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Operation Headquarters come to contain coronavirus

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
With the high prevalence of the pandemic in late October 2020, the Operation Headquarters for Coronavirus Control was established, which led to significant control of the disease in the country, as the number of high-risk “red” cities reduced from over 160 to 7.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered the establishment of the Operation Headquarters for Coronavirus Control on October 22, 2020.

All approvals of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control are followed for accurate implementation and monitoring by the Operation Headquarters.

To strengthen various capabilities in the country to curb the disease, the headquarters uses all the capacities inside the country, including public and private, military and law enforcement forces and related organizations, NGOs, religious organizations, mosques, and charities.

Now after two months of the Headquarters establishment, along with the worthy efforts of physicians, nurses, and other medical staff, as well as responsible bodies, volunteer groups, and the whole nation, the epidemic is under control.

In an announcement, the Operation Headquarters for Coronavirus Control called on people to diligently implement health protocols, continue to use masks, and observe social distancing rules, and avoid family gatherings, until the complete elimination of the disease.

Plans for fighting COVID-19
Due to the high prevalence of the disease, strict COVID-19 restrictions took effect on October 26, 2020.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities underwent restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow. Another plan also went into effect on November 21, 2020, according to which all occupations, except for emergency services and basic food suppliers, get closed for two weeks in high-risk cities.

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Any pre-condition will complicate return to JCPOA: Fitzpatrick

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN – A group of experts on non-proliferation and diplomacy penned a letter to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, calling for an immediate return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. The letter, published on January 7, carries more than 50 signatures, among them is Mark Fitzpatrick, associate fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The signatories believe Trump’s “maximum pressure” policy towards Iran has “failed” and described the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal in May 2018 as a “self-inflicted wound” which has “set the U.S. on a destructive path with no easy offramp.”

Fitzpatrick, former executive director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, warns any pre-condition for a possible return of the incoming Biden administration to the JCPOA will “complicate” the situation to revive the agreement.

“Demanding additional conditions, as U.S. hawks advocate, would needlessly complicate negotiations, allowing the security situation to worsen,” Fitzpatrick tells the Tehran Times.

“A quick and clean restoration of the nuclear deal is the best way to avoid a war,” the senior analyst notes.

The following is the text of an interview with Mark Fitzpatrick:

You are among a group of experts on non-proliferation and diplomacy who penned a letter to Joe Biden and his incoming administration encouraging their immediate return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. Could you explain the motives of such a move?

A: To make a clean break from Trump’s failed Iran policy, President-elect Biden should seek a clean return to the JCPOA.

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U.S. National Guard deployed in Washington for Biden’s inauguration

As many as 15,000 National Guard troops will be deployed in the nation’s capital to ensure security during Biden’s inauguration ceremony, officials announced on Monday evening.

The deployment of thousands of National Guard troops to Washington ahead of US President-elect Joe Biden’s inauguration may disrupt the distribution of vaccines against COVID-19, Democratic Congressman Tim Ryan said.

Speaking at a virtual press conference later in the day, Ryan said that many National Guard troops were helping distribute vaccines across the United States.

“This is also probably going to take away from some of the vaccine distribution issues in some of these states where the National Guard was involved”, Ryan remarked.

The deployment of National Guard troops to Washington follows in the wake of the 6 January riots that saw supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump storm the US Capitol building. Five people

reportedly died during the clashes with police, and Ryan criticised what he called “domestic terrorists” for hindering the vaccine deployment effort.

“They are continuing to pull resources from us being able to deal with the virus and the distribution of the vaccines”, the congressman said.

Joe Biden is set to be inaugurated as US president on 20 January. Trump, who has declared a state of emergency in the nation’s capital ahead of the inauguration ceremony, has said that he will not attend the event.

Meanwhile, among the people who died as a result of the Capitol riot last week were two officers, Brian Sicknick, who was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher, and Howard Liebengood, who died of undisclosed causes.

A video published on Youtube last Wednesday has captured the moment a Capitol protester threw a fire extinguisher at a group of officers, hitting one of them in the helmet.

General Soleimani’s legacy: Unifying the Arab resistance against imperialism and hegemony

BY AMAL WAHDAN

Today, the masses of the resistance movements in the region are commemorating the first anniversary of the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani and his companion Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

General Soleimani played a major transnational role across borders and sectarian lines to unite the resistance movements in the region to enable them confront the vicious plans of the USA, Zionist and Saudi regimes to divide and

control the countries of the region.

We have to emphasize and remind the whole world of the nature of this cowardly act by the USA, the Zionist terrorist colonial regime, and the Saudi criminal state.

The assassination in its nature is an intentional and deliberate crime, a violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. It is also a violation of the sovereignty of the state of Iraq, which is a member in the United Nations. The Iranian government has every right to take this

matter to the ICC against the three countries who were involved in this crime and to the UN Security Council in addition to retaliation.

Why did the USA assassinate General Soleimani? First of all, General Soleimani was a leader in the Revolutionary Guard, then the General Commander of its Al Quds Force, which by its name considered by the USA as a threat to the Zionist colonial regime in occupied Palestine, their military base in the area.

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Roshd books festival announces winners

The closing ceremony of the 18th Roshd books festival was held at Dar ul-Fonoon historical school in Tehran on Tuesday by announcing the best self-study books in different sections.

Authors of the selected books in the fields of economics, accounting, preschool education, religions, stories for children and young adults, Persian literature, poems, social science, and screen writing were honored during the ceremony.

Gilan province expects to meet rural employment goals by fostering tribe tourism

BY AFSHIN MAJLESI

TEHRAN – Gilan authorities expect to maximize sustainable employment of rural households by the means of expanding tribe tourism across the northern Iranian province.

In this regard, a committee of experts has been formed to formulate effective factors in the sustainable employment of the rural population under an accelerated development of infrastructures linked with nomadic tourism.

Issues related to various aspects of nomadic tourism, and associated strategies to improve and re-organize the process of attracting tourists, were amongst subjects discussed during the first meeting of the committee held on Monday.

The formulation of diverse and multilingual travel packages of tribe tourism was also discussed in the meeting, which was chaired by Mahmoud Qasemi, the governor of Rezvanshahr, CHTN reported.

Creating coordination and synergy between the relevant agencies to facilitate matters was another issue accentuated at the meeting by Hamid Azarpour, the deputy provincial tourism chief.

“Cultural events and the introduction of new tourism destinations will help promote the province in various arenas, including attracting tourists and sustainable employment of rural households,” Azarpour added.

In 2019, Gilan was selected as the first province to start the country’s comprehensive tourism plan, which is being developed under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

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Iran, UN discuss war on terrorism in Syria

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The United Nations secretary-general's Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen and senior assistant to the Iranian foreign minister for special political affairs Ali-Asghar Khaji held phone talks on Monday about the fight against terrorist groups in Syria.



According to the Nasim news agency, the two sides discussed the latest developments pertaining to Syria, including the upcoming meeting of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, developments related to the Astana talks and an escalation of activities by the Daesh terrorist group in Syria.

They also reviewed the achievements of the committee in 2020 and underlined the need for the committee to keep moving forward in the year 2021.

The two officials further expressed their support for holding a fifth meeting of the committee slated to be held in late January in Geneva.

Pedersen and Khaji also voiced concern over the activities of terrorist groups, especially those of Daesh, and stressed the need to keep fighting terror, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

New warship joins Iranian Navy in Sea of Oman

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A new homegrown helicopter carrier and a missile-launching warship were delivered on Tuesday to the Iranian Navy's fleet in the Sea of Oman. The domestically-made missile-launching corvette would enhance the Navy's combat capabilities in Iran's southern waters, Mehr reported.

The "Zereh" missile launcher is one of Iran's powerful vessels with high speed and maneuverability. Zereh is the Persian name for armor.

It is equipped with advanced automatic missiles and artillery. The vessel is classified among the Paykan-class rocket launching warships.

All components of the warship have been manufactured by Navy experts.

The warship has passed all its coastal and maritime tests and is fully prepared to embark on missions.

The helicopter carrier, dubbed "Makran", has also been developed by Navy experts.

The warship joined the naval fleet in the southern coasts upon the order of the Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein.

According to Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi, other vessels in the same class will be produced in the coming years.

The Iranian Navy dispatches flotillas, involving homegrown naval gear, to international waters on a routine basis.

IRGC Navy chief: Any invasion against Iran will face harsh response

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The commander of Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy said his forces are fully prepared to defend the Iranian borders and territorial integrity, warning any threat or aggression against Iran will face a harsh response.



Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri made the remarks on the 5th anniversary of capturing 10 American marines by the IRGC Navy near the Iranian Farsi Island.

"Five years ago two American boats carrying ten marines heading for Bahrain approached the five-mile distance of Iran's Farsi Island on their way, which is within the territorial waters of the Islamic Republic, and although there were two American and French super-carriers and five other destroyers in the region, the intruding U.S. boats were seized by the brave Guard's naval forces," Fars quoted Tangsiri as saying.

On January 12, 2016, the IRGC seized two U.S. Navy boats and detained ten U.S. marines on board on Farsi Island in the Persian Gulf. The marines were captured for illegally entering into Iranian territorial waters. The IRGC freed the marines one day later.

An investigation was conducted by the IRGC right after the detention and the results showed that American marines had gone astray during their voyage in the Persian Gulf. The IRGC declared in a statement that "it has released the U.S. marines and their vessels in international waters" after it became clear that the illegal entry was not a deliberate act.

"Following technical and operational investigations and in interaction with relevant political and national security bodies of the country and after it became clear that the U.S. combat vessels' illegal entry into the Islamic Republic of Iran's waters was the result of an unintentional action and a mistake and after they extended an apology, the decision was made to release them," the statement said.

"The Americans have undertaken not to repeat such mistakes," it said, adding, "The captured marines were released in international waters."

Afghan FM: Iran playing positive role in ensuring security and creating regional consensus

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar has said Iran is playing a positive role in the region and creating regional consensus.

In a meeting with Iranian Ambassador in Kabul Bahdor Aminian on Tuesday, the Afghan foreign minister also called for continuation of Iran's constructive role in the Afghan peace talks.

Praising Tehran's policy, the Afghan foreign minister said Iran has encouraged Taliban, as an influential group in the country's security, to join the peace talks.

The peace talks between Afghanistan government and the Taliban group started on Sept. 12, 2020 with the participation of a number of foreign ministers and representatives of international organizations, which have so far only managed to agree on the agenda of the talks.

The second round of peace talks between the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban group began in the Qatari capital Doha.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Seyed Abbas Araghchi who visited Kabul in December said Iran and Afghanistan are neighbors and share common interests



and concerns. Araghchi held talks with a number of high-level talks with Afghan officials including Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's

High Council for National Reconciliation. Araghchi said peace and stability in neighboring Afghanistan directly affect Iran.

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

Iran, Afghanistan insist on closer ties

During the Tuesday meeting, Foreign Minister Atmar and Ambassador Aminian also emphasized the need to strengthen political, economic and trade ties between Iran and Afghanistan.

Iran and Afghanistan officially inaugurated the strategic Khaf-Herat railway project on December 10. The 222-kilometers-long Khaf-Herat railway is part of the Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

The project was implemented in four parts, Iran was in charge of completing three of the mentioned four parts, two of which are in the Iranian territory and the other two are on the Afghan side.

Iran exporting heavy water to 8 countries, learning lessons from U.S. past behaviors

I → "After the conclusion of the nuclear deal between Tehran and the other parties to the agreement, some countries were eve willing to invest in production of fuel required for Iranian nuclear power plants inside the country, but the Americans prevented them from doing so," he stated.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 agreement in May 2018, raising criticism from all around the world (except some of his allies in West Asia) for this unilateral action. This, along with Washington's exit from some other international treaties and leaving the World Health Organization, has brought several top politicians and officials around the world to the conclusion that the U.S. cannot be trusted as a partner or a party of any important deal, even by its most loyal allies.

