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# U.S committed suicide for fear of death

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Reporters visit one of the many impact sites created by an Iranian missile attack at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Jan. 13, 2020.

## IRGC chief: Iran adamant on security of Persian Gulf

TEHRAN – Major General Hossein Salami, the commander of the IRGC, said on Wednesday that Iran is quite firm on the security of the Persian Gulf and advised the enemies not to make a miscalculation because Iran's armed forces have upgraded their military tactics.

"We have rolled up our sleeves for the security of Persian Gulf," the IRGC chief said as he inaugurated a hospital in As-

saluyeh on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Salami said, "Our will is indefatigable." He went on to say that the "anger" of the protectors of territorial waters cannot be contained and the enemy should submit to their will because "their finger is on the trigger".

General Salami also said in the same way that IRGC forces are standing against the enemy they are also active in doing infrastructure projects.

## WB sees Iranian economy resuming positive growth in 2021

TEHRAN – Iranian economy is projected to grow by 1.5 percent in 2021 as the domestic markets are getting back on track and the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic begin to wane, according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report released on Tuesday.

"Growth in the Islamic Republic of Iran is expected to recover as domestic consumption and tourism begin to normal-

ize, and disruptions related to COVID-19 taper," the report stated.

According to the mentioned report, Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is going to continue its positive growth in 2022, expanding by 1.7 percent.

In January 2020, the World Bank had predicted a 1.1 percent GDP growth for Iran in 2020 and 2021.

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## "Manifestation of Simorgh" will reflect ideals of Commander Soleimani: artist

TEHRAN – Iranian artist Habibollah Sadeqi said on Tuesday that his painting project, "A Requiem for the Manifestation of Simorgh", will be representative of the ideals and thoughts of Commander Qassem Soleimani.

Speaking during the launching ceremony of the project at the Khial Gallery of the Saba Art and Cultural Institute, he said that the project will also narrate the concepts derived from the resistance,

bravery and martyrdom of the commander.

During this project, Sadeqi plans to create four paintings, each one measuring 2.5x2 meters.

The Iranian Academy of Arts acting director Alireza Esmaili who was visited Sadeqi on Tuesday praised him for creating such a big project in honor of a great man on his first martyrdom anniversary.

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## Biotechnology budget rises almost 50%

**BY FARANAK BAKHTIARID**

The national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 20) has proposed 4 trillion rials (around \$95 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) for biotechnology, a 47.8 percent increase compared to the current year's budget.

About 62 percent of the biotechnology credits are earmarked to the Ministry of Agriculture and its subdivisions.

The Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology also has three executive bodies related to the biotechnology sector, which holds a 20 percent share of the total budget.

The Biotechnology Development Headquarters is also affiliated with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology which has been allocated 17 percent of the funds.

From an institutional point of view, 26 percent of the total biotechnology budget belongs to the Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Organization.

Credits proposed in the next year's budget bill have increased compared to the current year for all major organizations.

The government submitted the draft of the national budget bill for the next [Iranian calendar] year to Majlis on December 2, 2020.

The proposed budget amounted to about 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$580 billion), with a 20-percent rise from the current year's budget.

Supplying basic goods, treatment, and medical equipment; securing livelihood; supporting production and employment; promoting and supporting non-oil exports and knowledge-based companies are the focal points of the bill.

### Environment's share of national budget

The bill has proposed 12 trillion rials (around \$292 million) for the Department of Environment, a nearly twofold increase compared to the current year's budget of 6.38 trillion rials (nearly \$151 million).

The DOE's budget will be spent on air pollution management, sustainable conservation, and exploitation of aquatic ecosystems, conservation, restoration and refinement of onshore biodiversity, conservation of protected areas, protection of rangers, wildfire prevention, and promotion of public participation and awareness in environmental protection.

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## More than 20 at Mali wedding ceremony killed in France air strike

More than 20 people, including children, were killed in air strikes during a wedding ceremony in a remote desert area of central Mali on Sunday, a health worker with knowledge of the attack said on Tuesday.

A French army source told Reuters that French forces operating in Mali had carried out an air strike in the area on Sunday.

Residents of Bounti, in the central Mopti region, said a helicopter opened fire on the marriage ceremony on Sunday.

Villagers in Bounti said a low-flying helicopter, which has not been identified, carried out the strike in broad daylight.

Witnesses said the attacks appeared to target men on motorbikes who were believed to be militants.

Other villagers in Bounti said a lone helicopter opened fire in broad daylight, sowing panic among the crowd. Ahmadou Ghana said

two of his brothers were killed. "It was run for your lives," he told AFP.

The health worker, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said the air strikes had targeted men on motorbikes in the villages of Bounti and Kikara believed to be militants.

But civilians were caught up in the strike as people gathered for a wedding ceremony, the source said, adding that some of the wounded had to receive amputations at a nearby health center.

The identity of the targets was confirmed by drone before the attack and on the ground afterwards, the French army source said.

France has more than 5,100 military personnel based in the region to help counter militants. But a seven-year intervention has come at a cost as forces struggle to contain extremists in the open desert.

Five French soldiers have been killed in the country in recent days.

## Pro-Trump supporters rally near White House ahead of Electoral College vote

Pro-Trump supporters were demonstrating near the White House before Congress votes to certify the Electoral College results of the presidential election. NBC News' Ellison Barber reports on what protesters are saying about the vote.

After months of tense anticipation, Nov. 3 came and went in the United States without major incident of violence or intimidation—much to the relief of voters, voting rights groups and law enforcement. But as President Donald Trump's numerous lawsuits to overturn the election results failed, a new inflection point in his frenzied campaign emerged: Jan. 6, the day Congress is set to certify his loss to Joe Biden. To Trump's most fervent supporters, from button-down Republican lawmakers and conservative personalities to rifle-wielding militias and far-right extremists, Wednesday is seen as the day to mount a "final stand" to keep the President in power, despite his clear electoral defeat. As lawmakers loyal to Trump prepare to challenge the election's certification on Capitol Hill, pro-Trump online groups

have been touting the date as a decisive moment for his supporters to show their loyalty. The demonstrations, which began Tuesday, are the culmination of the ongoing "Stop the Steal" protests rallying around the President's false claims that mass voter fraud cost him the election.

Trump has been encouraging supporters to come to D.C. for weeks, prompting accusations that he is inciting extremist groups to possible violence. On Twitter, Trump has called Jan. 6 a "historic day" that will be "wild!" He has also hinted he may personally appear.

Trump's supporters' hopes are also being fueled by at least 140 House Republicans and 12 Senators who say they are planning to vote against counting the electoral votes that would officially certify the election for Biden on Wednesday. "Our presence in Washington D.C. will let Members of Congress know that we stand with Rep. Mo Brooks and his colleagues in the House of Representatives who will bravely object to the certification of the Electoral College," says the website for one of Wednesday's rallies organized by "Stop the Steal."

## 33 Iranian traditions, living expressions win national heritage status

TEHRAN – A total of 33 Iranian traditions and living expressions, passed down from generation to generation in three provinces of the country, won nation heritage status on Tuesday.

"33 traditions and living expressions, which are still practiced in the three provinces of South Khorasan, Mazandaran and Razavi Khorasan, have been registered on the intangible cultural heritage list of the country," IRNA quoted Mostafa Purali, a senior official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts,

as saying on Wednesday.

Traditional methods of designing, drawing, weaving, and dyeing of carpets; nomadic art of making Siah-Chador ("Black Tent"); and the method of cooking an indigenous flatbread were among elements inscribed for South Khorasan province, the official said.

For Mazandaran province, various methods of baking breads and cookies; traditional chorus and recitations; and the art of crafting and playing the naqqareh, which is a local drum with a rounded back

and a hide head, were amongst entries to the list.

Various mourning rituals of Nakhil Gardani, which are practiced during the lunar month of Muharram; as well as several methods of cooking local dishes, breads, and pastries were among elements made national heritage for Razavi Khorasan province.

The term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO.

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## Iran, Cuba's COVID-19 vaccines are surprising: Kuwaiti physician

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

TEHRAN – A Kuwaiti medical expert says Iran and Cuba surprised all when they announced the human testing phase of their national vaccine while they are living under siege.

"There was a surprise from besieged countries such as Iran and Cuba. The Iranian Shafa Pharma Company announced the human testing phase of its national vaccine," Issam al-Salih tells the Tehran Times.

"Iran and Cuba have proven that determination and ambition are important matters for security and health independence," the physician remarked.

Iran has launched human trials of its coronavirus vaccine, and health officials are optimistic about tackling the pandemic in West Asia's hardest-hit country.

The start of clinical trials on December 29 came as Iran has managed to bring its COVID-19 fatalities down to a three-month low and as the country continues to face difficulties in importing vaccines due to illegal U.S. sanctions.

According to the Kuwaiti physician, Iran and Cuba could break the monopoly of COVID-19 vaccines.

The following is the text of the interview: **What are the latest developments regarding the spread of the Coronavirus in Kuwait? What measures have been taken to contain the pandemic?**

The conditions in terms of containing the Coronavirus pandemic in Kuwait look good, as the country has managed to reduce the number of infected people for the first time to about 200-250 cases per day.

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## Quds Force chief: Americans must be expelled from the region

TEHRAN – Chief of the IRGC Quds Force Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani said on Wednesday that the Americans must be expelled from the region.

Ghaani said the unreal grandeur of the global arrogance must be revealed, adding that the followers of Iran's anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani will expel the Americans from the region.

Ghaani made the remarks while addressing a conference in commemoration of General Soleimani in Kerman, the birthplace and burial place of General Soleimani.

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## Diplomat says Iran focused on domestic capabilities to neutralize sanctions

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN – Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has reiterated Iran's insistence on tapping into domestic capabilities to neutralize the United States' illegal sanctions.

"In Tehran now and back in NY mid-January: The gov't is focused on domestic capabilities to neutralize illegal US sanctions," Takht-Ravanchi wrote in a tweet on Tuesday night.



Back in November, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei underlined the need to neutralize the sanctions on Iran through boosting internal economic capabilities while also ruling out any prospect of broader negotiations with the West.

The Leader called the sanctions "a crime against the Iranian people that has been intensified in the past three years." He said the economy is the main issue of the country right now and the livelihood of people has been really under pressure.

Ayatollah Khamenei also called the sanctions "a bitter reality and a crime by America and its European partners against the Iranian nation."

Meanwhile, President Hassan Rouhani has said his administration is seriously pursuing the nullification of the sanctions.

"That the Leader told [us] to neutralize the sanctions, we are pursuing this moment by moment. Every time money enters the country and goods are exported, you should know that hours of fights have been behind it," Rouhani said on December 26.

He explained that this is something that has been done for hours and moments since two years ago, when the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In his Tuesday tweet, Takht-Ravanchi also said that while Iran has resumed 20% enrichment, "we have reiterated that all its nuclear steps will be reversed upon full implementation of JCPOA commitments by all."

On Monday, Iran officially announced that it has started the process to enrich uranium to 20 percent purity at its Fordow nuclear facility.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei announced on Monday that President Rouhani has ordered the implementation of a new law, dubbed the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, which has been already approved by the Parliament.

The action plan introduces a step-by-step strategy for the government to increase nuclear activities in a few months if the other side failed to implement certain commitments.

The law is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran and was put forward by the lawmakers in early November. It aims to force the United States into lifting sanctions on Iran by doubling down on nuclear activities.

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, and also the European Union, reached a nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in Vienna on 14 July 2015. However, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018. The move was deplored by all other parties to the deal.

In response, Iran started a year for the remaining sides to protect its interests under the deal. But since they failed to do so, Iran started to reduce its commitments under the JCPOA beginning on May 8, 2019, exactly one year after strategic patience.

## Prosecution of Fakhrizadeh assassins through Interpol is underway: prosecutor general

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN – Iran's Prosecutor General Mohammad-Jafar Montazeri said on Wednesday that an international prosecution for those behind the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is underway.

"In terms of legal prosecution of the assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh, which was carried out by criminal Zionism and its internal agents that cowardly took a valuable figure from our nation and country, the Judiciary efforts are divided into two parts" Montazeri said.

