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Iran, Iraq ink economic co-op MOU

TEHRAN - Iran and Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on economic cooperation at the end of the fourth meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee on Wednesday, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, who is the head of the mentioned committee, announced.

The minister said that the MOU covers cooperation in different areas.

The two-day meeting provided a very fruitful discussion for both

sides and is expected to serve the interests of both countries, the minister noted.

Technical committees were formed in various business fields to discuss technical and engineering services and other topics of interest, he said, adding, the meeting also proposed and supported the establishment of a joint investment fund between the two countries and hopes to continue its path.

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IRCS offers health services to 13 countries

TEHRAN - The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) provides medical services to people in 13 Asian, African, and Latin American countries, Karim Hemmati, head of the IRCS, has said.

Hemmati made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday with Eugene Aka-Aouele, the health minister of Ivory Coast.

Currently, some 14 medical facilities are offering humanitarian, relief, and

health services to the deprived people in 13 countries, including Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Bolivia, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Congo, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, and Ecuador, he stated.

"Strengthening relations between governments and nations is one of the goals of the Red Crescent Society to establish medical centers in foreign countries.

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Iranian Navy stages drills

TEHRAN - The Iranian Navy kicked off a drill, codenamed "Eghtedar 99", in Makran Coast and the northern Indian Ocean on Wednesday morning.

The maneuver is being held amid heightened tensions between Iran and the United States which has sent an aircraft carrier - USS Nimitz - and a submarine - USS Georgia - to the Persian Gulf and deployed B-52 bombers to the Persian Gulf region.

The first phase of the two-day drill, which according to the Army's public relations office was arranged unexpectedly, involves the Navy's surface, subsurface and flight units among other armaments.

The armaments were deployed in general areas of the exercise to continue their specialized exercises based on a predetermined scenario.

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Expert happy with Tehran derby

BY FARROKH HESABI
The Iranian member of the AFC's Technical Study Group (TSG), Dr. Asghar Maziar, thinks that the latest Tehran derby was a better match compared to the previous meetings between Esteghlal and Persepolis in recent years.

The two Tehran giants shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Monday.

"Technically speaking, it was a much better match than the previous Tehran derbies. Both of the teams tried their best to play football not to defend and just think about getting points. Of course, the players of both teams, as well as their technical staffs, had some mistakes but neither team aimed to destroy the opponents' game, rather they just thought about their own performance and it was a good point," said Maziar in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

The Iranian experts also spoke about the result of the match.

"If we take the possession rate and the opportunities of the teams into account, we can say that the 2-2 was not a fair result. However, both of the teams had some mistakes regarding the squad selection, the substitutions during the game, and the tactical approaches. So, when we think about the mistakes of the teams, it cannot be an unfair result!

"For example, in the first goal of Esteghlal which was scored just one minute into the match, the Persepolis defenders made a few consecutive mistakes and it was the same about the first goal of Persepolis when the Blues' defenders made an error in their positioning," Maziar added.

When asked about the substitutions made by the coaches of Esteghlal and Persepolis, Maziar pointed to the one made by Mahmoud Fekri, Esteghlal head coach.

"I think it was not the best idea to take Ahmad Mousavi, the right-back of Esteghlal, out of the game because this replacement reduced the offensive power of Esteghlal from the right side," he said.

Persepolis head coach, Yahya Golmohammadi, harshly criticized the board of directors of the Red club for letting the key players leave the team. On the other hand, Voria Ghafouri, Esteghlal captain, attacked the managers of the club for their failure to fulfill their financial commitments.

Maziar believes that such problems must be resolved inside the clubs.

Soleimani was architect of the model for expanding Iran's influence: MP

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN - An Iranian parliamentarian describes Qassem Soleimani as a strategist who engineered the model for expanding Iran's power and influence after the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. "According to all of Soleimani's friends and foes, he was a person with a strategic insight and he was the one who engineered a model for expanding the Islamic Republic's influence after the Iran-Iraq war," Ahmad Naderi tells the Tehran Times. "Martyr Soleimani was one of the few important strategists in the world," Naderi remarks. He was not only a general who understood "geopolitical relations" he also was also an active player in "establishing, maintaining, and changing regional equations."

The following is the text of the interview:
What characteristics made Qassem Soleimani a prominent figure in Iran, the region, and the world?

A: If we want to briefly study Martyr Qassem Soleimani's personality, it must be divided into two categories: his material and spiritual dimensions.

His spiritual or mental dimension backs to the value system that Martyr Soleimani believed in. This value system arose from a kind of "pure Islam" and a firm belief in the first-hand interpretation of Shia educations inspired by the thought of Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Martyr Soleimani believed in the concept of jihad and supporting the oppressed people, and these concepts appeared in Soleimani's behavior and actions.

But in the material dimension, Martyr Soleimani was one of the few important strategists in the world. One of the generals who not only understood geopolitical relations, but also played an active player in establishing, maintaining, and changing regional equations.

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Protesters hold torch-lit rally accusing PM of corruption

Dozens of Israeli protesters carrying lit torches, megaphones and flags gathered at dawn Wednesday outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence to highlight his corruption trial, which is set to resume next month.

Police said at least seven demonstrators were arrested for disorderly conduct. The demonstration was organized by Crime Minister, one of several groups that have sprung up in recent months calling for Netanyahu to resign over the trial and his government's handling of the coronavirus.

The protesters read the indictment outside his residence. He was supposed to appear in court Wednesday, but the hearing was postponed to Feb. 8 because of a coronavirus lockdown that heavily restricts public gatherings.

For months, protesters have held weekly demonstrations outside the prime minister's office and at major road intersections and bridges across the country.

Netanyahu was indicted last year on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust linked to three corruption cases. He has denied any wrongdoing and accuses the media,

law enforcement and judicial officials of waging a "witch hunt" against him.

Netanyahu is once again fighting for re-election ahead of a nationwide vote in March - the fourth to be held in Israel in less than two years. Polls show his Likud party winning the most seats but being unable to form a coalition government because of rivalries with other right-wing leaders.

Meanwhile, the High Court of Justice on Tuesday heard a petition against controversial legislation granting the government emergency powers to limit protests during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The law was approved in September amid a nationwide surge in coronavirus cases. It forbade Israelis from traveling more than a kilometer from home (0.6 miles) to protest and required protesters to demonstrate in socially distanced capsules, effectively stifling mass rallies outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem, the epicenter of an ongoing popular effort against the premier over his indictment on graft charges and handling of the pandemic.

Iran, France preparing to expand museum cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and France are preparing to widen museum cooperation in various areas including joint online exhibits.

Ways to develop cooperation was discussed on Tuesday in a Tehran meeting attended by French ambassador to Iran Philippe Thiébaud, Myriam Pavageau, the cultural attaché of the embassy, National Museum of Iran Director Jabrael Nokandeh, and his deputy for cultural affairs, Fereidoun Biglari, a museum official told the Tehran Times on Wednesday.

The officials also exchanged views on holding a joint virtual exhibition by the National Museum of Iran and the Louvre.

Thiébaud pointed out the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the activities of museums and said that holding virtual exhibitions is one of the available solutions to solve this problem.

He also noted the importance of publications and expressed satisfaction that the French embassy, in cooperation with the Iran National Museum,

has published several books on Iranian cultural heritage in recent years.

He also referred to the scientific services of the late Michele Casanova, a French archaeologist in Iran, who recently died of coronavirus disease. Thiébaud described her as "an archaeologist who loved Iranian culture".

The envoy also mentioned his visit to the Iran National Museum exhibition in Alicante, Spain, which he considered to be a very successful exhibition.

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Art is most effective way to introduce a country and its people: writer

BY REZA MOSHFEGH
TEHRAN - A Turkish novelist believes that art is the most effective tool to introduce a nation and its people.

"Art is the most effective way to introduce a country and its people correctly," Gulsah Elikbank tells the Tehran Times.

The Turkish author says, "Our literature has always been a mirror of society."

The following is the text of the interview:
How can a novel connect hearts and minds of nations?

A: Literature is built on understanding and making sense. In this context, understanding a person as a whole is an important step towards understanding all of humanity. In addition, when my novel, The Shadow of Love, was published simultaneously in 8 Middle Eastern (West Asian) countries in Arabic, I experienced the true meaning of this sentence.

You know, they say geography is destiny. Similar stories are experienced in similar geographies and such a novel touches the hearts of everyone who is a part of that story. This is what I went through. In addition, people get to know each other best by learning each other's stories. For this reason, art is the most effective way to introduce a country and its people correctly. Literature is the most effective part of this, of course.

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15 unknown martyrs honored in Shiraz

15 unknown soldiers martyred during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s were honored by the people in Shiraz, the capital of Fars province. The funeral procession was held at Shahid Dastgheib Airport. The martyrs were buried in different places, including in Behesht Ahmadi cemetery, Shahid Bahman Bagheri barracks, Gerash Medical University, the Islamic Azad University of Abadeh, the Islamic Azad University of Firouzabad, Jahrom University, etc.



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Dear readers,
The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Monday, January 18.

Leader to deliver televised speech on Sunday

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will deliver a televised speech on the occasion of the martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh (PBUH).

Unlike previous years that the ceremony was held at the presence of people from all walks of life at Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyah, this year's ceremony will be held without the participation of people due to the spread of the novel coronavirus, according to a statement issued by Leader's Office on Wednesday.

The statement of the Leader's Office says: While expressing condolences on the occasion of martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh (PBUH), please be informed that the mourning ceremony is not held at Imam Khomeini (RA) Hosseiniyah with the participation of people due to the spread of the novel coronavirus and the need to observe health protocols and instructions.

Iranian Navy stages drills

1 → Firing surface-to-surface cruise missiles and torpedoes from indigenous naval submarines as well as conducting drone and electronic warfare operations are other parts of the military exercise.

The spokesperson for the drill, Deputy Navy Commander for Coordination Affairs Rear Admiral Hamzeh Ali Kaviani, said the exercise is took place unexpectedly and the participating units spread to the area in a very short time since notified.

“By holding this exercise, we will be able to assess and evaluate the ability to react in a timely and effective manner to the possible conditions caused by the enemy threat, so that by eliminating the weaknesses and strengthening the strengths, we can have a performance commensurate with the threat level,” the rear admiral explained.

Also during the drill, in an official ceremony, the Navy's Southern Fleet received Makran forward base ship and Zereh (Armor) missile-launching frigate. The event was attended by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, and other senior commanders, according to the Tasnim News Agency.

Makran forward base ship can carry 100,000 tons of fuel and fresh water and supply them to the vessels in various locations. The vessel is capable of making voyages for 1,000 days without a port call.

In September, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said Makran is the country's largest military vessel that can carry seven helicopters. It could provide support for the naval forces and warships in high seas, especially in northern Indian Ocean, Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Red Sea.

The Zereh missile-launching vessel, with its high maneuverability and speed, would help the Navy in defending Iran's territorial waters.

Armed Forces hold routine military exercises throughout the year in order to enhance capabilities to defend the country and its interests.

Speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony, General Bagheri said Iran will again start voyaging in the Red Sea for protecting oil tankers and commercial ships.

He also said if today Iranian oil and commercial vessels move in the Caribbean Sea despite all threats it is because of the deterrence power of the naval forces.

Senior MP: Seoul must immediately release Iran's funds

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Mojtaba Zonnouri urged the Seoul government on Tuesday to swiftly unblock Iranian funds in South Korean banks.



development of friendly relations to come to a halt under the influence of White House's biased efforts.”