For example, in an interview with the Tehran Times in December, Giorgio Cafiero, the chief executive officer of Gulf State Analytics (GSA), said, "Some Arab states in the Persian Gulf such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE supported Trump's 'maximum pressure' campaign against Iran. Yet others such as Qatar and Oman did not welcome the U.S.'s growing aggression against Iran in the Trump period. All Arab countries in the Persian Gulf have had to contend with the unpredictability and incoherence of Trump's foreign policy, which created greater doubt about the wisdom of remaining so dependent on the U.S. for security relations and prompted them to explore deeper partnerships with other powers such as China, France, Turkey, and Russia".

Some American and non-American analysts count this reckless behavior as one of the most important reasons for Trump's epic failure in 2020 presidential elections. They argue when the new administration takes office on January 20, major policy changes will emerge in regard to the JCPOA and the U.S. commitment to its content. Daryl G. Kimball, the executive director of the Arms Control Association, told the Tehran Times in December that the European Union, Germany, and the Biden administration are united in their positions that a full implementation of the Iran nuclear deal by each side is a "win-win".

"With one of the key supporters of the JCPOA entering the White House on January 20, the United States and Iran and the other parties to the agreement have an important opportunity restore compliance with the agreement, which will help restore confidence that Iran is not pursuing the development of nuclear weapons and will help provide the economic and financial relief that the Iranian people were hoping for when the JCPOA was concluded in 2015. Mr. Biden's public remarks clearly indicate that he supports

a simultaneous restoration of compliance with the terms and obligations of the JCPOA. Biden, once sworn into office, can waive the application of the nuclear-related sanctions that the United States waived when Iran implemented its obligations under the JCPOA in January 2016, as well as other duplicative sanctions imposed by the Trump administration," Kimball explained.

Despite their disagreement with some actions taken by the U.S. government, the European troika (Germany, England, and France) accompanied Trump on most of his unlawful sanctions against Iran and failed to take any serious step towards fulfilling their obligations under the JCPOA. This, regardless of whether the incoming Biden administration return to the JCPOA or not, the issue of "guarantee to commit" has been raised in academic and political circles. Many analysts believe that even if Biden decides to return to the deal there is no guarantee that a Republican administration won't quit the nuclear deal again.

For example, Shashank Joshi, a defense editor at the Economist, told the Tehran Times in December that a possible Republican administration in the U.S. is likely to breach the nuclear deal again.

"There is no guarantee the next administrations won't behave like Donald Trump's and pull out of international deals unilaterally. Iran must contend with the risk that a Republican administration in 2024 will once more walk away from a deal. The JCPOA was divisive and controversial in the United States, and there will remain strong opposition to it in the Republican Party for years to come. The lesson of the Trump era is that America is highly polarized and that diplomatic agreements may be less enduring and stable than they were in the past," Joshi said.

In another interview, Mark Dankof, a former U.S. Senate candidate, told the Tehran Times that even under Joe Biden, there will be no substantive change whatsoever in American foreign policy and Iran cannot possibly be expected to trust the United States again after the unilateral withdrawal of the Trump administration from the nuclear deal.

"The proof of this is found in his historic Zionist connections, those same connections with his running mate Kamala Harris, and the foreign policy choices Biden has made or will make, beginning with Zionist Jew Anthony Blinken. Blinken is linked to Bill Clinton's NATO war crimes in bombing Serbia in 1999, and the Obama-Hillary Clinton war crimes involved in bombing 7 Islamic countries, including Libya and Syria, where NATO was illegally used in Libya and Gaddafi was assassinated with Hillary Clinton's mocking approval, and where the United States



began using Sunni Wahabi extremists and terrorists from al-Qaeda and ISIS chapters to attempt overthrowing a sovereign government in Syria at the behest of Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey," Dankof said.

Pointing to the assassination of Iranian top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh and high ranking Iranian military official Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani as other reasons for distrust, Dankof added, "Iran cannot possibly be expected to trust the United States again after the unilateral withdrawal of the Trump administration from the JCPOA P5+1 nuclear deal, the subsequent American imposition of wartime economic sanctions on Iran, and obvious American involvement in and support for the [Gen.] Soleimani and Fakhrazadeh assassinations. I believe the more recent Fakhrazadeh murder, was undertaken by the Israeli Mossad and the MEK-MKO with full American connivance."

Iran has undertaken necessary measures to save the nuclear deal and IAEA inspectors have repeatedly confirmed that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful. Over the last couple of months, Iran has been taking five steps in scaling back its obligations, among them abandoning operational limitations on its nuclear industry, such as the level of uranium enrichment.

The most recent step was taken by Iranian Parliament in terms of a legislation which gives all parties to the JCPOA (especially the incoming U.S. administration) only two months (which ends on February 21) to fulfill their obligations under the JCPOA. Rafael Grossi, the IAEA chief, said on Monday, "We must take this seriously. Only a few weeks left to revive Iran nuclear deal."

Despite these practical steps to revive its peaceful nuclear program, several Iranian officials have repeatedly stated that Iran will come back to full compliance to its obligations under the JCPOA if all other parties to deal do so.

Iran: Renegotiating the JCPOA is out of question

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Rabiei, the spokesperson for the Rouhani government, asserted on Tuesday that a renegotiation of the 2015 nuclear deal is "impossible", stressing that the fulfillment of commitments, and no talks, is the only path forward.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Rabiei dismissed the idea raised by some Western officials about renegotiating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, saying, "Renegotiation of the JCPOA is impossible, as Iran, China and Russia have expressed their opposition (to such a suggestion)".

He also reminded the Western states that returning to the nuclear deal and fulfilling obligations do not need any negotiations, according to the Tasnim news agency.

"If the incoming U.S. administration abandons its predecessor's policies, the parties can honor the JCPOA



without the need for renegotiation," Rabiei added. Under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the

JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

However, the outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the JCPOA unilaterally in May 2018 and imposed harshest ever sanctions against Iran in line with his administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran.

The nuclear deal was signed when president-elect Joe Biden was acting as vice president under the Obama administration. However, as hopes have been raised for a revitalization the multilateral deal under the incoming Biden administration, some Western officials and figures like German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger have been pushing for revising the text of the deal.

Pompeo meets with Mossad chief ahead of anti-Iran speech: report

Outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has reportedly been spotted dining with Yossi Cohen, head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, at a café in Washington ahead of a planned anti-Iran speech by the top U.S. diplomat.

The White House reporter for U.S.-based POLITICO broke the news in a tweet published on Monday night.

The meeting came one day before Pompeo's televised speech at the National Press Club in Washington, where he reportedly plans to use what is said to be "declassified U.S. intelligence" to publicly accuse Iran of

ties with the al-Qaeda militant group, an allegation roundly rejected by Tehran.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters that Pompeo is expected to claim that Iran has given safe haven to al-Qaeda leaders despite skepticism within the intelligence community and Congress.

He could cite the information on what the U.S. and Israel claim to be the killing of al-Qaeda's suspected second-in-command in Tehran last year, they added.

Citing unnamed intelligence officials, The

New York Times claimed last November that Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, the al-Qaeda's second-in-command who went by the nom de guerre Abu Muhammad al-Masri, had been gunned down by two armed assassins on a motorcycle in northern Tehran in August.

The paper said al-Masri, who had been charged with helping to mastermind the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa, had been killed in Iran by Israeli operatives acting at the behest of the United States.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the report was based on

"false information," rejecting the presence of any of the terrorist group's members in the country.

Underlining that the al-Qaeda has been the brainchild of the United States and its allies' wrong policies, he stressed, "From time to time, Iran's foes — the United States and Israel — try to shirk responsibility for the criminal acts of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups in the region and link Iran to such outfits by lying and leaking false information to the media."

(Source: Press TV)

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran has not benefited from the 2015 nuclear deal and that it is not in a rush to get the United States to return to the nuclear deal because if the U.S. is to return to the deal without lifting its sanctions, it is Washington, not Tehran, that will benefit from the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In a dossier on the JCPOA, the Website of the Leader's office made interviews with several high-ranking Iranian officials to discuss the latest developments regarding the nuclear deal and a possible U.S. return to it. Ali Akbar Velayati, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on international affairs, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Saeed Jalili, the former nuclear negotiator, Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and Kamal Kharrazi, the head of Iran's Council on Foreign Relations are among the officials that were interviewed by the website, which has published only a few of the interviews.

The common theme between the interviews is that the U.S. must lift its sanctions on Iran before rejoining the JCPOA because if the U.S. returns to the deal without the lifting of sanctions, Iran will gain nothing. On the contrary, the U.S. will once again achieve the status of being a "JCPOA participant," which enables the U.S. to trigger the so-called snapback mechanism.

"After [UN Security Council] Resolution 2231, a U.S. participation in the JCPOA is useful only if it includes economic advantages for Iran. Through [Resolution] 2231, the Islamic Republic has achieved its goal with the U.S. participation in the JCPOA. In other words, the (sanctions) resolutions have been terminated. [But] now the U.S. can gain this concession by rejoining the JCPOA. This is not a concession that the U.S. will give us. Rather, it is a concession that the U.S. can get for itself, which means that the U.S. can monitor the implementation of the JCPOA. Therefore, the U.S. return to the JCPOA without the lifting of sanctions will not only not be in our interests, but it will be a sheer interest for the U.S.," Zarif told khamenei.ir.

Velayati echoed a similar view, saying that the U.S. must lift the sanctions if it wants to rejoin the JCPOA.

"We do not insist on the U.S. return and we're not in a rush for such a thing but if it wants to return, there are certain conditions,



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the most important of which is for the U.S. to lift the sanctions and make it clear that the new administration is living up to its obligations.... Therefore, if the U.S. wants to return to the JCPOA, it must end the sanctions, and of course, we do not insist on this return; if it wants to return then it can return, and if it doesn't want to return then it can stay out of the deal. If they want to return, they must fulfill our conditions that are quite reasonable and make up for the shortcomings of the past," Velayati stated.

Iran has made it clear that it is not eagerly waiting for the U.S. to return to the JCPOA. During his recent televised speech, the Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said that Iran is focusing on the lifting of the sanctions, not the U.S. return to the nuclear deal.

"The first point is the discussion about whether the U.S. should return to the Barjam or not. We do not at all insist on this and we are in no rush for the U.S. to return to it. Our

issue is not at all if the U.S. will return to that deal or not. Our reasonable and logical demand is the lifting of sanctions. Sanctions should be lifted. This is a right that has been taken from the Iranian nation, whether by the U.S. or by the Europeans – who are tied to the U.S.'s apron strings and who follow that country," the Leader said. "They are obliged to grant this right to the Iranian nation. Only if sanctions are lifted, will the U.S.'s return to Barjam have a meaning."

Barjam is the Persian acronym for the JCPOA.

The Leader also pointed out that Iran does not see a U.S. return to the JCPOA without the lifting of the sanctions as a concession. In reality, such a return would be to Iran's disadvantage, Ayatollah Khamenei remarked.

"If sanctions are not supposed to be lifted, then its return to the JCPOA might even be to our disadvantage. Not only will it not be to our advantage, but it will also be to our disadvantage. Of course, I have told officials,

both in the executive and legislative branches, that they should move forward in a careful manner and by observing all the necessary steps," the Leader stated.

It remains to be seen whether the incoming Biden administration would lift the U.S. sanctions on Iran before rejoining the JCPOA. President-elect Joe Biden has said many times, before and after the November election, that he will return the U.S. to the Iran nuclear deal. But he did not say how he will rejoin the deal, whether he would lift sanctions before rejoining the deal.