"One part is internal affairs. It is, a judicial case that is pursued in terms of internal issues. The case is pending before the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces. The investigation is nearing completion. After the investigation, the case will be completed and will go to court with an appropriate indictment to investigate the situation of those who were guilty in this regard. The dimensions of this case will be examined in court and the people will be informed" he explained.

Regarding the prosecution at international level, Montazeri said: "In the second part, which deals with the international sphere, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken legal action through Interpol. Part of this process is in done by the Tehran Public Prosecutor's Office. The attorney general asked the Tehran Prosecutor to file a case. We received a complaint from the family of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and it was sent to the Tehran Prosecutor's Office. Various departments are conducting investigations. We hope to achieve a favorable result at international level".

Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh Mahabadi, an Iranian nuclear physicist and an official at the Defense Ministry, was assassinated in a road ambush outside Tehran on 27 November 2020.

Today, in a message to the defense ministers of more than 60 countries in the world, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami wrote, "There are serious evidence which shows the key role of Zionist regime in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists."

# Serious evidence shows Israeli role in Fakhrizadeh assassination: Hatami

It is needed to put aside double-standards in the war on 'state terrorism', Iranian defense chief writes to 60 counterparts in the world

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN – Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Wednesday that there is "serious evidence" about the role of the regime in Tel Aviv in the November assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Pointing to the Israeli regime's history of assassinating Iranian scientists, Brigadier General Hatami said there's also serious evidence about the regime's role in the Fakhrizadeh assassination.

He made the remarks in a letter to his counterparts in over 60 countries about the prominent scientist's assassination.

Iran sees silence on this terrorist act as an excuse for its repetition and insecurity in the world, the minister emphasized, according to IRNA.

He further announced that Iran preserves right to respond to the assassination.

In his letter, General Hatami wrote about the scientific and research achievements and initiatives gained and developed by Fakhrizadeh.

Also, he stressed the need to put aside double-standard behavior towards the fight against "state terrorism".

Hatami called on global community to take part in the campaign against "this inhuman, illegitimate and felonious move."

Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear and defense



scientist, was assassinated in a small city east of Tehran on November 27.

His assassination is considered a serious blow to diplomatic efforts to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which was abandoned by U.S. President Donald Trump in May 2018.

Iran has blamed Israel, which has carried out assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Immediately after the assassination, Foreign Minister Zarif said in a tweet that the attack

was carried out with "serious indications of Israeli role".

Over the past years Israel has assassinated five other Iranian nuclear scientists. It has killed Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahriari, Darioush Rezaeinejad, and Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan. Israel also attempted to assassinate Fereydon Abbasi, Iran's former nuclear chief, but it failed.

President Hassan Rouhani said a day after the assassination that Israel was behind

the crime. "Once again, the evil hands of global arrogance and their Zionist mercenaries, were stained with the blood of another Iranian, causing deep grief across the nation for losing a hard-working scientist," Rouhani said in a message.

Undoubtedly, he said, the horrific terrorist attack is due to the inability of Iran's enemies against the country's scientific movement and the honors and capabilities of the great nation of Iran.

"It also comes after the enemies' repeated defeats in the region and other political arenas, and the depth of their malice and resentment," the president noted.

In remarks on Tuesday, Hatami said Fakhrizadeh was the frontrunner of resistance against nuclear threats.

"He left behind invaluable legacies in this field," the defense chief said.

He also said Fakhrizadeh was active in the field of nuclear defense, adding that the United States and the occupying Israeli regime possess hundreds of nuclear bombs and are considered a threat for the security of the people across the world.

Hatami further lauded Fakhrizadeh for his role in the country's scientific progress, but said the enemy failed to stop Iran's progress through the assassination.

## Rouhani: Iran will welcome U.S. repentance

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani says if the United States repents, abandons its "glass breaking" behavior and returns to its nuclear agreement commitments, Iran will also return to compliance with the deal.

"The administration that will come to power in the U.S. in the near future, that is Mr. [Joe] Biden's administration, which will come to power in the next two weeks, if it says the U.S. has stopped breaking glass, repents and wants to follow the law and fulfills its obligations, and if it asks us, we will say if you fulfill your obligations we will fulfill all our obligations as well," Rouhani said at a Wednesday cabinet session.

"And if you won't fulfill your commitments, we won't bow to you," he said, adding, "If you fulfill your obligations, we won't owe you anything. Rather, you had done something illegal, and then you regretted your illegal work and gave up and realized that you were wrong."

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, together with the European Union reached the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, in 2015, under which Iran agreed to put certain restrictions on its nuclear program in exchange for termination of sanctions.

However, despite Iran's strict compliance with the deal, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the United States

from the deal, which was signed under his predecessor Barack Obama, and imposed harsh economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic to force it to negotiate a new deal.

With Joe Biden's victory, however, hopes have been raised over the survival of the nuclear deal. Biden has promised to return the United States into the JCPOA if Iran returns to full compliance with the deal.

President Rouhani maintained that no one in the world should think that the Iranian nation would surrender in the face of sanctions.

"We will continue our path powerfully," he said. "Of course, any time that the other side surrenders to the rule of law, we will welcome it."

In remarks late last month, the president compared the outgoing U.S. president to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, saying Trump will face the same fate.

"We've had two lunatics in [our] history, one was Saddam who imposed a military war on us and the other lunatic is Trump who imposed the economic war on us," Rouhani said.

He said Iran emerged victorious in the military war and waited for the Iraqi lunatic to be hanged. "Trump's destiny will be no better than Saddam's," he emphasized.

"We saw how the Iranian people broke them with their resistance against those who wanted to break us," the pres-



ident added.

Rouhani also said last month that his administration is "not excited" about Biden's victory, but it's happy about Trump's defeat.

"Some say you are excited about Biden's coming [into power]. No, we're not excited, but we're very happy about Trump's leaving," he said, describing Trump as a person who even blocked the provision of vaccines to patients because he did not adhere to any moral and humane principles.

## Quds Force chief: Americans must be expelled from the region

**1 ->** Those who committed the crime must realize that it is not the case to assassinate the counterterrorism hero and then continue to be alive, the general pointed out, according to IRNA.

The path of Martyr Soleimani will be continued and strengthened undoubtedly, he underlined.

On January 3, 2020, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered drone strikes that martyred Lt. 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. Ghaani warned the U.S. that it might face revenge inside its territory for the assassination of the Lt. general.

"You cannot relax anymore even at your home, and it is not unlikely that we will take revenge inside the house," the top general warned.

Ghaani reminded the U.S. that its downfall and the process of taking revenge have already begun.

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.

Alqasi-Mehr named Trump as the key individual at the top of the list, saying his pursuit will continue even after his tenure as president.

Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday that the Islamic Republic will pursue the case of Soleimani's assassination until all perpetrators behind the U.S. attack that killed the top anti-terror general are punished.

Raisi warned that Trump must be punished for the act of terror.

"In Iran, a special court has been estab-

lished 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," he added.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has also said Iran will spare no efforts in bringing the assassins, especially Trump, to justice.

"Iran, while fully adhering to the applicable provisions of international law, will spare no legal and legitimate effort in order to bring the perpetrators and accomplices of Martyr General Soleimani to justice, so that they suffer legal punishment for their action," Khatibzadeh said two month ago.

## Army fires Azarakhsh missile in large-scale drone exercise

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN – The Iranian Army's Karrar-class drone on Wednesday fired an air-to-air Azarakhsh (Thunderbolt) missile at mock hostile targets during a large-scale drill involving combat unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

It came on the second day of a drone exercise in the northern province of Semnan, where hundreds of drones belonging to the Army's ground, navy and air defense forces are practicing combat missions.

During the Wednesday maneuver, the Karrar UAV used a payload of machine gun ammunition to fire rounds at mock aerial targets, Press TV reported.

The drone also struck targets on the ground, including enemy fortifications, using 500-pound MK 82 bombs. Also as part of the exercise, the Army's Ababil-class drones successfully fired air-to-surface Almas missiles, which precisely hit their specific targets.

Rear Admiral Mahmoud Mousavi, the Army deputy chief for operations, said the drill also focused on using drones to constantly monitor border lines.

"At this stage of the exercise, a number of Army drones successfully carried out reconnaissance operations against fixed and mobile targets along land borders," Mousavi explained.

"Today, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is able to strongly respond to any enemy aggression and target positions within a range of 2,000 kilometers using a variety of long-range combat drones," the Army official added.



On Tuesday, the first day of the military exercise, Mousavi said the Islamic Republic is one of the world's most powerful countries in the field of UAVs.

"During the Army's large-scale exercise, different types of drone systems in the Army's ground, air defense, air and navy forces will perform defined missions in real combat conditions," he added.

The commander also said that the operational part of the drill features the widespread use of kamikaze drones as well as the aerial interception and destruction of targets by air-to-air missiles, along with the destruction of ground targets with bombs and precision-guided missiles.

Navy drones, he noted, practice flying from vessels in the southern waters of the country, while long-range kamikaze

drones drill precision strikes on vital targets in the depth of the enemy territory.

The participating drone units also monitor land, air and sea borders, Mousavi said.

An exhibition was also held on the sidelines of the drill, showcasing the Army's new achievements in the field of drones.

Separately on Tuesday, Army's deputy chief Hossein Dadras said the main message of the exercise is the establishment of peace and security in the region without any need for foreign presence or intervention.

"The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran regularly upgrades its equipment and holds specialized exercises and combat trainings in accordance with the threats posed by extra-regional countries and enemies," the brigadier general said.

"Despite the cruel sanctions of the sworn enemies of the Islamic establishment, the capabilities and perseverance of Iran's youth have led us to reach a stage of self-sufficiency in the field of production of new equipment that can compete with those of the developed countries."

Iran has taken great strides seeking to attain self-sufficiency in producing essential military equipment and defense systems in the face of decades-long sanctions and arms embargoes on the country.

The Islamic Republic produces a wide variety of advanced weapons systems and equipment based on its own technological capabilities.

SPORTS

Iran commemorates 53rd anniversary of legendary wrestler Takhti

**S P O R T S** TEJRAN — Iran wrestling federation commemorated the 53rd death anniversary of legendary wrestler Gholamreza Takhti on Wednesday.

Due to coronavirus restrictions, the fans were not allowed to attend the anniversary at the Ebn-e Babveh Cemetery in southern Tehran.



Furthermore, a new commemorative postage stamp was unveiled coinciding with the Takhti's 53rd anniversary at the Khane Koshti (Wrestling House) with participation of head of wrestling federation, Alireza Dabir, and Ramezanali Sobhanifar, Managing Director of National Post Company.

Takhti won the gold medal in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, defeating Boris Kulayev from Soviet Union in the final match.

He also claimed two Olympics silver medals in 1952 Helsinki and 1960 Rome.

Takhti won two World Championships gold medals in 1959 Tehran and 1961 Yokohama.

The freestyle wrestler also seized a gold medal in the 1958 Asian Games held in Tokyo, Japan.

Takhti is the most famous wrestler in Iranian history. The legend was known for his chivalry and sportsmanship and continues to symbolize the essence of sports to the Iranian people.

Abbas Nazarian elected as head of Iran ski federation

**S P O R T S** TEJRAN — Abbas Nazarian has been elected as head of Iran ski federation on Wednesday for a four-year term till 2025.

In the elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Nazarian secured 23 of 28 votes cast.

Nazarian replaced Seyed Abdi Eftekhari as head of ski federation. Iran ski federation was founded in 1947 and has been headed by 13 presidents so far.

Esteghlal unbeaten run stretches to seven matches: AFC

**S P O R T S** TEJRAN — Tehran giants Esteghlal defeated Aluminum Arak 2-0 in Iran Professional League to stretch their unbeaten run to seven matches.

With 18 points from nine matches, and an unbeaten run stretching seven matches, Esteghlal are level on points with Sanat Naft Abadan, but hold advantages in goal difference and a game in hand.

Sanat Naft beat Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-0 on Monday, while Tractor and Paykan — both on 16 points and in third and fourth respectively — also picked up wins on Tuesday.

Sitting a distant 10th, albeit having only played seven matches, are defending champion and 2020 AFC Champions League runner-up Persepolis (11 points), who played to a third consecutive draw — a 0-0 result against Sepahan — on Tuesday, the-afc.com reported.

