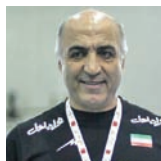




Iran seizes South Korean tanker for polluting Persian Gulf waters *Page 2*



Mohammad Vakili named Iran U16 volleyball coach *Page 3*

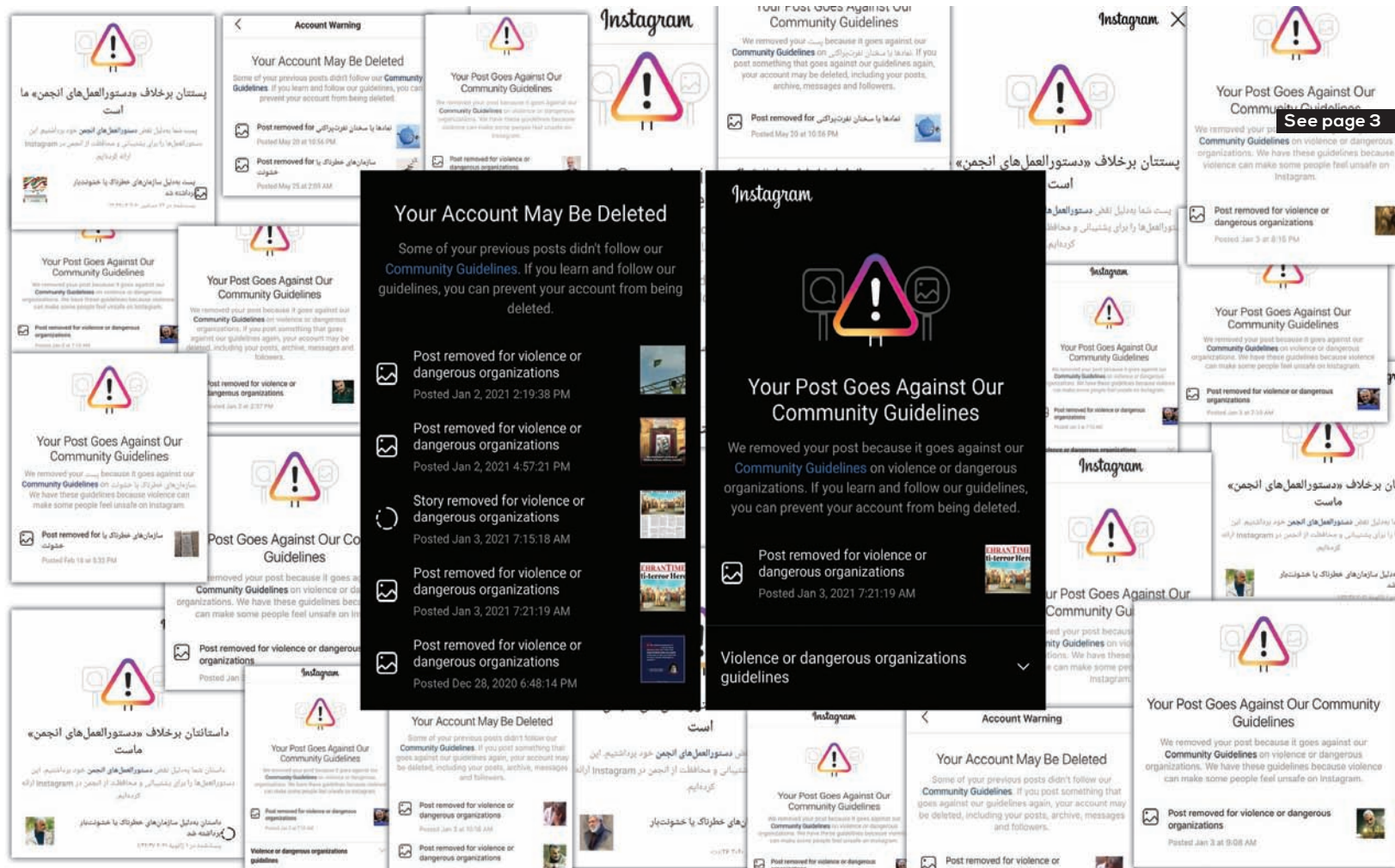


202 prisoners released on Gen. Soleimani's martyrdom anniversary *Page 7*

GENERAL SOLEIMANI INTERNATIONAL HERO



General Soleimani is being assassinated on social media every day over the past 365 days



Iran starts 20% uranium enrichment

TEHRAN – Iran has started the process of enriching uranium to 20% at the Fordow nuclear facility, the spokesman for Iran's government announced on Monday.

"A few minutes ago, the process of producing enriched uranium to 20% purity has begun. And the first product of UF6 enriched uranium will be produced in a few hours," Ali Rabiei was quoted as saying by the Tasnim news agency.

The spokesman also said that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has issued an order stipulating that the recent nuclear law passed by the

Iranian Parliament should be implemented, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA.

The nuclear law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect Nation's Rights," outlines a step-by-step strategy for Iran to force the West into reconsidering its sanctions policy against Iran by increasing nuclear activities. It stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20%

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Iran Oil Show to be held in late January

TEHRAN — The 25th edition of Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show), which was previously postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, is going to be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during January 21-24, Shana reported.

As announced by the Oil Ministry's news portal, since the pandemic condition has been once again controlled and

its second wave is almost contained, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control and the Health Ministry have approved the holding of some events and exhibitions in accordance with health and safety protocols.

Therefore, the Oil Ministry has decided to hold this year's exhibition, which was previously slated for October 12-15, 2020, in late January.

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2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival honors winners

TEHRAN — The 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival honored the winners of different sections during the closing ceremony of the event held on Monday in the southern Iranian city of Kerman, Commander Qassem Soleimani's hometown.

The festival was established after the assassination of Commander Soleimani to commemorate the IRGC Quds Force chief.

A number of officials, including the director of Iran's Dramatic Arts Center Qader Ashena, Revayat Cultural Foundation director Mohammad Yashar Naderi and Kerman Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance director Mohamadreza Alizadeh, attended the closing ceremony.

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Government's ETF approach still under debate

BY MAHNAZ ABDI

According to Note 2 of the budget law of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2020), the government is allowed to offer and sell its remaining shares in the state-owned companies in the usual way or through the exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

Following this legal capacity, at the beginning of this year, the cabinet allowed the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to transfer the remaining government shares in the framework of three ETFs.

An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks. An ETF holds assets such as stocks, commodities, or bonds and generally operates with an arbitrage mechanism designed to keep it trading close to its net asset value, although deviations can occasionally occur.

In May, 2020, the government sold shares in three banks and two insurance companies via the first exchange-traded fund (dubbed Dara First).

The bank-based ETF holds 17 percent of government stake in Tejarat Bank, 17 percent in Bank Mellat, 18.32 percent in Bank Saderat Iran, 17.34 percent in Alborz Insurance Company and 11.44 percent in Amin Reinsurance Company.

Dara First, listed on Tehran Stock Exchange, which is Iran's major stock exchange, was the first fund from a series of three ETFs, through them shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

The shares to be offered via the mentioned Iranian ETFs belong to those governmental bodies defined in Iran's privatization program, a comprehensive plan seriously followed up by the government to downsize and reduce its role in the economy.

The second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), which holds government shares in four major oil refining companies, namely Tehran Oil Refining Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, Tabriz Oil Refining Company and Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, was offered on August 26.

The government owns 20 percent of shares in each refinery.

It has also a plan to divest shares in giant auto and metal companies through a third ETF (dubbed Dara Third).

Continued on page 4

How should we remember General Soleimani?

BY IAN GREENHALGH

It is true that often, one can better assess a person by who their enemies were than by who were their friends. If we apply this maxim to the late General Qassem Soleimani, sadly assassinated by U.S. airstrike in January 2020, we see clearly that his enemies were the United States, Israel and their allies in West Asia – Saudi Arabia and the Arab States.

Why did the U.S. kill Gen. Soleimani? The official reason given by Washington is that he was a terrorist (thus designated by the U.S. in 2005) and a threat to peace and stability in the region. Of course, this is very far from the truth and the real reason is that he was greatly successful in throwing a metaphorical spanner in the works of the schemes of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi 'Axis of Evil'.

In a 2014 article in New Yorker magazine, Soleimani was described by an ex-CIA oper-

ative formerly responsible for clandestine operations, as "the single most powerful operative in the Middle East (West Asia) today" and "the principal military strategist and tactician in Iran's effort to deter Western influence."

After the last decade of conflict and regime change, that has seen the destruction of Iraq, Syria and to an extent, Egypt, West Asia today is dominated by two powers – Israel, with its American and Saudi backers and Iran, which is the 'last man standing' in opposition to Israeli domination of the region. It is Iran that has been the power behind the opposition to U.S.-Israeli-Saudi hegemony over West Asia and no man did more to oppose the nefarious agenda of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis than Qassem Soleimani and by doing so, he became a man marked for death.

Continued on page 5

Kenosha preparing for protests when charging decision comes on Jacob Blake's shooting

The city of Kenosha, Wisconsin, is making preparations for demonstrations when a charging decision comes over the police shooting of Jacob Blake, authorities said.

The safety efforts will include designation of a demonstration space, limitations on city bus routes, road closures, curfew and protective fencing, Mayor John Antaramian and Police Chief Daniel Miskinis said in a news release.

Kenosha saw civil unrest and large demonstrations against racism and police brutality in August after police shot Blake, an African-American man, who was left paralyzed from the waist down.

The decision is likely to come within the first two weeks of January, Mayor John Antaramian and Police Chief Daniel Miskinis said in a statement.

Efforts from authorities will include designating a demonstration space, limiting city bus routes, imposing curfews, and closing off roads

and other areas, according to the statement.

"Mayor Antaramian has been informed that the decision is likely to be announced within the first two weeks of January and is working with Chief Miskinis and other partners to protect peaceful demonstration and to guard against unlawful activity", authorities said on Sunday.

Blake was shot several times in the back and the incident, which was caught on video, sparked days of protests.

Two protesters were fatally shot during the unrest, with teenager Kyle Rittenhouse of Antioch, Illinois, being charged in connection with the shootings.

Blake's shooting came about three months after the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

Floyd's death sparked anti-racism protests across the United States and the rest of the world.

A tale of a fearless yet humble General

BY RANDI NORD

First, I would like to send my condolences to the Iranian people on the first anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani's death. This cowardly act is not a reflection of the general American public who would prefer peace with Iran. People immediately filled the streets across the country condemning Washington's actions and potential war against Iran. I remember in Detroit alone we had several hundred people in attendance despite the bitter cold weather.

One of my best memories of 2020 was the unity I saw after the assassination of Qassem Soleimani. I spoke at an emergency protest in Detroit where we had like 200 people in attendance, including a lot of Palestinian organizers who all spoke fondly of General Soleimani. I remember it was extremely cold that day too. The same week, the Iraqi embassy opened its doors for people to send condolences for the martyrs. I went with a group of friends and we were welcomed inside

with tea. We all talked about how this was such a disrespectful violation of sovereignty and they offered to help us get visas if we wanted to visit Iraq ourselves.

Throughout my entire life, I've watched my government invade, sanction, and sow sectarian violence around the world.

There are far too many embarrassing and disgraceful actions carried out in my name to count.

Continued on page 5

Taq Kasra, Sassanid masterpiece of architecture, partly collapses in modern Iraq

TEHRAN – Segments of Taq Kasra, which is an architecturally important Sasanian-era Persian monument in modern Iraq, has recently been collapsed, Mehr reported based on Iraqi sources.

"Some Iraqi social media users have posted pictures of Taq Kasra, which is located near Baghdad, writing the vault of the monument is partly collapsed at the beginning of 2021," the news agency said.

"Social media activists and cultural heritage lovers have also criticized the Iraqi government's neglect of the monument, disapproving the poor governmental performance in maintaining it... Relevant officials in Iraq have not yet commented on the matter and have not confirmed the news," the news agency said.

For years, there have been talks between Iranian and Iraqi officials to jointly restore the magnificent structure, but nothing happened.

Even Iranian archaeologists have repeatedly asked the Iranian authorities to consult on the restoration of the monument in cooperation between the two countries. Because they believe Taq Kasra is in dire need of urgent repairs as every time a part of it collapses.

In 2019, Tehran Municipality hold talks with Baghdad's urban planners and authorities to restore several aging monuments in Iraq including Taq Kasra.

Taq Kasra, also called Ivan Madaen or the Archway of Ctesiphon, are names given to the remains of a circa 3rd-6th-century Sasanian-era Persian monument, which is located near the modern town of Salman Pak, a city located approximately 15 miles (24 km) south of Baghdad.