Choi, for his part, said that South Korean officials are determined to return Iran's frozen assets. The vice foreign minister stressed that he had constructive and useful talks with Iranian officials in order to promote cooperation between the two countries and to remove obstacles on the way.

Regarding the issue, Iran's central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati called on South Korea on Monday to make a serious move and opt for independent decision-making on Iran's frozen assets, warning that if the country does not release Iran's crude revenues, it should expect consequences.

“Seoul must immediately release some \$7 billion worth of funds it owes to Iran over crude imports in the past,” Hemmati said after his meeting with Choi.

“I reminded the Koreans and emphasized that Iran's blocked funds belong to the Iranian nation and no one is allowed to play tricks on them,” the central banker insisted.

He said Seoul has been acting reluctantly by repeatedly promising that the money would be released.

“For almost one and a half year, the Koreans have sent numerous correspondences and announced that they would solve the problem today, tomorrow or a month later”, the CBI governor said.

The chief banker added that Choi had shown serious determination to tackle the case for good.

In a separate meeting on Sunday evening, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister For Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi told Choi that the blocking of the Iranian asset by South Korea “is only surrender to ransom demand from the U.S.” and this “is not acceptable”.

Araghchi said, “Naturally the expansion of relations (between Tehran and Seoul) would be meaningful only when this problem is solved.”

South Korea, which was one of Iran's main trading partners, left Iran as Donald Trump administration introduced illegal sanctions against Iran.

Zarif: Pompeo ending ‘disastrous career with more warmongering lies’ by Iran, Qaeda link rant

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says his American counterpart is marking the twilight of his already “disastrous” career with a pathetic end by resorting to more baseless “warmongering lies” about Iran and other countries, Press TV reported.

“From designating Cuba to fictitious Iran ‘declassifications’ and AQ (al-Qaeda) claims, Mr. ‘we lie, cheat, steal’ is pathetically ending his disastrous career with more warmongering lies,” Zarif wrote on Twitter on Tuesday.

He was referring to a recent raft of actions by the outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump administration's most forward Iran hawk Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who is just one week away from handing over the State Department.

Most recently, Pompeo brought Cuba back to the U.S. list of “Terrorism Sponsors”. The island nation was down the path of rapprochement with the administration of Trump's predecessor Barack Obama.

Trump's inauguration, however, ushered in a swift decline in the countries' ties, with Pompeo's move making it even harder for incoming President Joe Biden to resume a detente.

Later, Pompeo identified Iran, without any evidence, as the terrorist al-Qaeda group's “new home base”. He made the remarks as part of, what he called, publicizing “declassified U.S. intelligence,” which — as in the case of Washington's other claims against Tehran — surprisingly lacked all “declassified proof”.



Zarif went on to say, “No one is fooled. All 9/11 terrorists came from @SecPompeo's favorite ME destinations; NONE from Iran.” Zarif was referring to Saudi Arabia and its widely-known financial and ideological sponsorship of the terrorist outfit that staged the September 11, 2001 attacks against the United States.

15 of the 19 hijackers in the September 11 attacks were Saudi nationals.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had admitted that the United States created and funded Taliban and Al Qaeda. She

had also warned in a leaked classified memo that donors in Saudi Arabia were the “most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide”.

Russia also dismissed latest bout of trying to link the al-Qaeda and Iran without providing any proof as “absolutely” groundless.

“This is absolutely unsubstantiated and unreasonable. There is absolutely no information” supporting such a claim, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Zamir Kabulov said in a statement on Wednesday, Russia's Sputnik news agency reported.

840 Iranian academics ask IRGC Aerospace commander to fire on any intruding B52-s

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — 840 Iranian university professors who teach or conduct research in various fields of soft power and soft warfare have called on Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh to open fire on any intruding U.S. warplanes, especially B-52s, and warships that may violate Iran's borders in water and sky.

“A sum of 840 university professors in the fields of soft power and soft war, in a letter to Brigadier General Hajizadeh, urged him to shoot down any hostile warplane and warship, especially the American B-52s, as soon as they are detected in the territorial waters and skies of Iran,” the academics said in an open letter on Monday, according to the Pars news agency.

In their letter the academics also described General Hajizadeh as the “Conqueror of Ein Al-Assad”, an open reference to IRGC Aerospace Force's missile strikes on the U.S. airbase in southwestern Iraq in 2020 in reprisal for the U.S. assassination of top Iranian anti-terror Commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

Pointing to the United States' empty power which has been magnified by the Western, Zionist and Arab media outlets, the academicians asked General Hajizadeh to shatter this unreal and fabricated image.

The U.S. military first deployed B-52 bombers in West Asia on November 22. On December 10, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) also said that two B-52 bombers had been flown nonstop from Louisiana to West Asia Persian Gulf region on an alleged short-notice mission. The bombers were accompanied by aircraft from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain at various points in their mission.

According to CNN, the U.S. military also flew B-52 bombers to West Asia on December 30 which CENTCOM claimed is intended “to underscore the U.S. military's commitment to regional security and demonstrate a unique ability to rapidly deploy overwhelming combat power on short notice.”

The December 30 flight constitutes the third bomber deployment in the region.

In response to the move, the military adviser to Leader of

the Islamic Revolution addressed President Donald Trump directly in a tweet.

Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan warned Trump “not to turn the New Year into a mourning for Americans.”

Analysts say the deployments by the U.S. are intended to provoke a response from Iran so that the outgoing President Donald Trump finds a pretext for war with Iran in order to remain power.

Mark Fitzpatrick, former executive director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, says Trump has “conflicting impulses” in regard to Iran.

“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,” Fitzpatrick tells the Tehran Times.

In part of their letter, the academics say the “declining” U.S. which is on the path to “disintegration” is trying to reconstruct its nostalgia of a superpower by conducting “theatrical movements” in areas near Iran.

It added it is clear to all social, political and security analysts that if the U.S. starts a war it will face serious “racial” and “social” divisions in different cities, especially after the attack on the Capitol which was a scene of violence and death.

In 2019, the IRGC shot down a U.S. Navy's Northrop Grumman MQ4-C Triton drone that had entered Iranian airspace in the Gulf of Oman to gather intelligence, using Sevvom Khordad (Khordad 3) indigenous surface-to-air missile system.

The United States had confirmed that one of its reconnaissance planes was shot down by Iranian air defenses, but denied that it intruded into Tehran's airspace at the time.

Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said at the time that his forces could have also shot down a U.S. P8 aircraft with 35 onboard which was violating Iran's airspace, but decided to shoot down the drone to only send a message to Washington.

“We intended to send a message to American terrorists

in the region,” the brigadier general said on June 21, 2019, adding that his forces had also traced a military P8 aircraft violating the airspace of Iran.

“Along with the American drone was an American P8 aircraft with 35 onboard, and it was also violating our airspace and we could have downed it too,” he said, adding, “But we did not do (shoot down) it, because our aim was to warn the terrorist forces of the U.S.”

General Hajizadeh also stressed on June 22, 2019, that Iran was not after war but was fully ready to defend itself, adding that the fate of the downed U.S. spy drone was waiting for any intruding flying object.

“Our response to anything trespassing Iranian territory is like this, and if such acts of aggression are repeated, our response will also be the same,” Hajizadeh said, adding, “We don't embrace war but we are ready to fully defend the country”.

“We possess a collection of U.S. drones which is a proof that U.S. has violated Iran's airspace and shows that they don't want to respect international law”, Hajizadeh remarked.

“If such an aggression is repeated, we will add other U.S. (military) products to complete this collection,” the military official noted.

“The U.S. measure was in violation of international law and we acted according to our legitimate responsibility,” Hajizadeh said, adding, “It is possible that a U.S. general or some operators were behind this American aggression, we don't know that. But that measure (intruding into Iranian airspace) is a violation of international aviation rules by a spy drone which then received our natural response”.

Meantime, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami stressed that the move should alert Washington officials to stay away.

The incident sent “a clear message” to the U.S. and other enemies that Iran will show a firm and crushing response to any aggression, he stated.

“Borders are our red lines and any enemy which violates them will not go back home and will be annihilated. The only way for enemies is to respect Iran's territorial integrity and national interests,” the major general noted.

Foreign Ministry: U.S. allegation of Iran's link with al-Qaeda sign of desperation

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson has dismissed the false accusations of Iranian ties with al-Qaeda by the outgoing U.S. secretary of state as a sign of Washington's frustration and the failure of its policy of “maximum pressure” on Tehran. Saeed Khatibzadeh, in a statement on Tuesday, dismissed Mike Pompeo's allegation as a rebash of old accusations.

According to the New York Times, Pompeo claimed on Tuesday that al Qaeda's new base of operations is in Iran. According to the Times, Pompeo failed to offer intelligence for his claim.

“They are partners in terrorism, partners in hate,” Pompeo told an audience at the National Press Club in Washington, where he did not take questions from journalists afterward.

Some current and former U.S. officials said there was no intelligence to suggest that Iran was any kind of active headquarters for al-Qaeda.

“Repeating accusations and showing fabricated documents under the name of revealing confidential information by Pompeo, the U.S. secretary of state, in the one week left until the rebellious rule of the Trump regime ends, shows their desperation and the failure of the maximum pressure policy against Iran,” he said, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

Khatibzadeh added, “Resorting to such ploys and threadbare and baseless claims can, by no means, help the terrorist U.S. regime correct its path, which is full of mistakes, and restore the unjustifiable reputation of the officials of this regime”.

“Earlier, Pompeo had, once again, during the time he was the head of the CIA, and in exchange for petrodollars, sought to establish a fabricated link between Iran and al-Qaeda in order to use blackmail and false propaganda to shift responsibility and pressure from U.S. allies, which were the accused in the case of al-Qaeda and support for the

Iran witnessing ‘scandalous and shameful’ end of Trump: Rouhani

Rouhani says U.S. ‘maximum pressure’ policy failed

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the U.S. “maximum pressure campaign” against Iran ended in failure and described Donald Trump's record in the final days of his presidency as “scandalous and shameful” which Iran is witnessing.

“These days do not just mark the end of an administration, but they also mark the failure of a policy that is the policy of maximum pressure against the great nation of Iran. Today is the day of failure of the policy of economic terrorism with which they (Americans) sought to destroy the people's lives,” Rouhani said in a cabinet session on Wednesday morning.

He was referring to the policy adopted by the Trump administration after the U.S. president

withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal on May 8, 2018.

U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iran in an apparent bid to replace the nuclear deal - officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - with what Trump called a “better deal” with Iran, one that would include, among other things, extending the original deal's sunset clauses, curbing Iran's ballistic missile program and imposing limits on its influence in the West Asia region.

With Trump's election loss, this policy is coming to an end, according to Rouhani, who compared Trump's “downfall” to that of Iran's last shah, who fled Iran during the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Rouhani said the Shah's escape from Iran marked the end of despotism. “And today, we are witnessing a rarely seen phenomenon of the downfall of another despot in America,” the Iranian president pointed out.

He added that Iran witnesses “the scandalous and shameful” end of the Trump administration. And this end “showed that bullying, racism and violating the law will not end well,” Rouhani continued.

Rouhani also described Trump as a “big terrorist,” who wanted to topple the Iranian government in three months.

“Over the last three years, our dear and patient people resisted in the face of this big terrorist. They (Americans) wanted to overturn the establishment in a period of three months,

Reporting Pompeo's claims, the Reuters news agency said the U.S. official had made the remarks while any link between the group and the Islamic Republic had been met with “skepticism” even within the U.S. intelligence community and Congress.

The agency called such remarks part of the outgoing U.S. administration's efforts to complicate Biden's potential return to the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that Trump illegally quit in May 2018.