Yahya Golmohammadi's side have drawn all three of their matches since losing 2-1 to Ulsan Hyundai FC in the Continental decider. Persepolis haven't tasted victory since their 3-0 win over Shahr Khodro way back in November.

Iranian duo shortlisted for Best Young Player in 2020

Iranian forwards Mehdi Ghayedi and Mehdi Abdi have been nominated for the Best Young Player in 2020.

It was a footballing year like no other, but despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Asia's top players still delivered exceptional performances worthy of wider recognition.

For that reason, the AFC.com invites the fans to cast their vote in Asia's Choice — Fan Awards: Best Young Player in 2020, with 60 percent of the votes to be supplied by the direct participation of fans on the AFC.com, and the winners to be revealed on January 24.

Several young stars announced themselves at the AFC U-23 Championship Thailand 2020, won by Korea Republic last January, but more still managed to deliver standout seasons at club level, even despite the damage inflicted on the fixture lists throughout the continent and beyond.

**Mehdi Ghayedi (22, Esteghlal/IRN)**  
Esteghlal's Ghayedi shrugged off the disappointment of a narrow group stage elimination at the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 to produce another impressive year at club level, headlined by three goals and one assist in six AFC Champions League appearances.

His influence helped Esteghlal finish as runner-up in both the Iran Pro League and Hazfi Cup - with Ghayedi scoring in the final of the latter competition - and he also became a senior international, scoring for Team Melli against Bosnia and Herzegovina in November.

**Mehdi Abdi (22, Persepolis FC/IRN)**  
A league-winner with Persepolis in July, Abdi's rise to prominence came largely in the second half of the year, where he produced quality performances in the club's charge to the 2020 AFC Champions League final.

The exciting forward scored in the group stage, semi-final and, most notably, the final of Asia's premier club competition, announcing himself as a potential star of the future.

(Source: the-afc)

U.S committed suicide for fear of death

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — The day when Iran showered the U.S. military base in western Iraq may be regarded as the first military attack against the U.S. since World War II but Iran had been enjoying this capability at other levels.

Iran's public diplomacy over the past 42 years since the Islamic Revolution has always been a serious challenge to American politicians. The issue of Iran is at the top of the U.S. planning and budget list. However, over the past four decades, the United States' core interests, whether direct financial interests or significant credit interests, have been challenged by the political and military strength of the Islamic Republic.

The resistance of the holy Islamic system against the oppression of international Zionism and its refusal to recognize the occupying regime in Jerusalem and confronting its efforts to create small powerless and subjugated countries is one of the most important challenges for the U.S.-led world, which, according to various overt and covert information, is the most serious American issue with Iran. On the other hand, the increasing development of Iran's regional and supra-regional power and influence over the past decade means a decrease in U.S. influence and determining power in the new hegemony.

The fact that Iran, with its self-interested leadership, could persuade a power like Russia in the Syrian crisis and determine the playing field with an active role, is something that could be defined at the level of the balance of power in the Allied and Axis Powers era. Iran has reached the point of active actor from the stage of puppetry in the Pahlavi period. In December 1943, the Allied leaders (Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt) came to Tehran without informing the treacherous Shah of Iran and held a conference in Tehran with the aim of managing the war. At that time, Iran only had the role of hosting and providing services for the guests to come, eat, decide and leave. But today, strong Iran can play a role in whether or not the head of a government stays, and if Iran's decision was to keep that government, that government stays. The role of General Soleimani in the guise of a diplomatic genius is considered as the irreplaceable capacity and capital of the Islamic Republic.

Also, Iran's active role in the Iraq issue since the 2003 crisis has proved another part of Iran's deterrent power in world governance.

The futility of the trillions of dollars spent by the United States in occupying Iraq, as well as the billions of dollars spent by the region's oil regimes on the confrontation with Iran, resulted in increased Iranian bargaining



power and influence in various sectors. This is something that cannot be understood and defended in the enemy's calculation system. The massive Iranian active role in the region centered on General Soleimani that left the Americans with no choice but to remove him. Soleimani's assassination amounted to dying for fear of death, something that the Americans were forced to do. The Americans eliminated an enemy that they did not comprehensively assess all sides of his elimination. Of course, they did not need such an assessment according to the Western problem-solving system. In their view, the continuation of Iran's activities centered on Qassem Soleimani meant the weakening and permanent removal of the United States from the region. The certainty of this estimate was enough to make Trump accept responsibility for this dangerous act. In fact, the U.S. committed suicide for fear of death.

With Trump assuming office, the U.S. started to make a fuss in the international arena. Trump confronted all in such a way that he was regarded as a permanent nightmare for all nations of the world. He did not hide his cowboy nature at all. He had no reason to express friendship with Iran on the outside and enmity on the inside. He showed himself to be a real enemy. General Soleimani was a symbol of victory for Iran and the whole region by destroying ISIS and uniting the resistance front in the region. The U.S. thought that with this assassination, along with the economic problems and media warfare of the fifth column forces inside the country, it could bring Iran to the negotiating table and cause ideological skepticism and organizational collapse among the Resistance forces throughout the region. Therefore, despite experiencing military defeats such as the downing of its highly advanced spy

drone Global Hawk, it declared war on us by assassinating the Iranian general.

What the Americans and the Zionists had forgotten was the change in the situation in Iran in the 2010s compared to the 1980s. Despite all the incompetence in some forms of running the country, Iran was not involved in a serious war. At the same time, the General's influence and popularity among the Iranians were greater than the Americans imagined. People were not afraid of war with the United States; rather, they demanded it. The historical experience of the people had taught them that if they did not strike against the enemy, they would suffer more. The JCPOA's experience also dashed hopes for international commitments or international support for the Iranian people. Therefore, people first trended the hashtags of revenge on social networks, and then, with the passionate funeral of General Soleimani, they clarified their position with their government and the United States. Together with the Leader, they demanded severe revenge, though various social networks such as Instagram deleted posts related to severe revenge, and on the anniversary of the martyrdom, the symbol of resistance, it is still deleting content related to Martyr Soleimani, and all Western media outlets tried to silence the wave of protests. Even some internal figures accompanied them by taking ambiguous positions.

But a few days later, the IRGC severely slapped the U.S. in the face in Ain al-Assad. The United States has viewed itself as the undisputed superpower of the world since World War II. It had never faced retaliatory actions in response to its sporadic attacks. Portraying Democrats as benign and Republicans as malign, the American media usually tried to keep the other side hoping for the Democrats' softness and to dissuade them from taking revenge. But the Iranians

have repeatedly proven that they can break American hegemony.

The attack on Ain al-Assad crushed the Trump giant. The idiotic American ransom-demanding monster, which portrays itself as illogical, was no longer scary to the world. The Ain al-Assad attack thwarted some of America's arrogant plans around the world. People around the world believed that America could be hit. Images of Trump panicked and the American media desperately trying to downplay how Ain al-Assad was destructed, and the bizarre claim that U.S. troops were not harmed were repeated many times. When Trump announced the slight concussion of American soldiers, it was proved to the most skeptical American people that not only the American dream but also even news democracy was dead. That is why Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah predicted that Trump would lose the U.S. election by confirming the attack on Martyr Soleimani. And this is what happened in practice.

The attack on Ain al-Assad targeted two major U.S. wings: A military wing whose function is clear. But the other wing was the U.S. media wing, which failed in the Ain al-Assad issue. The American media, which considers itself the fourth pillar of democracy, did not conduct an effective research to determine the extent of the damage to Ain al-Assad and the number of wounded and killed. They have always claimed that if the government deviates from the path of democracy, they will right it. So where were they in Ain al-Assad? Or where are they? Only limited partisan reactions came from the Democratic media, which stopped at the level of grumbling about Trump. None of these media outlets mentioned that General Soleimani had been on the American assassination list since Obama's presidency and Vice President Joe Biden. If Obama could, he would have martyred the General sooner than Trump. The American people and the world saw with their own eyes that there was no news of a group of avengers with highly advanced tools. No one could prevent a severe slap in the face from Iran. Our neglect of paying proper attention to the various dimensions of the attack on Ain al-Assad will cause the U.S. media system to distort and downplay the whole story. And ultimately will encourage it to, with the help of Hollywood, make a thing such as Argo which whitewashes the U.S. disgrace of having its spy den taken over and celebrates the escape of three people as an achievement. Before this important attack can be ignored, the Iranian media and artistic system must do the right thing

Russia says U.S. pressure prompted Iran to resume 20% uranium enrichment

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — Iran's decision to resume 20% uranium enrichment at the Fordow nuclear facility was due to U.S. pressure, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Zakharova reacted to the recent move by Iran to substantially raise the level of uranium enrichment to 20% at the Fordow fuel enrichment plant. In an interview with the Russian TASS news agency, she said Iran's resumption of uranium enrichment to 20% is a departure from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Comprehensive Joint Plan of Action (JCPOA). But she also said that there are no claims to make against Iran as the country is coordinating its recent nuclear move with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Zakharova underlined that Iran's decision to enrich uranium to 20% does not go against Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

"This question has nothing to do with Iran's compliance with its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement or the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty. From this standpoint there are no claims to make against the Iranian side. All material enriched to 20% remains under the IAEA control. The Agency has not exposed any attempts to use it for undeclared purposes that might contradict the NPT," the spokeswoman said. "At the same time, the resumption of uranium enrichment to 20% is a departure from the agreements enshrined in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for a settlement over the Iranian nuclear program."

She added that Iran made the decision to raise the level of uranium enrichment due to U.S. pressure.

"In recent years the international community developed the clear awareness that the root cause of such deviations should be seen in systematic crude violations of international obligations by the United States, which in defiance of article 25 of the UN Charter ignores the UN Security Council's Resolution 2231 and deliberately poses obstructions to its implementation by other countries," Zakharova continued.

According to the spokeswoman, the U.S. sanctions had targeted the JCPOA project for converting the Fordow fuel enrichment plant in an unacceptable way.

Zakharova noted, "We have to recall once again that the JCPOA project for converting the FFEP to the production of stable isotopes has long been the target of Washington's sanctions, which is absolutely unacceptable."

She underlined that Moscow appreciated the Iranian side's repeated statements it was prepared to resume full compliance with the agreements under the JCPOA, provided the balance of interests was observed. "However, the current realities as they are, extra efforts and costs will now be required to bring the Fordow facility in conformity with the JCPOA again," she suggested.

Zakharova described Iran's actions as being of "fun-



damental importance for further work to reconfigure this facility, which is an integral part of the nuclear deal."

"The task of creating conditions for the stable implementation of comprehensive agreements has grown far more difficult," she remarked, pointing out that during the December 21 JCPOA ministerial meeting Russia stressed more than once that "guidelines for normalization over JCPOA are found in the plan proper (ly)" and require systematic compliance with the agreements by all parties that developed and concluded them.

Zakharova said all JCPOA parties, including Iran, have underlined the need for resolving the challenges to the implementation of the JCPOA, adding that these parties called on the U.S. to change its "subversive" policies and return to its commitments under the JCPOA without preconditions.

"In the unanimously approved Joint Statement the vector for further onward movement was charted very clearly. All JCPOA signatories, including Iran, came out in favor of the need for handling the remaining challenges to the implementation of the JCPOA and urged the United States to instantly give up its subversive policies and to comply with all obligations assumed under the UN Security Council's Resolution 2231 without any preconditions," the spokeswoman said.

She also pointed out that when the U.S. returns to its obligations without any preconditions, Iran must be prepared to take reciprocal steps.

"We proceed from the understanding that this should be precisely the focus of all available resources. There should be persistent collective work for the elimination of the accrued problems and against creating new ones," she concluded.

Earlier this week, Russia said that Iran's decision to enrich to 20% was predictable.

"Yes, we should have expected something like that, especially in the light of the law adopted recently by the Iranian Parliament. The only question is if this step is being made by Tehran on the right time?" Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, said in a tweet on Saturday.

## High-ranking Armenian trade delegation to visit Tehran soon

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — A high-ranking trade delegation headed by Armenia's Economy Minister is going to visit Iran in the next Iranian calendar month (begins on January 20), an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Mojtaba Mousavian Rizi made the announcement in a Commodity-Country Desk meeting on trade with Armenia which was held on Wednesday to explore trade opportunities with the neighboring country.