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Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi laid to rest

Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi was laid to rest in the shrine city of Qom on Monday, January 4. Ayatollah Mesbah died on Friday evening at the age of 85 due to gastrointestinal disease. A philosopher and political theorist, the ayatollah was a member of the Assembly of Experts and the Society of the Seminary Teachers of Qom. He also founded the Baqir-ul-Uloom Institute and then the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in the city of Qom, which he headed for the rest of his life.

Iran seizes South Korean tanker for polluting Persian Gulf waters

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy on Monday seized a South Korean oil tanker for polluting «Persian Gulf waters with chemicals».

The public relations office of the IRGC Navy said, «The vessel, moving with the South Korean flag and named HANKUK CHEMI, was carrying 7,200 tons of chemicals.»



The vessel was seized because of repeated violation of environmental regulations, the public relations office said.

It said the vessel was seized upon a request by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization and a verdict by the prosecutor office of Hormozgan province.

The tanker was seized at 10 a.m. local time.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the seizure of the vessel is «quite technical». Khatibzadeh said the tanker was captured through a judicial verdict as it was causing environmental damage.

Zarif says Gen. Soleimani was a strong proponent of peace

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has lauded the late anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, describing him as a strong proponent of peace in the region.

«Any peace plan I pursued had surely been devised by Hajj Qassem; he both encouraged us and helped us with the follow-ups,» Zarif said in a televised interview on Sunday night.



He said he always consulted with General Soleimani and his advice was always useful to him.

«As a person who has always worked in the field of peace and negotiation, I truly consider him not just a champion of fight against terrorists, but also a hero in peace-making efforts,» Zarif said, according to Press TV.

On January 3, 2020, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered drone strikes that martyred General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in Baghdad.

At the time of the assassination, Soleimani was on a diplomatic peace mission in neighboring Iraq.

Five days later, Iran's IRGC attacked Ain al-Assad airbase in western Iraq, where U.S. forces were stationed, as part of its promised «tough revenge» for the U.S. terror attack.

Iran has also vowed to spare no efforts in bringing the assassins of General Soleimani, especially Trump, to justice.

«In the time when I was Iran's ambassador and permanent (UN) representative in the U.S., and during the negotiations I had been ordered by the Supreme Leader to hold, I used to come back to Tehran to consult with Hajj Qassem, and then leave the country to hold negotiations,» Zarif said.

«Once I asked the Supreme Leader to allow Hajj Qassem to personally participate in the sessions, and I was sure the talks would have been much more successful [with him in attendance],» he added.

Zarif also highlighted the significant role played by General Soleimani in the 2001 Bonn Conference, which resulted in an agreement on the re-creation of the state of Afghanistan following the U.S. invasion of the country.

«Hajj Qassem played a more important role in Tehran by holding talks with all jihadi groups of Afghanistan, to convince them to accept an equation which could shape a new future for Afghanistan in the years to come,» the foreign minister added.

The chief Iranian diplomat then described Soleimani's assassination as a «cowardly act» by Trump. «It was an easy job to hit that car,» he said.

«The Americans were terrified of Hajj Qassem and considered him a genius in the battlefield. He was a genius who had defeated them in Syria and Yemen,» he added.

«Daesh is the only beneficiary of Soleimani assassination»

In a tweet on Sunday night, Zarif voiced similar remarks about the assassination, saying, «A year ago today, Enemy #1 of extremist terrorists was cowardly assassinated by the terrorist-in-chief.»

«As our region solemnly commemorates his one year passing, a reminder that the only beneficiary of his murder is Daesh (ISIS), which has only increased its activity since,» he added.

On Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry slammed Trump's «crucial role» in promoting terrorism, from al-Qaeda to Daesh, in the West Asia region.

«It's a well-documented fact, which's been admitted by Trump, that U.S. has had a crucial role in the rise of terrorism in our region, from AQ to ISIS,» the ministry wrote in a tweet.

It also described the U.S. and Daesh as «brothers in arms.»

«Not surprising that the U.S. assassination of Gen #Soleimani was cheered by ISIS: brothers in arms,» the tweet added.

Trump must be punished for Soleimani assassination: Judiciary chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi

has said the Islamic Republic will pursue the case of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani's assassination until all perpetrators behind the U.S. attack that killed the top anti-terror general are punished, warning that the outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump must be punished for the act of terror.

«In Iran, a special court has been established to follow up on this issue, but since the assassination took place in Iraq, we negotiated with Iraqi officials and the political and judicial officials of the two countries had meetings to pursue this case jointly and the case will be pursued until all of the criminals are punished,» Raisi said on Monday, according to Mehr.

On January 3, 2020, Trump ordered drone strikes that martyred General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), as well as their companions.

Five days later, the IRGC attacked Ain al-Assad airbase in western Iraq, where U.S. forces were stationed, as part of its promised «tough revenge» for the U.S. terror attack.

Raisi said the assassination was a clear example of state terrorism, which occurred in a third country and when General Soleimani was in Iraq at the official invitation of former Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi.



«This is definitely a crime that is not compatible with any of the international laws and regulations and the principles of human rights, and the perpetrators and those who were involved in this assassination can be prosecuted, and this prosecution will not be stopped,» he added.

He also said Trump has overtly announced that he has committed this crime and he must be punished whether he is the president of the United States or not.

«All of the individuals who helped him have been identified,» the top judge pointed out.

In June, Tehran said 36 individuals were identified in connection with the Soleimani assassination.

«36 individuals who cooperated, collaborated, and participated in the assassination of Hajj Qassem, including political and military authorities of the U.S. and other countries, have been identified,» Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alqasi-Mehr said.

Just last week Iran's human rights body announced that three more individuals have been identified who had been involved in the assassination.

Gen. Soleimani was an international icon of sacrifice: Hezbollah chief Nasrallah says region resolute to expel U.S. troops after Soleimani assassination

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – In a televised speech late

on Sunday, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah praised Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani as a hero and an international icon of sacrifice and loyalty who defended the oppressed nations.

January 3 marked the first anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani, the legendary anti-terror commander. He was assassinated along with deputy leader of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis near Baghdad's international airport.

General Soleimani was on a peace mission. He was to meet with then Iraq's Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi to talk about the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The assassination was an open violation of Iraq's national sovereignty.

General Soleimani's acumen in the war on terrorism was praised by his friends and foes.

The Hezbollah secretary general also said since the Pentagon assassinated General Soleimani, there have been growing calls for the expulsion of U.S. forces from the region, and this is only one of the repercussions of the cowardly act of terror.

The assassination was ordered by Donald Trump.

«One of the main outcomes of the assassination of General Soleimani and [deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mahdi] al-Muhandis is the calls made for the expulsion of U.S. forces from the region,» Press TV quoted Nasrallah as saying.

«Such calls had not been made prior to the assassination. The martyrdom of the resistance leaders set U.S. troops on the track of leaving Iraq,» the Hezbollah leader added.

Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was accompanying General Soleimani on the night of their martyrdom.

Nasrallah then addressed the United States, the Israeli regime and all those conspiring against the resistance front, saying, «When you assassinate our leaders, we get more determined and strong-minded to assert our rights.»

«Those thinking of weakening us through killings, wars and car bomb attacks are delusional. The U.S. believed it could weaken Iran and the axis of resistance by assassinating Qassem Soleimani, but we are the ones who know how to turn threats into opportunities.»

The Hezbollah leader also said the Tel Aviv regime is high on alert for possible Iranian retaliation on the anniversary of the Soleimani assassination.

«The resistance front will always be respecting and glorifying its martyrs. Iran will take military revenge by itself. It has strength and capability as well as power to defend and does not need any proxies. The friends of Iran will take their own decisions if they want to respond to this crime,» Nasrallah stressed.



From Africa to Latin America, people, public figures and organizations have commemorated Iran's anti-terror commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani on the first anniversary of his assassination in a U.S. drone strike in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

Hundreds of thousands of people attended rallies across Iraq on Sunday to commemorate the first anniversary of the assassination Qassem Soleimani and al-Muhandis.

The marchers in the capital Baghdad gathered at Tahrir Square, Press TV reported.

«We are here to commemorate the martyrdom of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and Qassem Soleimani,» one of the demonstrators at Tahrir Square told the Rudaw news agency. «Let us not forget, they sacrificed a lot for Iraq and they defeated America in Iraq.»

The PUM issued a statement saying the massive rallies in Iraq in memory of the two anti-terror commanders were a slap in the face of the United States.

Iran's Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Sunday that the U.S. made a «strategic mistake» by assassinating the top Iranian commander, saying such a miscalculation has increased the cost for American military presence in West Asia.

In a message released on the first anniversary of martyrdom of General Soleimani, the defense minister said the assassination was a strategic mistake and miscalculation because the loss of the commander has not affected the resistance movement.

Nazim Dabbagh, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) representative in Tehran, says General Soleimani's leadership against terrorism was «vital» and effective.

Dabbagh says the general helped the Iraqi Kurdistan by sending weapons and military advisers to defeat Daesh.

«Martyr Qassem Soleimani not only helped in the framework of consultation but also in the battlefield,» Nazim Dabbagh tells the Tehran Times. «We are thankful and appreciative

for Iran's advisory presence and its arms aid to eliminate the Daesh threat from Erbil.»

The Hezbollah leader also censured Washington and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for the creation of the Daesh terrorist group, saying their main reason for creating this vicious group was to fight the resistance front.

He also criticized some Lebanese media outlets for distorting latest remarks by Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the Aerospace Division of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), saying, «Lebanon and the Gaza Strip are naturally at the frontlines of the Muslim world due to their geographical proximity to the Zionist entity.»

In an interview with Al-Manar TV aired on Saturday, Hajizadeh

reaffirmed Iran's support for whoever resists the Zionist regime, saying Gaza and Lebanon are at the forefront of the battle and their missile capabilities have been supported by the Islamic Republic.

«Instead of giving a fish or teaching to catch a fish, we taught our allies and friends how to make a hook,» the commander said, adding that they are now in possession of advanced missile technologies.

«Iran's support for resistance front is unconditional»

The Hezbollah secretary general said Iran's support for the resistance movement and Palestinian groups has been unconditional, and the Islamic Republic has never stopped backing Lebanon, even during Saddam Hussein's war against the country in 1980s.

Dr. Kevin Barrett, an Arabist-Islamologist scholar and one of America's best-known critics of the war on terror, says General Soleimani's talent for «inspiring resistance» in Lebanon and Syria was «evident».

«The General's advice and support was an essential ingredient in the emergence of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Ansarullah movement in Yemen,» Barrett tells the Tehran Times.

He says both Hezbollah and Ansarullah «seemingly came out of nowhere to strike devastating blows against the twin scourges of Zionism and imperialism, somehow winning battles against vastly bigger, better-armed, better-funded opponents.»

Barrett, who taught at colleges and universities in San Francisco, Paris and Wisconsin, adds, «Lebanon's defeat of Israel in the 33 Day War of 2006, and Ansarullah's defeat of the Anglo-Zionist Empire's proxies Saudi Arabia and the UAE, were among the most unlikely David-vs.-Goliath triumphs in military history.»

He notes, «Such grossly improbable victories might have been downright impossible without the daring, charismatic genius of General Qassem Soleimani.»

Biden can win Tehran's trust by facilitating shipments of COVID vaccines to Iran: LA Times

In an op-ed published on January 3, the Los Angeles Times said the incoming Biden administration, which is seeking to restore the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, could build trust with Tehran through facilitating the purchase of vaccine by Iran to control the Coronavirus pandemic.

«If the Biden administration works out a COVID deal that facilitates shipments of vaccines to the Iranian people, it will win over the hearts and minds of millions in that country,» said the op-ed written by John W. Limbert, a former professor of Western Asian studies at the U.S. Naval Academy, and Bahman Baktiari, the executive director of the Baskerville Institute.

Following is part of the article:

This moment of a global pandemic offers an unusual opportunity for cooperation. Despite their mutual hostility, the two countries today are on the same side of a war against an enemy that has killed more than 347,000 Americans and more than 55,000 Iranians.

Although the Biden administration and the Europeans want to resuscitate the 2015 nuclear agreement, what Iran, the United States and Europe urgently need right now is a COVID deal.

A COVID deal would help rebuild trust for future negotiations with Iran, as well as improve U.S. relations

with the European Union, which have weakened in the Trump era. Stopping the pandemic in Iran is essential to protecting Iran's neighbors, 16 countries constituting over 500 million people. Without vaccines, more Iranians will die, and coronavirus infections from Iran will spread to other countries in the region.