Last year in September, Biden said in an op-ed for CNN that he will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, Biden wrote, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. Biden reaffirmed this position after he won the November election. But he also implied that he will raise other non-nuclear issues such as Iran's missile program, which the Europeans have already raised. Americans and Europeans have called for a new round of talks with Iran to expand the existing deal and fix its alleged flaws.

Iran responded to this new demand by saying that there would be no negotiations on the missile issue. And now Iran has also implied that it wants to fix the deal's flaws that the West never raised.

Velayati pointed to some flaws of the deal, saying that the JCPOA was not signed by the U.S. president at the time. He said the Leader had demanded a written commitment from then-President Barack Obama that the U.S. would implement its JCPOA commitments. But the U.S. refused to make such a commitment and rather it provided an oral one, which was later reneged on.

Velayati also said that Iran is not satisfied with the so-called snapback mechanism within the JCPOA. According to Velayati, the Leader was not content with this mechanism right from the start, but the mechanism was built into the JCPOA despite his discontent.

"If there is to be new negotiations, this mechanism must be certainly removed as an illogical provision," Velayati said.

The snapback mechanism is a legal mechanism built into the JCPOA which allows a "JCPOA participant state" to restore all UN sanctions on Iran in case it didn't uphold its obligations under the nuclear deal.

All participants should focus on resolving JCPOA problems, Russia says

Ulyanov warns: 'All of us are in one boat'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A senior Russian diplomat has called on all parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to focus on resolving the deal's problems instead of creating new ones.

The diplomat, Mikhail Ulyanov, pointed to the disagreement between Iran and the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"For a long time E-3, on the one hand, and Iran, on the other, refer to Dispute Resolution Mechanism. It is counter-productive," tweeted Ulyanov, who is Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna.

The Russian diplomat noted that all stakeholders of the JCPOA should work to settle differences over the deal.

"All of us are in one boat. We should focus on how to settle the existing problems and should not create new ones.



This applies to all JCPOA participants," Ulyanov continued. The tweet came after Iran and the E3 exchanged accusations over violating the terms of the JCPOA.

Iran has said that the E3 did not uphold its obligations

under the nuclear deal and that they are complicit in violating the JCPOA alongside the U.S.

"We have a big problem with some European countries which is that some European countries, as signatories and participants to the JCPOA, had definite obligations. Unfortunately, not only did they fail to fulfill their obligations, but they were America's partners in violating the JCPOA," Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Monday.

On the same day, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell issued a declaration on the JCPOA on behalf of the EU accusing Iran of taking steps that are inconsistent with the terms of the JCPOA, an accusation Iran firmly denied. Iran has said that its nuclear measures are being adopted in accordance with the terms of the deal.

EU reaffirms support for JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, issued a declaration on Monday on behalf of the EU's position regarding the Iran nuclear deal expressing support for the agreement.

"The EU reiterates its strong commitment to and continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The JCPOA is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and an achievement of multilateral diplomacy, endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council through resolution 2231," the chief EU diplomat said.

Borrell also expressed concern over steps taken by Iran over the last two years, especially its recent move to raise the level of uranium enrichment to up to 20%.

Iran has gradually reduced its nuclear commitments in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, and the European inaction in countering the U.S. sanctions on Iran thereafter. Iran increased the stockpile of its low-enriched uranium, resumed enrichment activities in the Fordow fuel enrichment plant, and most recently raised the level of uranium enrichment to 20%.

Iran started to reduce its commitments exactly one year after the U.S. left the JCPOA. At the time Iran said its "strategic patience" was over. However, Iran insisted if the remaining members of the nuclear agreement, especially Europeans, shield Iran from U.S. sanctions it will immediately reverse its decision. But it did not happen.

Borrell claimed that all these activities are inconsistent with Iran's JCPOA commitments and a matter of concern.

"We deeply regret the worrying steps taken by Iran over the last two years and recall that the EU has repeatedly called on Iran to reverse all actions that are inconsistent with Iran's JCPOA commitments. The initiation of uranium enrichment to up to 20% by Iran at the underground Fordow Fuel Enrichment

Plant, which was confirmed by the IAEA on 4 January, is a very serious development and a matter of deep concern. Iran's action is also inconsistent with the JCPOA's clear provisions on Fordow and has potentially severe proliferation implications," he said. Borrell added, "At this critical juncture, Iran's action also risks undermining efforts aimed at building upon the existing diplomatic process. We urge Iran to refrain from further escalation and reverse this course of action without delay. Continued full and timely cooperation with the IAEA remains critical."

The top EU diplomat pointed out that "The EU has upheld its JCPOA commitments, including regarding sanctions lifting as foreseen in the Agreement. Despite the severe challenges to the JCPOA, the EU has continued to work hard to preserve it."

But Borrell didn't say what the EU has done to preserve the JCPOA other than issuing political statements and declarations.

Referring to the recent JCPOA ministerial meeting, Borrell voiced "support for the ongoing diplomatic efforts in the framework of the Joint Commission, with the EU High Representative as its coordinator, to ensure full JCPOA implementation."

"In this context, we also express our support to intensive diplomacy with the goal of facilitating a US return to the JCPOA and Iran's return to full JCPOA implementation," he continued.

At the end of his declaration, Borrell expressed hope to work with the incoming U.S. administration, which according to Borrell, has issued "positive statements on the JCPOA."

Borrell's declaration came at a time when Iran is criticizing the Europeans for their failure to implement their commitments under the Iran nuclear deal. On the same day that Borrell issued his declaration, the spokesman for Iran Foreign Ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh, leveled criticism at the Europeans for their track record on the JCPOA.

Iran has a "big problem" with the Europeans, said Khatibzadeh, adding that they use palliatives to kill the pain instead of treating the disease itself.

"We have a big problem with some European countries which is that some European countries, as signatories and participants to the JCPOA, had definite obligations. Unfortunately, not only did they fail to fulfill their obligations, but they were America's partners in violating the JCPOA," the spokesman lamented.

According to Khatibzadeh, the Europeans are using palliatives to treat the fever of disease, not the disease itself. "Treating the disease is possible by fully implementing commitments. The day Europe and America return to the implementation of their commitment, we will also return to the full implementation of our commitments. Effective implementation in exchange for effective implementation."

Khatibzadeh was responding to a recent statement by the three European signatories to the JCPOA –France, Germany and the UK (E3)- in which they expressed concern over Iran's decision to resume 20% uranium enrichment at Fordow.

"We are deeply concerned by the commencement by Iran on the 4th of January of uranium enrichment up to 20% at the underground facility of the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant. This action, which has no credible civil justification and carries very significant proliferation-related risks, is in clear violation of Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and further hollows out the Agreement," the E3 said in a statement.

Khatibzadeh hit back at the E3 statement, saying that Iran's decision was consistent with the terms of the nuclear deal.

"These countries are better aware that what is being done today by Iran to reduce its obligations is in accordance with the JCPOA and within the framework of the



JCPOA and under Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA. Iran's actions are intended to maintain the JCPOA," Khtibzadeh said, noting, "Most importantly, these three European countries know better what is happening in Iran is a sign of a disease and a problem, not the root of a problem. What Iran is doing is a response to the root of the big problem, which is the repetitive and complete violation of the JCPOA in terms of lifting sanctions by the United States and Europe."

"If the European countries want to reverse Iran's actions, which are all reversible and can be easily and quickly reversed, it is better for these countries to return to the fulfillment of their obligations and cure the root cause of the violation of the agreement by the Europeans," he added.

Iran has called on the E3 to honor their JCPOA commitments on many occasions. But the Europeans did nothing to implement their obligations under the deal and kept accusing Iran of violating the terms of the deal instead.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said if all sides live up to their commitments, Tehran will immediately reverse its decision in enriching uranium to 20 percent.

"We resumed 20% enrichment, as legislated by our Parliament. IAEA has been duly notified. Our remedial action conforms fully with Para 36 of JCPOA, after years of non-compliance by several other JCPOA participants. Our measures are fully reversible upon FULL compliance by ALL," Zarif said in a tweet on January 4.

SPORTS

Esteghlal defender Hrvoje Milic leaves Iran

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team defender Hrvoje Milic left Tehran early Tuesday in protest of his lack of playing time.

The 31-year-old player had been sidelined by Esteghlal coach Mahmoud Fekri for several matches.

"Now, it's not a good time to interview but I returned to Croatia with a heart full of sorrow. I have always done my duty and I have been always committed to Esteghlal's shirt," Milic said.

The left back, who is suspected of doping, has left Tehran Tuesday morning to return his country.

The local media have reported that Esteghlal have failed to meet their financial commitment.



"Sports diplomacy" can reduce political conflicts: Alireza Delkhosh

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Alireza Delkhosh, the director of Foreign Ministry's Department for Public Diplomacy, says that "sports diplomacy" can reduce political conflicts and it can bring the countries closer together.

In the International Sports Diplomacy Conference held in Tehran on Tuesday, Delkhosh said the sport is an appealing concept for public and it's easy to talk about that but reaching the goals in the field has its own complexities.

"In the contemporary history of Iran, some political conflicts have been resolved through the sports capacities. The nations, regardless of their political beliefs, stand together," Delkhosh said.

"Diplomacy is an art and sports diplomacy means bringing the countries closer together. Regardless of anyone's political party, race, religion or beliefs, sport is a great way to bring people closer together with any point of view," he added.

Sport is a good way for the countries to stable their positions at the world, he added.

"The potential of sport should be actualized and it should not be limited to football. It must bring peace between nations and we should not see any challenge between the countries after the end of the competitions.

"We have to improve our relations with the other countries through the sport since it can be the voice of a nation. We have to be able to have a greater influence via sports diplomacy, as a tool of soft power, and we can achieve political goals by sports," Delkhosh added.

"Cultural and sports diplomacy are closely related, and if we can develop our sports cooperation with the different countries, there will definitely be a better condition for improving relational interactions," the director of Foreign Ministry's Department for Public Diplomacy concluded.

Naft Masjed Solyman join IPL top seven

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Naft Masjed Soleyman joined Iran Professional League favorites after defeating Shahr Khodro in Matchday 11 of the competition on Tuesday.

Mojtaba Hosseini's team defeated visiting Shahr Khodro 3-1 at the Behnam Mohammadi Stadium.

Sasan Hosseini was on target twice and Mohammadmehdi Mohhebi also scored for Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Amin Ghaseminejad pulled a goal back for Shahr Khodro in the final minutes of the match.

The victory helped Naft Masjed Soleyman move to IPL top seven. Sanat Naft lead the table with 21 points, six points ahead of Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Amol Haraz move top of Iran Volleyball Super league

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Urmia Shahrdiri suffered their successive two losses to drop to the third position, as Amol Haraz claimed a crucial win to move atop the standings of the Iran Men's Super Volleyball League, iranvolleyball.com reported.

Amol Labaniat stole the show in Week 20 following their dramatic 3-1 (25-17 18-25 25-18 25-19) win over Qazvin Shahrdiri. Week 18 leaders Urmia Shahrdiri, which succumbed to their loss to Yazd Shahdad in Week 19 to be relegated to the second place, suffered another loss as they went down 1-3 (18-25, 21-25, 25-21, 21-25) to Gonbad Shahrdiri. Sirjan Foulad and Sepahan Foulad rested in the fifth week of this away round.

Six matches were held in Week 20 at two halls – Volleyball Federation Hall and Volleyball House of Tehran, with Gonbad Shahrdiri, Tehran Saipa, Yazd Shahdad, Amol Haraz Labaniat, Ramsar Housan and Varamin Shahrdiri pulling out impressive wins.