The mentioned visit is organized by the Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry in collaboration with the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Negotiations on the development of trade, the inclusion of more commodity items in the free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), banking cooperation, cooperation for investment in Aras and Moghri Free Zones, and holding a special exhibition of Iranian goods in Yerevan are among the goals of this trip, the official said.

"The mentioned trade delegation also plans to visit several production and industrial centers in Iran to explore capacities for joint production and export of products to other countries," Mousavian added.

Elsewhere in the meeting, Behrouz Olfat, TPO director of the Europe and America Department, presented a report on the current state of trade and economic relations between Iran and Armenia, and mentioned the establishment of an X-ray monitoring system at Norduz border terminal, in northeastern East Azarbaijan Province to avoid unnecessary delays of export cargoes to Armenia in this terminal and to reduce smuggling of goods across the border.

According to Olfat, the volume of Iranian exports to Armenia in 2019 was more than \$330 million, with fuels and petroleum products accounting for 29 percent and cement and clinker accounting for 20 percent of the total exports.

Steel and steel products, plastics, fruits and vegetables, ceramics, glass products, chemicals, and fertilizers were also among the exported items to Armenia in the mentioned year.

Following a conflict with Turkey, Armenia has reached out to the Islamic Republic to replace Turkish commodities in its market with Iranian products.

This has presented a new opportunity for Iranian producers to have a strong presence in this market and turn the opportunity into a permanent trade bond between the two countries.

## Garment exports stand at over \$40m in 7 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's garment exports stood at over \$40 million during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21, 2020), the chairman of Iran Textile Exporters and Manufacturers Association (ITEMA) announced.

Majid Nami also mentioned the exit of foreign brands of clothing from the country in the past two years, as well as the government's decision to ban the import of clothing, which provided a great opportunity for Iranian producers.

Nami has previously announced that the production of garments in Iran increased 70 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20, 2020), compared to the same period of time in the past year.



He said the ban on foreign brands import and the closure of borders due to the spread of the coronavirus and the reduction of smuggled garments have contributed to this success.

Since the beginning of this year, garment production has fluctuated, but in general, the production situation has been satisfactory for the producers, he stated.

"Today, the share of Iranian brands in the market has increased significantly compared to the last year", Nami underscored.

As announced by the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Ruhollah Latifi, Iranian garments are exported to Iraq, Kuwait, Australia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Germany, Korea, Japan, UAE, UK, Venezuela, Ivory Coast, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Qatar, Oman, Nigeria, Switzerland, Pakistan, Georgia, Spain, and Denmark.

According to the chairman of Tehran's Union of Garments Manufacturers and Sellers, domestic units are supplying 70-80 percent of the requirement for clothing inside the country.

"After the ban imposed on the imports of clothing, domestic units are taking all endeavors to boost the quality and quantity of their products in a way that we saw no shortage in clothing market before the new year holiday (early March)," Abolqasem Shirazi has said.

# WB sees Iranian economy resuming positive growth in 2021

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Global economic output is expected to grow by four percent in 2021 assuming widespread rollout of a COVID-19 vaccine throughout the year; the estimation however is still five percent below pre-pandemic levels.

A recovery, however, will likely be subdued, unless policymakers move decisively to tame the pandemic and implement investment-enhancing reforms, the World

Bank says

World Bank has reported Iran's economic growth in 2020 to be negative 3.7 percent, which is still 1.6 percent better than the entity's previous estimations. The average global economic growth in 2020 was negative 4.3 percent and the figure for advanced economies averaged negative 5.4 percent.

Based on the report, aggregate GDP in



emerging markets and developing economies, including China, is expected to grow five percent in 2021, after a contraction of 2.6 percent in 2020.

Although the global economy is grow-

ing again after a 4.3 percent contraction in 2020, the pandemic has caused a heavy toll of deaths and illness, plunged millions into poverty, and may depress economic activity and incomes for a prolonged period.

## Tire output increases 19% in 9 months yr/y

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of tire in Iran has risen 19 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Some 198,339 tons of tires have been produced during the nine-month period of this year.

In terms of number, a 21-percent growth has been also achieved through production of 18.634 million tires.

As reported, 118,462 passenger car tires were produced in the mentioned time span.

Some 18,134 van tires were produced, indicating an eight-percent growth.

Also, 36,305 truck and bus tires were produced, showing a 14-percent rise.

Production of the tires of light agricultural vehicles experienced a growth of 58 percent to stand at 3,278 tons, and that of the heavy ones rose 16 percent to stand at 13,584 tons.

Meanwhile, 4,687 tons of road building and industrial vehicle tires were produced, with a 14-percent growth compared to the first nine months of the past year.

The bicycle and motorcycle tire output stood at 14,293 tons, indicating 39 percent growth.

In early August, 2020, an official with Iran's Industry,



Mining, and Trade Ministry said that increasing the amount of investment making for the production of the tire in the country is a necessity.

Kamran Kargar, the acting head of planning, supplying, and market regulating office of the ministry, said the consumption of tires is noticeable in Iran due to the country's big transportation fleet.

"Now the ground is properly prepared for the production of light and heavy vehicle tires in the country, and investment making will play a significant role both for the establishment of new production units and for launching

development projects", the official noted.

Having an annual production capacity of 426,000 tons of tire, Iran accounts for 41 percent of tire output in the West Asian region, according to the deputy director of the non-metal industries office of the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Mohsen Safdari has said that 11 tire production units are active in the country creating jobs for 14,500 people.

He said 426,000 tons is the nominal capacity, while the real output is less than this figure as some units are working with 60-70 percent of their capacity.

"Iranian tire industry is dependent on foreign raw materials by 40 percent, so we are self-reliant by 60 percent in this field", the official announced.

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of "Pickup in Production" for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of "Surge in Production" for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic's determination to achieve this goal.

To this end, the Iranian ministries besides the private sector have been outlining their programs for the surge in production.

## Iraq owes Iran 2-month worth of electricity imports

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Wednesday that Iraq owes Iran the money for less than two months of electricity imports and the rest of the dues in this sector have been settled, IRIB reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of some energy projects in the 35th week of the ministry's A-B-Iran program, Ardakanian said Iraq has signed two separate deals for importing electricity and gas from Iran and as of Wednesday, January 6, based on the electricity export deal the country owes Iran less than two

months of dues.

"During all the years since 2004 when we have been exporting electricity to this country, the dues have been received directly or have been paid to our private sector contractors, so Iraq does not owe us much in the electricity sector," Ardakanian explained.

The official noted that he will follow up on the issue on a daily basis until all the debts are fully settled.

Iraq owes Iran over \$6 billion for electricity and gas imports, of which \$3 billion is claimed to be blocked and inaccessible in the Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI).



In late December 2020, Iran reduced its gas exports to the neighboring country while the electricity exports were kept intact.

As the Iranian head of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, Ardakanian visited Iraq on December 29, 2020, to meet with senior officials from the country and discuss various issues including the country's energy debts to Iran.

During the meeting, the two sides reached an agreement based on which Iraq is going to open a euro savings bank account to deposit the country's energy debts to Iran.

"Iraq's recent and past debts to our country will be transferred and saved in this account after being exchanged to euro," the minister said in late December 2020.

## Azar oil field's development project to be inaugurated in near future

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The first phase of Azar oil field's development project, in western Iran, is nearly completed and will be inaugurated officially in near future, the managing director of Iran's Oil Industries Engineering and Construction Company (OIEC) said.

"Considering the 97-percent progress of the first phase of this joint field's development project, it will be ready for official inauguration soon," Gholamreza Manouchehri said.

The official put the total investment made in this joint field at €1.4 billion, noting that the deal for the development of the field was signed between the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and a consortium comprised of OIEC and Ahdaf Finance Company in September 2011.

According to Manouchehri, the production from the field began in February 2017 with a daily production of 15,000 barrels.

"This figure reached 30,000 barrels per day in 2018, and now the production of this joint field has reached 65,000



barrels per day, which is very significant." The major part of the project's financial resources came

from the National Development Fund (NDF) and the rest was supplied by OIEC, he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Manouchehri mentioned the conducting of performance tests in this field, saying all the wells and facilities of the field's first development phase have been put into operation since December 14, 2020, to be tested for potential problems.

During this 28-day pilot period the field's output will be 65,000 barrels per day (bpd), the official added.

Under the first phase plan, 18 wells have been drilled in the field, all of which are completed, the official said.

Azar, one of the joint fields with Iraq, spans an overall area of 482 square kilometers in southeast of Mehran town in the western Iranian province of Ilam.

The field is estimated to hold 2.5 billion barrels of oil in place. The volume of possible oil reserves to be extracted from the Azar field is estimated to be around 400 million barrels.

## Parliament's committee investigating car offering at IME

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Offering of cars in the commodity exchange has not been ruled out and the issue is being examined by the parliament's Industries Committee, the deputy managing director of Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) stated.

Alireza Naserpour, the IME deputy managing director for market development and economic studies, said the issue is being investigated by the Industries Committee, there have been several meetings so far, but they have not yet been concluded.

In recent months, the price of cars in the free market has become significantly different from the factory price.

While this gap has led to a massive influx of people and professional dealers to buy cars from the factory, it did not benefit the automotive industry and those active in this sector, as the automakers sold their products at prices set by the Competition Council.

As a result, the car industry suffered losses and the profit of price gaps went to the pockets of dealers.

To tackle the problem, the offering of cars in the commodity exchange has been a top issue under discussion in recent months, and different views have been expressed by officials and related organizations.

However, after contradictory comments, the plan to organize the automotive industry, the most important axis of which is the offering of cars in the stock market, was approved in a meeting of the Industries Committee of the parliament.

Talking about the offering of cars in the commodity exchange and discovering the price of this product is in a situation when just some time ago car was a consumer product and not an investment.

But the situation in the country these days has turned the car into a commodity for investment, and in the meantime, the

lack of a transparent market for pricing has caused a sharp rise in car prices in Iran.

Before talking about the plan to organize the automotive industry, it should be noted that mandatory pricing in the commodity exchange is prohibited and the discovery of real prices must be accepted.

In fact, selling a car in a commodity exchange means moving away from orderly pricing, and the car is available to the public at more reasonable prices.

With the sale of cars in the commodity exchange, car pricing is not done by the Consumers and Producers Protection Organization and the Competition Council. Rather, prices are determined by supply and demand.

The plan to organize the automotive industry seeks to balance supply and demand as well as turn the car into a consumer good.

This plan has been recently revised, and in the revised plan, the Competition Council



determines which cars should be offered in the commodity exchange.

In fact, in the revised plan, which is based on the regulated supply of cars in the stock exchange, the Competition Council is obliged to determine the cars subject to this plan every six months according to indicators such as inflation, factory-market price gap, number of manufactured cars and impact on the market.

# Iran, Cuba's COVID-19 vaccines are surprising: Kuwaiti physician

→ which is the lowest in the last six months, and for the first times the number of patients admitted to intensive clinic wards has decreased to about 50-60%.

Kuwait is considered one of the first countries that is using the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in the world, as vaccinations will start among vulnerable and high-risk groups such as medical staff, front-line workers, and those with weak immunity. The vaccination campaign and the distribution of vaccines began 7 days ago!

**Which countries are pioneer in providing vaccine to contain the Corona pandemic?**

There are a number of countries in the world that have competed to develop a vaccine for Corona, including Russian, Chinese, American, British-Swiss and German companies such as Pfizer, American Moderna, and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine as well as Chinese companies such as CanSino and Sinovac and companies from other countries in the world.

But there was also a surprise from be- sieged countries such as Iran and Cuba. The Iranian Shafa Pharma company announced the human testing phase of its national vaccine, where 10,000 volunteers are preparing to receive the vaccine! While Cuba announced its national vaccine, Soberana02.

Thus, the monopoly of vaccines is going to be broken in light of competition and the need for the vaccine, and as the proverb says, "Necessity is the mother of invention!"

Thus, Iran and Cuba have proven that determination and ambition are important matters for security and health independence.

**How would you assess the Arab world's reaction to the Corona pandemic?**

The level of Arabs' response to the Corona pandemic varied from one country to another, as it seems that the populous countries had the worst performance.

It became clear that the (Persian) Gulf states were the most alert and prepared.