This is not the first time Pompeo was trying to associate the terror group with Iran. Similar to the latest push, however, his previous such attempts lacked any evidence.

The now lame-duck secretary of state has been on the campaign, although all the previous such accusations by Washington, including those made by former president George W. Bush's administration — during which the 9/11 attacks took place — have been discredited. Iranian officials have blasted the U.S. groundless accusations as a means of its trying to obscure its own role in creation and continued existence of such groups.

Washington and many of its Western and regional allies have been identified as the main contributor to the emergence of such barbarous outfits.

Through either military or political intervention, the allies have been sowing such destruction and chaos across much of the region that has turned many regional countries into breeding grounds for terrorism.

September 11 disaster,” he added.

“However, until the end of the tenure of the Trump administration, he failed to make the U.S. and the world's public opinion believe the story he had made up,” the spokesman said.

He stressed that Iranian officials have given the proper response to such blame games and Hollywood-style scenarios through all these years.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, which itself has been a victim of the U.S. state terrorism and the groups it supports, has a brilliant and defensible track record in fighting al-Qaeda and ISIS terrorism, and believes this page of the show staged by the radical camp in the U.S. will not contribute to their thirst for, and addiction to sanctions or acts to trigger tensions,” the spokesperson stated.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister, responded to allegations by Pompeo, saying he is “pathetically ending his disastrous career with more warmongering lies.”

but they were toppled scandalously,” Rouhani asserted, according to state news agency IRNA.

The president noted that Trump was a president who lacked “political apprehension” and was flanked by a “stupid” secretary of state and an “extremist, ignorant” national security advisor.

“He himself pressed ahead with his businessman-style way of thinking and gambling, and we saw how he ended,” Rouhani said of Trump.

Rouhani pointed out that while the Iranian people emerge victorious in the face of U.S. pressures and terrorism the American people face a huge gap inside of America and witness a huge debacle in their social and political lives.

The Pompeo ploy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a sign of inability to prevent the incoming administration from rejoining the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has resorted to what he took from the CIA archives to cook up a new story against Iran.

On Tuesday, Pompeo participated in an event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. to level new accusations against Iran for its alleged links to the al-Qaeda (AQ) terrorist group. In what appeared to be a diplomatic sleight of hand, Pompeo claimed that Iran has become a “new Afghanistan” in terms of hosting al-Qaeda leaders.

“Al-Qaeda has a new home base: it is the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result, bin Laden’s wicked creation is poised to gain strength and capabilities. We ignore this Iran-al-Qaeda nexus at our own peril. We need to acknowledge it. We must confront it. Indeed, we must defeat it,” the hawkish top U.S. diplomat claimed.

Pompeo pointed out that the United States has taken drastic measures against al-Qaeda since the 9/11 attacks. These measures, Pompeo claimed, have pushed the al-Qaeda members to search for a new haven.

“That effort drove al-Qaeda to search for a safer haven, and they found one. The Islamic Republic of Iran was the perfect choice,” he claimed.

The outgoing U.S. secretary of state went so far as to say that Iran still has links to al-Qaeda.

Pompeo did not present any evidence to support his allegations, and, in fact, some of these allegations are nothing new. However, they elicited a strong response from Iran and Russia.

Iran rejected Pompeo’s claims as “warmongering lies.”

“From designating Cuba to fictitious Iran ‘declassifications’ and AQ claims, Mr. ‘ve lie, cheat, steal’ is pathetically ending his disastrous career with more warmongering lies. No one is fooled. All 9/11 terrorists came from @SecPompeo’s favorite ME destinations; NONE from Iran,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted in response to Pompeo’s remarks.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry also rejected the allegations as “baseless,” calling on



Pompeo to “die of anger.”

“Resorting to such ploys and threadbare and baseless claims can, by no means, help the terrorist US regime correct its path, which is full of mistakes, and restore the unjustifiable image of the officials of this regime,” Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran’s Foreign Ministry, said in a statement. “As martyr Beheshti aptly put it, Mr. Pompeo! Be angry and die of this anger,” the spokesman continued.

Pompeo accused Iran of supporting al-Qaeda while ignoring his predecessor’s admission that it was the U.S. that “created” and “funded” al-Qaeda. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said many times that the U.S. has created and funded al-Qaeda to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan.

“Let’s remember here that people we are fighting today, we funded 20 years ago. And we did it because we were locked in the struggle with the Soviet Union; they invaded Afghanistan. And we did not want to see them control Central Asia and we went to work. And it was President Reagan in partnership with the Congress led by Democrats, who said you know what? Sounds like a pretty good idea. Let’s deal with the ISIS and the Pakistani military, and let’s go recruit these mujahidin. And

great, let’s get some to come from Saudi Arabia and other places, importing their Wahhabi brand of Islam, so that we can go beat the Soviet Union. And guess what? They retreated. They lost billions of dollars, and it led to the collapse of the Soviet Union,” Clinton infamously said testifying before a Congressional committee.

But why does Pompeo ignore these facts? The question is simple: because he hates the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – and wants to make sure that the incoming Biden administration would not be able to return to it.

This was on full display during his Tuesday speech. Pompeo sought to use the alleged links between Iran and al-Qaeda to warn against reviving the JCPOA. He claimed that before 2015, Iranian authorities had strictly restricted the movement of al-Qaeda members living inside of Iran, “putting them under virtual house arrest.”

“But I have to say today that is not the situation. Indeed, everything changed in 2015 – the same year that the Obama administration and the E3 – France, Germany, and Britain – were in the middle of finalizing the JCPOA,” Pompeo noted.

He then tried to imply that Iran may

use its links to al-Qaeda to put pressure on JCPOA signatories to revive the nuclear deal.

“Imagine that al-Qaeda starts carrying out attacks at Iran’s behest, even if the control is not perfect. Who is to say that this isn’t the next form of blackmail to pressure countries back into a nuclear deal?” Pompeo asked.

Pompeo is clearly trying to torpedo any future effort to revive the JCPOA. Over the past few years, he has taken many measures to ensure that the nuclear deal will not be revived. Pompeo led the Trump administration’s efforts to change the logic of sanctions and, in some cases, reimpose previously imposed sanctions under non-nuclear-related authorities, including the U.S.’s counterterrorism sanctions authority. The main purpose of these measures was to create what pro-Trump experts call a “wall of sanctions,” a strategy that aims to make it harder for the Biden administration to lift sanctions against Iran.

Establishing links between Iran and al-Qaeda may be intended to make it even more difficult for the incoming U.S. administration to lift sanctions that were re-imposed under United States counterterrorism sanctions authority. Pompeo may have succeeded in doing so.

In his recent interview with the website of the Leader’s office, Zarif said that a U.S. return to the JCPOA will not be enough anymore because the U.S. has imposed pre-JCPOA sanctions and changed their logic to terrorism-related authorities, which made the lifting of sanctions even more difficult.

According to Zarif, when the JCPOA was negotiated there was a different kind of sanctions imposed on Iran and the JCPOA has outlined how these sanctions would be lifted but the situation has changed after the Trump administration pulled out of the JCPOA.

“Over the past four years, Trump worked to hollow out the JCPOA and impose sanctions that even if the U.S. returns to the JCPOA, they will remain in place. For example, they (the Trump administration) removed nuclear-related sanctions on our Central Bank and Petroleum Ministry and imposed sanctions on them under counterterrorism authority. They basically changed the logic of sanctions,” Zarif said.

Iran rejects Pompeo’s ‘preposterous’ AQ allegations

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Alireza Miryousefi, spokesman for Iran’s mission to the United Nations, has responded to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s allegations that Iran had links to the al-Qaeda (AQ) terrorist group.

“These preposterous, false accusations are nothing new, and only reinforce the fact that the Trump administration is desperately continuing their failed policy of Iran-bashing,” Miryousefi told Newsweek shortly after Pompeo accused Iran of having ties with al-Qaeda on Tuesday.

In remarks delivered before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, Pompeo claimed that Iran has become a new base for al-Qaeda.

“Al-Qaeda has a new home base: it is the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result, bin Laden’s wicked creation is poised to gain strength and capabilities. We ignore this Iran-al-Qaeda nexus at our own peril. We need to acknowledge it. We must confront it. Indeed, we must defeat it,” Pompeo claimed without presenting any evidence.

According to the U.S. secretary of state, the U.S. has worked to confront al-Qaeda since the 9/11 attacks. “That effort drove al-Qaeda to search for a safer haven, and they found one. The Islamic Republic of Iran was the perfect choice,” Pompeo claimed. “I would say Iran is, indeed, the new Afghanistan – as the key geographic hub for al-Qaeda – but it’s actually worse.”

However, Pompeo acknowledged that “there’s no evidence Iran helped plan or had foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks.” Miryousefi strongly rejected the Pompeo claims, saying Iran is a bulwark against such organizations, which Tehran has also fought in countries like Iraq and Syria.

“It is a well-known fact that Iran was and is the extremist terror groups’ most hated enemy and that the founder of al-Qaeda and many of its followers hail from what is the U.S.’s close ally in the Middle East,” the Iranian diplomat



said. “Needless to say, U.S. officials have repeatedly acknowledged their role in creating extremist groups in the region, including al-Qaeda.”

Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has responded to his American counterpart’s allegations by saying that Pompeo is propagating warmongering allegations.

“From designating Cuba to fictitious Iran ‘declassifications’ and AQ claims, Mr. ‘we lie, cheat, steal’ is pathetically ending his disastrous career with more warmongering lies. No one is fooled. All 9/11 terrorists came from @SecPompeo’s favorite ME destinations; NONE from Iran,” the chief Iranian diplomat said in a tweet.

Pompeo also published a string of tweets against Iran, repeating the same allegations he made at the National Press Club, a move that elicited a strong response from Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran’s Foreign Ministry.

Saeed Khatibzadeh said Pompeo’s tweets are the result of his “hysterical anger” at the end of his embarrassing term in office as U.S. secretary of state as well as his anger caused by the failure of Washington’s maximum pressure policy

against Iran.

“As martyr Beheshti aptly put it, Mr. Pompeo! Be angry and die of this anger,” he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Khatibzadeh also put out a statement rejecting Pompeo’s “unfounded claim that Tehran has links to the al-Qaeda terrorist group.”

“Repeating accusations and showing fabricated documents under the name of revealing confidential information by Pompeo, the U.S. secretary of state, in the one week left until the rebellious rule of the Trump regime ends, shows their desperation and the failure of the ‘maximum pressure’ policy against Iran,” the statement said.

Khatibzadeh added, “Resorting to such ploys and threadbare and baseless claims can, by no means, help the terrorist U.S. regime correct its path, which is full of mistakes, and restore the unjustifiable image of the officials of this regime. Earlier, Pompeo had, once again, during the time he was the head of the CIA, and in exchange for petrodollars, sought to establish a fabricated link between Iran and al-Qaeda in order to use chantage and false propaganda to shift responsibility and pressure from U.S. allies, which were the accused in the case of al-Qaeda and support for the September 11 disaster.”

Russia’s Foreign Ministry also issued a statement denouncing Pompeo’s allegations against Iran as “baseless,” according to a Sputnik News report. Washington’s claims about Iran becoming a “safe haven” for al-Qaeda are baseless, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Zamir Kabulov said in a statement on Wednesday.

“It seems that Mr. Pompeo, at the end [of Donald Trump’s presidency], wants to do something else to hurt Iran. But this is absolutely unsubstantiated and unreasonable. There is absolutely no information,” Kabulov said when asked if Moscow had any information about Tehran’s possible links to al-Qaeda.