Amol Haraz Labaniat surged to the top of the standings after Week 20, while Sepahan Foulad, and Urmia Shahrdiri came in second and third places respectively.

The preliminary matches in Week 21 will take place on Wednesday, January 13, at Volleyball Federation Hall and Volleyball House of Tehran.

Iran's Etedadi, Tayebi shortlisted for World's Best Player

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian players Fatemeh Etedadi and Hossein Tayebi have been nominated for the Best Futsal Players in the World.

Etedadi, who currently plays at Iranian club Mes Rafsanjan, along with nine other stars of international women futsal will try to reach the top.

Sport Lisboa e Benfica player Tayebi will also vie with nine candidates to win the award in the men's section.

The Futsal Planet website, which introduces the nominees for receiving the best awards in the futsal world at the end of each year, has put the name of the Iranian players among the top 10 nominees in each category to receive the best player award this year.

Iran-Iraq annual trade to reach \$20b

1 → He also underlined the development of transportation lines between the two countries as an important factor in the development of trade relations between the two countries and added: “We are ready to implement the previous agreements in the fields of electricity, gas and water, and to formulate new agreements in this field in order to develop cooperation between the two countries.”



Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian (L) and Iraqi Trade Minister Alla Ahmed Al-Jubouri at the 4th Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.

The official further called for signing agreements for cooperation in other fields including double taxation, investment, preferential tariffs and customs.

Ardakanian also mentioned the positive political relations between the two countries as a base for boosting economic relations.

He expressed hope that with the efforts of the two countries’ governments and businessmen, the development of trade and economic relations between the two sides will become smoother and the talks in the Joint Economic Committee meeting will lead to the signing of documents to develop bilateral cooperation.

Further in the meeting, Al-Jubouri emphasized the significance of modern technologies in the development of economic relations between the countries, and said: “In today’s world, the digital economy is very important and the existing obstacles and problems in the way of the development of economic relations between the two countries can be overcome accordingly.”

According to Al-Jubouri, the presence of a high-ranking Iraqi delegation at the two countries’ Joint Economic Committee meeting is an indication of Iraq’s determination for boosting cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to identify and eliminate existing obstacles in the way of the two sides’ trade development and to take the necessary measures.

“Given the important relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, both countries can help each other by sharing their experiences and technical knowledge to have good cooperation on important economic issues,” he stressed.

Attended by political and economic officials from the two countries as well as the representatives of the two sides’ private sectors the fourth Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee meeting kicked off in Tehran on Tuesday and will wrap up on Wednesday.

Monthly red meat output increases 27%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**- Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that production of red meat in Iran stood at 36,200 tons in the ninth month of the current Iranian calendar year (November 21-December 20, 2020), showing 27 percent growth compared to the same month in the past year, while 3.5 percent fall compared to the previous month in this year.

The SCI’s report said that beef and veal had the lion’s share in the country’s red meat output during the ninth month with 20,400 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 12,400 tons, goat meat with 2,700 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 709 tons.

The head of Iran’s Livestock Provision Council has called on the government to purchase the red meat at guaranteed prices to support the producers.

Mansour Pourian also recommended the exports of livestock to support the producers while bring foreign revenue for the country.



Saying that the purchase of red meat at guaranteed prices started in the country in the middle of the fourth Iranian calendar month of Tir (early July, 2020), Pourian announced that 4,000 tons of red meat have been purchased in this way by the State Livestock Affairs Logistics Company since then.

The purchase of red meat at guaranteed prices is already done in 15 provinces, including Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, Gilan, Alborz, Yazd, Isfahan, Fars, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khuzestan, East Azarbaijan, and Semnan, he said, adding that it will be then conducted in the other provinces as well.

Iran’s deputy agriculture minister, Morteza Rezaei, has said that the total production of red and chicken meat is expected to reach 3.5 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

He said red meat production will reach 880,000 tons, while chicken meat output is expected to reach 2.7 million tons.

“Considering the measures taken, the egg production will reach 1,650,000 tons, the honey output will reach 113,000 tons, and the production of fresh silk cocoons will reach 1,650,000 tons”, the official added.

Pointing to the per capita consumption of protein products in the country, Rezaei said: “Currently the per capita consumption of red meat is 12.5 kilograms, chicken meat 31.25 kilograms, raw milk 124 kilograms, eggs 11.72 kilograms and honey 1.35 kilograms.”

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after.

However, the consumption per person is around a third of what is normally seen in countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in Islamic law.

The major part of Iran’s red meat imports comes from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they comply with religious rules.

Kyrgyzstan eager for transit of goods via Iran’s southern ports

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Kyrgyzstan **d e s k** is keen on using Iran’s southern ports for transiting commodities, the Kyrgyz Ambassador to Tehran Avazbek Abdrazakov said.

Abdrazakov made the remarks in a meeting with Managing Director of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad on Tuesday.

In the meeting, the ambassador noted that due to the closure of the border between China and Kyrgyzstan, the transit of goods through the southern ports of Iran to the Sarakhs-Kyrgyzstan border in the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan Razavi is of considerable importance and it is hoped that this capacity can be used.

Rastad for his part said Iran is ready to promote its ports, maritime, and training capacities in order to develop mutual cooperation with Kyrgyzstan.

“Thanks to the active presence of operators and suitable equipment in the north and south of Iran, it will be possible to present services with the highest quality and the least



cost,” Rastad said.

Referring to the development of the strategic port of Chabahar and the launch

of the Zahedan-Chabahar railway project in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, the official said Chabahar has a

great capacity to transit goods to Central Asian countries (CIS) including Kyrgyzstan.

Touching upon the 2016 Chabahar agreement between Iran, India, and Afghanistan, Rastad said this MOU does not mean that the agreement is limited to the three countries, other states can also join it to make use of its capacities.

Chabahar, as Iran’s only oceanic port, plays an important role in developing the country’s trade, transit, exports, and imports.

Back in July 2020, Iran officially launched the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) corridor by sending two cargoes from Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas to Kyrgyzstan.

According to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Director of Transit Bureau Mostafa Ayati, the KTAI Corridor was established as a short and alternative route for sending goods from Iran’s southern ports to Central Asian countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the most economical route for the transit of goods to CIS due to shorter access to open waters.

Government supports stock market: VP

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s First Vice President **d e s k** Es’haq Jahangiri stressed that the stock market is an independent body, but the government always supports it.

The government has a duty to support the stock market and do its best to address the concerns of shareholders and prevent them from being harmed, the official emphasized.

“The government does not want and should not interfere in the rules, regulations and mechanisms of the stock market, at the same time, people should pay attention to its economic mechanisms in order to enter this market and pay attention to the opinions and advice of experts in this due”, Jahangiri noted.

Stating that the stock market mechanism is a purely economic mechanism, the official said: “The decisions of the Supreme National Security Council are valid for the government and the government’s mission at this time is to support these decisions and rational methods because at the current stage the stock market has shown that it can be a good place to finance public and private enterprises.”

Last week, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand said that the stock market is now on the right

track and has reached a stage that can be trusted in terms of performance.

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

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

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

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

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

Regarding the continuation of the stock market trend in the



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

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

Tehran hosting intl. water, electricity exhibits

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 20th **d e s k** International Electricity Exhibition (IEE) and the 16th International Water and Wastewater Exhibition of Iran kicked off on Tuesday at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds in a ceremony attended by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

As IRNA reported, Iraqi Trade Minister Alla Ahmed Al-Jubouri also attended the opening ceremony.

The mentioned exhibitions which were scheduled to be held during October 29-November 1, 2020 had been postponed due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Over 275 domestic and foreign companies are participating in the mentioned exhibitions, of which 200 exhibitors are present in the IEE expo and more than 75 companies are



participating in the water and wastewater exhibition.

In the specialized exhibition of Iran’s electricity industry, a wide range of commodities and services in the fields of lighting, wire and cable, panels, electrical equipment, automation and instrumentation systems,

transmission lines, employers, consultants, and contractors are being showcased.

Also in the 16th specialized exhibition of water and wastewater industry, the exhibitors are showcasing their latest products and services in the fields of polymer pipes and fittings, treatment, filtration and desalination, metal pipes and fittings and valves, measuring systems, and laboratory equipment, industrial equipment, and etc.

Iran’s International Water and Wastewater Exhibition, and the IEE exhibition, as the largest industrial and commercial events in Iran in their sectors, are held annually with the presence of a large number of capable domestic and foreign companies in the field of electricity, as well as water and wastewater industries.

The exhibitions are a great opportunity

for companies active in these industries, to showcase their achievements and products to the experts and people involved in the mentioned fields, and to direct their future activities and innovations by considering the market demand trends and the direction of growth of this industry.

Due to the special conditions caused by the pandemic, almost all exhibitions scheduled for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2020) have been postponed.

Recently, however, since the pandemic condition has been once again controlled and its second wave is almost contained, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control and the Health Ministry have approved the holding of some events and exhibitions in accordance with health and safety protocols.

Production of 6 major mining products up 16% in 9 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The production of six major **d e s k** mining industry products has increased by an average of 16 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), the latest data released by Iran’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry show.

Based on the mentioned data, during the first nine months of this year, production of crude steel and steel products, copper cathode, cement, aluminum ingots, as well as alumina increased compared to the same period in the previous year.

As reported, aluminum ingots had the highest growth rate among the products in the mentioned period with a 51.2 percent rise, followed by cement, copper cathode, steel products, and alumina, with 14.8, 11.2, 9.5, and 8.3 percent increase respectively.

The production of aluminum ingots stood at 308,200 tons in the said nine months, while in the same period last year, 203,800 tons of this product were produced.

As for cement, in the current year’s nine-month period 53.606 million tons of cement were produced compared



to the 46.691 million for the previous year’s same period.

The lowest production growth rate was reported for alumina, with 175,300 tons of the commodity produced in the mentioned time span compared to 172,100 tons in the previous year’s same period.

The country’s steel products output increased from 17.53 million tons in the first nine months of the last year to 19.199

million tons in the same period this year. The production of steel ingots also rose from 19.986 million to 21.68 million in the period under review.

Iran is the tenth-largest steelmaker in the world and the country’s steel ingot production capacity is expected to reach 55 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (begins on March 21, 2025).

According to the Industry Mining, and Trade Ministry, the mining sector accounted for 25 percent of the country’s non-oil revenues in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries in the world in which 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper, zinc, and iron; so there are numerous large, medium, and small-sized mines across the country that are being operated by the government or the private sector.

So, the country has set a new target for further development of its mining sector as the country’s economy is moving away from oil toward becoming oil-independent.

Iran’s crude steel output rises 13% in 11 months yr/yr: WSA

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of crude steel (steel **d e s k** ingot) in Iran has risen 13 percent during January-November, 2020, according to a report released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

It is while the crude steel output in the world has decreased 1.3 percent in the mentioned time span, IRNA reported.

The WSA’s report said that Iran has produced 26.369 million tons of crude steel during the 11-month period of 2020, while the figure was 23 million tons in the same time span of 2019.

The country’s monthly crude steel output stood at 2.575 million tons in November 2020, rising 14 percent from 2.256 million tons in November 2019.

Meanwhile, the recent data released by the Iranian sources show that production of steel ingot in the country has increased 8.3 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.

Over 21.65 million tons of steel ingot was produced during the nine-month

period of the present year, while the figure was 19.98 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Production of steel ingot in Iran is expected to surpass 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20), Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili has announced.

Saying that Iran is currently the world’s 10th biggest steel producer, the official underscored that the country is planning to rise to 8th place by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).