Qatar is at the top of countries that have succeeded in containing the pandemic in terms of infected people and the number of deaths, followed by the Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, while Iraq has suffered a great Coronavirus crisis due to its poor health services as well as poor equipment.



**"The monopoly of vaccines is going to be broken in light of competition and the need for the vaccine, and as the proverb says, 'Necessity is the mother of invention!' Thus, Iran and Cuba have proven that determination and ambition are important matters for security and health independence."**

Transparency was absent in many Arab countries, including Egypt and Syria. The situation in Yemen is worse as the country is greatly affected by the war. Medical and logistical blockade, in addition to hunger and poverty, have led to successive disasters for the Yemeni people. North African countries, specifically Algeria, were affected by the pandemic. They were less prepared for it than required.

**How do you see the strength of the new strain of Coronavirus, which is said to have originated in Britain?**

New reports indicate the spread of a new strain of Corona in Britain, South Africa and a number of European countries, and now there is no sufficient information except that the rate of its spread has severely doubled and that it affects younger age groups in

comparison with COVID-19.

According to medical reports, the vaccine is effective, despite mutations in the coronavirus which are not strangely unpredictable.

Multiple mutations of the Coronavirus have been tracked and we are waiting for new information about it, and we ask God for good health for everyone, but there is no clear indication that the virus has become more brutal so far.

**How do you assess the performance of the so-called developed countries like the U.S. and Britain in containing the pandemic and reducing the number of infected people or deaths?**

It is noticeable that many developing countries have not been affected that much by the Corona pandemic in comparison to

those in Europe and America.

African countries do not, for some reason, record large numbers, either due to the weakness of medical and administrative services or for environmental immunological reasons, but South American countries, especially Brazil, Mexico, Panama and Peru, are caught in a disastrous situation. That is because of the lack of compliance with social distancing, overcrowding, and poor health services.

As for what is happening in America, it is like a catastrophe, despite the advancement of medical technology.

However, the pandemic has proven that when the disease breaks out, a depletion of health and clinical staff is expected. This shows that prevention is more effective than treatment.

This is what happened in America when treatment centers failed to play their role.

The U.S. president's mismanagement of the crisis was clear. A number of other factors, such as demonstrations by the Blacks and elections, helped aggravate the outbreak of the pandemic.

Now the U.S. is rushing to use the vaccine to solve the escalation of the crisis, as America is the most affected country in the world by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**What is your opinion about the possibility of launching an initiative to form a regional scientific cooperation in which the countries of the region, including Iran, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf states, would join it? Do you think that the ground is suitable for that?**

The countries of the region in the (Persian) Gulf have to cooperate in the health field and exchange scientific experiences and expertise. Health and food security are as important as social and political security, as it should be less expensive and more effective.

The geographical neighborhood is a factor that helps the spread of the disease, depending on cooperation between countries, especially when they can coordinate and avoid fueling disputes, crises or external interventions.

We wish the peoples of the region to join hands with us. What unites them is much more than what divides them, especially since there are teams and experiences that the region and even the world should benefit from.

## Will the Deal of Century include Indonesia?

By Mohammad Javdan

Over the past half a century, presidents of the United States have regularly assured American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) at annual meetings of Washington's commitment to the Zionist regime's values. To that effect, efforts to help the Zionist regime reach sustainable security constitute a principled policy of Washington.

Nonetheless, under President Donald Trump, these efforts were significantly different. By signing the "Deal of the Century" before cameras, Trump pretended to be a pragmatic president with regard to the security of Israel through mediating peace between Israel and Muslim nations. He had from the very beginning focused specifically on a handful of Muslim nations.

Shortly after signing the Deal of the Century, Trump delivered on his pledge. He officially gave the go-ahead to the process of normalizing ties between Muslim nations and the Zionist regime.

From the day the Deal of the Century was signed until normalization agreements between the Zionist regime and several Muslim nations, an opportunity might have been provided to assess the public opinion in these countries and of course the firm determination of their governments for normalizing ties in view of the materialization of the "Deal of the Century" project initiated by the U.S.

Currently, despite sporadic oppositions across the Muslim world, the Deal of the Century project has taken some steps forward. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Morocco are the three Muslim nations that have normalized relations with the Quds occupying regime. However, we have to look into the future of the Deal of the Century.

The Republic of Indonesia is the largest Muslim world and the third biggest democracy in the world. After living for centuries under occupation, colonialization and exploitation by the Dutch, the Japanese and the Americans, Indonesia is close to marking the 75th anniversary of its independence.

Living under colonialism, the Indonesian youth sacrificed their lives to achieve independence in 1945. That taught Indonesian Muslims helpful lessons which are symbolized in the country's Constitution and more importantly in Indonesia's five major principles.

Now we intend to test the waters for Indonesia to see if it can join the Deal of the Century and sign normalization or peace deals with the Zionist regime.

**Colonialism yoke**

A flashback to the black period of colonialism in Indonesia can serve as the first clue to this enigma. The history of the Kingdom of Srivijaya in Indonesia was millennia-old. Alas, it was seized in the 15th century by the Portuguese. Two centuries later, Britain and the Netherlands dominated Indonesia, leaving tragic disasters behind. That was when Indonesia was renamed the East Indian Company.

History witnesses that the Dutch spilled too much blood in Indonesia to establish their own regime there. Badung, Bali and Java still remember the horrible Dutch



massacre of Indonesians with no mercy for women and children. After the Netherlands, Japan occupied Indonesia while World War II was underway. Then, it was the Americans' turn to run Indonesian affairs following their victory in the war.

Although the U.S. dominance of Indonesia was short-lived and the country braced for independence, the U.S. maintained its secret clout with Indonesia's policy, which resulted in the mass deaths of three million Indonesians under the pretext of a Communist coup.

Recently declassified CIA documents show that the intelligence agency was directly and indirectly involved in the coup and the subsequent carnage of Indonesians.

It may be said that Indonesia is a large country in the world to have felt the life under occupation and suffered massive deaths committed by colonialist powers.

That is exactly why from the very outset of the Indonesian National Revolution, independence leaders pursued the five basic principles of Indonesia's independence as the most significant independence document and future strategy for the country, calling for just life for all human communities.

**Pancasila, political philosophy of Indonesia**

As soon as Indonesia declared independence, the country faced serious political tumults. In 1998 Indonesians had to adopt fundamental reforms, known as reformasi. The reformasi brought once more Pancasila to the fore and resulted in a more forceful implementation of Indonesia's Constitution.

In fact, reformasi laid emphasis on major and principled policy lines of Indonesia and their implementation by people, a policy line whose main focal point was administration of justice in all human communities and clear dismissal of colonialism and exploitation all across the globe.

Indonesian governments have since remained faithful to Pancasila and the Constitution. Wherever people have seen any non-compliance with laws they have taken action against their governments.

**Independent foreign policy**

"Independence is the right of every nation. Occupation must be abolished in the world because it does not comply with humanity and justice." That is how Indo-

nesia's Constitution begins. Therefore, Indonesia has always pursued an independent line vis-à-vis colonial issues in the world because it is a founding nation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and has always adopted a principled and anti-occupation position vis-à-vis the Zionists' occupation of Palestine.

This political line is symbolized in the Indonesian governments' treatment of the Quds occupying regime. Prior to adoption of reformasi and several years after, the Indonesian government maintained low-level political ties with the Zionist regime without recognizing it. The Indonesian government's stance against the Zionist regime's inhumane behaviors came to the limelight after it organized its domestic policy and embraced action on the global scale.

The administration of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) from 2004 to 2014 adopted very tough stance against the Zionists. That is while Indonesia has always faced harsh criticism from the U.S. because of its anti-Zionist stance. On the other hand, Indonesia's anti-colonialist policy has not been limited to condemnations and political statements. Indonesia has largely helped residents of Gaza and the West Bank. Construction of several hospitals in Palestine, funded by Indonesian government and charities, is a case in point.

Under President Joko Widodo, Indonesia has pushed ahead with its anti-colonialist policy - as stipulated in the Constitution - since 2014.

**Countering Israeli aggression in return for strained ties**

Indonesia has hitherto paid a heavy price because of its faithfulness to the Palestinian cause and its efforts to resolve the issue of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. At political forums and the UN General Assembly, it openly opposed the U.S.'s declaration of al-Quds as the capital of the Zionist regime.

Indonesia's adoption of an independent policy and support for Palestinian people has not pleased some nations, particularly Australia, leading to a verbal row between the two nations. Indonesia even threatened to sever ties with Australia, saying supporting the Palestinian cause was a principled policy of Indonesia and objecting to Indonesia's pro-Palestine policy amounted to interference with its domestic affairs.

**Will the Deal of Century reach Indonesia?**

In light of the Indonesian Muslims' support for the Palestinian cause and objection to the Zionist regime's occupation as well as crimes committed by the regime in Gaza and the West Bank, the issue of normalization of ties between Indonesia and the Zionist regime seems to have no real standing and is just a mere speculation. Economically known as the Tiger of Southeast Asia, Indonesia does not depend on the so-called American-Zionist aid. Furthermore, the Indonesian government has shown that it would not shy away from paying any price to support Palestine in line with its Constitution. To that effect, Indonesia's Foreign Ministry spokesman recently dismissed any plan for resumption of ties with the Zionist regime or any proposal for the recognition of Israel.

## Iraq sues U.S. for disastrous uranium bombings

Iraq files its first lawsuit against the United States for bombing the Arab country with depleted uranium several times over the course of two decades.

On Tuesday, Iraq's al-Maaloumah news website reported the initiation of the legal proceedings related to the bombing spats that plagued Iraq with rampant and deadly radioactive contamination.

The lawsuit was lodged by Hatif al-Rikabi, the Iraqi parliament's legal advisor, with a Swedish court in Stockholm on December 26.

The suit demands compensation for the repercussions of the bombings that targeted the country's former nuclear installations twice in the 1990s and once in the 2000s, said al-Rikabi, who is also a member of Baghdad's negotiation team with the United Nations.

He said the weapons used in the assaults included bombs and missiles.

The Iraqi legal team is trying to have the United Nations issue a resolution that would oblige Washington to pay the reparations.

Attacks against the former Iraqi regime's nuclear facilities that also include one Israeli aerial assault in 1981 have afflicted the country with such contamination levels that have so far led to thousands of deaths.

According to press TV, the fatalities have been ascribed to the various kinds of cancer, apoplexy, and endless birth defects that have resulted from the fallout of the attacks.

During 2004, the U.S. military also laid two massive military sieges to the city of Fallujah, using large quantities of depleted uranium ammunition.

Officials statistics show that by 2005, cancer rate in Iraq had doubled to at least 1,600 out of 100,000 people. Prior to the First Persian Gulf War in 1991, the rate had stood at 40 out of 100,000 people.

## Only hundreds of U.S. troops will remain in Iraq: Kadhimi

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi says only hundreds of U.S. troops will remain in the Arab country following the pullout of half of them within the next few days.

"As a result of the ongoing strategic dialogue between Iraq and the United States, batches of American forces have been withdrawn within technical schedules during the past months. The withdrawal of more than half of those forces will be completed within the coming days," Kadhimi said in a televised speech on the eve of the centenary of the Iraqi Army Day.

He added, "Only hundreds of them will remain, for cooperation in the fields of training, rehabilitation, armament and technical support. Their redeployment outside Iraq is scheduled entirely within agreements between the two countries."

## Turkey, UK safeguard \$25bn worth of trade in post-Brexit deal

The post-Brexit trade deal between Turkey and the United Kingdom has safeguarded \$25bn worth of business between the nations that find themselves two of the largest economies on the fringes of the European Union.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described it as "the most important trade deal" since Ankara signed a customs union with the EU in 1995, while the UK's International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said it would lead to a "new, more ambitious deal with Turkey in the near future".

Ruhsar Pekcan, Turkey's trade minister, said: "Without a deal, about 75 percent of Turkish exports to the UK would be subject to tariffs, causing the loss of about \$2.4bn; this risk is now gone." The free trade agreement (FTA) that came into effect on New Year's Day replicates ties that existed when the UK was still in the EU, which became void after December 31.

According to al Jazeera, it ensures continued tariff-free trade on non-agricultural products between the UK and Turkey.