In Iran, healthcare workers and doctors are dying in hospitals overwhelmed with COVID patients.

Legally, the shipment of medicines to Iran is not under sanctions today, but the Trump administration has made it impossible for Iran to process payments from its central bank, or receive loans from the International Monetary Fund to pay for them. These financial sanctions have deterred international banks and suppliers of medicine from participating in any financial transactions for fear of becoming subject to secondary U.S. sanctions imposed on their companies or banks.

By issuing broad licenses to medical and pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers of COVID vaccines, the U.S. can assure banks, aid organizations and insurance companies that they will not be punished for supporting humanitarian medical assistance to Iran.

Iran has «pre-purchased» 17 million doses of vaccines through Covax, the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access

Facility, which the World Health Organization created to ensure a more equitable distribution of vaccines. But the sanctions prevent Iran's central bank from processing the payment for these vaccines. This purchase covers less than 10% of the Iranian population. To fight the virus, Iran has requested an emergency loan from the IMF, which the Trump administration blocked. The U.S. should allow the loan to proceed.

There is precedent for setting aside enmity to address a dire crisis together. After the December 2003 earthquake in Bam, which killed more than 20,000 Iranians, the Bush administration — while making threatening noises about sending tanks to Tehran — sent medical aid to victims. Somehow, the two sides could put aside their distrust to send and accept much-needed help for the survivors.

Today, decades of isolation, recrimination and demonization prevent us from realizing the power of cultural connections that have linked Iran and America for generations.

If the Biden administration works out a COVID deal that facilitates shipments of vaccines to the Iranian people, it will win over the hearts and minds of millions in that country, strengthening the deep but frayed bonds of friendship between ordinary Americans and Iranians.

Iran starts 20% uranium enrichment

1→ and suspending the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in few months if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the JCPOA.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the latest Iran's nuclear move was in line with this law. However, he reassured other JCPOA parties that this "remedial action" is "fully reversible."

"We resumed 20% enrichment, as legislated by our Parliament. IAEA has been duly notified. Our remedial action conforms fully with Para 36 of JCPOA, after years of non-compliance by several other JCPOA participants. Our measures are fully reversible upon FULL compliance by ALL," Zarif tweeted on Monday.

Earlier on Friday, Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), had said that Iran will raise the level of uranium enrichment up to 20 percent "as soon as possible."

"We have sent a letter to the representative of the Islamic Republic to the International



Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna to submit it to the Agency. This letter was submitted to the Agency on Friday, informing it that we want to start 20% enrichment in accordance

with the parliament law," Salehi said in a televised interview on Friday.

"God willing, we will start enriching [uranium] up to 20% soon. The president should

issue an order. Of course, the president has already issued a preliminary order according to which we sent a letter to the Agency and made the announcement. We are just like a soldier having his hand on the trigger, waiting for the commander to issue an order to open fire. We are ready to do this and God willing, we will do it as soon as possible," added Salehi, a nuclear physicist.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed that it has received a letter from Iran declaring the country's intention to start enriching uranium up to 20%.

"Iran has informed the Agency that in order to comply with a legal act recently passed by the country's parliament, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran intends to produce low-enriched uranium (LEU) up to 20 percent at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant," the IAEA statement has said in a statement.

Iran did not say in the letter when it would raise the level of uranium enrichment up to 20%. But the Monday announcement of Rabiei made it clear that Iran was in no mood to wait for so long to make the nuclear move.

Iran expresses readiness to restore ties with Saudi Arabia

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Two Iranian diplomats have said that Tehran is ready to restore diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia if Riyadh changes behavior.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, has called on Saudi Arabia to change its behavior so that Iran rebuild its ties with it. The spokesman said if the Saudis change their regional policies the region would see better days.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Monday, Khatibzadeh noted, "What happened in Yemen is really bitter. Besieging a nation and imposing a famine on it is really a historic catastrophe. Yemen is Saudi Arabia's immediate neighbor. And what happened to Qatar was not a good thing. The sooner each of these is resolved, the better for the region. The day when Saudi Arabia concludes that it can speak directly to us and the region and embrace the region and stop buying security from outside the region, there will be better days for the region."

The spokesman pointed out that it is possible for Tehran to reestablish diplomatic ties with Riyadh because Saudi Arabia is an important country in the region.

"Saudi Arabia is an important country, and it is possible to rebuild relations with it if the rulers of the House of Saud change tack," Khatibzadeh remarked.

Iran's ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani also expressed his country's readiness to rebuild ties with Saudi Arabia in an interview with the Kuwaiti daily newspaper Alrai.

"The Islamic Republic, as the largest neighbor of the countries bordering the [Persian] Gulf, seeks to have the best relations with its neighbors on the southern bank. It believes that its interests and benefits, and the interests of the countries of the region can be achieved through good neighborliness and peaceful coexistence, and it stresses the strengthening of security and stability throughout the region. Evidence of this is the Hormuz Initiative project presented by His Excellency the Iranian President Dr. Hassan Rouhani in 2018 and was welcomed by most countries in the region and beyond," the Iranian ambassador told the Kuwaiti newspaper.

There have been no diplomatic ties between Tehran and Riyadh since early 2016 when Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Iran after a group of angry protesters stormed its embassy in Tehran due to Saudi Arabia's execution of the prominent Shia dissident Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr.



Iran said his country did not believe in cutting diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia right from the start.

"With regard to relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from the beginning, we did not believe in severing relations with it, as we consider it an important and large country in the region. We believe that within the framework of joint cooperation, most bilateral problems can be solved and most regional crises overcome," the Iranian ambassador stated.

He also said that Iran is ready to enter any kind of talks with the Saudis unconditionally.

"We have expressed many times our readiness to start discussions anywhere, anytime, and under any heading, directly or indirectly. We informed our brothers of this and said that we are ready to discuss any accusations and discuss all controversial issues on the negotiating table," Irani continued.

Earlier in December, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had called on the Saudis to pursue talks with Iran rather than asking the West for a seat at the table of nuclear talks with Iran.

"It seems that some neighbors are asking the West to be part of the negotiation process with Iran! We do not negotiate with Westerners over the region. Their interventions are the basis of the problems. We are always ready for dialogue with our neighbors, and we have translated it into proposing regional security projects in 1986, the Regional Dialogue Forum in 2016, and the Hormuz Peace Initiative in 2019," the chief Iranian diplomat tweeted in Arabic on December 20.

On the same day, Zarif called for direct talks between Iran and its neighbors.

"Dear neighbors, Why ask US/E3 for inclusion in talks with Iran when: a) There won't be ANY talks about OUR region with them as they're the problem themselves b) We can speak directly about our region without outside meddling. Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE) is still on the table," Zarif tweeted.

Zarif's tweets came after the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, called for a new nuclear agreement with Iran instead of the existing one, which is called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The Saudi foreign minister told CNBC in late November that President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has set the groundwork for a new agreement with Iran and that Saudi Arabia should be a part of any potential negotiations between the incoming U.S. administration and Iran on a new nuclear deal. The chief Saudi diplomat said Saudi Arabia seeks to partner with the U.S. administration on a potential new agreement, which would not only limit Iran's nuclear activities but also seek to address what he called its "regional malign activity."

Such an accord could be labeled the "JCPOA++," bin Farhan added.

The Saudi foreign minister believes such an agreement could go even further, claiming that a "JCPOA++" deal could also seek to address Iran's alleged "arming of militias, whether it's the Houthis in Yemen, or certain groups in Iraq or in Syria, or Lebanon, and even beyond."

"And, of course, its ballistic missile programs and other arms programs, which (it) continues to use to spread havoc around the region," bin Farhan noted.

Iran has rejected the Saudi demand, saying bin Farhan's remarks indicate the weakness of Washington, Tel Aviv, and Riyadh.

"These remarks indicate three things: First, the United States, the Zionist regime, and Saudi Arabia are alone, and none of them see themselves as capable enough to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran. They need the help of others. Second, the remarks of the Saudi foreign minister show the hostile ties of Saudi Arabia with the Zionist regime and the United States. [Third], neither the U.S., nor Israel, or Saudi Arabia has the right to interfere in Iran's decisions, and Iran is free to negotiate with any country it wants," Mojtaba Zolnouri, the head of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said in November.

General Soleimani is being assassinated on social media every day over the past 365 days

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a gross violation of freedom of expression, Instagram and other American social media platforms have moved to censor media content related to a top Iranian general who was assassinated by the United States last year.

This week as people all across the region prepared to commemorate the first martyrdom anniversary of the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force, General Qassem Soleimani, some American social media platforms threw away their guidelines to uphold respect for freedom of expression, and heavily censored media materials related to the senior Iranian general.

Instagram was at the forefront of boycotting these materials. First of all, it moved to delete posts that include pictures of the general. But it gradually intensified its censorship operation, removing hashtags and even Stories that use the name of General Qassem Soleimani.

Instagram's censorship against General Soleimani dates back to the early hours of his assassination. On January 3, 2020, the Iranian people woke up to the news that the highly respected general has been assassinated in an American drone strike near Baghdad's international airport. The strike, which was ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump, caught tens of millions of people in the region by surprise as no one expected that the Americans would commit such an act of sheer folly when the Iranian general was on a diplomatic mission to de-escalate tensions between Iran and the U.S.

Within a few hours of the assassination of General Soleimani, there was an outpouring of emotions on social media apps, with millions of social media us-

ers, including those using Instagram, directing their anger at the White House. Instagram was all-prepared to extinguish this inferno of anger through what can be called a "blanket censorship," as if it was informed of the U.S. decision to assassinate General Soleimani in advance. The censorship of Instagram was so widespread that if even included Iranian government officials who posted materials commemorating the assassination of the Quds Force commander.

"In an undemocratic and scandalous move, Instagram has removed the voice of innocence of the nation," government spokesman Ali Rabiei wrote in a post on his Twitter account amidst an Instagram censorship campaign.

Some Iranian officials said at the time that Instagram had launched its campaign against General Soleimani under the pressure of the U.S. government. The U.S. government's move to put pressure on companies to censor Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani on social media is out of misery, Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi, minister of information and communications technology, noted in January 2020.

"America's action shows its misfortune, as Iran is powerful on social media. The on-going presence of people on social networks with tens of millions of posts has echoed the U.S. terrorism in the world," the Iranian minister asserted, vowing that he will take measures to counteract the U.S. censorship.

Instagram users in Iran have since castigated it for its discriminatory approach to events related to Iran, hoping that the American photo and video sharing social networking service would change its policy on the Iranian general.

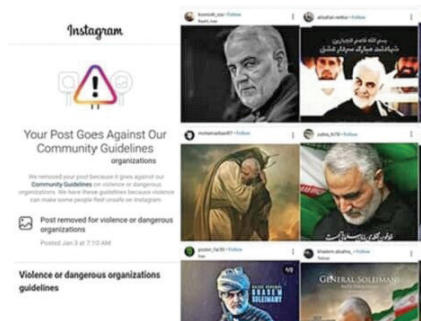
But this January dashed Iranian users' hope. As Iranian users of Instagram prepared to mark the first martyrdom anniversary of General Soleimani, Instagram once again showed that it is still complying with its controversial policy of muzzling any voice showing respect for the Iranian general.

This time, Instagram not only removed posts of ordinary users in Iran, but also deleted, and in some cases threatened to suspend, a number of accounts affiliated with some Iranian media outlets including the Tehran Times.

Over the past few days, Instagram brutally suppressed the voice of the Tehran Times, removing several posts and Stories published by its account. Instagram even threatened to suspend the account of the Tehran Times for sharing media materials on General Soleimani, a move that constitutes a flagrant violation of freedom of expression. The Tehran Times has every right to ask Instagram that why it is applying dual standards in its policy toward freedom of expression, removing General Soleimani-related media materials produced by Iranian news organizations while refusing to remove similar materials produced by Western media outlets.

This behavior of Instagram prompted some Iranian officials to seriously consider it to be a tool of the U.S. government. Head of Iran's Civil Defense Organization Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali on Sunday described Instagram as "a new colonial tool" of the U.S.

"We hold the first anniversary of the great martyr at a time when the new colonial and virtual tools of America such as Instagram are afraid of even publishing the pictures of Soleimani," Jalali said in a message released on Saturday, ahead



of the anniversary of Lieutenant General Soleimani's martyrdom.

The censorship campaign against the top general was not limited to Instagram but also its parent company Facebook, both of which did not even try to whitewash their anti-freedom campaign.