10,000 nurses hail Leader’s ‘wise’ stance on Covid-19 vaccine

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — About 10,000 Iranian nurses have launched a campaign to thank the Leader of Islamic Revolution for his “wise and strong” positions on the Covid-19 vaccine and the issues faced by nurses and health workers in the country.

In a statement on Wednesday, the nurse voiced support for the Leader’s positions on the coronavirus vaccine, saying that they are ready to execute his orders.

“We nurses not only support the Leader’s recent stances on the coronavirus vaccine and the fundamental issues facing the nursing field and the healthcare system’s infrastructure, but we also consider ourselves to be the executives, advocates, and followers of our dear Leader’s orders,” the statement said, according to a Press TV report.

The nurses hailed the Leader’s support for a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Iranian scientists, describing the vaccine as “a source

of national pride and power, and a guarantor of the entire nation’s health, especially that of medical workers.”

They also expressed discontent about importing coronavirus vaccine, calling such a move a “historic disgrace” that would only serve to complete foreign research projects.

The statement was issued on behalf of a campaign called “Thank you, My Leader,” which aims to express gratitude to the Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

During his January 8 speech, the Leader praised the Iranian-developed Covid-19 vaccine as “a source of pride,” underlining that no one should deny the breakthrough.

“This should not be denied. It is a source of dignity and pride for the country. Of course, they are working on vaccines in different ways, but in one case, they tested it on humans and it has proved to be successful. Some people should not try to deny it,” the Leader

said. “There are some individuals who cast doubts on every great feat accomplished in the country. When our youth built nuclear centrifuges and when I mentioned them in my public speeches a few times, some scientific personalities wrote letters to me saying, ‘Aqa, do not be deceived by these claims. They cannot do such a thing.’ They rejected it downright saying that it was not possible, but you witnessed what happened and what achievements we achieved.”

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out that Iranian researchers have tested their vaccine on humans and they will develop an even better and more effective vaccine.

He also prohibited importing American and British Covid-19 vaccines due to their unreliable testing.

“Importing American and British vaccines into the country is forbidden. I have said this to officials and I am saying it publicly now. If the Americans had managed to produce a



vaccine, this corona disaster would not have occurred in their own country. A few days ago, they registered 4,000 deaths in the course of 24 hours. If they know how to produce a vaccine and if their Pfizer company can produce a vaccine, why would they give it to us? Well, they can use it for themselves so that they will not have so many deaths and so many victims. The same is true of England. Therefore, they are not trustworthy. I do not really trust them,” the Leader stated.

SPORTS

Iran football training camp to start March 17

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran football federation announced that the training camp for the National Team as part of preparation for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers would begin on March 17 in Tehran.

The ‘Persian Leopards’ will first host Hong Kong national football team on March 25 in Tehran.

Dragon Skocic’s men will travel to Phnom Penh to meet Cambodia five days later.

Iran, who sit third in Group C, will also host Bahrain and Iraq on June 7 and 15, respectively.

The eight group winners of the World Cup qualification’s group stage and four best runners-up will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the second round of the joint qualifiers will compete in a separate competition for the remaining 12 slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

The FIFA World Cup in Qatar will run from Nov. 21 to Dec. 18, 2022.

Faghani among World’s Best Referees of Decade

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian referee Alireza Faghani is among the 19 best men referees of the 2011-2020 decade.

The IFFHS has devised an equitable method for determining THE WORLD’S BEST MAN REFEREE OF THE DECADE 2011-2020. The Federation has taken in consideration the TOP 20 of each yearly ranking of each category concerned and allocated points to each place. So, the first placed received 20 points, the second placed 19 points, the third placed 18 points. And one point for the 20th place. If the annual ranking comprised fewer than 20, no point will be awarded for the unoccupied places.

Adding the points from the individual years provides a World Ranking for the Period 2011 – 2020.

Germany’s Top Referee Felix Brych is The World’s Best Man Referee of the Decade. The 45 years old Brych, who was one time The World’s Best Referee of the year in 2017, is known for his regularity (second in 2019 and 2020, third in 2014, fourth in 2013, 2015 and 2018), so he became a deserved winner with only one point more than Cuneyt Cakir from Turkey and eight more than Netherland’s Bjorn Kuipers. Two Referees with a regularity and a personality in the same way.

Faghani has been recently chosen as the best Asian referee by the IFFHS.

Ranking:

1. Felix BRYCH (Germany – 141 points)
2. Cuneyt CAKIR (Turkey -140 points)
3. Bjorn KUIPERS (Netherlands – 133 points)
4. Nicola RIZZOLI (Italy – 113 points)
5. Nestor PITANA (Argentina – 88 points)
6. Howard WEBB (England – 76 points)
7. Damir SKOMINA (Slovenia - 76 points)
8. Martin ATKINSON (England – 69 points)
9. Viktor KASSAI (Hungary – 56 points)
10. Antonio MATEU LAHOZ (Spain – 54 points)
11. Gianluca ROCCHI (Italy – 53 points)
12. Marc CLATTENBURG (England- 52 points)
13. Pedro PROENCA (Portugal - 49 points)
14. Carlos V. CARBALLO (Spain – 47 points)
15. Milorad MAZIC (Serbia – 35 points)
16. Ravshan IRMATOV (Uzbekistan - 33 points)
17. Jonas ERIKSSON (Sweden – 30 points)
18. Clement TURPIN (France – 30 points)
19. Alireza FAGHANI (Iran – 23 points)

Asian Junior Handball Championship relocated to Bahrain

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 17th Asian Men’s Junior Handball Championship has been moved to Bahrain from Iran due to coronavirus fears.

The competition was original scheduled to be held in Shiraz from March 20 to 29 but the Asian Handball Federation (AHF) has changed the host.

Islamic Republic of Iran Handball Federation (IRIHF) President Alireza Pakdel had already said the AHF will not change the host but coronavirus pandemic has complicated the situation in Iran.

“We did our best to keep the hosting rights of the tournament but many Asian countries have shown reluctance to travel to Shiraz,” Pakdel said.

“We were completely ready to host the competition but it was not in our hands,” he added.

The top four teams from the tournament will qualify for the Junior World Championship which is scheduled to be held from June 22 to July 21 in Hungarian capital Budapest.

Iran has recorded more than 1.3 million coronavirus cases, resulting in over 56,000 deaths, but the situation has reportedly improved in the Middle East nation.

Taremi scores as FC Porto move on to cup quarterfinals

FC Porto defeated Nacional 4-2 after extra time in the round of 16 of the Portuguese Cup.

The win confirms qualification to the ‘quarters’ of the competition.

In Funchal, FC Porto took the advantage on 22nd minute with a goal from Luis Diaz.

Nacional scored the equalizer through Brian Róchez (25th), and then took the lead through Brayan Riascos (62nd).

On the 88th minute of the match, the Madeiran team were reduced to 10 men due to the expulsion of Rui Correia (65th). FC Porto substitute Evanilson tied the game with the equalizer on the 88th minute taking the match into extra time.

During extra time, Sérgio Oliveira returned the advantage to the ‘dragons’ on the 101st minute.

Mehdi Taremi extended the score on the 115th minute.

The win sees FC Porto qualify for the quarter-finals, and will now face the winner of Gil Vicente, from the first division, and Academico de Viseu from the Championship of Portugal.

(Source: Wort.lu)

Rouhani to inaugurate 60 projects worth €598m in free, special zones today

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani will inaugurate 60 projects worth 30 trillion rials (about €585 million) plus €13 million in some of the free trade zones and special economic zones of the country through video conference on Thursday, Morteza Bank, the secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council, announced.

Bank said that the projects to be put into operation in two free zones and four special zones will create jobs for 3,223 persons, IRNA reported.

Of the 60 mentioned projects, 18 projects worth 8.175 trillion rials (about €154 million) will be put into operation in Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone in the north of Iran, the managing director of Anzali Free Zone Organization announced.

The projects will be put into operation in the industrial-production sector as well as port and tourism infrastructures of the zone, Mohammad-Vali Rouzbehan said, adding the projects, which are implemented through private sector's investment, have created direct and indirect jobs for 1,193 persons.

Located in Gilan Province, north of Iran, Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone is the sole free zone in the southern part of the Caspian Sea with an area of 9,400 hectares and 40 kilometers shoreline.

It is one of the country's seven free trade-industrial zones. The data released by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs show that 89.843 trillion rials (about \$2.139 billion) of domestic investment has been made in Iran's special economic zones during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), which has been 173 percent more than the figure of its preceding year.



The development of free trade zones and special economic zones through production, exports and investment is one of the goals of creating these zones in the country.

To achieve this target, different measures were taken in the past year, such as attracting innovative and technological units to these areas, and introducing investment opportunities and advantages in these zones.

Morteza Bank has recently said that 1,000 trillion rials (about \$24 billion) plus \$1.5 billion of foreign investment is forecast to be made in free trade zones and special economic zones of the country, creating 102,500 jobs by August next year.

The job opportunities will be created through implementing 320 development projects in free trade zones and 200 projects in special economic zones by August next year, which marks the end of the administration of President Hassan Rouhani, Bank stated.

More than 40 percent of Iran's exports is done through the country's free trade zones and special economic zones, Bank said in last September.

The value of exports from Iran's free trade zones and special economic zones stood at \$17 billion during the past Iranian calendar year.

There are currently seven free trade zones and 25 special economic zones in Iran.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the Persian Gulf islands of Kish and Qeshm.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azerbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azerbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

Considering the important role that the free trade zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing the development of its existing zones and establishment of new zones as well.

More development measures in this field have been taking since the U.S. re-imposition of sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as Iran is reducing its dependence on the oil income while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

Many strides made for increasing activities in the free zones have played a significant part in boosting the country's non-oil exports and brought prosperity in the other economic sectors.

Zinc export stands at \$189m in 9 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's zinc export stood at \$189 million during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The IRICA data put the price of each ton of the exported zinc at \$2,226.

During the first nine months of this year, zinc was among the 30 most important export goods in the mining and mineral industries after steel and copper.

Zinc is used in alloys such as brass, nickel, silver, and aluminum, and also in galvanizing steel structures. Furthermore, the metal is widely used in the manufacture of products such as paint, rubber, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, plastic, ink, soap, batteries, textile, and electrical equipment.

According to the United States Geological Survey, Iran holds the world's largest zinc, ninth largest copper, 10th largest iron ore, fifth largest gypsum and barite, and 10th largest uranium reserves.

Aluminum ingot production climbs 51%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of the aluminum ingot in Iran rose 51.2 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.

The data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry show that the country's aluminum ingot output stood at 308,000 tons during the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was 203,800 tons in the corresponding time span of the previous year.

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

Iran's major aluminum producers produced 275,716 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The country's aluminum ingot production in the past year fell eight percent in com-



parison to the figure for its preceding year. The data show that among the country's

top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance

Iran, Iraq ink economic co-op MOU

1 → In addition to establishing a shipping corridor and increasing the number of Iraqi aircrafts passing over Iran, good agreements were reached to review the requests, Ardakanian stated.

In the first day of the meeting on Tuesday, which he co-chaired with the Iraqi Trade Minister Alla Ahmed Al-Jubouri, Ardakanian had stated that the two countries' annual trade is going to be increased to \$20 billion.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to support the export of Iranian engineering and technical services to Iraq by establishing a joint investment fund," he said, adding that new agreements are going to be signed between the two countries in the fields of water and energy.

Al-Jubouri, for his part, 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.

Iranian, Iraqi private sectors discuss expansion of ties

During a meeting between Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), and Abdel Razzak El-Zouhairi, the chairman of the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce, the two sides explored the ways for the expansion of relation between the two countries' private sectors and removal of existing barriers in this due.

