.

Keyvan Gardan, the director for the electrical and metals industries and home appliances office of the ministry, put the annual production of home appliances at nine million sets in the past Iranian year.

The official further stated, "Following the policies of Resistance Economy, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and



Trade has defined a path for the development of domestic industry, and we will pass this way with our all-out efforts."

He said that 500 production units with an annual turnover of \$6 billion are currently active in the field of home

appliances throughout the country.

In early July, Hamidreza Ghaznavi, the spokesman of Iran's Home Appliances Manufacturers Union, had said that Iran is expected to become an exporter of some home appliance items as of the next Iranian calendar year (starts in March 2021).

"If the currency problems are solved and steel sheets and some petrochemical products are provided for this industry, we will become an exporter of some household appliances by the next year," he said at the time.

In recent years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has not been an exemption and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the previous calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) this industry's production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

Loading, unloading of goods up over 40% at ports of Gilan Province

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Loading and unloading of commodities have risen more than 40 percent at the ports of Gilan Province, in north of Iran, since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 20), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Hamidreza Abaei, the director-general of Gilan Province's Ports and Maritime Department, announced that 1.06 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at Anzali and Asatra ports since the year start.

He said 920,000 tons of goods have been loaded and unloaded at Anzali Port, and 140,000 tons at Astara Port, showing 42 percent and 44 percent rise, respectively, year on year.

Mohammad Rastad, the head of Iran's

Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), said on Wednesday that the country's trade gateways were not closed even a moment despite the sanctions and pandemic, adding that loading and unloading of goods, especially the essential goods, are continuously conducted at the ports.

As announced by the PMO head, loading and unloading of commodities are being conducted continuously at the ports of Iran while the health requirements are completely met.

Rastad has reiterated that all port operations are done observing healthcare protocols and the principles set by the Coronavirus Containment Headquarters.

In a statement previously released by the PMO, the organization declared that loading and unloading of commodities are underway continuously at the country's ports.

While the enemy is trying to halt Iran's

exports and imports through imposing sanctions, operation at Iranian ports are underway without interruption as the result of the all-out efforts of the organization's personnel, the statement read.

Meanwhile, as the PMO head has announced, 11 new development projects with 59 trillion rials (over \$1.4 billion) of investment are currently underway at the Iranian ports.

Not only the sanctions could not stop development activities at the ports of Iran, some new development projects have been also defined, Rastad has underscored.

The third phase of the development plan of Shahid Rajaee Port is one of the major projects which is going to go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral



sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play some significant role in this battle, and the ongoing operation at the ports indicates that they are playing their part perfectly.

As reported, loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Iran and Turkey must use their geostrategic potential in face of Zionism: Turkish politician

“Erdogan recited a poem during a parade in Baku, especially in a sensitive period that we have enemies who are waiting to exploit opportunity to undermine Turkey-Iran ties”

It is of course possible for them to solve this misunderstanding and similar problems that may arise between them through common understanding and diplomacy, and we all have a great duty to eliminate the negative atmosphere that foreign powers try to create through the media.

It is to be taken into consideration that a weak Turkey and Iran helps imperialist global forces to reinforce their oppressive policies. For example, Fahmi Adak, the Turkish foreign minister in Najmuddin Erbakan's government, made a remark in response to the Americans' stance against Iran, that contains important lessons for us.

Fahim Adak arrived in the United States in January 1997 at the invitation of U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. on behalf of the Welfare State, and participated in a tripartite meeting with Madeleine Jana Korbel Albright.

Adak used the opportunity to convey the economic policies of the Welfare government to the American side.

In this regard Madeleine Albright expressed her deep displeasure over Turkey's policy of buying gas from Iran.

Fahim Adak told American secretary of state “In Turkey, we get natural gas from the Russian Federation. You also have problems with them on a large scale, but it didn't bother you, while the natural gas we buy from Iran annoys you. We are acting Turkish economic interests.”

“We buy natural gas wherever we find it at affordable prices,” he emphasized. “We can get it from Iran, Russia or other places.”

After Adak's response Madeleine Albright



could find no further words for these remarks and simply said, “You are right.”

3. What is Turkey's position toward pan-Turk separatists?

Here we understand the Turkish government's attitude towards Iran's territorial integrity and independence. As the Welfare Party, we want to state that we prioritize the respect to independence and territorial integrity of Iran, in line with our national vision.

Separatist approaches are only in line with desire of foreign powers and policy of “divide and rule”.

The policy of domination, which the Zionists are trying to impose on the re-

gion by promoting the separatist tribalist attitudes, will lead to division and ethnic strife they want to plant among Muslims. But these attempts will eventually face the fate of the Berlin Wall.

As Gianni de Michelis said, “The Berlin Wall was a building from the last century; the next structure must be a bridge.”

Here, in the words of the “bridge” of Gianni de Michelis, our greatest wish is that the Aras River be a bridge, not a separation.

3. How do you evaluate Biden's attitudes toward Turkey?

Biden is expected to do the same with Turkey which Obama followed. He is prob-

ably trying to bring Turkey closer to Israel.

Albeit his main goal would be an insidious policy to redesign the Middle East (West Asia) through Israel.

Biden, based on the Zionist policies, is keen to follow the policy of separatism and division to deal with countries like Turkey, Iraq and Syria. He will certainly make every effort to reach these goals.

Turkey and Iran have great responsibilities in this regard.

Arbakan's words about Iran was correct as he said: “It is time to take the lead from them the Zionists by economic power that we have gained in collaborating with our ally Iran”.

So, the best response is the geographical power balance.

The U.S. policy toward the Middle East (West Asian) is not only unfair, but also has severely affected Iran and Turkey.

There are great lessons to be learned from the long-standing sanctions against Iran.

The United States has gained its economic and hegemonic superiority through threatening oil-rich (Persian) Gulf states.

Iran and Turkey must use their geostrategic potential to eliminate the threat of global Zionism.

The stability of Iran is equivalent to the stability of Turkey. To achieve this goal, the unity of regional power is needed more than ever.

Economic, political and security cooperation between Iran and Turkey is needed to improve the strategic position of both countries.

Russia says Trump's policies have eroded trust in U.S.

By Mohammad Ali Saki

TEHRAN — Director of the Russian Center for Energy and Security Studies (CENESS) says the policies adopted by the outgoing Trump administration have raised serious questions over the reliability of the U.S. as a partner.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Anton Khlopov notes that “Trump's administration foreign policy raised a critically important question how reliable is the United States as a partner of a treaty or in other international deals.”

The United States, under the Trump administration, unilaterally pulled out of certain international deals and treaties, including the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement – JCPOA – signed in July 2015.

The CENESS director says the Trump administration “withdrew from the JCPOA, INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) treaty as well as from a number of other bilateral trade or security-related agreements.”