Any pre-condition will complicate return to JCPOA: Fitzpatrick

➔ Demanding additional conditions, as U.S. hawks advocate, would needlessly complicate negotiations, allowing the security situation to worsen, and would make it appear as though Biden was prolonging Trump's failed policy. I did not draft the letter; if I had, I would have clarified that restoration of U.S. commitments should be on the basis of "compliance for compliance." It would be difficult for Biden to return to the JCPOA if Iran is still violating its provisions. But I wholeheartedly support the call for immediate action to revive diplomat channels. Quick and clean restoration of the nuclear deal is the best way to avoid a war. A quick return to the JCPOA would also restore American credibility and the prospects for a diplomatic solution to other issues of concern.

You believe the Trump administration's policy towards Iran has "failed" and the U.S. exit from JCPOA in May 2018 was a "self-inflicted wound", while Trump has described the JCPOA as a real "catastrophe" for the U.S. What were the advantages of U.S. commitment to the nuclear deal?

The JCPOA was advantageous to the U.S. because it rolled back Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities and provided for expanded monitoring to detect and thereby deter cheating. Informally, the deal also provided a basis for the U.S. to engage with Iran on other issues of concern, including Iran's interventions (presence) in Syria and Yemen. Trump's abrupt withdrawal was a self-inflicted wound because Iran was in full compliance with the deal at the time, and now it has exceeded all of the limits on uranium enrichment.

Do you expect Biden to return to the JCPOA without any pre-conditions? It seems that any pre-condition may hamper reaching an understanding.



I have no inside information about the incoming administration's plans, but I believe Biden will be inclined to return to the deal without preconditions. The most definitive statement of his Iran policy was a 13 September commentary on CNN.com, in which he said would re-join the accord if Iran returned to strict compliance with the deal. Relatedly, he would work to strengthen and extend the JCPOA's provisions, while also addressing other issues of U.S. concern. I took this to mean that improving the accord

and dealing with the other issues could come after the deal is first restored. Many of the capable people whom Biden has chosen for his administration worked on the JCPOA and know very well that adding conditions would prolong and overly complicate the effort to restore it.

Don't you think that Trump may ignite a war in his last days of presidency under the pretext of Iran's nuclear program? Is he authorized to take such a step?

"Assassinating Fakhrizadeh had no legal basis or strategic purpose. I believe it was intended to provoke Iran into taking retaliatory action that would impede Biden's ability to restore the JCPOA."

President Trump has conflicting impulses in this regard. On one hand, he is an isolationist who has sought to avoid engaging the United States in foreign wars. On the other hand, he sees Iran as an arch-enemy and he may think, delusionally, that creating a crisis by attacking Iran's nuclear facilities could somehow keep him in office.

Many Democrats and security experts would say he does not have the authority to do this because the U.S. Constitution reserves to Congress the right to declare war. But this Constitutional provision has been weakened over the years, and Trump would probably claim that a 2001 Congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force against perpetrators of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks gives him the authority to launch strikes.

One debatable legal rationale would be that Iran has harbored members of Al Qaeda. While I do not rule out anything, I do not think Trump in his remaining few days in office would launch an attack, especially after the trouble he got into by instigating an insurrection to try to stop the January Congressional certification of Biden's Electoral College victory.

How do you assess repercussions of U.S.-Israeli moves against Iran, especially after the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh?

Assassinating Fakhrizadeh had no legal basis or strategic purpose. I believe it was intended to provoke Iran into taking retaliatory action that would impede Biden's ability to restore the JCPOA. Iran wisely refrained from lethal retaliation, although its moves in other areas, such as increasing uranium enrichment to 20% and seizing a Korean oil tanker, will further complicate diplomatic efforts to restore the JCPOA and relax tensions.

Pakistan must limit extremists' activities: security expert

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — An Indian security expert advises Pakistan to limit extremists toeing the Wahhabi line, saying extremist thoughts have been ingrained into some segments of the population in Pakistan by vocal and powerful clerics.

Early Sunday, armed men abducted and killed at least 11 coal miners in southwestern Pakistan. All the victims were attributed to ethnic Hazaras, a minority Shia group that has often been the target of Wahhabi extremists.

Officials said the events took place in Machh, a small mining town in Baluchistan Province about 30 miles east of Quetta, the provincial capital.

Over decades Pakistan has been witnessing violence against religious minorities, especially Shias by extremist groups chiefly funded and trained by Saudi Arabia.

The United States, India and Afghanistan have long accused Pakistan of providing safe havens to terror groups like the Taliban, the Haqqani network, the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

However, Prime Minister Imran Khan has tried to make some reforms since he came to power in 2018, saying there are no "safe havens" for terror groups in Pakistan.

Asked about the message of this terrorist action the security expert tells the Tehran Times that "the killings indicate that the Pakistani government has never been serious enough of protecting its minorities, whether they are Shias, Ahmadiyyas, Hindus, or Christians."

"Minorities are targeted at will and hardly have the killers been brought to book," Maj. Gen. Harsha Kakar says.

While human rights organizations say these killings

are due to the failure of the government and security forces, the Indian analyst notes that "it is deplorable and the government must be taken to task. Pakistan seeks close relations with Iran, which is the global protector of Shias, but at the same time refuses to protect their communities."

Meanwhile, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has said, "We are taking steps to prevent such attacks in the future."

"I want to reassure the Hazara families who lost their loved ones in a brutal terrorist attack in Machh that I am cognizant of their suffering and their demands," the Pakistani prime minister said in a tweet he published on January 6.

Islamabad's move to limit extremists' activities would show that it is going to review its religious ties with Saudi Arabia.

The maximum number of terrorist groups proscribed by UN Security Council are active in Pakistan. In Baluchistan where these killings happened, locals claim that there is the highest presence of security forces.

"Yet if they did take place and Pak has failed to target the group, it displays it is unwilling to act against them as those targeted were not the majority Sunnis. This is neither the first attack on minority Shias nor will be the last," the major general remarks.

Nevertheless, the hatred against the Shia minority is deep-rooted culturally in societies like Pakistan which has been subjected to Saudi-funded Wahhabi education and the Pakistani government has a long road ahead to reform its educational system and get rid of the impact left by the Saudis.

While the Wahhabi teachings state that Shias are pagan, "the recent anti-Shia protest in Karachi, which was officially



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan visits Quetta, meets families of slain Hazara miners

permitted, displays the country's mindset," Kakar argues. "No member of the government criticized the protests and stated they were wrong. It has a long way to go before it reforms as a responsible global nation which protects its citizens, despite their beliefs and religion."

He says while Imran Khan blames neighboring countries for exploiting the sectarian terrorism, there is no evidence for such a claim.

"They throw the blame on others. Invariably, they blame India and Afghanistan. Ironically, no nation accepts their logic and blame," the security expert says.

Kakar concludes that "in Pakistan, extremist thoughts have been ingrained into the public by their vocal and powerful clerics, toeing the Wahhabi line. No funding is needed now, as these thoughts have been too deeply ingrained."

General Soleimani's legacy: Unifying the Arab resistance against imperialism and hegemony

➔ Second, for his extraordinary role in assisting the Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah, who was at war with the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon and was able to liberate the South in the May of 2000 with the great help of Iran and Soleimani. He continued to assist through the 2006 Israeli aggression against Lebanon until his assassination. Today, the Lebanese resistance movement has advanced its military and logistic capabilities by almost 100 times since 2000 and 2006.

Third is General Soleimani's role in promoting the Palestinian resistance in the Gaza Strip without any factional or sectarian discrimination. His strategy was to work with all Islamic and secular resistance organizations who share the ability and fit to fight a long term struggle against the Israeli occupation, "the absolute evil", as described by him, until liberation and independence. It was General Soleimani who took the decision with Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah to negotiate with President



Bashar Al Assad to provide the Palestinian resistance with Cornet missiles and he took responsibility to deliver them to Gaza in 2005 which was the cornerstone in deterring military aggression. He transformed the Palestinian resistance to an advanced level.

Fourth, General Soleimani played a great

military role in the joint operation room against FSA, ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra through the 10 years of the terrorist war against Syria. He fought hand in hand with the Syrian Arab Army and Hezbollah fighters, provided them with training, ammunition, and supplies.

Fifth, General Soleimani also played a great role in assisting the Iraqi resistance movement regardless of their religious or political backgrounds. He helped uniting the different groups under one umbrella: the popular brigades (Hashd al-Shaabi). He provided them with training, munitions, supplies and logistics. He was a good companion with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy leader of Hashd al-Shaabi and worked with him hand in hand in the different fronts in Iraq until they defeated ISIS.

Sixth, General Soleimani also supported the Yemeni Army, popular committees, and Ansarullah in their fight against the Saudi, U.S. and Zionist aggression of 2200

days in a row, which has left hundreds of thousands of casualties mainly among children, women and the elderly.

General Soleimani's legacy of uniting the resistance movements in the region from Iraq to Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and most importantly uniting the resistance forces in Gaza, the front line against the Zionist colonial apartheid regime. A deterrence power that forced the Zionist military and political apparatus from any aggression attempts or land incursions.

The general was a man of ethics, principles and passion; an exceptional military general with strategic thinking and diplomatic skills. He was assassinated while he was on a diplomatic mission. His assassination is a great loss for the axis of resistance and humanity but marks the defeat of the U.S. hegemony and aggression era.

Amal Wahdan is a veteran Palestinian political activist and member of the coordination committee of Syria Solidarity International Movement.

Facebook briefly shuts down Press TV's page

Facebook has disabled Press TV's account with nearly four million followers, alleging that Iran's international English news network is not eligible to use the social media platform.

In a notification upon taking down the page early on Tuesday, the U.S.-based social media giant said the decision was "final," adding that it could not provide additional information for "safety and security reasons."

Facebook, however, reversed the decision hours later in response to an appeal filed by Press TV.

Over the past years, Facebook — along with YouTube, Twitter and Google — have repeatedly targeted Press TV among other media outlets of Iran and the countries critical of the West and the Israeli regime's occupation of Palestine.

In June, Facebook started to label Iran's Press TV, Russia's Sputnik, and China's Xinhua News Agency as

"state-media", adding it would block them from running advertisements in the United States, following the three outlets' widespread reporting of protests in the U.S. against police violence and systemic racism.

The latest attack coincides with Press TV's coverage of shocking post-election violence in the U.S., which saw supporters of defeated President Donald Trump storm and ransack the U.S. Capitol building last week.

Biden faces calls to reverse Houthi 'terrorist' group designation

United States lawmakers are calling on President-elect Joe Biden to overturn the Trump administration's decision to label Yemen's Houthis a "foreign terrorist organization", slamming it as "short-sighted" and "a death sentence" for millions of people already reeling from years of war.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Gregory Meeks said the designation announced by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo early on Monday "endangers the lives of the Yemeni people".

"The Trump Administration has yet to learn that they can't sanction their way out of a civil war," Meeks said in a statement on Monday, denouncing what he described as the politicization of the U.S.'s sanction authorities.

Senior Bahraini Shia cleric sympathizes with Pakistan's Hazara Muslims after Daesh bloodshed

Bahrain's most prominent cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim has expressed sympathy with members of the ethnic Pakistani Hazara community, after the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group killed nearly a dozen coal miners from the Shia Muslim group in a targeted attack in southwest Pakistan earlier this month.

Sheikh Qassim, in a statement released on Monday, strongly condemned the massacre, stating that the victims were neither harboring any grudge against anyone, nor involved in ideological and sectarian conflicts.

"It is practically obligatory for all sects of the Muslim world to stand up against the devastating menace of Daesh. Daesh has remained and will remain a falsified and distorted representation of Islam. It will ruin the image of Islam in the eyes of all those who believe in the truth and purity of the religion, its denunciation of savagery, its respect for humanity, as well as its sanctity of blood and human life," he said.