As published on the ICCIMA website, addressing the meeting, which was held at the place of ICCIMA on Tuesday, the ICCIMA chairman stressed the readiness of the private sector to expand trade relations with Iraq and called for resolving border, customs, banking and business visa issuance problems.

"The Iranian people are very interested in Iraq and Iraqi people, and we must use this exceptional relationship to develop trade and economic relations", he said, adding, "As a representative of the private sector, we are interested in developing and improving our economic relations with Iraq, which will contribute to the level of public welfare of the people of the two countries."

He continued, "Fortunately, both the governments of Iran and Iraq have a good view of the development strategy and we, as the private sector, can use these opportunities for new investments in both countries."

El-Zouhairi, for his part, mentioned the economic opportunities between the two countries, and said, "There are many



investment opportunities in addition to trade opportunities in agriculture and industry sectors. We can work together in fields such as building factories."

"The volume of trade between the two countries is very low considering the existing potential and opportunities. Of course, I am not against imports and exports, but I believe that investment opportunities should be created and strengthened between the two countries", he added.

El-Zouhairi visited Iran in a trip of an Iraqi high delegation who arrived in Tehran on Tuesday to take part in the two countries' fourth Joint Economic Committee meeting.

Annual export to Afghanistan expected to reach \$5b in next calendar year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's annual export to Afghanistan is anticipated to hit \$5 billion in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2021-March 2022), the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) stated.

Saying that annual export to Afghanistan has surpassed \$3 billion, Hamid Zadboum stressed that boosting exports is one of the bases of resistance economy.

The director-general of TPO's Asia-Pacific Office has recently said that balancing international trade, especially with Afghanistan is



one of the major strategies of Iran in foreign trade, noting that TPO's goal is to establish a balanced trade between the two countries.

Special strategies have been adopted by the Trade Promotion Organization for balancing trade with Afghanistan and for resolving problems in this field, Reza Seyed-Agazadeh stated, adding that the issues and demands of Afghan businessmen will also be reviewed in a special working group in this organization to take the necessary measures and resolve their issues.

Having shared historical, cultural, political, and economic backgrounds, Iran and Afghanistan have been allies for many years and the strategic cooperation between the

two countries has been broadened especially over the past two decades.

As the TPO head has announced, the 14th exclusive exhibition of Iranian products will be held in Afghanistan's capital Kabul in the next Iranian calendar month (begins on January 20).

Holding this exhibition after a period of about one year due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions is a great opportunity to enter the Afghan market and reconnect with old customers and find new markets, Zadboum has stated.

Cellphone price falls 12-20% in recent days

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The price of cellphone has dropped 12-20 percent in Iran in recent days, the spokesman of the Iranian Association of Cellphone, Tablet and Accessories Importers announced on Wednesday.

Iran's imports of mobile phones registered a 27 percent growth in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020) as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Some 8,617,438 cellphones worth over \$1.34 billion were imported into the country in the mentioned period, placing the commodity at second among the



top imported items, according to the Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi.

The official noted that 6,779,012 mobile phones were cleared from the country's customs during the previous year's same nine months.

The value of the imported products in the said nine months also increased by 65 percent compared to the previous year, Latifi said.

Mobile phones were the second most valuable commodity items imported into the country in the period under review.

Washing machine manufacturing rises 59%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Manufacturing of washing machines in Iran has increased 59.1 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, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data show that 769,400 washing machines have been manufactured in the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was 483,600 in the corresponding period of the previous year.

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

The secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran has recently said that domestic production of equipment and parts used in the home ap-

pliance industry has saved Iran \$220 million.

Currently, Iranian producers have indigenized the knowledge for manufacturing 70-75 percent of the country's home appliance needs, Abbas Hashemi said in a press conference in late December.

According to Hashemi, the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran has established a parts manufacturing department, the purpose of which is to promote the position of component makers in the association to deepen domestic manufacturing of the required parts and equipment in this industry while providing a platform for home appliance manufacturers and component makers to stay connected.

Iran has various comparative advantages in this industry in terms of supplying raw materials such as steel sheets, petrochemicals, copper and brass sections, the abundance and low costs of energy and workforce in addition to the strategic position of the country, com-

pared to other countries in the region, he said.

"So, the development of exports to countries in the region and to the neighboring countries is possible even despite the strong regional competitors," Hashemi added.

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

The home appliances sector has not been an exemption and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the previous calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020) this industry's production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

Last month, the spokesman of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran said with foreign companies leaving the country's home appliance market the pro-



duction of domestic companies has increased and the unemployment rate in this sector has significantly declined.

While it was expected that the home appliance industry, like some other industries, would suffer from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, the inauguration of several new projects in this industry showed that the industry is expanding strongly and moving forward, Hamidreza Qaznavi said on December 28.

Gen. Soleimani was architect of the model for expanding Iran's influence: MP

1 → According to all of Gen. Soleimani's friends and foes, he was a person with strategic insight and he was the one who designed a model for expanding the Islamic Republic's influence after the Iran-Iraq war.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, a lot of restrictions were imposed on Iran including an 8-year war, which was in line with the dictates of the domination system.

The slogan of exporting the revolution would have expanded the influence of the Islamic Republic much sooner if it had not faced the restrictions imposed by the Western superpowers at the beginning of the road.

For this reason, the Western states tried to derail the Islamic Republic from its main slogan (exporting the revolution), adopting a deterrent strategy (against Iran). The war that Saddam imposed on Iran must be understood within this framework.

After the 8-year war, Iran began to expand its influence. A large part of the influence that the Islamic Republic has gained in the region is the result of the thoughts and efforts made by Martyr Qassem Soleimani.

Our sphere of influence in its first layer extends from the Chinese border with Afghanistan to the Mediterranean Sea, and then extends from the Russian borders with the Caucasus and Central Asia to the Gulf of Aden.

We have other layers; the second layer extends to Africa and the third to Latin America.

Martyr Soleimani succeeded to expand Iran's influence by applying his strategic idea.

How do you see the position of Martyr Soleimani and Iran when it comes to a clash of civilizations?

I have said many times that I see all the equations of the world after 2011 in the context of the battle of civilizations.

Both the war in Ukraine, which started in 2011 and of course stopped, and the wars and bloodshed in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen can be understood in this framework.

Discussing the clash of civilizations, Samuel Huntington basically claims that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world is divided into eight civilizations, where the future of the world will be determined by the battle of these eight civilizations.



Unlike Francis Fukuyama, Huntington does not believe that the world is moving towards "the end of history" and the triumph of the Western liberal democracy.

In fact, Huntington is fundamentally critical of Fukuyama's theory who emphasizes "a transition from state-centered to civilization-centered." In a sense, we are passing state-centered geopolitics towards a civilization-centered geo-culture.

According to Huntington's theory, among these eight civilizations, three of them are important in the final confrontation, the first of which is the Chinese-led Confucian civilization, claiming that the China acts as the core-state.

The other important civilization is a Western civilization which is represented by the U.S. as its core-state and the third Islamic civilization.

Huntington does not specify representative of Islamic civilization, but from some evidence he has presented and due to the consolidation of ties between Iran and China in that period, Iran can be considered one of the options. In fact, Iran is a serious option for the representation of Islamic civilization.

Nevertheless, Huntington's theory can be criticized from two perspectives: one is Edward Said's approach, which calls into question Huntington's holistic view. Edward Said has an article called "Clash of Ignorance" in which he sees the holistic concept as fundamentally at odds with the anthropological approach. Huntington put forward a "whole" that contains many

contradictions within itself.

The second criticism I make is that Huntington is optimistic about civilization and has not taken into consideration the Orthodox civilization at all, which may have been due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the absence of post-Soviet Russia. But today we see three civilizations that have risen up against Western civilization on the fault line in Syria and Iraq. (According to Huntington's theory, violence caused by the clash of civilizations usually occurs along these fault lines).

These three civilizations (namely the centrality of Islamic civilization in Iran, the Confucian civilization in China, and the Orthodox civilization in Russia) have worked closely and cooperated with one another.

In a role sharing suggested by Soleimani, China helped economically, Russia provided air support and Iran fought in the battlefield.

The alliance of these three civilizations against the Western counterpart changed the equations in Syria. The bleeding that occurred in the fault lines is also a sign of a change in the world order. We see in history that the change of order has always been accompanied by great collapses such as the collapse of empires and bloody events and wars.

Therefore, we see that the unipolar order which was ruling the globe after the collapse of the Soviet Union is moving towards a multipolar order. The future of world order depends on this battle, and, of course, this

battle is not over yet, but the decline of America is evident. This is admitted by American strategists, including Brzezinski, who said "we are no more hegemon."

The region in recent decades has witnessed the emergence of new powers like China, Russia, India, and Iran which are important players on the global stage.

On the other hand, the spread of Corona reinforced "nationalism" and accelerated the formation of a future multipolar order.

In all the equations we mentioned above, it was Martyr Soleimani who represented the role of Iran. The main idea belongs to Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, but the agent of these equations was Martyr Soleimani.

It seems that Gen. Soleimani was not just a military general. He also advanced strategic ideas in social and cultural arenas as well. What is your comment?

Martyr Soleimani's goals for expanding Iran's sphere of influence within a civilizational equation have basically two dimensions: a soft dimension and a hard one.

The hard dimension is represented in his military moves and the overall power of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Of course, I consider Martyr Tehrani Moghaddam (father of Iran's missile program), the symbol of Iran's hard power, because of his non-stop efforts to develop Iran's missile technology.

But Martyr Soleimani, along with his role in strengthening Iran's hard power, should be seen as a symbol of the soft power of the Islamic Republic and Islamic civilization. Gen. Soleimani represented the soft power of Iran by finding and strengthening socio-political movements in the region based on local cultures, especially Islamic culture.

In all places that are considered Iran's sphere of influence, we find Iranian cultural impact. Therefore, Martyr Soleimani made every effort to find and strengthen common cultural affinities.

Martyr Soleimani's approach is a "soft power" policy in various fields. For example, in the natural disasters that occurred inside Iran, we see that Martyr Soleimani was appearing as a volunteer force and serving the people.

One of the reasons that Gen. Soleimani was loved by Iranians and people of the region was that he won the hearts.

Art is most effective way to introduce a country and its people: writer

1 → Are you familiar with Iranian literature and Persian novels?

A: When I think of Iranian literature, the first thing that comes to my mind is Tales of One Thousand and One Nights. And Leyla and Mecnun. Furug Farruhzad has a special place in my heart since I love poetry very recently. I think Iranian literature has a very strong background. In fact, I feel this for every literature that rests on the public and its epics. Nevertheless, I would like to follow Iranian literature more closely. Tehran is one of the places I want to see. Maybe, after the pandemic is over, it will be possible to come and meet Iranian readers, meet writers, who knows.

Can you introduce the contemporary approaches of the Turkish novel to the Persian reader?

We can say that Contemporary Turkish Literature showed a different orientation after 2010. This date is also my entry year into literature. I first met the readers by writing a fantastic trilogy and the Gunebakan Trilogy I wrote was the first trilogy written by a female writer in my country. Fantastic literature, surrealist movement, and science fiction have influenced the literature of recent years, especially both readers and writers of the new generation. With Orhan Pamuk taking the Nobel, the world started to take a closer look at Turkish literature.



Our literature has always been a mirror of society.

What do Iranian and Turkish literatures have in common? Do you think our ties are limited to Jalaluddin Rumi only?