A Facebook spokesperson admitted in a mid-January 2020 statement to CNN that Instagram and its parent company Facebook are removing posts that voice support for General Soleimani to comply with U.S. sanctions.

On Monday, Facebook removed the Tehran Times' posts commemorating the general, shortly after they were posted. Facebook went so further as to suspend the Tehran Times' account for a month, threatening to remove the account afterward. YouTube also followed in the footsteps of Instagram and Facebook, launching a censorship campaign to remove videos showing support for General Soleimani. These social media platforms have been busy removing posts related to General Soleimani since he was assassinated last year, and they continue to do so, in what appears to be a violation of freedom of expression.

SPORTS

Mohammad Vakili named Iran U16 volleyball coach

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Vakili was appointed as new head coach of Iran U16 volleyball team on Monday.

Vakili has worked in Iran's age-group teams (U19, U21 and U23) since 1990. Most of the players who are going to Tokyo Olympic Games have started volleyball under guidance of the long-serving coach.

He had problems with Iran volleyball federation and had said he would not lead the U16 team but it seems they have buried the hatchet.

Vakili won the title with Iran at the 2017 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U19 World Championship in Bahrain.



Esteghlal beat Aluminum to remain top of IPL

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team defeated Aluminum in Iran Professional League (IPL) to remain top of the table.

On Monday, the Blues defeated the Arak based football team 2-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Amirarsalan Motahari was on target in the 38th minute and Mehdi Ghaedi doubled the score in the 73rd minute.

Earlier in the day, Sanat Naft defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-0 thanks to goals from Reza Khaleghifar and Mehdi Zobeidi in Abadan.

Shahr Khodro edged past Saipa 1-0 in Mashhad courtesy of Amin Ghaseminejad's 54th minute goal.

In Ahvaz, Foolad suffered a late draw against Mes Rafsanjan. Brazilian forward Luciano Pereira scored for the hosts in the 56th minute but Mehrdad Avakh leveled the score in the dying moments of the match.

On Tuesday, Persepolis will host Sepahan in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Tractor meet Zob Ahan in Isfahan and Paykan play Nassaji in Tehran.

Esteghlal sit top of the table thanks to goal difference over Sanat Naft.

Norouzi re-elected as head of Iran's Sports Medicine Federation

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Gholamreza Norouzi was re-elected as head of Iran's Sports Medicine Federation on Monday for a four-year term till 2025.

In the elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Norouzi secured 27 of 43 votes cast.

"We will keep the sports at the forefront of the fight against doping," Norouzi said. "We want to see the sports without doping."

Norouzi says that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the most significant disruption to the worldwide sporting calendar but the world will pass this stage.

Iran's Esmailpour announces retirement from wrestling

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian freestyle wrestler Masoud Esmailpour represented Iran at the Wrestling Men's freestyle 60 kg event at the 2012 Summer Olympics.

The 32-year-old wrestler was sidelined due to an injury two years ago and decided to announce his retirement from the sport.

Esmailpour won Asian championship three times in 2010 (New Delhi), 2014 (Astana) and 2015 (Doha).

He also claimed a silver medal at the 2014 World Championships (Tashkent) and a bronze medal at the 2013 World Championship (Budapest).

The lightweight freestyler also seized a gold medal at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon.

Esmailpour represented Iran at the Wrestling Men's freestyle 60 kg event at the 2012 Summer Olympics.

Al Duhail eye Iran's Karimi

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Qatari football club Al Duhail have set their sight on signing Iranian defensive midfielder Ali Karimi on loan.

Karimi is a member of Qatar SC but the club have recently signed Persepolis midfielder Bashir Resan.

Al Duhail football team have recently parted company with Iranian winger Ramin Rezaeian.

Iranian media have reported that Iranian club Esteghlal are going to re-sign the midfielder.

Al Duhail sports officer Faraj Saleh al-Marri has confirmed negotiations with Karimi.

Palestine to play Kuwait in friendly

Palestine will face Kuwait in an international friendly on January 18 in Kuwait, the Palestine Football Association has announced.

The friendly will serve as preparation for the two sides ahead of the resumption of the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Palestine are scheduled to host Singapore in Group D of the Asian Qualifiers on March 25 while Kuwait will travel to Australia for Group B action.

Palestine are currently bottom of Group D standing with four points while Kuwait are second in Group B on ten points, two behind Australia.

Palestine head coach Nouredine Ould Ali has called up 24 players for a 10-day training camp in Jericho from Tuesday. *(Source: the-afc)*

Clearance of goods from customs to be accelerated

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm-Hosseini said on Monday that his ministry is going to take necessary measures to accelerate the clearance of goods at customs to help regulate domestic markets.



“We will follow up on the necessary approvals and directives to reduce the deposit of goods at customs and to accelerate the clearance processes,” Razm-Hosseini said on the sidelines of a market regulation headquarters’ meeting.

Referring to the customs report on the clearance of 16 million tons of basic goods, the official said: “facilitating the clearance of stored goods is one of the priorities of the Industry Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and with the approval of the government’s economic headquarters, we have started to facilitate the clearance of goods at the country’s ports.”

According to the official, there are four million tons of goods stored in the country’s ports that are currently undergoing clearance processes.

Clearance of the mentioned goods will help supply the raw materials required by the production sector and will also affect the supply of basic goods in domestic markets, he said.

Earlier on Sunday, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced that over 17.46 million tons of commodities worth \$8.763 billion have been imported to the country during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020).

More than 2,136,175 tons of basic goods were cleared from the country’s customs during the ninth Iranian calendar months of Azar (November 21- December 20, 2020), about 450,000 tons more than the previous month, Roholloha Latifi said.

Back in May 2020, the head of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad said that the coronavirus outbreak has negatively affected the loading and unloading of goods in the country’s ports.

“The international trade has been [negatively] affected by the coronavirus outbreak and we have been witnessing a significant drop in maritime transportation worldwide, Rastad said.

Iran Oil Show to be held in late January

1 → Due to the special conditions caused by the pandemic, in almost all exhibitions held this year only managers, businessmen, scholars, and experts have been allowed to participate and visit, so the Oil Show is not an exception too.

Iran Oil Show is among the most significant oil and gas events in the world in terms of the number of participants and its diversity.

Stock market is on right track: fin. min.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand has said that the stock market is now on the right track and has reached a stage that can be trusted in terms of performance.

“Except for the peripheral variables that affect this market, we do not have a specific market disturbance”, the minister stated.

Sometimes the policies that are made in different sectors affect the market, which is natural, he added.



For example, if a price floor is to be set for a commodity group and a ceiling is to be released, it is in the interest of that group, but because it is badly reflected, it has the opposite effect, Dejpasand explained.

The vice-chairman of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)’s board of directors has recently said that the stock market will spend the last months of the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) calmly.

Mentioning investigation of the periodical (six-month and nine-month) reports of the companies’ performance, Javad Eshqi-Nejad said that given the foreign currency exchange rate situation and the appropriate sales volume, in this period, almost the expectations of listed companies have been met and positive results have been provided for the capital market.

Regarding the continuation of the stock market trend in the next three months, he said: “In this regard, the main issue is political relations and international behavior; We seem to be achieving good results in the international arena.”

While predicting that the stock market will be calm in the last months of this year, he said: “But for the next year, according to the budget, we may face new events whose analysis can have special effects on various industries; in a way that these effects may be associated with some industries for the next 2-3 years.”

Thermal power plants’ 9-month output stands at 236,000 gigawatt-hours

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Thermal power plants generated 236,000 gigawatt-hours of electricity during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), a director in Iran’s Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH) announced.

Ali-Asghar Abdoli, the TPPH’s director for power plants improvement, said of the 270,000 gigawatt-hour of electricity generated during the nine-month period, 236,000 gigawatt-hour was the share of thermal power plants.

Last month, the managing director of TPPH had said that seven major thermal power industry projects worth 150 trillion rials (about \$3.57 billion) will come on stream across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

According to Mohsen Tarzatabab, under the framework of the Energy Ministry’s A-B-Iran program, a total of 21 major thermal industry projects valued at 400 trillion rials (about \$9.5 billion) were planned to



go operational in the current year of which 14 have been inaugurated.

Tarzatabab noted that the mentioned 14 projects with a total investment of over 250 trillion rials (about \$5.95 billion)

were put into operation before the current year’s summer peak period to add 1,300 megawatts (MW) to the country’s power generation capacity.

The official put the total volume of in-

vestment made in the country’s thermal power industry under the framework of the A-B-Iran program at €2.5 billion.

A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19). Since the beginning of the second phase of the scheme in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2020), every week several energy projects have gone operational across the country.

Currently, a total of 478 thermal power plants are operating throughout Iran which includes both gas power plants and combined cycle plants.

Iran’s total power generation capacity stands at about 85,000 MW, more than 90 percent of which is supplied by thermal power plants.

Over two-thirds of Iran’s thermal power plants are owned and operated by the country’s private sector and private owners are currently generating nearly 67 percent of Iran’s thermal power.

Government’s ETF approach still under debate

1 → The third fund is expected to hold 12.05 percent of government stakes in the National Iranian Copper Industry Company, 17.2 percent in Mobarakeh Steel Company, 14.04 percent in Iran Khodro, and 23 percent in SAIPA (the two main domestic carmakers).

Now, while the subject of second and third ETFs offerings is still hot in the media and there is a lot of speculation about the timing of these offerings, some experts and those active in the capital market believe that the ETF idea is essentially wrong, saying that although the government may have achieved its goals of offering ETFs, but the capital market and shareholders have not benefited.

Behrouz Shohadaei, a capital market expert, believes that the way the government has planned for these offerings

is wrong from the beginning and the government should not continue to insist on staying in the wrong direction.

In a recent interview, the expert has said, “As sanctions and financial problems escalated, the government decided to provide some of the funding it needed, but still refused to provide management to those who owned it. So the government decided to pursue the transfer of government shares through ETFs, thereby trying to raise some of its funding.”

“What we are seeing in the market now is that this type of divesting has not worked well. The government planned a wrong thing and still insists on it. No one doubts that the government should be downsized, but it has not done the right thing in this regard”, he concluded.



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

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Heads of Iran’s joint chambers of commerce with Oceanian countries met with First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri to discuss issues and ways of boosting trade with the mentioned countries, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Sunday.

The meeting was attended by senior government officials as well as representatives of the private sector including the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and the Foreign Affairs Ministry’s Director General of Economic Diplomacy Rasoul Mohajer.

During the meeting, the private sector representatives talked about their concerns and the problems and challenges that the traders are currently facing, and made some



suggestions to improve the conditions and develop trade and economic relations with the target countries in Oceania.

The officials attending the meeting also underlined the significant role of the private sector in the country’s economy and called

for necessary measures to be taken by the government for removing the obstacles facing the private sector traders.

Shafeie for his part, emphasized the importance of joining regional and international treaties like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) for the country’s trade and called for a detailed study of this agreement by the government to be simulated and implemented in Iran as a detailed case study.

RCEP is a free trade agreement initiated by Indonesia, between the Asia-Pacific nations of Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

“The main objectives of this agreement are the gradual elimination of tariff and

non-tariff barriers in foreign trade, as well as the gradual elimination of restrictions and discriminatory regulations in the field of services trade to create a free, facilitating and competitive investment environment in the mentioned region,” Shafeie explained.

Jahangiri, in his speech, referred to his several meetings with the heads of joint chambers of commerce, and said: “The most important message of these meetings is that foreign trade and developing exports and imports should be among the government’s priorities.”

“The joint chambers of commerce are in fact the main representatives of the country’s private sector, and it is necessary to always have a careful analysis of the obstacles facing the economic activity in the target countries as well as within the country,” he stressed.

Iran’s oil reserves in Persian Gulf increase

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Recent studies on the reservoirs of four Iranian oil fields in the Persian Gulf have shown that the estimations of the in-place oil in these fields have increased by more than 740 million barrels, Shana reported.

Based on the Fast Track studies carried out by the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) on Hendijan, Behregansar, Abouzar and Nowruz oil fields, the total in-place oil reserves of these fields have increased by 742 million barrels compared to the last approved study carried on the fields and has reached 9.9 billion barrels, an official with the company announced.

According to Ali Khajavi, the mentioned studies have been completed in collaboration with capable domestic companies in less than nine months and with average monthly progress of over 11 percent.

The new findings indicate that the total extractable oil from the mentioned fields has also increased by 217 million barrels to reach more than 3.2 billion barrels,



Khajavi said. “Considering the oil price at \$45 per barrel, the added

volume is equivalent to about \$10 billion,” he added.