## Resistance News

### Haneyya expresses readiness for inclusive elections within 6 months

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN—Ismail Haneyya, Hamas's leader, affirmed on Sunday the Movement's readiness

to resume Palestinian dialogue to hold legislative, presidential and National Council elections in succession within 6 months.

Haneyya stated during a televised speech that he received a written reply letter from the President of the Palestinian Authority, Abu Mazen, welcoming the content of his message, his commitment to holding elections and achieving the principle of partnership in building Palestinian institutions. He also received a letter from Egypt, Qatar and Turkey, in which they confirmed this position.

"We are facing a new and promising stage for the completion of a Palestinian agreement that opens a new and historic stage for our Palestinian people", he added.

Hamas's leader added that this dialogue aims to rebuild the Palestinian leadership represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, end the division represented by a unified Palestinian Legislative Council and a unified national government and agree on a national political program as well as agree on the struggle strategy.

He underlined that recently a national dialogue was launched with the Fatah movement and the rest of the Palestinian national factions, hosted by friendly countries, led by Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Russia and others. Through this dialogue, they were able to complete the Istanbul understandings and to agree on the outcomes of the meeting of the Secretaries-General, and then the final dialogue was in Cairo.

During the last Cairo meeting, the dialogue was suspended at a specific point related to the elections which is the issue of synchronization. "The reason for our adherence to and the adherence of many factions to the issue of synchronization is the eagerness and desire to rebuild the entire Palestinian political system on the principle of partnership", he stressed.

Haneyya said, "We are running out of time and we face real danger, as we see what is happening inside Palestine, the settlers' attacks. Also the attempts to annex the Palestinian land and cancel the right of return. Therefore, we have dealt positively, responsibly and quickly and we understand the need to resume the process of internal Palestinian dialogue."

## Ancient Sassanid coins regain former luster

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — A collection of 45 silver coins dating back to the Sassanid era (224 CE–651) underwent some rehabilitation works in western Lorestan province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The coins, which contained some deposits and corrosion, were cleaned and restored by cultural heritage experts in a laboratory at the Sassanid-era Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress in Khorramabad, Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Wednesday.



The collection is planned to go on display in a museum located inside the historical fortress, the official added.

In many ways, Iran under the Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance during Sassanid rule.

In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Of all the material remains of the era, only coins constitute a continuous chronological sequence throughout the whole period of the dynasty. Such Sassanid coins have the name of the king for whom they were struck inscribed in Pahlavi, which permits scholars to date them quite closely.

The legendary wealth of the Sassanian court is fully confirmed by the existence of more than one hundred examples of bowls or plates of precious metal known at present. One of the finest examples is the silver plate with partial gilding in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The dynasty was destroyed by Arab invaders during a span from 637 to 651.

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

## 33 Iranian traditions, living expressions win national heritage status

→ According to the UN cultural body, cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and



practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life.

The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next.

## Hamidinava, architect of Sari's clock tower, dies aged 90

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — Mohammad-Ali Hamidinava, a traditional Iranian architect who constructed a landmark clock tower in Sari, has died. He was 90.

The clock tower, which replaced an older one in the northern Iranian city, the capital of Mazandaran province, was completed in 1978 following two years of work.



A fusion of Iranian and European architectural elements have been applied to the construction of the tower, which stands tall at Sa'at (clock) sq. of the city.

Long before we started constantly looking down at our phones or glancing at watches on our wrists, clock towers were the best way to find out the time.

Mechanical clocks were invented in the 13th century, but even before that civilizations had found a way to merge time-keeping and architecture with obelisks and sundials.

Today clock towers remain some of the most iconic structures in the world, and in some cases, such as the Elizabeth Tower (better known as Big Ben), are symbols of their cities. The functional designs provide information, add beauty to the skyline, and often provide a daily show of animated figures or bells.

# Varamin produces 70% of country's glassware

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — The craftspersons of Varamin, an ancient city in Tehran province, produce some 70 percent of Iran's glassware and crystal, the local tourism chief has said.

The city is a hectic hub of glass production with 100 active workshops. Zhila Khodadadi announced on Wednesday.

Varamin's crafters apply all modern techniques in this field and their handmade products are competitive with similar products imported from other countries such as Italy, the official added.

Varamin exports two trillion rials (\$47.6 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) worth of glassware annually to the Persian Gulf littoral states and some European countries, she explained.

She also noted that \$5 million worth of handmade glassware and crystals were exported directly and indirectly from Varamin to other countries during the last Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020).

Last April, the provincial tourism chief Parvaneh Heydari announced that the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ministry plans to name Varamin the national city of handmade glassware.



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

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with

four, and India with three ones come next.

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

from ten to 14.

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

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

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

## Historical vaulted alley, adjoining houses undergo urgent restoration

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — A traditional vaulted alley and its adjoining mudbrick houses, which are altogether named a "darband" in the Iranian vernacular architecture, have been restored urgently in the historical texture of Ardakan in central Iran.

"Some parts of a darband have undergone urgent restoration in the Ali-Beyk historical neighborhood of Ardakan," Mohsen Mirjani, tourism chief of the central Iranian city, announced on Wednesday.

Darband is a roofed alley with an entrance door that leads onto several houses.

"This historical texture is a collection of different architectural components, and to preserve its shape, even small and minor problems must be taken into account."

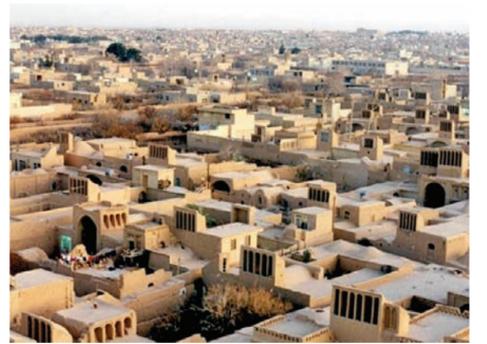
Modification of worn-out parts, sloping and lightening of the roofs, replacing old roof straws, and the amendment of wall gutters constituted were the most important measures carried out in the project, the official explained.

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

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

The word Ardakan in Persian means "holy place" or "clean place" (Modern Persian: arda+kan / Middle Persian: arta+gan) and the city has many historical religious attractions such as the Grand Mosque of Ardakan (Masjed-e Jame'), Zire-deh Mosque, Emam-Zadeh Mir Seyyed Mohammad and Tekeyeh bazaar.

This region is one of the Zoroastrian centers of Iran, and there are numerous holy sites for Zoroastrians in Sharif-Abad, a village near Ardakan. Each summer thou-



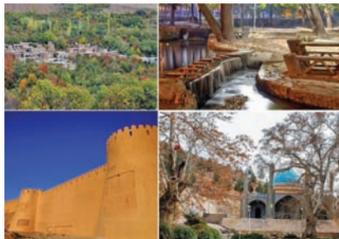
sands of Zoroastrians from around the world gather there for pilgrimage.

## Some \$3.1m paid to support tourism in North Khorasan

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — The Iranian government has paid 132 billion rials (\$3.1 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support tourism businesses in North Khorasan province during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020).

Besides this amount of money, the government has also paid 14 billion rials (over \$333,000) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the northeastern province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The cultural heritage department of the province also plans to attract private sector investors to carry out tourism-related projects in near future, Habib Yazdanpanah announced on Wednesday.



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

He also announced that depending on

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Rare Quran manuscripts, column capitals, bronze coffin, and clay seal made national heritage

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — A total of eight moveable properties, which are being kept in private or state-owned museums across Iran's Kermanshah province, have recently been inscribed on the national cultural heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Tuesday in a letter to the governor-general of the province, CHTN reported.

Two Quran manuscripts, four stone column capitals, a bronze coffin, and an earthen seal have been added to the prestigious list.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, of which Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan are



both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting the king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

## Apadana Staircase: an absolute glory of architecture & art

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — The ruins of Apadana Staircase show off and offer scenes of historic Persian arts to its domestic and foreign visitors an absolute glory of architecture and art.

The lavishly decorated monument stands within the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, which was once the ceremonial capital of the Persian Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC).

The Staircase features finely crafted frieze in three major panels, each divided into several tiers depicting sovereigns, dignitaries, and the then visitors to the city.

The northern panel itself is divided into three tiers of well-preserved bas-relief figures of Persian nobility including the Imperial Guard and the Immortals.

According to the Lonely Planet, on the

upper tier, the figures are followed by the royal procession, valets, and horses of the king's chariot; on the lower two tiers, these figures precede Persians wearing feather headdresses and Medes in their round caps.

The central panel of the staircase is dominated by the traditional symbol of Zoroastrianism which is flanked by two winged lions with human heads.

Elaborate panels at the southern end of the staircase depicts a record of nations, showing 23 delegations bringing their gifts to an Achaemenid king. The Ethiopians begin the frieze in the bottom left corner and are joined by Arabs, Thracians, Kashmiris, Parthians, and Cappadocians. The Elamites, Egyptians, and Medians occupy the panel at the top right. Accompanying this pantheon of guests are



an assortment of delicately carved sheep with ram's horns and curled wool, two-humped Bactrian camels, oxen, and mules.

On the northern panel exists inscriptions with fairly stereotypical texts by king Xerxes; one in Old Persian and others in Elamite

and Babylonian.

According to livius.org, a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering, parts of the inscriptions read as:

"A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created that heaven, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Xerxes king: the king of many kings, one ruler of many rulers."

"I am Xerxes, the great king, king of kings, king of all nations, having various kinds of people, king in this great earth far and wide, the son of King Darius, an Achaemenid."

In 330 BC, the staircase was miraculously survived the sack of Persepolis by the soldiers of Alexander the Great. The staircase is currently protected by a permanent shelter.

# Iran pays for buying 16.8m doses of COVAX vaccine

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The Central Bank of Iran has announced an advance payment to purchase 16.8 million doses of coronavirus vaccine through the COVAX, a global initiative to ensure rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

In order to receive 16.8 million doses of the COVAX vaccine, an advance payment was credited to the World Health Organization with the cooperation of two Iranian banks and three European banks, CBI Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati wrote on his Instagram account on Tuesday.

More budget has been proposed to buy the vaccines, which is awaiting the Ministry of Health's approval, he added.

Christoph Hamelmann, WHO Representative in Iran, said on December 28 that sanctions imposed by the United States will have no effect on importing coronavirus vaccines by Iran from the COVAX.

"We support and assist Iran in obtaining



essential items from the global market, and we did so since the beginning of the pandemic, as we anticipated the provision of medicine to be affected by sanctions," he added, ILNA reported.

COVAX member states, including Iran, will jointly decide on which brand of vaccine each country to purchase, and the final decision will be announced by the officials, he noted.

The first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers was unveiled and injected into three volunteers during a ceremony on December 29, 2020.

After vaccination, the candidates must remain in quarantine for a week to a month to show the side effects of the vaccine. In the meantime, the test results are checked several times for blood and cellular immunity.

After the results of the study are determined, the second stage begins with the injection in 500 people, and after 28 days, the third phase begins with mass production.

## Tehran air pollution incurs daily loss of \$7m

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — Air pollution brings a heavy economic burden amounting to \$7 million per day for the metropolis of Tehran, Hossein Shahidzadeh, head of Tehran's Air Quality Control Company, has said.

Air pollution is responsible for 11 premature deaths daily in Tehran, he lamented.

According to the World Bank in 2018, the economic consequences of air pollution haunting the metropolis of Tehran equal \$2.8 billion per year, he highlighted, regretting that the number of deaths attributed to air pollution in Iran is estimated at 12,000 per year, of which 4,000 are related to Tehran.

World Health Organization (WHO) asserts that Tehran is one of the most air-polluted cities in the world. Tehran is ranked 12th among 26 megacities in terms of ambient PM10 levels. In 2016, the annual ambient level of PM10 was estimated at 77 micrograms per cubic meter. This is almost four times the WHO's recommended threshold of 20 micrograms per cubic meter.

### Pollution choking Tehran

According to the statistics published by Air Quality Control Company, the Tehran air quality index (AQI) demonstrated 15 days of excellent air since the beginning of this [Iranian calendar] year (March 21, 2020), while during the same period last year, Tehraners breathed 25 days of clean air.

An AQI is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.

The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), acceptable (51-100), moderately polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

This is while, last year over the same period 202 days of acceptable quality air reported in the city, while this year it was reported 182 days.