The following is the text of the interview:

■ How do you assess the U.S. administration's behavior at the international level given that Washington has quit many international agreements such as the JCPOA?

A: The statement from Jo Biden that he is interested to return the United States to the JCPOA should be welcomed but of course there are many challenges to bring the United States back because there are some technical issues, there are some legal issues; also there are some forces inside and outside the United States which are interested to prevent rejoining the JCPOA. Of course, there is another issue that how to prevent unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the deal again. I think it would be very important to think how to develop a mechanism to guarantee that Washington would not announce another unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA in four years' time following the arrival of a new administration, especially since Joe Biden is unlikely due to his age to run for another term.

But this kind of new mechanism to guarantee that Washington will not withdraw from the JCPOA should be developed or all parties of the U.S. should try to develop that after Washington rejoining the JCPOA or after Iran return to full compliance to the deal because I think it must be the first step for Washington to rejoin the deal before any other related issue should be discussed. Firstly, the U.S.

and Iran should return to the JCPOA as it was originally adopted in July 2015.

■ How can Iran or Russia trust the U.S. now that Washington has unilaterally pulled out of international deals?

A: Trump's administration foreign policy raised a critically important question how reliable is the United States as a partner of the treaty or in other international deals because Trump's administration withdrew from the JCPOA, INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) treaty as well as from a number of other bilateral trade or security-related agreements.

The good news is that the JCPOA is multinational. It means that multinational support makes this deal more sustainable and I think the recent developments when the Trump administration was trying to reinterpret those agreements in a way to condemn Iran in the Security Council, but those attempts failed twice, the first was about conventional arms export and import to and from Iran and the second was when the Trump administration tried to use so-called snapback mechanism. This is another evidence that actually negotiators from Iran and P5+1 made a very good deal when they negotiated the JCPOA. Even with all power and leverage of the United States including military, political, and economic, the Trump administration was not able to kill the deal despite the will to do so. This is another evidence of the importance of multinational diplomacy.

■ How do you assess the Iran-Russia relationship in the light of the JCPOA?

A: First of all, I hope very much that full compliance with the JCPOA would restore all original parties of the deal including Washington and Iran. I should mention that Russia-Iran relations should develop further not only in the light of that process but independently because the two countries are neighbors and strong and solid bilateral relations should be a basis for working to gather in many fields; in science, in the economy as well as in political relations. Here I should mention that despite those sanctions and Trump administration policies, the good news is that bilateral trade between the two countries is growing according to official statistics of the Russian Federation. It increased 20 percent last year and even during the first half of the year increased a few percent despite the pandemic. I should also underline here that political ties between the two countries are very strong. During



spring and summer this year Foreign Minister Zarif visited Russia three times.

It is an indicator of how close our political exchanges are and it will be very important to convert those active political exchanges to more active trade which goes beyond importing food, Iranian vegetables, and fruits to Russia and we do need big infrastructure projects like Bushehr in other energy-related and in infrastructure-related areas. If we succeed to expand our cooperation in those areas I think it will make our relations even more sustainable and stronger.

■ Do you think that Iran and Russia have succeeded to widen the scope of their political partnership to increase their economic interactions as well?

A: It is easy and difficult at the same time to explain why Russia-Iran economic relations, while improving, are still quite limited. The first simple answer is that Iran traditionally is a big oil exporter and Russia is a big exporter of oil as well. It means that this is not what Russia would be interested to cooperate with Iran.

Another and probably more complicated element of the answer we should work together to improve the business mutual environment to expand the trade between the two countries. I have an impression though I am not an expert on economic cooperation between Iran and Russia. I have an impression that business people from our country and Russian companies don't know well how to work in Iran's environment and vice versa. I think there should be additional efforts by business councils of two countries that would facilitate the expansion of bilateral trade and economic ties between the two countries and especially efforts should be made on awareness.

Gen. Soleimani sought to bring peace, security to region: Iraqi analyst

By Fatemeh Salehi

TEHRAN — Hailing General Soleimani's role in defeating ISIL terrorists and thwarting conspiracies of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia in West Asia, an Iraqi analyst said that Martyr Soleimani sought to bring peace and security to the region.

Speaking in an interview with Mehr News

Agency, Ali Fahim, an Iraqi political analyst made some remarks over the assassination of Martyr Qassem Soleimani who lived his life in the path of Resistance and fight against terrorist groups in West Asia.

On 3 January 2020, general Soleimani, Commander of the IRGC Quds Force was martyred in an airstrike at Baghdad's international airport.

The U.S. airstrike also martyred Abu Mah-

di al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMU), and some of the other forces of the PMU along with their guests.

Hailing the key role of General Soleimani in countering the ISIL terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq, the analyst said, “The role of General Soleimani's military planning as well as his organized strategy and cleverness in

defeating ISIL and declaring victory against these terrorist groups is undeniable.”

As General Soleimani sought to bring peace and security to the region and to strengthen the unity of the Iraqi Shias and political groups, the U.S. considered him as a danger, Fahim said and added that, in this regard, General Soleimani's measures were to the detriment of the interests of the U.S. and Zionist Regime.

Biden will keep using U.S. sanctions weapon but with sharper aim

Joe Biden will not shy away from using President Donald Trump's weapon of choice - sanctions - as he seeks to reshape America's foreign policy, according to people familiar with his thinking.

But when Biden takes office on Jan. 20, he is expected to quickly begin recalibrating Trump's blunt-force approach while taking time to deliberate before making any major changes with top sanctions targets like Iran and China, the sources said.

His challenge will be to sort out which sanctions to keep, which to undo and which to expand. This will come after four years in which Trump has imposed punitive economic

measures at a record pace - often unilaterally - but has failed to bend U.S. rivals to his will.

The revised strategy will be crafted with help from a broad review of sanctions programs that will begin soon after Biden's inauguration, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

But even before this assessment is complete, Biden is expected to make clear that sanctions will remain a central instrument of U.S. power - although it will no longer be deployed with the “America First” bravado that has driven Trump's foreign policy.

“It won't be a pullback or a push forward,” said one person

close to Biden's transition team. “It will be a readjustment in the use of the sanctions tool.”

Among the early possibilities, according to two sources, could be lifting sanctions Trump imposed in September on officials of the International Criminal Court over its investigation into whether the U.S. military committed war crimes in Afghanistan, a move denounced by European allies.

Biden could also match British and European Union sanctions against Russians over the poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, said one person familiar with the matter. Moscow has denied any involvement.

Biden's team had no official comment.

Hundreds of migrants abused in Saudi deportation center: HRW

Saudi Arabia is detaining hundreds of mainly Ethiopian migrants in squalid conditions in Riyadh, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said, quoting some as saying they had been tortured or beaten.