I don't think Mevlana is the only connection, but Mevlana is a very important thinker. It is obvious that he is a name well ahead of his age. It is only now that people have begun to fully understand it. In addition, I think the importance we attach to fairy tales, the tradition of folk epics, and oral storytelling make us close.

After all, we are fighting for survival against the world's giants in a region where the world is different and life is difficult. From time to time, problems arise that cause big skidding in both countries. There is, of course, a union of belief. I also think that the people of both countries are people who like to think about the world. The fact that we have a deep-rooted literary tradition emphasizes this.

What is the role of mysticism in Turkish literature and novels? Where does this mysticism come from?

A: Mysticism, if you ask me, is a trend that has its origins in fairy tales. I grew up with oral tales I listened to from my grandmother. This led me to write my first novel based on a fantastic school. Anatolia has always been a place that is not content with what is visible, attributes different meanings to nature, and thinks between dimensions. But where science has come has brought us to the point where reality and surreal can be separated with a very fine line. Quantum physics in particular points to things that perhaps we've always heard in fairy tales. Anything imaginable has the potential to come true. In this context, how can we decide what is mystical and what is real? As a literary writer, what I have to do is create meaningful stories for people to ask the right questions, at this point.

National Guard troops deployed to secure Capitol for Biden inauguration will be armed

U.S. National Guard forces currently being deployed to Washington, DC to help strengthen security around the Capitol building complex for Inauguration Day will be armed, The New York Times cited unnamed Defense Department officials as saying.

They referred to a decision by Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy who earlier allegedly said those National Guard troop stationed around the Capitol on 20 January will carry weapons.

Earlier this week, the Pentagon authorised up to 15,000 National Guard personnel from across the country to be deployed to Washington to support law enforcement before and during Biden's inauguration.

YouTube suspends Trump's channel after violating policy on inciting violence

Alphabet Inc's YouTube said it has suspended Donald Trump's channel as it violated policies for inciting violence after last week's assault on the U.S. Capitol by the president's supporters.

Online platforms and social media companies are distancing themselves from, and taking action against, those that encouraged or engaged in the violence in Washington, DC.

Biden Nominates ex-U.S. envoy to the UN Samantha Power as USAID administrator

Joe Biden has named Samantha Power as his choice to lead the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"Power will rally the international community and work with our partners to confront the biggest challenges of our time — including COVID-19, climate change, global poverty, and democratic backsliding", the official statement from his transition team said.

Biden praised Power as "a world-renowned voice of conscience and moral clarity".

Power was born in London and spent part of her childhood in Ireland until her parents moved to the U.S. in 1979. She graduated from Yale and worked as a war correspondent during the war in Yugoslavia. In 2003, she received a Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction for her book "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide", which argued in favor of the so-called "responsibility to protect" doctrine, supporting humanitarian interventions by the U.S.

Luxembourg, EU snub Pompeo in final Europe trip, diplomats say

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo cancelled his Europe trip at the last minute on Tuesday after Luxembourg's foreign minister and top European Union officials declined to meet with him, European and U.S. diplomats familiar with the matter said.

The extraordinary snub of the top U.S. diplomat, first reported by Reuters, came days after the storming of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump, an unprecedented attack on American democracy that stunned many world leaders and U.S. allies.

Pompeo, a close ally of Trump, had sought to meet Jean Asselborn in Luxembourg, a small but wealthy NATO ally, before meeting EU leaders and the bloc's top diplomat in Brussels, three people close to the planning told Reuters.

Resistance News

EU, OIC urge Israel to drop illegal expansionist constructions in West Bank

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — The European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have condemned the Israeli regime's plan to advance the construction of hundreds of more settler units in the occupied West Bank in an apparent attempt to propel such land grab projects shortly before pro-settlement US President Donald Trump leaves office.

"We call on Israel to stop these actions and focus on resuming dialogue rather than building illegal settlements," the Lead Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Commission, Peter Stano, said in a statement on Tuesday.

He said, "Our firm position on building of settlements does not change, as they are illegal under international law. They represent obstacles to the peace process and the two-state solution to establish an independent Palestinian state and a barrier to building confidence between the two parties."

Lebanon files complaint with UN Security Council over Israeli violations

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Lebanese caretaker Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbe has filed a complaint with the UN Security Council (UNSC) and UN Secretary-General António Guterres against the Israeli regime's repeated violations of the Arab country's sovereignty.

The complaint, lodged through Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations Amal Mudallali on Tuesday, pointed to "the recurrent and dangerous airspace violations carried out over the past few days," describing them as "a flagrant violation of Security Council Resolution 1701."

"This requires the Security Council to condemn Israel for these violations and put an end to them immediately in order to preserve stability, security, and peace in the region," it said.

Moreover, caretaker Defense Minister Zeina Akar on Tuesday vehemently condemned the Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty, Press TV reported.

"Since the beginning of last week, Lebanon's airspace has witnessed intensive Israeli enemy overflights at low very altitudes, which constitute a blatant violation of the Lebanese sovereignty, and have caused panic among Lebanese citizens, especially children," she said in a statement.

Trump, tech and TV have throttled press freedom, journalists say

U.S. President Donald Trump emboldened other leaders to quash press freedom, his message amplified by tech platforms and a mainstream media which did not know how to respond, three leading journalists and campaigners said.

CNN's Christiane Amanpour, Maria Ressa, who heads a Philippine news website known for its scrutiny of President Rodrigo Duterte, and Sonny Swe, CEO of Frontier Myanmar, told a Reuters Next panel that press freedom had deteriorated sharply.

Ressa, who has faced criminal prosecutions for her reporting, likened the arrival of the major tech platforms to an atom bomb going off in the media ecosystem, with readers manipulated by algorithms towards ever more incendiary news, Reuters reported.

Amanpour, the chief international anchor on CNN, said broadcasters and newspapers also had to look at the role they had played

after they reported comments and news based on who had said them, regardless of whether they were true.

"We should have dropped the mic a long time ago," she told the panel on press freedom around the world, adding that citizens also have to start taking much more responsibility for what they consume.

Rights groups have warned that press freedom is in peril in many parts of the world, with journalists harassed by police, the judiciary, politicians and protesters on the streets.

In 2020, the United Nations accused Trump's White House of mounting an "on-slaught" against the media which, it said, had led to a very negative "Trump effect" on press freedom elsewhere.

Reacting to the report, the White House said at the time that it expected all news to be "fair and accurate", adding that Trump

was "not going to back down from calling out lies".

Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook had previously taken a light touch to policing posts from world leaders, arguing that people have a right to see their statements and it is in the public interest.

But the storming of the U.S. Capitol last week has prompted a rethink, with Twitter banning Trump's account, which had 88 million followers, due to the risk of further violence.

The speakers said tech platforms needed to be regulated at a key moment in their development, although there is no easy consensus on who should lead this.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has criticized Twitter's ban on Trump and warned through a spokesman that legislators, not private companies, should decide on potential curbs to free expression.



In Myanmar, Swe said, the government used Facebook to release news, particularly during the pandemic, which prevented journalists from scrutinising data.

Asked if they were more optimistic about press freedom in 2021, Amanpour said she was, while Ressa said it depended on how the industry handles this moment. Swe, jailed for eight years for breaching censorship rules, said he remained hopeful.

U.S. lawmakers approve resolution calling to remove Trump

The U.S. House of Representatives voted almost along party lines to call on Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment of the Constitution to remove President Donald Trump

from office just eight days before his term ends on January 20.

The vote amounts to a symbolic rebuke as Pence said earlier that he does not support the resolution.

Democrats are now swiftly moving towards impeaching Trump with a single charge: "Incitement of insurrection" over the violent siege of the US Capitol. Several Republicans have said they will vote to impeach him.

Friday Mosque of Neyriz, one of the oldest-standing in Iran, gets more protection

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Work to restore Friday Mosque of Neyriz, which is one of the oldest-standing Islamic places of worship in Iran, has begun in the southern Iranian city.

Reinforcement of several walls and ivans (porticos) is top on agenda for the six-month restoration project, which is recently commenced on the mud-brick mosque, Neyriz tourism chief Hamidreza Hadi said on Wednesday. CHTN reported.



The Friday mosque of Neyriz was built at least in three phases which spanned different eras of Buyid, Seljuk, and Il-Khanid rule. An inscription on the great qibla iwan (portico) indicates that the mihrab was built in 973, which is probably the date when the qibla iwan and the minaret were also constructed and enclosed within precinct walls, according to the Islamic Architecture Community.

Identified as “iwan-mosque,” the pre-Islamic typology of the Masjid-i Jami’ in Neyriz, Bamiyan, and Nishapur has led some scholars to believe that their mihrabs and minarets may have been appended to Zoroastrian fire temples. At Neyriz, the northwest iwan facing the original sanctuary was erected at a later date, followed by the addition of two rows of lateral arcades along the courtyard and iwan walls. The portal, which bears the date 1472, commemorates the last known period of construction.

The mosque is rectangular in plan, measuring about forty-eight by thirty-four meters on the exterior. It is aligned with qibla along the northwest-southeast axis and is centered on an arcaded courtyard that is fifteen meters long and eighteen and a half meters wide. Entered from a simple portal at the northern end of the northwest facade, the courtyard is dominated by the tall sanctuary iwan that occupies its southwest wing. Eleven meters wide and seventeen meters deep, the sanctuary iwan is vaulted at a height double that of the flat-roofed courtyard arcades that continue along its sidewalls.

The mosque is made of baked bricks, covered with clay on the exterior and plastered white on the interior. The courtyard façade of the great iwan is ornamented simply with polychrome tiles composed of geometric patterns. Inside, the decorative effort is focused on the mihrab niche on the qibla wall, which is framed with multiple bands of ornate arabesques and inscriptions carved in relief out of stucco. The original minbar, probably wooden, was since replaced.

Restoration begins on centuries-old bazaar in Kashan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The historic bazaar of Kashan, an oasis city in Iran’s Isfahan province, is going through an extensive restoration.

Interconnected covered passages and domed halls of the vaulted labyrinthine bazaar are subjects of the restoration work, which has begun in collaboration with Kashan Municipality, the deputy provincial tourism, Abbas Motevalli, announced on Tuesday.

A budget of 10 billion rials (\$238,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, the official added.



While most of its covered structures and marketplaces are associated with the 19th century onwards, the history of trade in the bazaar dates almost 800 years.

Two main alleys lead through the bazaar, one known as the ‘Main Line’, and the other as the ‘Copper Line’, which lives up to its name for at least part of its length. There’s also a wealth of caravanserais, mosques, madrasas, and hammams (public bathhouses) to explore.

Chief among the attractions is the fine Amin al-Dowleh Timcheh, a caravanserai with a soaring, beautifully decorated dome. Dating from 1868, the caravanserai is home to carpet sellers and the odd curiosity shop.

The bazaar also includes the 19th-century Hammam-e Khan, the Seljuk-era Soltani Mosque, and the 800-year-old Mir Emad Mosque.

Many travelers opt to bypass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan, and Yazd, but this delightful oasis city on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir is one of Iran’s most alluring destinations. The city not only boasts a cluster of architectural wonders and a UNESCO recognized garden, but it also offers some of central Iran’s best traditional hotels.

During the Seljuk period (1051–1220) Kashan became famous for its textiles, pottery, and tiles, reaching high levels of accomplishment in each of these cottage industries. Today it is more widely known as a major center for the production of rose water, which is sold at outlets around the main tourist attractions and dedicated stores in the bazaar.

Enigmatic collection of salt men being documented, reorganized

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A project for documenting and reorganizing ancient salt men and their belongings, found in Iran’s Chehrabad Salt Mine, have been commenced in Zolfaghari Museum in the northwestern city of Zanjan.