BDS movement urges continuation of boycott against Israel in 2021

The international anti-Israel movement of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) has called for the intensification of its campaign against the occupying regime in the year ahead and the imposition of worldwide sanctions on Tel Aviv over its occupation and persecution of the Palestinians.

The BDS made the plea in an annual report published on the movement's achievements over the past year, and said its objective for 2021 is to put an end to Israel's occupation and colonial regime.

The anti-Israel movement also censured normalization deals recently struck between some Arab countries and Tel Aviv and underlined that collective efforts were required to preserve the Palestinian cause.

Four Arab countries announced normalization deals with Israel in 2020, starting with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and followed by Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

India's army chief calls China & Pakistan a 'potent threat'

India's army chief has expressed the hope that the border standoff with Beijing will be solved through negotiations, as the country's FM lamented that the recent clash with Chinese forces had greatly damaged mutual trust.

Speaking during the annual Army Day press conference on Tuesday, General Manoj Mukund Naravane said the military was ready to take on any threat, both internal and external. They remain on high alert along the country's borders, he said, particularly in the northern region of Ladakh, whose status is disputed with China.

The mountainous region was the scene of a major flare-up between the two countries last summer, with at least 20 Indian soldiers killed during the violent escalation.

"We have gone into a winter deployment situation and we are left all along the boundary. We are hoping for a peaceful solution, but we are ready to meet any eventuality. All logistics are taken care of," Naravane stated, alleging that Beijing has constructed additional infrastructure in the disputed area.

Resistance News

Advocacy group B'Tselem calls Israel apartheid regime for first time

An Israeli advocacy group says Israel is not a democracy but an "apartheid regime" that systematically oppresses the Palestinians via military occupation and racist laws.

In a position paper published on Tuesday, B'Tselem, for the first time in its 31-year history, called Israel an apartheid regime — which is a crime under international law — for using "laws, practices and organized violence to cement the supremacy of one group over another."

It said, "Israeli apartheid, which promotes the supremacy of Jews over Palestinians, was not born in one day or of a single speech. It is a process that has gradually grown more institutionalized and explicit, with mechanisms introduced over time in law and practice to promote Jewish supremacy."

"These accumulated measures, their pervasiveness in legislation and political practice, and the public and judicial support they receive — all form the basis for our conclusion that the bar for labeling the Israeli regime as apartheid has been met," it added.

Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds during the Six-Day War in 1967. It later annexed East Jerusalem al-Quds in a move not recognized by the international community.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital, Press TV reported.

But Israel's aggressive settlement expansion and annexation plans have dealt a serious blow to any prospects of peace.

The Gaza Strip has also been under an inhumane Israeli land, air and sea siege since 2007 and witnessed three wars since 2008.

Gilan province expects to meet rural employment goals by fostering tribe tourism

➔ **1** The comprehensive plan is aimed to serve as a roadmap to guide tourists from all over the globe to achieve a sustainable and competitive tourism market.

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

Over the past couple of years, tribe tourism has gained a lot of support and attention in the country by both the government and the private sector, as well as sightseers and local communities. Many tour operators believe that tribal regions could be deemed as



the legacy of human authenticity in its novel cultural and human aspects. In Iranian culture, literature, and public opinion, nomads have always been a proud part of the nation.

Iranian nomads surprise visitors with the dignity in their rough and overworked hands and integrity in their compassionate eyes at first sight. Migration is a way of life for nomads because herding cattle is their main source of income. In spring they with all their belongings head for the cooler pastures usually in mountain hillsides where the grass is abundant for their flocks of sheep and goats. And in autumn they return to previous tropic plains as their well-fed livestock getting stronger to bear the winter.

Accompanying nomads during their migration, even for a day or two, maybe a lifetime experience. As a traveler, one has the chance to visit, live, eat, and sleep in a nomadic camp with a real nomad family. Colorful dresses, vast black tents, colored-eyed children with rosy cheeks, modest lifestyle, scenic landscape, and local dishes are probably among the delights of such visits.

Language, music, indigenous cuisine, clothing, songs, anecdotes, crafts, live performances, and local rituals such as celebrations and wedding ceremonies have always spurred many to experience life among the tribes.

Qom named national city of handmade rings

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Qom, Iran's second holiest city after Mashhad, has recently been designated as the national city of handmade rings.

Almost 1,200 crafters and artisans are active in the production of handmade jewelry and rings in workshops across the province, Qom's governor-general has announced.



The semi-precious stone mines, which are scattered across the province, is also one of Qom's potential to be developed in this field of handicrafts, Bahram Sarmast said on Monday.

Besides domestic travelers, foreign tourists, who are mostly from Arab countries and the Persian Gulf littoral states, are the main customers of these handmade products, the official added.

Last July deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian announced that such national status can help promote Qom becoming a principal "brand" in this field of handicraft.

Qom is home to both the magnificent shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and the major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage at the holy shrine, the city is also a top destination for Shiite scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

Police seize relics including spearheads, seals from dealers

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iranian authorities have confiscated 145 historical objects from two antique dealers in the town of Pakdasht, near Tehran.

After days of intelligence operations, two illegal dealers were traced and arrested after police received reports from cultural heritage aficionados about their misdeeds, Pakdahst's police chief has announced.



Recovered relics include spearheads, clay seals, metal rings, a metal knife with a decorative handle made of bone, and some copper and bronze objects, which are estimated to date back to the Achaemenid (550–330 BC) and Qajar (1789–1925) eras, IRNA quoted Reza Alibakhshi as saying on Tuesday.

Cultural heritage experts are assessing that the objects worth more than four billion rials (around \$95,000), he explained.

The culprits were surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

The Achaemenid Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time, stretching from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and to India.

The Qajar-era is one of the most fascinating periods in the history of the country, embracing European modernization while maintaining its identity.

Magnificent Taq Kasra to be restored by Iranian budget, expertise

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iran is set to conduct an urgent restoration project on Taq Kasra, a Sassanid-era Persian masterpiece of architecture, which was collapsed partly in modern Iraq earlier this month.

The Plan and Budget Organization of Iran (PBO) have given its seal of approval to allocate the needed budget for the restoration of the Sassanid monument, IRNA quoted tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan late on Monday.

"Due to the historical importance of the ancient monument, discussions were held with Mr. [Mohammad Baqer] Nobakht [who presides over the Management and Planning Organization] in a government session... which was finally resulted his agreement to pay for the restoration," Mounesan said.

After financial estimates, the Organization will consider budget needed for the restoration of this historical monument, Mounesan added.

He stated that the official letter of this request was also sent to the organization yesterday (on Sunday), adding as soon as the budget is submitted, [a team of] Iranian cultural heritage experts will be dispatched to Taq Kasra with the coordination of their



Iraqi counterparts.

Regarding the initial financial estimates for the restoration of the monument, Mounesan said: "According to the photos and images submitted, a credit of about \$600,000 is required for the restoration, and as soon as it is provided, experts will be sent to Iraq."

In early January, some Iraqi social media

users posted pictures of Taq Kasra, which is located near Baghdad, writing the vault of the monument is partly collapsed. Social media activists and cultural heritage lovers have also criticized the Iraqi government's neglect of the monument, disapproving of the poor governmental performance in maintaining it....

For years, there have been talks between

Iranian and Iraqi officials to jointly restore the magnificent structure, but nothing happened. Even Iranian archaeologists have repeatedly asked the Iranian authorities to consult on the restoration of the monument in cooperation between the two countries. Because they believe Taq Kasra is in dire need of urgent repairs as every time a part of it collapses.

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

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

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

Varamin designated national city of glassware

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Varamin, which is home to many modern and traditional glassblowing workshops in southeast Tehran, has been designated the national city of glassware by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

The designation was officially announced in a ceremony on Monday in which tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan gave a framed document of the designation to Hossein Kaghazlu, the governor of Varamin, IRNA reported.

Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, the governor-general of Tehran province, along with several other officials and cultural heritage enthusiasts attended the ceremony, which was held at the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex.

Speaking at the ceremony, Kaghazlu noted that Varamin has more than one hundred glass-production workshops, employing some 6,000 people, directly and indirectly, and accounting for some 70 percent of Iran's glassware output.

"The glassmakers in Varamin produce top and high-quality glass products, using up-to-date techniques.... Therefore, many of their products are exported directly and indirectly from the city to the Persian Gulf countries and some European countries."

"Handmade glass, stainless glass, molding, mosaic glass,

thousand flowers, glass cutting, glass painting, frosting, housework, glass fusion and enameling are amongst skills and techniques glassmakers in Varamin employ in their products," Kaghazlu explained.

Varamin annually exports some two trillion rials (\$47.6 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) worth of glassware to the Persian Gulf littoral states and some European countries, according to Zhila Khodadadi, who presides over Varamin's cultural heritage and tourism office.

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).

Glass blowing is a glass-forming technique that humans have used to shape glass since the 1st century BC. The technique consists of inflating molten glass with a blowpipe to form a sort of glass bubble that can be molded into glassware for practical or artistic purposes.

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 ornaments with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Parthian, Sassanid, Islamic coins restored in southeastern Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Some 130 historical coins have been restored since the beginning of the current Iranian year 1399 (March 20, 2020) in the southeastern province of Kerman, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Dating back to the Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE), Sassanid era (224 CE–651), and Islamic period, the coins have been discovered during several excavations carried out in historical sites across the province, Mojtaba Shafiei announced on Monday.

Some other 200 coins are also planned to undergo rehabilitation works in the near future, however, due to the extent of their corrosion, deposits, and thinness, it will be a time-consuming process, the official added.

In about 220 CE the Sasanian dynasty of Iran introduced the concept of thin flan coins, issues that were struck in relief on both sides. In order not to produce intolerable stresses in the dies, since the thinner the material the more force necessary to make it flow into the recesses of the die's design,



the depth of relief on such coins was of necessity much shallower than with earlier currency. Such techniques spread by way of Byzantium to northern Europe, where the emperor Charlemagne struck thin flan deniers (small silver coins), or pennies, which became characteristic of both his own and neighboring kingdoms.

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.

The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power in ancient Iran. The Parthians largely adopted the art, architecture, religious beliefs, and royal insignia of their culturally heterogeneous empire, which encompassed Persian, Hellenistic, and regional cultures. At its height, the Parthian Empire stretched from the northern reaches of the Euphrates, in what is now central-eastern Turkey, to eastern Iran.

Parthian wealth obtained through lucrative trade networks resulted in substantial patronage of the arts, in particular, relief sculpture, statuary (large and small scale), architectural sculpture, metalwork, jewelry, and ceramics; coins with images of Parthian rulers form another important category of objects.

The Muslim conquest of Persia, also known as the Arab conquest of Iran, led to the fall of

the Sasanian Empire of Iran (Persia) in ca. 651 and the eventual decline of the Zoroastrian religion. The rise of Muslims coincided with an unprecedented political, social, economic, and military weakness in Persia.

The conquering Muslims at first mimicked the coinage of their predecessors. In the western provinces, they issued gold and copper pieces imitated from contemporary Byzantine coins, modifying the cross on the reverse of the latter somewhat to suit Muslim sensibilities. In the eastern provinces, the Arab governors issued silver dirhams that were copies of late Sasanian coins (mostly of those of Khosrow II; with the addition of short Arabic inscriptions on the margin and often the name of the Arab governor in Pahlavi; even the crude representation of the fire altar was retained).

Big and sprawling Kerman province is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, and ruins of ancient urban areas.

Some \$1.3m paid to support tourism businesses in West Azarbaijan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The Iranian government has paid more than 57 billion rials (over \$1.3 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020).

The loans have been paid to over 180 tourism-related units and handicrafts workshops to prevent business closures as well as create sustainable employment, the deputy provincial tourism chief, Mohammad Abdoli, said on Tuesday.