According to the official, conducting Master Development Plan (MDP) studies is the most important tool for optimizing production, choosing the appropriate way of reservoir development, and ultimately increasing the recovery factor of hydrocarbon reservoirs.

MDP studies typically include the processing and interpretation of seismic data, complete studies of basic geology and static modeling, complete studies of basic reservoir engineering, history matching and construction of dynamic simulation models, preparation and implementation of production scenarios, and finally complete economic studies of the reservoir development project.

IOOC, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), is one of the world’s largest offshore oil-producing companies. The company accounts for one-third of the Iranian oil exports, operating on the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea.

‘Reviving 1,000 idle stone mines a necessity’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The secretary-general of Iran Stone Association has emphasized the necessity of reviving 1,000 idle stone mines across the country.

Ahmad Sharifi has said that the precise implementation of the small-scale mines reviving plan can lead to the return of 1,000 decorative stone and facade stone mines to the production and export cycle.

The small-scale mines reviving plan is one of the best government’s programs in the mining sector, but differences in the tastes of government officials in this area have hampered the expected progress in this sector, he lamented.

He further said, “Studies show that the annual capacity of the country’s stone mines is more than 30 million tons, but now in the current situation it has reached about eight to nine million tons and needs to be reconsidered. Why have we reached

the production of about one third of the capacity in this sector?”

The Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has announced that there are 4,000 idle mines throughout the country.

As announced by the ministry, from the 5,600 active mines of Iran, 400 million tons of minerals are averagely extracted per annum.

The figure was 410 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

In mid-October, the previous head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) had announced that 157 idle small-scale mines had been revived throughout the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).

Saying that the mentioned mines had been reactivated as part of a compre-



hensive program for reviving idle small mines across the country, Khodadad Gharibpour also announced that 200 mines were planned to be put back into operation by the end of the year.

As reported, under the framework of the mentioned program, 672 idle mines have been identified and prioritized in the current Iranian calendar year, and

diagnostic procedures have been performed on 194 mines to determine the reasons for the halt in their production.

According to Gharibpour, since the beginning of the program in March 2019 up to date 303 mines had been revived.

The mentioned program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO’s missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces.

The head of IMIDRO has mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of “Resistance Economy”, saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step toward materializing “Surge in Production”, which is the motto of the current Iranian calendar year, it also plays a significant role in job creation throughout the country, Gharibpour said back in June.

How should we remember General Soleimani?

1 → Soleimani was leader of the Quds Force, the primary military arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. Almost his entire military career was spent battling the various proxy forces of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis and in doing so, he enjoyed great success. He began by successfully battling drug traffickers operating along the Afghanistan-Iran border, thus disrupting the highly lucrative heroin smuggling operations that had earned huge profits for the CIA, thus he came 'onto the radar' as a threat to U.S. 'interests' in the region.

The next time Gen. Soleimani came into direct opposition to the nefarious operations of the axis came in 2006 when Israel invaded Lebanon, an invasion that very quickly turned into total failure and became an embarrassing defeat for Israel. It was Gen. Soleimani that masterminded the Lebanese defence as he directed the battle between the Hezbollah forces that defended Lebanon and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Israeli invaders.

One might ask why an Iranian general was commanding Hezbollah forces in Lebanon, the answer requires a little knowledge

“It was Gen. Soleimani that masterminded the Lebanese defence as he directed the battle between the Hezbollah forces that defended Lebanon and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Israeli invaders (in 2006).”

of the geopolitics of West Asia. While Iran is not an Arab nation, the bond of Islam makes it a natural ally and supporter of nations of Syria & Iraq (the Saddam Hussein years were an aberration, Saddam cared nothing for Islam of any form and was a CIA puppet who attacked Iran on U.S. orders); therefore, it is entirely reasonable for Iran to support and defend its Arab brothers, whether they be in Iraq, Syria or Lebanon. Gen. Soleimani was the man who led Iranian efforts to do so.

With a track record of defeating CIA-backed drug traffickers and humiliating Israel's forces in Lebanon, Soleimani was already perceived by the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis as a thorn in the side of their plans when they enacted their plot to destroy



Ian Greenhalgh is a British political analyst and historian with a particular interest in military history and the real causes of conflicts. His studies in history and background in the media industry have given him a keen insight into the use of mass media as a creator of conflict in the modern world.

Syria & Iraq under the guise of Islamic State in 2014. The Iraqi Army largely deserted, turning over its weapons & equipment to the ISIL fighters and simply going home, their pockets lined with U.S.-supplied cash handed out by ISIL. This was the how and why of ISIL's lightning fast conquest of large swathes of northern Iraq. With the Iraqi Army gone, ISIL faced little opposition, just a rag-tag of Kurdish forces and hastily organised local militias, into this vacuum stepped Gen. Soleimani and a small but highly motivated and trained Iranian Revolutionary Guards cadre around which the general was able to organise the local Kurds & Iraqi militias into an effective fighting force that first halted the advance of ISIL, then over many long, hard months of fighting, pushed them back and eventually drove them out of Iraq entirely.

Now he had defeated ISIL in Iraq, Gen. Soleimani really was a marked man, he had seriously derailed the nefarious agenda of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis and they

wanted his head for doing so. With Iraq now free of ISIS, Gen. Soleimani moved on to Syria where a similar struggle was taking place between the largely foreign mercenary forces of ISIL and the Syrian armed forces with assistance from Hezbollah. Once again, Soleimani became the lynchpin that held together the alliance against ISIL and masterminded the successfully military campaign that defeated them. During this time, the U.S. and Israel made several attempts to kill the General, airstrikes on positions where the General was thought to be located were a frequent occurrence and several times the U.S. falsely claimed to have killed him. Eventually, thanks to the leadership of Soleimani, ISIL was defeated in Syria and the general had a second great victory against the proxy mercenary forces of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis under his belt.

With such a string of victories to his credit, Gen. Soleimani was very much a man marked for death by his enemies.

“No man did more to oppose the nefarious agenda of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis than Qassem Soleimani.”

He had driven their proxy armies out of first Iraq and then Syria, he had destroyed their plans to conquer West Asia, no other figure could reasonably be claimed to be a greater threat to their nefarious agenda. Therefore, it was with a crushing inevitability that the General, a man of great integrity, a warrior of great bravery and a unifying and inspiring figure for the entire Arab and wider Islamic world would meet his tragic end at the hands of the US-Israel-Saudi axis when finally, they caught up with him at Baghdad Airport in January 2020, blowing his vehicle convoy to pieces with an airstrike.

The Western world reveres great generals of the past such as Rommel, Patton and Montgomery, in my eyes, Qassem Soleimani deserves to be ranked alongside them as a warrior and man of honour and integrity, a man who fought long and hard against forces that sought to destroy, conquer and enslave on behalf of international criminals. Gen. Soleimani should be remembered as both a great general and a great man, but I fear that will not be the case in the Western world where he has been besmirched as

“Soleimani was a humble man; he never courted fame nor public adulation; he simply got on with the task assigned to him and completed that task with great skill and courage.”

a terrorist and enemy of freedom. I hope that one day, this egregious falsehood is overturned and his rightful position as the man who defeated Islamic State first in Iraq and then in Syria is fully recognised. Soleimani was a humble man, he never courted fame nor public adulation, he simply got on with the task assigned to him and completed that task with great skill and courage.

I shall leave the writing of epitaphs to more poetically minded writers and simply say that Qassem Soleimani was a brave and noble warrior who gave his life in service of his Islamic brothers so that they may live safer, happier lives and for that, he deserves to be remembered with respect and admiration.

A tale of a fearless yet humble General

“General Soleimani assassination demonstrates Washington’s cowardice and love of chaos”

1 → However, one of the most outright cowardly and chaotic actions I've witnessed happened on January 3, 2020 when Washington decided to assassinate General Qassem Soleimani along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and several others.

Cowardly was indeed the first word that came to my mind. General Soleimani had just arrived at the Iraqi airport on a very public diplomatic visit to meet with Iraq's prime minister.

As more details emerged, I felt even more shame and embarrassment. Not only was this an extrajudicial killing without any shred of evidence to justify it, but the manner in which they murdered General Soleimani was especially cowardly. Washington ordered a drone strike for this killing. Most drone strikes are carried out remotely, often from within rural strip malls inside the United States or bases in Europe -- thousands of miles from the site of the assassination.

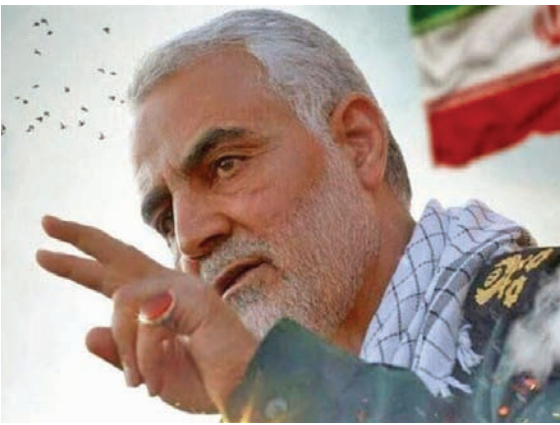
The people operating these unmanned drones are notoriously detached from their targets and the reality of the violence they inflict. Drone strikes are like a video game from the killer's perspective: They require no bravery, skill, or physical fitness. There is absolutely no honor or dignity in a drone strike. Washington understands this and I believe this is why we have not seen Trump award Soleimani's killer with any type of honorable service medal.

Later, I started thinking about how this assassination demonstrates Washington's commitment to chaos in Iraq and the rest of the region. The United States actively armed ISIS in Iraq and other terror groups in Syria. The same country with several active military bases in Iraq -- including several in the northeast -- allowed ISIS to maintain control of Mosul and the surrounding areas for years.

The poor people of Mosul, which I'm sure your readers know is a religiously diverse area, lived under unthinkable terror for over three years. It took almost a full year to liberate Mosul from ISIS rule and the success was largely thanks to the Popular Mobilization Units trained under General Soleimani. It's the same story in Syria's Raqqa, Homs, and other cities.

It's hard to say what Iraq and Syria would look like today without General Soleimani's influence but I'm sure it wouldn't be pretty. Unlike the United States, General Soleimani understood the importance of empowering local groups to hold their own and uphold unity to persevere against sectarian terror groups. He was fearless yet humble.

Washington's decision to assassinate General Soleimani also demonstrates its dedication to chaos



U.S. soldiers are quite literally cannon fodder in the eyes of politicians. It wouldn't be beneath the U.S. to stage an attack against its own troops to justify striking Iran, especially seeing as Trump keeps saying that if a single American dies he will strike Iran. The last few weeks of his administration could get dirty.

in Iraq and elsewhere. The United States would prefer violence and terrorism if a diplomatically independent Iraq is the alternative -- it's the same scenario we see in Yemen, Libya, Syria, and every warzone.

On that note, the assassination was truly a gross violation of Iraq's sovereignty and an admission of defeat from Washington. General Soleimani was on his way to meet with the Iraqi Prime Minister to discuss peace coordination and the path forward. The United States decided the best course of action was to interfere with this diplomacy by launching a terror attack at the Iraqi airport.

Just imagine how the United States would respond if Iran assassinated a U.S. general in Mexico on a diplomatic visit just 100 miles from the Texas border. There would be international condemnation, emer-

gency UN Security Council meetings and resolutions, direct military action from a broad coalition of countries, and an ICC investigation and trial against the perpetrators.

Yet we've seen none of this reaction for Washington's irrational and terroristic assassination of General Soleimani. Quite the contrary, the international courts and organizations have all but laughed in Tehran's face for seeking justice through appropriate channels. Instead, the "international community" remains committed to U.S. hegemony and power, refusing to help. In fact, Tehran was urged to remain calm, peaceful, and collected in response to the cowardly attack on its beloved General.

This shows us the extent to which Washington is willing to put the lives of its own troops at risk to maintain a safe space for its private contractors in Iraq. U.S. soldiers are quite literally cannon fodder in the eyes of politicians. It wouldn't be beneath the U.S. to stage an attack against its own troops to justify striking Iran, especially seeing as Trump keeps saying that if a single American dies he will strike Iran. The last few weeks of his administration could get dirty.

Prior to the assassination, I told Tasnim that Washington is willing to put its own allies and troops at risk to send a message and continue its occupation of Iraq. In late December 2019, Washington had launched airstrikes against Iraq's PMUs. Over the prior summer in 2018, Washington flew a drone into Iran's airspace and condemned Tehran for shooting it down. (I was actually interrogated at the airport that same day. DHS asked why I chose to fly on the day Iran shot down that drone. As if I could have known the U.S. would pick this day to violate Iran's airspace.)