The migrants at the center, mostly from Ethiopia but also from other African or Asian countries, were being held pending deportation, most having been arrested by Saudi authorities because they did not hold valid residency permits.

The report, released on Tuesday, quoted detainees as saying they were held in extremely overcrowded rooms and that guards tortured and beat them with rubber-coated metal rods, leading to at least three allegations of deaths in custody between October and November.

HRW said it spoke to seven Ethiopians last month being held and two Indians who were recently deported. All of them said they were kept in small rooms in a detention center with up to 350 others.

Indonesia denies in talks with Israel

Foreign Affairs Ministry's spokesman Teuku Faizasyah denies Israeli media claims of Indonesia seeking to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel.

Last week, Israeli news outlet claimed that Indonesia is likely to establish ties with Israel after four Arab states -- the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco -- decided to open diplomatic relations with Jerusalem. Indonesia debunked these claims, saying they have never communicated with Israel nor changing their position in the Palestinian issue.

“There are two things that I would like to say. First, the Foreign Affairs Ministry has never been in contact with Israel. Secondly, when it comes to running foreign policy, the Foreign Affairs Ministry is still consistent with Palestine in accordance with the mandate of the constitution,” Teuku said in Jakarta on Monday.

Indonesia often reiterates their stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in numerous international meetings.

At the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September, President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo expressed Indonesia's unceasing support for Palestine. The president highlighted how Palestine is the only participant of the 1955 Bandung Conference -- a world summit on world peace attended by 29 Asian and African nations -- who has not reached independence.

In June, Indonesia, along with Tunisia and South Africa, initiated a ministerial-level UN Security Council meeting to discuss Israel's annexation plan over the West Bank. At the meeting, Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi called the international community to oppose Israel's plan as it violates the international laws and threatens the future of the Palestinian people.

“Injustice happens not because of the absence of justice. Injustice happens because we allow it to happen. It's time we stop the injustice,” Retno said, as quoted by the ministry's official website.

Erdogan says U.S. sanctions an attack on Turkey's rights

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that U.S. sanctions imposed on Turkey over its purchase of Russian defense systems were an attack on Ankara's sovereign rights aimed at deterring its defense industry, a move which he said was bound to fail.

On Monday, Washington imposed the sanctions targeting NATO member Turkey's Defense Industry Directorate (SSB), its chief Ismail Demir and three other employees over its acquisition of Russian S-400 missile defense systems, Reuters reported.

In his first public comments on the move, Erdogan said that problems stemming from the sanctions would be overcome and vowed to ramp up efforts towards an independent defense industry, while criticizing Washington for sanctioning a NATO ally.

“What kind of alliance is this? What kind of partnership is this? This decision is an open hostile attack against our country's sovereign rights,” he said in a televised address.

“The real goal is to block the advances our country started in the defense industry recently and to once again render us absolutely dependent on them,” he added.

“Surely there will be problems, but each problem will push open a door for us for a solution.”

Resistance News

Mishaal: The people who bet on Israel will lose

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Former head of Hamas's desk political bureau Khaled Mishaal has asserted that those who wager on Israel and their lackeys in the region will lose and will find out one day the worth of their Arab nation.

“We are following the developments and changes in the regional and international arenas, and we are aware that there is a new administration led by Biden ascending on the ruins of the bizarre administration of Trump, but we will deal with it wisely and firmly,” Mishaal said in an interview conducted by the Gaza-based media institution al-Risalah.

The Hamas official affirmed that his Movement would deal with such developments and changes with awareness and without betting on anyone.

He also urged the countries that still support the Palestinian cause to meet and deal seriously with the new situation because others do not hesitate to talk openly about their agendas.

Talking about his Movement, Mishaal said that Hamas, together with other partners in the Palestinian arena, restored the prestige of Jerusalem and the national rights and constants, lauding the Movement's openness towards others internally and externally.

He underlined his Movement's keenness on working with its Palestinian partners on the basis of upholding the resistance option and the national constants.

Yazd caravansaries weighed for collective UNESCO tag

TOURISM TEHRAN — A select of nine caravansaries, scattered across Yazd province, have been assessed to be a part of a shortlist of Iranian historical caravansaries being prepared for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The dossier of nine historical caravansaries scattered across the province has been compiled in order to be added to the list of the Iranian caravansaries to be submitted to UNESCO, provincial tourism chief has said.

The record bears all-inclusive details of documentation, land surveying, historical investigations, Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi said. "Saryazd, Zeineddin, Meybod's Shah Abbasi, Qaleh Khargushi, and Kermanshahan are among the selected caravansaries each characterizing a distinctive feature... for instance, Zeineddin is the only circular caravansari in the province or Saryazd is considered as the biggest caravansari complex."



Last year, the tourism ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravansaries for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

Caravansari is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara". The first stand for a group of travelers and sara means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Iran's earliest caravansaries were built during the Achaemenid era (550-330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravansaries across the country. For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravansari, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras. Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Webinar to discuss AI in tourism

TOURISM TEHRAN — An online seminar will be discussing the role of artificial intelligence in the tourism industry on Saturday with shifting the focus on museology, and museum management.

Organized by the tourism ministry in collaboration with the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the committee of new tourism businesses at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, the session will review the basic concepts of artificial intelligence, its irreplaceable role in increasing productivity, decision-making accuracy, creative achievements, innovations, and staff and experts empowerment, ILNA reported on Tuesday.

Iranian scholar Yahya Tabesh and ICOM-Iran director Seyyed Ahmad Mohit-Tabatabaei are scheduled to give speeches on developing business strategies, intelligent information services, and their links with the tourism industry, the report added.



The participants will also exchange views on the capabilities of the tourism industry in the sustainable development of the country, the need to synchronize with the latest technologies in the world, increasing creativity, growth, and innovation in various sectors of tourism and museum management.

By making a profound breakthrough in technology, known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, AI contributes to creative and complex activities, strategic decision-making, and modeling and simulation.

Using artificial intelligence, tasks that normally require the use of human intelligence and decision-making power can be delegated to machines and robots, which could save resources and increase productivity while reducing the likelihood of error.

One of the most common usages of artificial intelligence in the tourism industry is to provide online customer service in hotels, travel agencies, museums, historical sites, and recreational centers in such a way that all questions and requests can be answered and guided without human intervention. It could also identify the needs, tastes, and expectations of the customers of this industry by observing and analyzing user interactions, searches, and other activities within the tourism website and platforms.

Many tourism businesses use artificial intelligence to process and analyze their financial and business data, and artificial intelligence will create a fundamental change in various sectors of the tourism industry in near future.

Iranian elements re-endorsed as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

→ Regarding the case of traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf, the official, who participated in the online session, explained: "I completely agree with this committee that the impact of tourism in the protection of the intangible heritage of this valuable element should be given much attention. We also pay a lot of attention to this special subject... we pay special attention to..."