He also noted that four tourism-related projects worth 375 billion rials (\$8.9 million) are planned to be implemented across the province. The mentioned projects will generate job opportunities for 70 people, the official added.

Government's care and support packages

In late October, the deputy tourism chief, Vali Teymouri, announced that a new support package was approved to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, he said.

The loans would be allocated to tourist guides, travel



agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guesthouses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers, the official explained.

In September, Teymouri pointed to the 1.3 million tourism workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said "This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry's decisions."

Back in August, Teymouri announced that the tourism

ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

Tourism industry in critical situation

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

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

He also noted that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

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).

Iranian coronavirus vaccine enters second stage of human trial

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The second dose of the Iranian coronavirus vaccine was injected into three volunteers, who were tested for the first time two weeks ago, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, was unveiled and injected into three volunteers during a ceremony on December 29, 2020.

The daughter of Mohammad Mokhber, the head of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, was the first volunteer who received the vaccine, and two senior managers of the Headquarters.

The first dose of the vaccine has been injected into 14 people so far, and this number should reach 56 people in the clinical study phase.

Each volunteer will have the second



injection two weeks after the first injection and under the necessary medical care, the

safety of the vaccine must be approved by the doctors and specialists 28 days after

the last injection, then the second phase of the human trial will get started.

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.

Hojjat Niki-Maleki head of the information center of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, said by the next six months, vaccine production will reach up to 12 million doses per month.

Mostafa Ghane'ei, an official with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said that the domestically produced COVID-19 vaccine will probably be injected into the whole population by September 23.

Special budget allocated to protect biosphere reserves

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Two biosphere reserves, namely Golestan and Dena, will receive special funds in the national budget bill for the next calendar year (starting on March 20), IRNA reported on Tuesday.

With the cooperation of the Plan and Budget Organization and the Department of Environment, two important national biosphere reserves will be provided with a budget to be specially protected, Kioumars Kalantari, head of the natural environment and biodiversity of the Department of Environment said.

The purpose is to elicit people's participation in regional management, sustainable use of land and their use of reserves, and protection of biodiversity of the country's exemplary ecosystems, Kalantari stated.

Iran is a vast country with a wide range of biodiversity and natural resources, with 13 biosphere reserves named Golestan, Miankaleh, Arasbaran, Urmia, Arjan and Parishan, Geno, Hara, Hamoon, Dena, Tange Sayad, Sabzkooh, Turan, Kavar and Kopet Dag has been registered in the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, he explained.

Biosphere reserves include terrestrial, marine, and coastal ecosystems. Each site promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. There are currently 714 biosphere reserves in 129 countries, including 21 transboundary sites.

The Golestan Biosphere Reserve is located in the north of Iran and forms part of the Caucasus-Iranian highlands, situated between the sub-humid and semi-arid Caspian regions. A wide variety of habitats and rich biodiversity can be found in the reserve, including 150 bird species, 54 species of reptiles and amphibians, 8 species of huge carnivores such as the leopard and brown bear, and more than 1,366 plant species.

Dena Biosphere Reserve is located in the Central Zagros Mountains of Iran, with a general slope of more than 60 percent. Dena is also home to a vast range of plant species and several endangered and endemic mammal species. Oak species dominate the highlands, while pistachio and almond are common at lower elevations.

Environment's share of national budget

The next year's budget bill has proposed 12 trillion rials (around \$292 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) 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.



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.

50 countries pledge to protect at least 30% of world's land and oceans by 2030

A group of 50 countries has pledged to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans by 2030 in a bid to tackle the world's worsening biodiversity crisis.

The commitment to restoring nature was announced on Monday at the One Planet Summit, a key meeting for world leaders hosted by France, the World Bank and the UN.

The coalition of countries, led by the UK, Costa Rica and France, together account for around 28 per cent of the world's land animals and a quarter of the land's carbon reserves, the Independent reported.

The group aims to galvanise greater action on stemming biodiversity loss ahead of a key UN biodiversity summit, which is to be held in Kunming, China later this year in May.

At the China summit, around 200 countries will negotiate a new agreement for protecting wildlife. The cross-country group, known as the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, hopes to secure a global deal for setting aside 30 per cent of the world's land and ocean for wildlife.

Andrea Meza, the minister of environment and energy for Costa Rica, said: "Protecting 30 per cent of the planet will

undoubtedly improve the quality of life of our citizens, and help us achieve a fair, decarbonized and resilient society.

"Healing and restoring nature is a key step towards human wellbeing, creating millions of quality green and blue jobs and fulfilling the 2030 agenda, particularly as part of our sustainable recovery efforts."

In 2019, a landmark report found that one million animal and plant species are now threatened by extinction as a result of human pressures – including habitat loss through deforestation, the illegal trade of wildlife and global heating, which is creating intolerable living conditions for many species.

Last year The Independent launched its Stop The Illegal Wildlife Trade campaign to demand a clampdown on poaching and the illegal trade in wild animals, working with leading conservationists and charities to protect wildlife at risk from poachers due to the conservation funding crisis.

A second report published in 2020 warned that, if the destruction of wildlife is not curbed, it could lead to the emergence of more pandemic-causing diseases akin to Covid-19.

Animal-borne diseases, known as "zoonotic



diseases", can spread to humans when they come into contact with wildlife. The destruction of the world's habitats, increased urbanisation and animal migration as a result of the climate crisis is increasing the rate at which humans are coming into contact with wildlife.

In addition to helping to preserve wildlife, restoring and protecting the world's land and ocean habitats could also boost natural carbon stores, helping to tackle the climate crisis.

Lord Goldsmith, the UK's international environment minister, said: "We know there is no pathway to tackling climate change that does not involve a massive increase in our efforts to protect and restore nature.

"We have an enormous opportunity at

this year's biodiversity conference in China to forge an agreement to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and ocean by 2030. I am hopeful our joint ambition will curb the global decline of the natural environment, so vital to the survival of our planet."

A UN report released in 2020 found that the world failed to meet any of the targets for halting biodiversity loss that were set out in 2010. To reverse the loss of biodiversity, any agreement secured in China later this year will need to be met with more ambitious policy actions, analysts say.

Boris Johnson is among world leaders speaking at the One Planet Summit later today. He is expected to announce that the UK will spend at least £3bn on solutions for tackling the climate crisis while restoring nature over the next five years.

Among the countries to get on board with the pledge was Mozambique, where wildlife conservation efforts are being directly hampered by Covid-19.

The southern African nation's sprawling national parks are largely funded by tourism, which has all but dried up, while the pandemic has also seen a spike in poaching.

Relief foundation creates 210,000 jobs for the deprived

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation created 210,000 direct and indirect jobs for the deprived since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2020), IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The number of jobs generated over the aforementioned period shows a 25 percent rise compared to the same period last year, Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki, deputy head of the Foundation stated.

Out of 210,000, some 150,000 jobs have been created directly and the rest indirectly, he added.

According to Abdolmaleki, a total of 40 trillion (nearly \$950 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been spent to create 150,000 direct jobs.

Last year (March 2019-March 2020), the Foundation launched about 33 percent of the country's employment projects, Morteza Bakhtiari, head of the Foundation, said in August 2020.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empowers financially struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

Operation Headquarters come to contain coronavirus

1 → In another move approved by the National headquarters for Coronavirus Control, with the efforts of the Basij, people, and volunteers, as well as a national plan named after martyr Qassem Soleimani so far the transmission chain of the disease has decreased by 50 percent, and high-risk red zones turned to yellow and orange.

Martyr Soleimani plan is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Basij, and the Red Crescent Society, through which volunteer forces provide information, testing, diagnosis, referral of suspects to health centers, and offer services by visiting people's homes.



Some 22,530 monitoring teams have been formed within the framework of the plan since December 15 with 103,000 members, of which more than 270,000 are in contact to identify COVID-19 patients, said Jafar Sadeq-Tabrizi, head of the Network Management Center of the Ministry of Health.

Some 6,730 home care teams have been formed in the country with the participation of 18,000 forces, who have taken care of 41,000 people at home, and rapid result tests have been performed on 7,500 suspects, he explained.

Since December 15, 2020, with the participation of 61,000 people, more than 10,000 monitoring teams have been formed. About 782,000 visits and monitoring of various places and centers have been done to warn those who do not observe the health protocols, Sadeq-Tabrizi stated.

Declining trend of daily new cases and mortalities

So, after several months of snowballing death toll due to COVID-19, finally, all the national plans and programs together resulted in a declining trend of daily new cases and mortalities dropped to below 100.

In a press briefing on Tuesday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,408 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,299,022. She added that 1,088,465 patients have so far recovered, but 4,507 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 98 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 56,360, she added.

So far, 8,226,166 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 7 cities are in high-risk "red" zones, and 30 cities are in the orange zone and 219 in low-risk "yellow" zones.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 107)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Present Indicative

حَالِ اِخباری

می + یتاکِ حال + شِناسیه‌های حال. شناسه‌های حال عبارتند از:

مَ، مِ، مِی، مَد، مِیم، مِید، مَنَد

I go;

مَ — می‌رَوَم

I am going;

مِی — می‌رَوِی

I shall go, ...

مَد — می‌رَوَد

مِیم — می‌رَوِیم

مِید — می‌رَوِید

مَنَد — می‌رَوَند

Present indicative of بودن, used only in the formal language, is made with the obsolete infinitive باشیدن "to be":

می‌باشم، می‌باشی، می‌باشد، می‌باشیم، می‌باشید، می‌باشند = هستم، ...

● تمرین ۱. به جای گذشته‌ی ساره، حَالِ اِخباری بنویسید:

۱. ما در دو رشته تحصیل کردیم.

۲. من از استخر استفاده کردم.

۳. دخترها و پسرها با هم بازی کردند.

۴. این آثار تاریخ ایران را نشان دادند.

۵. تو شنا را زود یاد گرفتی.

۶. کی از مترو پیاده شدید؟

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran spends \$477m on refugee education annually

Iran spends about 20 trillion rials (nearly \$477 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) every year on the education of foreign national students residing in the country, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education has said.

Over 558,000 foreign national children are receiving education in Iran completely free of charge, 474,000 of whom are Afghan children, ISNA quoted Gholamreza Karimi as saying on Wednesday.

Karimi said that there are currently about 137,000 undocumented Afghan students in the country, adding that their parents do not have valid residency documents, "but we have provided the conditions for enrolling them in schools."

A number of foreign nationals from neighboring countries came to Iran over the past four decades due to numerous regional crises and civil wars, he lamented.

ایران سالی ۲ هزار میلیارد تومان برای دانش آموزان اتباع خارجی هزینه می کند

ایران هر سال حدود ۲ هزار میلیارد تومان برای ۵۵۸ هزار دانش آموز اتباع خارجی در مدارس سراسر کشور هزینه می کند.

به گزارش روز چهارشنبه ایسنا، غلامرضا کریمی رئیس مرکز امور بین‌الملل و مدارس خارج از کشور وزارت آموزش و پرورش گفت از این تعداد ۴۷۴ هزار نفر آنها اتباع افغانستانی هستند.

کریمی با بیان اینکه در حال حاضر ۱۳۷ هزار دانش آموز غیرمجاز در کشور داریم گفت پدر و مادر این افراد مدارک اقامتی معتبر ندارند اما ما شرایط ثبت نام آنها را مدارس فراهم کردیم.