It should be clear to everyone that the United States never has nor will uphold basic human rights and respectful diplomacy. If it did, it would have respected Iraq's wishes and left the country after nearly 20 years of varying levels of occupation.

Unfortunately, many commentators and politicians have pinned the entire blame on Trump rather than acknowledging that this assassination reflects the true nature of U.S. foreign policy: violence, disregard for sovereignty, and domination at all costs without a shred of accountability.

Owner and editor of Geopolitics Alert, Randi Nord is a U.S.-based geopolitical analyst and content strategist. She covers U.S. imperialism with a special focus on Yemen, Iran, and Lebanon. She has participated in the UNHRC as a guest of NGOs and speaks at anti-war events.

Ex-Pentagon chiefs warn against using U.S. military in election row

In an extraordinary rebuke of U.S. President Donald Trump, all 10 living former secretaries of defence cautioned on Sunday against any move to involve the military in pursuing claims of election fraud, arguing that it would take the country into "dangerous, unlawful and unconstitutional territory".

The 10 men, both Democrats and Republicans, signed on to an opinion article published in The Washington Post newspaper that implicitly questioned Trump's willingness to follow his constitutional duty to peacefully relinquish power on January 20.

They included Mark Esper who was fired by Trump in November as well as another Trump defense chief James Mattis.

The group said the time had come to accept that the Republican president had lost the November 3 election and that Biden would succeed him on January 20.

"Our elections have occurred. Recounts and audits have been conducted. Appropriate challenges have been addressed by the courts. Governors have certified the results. And the electoral college has voted," they said in the opinion piece. "The time for questioning the results has passed."

And it is now time to formally certify the Electoral College votes, they said.

The former Pentagon chiefs warned against use of the military in any effort to change the outcome.

"Efforts to involve the U.S. armed forces in resolving election disputes would take us into dangerous, unlawful and unconstitutional territory," they wrote. "Civilian and military officials who direct or carry out such measures would be accountable, including potentially facing criminal penalties, for the grave consequences of their actions on our republic."

Israeli prosecutors detail corruption charges against Netanyahu

Israeli prosecutors have released an amended indictment spelling out detailed charges against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a corruption case in which he is accused of trading favors with a powerful media mogul.

Netanyahu has been charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three corruption cases, al Jazeera reported.

One of them alleges that Netanyahu promoted regulations worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the owner of the Bezeq telecom company in exchange for positive coverage on its popular Walla news site.

In response to a request from Netanyahu's lawyers for more details, Israeli prosecutors released a letter on Sunday alleging there had been 315 incidents of Walla being requested to make its coverage more favourable for Netanyahu and his family.

They said there were indications that Netanyahu was personally involved in 150 of those incidents.

Afghan rivals to resume talks as civilian killings sow suspicion

Afghan government representatives and Taliban officials are due to resume their power-sharing talks, officials said on Monday, although battlefield clashes and targeted killings risk undermining efforts to end the war.

The talks began in Qatar in September months after the Taliban reached an agreement with the United States allowing it to pull its troops out of Afghanistan and end its longest war in exchange for Taliban security guarantees, Reuters reported.

The two Afghan sides got bogged down on procedures for weeks but in December they reached an agreement on the process, clearing the way for them to get down to the issues when they resume their negotiations on Tuesday.

"Talks are a complicated process but the Afghan government and the negotiating team, with regard to the interest of the people of Afghanistan, are determined to take the process forwards," said Najia Anwari, a spokeswoman for the Ministry for Peace Affairs.

UK judge rejects extraditing 'suicide risk' Assange to U.S

A British judge ruled on Monday that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange should not be extradited to the United States to face criminal charges including breaking a spying law, saying his mental health problems meant he would be at risk of suicide.

U.S. authorities are likely to appeal the decision to London's High Court. Ultimately the case could go to the UK Supreme Court.

The United States accuses Australian-born Assange, 49, of 18 offences relating to the release by WikiLeaks of vast troves of confidential U.S. military records and diplomatic cables which prosecutors said had put lives in danger.

Resistance News Muslim scholars urge economic boycott of Israel

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— The International Union of Muslim Scholars has called for a mass boycott of Israel over its occupation of Arab territories, and attacks on Muslims in Palestine and Syria's Golan Heights.

"We call for boycotting the Israeli regime, which is currently occupying the Al-Aqsa Mosque, attacking our brothers and sisters in Golan Heights in Syria, and in Palestine and destroying their lands and homes," it said in a statement published on the body's official Facebook page on Sunday.

According to Press TV, the statement, signed by President Ahmed er-Raysuni and General Secretary Ali al-Qaradaghi, stressed that resisting occupation by legitimate means and ousting the occupiers is a moral obligation according to Islam, and is recognized by international law as well as United Nations resolutions.

Noting that occupation is a temporary situation, and hence does not allow the seizure of private property, the organization said, "Those who purchase or market the goods of occupiers are recognized as sinners who abetted in this crime."

"We, therefore, call upon all Muslims for a mass economic boycott of Israel until it withdraws from the all occupied territories."

A manifestation of Iran’s cultural relations with the thousand-colored country of India

By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddiq

(Part 2/2)

One of the greats in the field of writing is Enayatullah Kanboh, the author of the book Bahar- e Danesh and one of the scientists of the Shah Jahan era. Bahar-e Danesh was written from fiction and ancient Indian romantic legends in Persian during the reign of lover king. In this age, storytelling grew at an unprecedented rate. In the Indian subcontinent, storytelling flourished and hundreds of stories were written. The profession of storyteller was recognized officially in the courts of the kings of Iran and India.

---- Here is the summary of one of those stories:

While hunting, Jahandar Prince of India buys a sweet-talking parrot from a young and accompanies himself with the bird. One day, the parrot, seeing the prince playing love with his maid, rebuked him and said: Why did you ignore the love of Bahrehvarbanou, the daughter of the king of Minosavad, and fall in love with this maid?

Upon hearing Bahrehvarbanou’s descriptions, the prince falls in love with her and sends Binazir the painter to Minosavad to paint her picture. Binazir goes to Bahrehvarbanou’s garden as a businessman and after drawing her picture, he shows her the picture of Jahandar.

Bahrehvarbanou falls in love with Jahandar after seeing his beauty. Jahandar is also intoxicated by seeing Bahrehvarbanou’s picture and falls ill. The doctors are unable to treat him, and the prince’s father, who is bored and upset about his son falling in love; goes to him and finally the opinion of the sages is placed on it. Each of the king’s relatives comes to the prince and tells a story in this regard, and thus these seven people close to the king tell seven stories about the infidelity of women and their intrigue. But these legends do not deter the young prince from what he has been doing.

The king, after consulting with the elders of the court, decides to send a person with many gifts to King Homayoun, Bahrehvarbanou’s father, and ask for a letter from Bahrehvarbanou for Jahandar. In response to Jahandar’s father’s letter, the king writes a violent letter and rejects his request.

Upon hearing this news, Jahandar leaves the throne and rushes to the beloved land. Ignoring the Sharak’s advice, Jahandar goes to Homayoun Shah’s court in Minosavad with a parrot and shows his eagerness to serve him, but Homayoun Shah expels him. They sit in the garden of Bahrehvarbanou. The parrot, seeing the condition of the prince, tells stories about lovers who have endured hardships on the way to reach their beloved; but the insane Jahandar burns in the fire of love.

One day, when Bahrehvarbanou sees Jahandar singing, she remembers him and reveals her love to the Nanny or nursemaid. The king upon hearing this news from the Nanny and after consulting with the ministers and elders, the court sees the expediency in her marriage and gives the order. After determining the blessed omen for their marriage, prepare the means of feasting and happiness.

After getting married to Bahrehvarbanou, Jahandar returned to his homeland by giving jewelry to her father. In the middle of the road, the two brothers end the quarrel over their father’s inheritance, and they give him their capital. Hormoz, the son of a minister who is a fan of Bahrehvarbanou, joins him in expressing friendship to Jahandar and while hunting, he says to Jahandar: I can transfer the soul from one body to another by knowing the great name.

Jahandar is deceived by his words and takes place in his body by transporting the soul; But Hormoz leaves him and goes. At the same time, the Jahandar king’s father greets him with a group of princes and puts Hormoz on the throne instead of the Jahandar. Jahandar returns in the form of a shark and saves a young man who is being tried for kissing the image of the minister’s daughter in the mirror, by flogging him in the shadow. Bahrehvarbanou, seeing Sharak’s wisdom, takes him from a dervish, and hearing the truth from Sharak, asks Hormoz to become a deer so that the world can return to its original body. Hormoz is then hanged.

Sometime later, Bahram Khan, the general of the government, rebelled against Jahandar for the sake of the monarchy and ignored his advice letters. Jahandar also fought Bahram bravely and defeated the insurgents by killing him. When Jahandar hears the song of Bahram’s daughter named Ghazal Tatari, he calls her and her mother to himself and is intoxicated by the sound of her harp instrument. Bahrehvarbanou, annoyed by the Jahandar’s association with the Tatar Gazal, leaves the palace and pitches a tent in the desert. After writing an apology letter, Jahandar goes to the desert and, seeing her condition, weeps and dies. Bahrehvarbanou also dies on her bed in a wedding dress.

Pilot project to buttress tourism in UNESCO-tagged Yazd

TOURISM TEHRAN — A pilot project is planned to promote tourism in the UNESCO-listed Yazd, which is a major travel destination in central Iran.

The project, which is scheduled to launch in the next Iranian calendar year 1400 (starting March 20), also aims at introducing Yazd as a safe tourist destination as well as a center for archeological studies of the country, Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism Director Behrouz Omrani said on Monday.



Commencing researches and studies in the fields of archeology, ethnography, linguistics, anthropology, conservation and restoration, tourism and eco-tourism are also among the goals of the project, the official added.

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

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

Oman offers visa-free travels to Iranians, other nations but strict rules required

TOURISM TEHRAN — Oman **d e s k** has recently dropped its tourist visa requirement for visitors from 103 countries, including Iran, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, China, India, and Turkey, however the Sultanate has set some rules for the potential visitors.

“Although Oman has started accepting foreign tourists, it has made some exceptions and requirements in travel laws. The Royal Oman Police have announced that citizens of 103 countries who have been exempted from entry visas for 10 days must have pre-booked hotel reservations, health insurance, and return tickets, and must pay a fine each day if they stay extra. The amount of the fine has been announced as 10 Omani rials per day,” ISNA reported on Monday.

Previously, all tourists entering Oman had to apply for a visa online in advance of their visit, and the visa would be valid for either 10 days, at a cost of about \$13, or 30 days for \$52, according to Lonely Planet.

Oman has been slowly opening its borders since October when international flights were permitted for residents and citizens abroad. At the end of November, tourist visas were issued for the first time in about eight months. Tourism



is the fastest-growing non-oil industry in Oman, and accommodation providers and tour operators are eager to see visitors return.

Before the pandemic, Oman started to better connect itself to its neighbors in the region and become more accessible. In 2019, Dubai’s public transport system started a bus route that terminates in

Muscat. Oman’s visa application process also went online last year, though visitors from many countries will no longer need to access this system with the new visa-free travel announcement.

Oman has recorded almost 127,000 cases since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, but the number of new cases appears to be on a downward trend.

Taq Kasra, Sassanid masterpiece of architecture in modern Iraq, partly collapses

→ 1 The arch was part of the imperial palace complex, however, the exact time of its construction is not known with certainty. Some historians believe the founder is Shapour I who ruled Persia from 242 to 272 CE and some others believe that construction possibly began during the reign of Anushirwan the Just (Khosrow I) after a campaign against the Byzantines in 540 CE.

Ctesiphon served as the winter capital of the Parthian empire and later of the Sasanian empire. Classical writers claimed that Ctesiphon was founded by the Parthian king Vardanes. The first reliable mention of Ctesiphon, however, is as a Greek army camp on the east bank of the Tigris River opposite the Hellenistic city of Seleucia, according to Britannica.

Since then the course of the river has shifted, no longer flowing between the ruins of the two cities but instead dividing Ctesiphon itself. In 129 BC, when the Arsacids (Parthians) annexed Babylonia, they found Ctesiphon a convenient residence and cantonment, and under their rule Seleucia and its royal suburb of Ctesiphon came to form a twin city and a capital of the empire. A discontinuous Roman occupation of Seleucia and Ctesiphon began under the emperor Trajan in 116 CE. During the Roman sack of the city complex in 165 CE by the general Avidius Cassius, the palaces of Ctesiphon were destroyed and Seleucia was depopulated. The Sasanian monarchy, which replaced the Arsacids in 224 CE, resettled Ctesiphon.