"I would also like to express my thanks to all the captains, sailors, and mayors of Iranian ports on the northern shores of the Persian Gulf."

The endangered Iranian elements along with other seven others from Brazil, Indonesia, Mali, Mongolia, Uganda, and the UAE had been scheduled to be reassessed during the event, according to the organizers.

The two elements were inscribed on the list during the sixth session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was held in Bali, Indonesia in November 2011.

The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is composed of the intangible heritage elements that concerned world cultural communities and the states' parties should consider urgent measures to keep them alive. Inscription on this list helps to mobilize international cooperation and assistance for stakeholders to undertake appropriate safeguarding measures, according to the UN cultural body.



Naqqali is the oldest form of dramatic performance in Iran and has long played an important role in society from the courts to the villages. The performer—naqqal or morshed—recounts stories in verse or prose accompanied by gestures and movements, and sometimes, instrumental music and painted scrolls.

Naqqali requires considerable talent, a retentive memory, and the ability to improvise with

skill to captivate an audience. Naqqals wear traditional Iranian costumes, but may also put on ancient helmets or armored jackets during performances to help recreate battle scenes.

Naqqali was formerly performed in coffeehouses, tents of nomads, houses, and historical venues such as ancient caravansaries. However, a decline in the popularity of coffeehouses combined with new forms of entertainment has resulted

in diminishing interest in naqqali performance.

Besides, the aging of master performers and the decreasing popularity among younger generations have caused a steep drop in the number of skilled naqqals, threatening the survival of this dramatic art.

Iranian Lenj vessels are traditionally hand-built and are used by inhabitants of the northern coast of the Persian Gulf for sea journeys, trading, fishing, and pearl diving.

The traditional knowledge surrounding Lenjs includes oral literature, performing arts and festivals, in addition to the sailing and navigation techniques and terminology, and weather forecasting that are closely associated with sailing, and the skills of wooden boat-building itself. The navigational knowledge used to sail Lenjs was traditionally passed on from father to son.

Specific music and rhythms also constituted inseparable parts of sailing in the Persian Gulf, with sailors singing particular songs while working.

Nowadays, the community of practitioners is small and mainly comprises older people. Wooden Lenjs are being replaced by cheaper fiberglass substitutes, and wooden Lenj construction workshops are being transformed into repair shops for older Lenjs. The philosophy, ritualistic background, culture, and traditional knowledge of sailing in the Persian Gulf are gradually fading, although some of the associated ceremonies continue to be practiced in a few places.

Pottery village to make debut in Alborz

TOURISM TEHRAN — A crafts village devoted to the art of pottery is planned to be formed for the first time in Alborz province near the capital Tehran, provincial tourism chief announced on Tuesday.

Launching such a handicraft hub is being pursued by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of the province to extend support for the potters and related workshops, Fereydoun Mohammadi said.

For this purpose, a target village has been selected and the project is scheduled to be implemented by the experts after providing the necessary conditions, the official added.

He also noted that the implementation of this project could create job and economic prosperity in the region, which is ranked third countrywide in pottery production.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for having the topmost number of cities and villages registered by the World

Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In late January, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qasemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious



gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

London museum to host major exhibit on Iranian history and arts

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) will be hosting a major exhibition on Iranian history and arts.

Titled "Epic Iran", the exhibition will open to the public on February 13, 2021, exploring 5,000 years of art, design, and culture of the ancient country, and its monumental artistic achievements, which are still unknown to many.

Just as London museums are closing down again due to heightened Covid-19 restrictions, the Victoria and Albert Museum has optimistically announced further details about its forthcoming 2021 blockbuster survey on Iran.

Epic by name and epic by nature, this exhibition will cover an ambitious 5,000 years of Iranian history through 350 objects. The exhibition is billed as "the first UK exhibition in 90 years to present an overarching narrative



An incense-burner in the shape of a lion (1000-1100) is on show in the "Literary Excellence" section, demonstrating how texts decorated objects (Photo: © Musee du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Hughes Dubois)

spanning 5,000 years of Iranian art, design and culture". Split into ten, fairly chronological sections, it will have an "immersive design" that sets it in a city, complete with a gatehouse, gardens, a palace, and a library. The show will include works borrowed from collections in the U.S., Russia, France, Belgium, and the UK.

Starting in 3,200 BC, the show will first explore the varied landscape of Iran before moving on to early Persian civilizations, the Persian Empire, and later Sassanid rule and Zoroastrianism.

"Visitors will be astonished by the quality and variety of objects from Ancient Iran, showing that it had a civilization every bit as advanced and prosperous as those in neighboring Mesopotamia and Egypt," says John Curtis, the co-curator of Epic Iran. "It will be clear that the Persian Empire, founded in 550 BC, inherited a very rich legacy from

earlier periods of Iranian history."

Another section in the show will look at the emergence and establishment of Islam following the Arab conquest in the mid-seventh century. The display will include Qurans and manuscript illuminations, including the Horoscope of Iskandar Sultan—a 15th-century manuscript featuring the horoscope of a Timurid prince—on loan from London's Wellcome Collection.

Literature is an overarching theme of the show, with a section devoted to poetry and its use in manuscripts and another dedicated to Ferdowsi's 11th-century epic poem Shahnameh (book of kings).

The final section will cover a tumultuous period of rapid social and political change in Iran from the 1940s to the present day, which has seen the Islamic Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and ongoing international tensions.

Chavoshi reciting; a long-lasting tradition in Shahroud

By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig

Chavoshi is a Shiite religious song for departing and welcoming pilgrims to places of pilgrimage. The ritual of Chavoshi reading for pilgrims to the cities of Karbala, Mashhad, Najaf, Mecca, and Medina has been common since the Safavid and Qajar periods and has received much attention in the recent century. In addition to Semnan province and particularly Shahroud county, Chavoshi reading is also common in other provinces such as Khuzestan, Hormozgan, Bushehr, and the northern provinces of Iran.

"Chavosh" is a Turkish word, meaning a herald, courier, caravan leader, one who invites people to visit the holy shrines and the house of God, the Kaaba or Holy Cube.

In other words, Chavoshi is one of the types of oral literature. Chavoshi's collection of poems was recited in the ceremony of accompanying and welcoming the pilgrims of Mashhad, the pilgrims of Mecca, and the holy shrines. In the distant past, Chavoshi reciters were considered part of the expedition caravan; reciting poems, which included the praise of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and his family, because of the spiritual aspect hidden in it is considered a cultural heritage of Iranians. With the industrialization of societies, this tradition is on the verge of extinction, while the textual analysis of epic poems in Chavoshi reveals that these poems refer to the real aspects of the pilgrim's journey and purpose.