تعدادی از اتباع کشورهای همسایه به خاطر بحرانهای متعدد منطقه ای و جنگ‌های داخلی در طول چهار دهه گذشته به ایران آمدند. پس از صدور فرمان مقام معظم رهبری در پایان سال ۱۳۹۳ هیچ کودک ایرانی و خارجی مستقر در ایران نباید از تحصیل محروم بماند.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Prophet Muhammad (S)

80 foreign publishers to attend Tehran Intl. Book Fair

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — 80 foreign publishers will be attending the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), which, will go online from January 20 to 25.

“110 publishers have registered in the international section of the festival, 80 of which are foreign publishers and 30 are Iranian publishers,” the director of the international section of the fair, Shiva Vakilnaslian, said in a press release published on Tuesday.

“The publishers are from different countries including Spain, Indonesia, Columbia and Senegal, some of which are attending the Tehran Book Fair for the first time,” she remarked.

“The international section is one of the main sections of the fair that help establish international relations in the book and publications arena,” she noted.

“Easier access to the fair where publishers can easily upload their latest productions is one of the reasons behind the warm welcome of the foreign publishers, while about 30 different international programs with 180 experts who will be attending the webinars organized on the margins of the fair is another reason for the participation of the publishers. The online fair will have good results,” she concluded.



People visit the Tehran International Book Fair at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla in May 2019. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

Last year, the 33rd edition of Iran’s most important cultural event was scheduled to be held in April and Turkey was slated to be the guest of honor, however, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance canceled the fair due to a massive rise in the death toll from coronavirus in the country.

Iran Book and Literature House director Ayyub Dehqankar earlier said that they believe the fair will give more opportunities to the readers that were probably not possible in a physical book fair.

“Iran Book and Literature House had several meetings with the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control in Tehran and the decision was made to hold the fair in summer, however, with the rise in the death toll, it was decided that the fair would be held online,” Dehqankar said.

“We observed the world online book fairs, while we also attended different international book fairs such as Bologna and Frankfurt. We are well aware that we can’t achieve all the goals of a physical fair, however, we believe that the virtual fair can provide some good opportunities,” he added.

“We always had limited spaces for the publishers both in the Imam Khomeini Mosalla, and Shahr-e Aftab Fairground, while the online fair will have no such restrictions, and any publisher that has been active for the past 4 years can request a virtual stand to offer its books, and this can be considered a big step towards fairness,” he added.

“The Iranian books will be offered with a 20 percent discount while the foreign books will have a 50 percent discount at the fair,” he asserted.

He noted that the books will be delivered to all the various cities across the country for free and also that the virtual fair will be open around the clock.

“So far, 1500 publishers have registered, and we hope to witness good growth in the first edition of the first virtual exhibit,” he concluded.

Iranian literati to Western scholars: Don’t consider Ferdowsi’s poetry medieval

→1 He added that Omdsalar, after his comprehensive research, learned that Ferdowsi used the Shahnameh of Abu Mansur as a main source to compose his Shahnameh.

The Shahnameh of Abu Mansur was a work in prose commissioned by the aristocrat Abu Mansur Mohammed during the tenth century.

“However, over the past few decades, some scholars in the United States have published some ridiculous assertions, claiming that Ferdowsi had no source material, and the Shahnameh was composed based on oral traditions; that he had been listening to stories related by the people around him and versifying the tales at his home,” Nahvi stated.

He said that the scholars intend to generalize what happened to literature in the West during the Middle Ages to Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh.

“They have read about the medieval peddlers who manipulated stories, telling people that they have read them in such and such books to gain more trust from the people,” he explained.

In his “Poetics and Politics of Iran’s National Epic, the Shahnameh”, Omdsalar sees political intention behind the scholars’ attitudes toward the Shahnameh, Nahvi said.

In his speech, Omdsalar asked the



This combination photo shows a statue of Ferdowsi and a teahouse painting depicting a story from his Shahnameh.

Shahnameh aficionados to regard the coherence of the stories in the book.

He said that the stories in the Shahnameh are perfectly cinematic and added, “Ferdowsi has animated all his mental images. With his language, he makes a scene that a reader sees in wars, marshaling the forces and music. We see his camera zooming in on some scenes by means of his narratives; he even changes his camera angle and is

present on two sides of the battle, and in the end, the music also plays. We see all these details in his literature.”

“Unlike other poets, Ferdowsi does not waste time, avoiding any extra literal interpretation. He doesn’t focus on the characters’ conversations, but he wants to quickly express the gist of his argument, and all of this contributes remarkably to the coherence of the Shahnameh,” Omdsalar said.

Book on Israel’s targeted assassinations comes to Iranian bookstores



Front cover the Persian translation of Ronen Bergman's book "Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations".

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A book by Ronen Bergman, a military analyst and former journalist and writer with the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, on the history of the Zionist regime’s targeted assassinations across the world, has recently been published in Persian.

The Martyr Kazemi Publishing House in Tehran is the publisher of “Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel’s

Targeted Assassinations” translated into Persian by Vahid Khazab.

The book is the first definitive history of the Mossad, Shin Bet and the IDF’s targeted killing programs, from the man hailed by David Remnick as “arguably [Israel’s] best investigative reporter”.

It portrays the assassinations of British government officials, Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders, and Iranian nuclear scientists.

The Talmud, the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and Jewish theology, says, “If someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first.” This instinct to take every measure, even the most aggressive, to defend the Jewish people is hardwired into Israel’s DNA.

From the very beginning of its statehood in 1948, protecting the nation from harm has been the responsibility of its intelligence community and armed services, and there is one weapon in their vast arsenal that they have relied upon to thwart the most serious threats: Targeted assassinations have been used countless times, on enemies large and small, sometimes in response to attacks against the Israeli people and sometimes preemptively. In this page-turning, eye-opening book, journalist and military analyst Bergman offers a riveting inside account of the targeted killing programs, their successes, their failures, and the moral and political

price exacted on the men and women who approved and carried out the missions.

Bergman has gained the exceedingly rare cooperation of many current and former members of the Israeli government, including prime ministers Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as high-level figures in the country’s military and intelligence services: the IDF (Israel Defense Forces), the Mossad (the world’s most feared intelligence agency), Caesarea (a “Mossad within the Mossad” that carries out attacks on the highest-value targets), and the Shin Bet (an internal security service that implemented the largest targeted assassination campaign ever in order to stop what had once appeared to be unstoppable: suicide terrorism).

Including never-before-reported, behind-the-curtain accounts of key operations, and based on hundreds of on-the-record interviews and thousands of files to which Bergman has gotten exclusive access over his decades of reporting, “Rise and Kill First” brings us deep into the heart of Israel’s most secret activities.

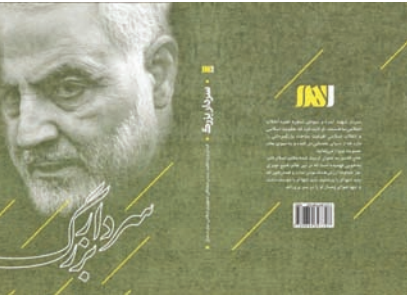
Bergman traces, from statehood to the present, the gripping events and thorny ethical questions underlying Israel’s targeted killing campaign, which has shaped the Israeli nation, West Asia and the entire world.

Iraqi cultural figures portray Martyr Soleimani as great commander in new book

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Several Iraqi cultural figures have represented Martyr Qassem Soleimani as a great commander in a book recently published in Tehran.

The Alhoda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute is the publisher of the book entitled “Great Commander”.

“The book, which has been published on the first martyrdom anniversary of the commander, contains a series of articles written by Iraqi cultural figures,” Alhoda Managing Director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Asadi-Movahhed said in a press release published on Tuesday.



Cover of the book "Great Commander" published by Alhoda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute.

“The first volume contains interviews with figures such as former Iraqi prime minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and the leader of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, Hamam Hamudi, and Seyyed Kazem al-Jaberi, the representative of Iran’s World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought in Iraq,” he added.

He said that “Great Commander” is the first volume of a series, which has been prepared by Iran’s Cultural Office in Baghdad, and will be published by Alhoda.

He added that the cultural office has already published the testaments of Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy

chief of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces.

The two were assassinated during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

“Introducing and clarifying different dimensions of this great man of his time in the international arena is a great responsibility that Alhoda believes must be fulfilled,” he noted.

Earlier in January, Iran’s Cultural Office in Baghdad published a book on martyr Soleimani in Iraq both in Persian and Arabic under the title “Guest of Iraq Written by Iraqi Personalities”.

The book contains interviews with 18 political and religious officials, experts and analysts.

Fajr art festival to honor COVID-19 photographers

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Fajr Festival of Visual Arts will be honoring the photographers who were active during the pandemic, were tested positive with COVID-19, or died of COVID-19.

Member of the policy-making council of the festival Jasem Ghazbanpur said, “Surely the condition of each society affects the photos taken by the photographers. That is, a photo comes out of the heart of a society and any event happening in the society will affect the quality and the themes of the photos.”

“Therefore, the organizers have decided to honor those photographers who were active during the pandemic and died of COVID-19 or tested positive with COVID-19,” he said.

“The art of photography has a close relationship with people, and the closer art is with the society and people, the more endearing it is,” he added.

The 13th edition of the festival will be held in the Saba Art and Cultural Institute in February.

In a press release published in late December, the



A photo by Mohammad Nasimi. (Tasnim)

organizers called on Iranian artists who have been honored at international events to participate in the festival.

“Interested artists who have received international awards at the biennials and festivals in 2019 and 2020 are invited to attend the new section named ‘World Stars of Iranian Art’,” director of the festival Ali-Ashraf Sandoqabadi said.

Iranian Cinema Festival of Chantilly postponed to November 2021

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The first edition of the Iranian Cinema Festival of Chantilly, which was scheduled in March, has been postponed to a later time in November, the organizers have announced.

The festival, dedicated to screening movies by Iranian filmmakers from around the world, will be organized in the northern French town of the same name from November 4 to 7.

The Franco-Iranian Center has organized the festival in collaboration with several Iranian art and cinema centers.

The festival, which is also dedicated to modern figures of Iranian cinema, will be held in two competitive and non-competitive categories.

A lineup of seven features will go on screen

in the competitive section with their directors in attendance, and six short films will go on screen in the non-competitive section.

A panel of jury members and several French cineastes will judge the entries.

The audience will have full participation in the festival and will choose their favorite movie, which will be granted the special audience award.

The Franco-Iranian Center organized the first edition of the New Images of Iran (Nouvelles Images d’Iran) in the northwestern French town of Vitre in December last year.

The festival was organized in collaboration with Aurore Cinema, House of World Cultures, Ouest France, World Trade Center Rennes Bretagne and several other French centers,

and Iran’s Farabi Cinema Foundation.

The festival helped highlight promising young Iranian filmmakers by inviting them to present their first achievements.

Six films by Abolfazl Jalili were reviewed during the festival. Iranian-Armenian filmmaker Anahid Abad’s acclaimed drama “Yeva” won the first prize at the 1st edition of the New Images of Iran.

Produced by Farabi and the National Cinema Center of Armenia, the film tells the story of Yeva, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband’s tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages in the Karabakh region. She is a complete stranger in this ballgame and is obliged to live her daily life in disguise.

“Yeva” was Armenia’s submission to the 90th Academy Awards, but it did not make the shortlist.

“A House on 41st Street” by Hamidreza Qorbani and “Villa Dwellers” by Monir Qeidi took second and third prizes respectively.

A lineup of 12 Iranian short and feature films was screened at the festival.

The movies were selected by a committee composed of Iranian filmmaker Abolfazl Jalili, Vitre Mayor Pierre Méhaignerie, Franco-Iranian Center director Alireza Khalili, member of the editorial board of Paris-Tehran Magazine Fatemeh Shadman, founder of the Garromedia Cultural Association Laurent Garreau, French literature expert Vahid Yaqubi and French art historian Jean-Claude Voisin.