Caviar museum to be established in Gilan

TOURISM TEHRAN — A caviar museum will be established in Iran’s Gilan province, which lies next to the Caspian Sea, a rich source for sturgeon species of fish such as salmon, steelhead, trout, lumpfish, and whitefish.

The museum will be made under a memorandum of understanding recently signed between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, and the Agricultural Services Specialized Holding Co., which is affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, IRNA reported on Monday.

The MOU aims at facilitating the establishment of the National Caviar Museum in the northern province to contribute to preserve cultural assets as well as deepen bilateral collaborations between the two ministries, the report said.



Deputy tourism minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian and the CEO of the agricultural company inked the MOU on Sunday.

Developing fisheries tourism, preserving national resources, establishing national and international caviar trade centers, launching sturgeon breeding

centers, and holding training courses and educational and recreational tours related to the caviar industry is also among the most important goals of signing the memorandum.

Last January Nabiollah Khoon-Mirzaei head of Iran Fisheries Organization announced that Iran produced Six tons of aquaculture caviar and 2,800 tons of caviar fish meat in 2019.

“Sturgeon breeding is carried out in more than 20 provinces of the country. We look forward to enhance it throughout the whole province as studies have been carried out in this regard.”

“There are currently 128 sturgeon farms in the country that are breeding the species, and we are planning to reach an output of 100 tons of caviar and 10,000 tons of caviar fish meat by 2025.”

The Persian sturgeon (Acipenser persicus) is a species of fish in the fam-

ily Acipenseridae. It is found in the Caspian Sea and to a lesser extent the Black Sea and ascends certain rivers to spawn, mainly the Volga, Kura, Araks, and Ural Rivers.

Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it’s the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Historical relics discovered in northeastern Iran being documented

TOURISM TEHRAN — A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts have commenced a project to study and document the ancient relics discovered in historical sites in Zaveh, the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province.

More than 1000 pieces of historical pottery, which were kept in “inappropriate conditions” for the past few years, are being organized, studied, and documented, local tourism official Ali Mohammadi said on Sunday.

The project is being carried out by the

province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in collaboration with the Archeology Faculty of Torbat-e Heydarieh University, sponsored by Zaveh Cement Factory, the official added.

So far 90 historical structure has been identified in Zaveh-located 180 kilometers to the provincial capital of Mashhad- of which 20 properties have been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Before the coronavirus puts almost everything on lockdown, the provincial capital of Mashhad played host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come



from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe to visit the imposing, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

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

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

90 historical sites demarcated in West Azarbaijan

TOURISM TEHRAN — Some 90 historical sites and structures across the northwestern West Azarbaijan province have recently been demarcated in a bid to curb illegal constructions within their boundaries.

Mapping projects of 37 more properties in the cities of Urmia, Khoy, Salmas, Sardasht, Chaldoran, Piranshahr, and Mahabad are also underway as a prerequisite for demarcation, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The demarcation project aims at preserving and protecting historical sites by creating a legal ban against intruders. Hassan Sepehrfar announced on Monday.

Constructing high-rise buildings that distort the visual elements of the demarcated properties or the use of uneven materials next to them is prohibited, the official added.

He also noted that landscaping and flooring in the surrounding areas need to be under the supervision of archeologists and cultural heritage experts.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Tepe Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region has been the seat of several ancient civilizations. It formed part of Urartu and later of Media. In the 4th century BC, it was conquered by Alexander the Great and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander’s generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. The area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE. The Arabs controlled Azerbaijan from the 7th century until Turkish nomads overran it in the 11th century. Thenceforth the inhabitants of the region were Turkish speakers. The region was overrun by the Mongols in the 13th century, and, under the ruler Hulegu, Azarbaijan became the center of a Mongol empire extending from Syria on the west to the Oxus River (now Amu Darya) on the east.



202 prisoners released on Gen. Soleimani's martyrdom anniversary

SOCIETY

d e s k

TEHRAN — On the occasion of the first martyrdom anniversary of Commander of the IRGC Quds Force Major General Qassem Soleimani, 202 prisoners of unintentional crimes were released across the country.

Benefactors in 12 provinces have contributed to releasing 1,000 prisoners of unintentional crimes on this occasion, and 1,000 more will be released in the near future, IRIB reported on Sunday.

January 3 was the first anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani in an American drone strike near Baghdad's international airport. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), who accompanied Soleimani upon his arrival in Baghdad, was also assassinated in



the strike.

Iranian philanthropists have helped free 5,068 inmates of unintentional crimes since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2020) till November 20, Asadollah Joolaei, head of Blood Money Organization, has said.

Some 173 female and 4,895 male prisoners were released across the country with a debt of 22 trillion rials (nearly \$530 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), he noted.

According to him, there are currently 12,874 inmates of unintentional crimes in the country's prisons.

Last year (March 2019-March 2020), some 8,599 inmates of unintentional crimes were released from prison with the help of charities.

IFRC appreciates Iran for emergency response efforts

SOCIETY

d e s k

TEHRAN — The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has appreciated the Iranian Red Crescent Society for its efforts to implement emergency response programs during natural disasters.

This is a great achievement on a global scale that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has appreciated Iran for its programs and amending viewpoints, IRNA quoted Afshin Alikhani, an official with the Iranian Red Crescent Society, as saying on Monday.

An Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is a team of trained technical specialists, ready to be deployed at short notice, which uses pre-packed sets of standardized equipment. ERUs are designed to be self-sufficient for one month and can operate for up to four months. The ERUs are vital in the IFRC's disaster response tools system.

ERUs were created in 1994 to give immediate support

to National Societies in disaster-affected countries. They provide specific support or direct services when local facilities are either destroyed, overwhelmed by the need, or do not exist.

In 2017, the emergency medical technicians (EMT) team of Iran got a membership to the ERU of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Barbara Rizzoli, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Tehran, has said the actions taken by the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) to battle the COVID-19 outbreak were very significant in various fields, including prevention and treatment.

In the fight against coronavirus, the IRCS, along with the Ministry of Health and other responsible organizations, has undertaken important activities, from rapid diagnosis and screening to providing medical services and shelter, she noted, adding, but the most important



activity of this population has been informing the public about healthcare and treatment.

The ICRC has supported the Iranian Red Crescent Society as much as possible, one of the contributions was the payment of 500,000 Swiss francs, she stated.

Over \$4m of smuggled goods seized in week

SOCIETY

d e s k

TEHRAN — Different kinds of goods valued at 170 billion rials (some \$4.1 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) have been seized from smugglers over the past week in the country.

The Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange managed to find and confiscate kinds of smuggled goods, including fuel, cell phones, cosmetics, powdered milk, home appliances, livestock, and foreign exchange, IRNA quoted police official Mohammad-Reza Moqimi as saying on Monday.

In this regard, 17 persons have been arrested and handed to the judiciary for further investigation, he added.

President Hassan Rouhani has urged a



systematic fight against smuggling "from the start to the endpoint", citing the fight as a key factor in improving Iran's economy in July 2019.

Rouhani said while Iran is under sanctions, extra care should be given to stopping

the smuggling of "hard-won" currency.

Every year, \$20-25 billion are smuggled in and out of the country, which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, Hassan Norouzi, member of the Parliament said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017- March 2018), \$12 billion was smuggled into Iran and \$900 million out of the country, according to the Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange.

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On December 19, 2018, a government spokesman said every day 11.5 million liters of gasoline

are smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee has quoted various sources as putting the figure at 10, 15, and even 20 million liters a day.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, another member of the committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per liter profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the same as the country's annual development budget.

In addition to gasoline smuggling, other fuels such as kerosene and diesel are also smuggled; not in lesser quantities.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan has been implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.



Tehran police arrest 183 persons for gambling

SOCIETY

d e s k

TEHRAN — Tehran police have arrested 183 persons for their involvement in illegal online gambling.

Since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2020), 34 gambling ringleaders have been arrested and 12 gangs have been disrupted, Tehran police commander Hossein Rahimi said on Monday, ISNA reported.

Police have arrested these persons who had illegally

earned up to 250 billion rials (some \$6 million) through gambling, he said, adding that 49 fraudsters who had launched 16 phishing gangs have also been arrested.

Cyber police chief Vahid Majid has said that in the past Iranian year, 53 people involved in seven betting and gambling groups were arrested. Moreover, some 3,000 websites and accounts active in social media have been identified and up to 800 persons have been handed to the judiciary in this regard.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Relief foundation creates over 1.5m jobs for the deprived in 7 years

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has generated over 1.5m job opportunities for those financially struggling since the past 7 years, Hojatollah Abdolmaleki, the Foundation's deputy director has announced.

Job generation for the underprivileged is among the most important and tough responsibilities of the Foundation, he stated, YJC reported on Monday.

Since Iranian calendar year of 1390 (March 2011- March 2012) to 1396 (March 2017- March 2018), the Foundation has earmarked 100 trillion rials (nearly \$2.4 billion) to open up over 1.4 million job opportunities in order to facilitate income generation for the deprived, he explained.

He went on to add that last year (March 2018-March 2019), a total of 148,000 jobs were created by the Foundation's budget of 23 trillion rials (around \$547 million).

Last year, some 495,000 families have become financially independent and no longer under the Foundation coverage, he highlighted.

ایجاد بیش از یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار شغل برای محرومان در کشور طی ۷ سال

معاون کمیته امداد گفت: کمیته امداد امام (ره) از سال ۹۰ تاکنون بیش از یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار شغل برای محرومان کشور ایجاد کرده است.

به گزارش خبرنگار حوزه رفاه و تعاون گروه اجتماعی باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، حجت الله عبدالملکی معاون کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره)، اظهار کرد: ایجاد اشتغال امری سخت است، تولید اشتغال برای محرومان سخت‌ترین اقدام برای کمیته امداد است که در حال انجام است.

وی افزود: از سال ۹۰ تا سال ۹۶، یک میلیون و ۴۰۰ هزار شغل با تسهیلات ۱۰ هزار میلیاردی برای محرومان ایجاد شده است، در سال گذشته ۱۴۸ هزار نفر با ۲ هزار و ۳۰۰ میلیارد تومان تسهیلات توسط کمیته امداد شغل ایجاد شده است.

عبدالملکی تصریح کرد: ۴۹۵ هزار خانوار محروم خودکفا از پوشش کمیته امداد خارج شده اند.

After Covid, tech focus will shift back to climate change in 2021

As the world struggles to recover from the hard reset of Covid-19, what can 2021 bring us?

As we collectively reflect on the personal losses and on the incalculable damage caused by Covid-19 to societies and economies, can a future pandemic possibly be prevented?

The key technology breakthrough in 2020 may well have been the development of viable messenger RNA (mRNA) technology.



This mRNA technology may fundamentally change vaccine and drug discovery. Before Covid, a vaccine consisted of a weakened form of a virus deliberately injected so as to stimulate an immune response, Irishtimes reported.

Instead, mRNA technology is somewhat akin to a "software" update to the body: it provides new instructions to the immune system on how to use the body's own existing natural defences to fight a new virus. In principle, myriad mRNA "recipes" could be devised for a substantial number of viruses and diseases.

Climate change

It may seem a very long time ago but, as we entered 2020, an entirely different existential threat was making the headlines. Bushfires in Australia, then wildfires in Siberia and the western United States, hurricane Dorian, super-typhoons Halong and Lekima together made climate change the world's most consistent news item in 2019. As the challenges of Covid-19 hopefully are overcome, climate change will undoubtedly return as the top theme in 2021.

The EU's "Green Deal" expects an astonishing €1 trillion to be invested by 2050 in making Europe a climate-neutral bloc.

There are many challenges in achieving the Green Deal but these, in turn, are substantial opportunities for European entrepreneurship. European research and technology innovation are likely to change as a result, to focus largely on climate change challenges.

There are many. Current battery technology for electric vehicles has disappointing recharging times, loses a proportion of battery capacity after a few years and can be a safety risk because of the flammable materials used.

Most current manufacturing, including of electric and other vehicles, makes negligible use of recycled and recovered materials. Today, cement and concrete production for the construction industry generates alone about 8 per cent of global carbon emissions.