In addition to the court and government aspect, which was mainly praised by rulers and kings, it was also a popular ritual. This ceremony, as the heritage of Iranian culture, has changed in content with the entrance of Islam. In this section, instead of joy and applause, praise and glorification of Imams and religion replaced the praise of kings and rulers. Chavoshi reading among all the people was different from the method used by the courtiers. This tradition has long been popular among people in different parts of Iran.

Chavoshi reciters also played the role of the caravan awake and accompanied the caravans. They patrolled the caravan until the morning when the caravan was resting



and walked around the caravan so that if they heard any sign of a bandit

attacking the caravan or seeing a predator attacking the caravan. They blow the trumpets so that the women and children wake up and are not afraid of the sound of gunfire and the whistling of bullets, and the gunmen get ready. The Chavoshi singers had a good voice. They chose rhythmic poems based on the difficulty of the path and recited them during the journey. These poems were both instructive and relieved the travelers' fatigue.

In Shahroud, Chavoshi reciting is a means of informing the people of the neighborhood about the pilgrimage trips of individuals, which is more or less performed today. Chavoshi's poems are mostly made by the taste and imagination of enthusiasts, and their poets are often unknown; that is why some of Chavoshi's poems lack regular rhyme.

It is noteworthy that the families of the pilgrims both departing and arriving ceremonies serve sweets, local breads, and fruit juice or tea to the attendees and greeters during the Chavoshi ritual. Also, sacrifice sheep after returning for pilgrims and burn Sepand (plant seeds that burn to ward off evil eyes) in charcoal fireplaces.

Chavoshi themes

Looking at the poems of Chavoshi, they can be divided

into three general sections in terms of structure based on the subject. The general structure of Chavoshi is divided into the following three sections based on the subject: Chavoshi before departure; Chavoshi along the way; Chavoshi on arrival.

Chavoshi is usually composed of Iranian music on the "Chahargah" instrument and is performed without the accompaniment of musical instruments and is usually sung by several people. Two or more singers exchange Chavoshi poems with a specific voice and answer each other. Women may even join men in this harmony.

Chavoshi reciting requires more than anything esoteric purity, and sincerity, and in the next stage to gain experience and practice. After reaching the master's level, the experienced Chavoshi reciters tried to train students; therefore, they taught the learners steps such as reading the Chavosh texts, memorizing, consonant, and accompanying the skilled Chavosh.

Due to its artistic subtleties, Chavosh reciting was sometimes performed as a solo reading and sometimes as a consonant, which had a special atmosphere in the second form. In this type of Chavosh reading, pilgrims and accompanying people are in harmony with the Chavosh. In such a spiritual atmosphere, excitement and passion were everywhere and for a moment pilgrims and non-pilgrims were whispering to God Almighty and His saints. At the same time, spirituality caused people to forget if they had a grudge against each other in their hearts and to be ruled by love and empathy.

During the Qajar period, a lot of attention was paid to Chavoshi. After his first trip to Europe (1873), Nasser al-Din Shah intended to prepare a venue for the play in the style of European theater, imitating the architectural style of the Royal Albert Hall in London, but the clergy opposed the European style theater. It became a place for reciting Taziyeh or religious theater and sending travelers to Karbala, Najaf, Mashhad, Damascus, Mecca, and Medina. Chavoshi reading has grown significantly in the Qajar period, especially since the time of Nasser al-Din Shah. But according to available sources, this custom has been common since the Safavid period.

Iran seizes over 46 tons of narcotics, psychoactive drugs in month

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran seized 46,633 kilograms of various narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances from October 22 to November 11, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations has said.

The highest seized type was opium with 36,288 kg, followed by 3,958 kg of hashish, 3,931 kg of other substances including precursors and psychotropic pills, 936 kg of Grass, 634 kg of Morphine, 558 Heroin and 265 kg of Crystal, he wrote in a statement published on Monday.

Negotiations between Iran, Azerbaijan anti-narcotics police

The statement also said at a virtual meeting between the chiefs of Iranian and Azerbaijani anti-narcotics police, the two sides stressed the need for increased bilateral cooperation, exchanging information, and enhancing cooperation in related areas.

Iran, Italy to strengthen anti-narcotics co-op

Moreover, after a meeting with the liaison officer of the anti-narcotics police of Italy Salvatore Labarbera, the chief of the Iranian anti-narcotics police Majid Karimi announced that the level of cooperation between the two



countries will be strengthened and increased.

The meeting was held in Iran on December 3, during which Labarbera supported the idea of extending the level of existing cooperation and emphasized the need for combating narcotic drugs at the international

level as well.

Iran's measures in anti-narcotics fight

Iran seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), putting the country in the

first place in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the secretary-general of Iran's drug control headquarters, said in July.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking, Momeni announced.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Iran's drug control efforts led to the seizure of 266 tons of different types of drugs during the period of April-June 2020, a 20 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019.

Iran among top 20 Asian migrant countries

The observance of International Migrants Day 2020 focuses on the stories of social cohesion, which are as varied and unique as each of the whole migrants worldwide.

Iran among top 10 refugee-hosting countries

However, Asia experienced the most remarkable growth from 2000 to 2019, at 69 percent (around 34 million people in absolute terms).

In 2018, for the fifth consecutive year, Turkey was the largest host country in the world, with 3.7 million refugees, mainly Syrians (over 3.6 million). Pakistan and Iran were also among the top 10 refugee-hosting countries, as the two principal hosts of refugees from Afghanistan, the second-largest origin country.

Most notably, at the end of 2018, there were 2.7 million Afghan refugees, the second-largest refugee population in the world after the Syrian Arab Republic, and 2.6 million Afghan IDPs. The neighboring countries of Pakistan and Iran hosted the most Afghan refugees and, accordingly, featured among the top host countries in the world.

At the end of 2018, Iran hosted close to 1 million refugees, making it the sixth-largest refugee host country in the world.

Iran also was the eighth largest refugee-hosting country in the world in 2019, hosting 951,142 Afghan refugees and 28,268 Iraqi refugees, according to the UNHCR.

Inclusive refugee policies

Iran hosts one of the largest and most protracted urban refugee populations in the world with 97% of them living in urban and rural areas while the remaining 3% residing in 21 settlements managed by the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA).

Iran is going through a challenging economic period as a result of the evolving international environment linked to the country and the region in general. This situation poses a further strain on national resources as well as on



refugees and their host communities, presenting a number of challenges for the country.

Despite the prevailing economic situation, Iran is committed to continue with a number of inclusive refugee policies that were introduced in recent years; facilitating access for all foreign children residing in Iran to enroll in public schools, access for all refugees to enroll in the national Universal Primary Health Insurance (UPHI), and access to legally engage in livelihoods opportunities through attaining temporary work permits.