The collections of salt men and their belongings will also be purified, cleansed, and restored during the project, which is supervised by Iran’s Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics, Zanjan’s provincial tourism chief has announced.

After almost sixteen years since the discovery of salt men, their bodies and belongings haven’t been cleaned, restored, and studied properly yet, Amir Arjmand said on Wednesday.

The Archaeological Museum Frankfurt, the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and Zanjan’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department are taking part in the project, which also aims at desalinating, strengthening, and reconstructing the salt men as well as preventing further damage to them, the official added.

Last May, the official announced that a team of experts from Iran and Germany has started a project for cleansing and restoring garments and personal belongings of ancient salt mummies.

In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan Province, accidentally came across a mummified head, dated to 300



CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another “saltman,” which was followed by further excavation unearthing remains of a human body along with a large number of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery.

In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ due to lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy dubbed the “saltman,” is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular “saltman” was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE

(1750 BP, that is, “before present” or 1750 years ago), the Sasanian Empire’s height. The second “Saltman” was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first “saltman,” the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and fifth “saltmen” were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The individual “saltmen” has a few secrets of their own, for instance, the first “saltman” that was discovered had the blood type B+, and 3D imaging of his skull revealed fractures around his eye and other damage that occurred before death by a hard blow to the head. His clothing (the impressive leather boot) and his gold earring show a person of some rank; the reason for his presence in the mine still remains a mystery.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the Taenia sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the bodies is “saltman” No. 4. A sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

Iran, France preparing to expand museum cooperation

→ 1 Nokandeh also welcomed the ambassador’s proposal, noting the close relationship between the Louvre museum and the National Museum of Iran in recent years, and joint research projects and successful exhibitions. Holding a virtual exhibition could be another part of the potential of the two museums in cultural collaborations.

He also expressed hope that the two museums, in cooperation with the French embassy, would be able to translate the Louvre brochure into Persian so that Iranian visitors could receive the necessary information in Persian while visiting the Louvre. In the end, Nokandeh expressed the hope that these joint museum activities will be a step towards recognizing the two nations and bring the two rich cultures closer.

Pavageau pointed to the capabilities of social media in introducing the cultural and historical objects and monuments of the two countries and said that during the past year and the limitations of the Coronavirus pandemic, these social media have played an important role in communication and education.

Biglari, the cultural deputy of the museum, noted the

collaborations of the National Museum of Iran and French universities and institutes, which have yielded interesting results in the field of paleoanthropology, zooarchaeology, and paleoenvironment.

At the end of the meeting, the ambassador presented several new publications published with the support of the cultural section of the embassy to the National Museum of Iran. One of these publications is the brochure of the French residence in Tehran, which was recently published by the French embassy and introduces this Qajar mansion designed by the French architect Andre de Balloy.

He stressed that the possibility of a virtual visit to the mansion is provided on the website of the French embassy. Welcoming the event, Nokandeh expressed hope that other embassies located in similar old monuments would be able to introduce the buildings in this way.

The officials also agreed to unveil one of the recent joint publications and also to pursue a joint virtual exhibition.

In 2018, Louvre lent art to Tehran for an ‘unprecedented’ show, which was held at the National Museum of Iran. The show was the first large-scale exhibition by a major Western



museum in the country, putting on show some 50 works including 2,400-year-old Egyptian sphinx, a bust of Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius and drawings by Rembrandt and Delacroix and other artefacts linked to Greek, Egyptian and Mesopotamian culture, as well as objects from ancient Iran.

In parallel with the Tehran exhibition, the Louvre-Lens presented a vast collection of objects handcrafted by Qajar-era (1785-1925) talented Iranian court from March to July of the same year.

Book on ancient Tarikhaneh Mosque published

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A book on ancient Tarikhaneh Mosque, which is one of the oldest existing mosques in Iran, has recently been published in Persian.

Compiled by Iranian cultural heritage expert Alireza Anisi, the book, which is 200 pages, explores the history, architecture, and associated restoration activities of the mosque that stands tall in the city of Damghan.

Some sources including the ArchNet, a collaborative digital humanities project focused on Islamic architecture, say that the Tarikhaneh Mosque is the oldest existing mosque in the country. Also called Tarik Khana, the monument incorporates a simple Arab plan with Sassanian construction techniques.



isting mosque in the country. Also called Tarik Khana, the monument incorporates a simple Arab plan with Sassanian construction techniques.

25 sites, relics in Lorestan made national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of 25 historical and natural sites as well as ancient relics in the western province of Lorestan have been inscribed on Iran’s list for the national heritage, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Fifteen immovable properties and ten moveable items, dating back from the pre-historical times to the Islamic era have been added to the national heritage list, ISNA quoted Amin Qasemi as saying on Wednesday.

The items include historical monuments and [archaeological] hills, mostly located in Delfan county, as well as metal objects belonging to the Iron Age, the official added.

Iron Age is the final technological and cultural stage in the Stone–Bronze–Iron Age sequence. The date of the full Iron Age, in which this metal, for the most part, replaced bronze in implements and weapons, varied geographically,



beginning in the Middle East and southeastern Europe about 1200 BC but in China not until about 600 BC, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Although in the Middle East iron had limited use as a scarce and precious metal as early as 3000 BC, there is no indication that people at that time recognized its superior qualities over those of bronze.

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

Qajar-era castle to undergo restoration work

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Vali Castle, a Qajar-era (1789–1925) monument in the western Iranian province of Ilam, is planned to undergo some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The restoration project will be carried out by experienced traditional restorers under the supervision of the cultural heritage experts, Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh said on Wednesday.

The project aims at repairing the walls, the rooftop, and flooring of the castle, which has been turned into Ilam’s Museum of An-

thropology, the official added.

Completed in 1908, the castle is made of stone slabs, bricks, and timber beams and it consists of 25 rooms, a big courtyard, a basement, and a jail, which are decorated by beautiful plasterwork, tilework, and mirrorwork.

Every room has at least a way to access the next one. There are also four halls and two small terraces in the southern part of the castle.

Almost half of the castle was ruined during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). However, after the war ended, the castle was restored

preserving its originality and historical values.

The monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1997, Shanbehzadeh added.

Home to almost half of Iran’s UNESCO sites, western Iran is a land of hospitable people, wild extremes, and wilder history, and it may be an independent traveler’s adventure playground. The region also witnessed the rise and fall of many great empires once bordering Mesopotamia, Ottoman Turkey, and Czarist Russia.

From the fecund Caspian coast to the stark, mountainous northern borders and



the crumbling desert ruins of the southern plains, the region hosts everything from paddy fields to blizzards to Persian gardens.

72% of Iranians ready to receive homegrown coronavirus vaccine

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 72 percent of Iranians have expressed readiness to receive the domestically-made coronavirus vaccine, Kianoush Jahanpour, head of the Information Center of the Ministry of Health, said on Wednesday.

Also, 60 percent of people have hopes for the production of Iranian vaccines, 40 percent do not trust foreign vaccines, and 53 percent say that if the Ministry of Health approves the foreign vaccine, they will receive it, Jahanpour added, referring to a recent survey.

Production of COVID-19 vaccine was followed by 16 Iranian companies since the beginning of the outbreak, and so far 12 companies applied to produce the vaccine, of which eight are operating, one of the companies have entered the human trial phase, and two more companies will soon test the vaccines on human, Jahanpour said 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.

On Tuesday, the second dose of the vaccine was injected into three volunteers.

So far, 14 people received the first dose of the vaccine, and this number should reach 56 people in the clinical study phase.

After the results of the study are deter-

mined, 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.

COVID-19 daily new cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Wednesday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,317 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,305,339. She added that 1,094,388 patients have so far recovered, but 4,469 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 97 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 56,457, she added.

So far, 8,316,375 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.

FAO helps Iranian farmers to improve productivity

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides its assistance to equip Iranian farmers in Qazvin province with the requisite technical knowledge and skills to improve agricultural water productivity.

Covering 80,000 hectares of farmlands and hosting nearly 30,000 irrigators, the Qazvin Irrigation Network suffers from several challenges, including but not limited to agricultural water efficiency and productivity.

As part of the water productivity component of a regional project "Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Water Efficiency/Productivity and Water Sustainability in NENA" funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and implemented by FAO, this activity in Qazvin Province is aimed to make agriculture more productive and sustainable.

The activity also enables stakeholders and beneficiaries to make evidence-based decisions in the planning and management of the agricultural sectors and natural resources

to support the transition to sustainable agricultural production systems.

In this endeavor, FAO uses Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to enhance agricultural extension workers' and facilitators' capability to support transferring technical knowledge and skills to Iranian farmers.

To this end, FAO in close partnership with the Qazvin Provincial Office of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO) provides learning opportunities to the facilitators and farmers, training them on particular topics of concerns, including Training of Facilitators (TOF) on FFS method, Technical Knowledge Training of Facilitators (TK-TOF) on Water Productivity and Water Monitoring, and FFS Process Training for the Farmers.

Benefitting from a participatory approach, FFS also empowers farmers to identify and handle challenges of low water productivity, to understand and monitor their local water resources, and to decide as a group on the optimal cropping pattern.



These activities are directed at improved water productivity, increased farm-household income, and reduced water withdrawal in the Qazvin plain.

Top scientists warn of 'ghastly future of mass extinction' and climate disruption

The planet is facing a "ghastly future of mass extinction, declining health and climate-disruption upheavals" that threaten human survival because of ignorance and inaction, according to an international group of scientists, who warn people still haven't grasped the urgency of the biodiversity and climate crises.

The 17 experts, including Prof Paul Ehrlich from Stanford University, author of The Population Bomb, and scientists from Mexico, Australia and the US, say the planet is in a much worse state than most people – even scientists – understood, The Guardian reported.

"The scale of the threats to the biosphere and all its lifeforms – including humanity – is in fact so great that it is difficult to grasp for even well-informed experts," they write in a report in Frontiers in Conservation Science which references more than 150 studies detailing the world's major environmental challenges.

The delay between destruction of the natural world and the impacts of these actions means people do not recognise how vast the problem is, the paper argues. "[The] mainstream is having difficulty grasping the magnitude of this loss, despite the steady erosion of the fabric of human civilisation."

The report warns that climate-induced mass migrations, more pandemics and conflicts over resources will be inevitable unless urgent action is taken.

"Ours is not a call to surrender – we aim to provide leaders with a realistic 'cold shower' of the state of the planet that is essential for planning to avoid a ghastly future," it adds.

Dealing with the enormity of the problem requires far-reaching changes to global capitalism, education and equality, the paper says. These include abolishing the idea of perpetual economic growth, properly pricing environmental externalities, stopping the use of fossil fuels, reining in corporate lobbying, and empowering women, the researchers argue.

The report comes months after the world failed to meet a single UN Aichi biodiversity target, created to stem the destruction of the natural world, the second consecutive time governments have failed to meet their 10-year biodiversity goals. This week a coalition of more than 50 countries pledged to protect almost a third of the planet by 2030.

An estimated one million species are at risk of extinction, many within decades, according to a recent UN report.

"Environmental deterioration is infinitely more threatening to civilisation than Trumpism or Covid-19," Ehrlich told the Guardian.

In The Population Bomb, published in 1968, Ehrlich warned of imminent population explosion and hundreds of millions of people starving to death. Although he has acknowledged some timings were wrong, he has said he stands by its fundamental message that population growth and high levels of consumption by wealthy nations is driving destruction.

He told the Guardian: "Growthmania is the fatal disease of civilisation - it must be



replaced by campaigns that make equity and well-being society's goals - not consuming more junk."