Since March 2020, polluted air haunted the capital for 8 days which was almost dangerous for all the residents, which was reported 5, last year.



This is while, last year over the same period 61 days were unhealthy for sensitive groups, but this year it reached 88 days. The leading cause of air pollution in the capital is PM 2.5, PM 10, and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2).

## Jazmourian wetland hosting flocks of migratory birds

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — Flocks of migratory birds, including flamingos, came to winter in Jazmourian wetland in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, despite parts of the wetland has been dried up.

Migratory birds are frequently monitored and counted round-the-clock by rangers, Hossein Qassemi-Manesh, the head of Delgan county's department of environment said, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Suitable climate, locating in the main

route of bird migration, autumnal rains, and spotted vegetation in different areas are the main reasons for hosting migratory birds in Jazmourian wetland, he noted.

Diverse habitats in Sistan-Baluchestan include tropical beaches, mangrove forests, marine, mountain, and rocky habitats, deserts, and plains, which have provided favorable conditions for the presence of migratory birds, both aquatic and coastal, he explained.

Nestled between the provinces of Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan, Jazmourian is



one of the two major wetlands in southeast Iran, which is on the knife-edge of complete desiccation as a result of climate change, excessive dam construction, low precipitation, high-temperature rates, and the depletion of groundwater resources.

The area of the Hamoon and Jazmourian basin stretches to 69,600 square kilometers, with the western part of 35,600 square kilometers in Kerman province and the eastern part of 34,000 square kilometers in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

## Cities around world will see humidity fall due to climate crisis, study finds



Cities across the world will see a near-universal drop in humidity by the end of the century due to the climate crisis, according to a new study.

While cities cover only about 3 per cent of earth's total land surface, they are home to half the global population. This percentage is projected to increase to 70 per cent by 2050.

It means that environmental problems, including heat

stress, water scarcity, air pollution and energy insecurity are felt more acutely in urban areas, the Independent reported.

The study, led by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign engineer Professor Lei Zhao, notes that while global climate models give a big-picture look at the crisis, cities are poorly represented. Air, surface and soil temperatures in cities are almost always warmer than in rural areas, in what's known as an "urban heat island".

For example, cities like London, Manchester and Birmingham, have been up to 5C (9F) warmer at times than their nearby rural areas in the past 20 years, according to Carbon Brief.

Much of the urban landscape is paved and has little vegetation. This means that there is usually little water available for evaporation, so most available natural energy warms surfaces.

Construction materials are dense, and many — like dark-coloured asphalt — are good at absorbing and storing solar radiation.

The study, published on Monday in the journal Nature Climate Change, focuses on cities and makes projections about how they will be affected as the global temperature rises.

"Our findings highlight the critical need for global projections of local urban climates for climate-sensitive urban areas," Prof. Zhao said.

"This could give city planners the support they need to encourage solutions such as green infrastructure intervention to reduce urban heat stress on large scales."

The researchers say that "greening" of cities is needed to reduce heat stress. For example, planting trees and vegetation will be important to help lower temperatures, as the water they release cools the air.

The research found that implementing green infrastructure would be most effective in reducing urban heat stress for dryer cities.

However, despite being less effective in wetter cities, "green infrastructure would still provide cooling and, in addition, more shading (by trees)," the researchers added.

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

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## Iran pioneer in cancer innovation, research among Islamic countries

Iran has the most research and innovation in the field of cancer both in the region and among Islamic countries, deputy health minister Reza Malekzadeh has stated.

Referring to the great progress in cancer research, he said that "We have been able to play a role in this area globally."

He added that one of the hopes for early detection of cancer is the use of urine and blood tests for people who are susceptible to cancer. "We have conducted researches in the field of blood and urine biomarkers, which will help control cancers in the country," he said.

Pointing out that there are about 250,000 cancer patients in the country, Malekzadeh noted that 50,000 people die each year from the disease and 125,000 new patients develop cancer, so that the number of people with the disease increases each year.

## ایران بیشترین نوآوری و تحقیقات سرطان را بین کشورهای اسلامی دارد

معاون تحقیقات و فناوری وزیر بهداشت، درمان و آموزش پزشکی گفت: ایران هم در منطقه و هم بین کشورهای اسلامی بیشترین میزان تحقیقات و نوآوری ها در حوزه سرطان را داشته است.

دکتر رضا ملک زاده روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار علمی ایرنا با اشاره به اینکه ما در زمینه تحقیقات سرطان پیشرفت های خیلی خوبی داشتیم، گفت: ما در سطح جهانی هم توانستیم در این حوزه نقش آفرین باشیم.

وی افزود: یکی از امیدهای خیلی روشن برای تشخیص زودرس سرطان، استفاده از آزمایش ادرار و خون برای افرادی است که استعداد سرطان را دارند.

معاون وزیر بهداشت گفت: در ایران تحقیقات خیلی خوبی در زمینه بیومارکرهای ادراری و خونی در دست اجرا داریم و امیدواریم با این کار، امکان کنترل سرطان ها در کشور میسر شود.

ملک زاده با اشاره به اینکه در حال حاضر تعداد ۲۵۰ هزار مبتلا به سرطان در کشور داریم، گفت: هر سال حدود ۵۰ هزار نفر بر اثر این بیماری می‌میرند و ۱۲۵ هزار بیمار جدید اضافه می‌شوند. در نتیجه هر ساله تعداد مبتلایان این بیماری بیشتر می‌شود.

## Biotechnology budget rises almost 50%

**1 →** To support the rangers, about 1.08 trillion rials (about \$25 million) is proposed, while this figure for the current year's budget has been about 290 billion rials (about \$6.9 million), showing a threefold increase, according to IRNA.

A total of 1.4 billion trillion rials (around \$34 million) to provide equipment for the protection and firefighting unit of the areas under the management of the DOE, which is raised by 98 percent compared to the previous.

The budget for the promotion of public participation, awareness, and culture is about 1.4 billion trillion rials (around \$34 million), which was increased by 42 percent in comparison to that the last year.

The share of waste management supervision is set at 300 billion rials (around \$7 million).

More than 3.2 trillion rials (about \$77 million) are to be allocated for the monitoring and management of pollutants.

A sum of 8.5 billion rials (nearly \$202,000) is also proposed for the implementation of the Clean Air Law.

## Greenhouse gases already emitted 'will warm Earth beyond 2C'

The amount of greenhouse gases already released into the atmosphere by humans will likely warm our planet beyond the limits set out under the Paris climate agreement, alarming new research which recalculates previous climate models warns.

Future warming from greenhouse gases that have already been emitted is called "committed warming", the Independent reported.

"It arises because when you emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, it takes a very long time to fully realise the warming," said Andy Dessler, a co-author of the report.

"The ocean has an enormous amount of heat capacity and it takes decades or centuries for it to warm up in response to those emissions."

And as fossil fuels continue to be burnt, the level of future warming humans are committing the planet to is still continuing to rise.

"We have few ways to avoid this committed warming," he said in a video summarizing the findings of the report.

Previous estimates for the Earth's committed warming suggested an additional 1.3C was on the way, but the new report suggests that number could be over 2C.

In particular, the paper looks at how cloud cover over Antarctic areas could change in future. Clouds reflect sunlight back into space, helping to keep the planet cool, but if cloud coverage drops, energy from the sun is readily absorbed by the Earth, warming it up.

"One way to estimate committed warming is to assume that changes in the future will pretty much follow changes in the past. In particular we can estimate how clouds have changed in the past as the climate warms — a process known as the cloud feedback, and assume that future changes will be similar. This yields an estimate for committed warming of 1.4C [above pre-industrial levels]," said Professor Dessler.

This is similar to the previous estimates for committed warming.

"What this means is that we are committed to 1.4C of warming above pre-industrial, just due to emissions which have already taken place — future emissions will cause warming above this committed baseline."

But he said: "The main conclusion of our paper is that assuming future changes in the climate system will follow past changes is a bad assumption."

He said this is because historical data reveals that over the 20th century, the slowest area of warming has been in the Southern Ocean, around Antarctica.

But this is an area of very high heat capacity — it takes a long time to warm it up, and global warming has not been going on long enough to have had a significant impact on weather patterns here.

"The existence of cold present day sea-surface temperatures in these regions, while the overlying atmosphere is warming due to global warming, favours the buildup of low clouds over the region," he said. "These clouds reflect sunlight back into space and tend to cool the planet."

But when the Southern Ocean does eventually warm up, the likely result will be the clouds are more readily burnt off, allowing more sunlight through to be absorbed by the Earth, and giving us additional warming, Professor Dessler said.

This has not happened during the 20th century, and is therefore not in the datasets which have previously been used to calculate likely future warming, and have potentially therefore underestimated possible global temperature rises.

"When we account for this process, we find that committed warming has a most-likely value of around 2.5C above pre-industrial ... this is just from emissions that have already occurred," he said.

"Obviously this exceeds the Paris agreement limits. While I would not categorise this as good news, it is not game over for the climate."

"It's important to realise this committed warming is a very slow process because it requires warming regions of the planet that are very slow to warm, therefore it could take centuries for the bulk of this committed warming to occur."

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 102)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

تمرین ۲. کلمات را در جای مناسب قرار دهید.

۱. کُره □ ایران □ یک کشور دیگر □
۲. تهران □ شهر ری □ ستول □
۳. چهارصد کیلومتر مربع □ هفتصد کیلومتر مربع □ هزار کیلومتر مربع □
۴. سه میلیون نفر □ پنج میلیون نفر □ هشت میلیون نفر □
۵. ۴۶۷۱ متر □ ۵۶۷۱ متر □ ۶۶۷۱ متر □
۶. بزرگراه، مترو، برج □ موزه، هتل، رستوران □ همه‌ی آنها □

### نگارش

تمرین ۱. جواب سؤال‌های زیر را کامل بنویسید:

۱. تهران از کی پایتخت ایران است؟
۲. تهران نزدیک کدام قله واقع است؟
۳. ارتفاع این قله چند متر است؟
۴. مساحت تهران چند کیلومتر است؟
۵. جمعیت تهران چقدر است؟
۶. این جمعیت چگونه زیاد شد؟

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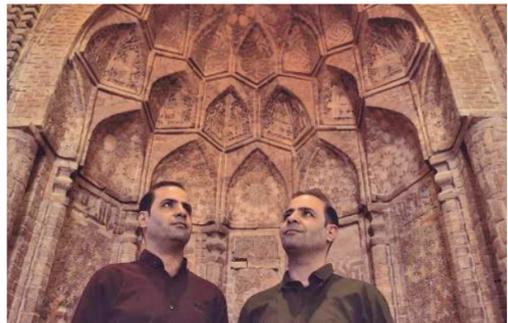
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Lying would negatively influence your livelihood.  
Prophet Muhammad (S)

## Saeidi brothers' music videos clips tuned to frantic pace of modern life

**A R T TEHRAN** — Vocalist brothers Ali and Mohammad Saeidi have initiated a plan to enrich the daily lives of those people who have little patience or spare time by recording short music videos. The music videos run less than one minute and each promotes one more Iranian art indirectly.



Saeidi brothers, Ali and Mohammad in a scene from the short music video "There Is No Help".

In a post published on Instagram, the twin brothers said that their plan is a matter of necessity in modern life. They also wrote that most of people in the modern world are hasty and no longer have patience to hear any preludes in songs or a longer musical piece. Thus, they choose one or two verses which are intended to be the point of each music video. The songs are performed in various gushes, the totality of melodies of the Persian traditional music system. They have recently released "There Is No Help" from a poem by Emad Khorsani, which was recorded at Barsian Mosque, a Seljuk era (1037-1194) monument located in the village of Barsian near the central Iranian city of Isfahan, the hometown of the Saeidi brothers. Iranian architecture is indirectly observed in this video. Saeidi brothers have collaborated with numerous prominent musicians, including maestro Farhad Fakhreddini, the founder of Iran's National Orchestra.