Foreign nationals in Iran

Many of the refugees living in Iran are the second and third generation, according to the UNHCR.

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

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

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

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

Reducing statelessness

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

In October 2019, the Guardian Council ratified a bill amending the law on conferring citizenship on children born to an Iranian mother and a foreign father regardless of where they are born.

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

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

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

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

Iranian students shine at South Africa science, invention festival

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iranian students won colorful medals at the 2020 South African science and invention festival, which was held virtually on November 28-December 5, ISNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

"Our students grabbed various medals in the fields of chemistry, biology, environment, medicine, technology, and engineering at the South African science and invention festival," secretary of the national student festival of Ibn Sina, Mehdi Rashidi Jahan, said.

Among the inventors who participated from Iran, Marzieh Salemi and Zohreh Mahdavi Sabet each won a gold medal, and a team

consisting of Mojtaba Jafari and Morteza Jafari also received a gold medal. In addition, Fatemeh Teymouri, Asal Babazadeh, Nastaran Habibi, and Mobina Karami won silver medals, he announced.

Five teams from Iran attended the festival, all of which won bronze medals, he concluded.

More success at international competitions 2020

Iranian students grabbed 8 colorful medals at the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA), according to the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents.

Also, the students grabbed four medals

at the 31st International Biology Olympiad (IBO 2020) which took place in Nagasaki, Japan on July 3-11.

The team of Iranian students won six colorful medals at the 61st International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO 2020), putting the country in 18th place. Held on September 21-22, IMO 2020 was hosted by Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The country's team also snatched 4 medals at the 52nd International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO 2020) held in Turkey on July 6 to 15.

Moreover, Iran finished fourth winning three gold medals and a silver medal at the 32nd International Olympiad in Informatics



(IOI 2020) which was held in Singapore from September 13 to 19.

The students also won gold and silver medals at the Bangkok International Intellectual Property, Invention, Innovation and Technology Exposition (IPITEx 2020) which was held on February 2-6 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Free water, gas, and electricity for 30 million Iranians

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Iranian government has approved a plan to provide some 35 percent of the country's 83 million population with free water, electricity, and gas in a bid to support low-income families.

"Energy-efficient households, who are mostly from among low-income strata of the society, will receive free-of-charge water, gas, and electricity," government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Wednesday.

Some 30 million people will benefit from the plan, he said, adding, vacant residential units and villas will not be included, he stressed.

President Hassan Rouhani said on December 9 that it is a great honor for the government to provide low-income families with free water, gas, and electricity.

"We supplied people with free gas, but we became self-sufficient in gas production beforehand so that we can meet the domestic demand in winter and even be able to export".

"In the field of electricity, we achieved a notable growth. We added the generation capacity and then we made supply free of charge. We also took substantial measure for reducing water consumption and water loss in different sectors," Rouhani explained.

Supporting corona-affected households

Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian said in November that the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has come up with 14 plans to support households and businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Two of these 14 decisions are related to households and nine are for all businesses, while three are pertaining to the businesses that have been severely affected by the negative impacts of the pandemic."

According to the official, the support packages for households will be provided for those without fixed-income who live in red-zones.

Nahavandian noted that nearly 30 million people are expected to benefit from the support plan.



Iran, Italy discuss enhanced academic co-op

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Mahmoud Nili Ahmadabadi, the chancellor of the University of Tehran, and Giuseppe Perrone, the Italian Ambassador to Iran, discussed ways to expand academic cooperation on Tuesday.

Emphasizing the necessity of enhancing the already-established academic ties between the University of Tehran and Italian universities, both sides expressed their will to expand the mutual collaboration within the framework of various programs.

Promoting exchange and mobility programs for students and faculty members, holding joint research projects, holding joint cultural and artistic exhibitions, exchanging academic materials, organizing meeting between the presidents of Iranian and Italian top universities and supporting the establishment of Ph.D. programs of Italian language by dispatching qualified native instructors were the main topics discussed by the two sides.

Holding a thematic joint workshop on cinema, architecture, archaeology, book exhibitions, establishments of an association to boost cultural relations, presentation of a lecture by Italian ambassador at UT, exchange of experience on the relationship between university and industry, using the facilities of UT partner universities in Italy and vice versa to reduce the costs, collaboration within EU programs were other topics discussed at the meeting.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 85)	(Source: saadifoundation.ir)
داشتن - دار (جمع، دکتراها)	to have
دانشتن - دان (جمع، دانستن)	to know
دو (جمع، دکتراها)	two
دوازده (دوازده)	twelve
دوباره (دوباره)	again
دور (دور)	far
دوست (دوست)	friend
دوست داشتن (دوست داشتن)	to like, to love
دوشنبه (دوشنبه)	Monday
دویست (دویست)	two hundred
ده (ده)	ten
دیدن - بین	to see
دیر (دیر)	late
دیروز (دیروز)	yesterday
دیشب (دیشب)	last night
دیکته (دیکته)	dictation
دیگر (دیگر)	another
دیگر (دیگر)	other; more; else
زیاد (زیاد)	many; much
زیر (زیر)	bottom
زیر (زیر)	following
زیر (زیر)	under
ژ (ژ)	under
ژاپن (ژاپن)	Japan
ژاپنی (ژاپنی)	Japanese
ژوستین (ژوستین)	French female student
س (س)	س
ساتوشی (ساتوشی)	Japanese male student
ساختار (ساختار)	structure
ساده (ساده)	simple
ساعت (ساعت)	hour; clock; watch
سال (سال)	year
داشتن - دار (جمع، دکتراها)	to have
دانشتن - دان (جمع، دانستن)	to know
دو (جمع، دکتراها)	two
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سال (سال)	year

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Marine species population increased in protected areas

According to the annual census, the population of marine species in habitats under the Department of Environment (DOE) supervision has increased, Ahmad Lahijan-zadeh, head of marine environment affairs at the DOE has said.

The annual Census is the authoritative source of data determining the population and distribution of animal or marine species through counting them yearly.

Protecting marine habitats and listing them as protected areas are among the most important priorities of the DOE, he said, adding, all of the areas have been identified through environmental assessment and field surveys. The reproduction time is important, and the DOE forces stand guard and constantly supervise the area during this period, he noted.

He went on to say that annual census shows that the number of species in protected areas is increasing, probably due to favorable condition and full-time control.

افزایش گونه‌های دریایی مناطق تحت حفاظت سازمان محیط زیست

براساس سرشماری سالانه تعداد گونه‌های موجود در زیستگاه‌های دریایی تحت حفاظت رو به افزایش است.

احمد لاهیجان زاده معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، در رابطه با اهمیت حفاظت از زیستگاه‌های دریایی و شناسایی این مناطق در اولویت سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست قرار دارد و تمام این زیستگاه‌ها در قالب مطالعات جامع و تعقیب میدانی شناسایی شده‌اند.