The agricultural industry is currently a net emitter of carbon, but changes in practices could potentially transform that to a net sequestration of carbon into organic matter and soils. Many fossil fuel power plants across Europe can lose almost as much energy as they produce. Most electronic devices including TVs and smart devices consume significant energy during their long idle times, and are not yet a substantial part of the circular economy of recycled materials.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 100)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

● تمرین ۲. جُمَل‌ها را به گذشته‌ی ساده بنویسید:

۱. شهر کوچکی در آنجا می‌سازند.
۲. مردم به تهران مهاجرت می‌کنند.
۳. ما سؤال شما را می‌فهمیم.
۴. شما از پنجاه تا صد می‌شمارید.
۵. دخترها هم به قله می‌روند.
۶. او تهران را با سؤال مقایسه می‌کند.

کجا ناهار خوردید؟ (کَلِمَه‌ی سْوَالی)

پدرش خانه‌ای خرید. (تَفْعُول)

دیروز خانه را فروخت. (فِعْل مَتَعَدّی بعد از 'را')

آنها به لاله‌چین رفتند. (مُتَّوِّج)

The stress may be placed on any other word required by the specific situation:

إصفهان یک شهر بزرگ است؛ پایتخت نیست. تهران پایتخت است.

■ Intonation **آهنگ**

Indicative sentences end on a falling intonation:

تهران پایتخت است. همدان پایتخت نیست. ●

Questions with a question word also bear a falling intonation:

تهران پایتخت کجاست؟ ●

Questions with no question word end on a rising intonation:

تهران پایتخت است؟ ●

■ صِداهاى "و" – حرف "و" دارای این صداهاست: ۱. /v/ واقع،

جواب، اولین ۲. /u/ کوه ۳. /o/ کیلو ۴. /ow/ نُوبت

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Iran’s “Am I a Wolf?”, “Song Sparrow” on Oscars 2021
longlist of animated shorts

A R T **TEHRAN** — “Am I a Wolf?” and “Song Sparrow” from Iran are among the 96 short animated movies qualifying for the Academy Awards 2021 longlist.

“Am I a Wolf?” directed by Amir-Hushang Moin qualified at the 18th Hiroshima International Animation Festival by winning the Hiroshima Prize of the Japanese event.



A combination photo shows scenes from “Am I a Wolf?” and “Song Sparrow”.

The acclaimed short produced at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults tells the story of a group of children who perform the familiar story of the wolf and the yearlings in school as a puppet show. The nanny goat grieving for its yearlings and the angry wolf in its solitude face each other.

“Am I a Wolf?” received several awards in Iranian and international events, including the Grand Prix at the 12th Paris International Animation Film Festival and the Light of Asia Grand Prize at the 15th Indie-AniFest Korea Independent Animation Film Festival in September 2019.

The film also won the Golden Dove for best animated film at the 62nd DOK Leipzig in Germany in 2019.

“Song Sparrow”, a co-production of Iran and Denmark, has qualified for entry onto the longlist upon receiving the award for best short animation at the Lebu International Film Festival in Santiago, Chile.

Directed by Farzaneh Omidvarnia, the animated movie is about a group of refugees who try to gain entrance into a safe country in search of a better life. They pay a smuggler to convey them across the borders in a refrigerated truck. However, the freezing temperature inside the truck turns their hopes for a better future into a fierce struggle for survival.

Persian translator Mohammad Majlesi dies at 87

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Majlesi, an Iranian translator of books by world-renowned novelists such as Victor Hugo, Romain Rolland and Leo Tolstoy, died of natural causes in Isfahan on Sunday. He was 87.

Iranian translator Mohammad Majlesi in an undated photo.

Born in 1933, Majlesi was a graduate of law from the University of Tehran and also a graduate of French literature from the Sorbonne University in Paris.

“Les Misérables” by Hugo, “Chess Story” by Stefan Zweig, “Dreams of the She-Wolf” and “Jamila” by Cengiz Aytmatov, “Jean-Christophe” by Romain Rolland and “A Very Easy Death” by Simone de Beauvoir are among many books translated into Persian by Majlesi.

He translated over 70 major books from French literature into Persian. He was also busy working on a new translation of Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” which remained unfinished due to his death.

Majlesi was also the author of the night tales of Iran’s radio.

2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival honors winners

➔ Speaking at the ceremony, Ashena said, “What we possess and are proud of are countless, but we are proud of our martyrs of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. Commander Soleimani and the other martyrs entered the warzone where ISIS had decided to destroy the Iranian nation.”

He added that he is proud to have such committed and talented artists.

The ceremony continued with honoring several war veterans from Kerman Province and actor Reza Iranmanesh.

For his part, Iranmanesh said that Commander Soleimani was interested in art, and that he had once told him after watching a play, “You were present in the war with your plays, and now you have stood with your art. You should also continue with your art for the future.”

Next the winners were honored on stage. In the playwright section, “Immortality” written by Asghar Gharusi took first prize, while “Wave” by Sajjad Masudi and “Trivia about Hajji Qassem” by Saied Mohammadi



A thespian accepts his award during the closing ceremony of the 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival in Kerman, January 4, 2021.

won second and third prizes respectively.

“Tahdigi” written by Kaveh Mahdavi, and “1:20 am” by Pejman Shahverdi also received honorable mentions in this section.

Saied Badini received the award for best director for his play “General”.

The jury also selected “General”, “Letter to Hajji Qassem” and “Ring” to be performed during the 39th edition of the Fajr Theater Festival.

Saied Barati was honored as the best actor for his role in the play “Ring” and actress Arezu Jafari was selected as best actress for her role in the play “Letter to Hajji Qassem”.

Mojtaba Khalili received the best stage designer award for the play “Lonely Bodies”.

The festival was inaugurated last Wednesday and troupes from across the country gave performances in Kerman and the villages nearby.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater and the Revayat Foundation are the main organizers of the event.

Eight Persian translators contending for Abolhassan Najafi Award

the Second World War, and his incarceration in the Auschwitz concentration camp (Monowitz) from February 1944 until the camp was liberated on 27 January 1945.

Farzaneh Taheri is contending for the award with her work on “Petersburg” by Russian writer Andrei Bely. It is a symbolist work that arguably foreshadows James Joyce’s modernist ambitions.

First published in 1913, the novel received little attention and was not translated into English until 1959 by John Cournos. Today the book is generally considered Bely’s masterpiece.

Nushin Tayyebi is competing for the award with American author Anthony Doerr’s war novel “All the Light We Cannot See” published in May 2014.

Set in occupied France during World War II, the novel centers on a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths eventually cross.

It won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2015 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction.

Mohammadreza Torkataari has been nominated for his work on “The Master of Petersburg”, a 1994 novel by South African writer J. M. Coetzee.

The novel is a work of fiction but features the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky as its protagonist. It is a deep, complex work that draws on the life of Dostoyevsky, the life of the author and the history of Russia to produce profoundly disturbing results. It won the 1995 Irish Times International Fiction Prize.

Mahmud Gudarzi is also among the nominees. He received the nomination for “The Story of the Chevalier des Grioux and Manon Lescaut” by French novelist Antoine François Prevost.

Published in 1731, it is the seventh and final volume

of “Memoirs and Adventures of a Man of Quality”.

The story, set in France and Louisiana in the early 18th century, follows the hero, the Chevalier des Grioux, and his lover, Manon Lescaut.

Controversial in its time, the work was banned in France upon publication. Despite this, it became very popular and pirated editions were widely distributed.

Mohammadreza Parsayar received a nomination for the translation of “Reveries of the Solitary Walker”, an unfinished book by Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau written between 1776 and 1778.

It was the last of a number of works composed toward the end of his life that were deeply autobiographical in nature.

Mohammad Nejabati is also competing for the award with his rendition of French writer Jules Verne’s classic science fiction adventure novel “Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas: A World Tour Underwater”.

The novel was originally serialized from March 1869 through June 1870 in Pierre-Jules Hetzel’s fortnightly periodical, the Magasin d’éducation et de récréation.

Its depiction of Captain Nemo’s underwater ship, the Nautilus, is regarded as ahead of its time, since it accurately describes many features of today’s submarines, which in the 1860s were comparatively primitive vessels.

The nominees have been selected by a jury composed of Abtin Golkar, Zia Movahhed, Mahasti Bahreini, Abdollah Kowsari, Hossein Masumi Hamedani, Musa Asvar and Abolfazl Horri.

The winner will be announced today at the Book City Institute during a special ceremony with a limited number of guests.

Iranian animation “Kung Fu Gools” to go on screen in China this summer

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian animation “Kung Fu Gools” by director Farzad Dalvand will be screened at the Chinese movie theaters during summer 2021.

Originally titled “The Gools”, the animation has been renamed “Kung Fu Gools” for its Chinese premiere, the Persian service of ISNA announced on Monday.

Chinese director Wang, who has helped make the movie suitable for the Chinese audience, has said that he is happy to have collaborated with the Iranian team on the production.

“The Iranian screenplay attracted me



A poster for Iranian animated movie “The Gools” by director Farzad Dalvand.

Chinese producer Jin Yang has also stated that the Iranian team has worked on the project professionally, and the animation would be very interesting for the Chinese filmgoers.

He estimated that the animation “Kung Fu Gools” will earn about \$21m in box office receipts in China.

The film is a rewriting of an ancient legend of the Orient that has been created in an attractive atmosphere. The ancient legend is the story of a goat living with her kids Shangul, Mangul and Habbeye Angur and a wolf in their neighborhood.

After learning to protect a truce among

a community of animals, three young goats embark on an adventurous journey to keep a ceasefire intact throughout their society.

There is a fragile ceasefire between predators and prey which has been protected by the anonymous Ninja Warrior named Red Shadow.

One day, the wolf who is tired of vegetarian recipes decides to find a legal detour to hunt some little goats without breaking the truce and risking a reaction by the Red shadow. But he doesn’t know that these little goats are the students of the Martial Arts school that trains little animals in self-defense by encouraging their inner talents to flourish.

SAMT publishes “Doing Corpus Linguistics” in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — “Doing Corpus Linguistics” co-written by William Crawford and Eniko Csomay has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

SAMT, an Iranian publishing house that provides textbooks for university students, is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Mohsen Nobakht.

“Doing Corpus Linguistics” offers a practical step-by-step introduction to corpus linguistics, making use of widely available corpora and of a register analysis-based theoretical framework to provide students in applied linguistics and TESOL with the understanding and skills necessary to meaningfully analyze corpora and carry out successful corpus-based research.

Divided into three parts: Introduction to Doing Corpus Linguistics and Register Analysis; Searches in Available Corpora; and Building Your Own Corpus, Analyzing Your Quantitative Results, and Making Sense of Data, the book emphasizes hands-on experience with performing language



Cover of the Persian translation of the book “Doing Corpus Linguistics” co-written by William Crawford and Eniko Csomay.

analysis research, and in interpreting findings in a meaningful and engaging way.

Readers are given multiple opportunities to analyze and apply language data by completing smaller tasks and corpus projects using publicly available corpora.

The book also takes readers through the process of building a specialized corpus designed to answer a specific research question and provides detailed information on completing a final research project that includes both a written paper and an oral presentation of their specific research projects.

“Doing Corpus Linguistics” encourages students to participate in the growing field of corpus linguistics.

William J. Crawford is an associate professor in the Department of English at Northern Arizona University.

Eniko Csomay is a professor in the Department of Linguistics and Asian Languages and associate dean in the College of Arts and Letters at San Diego State University.

James Rollins’ “The 6th Extinction” published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — “The 6th Extinction” by James Rollins, a New York Times bestselling author of international thrillers, has recently been published in Persian.

Ketabsaraye Tandis is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Hadi Amini.

In a masterful epic of timeless mystery and ripped-from-the-headlines scientific intrigue, Rollins takes mankind to its endpoint, to a fate written in rock and ice in an event known as “The Sixth Extinction”.

A remote military research station broadcasts a frantic distress call that ends with a chilling message: Kill us all. When soldiers arrive to investigate, they discover everyone in the lab is dead — not just the scientists, but every living thing for fifty square miles is annihilated: every animal, plant, and insect, even bacteria. The land is completely sterile — and the blight is spreading.

To prevent the inevitable, Commander Gray Pierce and Sigma must decipher a threat that rises out of the distant past, a



Front cover of the Persian translation of James Rollins’ “The 6th Extinction”.

time when Antarctica was green and Earth’s life balanced on a knife edge. Following clues from an ancient map rescued from the lost Library of Alexandria, Sigma will make a shocking discovery involving a prehistoric continent, and a new form of death buried under miles of ice.

From millennia-old secrets out of the frozen past to mysteries buried deep in the darkest jungles of today, Sigma will face its greatest challenge yet: stopping the coming extinction of mankind. But is it already too late?