## "The Metapsychology of Christopher Bollas" appears in Persian

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of "The Metapsychology of Christopher Bollas" by Sarah Nettleton has recently been published by Arjmand Publications in Tehran. The book has been translated into Persian by Mansur Valibeigi and Nayyereh Ahmadi. "The Metapsychology of Christopher Bollas" is an introduction that explores Bollas's extraordinarily wide contribution to contemporary psychoanalysis. The book aims to introduce and explain the fundamentals of Bollas's theory of the mind in a systematic way, addressing many of the questions that commonly arise when people approach his work. Through chapters on topics such as the receptive subject, the creative unconscious and the implications of Bollas's metapsychology for the technique of free association, the book enables the reader to acquire an understanding of his unique psychoanalytic language, to grasp the conceptual building blocks of his thinking and how these interrelate, and to appreciate the theoretical and clinical coherence of his thinking. "The Metapsychology of Christopher Bollas: An Introduction" can be of use to psychoanalysts, psychotherapists and counsellors, as well as psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers wishing to explore the applications of psychoanalytic thinking to their practice. It can be of great value to trainees in these disciplines, as well as to postgraduate students and academics interested in contemporary psychoanalysis. Christopher Bollas has made an extraordinarily wide contribution. Nettleton is a psychoanalyst in London. Originally a piano accompanist, she has written on music and the internal world and on the psychodynamics of musical giftedness. For the past ten years she has taught seminars on the work of Christopher Bollas extensively in the UK, and in Norway, France, America and Turkey.

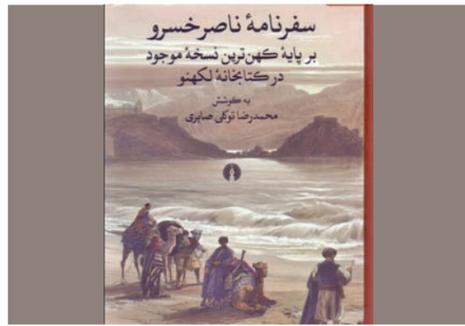
# "Manifestation of Simorgh" will reflect ideals of Commander Soleimani: artist

→1 "He has chosen the title 'A Requiem for the Manifestation of Simorgh', which properly indicates the high status of Commander Soleimani among the nation. He was both the hero of our nation and the hero of the other Muslim nations," he said. Pointing to the symbols used in the painting project, he added, "Art is the most influential media to promote the ideals and thoughts of the commander. In some parts of the paintings, the arrogant and terrorist natures of the U.S. government and ISIS have been depicted well, while in other parts the bravery of the Iranian soldiers during the Iran-Iraq war has been highlighted." For his part, Sadeqi also said that the project begins with a monster, which swallows man, then depicts the sufferings of the American Black nation, and the Iraqi invasion of Iran during the 1980s. "It goes on with national heroes such as



Iranian artist Habibollah Sadeqi elaborates on his painting project "A Requiem for the Manifestation of Simorgh" at Khial Gallery in Tehran on January 5, 2021.

Arash and Rostam in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and continues with the failure of Zahhak. The painting will go through the hearts of Ferdowsi and Rumi and reaches the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (S)," he described. The Iranian soldiers who fight against the enemy will also be highlighted in the project, he said. "The duty of art and those who pay due attention to idealistic art is to narrate the thoughts of this great martyr," he added. Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq, the fall of ISIS and the battle between the Iranian forces and the enemy as well as the kindness of Commander Soleimani to the children of martyrs will also be featured in the project. The project has been initiated with contributions from the Saba Art and Cultural Institute, the Palestine Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran and the Iranian Academy of Arts.



Front cover of Naser-e Khusraw's Safarnamah (Book of Travels) corrected by Mohammadreza Tavakkoli-Saberi.

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — Literature scholars discussed the Safarnamah (Book of Travels) of Abu Muin Naser-e Khusraw al-Marvazi al-Qubadiyani, known as Naser-e Khusraw, during an online session on Tuesday. The session was organized by the Persian literary monthly Bokhara and Elmi Farhani Publications to celebrate the release of a new edition of the book by the publisher. The edition has been corrected by Mohammadreza Tavakkoli-Saberi, who delivered a speech during the session, which streamed through Instagram.com/elmifarhangipub

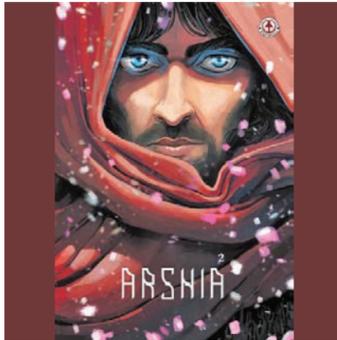
## Persian literati discuss Naser-e Khusraw's Book of Travels

and Instagram.com/bukharamag. Mohammad Emadi Haeri, Bahram Parvin Gonabadi, Pajand Soleimani, Nadereh Rezai and also Ali Dehbashi gave lectures during the session. Tavakkoli-Saberi is also the author of "The Wanderer of the Yamgan Valley", a novel he has written about the life story of Naser-e Khusraw who lived during the eleventh century. Naser-e Khusraw's most-celebrated prose work, The Safarnamah is a diary describing his seven-year journey through Syria and Palestine. It is a valuable record of the scenes and events that he witnessed. Tavakkoli-Saberi followed the route in a similar journey to write his book "The Lapsable Journey", which was published by Elmi Farhangi in 2018. Born in 1004 in Qubadiyan, Merv, Khorasan (Iran), Naser-e Khusraw came of a family of government officials who belonged to the Shia branch of Islam. In 1045, he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and continued his journey to Palestine and then to Egypt, which was ruled at that time by the Fatimid dynasty. The Fatimids headed the Ismaili sect, an offshoot of Shiism, and they sent missionaries to propagate their beliefs

throughout the Islamic world. Naser-e Khusraw became such a missionary, though it is not certain whether he became an Ismaili before his trip to the Fatimid capital or after. He returned to his homeland in what is now Afghanistan, but his vigorous advocacy of the Ismaili ideology within Sunni territory forced him to flee to Badakhshan, where he spent the rest of his days, lamenting in his poetry that he was unable to be an active missionary. His poetry is of a didactic and devotional character and consists mainly of long odes that are considered to be of high literary quality. His philosophical poetry includes the Rawshanainameh ("Book of Light"). He also wrote more than a dozen treatises expounding the doctrines of the Ismailis, among them the Jami al-Hikmatayn ("Union of the Two Wisdoms"), in which he attempted to harmonize Ismaili theology and Greek philosophy. Naser-e Khusraw's literary style is straightforward and vigorous. In his verse, he displays great technical virtuosity, while his prose is remarkable for the richness of its philosophical vocabulary. He died c. 1072/77 in Yamgan, Badakhshan, Central Asia, which is now in present-day Afghanistan.

## Sequel to Iranian graphic novel "Arshia" comes out in London

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — A sequel to Iranian writer Ashkan Rahgozar's "Arshia" was released in London on Monday. Published by Markosia, a leading UK publisher of graphic novels and comic books, "Arshia 2" is being offered by several international E-commerce companies, including Amazon and Barnes & Noble. "Arshia 1" is the story of a mysterious character born completely out of the writer's fiction. Nevertheless, the relation of this character with the Shahnameh (The Book of Kings) and ancient Iranian mythologies is quite notable as Arshia, along with the main characters, is one of the most influential and important characters in the graphic novel series "Jamshid" and the animated movie "The Last Fiction", both of which are loose



Front cover of the English version of Ashkan Rahgozar's graphic novel "Arshia 2".

adaptations of stories from the Shahnameh. The young protagonist starts his life during the rule of Tahmures, father of Jamshid, and his life comes to a close during the reign of Afaridun with the defeat of Zahak. Throughout this collection of graphic novels, the mystery around Arshia's long life is uncovered, and the number of secrets that have turned him into a mysterious character are revealed. In "Arshia 2", Arshia, after making a deal with Sawool, the giant of carnage, discloses the hideout of Ahriman to Tahmures. However, the curse of the Sawool ensnares the people, and they expel Arshia from Taham Jam, blaming him for becoming a complicit of the giants. Arshia, who has acquired a great amount of knowledge from Sawool, decides to leave

Taham Jam and find Tahmures. Nonetheless, on this perilous journey, he comes face to face with Ahriman himself, a meeting that puts his life through tumults once again. The book has been illustrated by Rasul Rezaaju and Tina Aqajani. Markosia released "Arshia 1" during November. The original Persian version of the book series was published by Hooraksh Studio, an animation studio in Tehran that produced the acclaimed movie "The Last Fiction" directed by Rahgozar. "Arshia" is appropriate for all age groups, Hooraksh announced in 2019 when the Persian version of the book came out. Earlier Markosia published Rahgozar's graphic novel series "Jamshid", which includes four books.

## Gagosian Gallery picks works by Iranian artists for "The Future"

**A R T TEHRAN** — Gagosian Gallery in New York has selected artworks by Iranian artists Mehdi Qadyanlu and Asal Peirovi for its online group exhibit "The Future". "The Future" is the sixth in a series of annual thematic exhibitions presented by the major gallery, which leads a global network of art galleries specializing in modern and contemporary art along with American art dealer Jeffrey Deitch. The exhibit opened during the Art Basel Miami Beach Fair in November 2020 and will be running until January 31. Previously staged at the historic Moore Building in the Miami Design District, this year the collaborative project will be hosted on a new stand-alone website. In his 1909 Manifesto of Futurism, Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti outlined the movement's desire to abandon the past and accelerate toward a new aesthetic and societal model. Today, contemporary artists continue to imagine what may be coming next, their approaches ranging from earnest to



"Rainbow Talks", an acrylic painting on canvas by Mehdi Qadyanlu.

tongue-in-cheek, from ardently utopian to grimly apocalyptic. Following "The Extreme Present", last year's collaborative exhibition, which focused on artists' responses to then-contemporary conditions around the world, "The Future" dares to speculate on what the coming years may have in store.

The work in "The Future" is highly diverse, reflecting myriad ways in which speculation inflects artists' theoretical and formal concerns. Some contributions focus on key moments from real or projected timelines, others evoke an atmosphere or aesthetic by extrapolating, in the manner of the best science fiction, from already familiar circumstances. In still other cases, artists use new technologies in their production processes, or explore a contrast between more traditional media and futuristic imagery or thinking. Certain artists in "The Future" reflect on, interrogate, or present alternatives to a variety of topical concerns, ranging from the environmental to the technological. It might be said that 2020 marked the start of another future, previously unimaginable, with the result being a permanently changed historical trajectory. Being in it, living through it, trying to make sense of it, the artworks in the exhibition put forth varying artistic perspectives engaged with undertaking such an endeavor.

## "The Truths We Hold" by Kamala Harris comes into Iranian bookstores

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — The first Persian translation of "The Truths We Hold: An American Journey" written by U.S. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has recently been published in Tehran. The Noon Publishing House has published the book translated into Persian by Ali-Akbar Abdorrahshidi, a former TV host. Harris's commitment to speaking the truth is informed by her upbringing. The daughter of immigrants, she was raised in an Oakland, California community that cared deeply about social justice; her parents, an esteemed economist from Jamaica and an admired cancer researcher from India, met as activists in the civil rights movement when they were graduate students at the University of California at Berkeley. Growing up, Harris herself never hid her passion for justice, and when she became a prosecutor out of law school, a deputy district

attorney, she quickly established herself as one of the most innovative change agents in American law enforcement. She progressed rapidly to become the elected District Attorney for San Francisco, and then the chief law enforcement officer of the state of California as a whole. Known for bringing a voice to the voiceless, she took on the big banks during the foreclosure crisis, winning a historic settlement for California's working families. Her hallmarks were applying a holistic, data-driven approach to many of California's thorniest issues, always eschewing stale "tough on crime". Neither "tough" nor "soft" but smart on crime became her mantra. Being smart means learning the truths that can make one better as a community, and supporting those truths with all her might. That has been the pole



Front cover of the Persian translation of Kamala Harris's book "The Truths We Hold".

from health care and the new economy to immigration, national security, the opioid crisis and accelerating inequality. By reckoning with the big challenges, drawing on the hard-won wisdom and insight from her own career and the work of those who have most inspired her, Harris offers in "The Truths We Hold" a master class in problem-solving, crisis management, and leadership in challenging times. Through the arc of her own life, on into the great work of the day, she communicates a vision of shared struggle, shared purpose and shared values. In a book rich in many fundamental truths, not the least of which is that a relatively small number of people work very hard to convince a great many that they have less in common than they actually do, but it falls upon them to look past this and get on with the good work of living within the common truth.