وی با بیان اینکه در بسیاری از این زیستگاه‌ها زادآوری صورت می‌گیرد، افزود: زمان این زادآوری‌ها با شناسایی زیستگاه‌ها مشخص است و سازمان محیط زیست در این بازه زمانی حفاظت فیزیکی را انجام می‌دهد.

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Loving humanity is second only to having faith in Allah as one of the best deeds in Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Symphonic poem “The Soldier” to commemorate Commander Qassem Soleimani

→1 The last act of the drama focused on the key role he played in the defeat of the ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

“The Soldier” was a joint production of Iran’s General Office for Dramatic Arts and the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater Association.



Recently, young filmmaker Behnam Bahadori announced that he has made a short documentary named “Green Zone” about the good conduct of Commander Qassem Soleimani toward children.

The Children’s Department of the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization is the producer of the film.

A poster for Commander Qassem Soleimani.

The 38th Fajr Film Festival announced it would honor films on resistance and jihad with an award named after Soleimani.

In addition, the 16th Resistance International Film Festival, which will be held during December, will review films on Commander Qassem Soleimani’s role in awakening people in the region and around the world in a special section named “Prominent Resistance Martyr Section”.

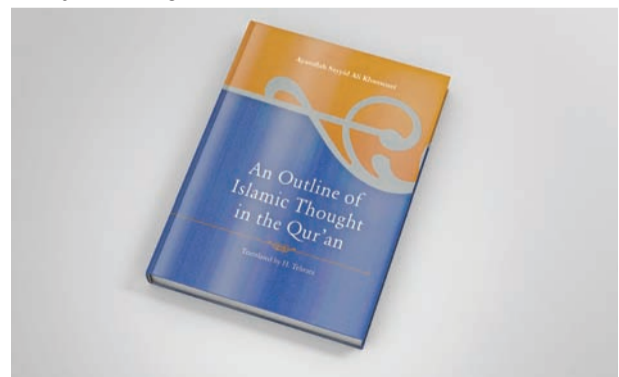
Leader’s book “Islamic Thought in the Quran” published in Urdu

CULTURE TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei’s book “An Outline of Islamic Thought in the Quran” has recently been published in Urdu in Pakistan.

The book has been released by the Karachi-based publishing house Dar al-Thaqalayn, which has earlier published books on Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic.

“An Outline of Islamic Thought in the Quran” is the distillation of a series of lectures delivered by Ayatollah Khamenei.

In these lectures, the Leader presents faith, oneness of Allah (tawhid), prophethood (nubuwwah) and guardianship (wilayah) as major themes in the Quran.



A poster for the English translation of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei’s book “An Outline of Islamic Thought in the Quran”.

His project is to disclose the ramifications of the conviction that there is only one God and Master in the universe and the belief in the divine prophets.

Ayatollah Khamenei rests his case with his final summation on wilayah, asserting that a true Muslim should side with the godly powers in the eternal battle between the divine powers and the satanic forces.

An English translation of the book by H. Tehrani was released by the Islamic College for Advanced Studies in the UK in 2008. The book has also been published in Arabic.

Asgharia Pakistan, a major Shia Muslim organization of students in Pakistan, with contributions from the Cultural Center of Iran in Karachi has translated the Leader’s book “A 250-Year-Old Person” into Sindhi.

The book arranged in 17 chapters gives a chronological account of the lives of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the Shia Imams (AS).

“Mohsen, the Japanese” chronicles life of Afghan volunteer fighter in Iran-Iraq war

ART TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Vahid Faraji has made a documentary named “Mohsen, the Japanese”, which chronicles the life story of Mohsen Mirzai, an Afghan migrant who joined Iranian forces as a volunteer during the 1980s to fight against Iraq.

He was one of the divers, who were members of a shock troop squad that crossed the Arvand River to overrun Umm al Rassas, a nearby island on the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, during Operation Karbala-4 on December 25, 1986. However, they were captured by Iraqis.

Mirzai had been injured in his jaw and was not able to speak. Therefore, due to his similarity in appearance to the Japanese people, the Iraqis assumed that he was a Japanese military advisor working for Iran. Consequently, he was known as “Mohsen, the Japanese”.

Due to the fact that the region where the divers had been captured was strategically important, Iraq refused to register them on the list of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or give any information about them. Mohsen was held in captivity for four years.

“I had read a book named ‘From Leili Desert to Majnun Island’ carrying the memories of the Afghans who volunteered to fight for Iran during the war and the book was really amazing,” Faraji said in a press



This picture shows several Afghan volunteers who fought for Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.

release on Wednesday.

He criticized Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s deputy foreign minister, for the remarks he made in May 2019 saying Iran would consider asking Afghan refugees to leave Iran if the United States continued to put economic pressure on Tehran.

Faraji said, “What percentage of migrants in the countries that accept refugees are ready to fight for or sacrifice themselves if the countries are involved in a war? Therefore, by this film, I want to acknowledge that we owe a debt of gratitude to all foreign people who fought for us during the war.”

He made several trips to the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad, where Mohsen Mirzai lives, to make the documentary, which took over nine months to be completed.

Faraji said that few people in Iran are aware of the contribution that Afghan refugees made to Iran during the war, and added that “Mohsen, the Japanese” also criticized this ignorance “sociologically.”

This film is competing in the Avini Awards category of the 14th edition of the Cinéma Vértité festival, Iran’s major international festival for documentary films that opened on Tuesday.

Tehran-based Afghan writer Mohammad-Sarvar Rajai is the author of “From Leili Desert to Majnun Island”, which inspired Faraji to make the documentary.

The book published in 2018 contains the memoirs of the Afghans who volunteered to fight for Iran during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

“To achieve unity between our nations, we need to know how the Afghan mujahideen, on their way to find love, crossed the central and northern provinces in Afghanistan, from Leili Desert in the Jawzjan Province and the Dokuh Garrison in (Iran’s) Andimeshk to reach Majnun Island,” Rajai wrote in the introduction to the book.

Thousands of Afghans volunteered to help Iran in the war, during which over 2,000 of them lost their lives.

Exhibit by Iranian, Tajik artists to celebrate poet Khujandi’s 700th birthday



A poster for the art exhibition “The Nightingale of Khujand”.

ART TEHRAN — Iranian calligrapher Mirhossein Zanuzi and Tajik painter Karim Raqibov have teamed up to celebrate the 700th birthday of Persian poet and mystic Kamal Khujandi during an online exhibition, which will open on Saturday.

The showcase entitled “The Nightingale of Khujand” will be organized in a collaborative effort between the ECO

Cultural Institute and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO on the Instagram page of the commission.

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO director Hojjatollah Ayyubi and Sarvar Bakhti, the president of the ECO Cultural Institute, are expected to deliver speeches during the opening ceremony of the exhibit.

Zanuzi is a master of calligraphy born in 1950 in Tabriz. He learned calligraphy with masters like Gholamhossein Amirkhani.

He has published books on art of calligraphy and has taken part in several solo and group exhibits in Iran and outside the country in countries such as Turkey, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

Raqibov is a master of Kundal, a style of polychrome decorative relief wall painting.

“The basis of Kundal’s design consists of three sources: geometric ornaments, which include the square, the triangle, the circle, the rectangle and other geometric figures such as the Arabesque; designs that come from nature, from trees, leaves, branches and flowers; and Zoomorphic ornaments, the ornaments taken from mythical creatures such as lions with wings and legendary birds or stars and the moon”.

Raqibov has said.

Nothing is known of the family background or early life of Kamal Khujandi, also known as Shaikh Kamal.

Sometime after the middle of the 14th century, Kamal left his hometown and headed west, went to Mecca, never returned home and eventually settled in Tabriz.

Kamal’s poems were collected by his disciples upon his return to Tabriz from Saray, the capital city of the Golden Horde on the banks of the Volga, where he was forced to live for eleven years.

The divan, originally entitled Tarjoman al-Hal le-as’hab al-Kamal, consists almost entirely of lyric poetry, amounting to some 980 poems in the most recent editions.

Kamal’s poetry was only an adjunct to his life as an adept spiritual and Sufi leader.

Kamal’s poetry inevitably pales in comparison to that of Hafez, but this is more due to Hafez’s singular brilliance than to any shortcoming on the part of Kamal.

Kamal has especially attracted the attention and admiration of Tajik readers and scholars, who played a leading role in organizing an international conference in the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz in November 1996 to commemorate the poet.

Art competition Palestine Is Not Alone announces Iranian jury members

ART TEHRAN — The Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest has announced the Iranian members of its jury.

Mohammad Khazai, Masud Ziai, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, Saedi Sadeqi and Abbas Nasserii will judge the artworks at the contest.

Moroccan cartoonist Najj Benaji, who is also a founding member of a caricature school in the Tunisian city of Sfax, Brazilian cartoonist Silvano Mello and Indonesian cartoonist Jitit Kustana are the members of the international jury.

Iran’s Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization has organized the contest to show solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

Khazai is a Ph.D. graduate of graphic design of Islamic art from the Birmingham



This combination photo shows images of the Iranian members of the jury at the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest.

University.

Ziayi, Sadeqi and Nasserii are cartoonists, and Shojaei-Tabatabai is the director of the

bureau’s Visual Arts Office.

In a press conference held at the bureau in September, Art Bureau director Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman said that the contest is slated as a forerunner for the new activities of the bureau to help develop its international activities.

He added that the bureau is ready to provide artists who are active on the resistance frontline with all the knowledge and experience the bureau has accumulated over the past 40 years.

He also said that the bureau will make its best efforts to help establish an artistic movement against the Zionist regime so that Palestinian artists can better form an artistic battle.

Shojaei-Tabatabai also for his part pointed to the recent republication of cartoons insulting Prophet Muhammad (S) by the

French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, and said that they are intended to create and promote hatred, and hurt the hearts of millions of Muslims across the world.

“The issue of Palestine and its identity is one of the major topics during these days when deals between some Arab states and Israel are being framed to look normal, while people and artists from the countries whose governments are trying to normalize their relations, disagree with these relations,” he explained.

“We will be making the most use of the potentials, and are also planning to establish public movements,” he added.

Shojaei-Tabatabai next added that due to the high risk of spreading the coronavirus, the contest will be held online, and each submitted work will be uploaded on the Irancartoon website.

“Limbo” honored at Brazil Alter do Chao Film Festival

ART TEHRAN — “Limbo” by Iranian filmmaker Ghasideh Golmakani has won the Premio Pequenos-Grandes Relatos at the Alter do Chao Film Festival in Brazil.

“Limbo” is about a former Iraqi sniper who takes refuge in Iran and begins to tattoo the names of all the soldiers he has killed in the conflicts and wars in Iraq. The last name is tattooed by a young Iranian, who is asked for a strange favor.

Golmakani’s “Online Shopping” was also screened at the festival that took place in Santarém from December 9 to 13.

The film tells the story of Donia, a young girl, who wants to immigrate to continue her studies abroad. Before leaving Iran, she tries to sell her belongings online. One of the customers is a man who enters her house and behaves strangely.

A lineup of over 40 Iranian films, including “How to Dry Wet Wastes” and “2050, A Year without Fish” by Reza



“Limbo” by Iranian filmmaker Ghasideh Golmakani.

Khodadadi, competed in the event.

“Angels Do Not Die” and “Snowy Heart” by Alireza Biglari, “Collapse: A Local Report” by Mojtaba Yusefi and “I Call It Home” by Leila Ahang were also among the Iranian movies screened in the parallel section of the festival.

Golmakani, director of the acclaimed Iranian shorts “Violet” and “Horn”, was a member of the international competition jury of the 3rd Cortos en Grande Short Film Festival held online during November in Chile.

She was also a member of the documentary competition jury of the Batumi International Art-House Film Festival in Georgia in 2019.

She is also the director of the short “Violet”, and her latest movie “Horn” is about a woman who tries to find a place to park her car in Tehran to be on time for a business appointment. Men on the streets disturb her concentration while driving.

“The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down” comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Haemin Sunim’s “The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down: How to Be Calm in a Busy World” has recently been published by the Milkan Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Nazanin Firuzi.

The world moves fast, but that doesn’t mean we have to. This bestselling mindfulness guide by Haemin Sunim (which means “spontaneous wisdom”), a renowned

Buddhist meditation teacher born in Korea and educated in the United States, illuminates a path to inner peace and balance amid the overwhelming demands of everyday life.

By offering guideposts to wellbeing and happiness in eight areas, including relationships, love and spirituality, Sunim emphasizes the importance of forging a deeper connection with others and being compassionate and forgiving toward ourselves. The more than twenty full-color illustrations that accompany his teachings serve as calming

visual interludes, encouraging readers to notice that when one slows down, the world slows down with him/her.

Sunim is one of the most influential Zen Buddhist teachers and writers in the world. Born in South Korea, he came to the United States to study film, only to find himself pulled into spiritual life.

Educated at UC Berkeley, Harvard and Princeton, he received formal monastic training in Korea and taught Buddhism at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts.

“The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down”, which has been published in more than thirty languages, and his “Love for Imperfect Things” have sold more than four million copies and are popular as guides not only to meditation but also to overcoming the challenges of everyday life.

When not traveling to share his teachings, Sunim lives in Seoul where he founded the School of Broken Hearts, a nonprofit that offers group counseling and meditation for people experiencing challenges in life.