Large populations and their continued growth drive soil degradation and biodiversity loss, the new paper warns. "More people means that more synthetic compounds and dangerous throwaway plastics are manufactured, many of which add to the growing toxicification of the Earth. It also increases the chances of pandemics that fuel ever-more desperate hunts for scarce resources."

The effects of the climate emergency are more evident than biodiversity loss, but still, society is failing to cut emissions, the paper argues. If people understood the magnitude of the crises, changes in politics and policies could match the gravity of the threat.

"Our main point is that once you realise the scale and imminence of the problem, it becomes clear that we need much more than individual actions like using less plastic, eating less meat, or flying less. Our point is that we need big systematic changes and fast," Professor

Daniel Blumstein from the University of California Los Angeles, who helped write the paper, told the Guardian.

The report follows years of stark warnings about the state of the planet from the world's leading scientists, including a statement by 11,000 scientists in 2019 that people will face "untold suffering due to the climate crisis" unless major changes are made. In 2016, more than 150 of Australia's climate scientists wrote an open letter to the then prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, demanding immediate action on reducing emissions. In the same year, 375 scientists – including 30 Nobel prize winners – wrote an open letter to the world about their frustrations over political inaction on climate change.

Prof Tom Oliver, an ecologist at the University of Reading, who was not involved in the report, said it was a frightening but credible summary of the grave threats society faces under a "business as usual" scenario. "Scientists now need to go beyond simply documenting environmental decline, and instead find the most effective ways to catalyse action," he said.

Prof Rob Brooker, head of ecological sciences at the James Hutton Institute, who was not involved in the study, said it clearly emphasised the pressing nature of the challenges.

"We certainly should not be in any doubt about the huge scale of the challenges we are facing and the changes we will need to make to deal with them," he said.

73,000 gambling, fraud websites filtered

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 73,000 gambling, phishing, and fraud websites identified through public reports have been filtered, Javad Babaei, deputy attorney general for cyberspace, has announced.



After creating a special portal in the Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (started August 22) to receive public reports of illegal websites, thousands of these violators have been identified and the websites have been filtered, he stated, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2020), 34 gambling ringleaders have been arrested and 12 gangs have been disrupted, Tehran police commander Hossein Rahimi told ISNA on January 4.

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

As per Iranian law, designing, launching, and running betting and gambling websites are forbidden.

IRCS offers health services to 13 countries

1 → The important point in establishing medical centers abroad is that all of these centers are self-governing and earn their income by providing services to patients in the mentioned countries," he noted.

Referring to the good relations between Iran and Ivory Coast, Hemmati emphasized strengthening brotherhood and friendship between the two countries.

Highlighting the support of the health minister of Ivory Coast for the IRCS clinics, he said that medicine will enter Abidjan. Also, the IRCS needs the support and cooperation of this ministry to provide medical equipment and infrastructure.

Aka-Aouele also for his part expressed happiness for the cooperation among the two countries and said that Iran is a friend to Ivory Coast.



Karim Hemmati, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (L) and Eugene Aka-Aouele, the health minister of Ivory Coast

Referring to the provision of specialized services by the Iranian polyclinic center in Abidjan, he expressed appreciation for providing medical services to the deprived and needy people in the rural areas of Abidjan.

Ivory Coast is interested in benefiting from all the services of Iran, therefore, with more cooperation, the Iranian Red Crescent Society can be active in Ivory Coast, especially in the field of medicine and medical equipment, he emphasized.

Aka-Aouele went on to explain that recently, an organization has been established in the Ministry of Health to facilitate the import of medicine and medical equipment. IRCS polytechnic in Abidjan can cooperate and consult with this organization to import Iranian medicine and market it in Ivory Coast and West Africa.

"We will do our best to strengthen cooperation between the two countries," he concluded.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 108)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

● تمرین ۲. جمله‌ها را به منفی حال اخباری بنویسید:

۱. مریم در این دانشکده تحصیل کرد.
۲. در آن استخر شنا یاد گرفتیم.
۳. کسی به اسم علی اینجا نیامد.
۴. امسال زمین را به کسی فروختیم.
۵. امشب توانستم اتومبیل بخرم.
۶. امروز در کتابخانه درس خواندید؟

■ **Conjunction** "حرف ربط که"

که "that" may simply join two sentences:

خوشحالم. شما آمدید. ← خوشحالم که شما آمدید.

● تمرین ۳. جمله‌ها را با "که" ترکیب کنید:

۱. امشب خوشحال شدم. شما را دیدم.
۲. خوشحالم. پس فردا تو را می‌بینم.
۳. آنها می‌دانند. امسال اینجا هستی.
۴. پریروز دیدیم. همه رفتند.
۵. پریشب به شما گفتم. من کار ندارم.
۶. پارسال گفتم. این هتل بد نیست.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

500,000 policemen ready to ensure road safety during Noruz

Traffic police teams comprising 500,000 policemen will stand guard to ensure safety by monitoring road regulations during the new year holidays (Noruz, starting March 21), road traffic police chief Mohammad Hossein Hamidi has announced.

In this regard, coordination has been made with the related bodies to fully control the country's roads and prevent the probable accidents, he added.

Given that this year's holiday is longer, trips certainly increases compared to past years, so we decided to constantly monitor the highways, he stated.

۵۰۰ هزار پلیس نوروز ۹۸ جاده های کشور را کنترل می کنند

محمد حسین حمیدی رئیس پلیس راه راهور نیروی انتظامی کشور گفت: با هدف ارتقا هرچه بیشتر امنیت مسافران، ۵۰۰ هزار نیروی پلیس در ایام نوروز ۱۳۹۸ جاده های سطح کشور را کنترل می کنند.

سردار محمد حسین حمیدی روز دوشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار انتظامی ایرنا افزود: در این ارتباط هماهنگی های لازم با دستگاههای مربوطه نیز به انجام رسیده است و آمادگی برای کنترل هر چه بیشتر سطح جاده های کشور برای جلوگیری از تصادفات وجود دارد.

وی خاطرنشان کرد: پیش بینی امسال ما با توجه به میزان تعطیلات نوروز افزایش سفرها در مقایسه با سال گذشته است که همین امر موجب شده از همه ظرفیت ها به صورت ۲۴ ساعته بهره مند شویم.


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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of nothing but sins.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Persian writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad’s stories published in Bangladesh

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A book containing 10 stories by the renowned Iranian novelist and short story writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad has recently been published in the Bengali language in Bangladesh, the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) has announced.

The book has been published by the Pendulum Publications, and has been translated by Muhammad Abdus Sabur Khan, who is a faculty member at the Department of Persian Language and Literature of the University of Dhaka.

Born in 1923, Al-e-Ahmad was a prominent Iranian writer, scholar, and social and political critic.

Some of his works, including his most popular polemical essay “Plagued by the West” and his most popular novels “The School Principal”, “By the Pen” and “Lost in the Crowd”, have appeared in English translation.

An English translation of his story “A Stone on a Grave” by Azfar Moin was published by Mazda Publishing in the U.S. in 2008.

The book also contains an in-memoriam essay entitled “Jalal’s Sunset” by his wife, Simin Daneshvar, who was a prominent writer.

In this book, Al-e Ahmad investigates the recesses of his own psyche to explore the roots of his identity as an Iranian male, his manhood. Consciously, he tries to uncover why having children to continue one’s name and legacy, not unlike one’s gravestone, should signify that he had existed.

Al-e Ahmad spent his childhood in relative comfort. Many members of his family, including his father, older brother and a brother-in-law, were all Muslim clerics.

Early in the 1930s, when the Ministry of Justice under Reza Pahlavi, the Iranian monarch who ruled 1921–41, began to regulate the activities of the clergy, Al-e Ahmad’s father went into voluntary retirement. His decision forced young Jalal to leave school and work at various jobs in the marketplace such as watchmaking and selling leather goods.

He was a member of the Tudeh Party, an Iranian Communist organization, and also translated works by French writers André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus into Persian.

In 2008, Iran established the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards in memory of the writer, who passed away in 1969.

Friedrich Durrenmatt’s “Execution of Justice” comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of “The Execution of Justice” (“Justiz”) by Friedrich Durrenmatt has recently been published by Borj Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Mahmud Hosseinizad.

A respected professor is dead - shot in a crowded Zurich restaurant, in front of dozens of witnesses. The murderer calmly turned himself in to the police. So why has he now hired a lawyer to clear his name? And why has he chosen the drink-soaked, disreputable Spat to defend him? As he investigates, Spat finds himself obsessed, drawn ever deeper into a case of baffling complexity until he reaches a deadly conclusion: justice can be restored only by a crime. This is a captivating neo-noir classic from the master of the genre.

“The Execution of Justice” is a dark, wicked satire on the legal system and a disturbing, if ambivalent, allegory on guilt, justice, violence and morality.

Durrenmatt was born in the Emmental (canton of Bern), the son of a Protestant pastor. His grandfather Ulrich Durrenmatt was a conservative politician. The family moved to Bern in 1935. Durrenmatt began to study philosophy, and German language and literature at the University of Zurich in 1941, but moved to the University of Bern after one semester. In 1943 he decided to become an author and dramatist and dropped his academic career.

In 1945-46, he wrote his first play, “It is written”. On October 11, 1946, he married actress Lotti Geissler. She died in 1983 and Durrenmatt was married again to another actress, Charlotte Kerr, the following year.

He was a proponent of epic theater whose plays reflected the recent experiences of World War II. The politically active author gained fame largely due to his avant-garde dramas, philosophically deep crime novels, and often macabre satire. One of his leading sentences was: “A story is not finished until it has taken the worst turn”.

“Dream about Sohrab”, “The Dogs Didn’t Sleep Last Night” picked for Goa filmfest

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian movies “Dream about Sohrab” and “The Dogs Didn’t Sleep Last Night” will be screening at the 51st International Film Festival of India, which will open in Goa on Saturday.

“Dream about Sohrab” by Ali Qavitan traces the mysticism and philosophy in the poetry of Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980), second only to poet Nima Yushij, who is known for his pure style of blank verse.

As a talented artist and a gifted poet, Sepehri came to prominence with the publication of his collection “The Water’s Footfall” in 1965. His works have been translated into the English, French, Italian and Spanish languages. He died of leukemia in Tehran in 1980.

Directed by Ramin Rasuli, “The Dogs Didn’t Sleep Last Night” is a co-production between Iran and Afghanistan.

In a remote area in Afghanistan, stories



“Dream about Sohrab” by Ali Qavitan.

of the lives of a young shepherdess, a birdcatcher boy and a mourning teacher are intertwined after their school is burned down. The young shepherdess takes the risk of saving a female U.S. soldier after a helicopter crash. The birdcatcher boy takes shelter in a tank with the birds, the pin-ups and the illegal music that he loves. And the mourning teacher seeks vengeance on the one who has widowed her.

Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar will preside over the international jury panel, which also will have filmmakers Prasanna Vithanage from Sri Lanka, Abu Bakr Shawky from Austria, Priyadarshan from India and Rubaiyat Hossain from Bangladesh.

The festival will open with “Another Round”, a Danish comedy-drama directed by Thomas Vinterberg, and will wrap up on January 24 with “Wife of a Spy”, a Japanese historical drama romance television film by Kiyoshi Kurosawa.

Sculptor Hamid Kangarani deems his wax effigy of Commander Soleimani acceptable



Sculptor Hamid Kangarani poses with his wax effigy of Commander Qassem Soleimani.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Sculptor Hamid Kangarani, whose wax effigy of Martyr Qassem Soleimani was unveiled at the Museum of Luminaries at Tehran’s Milad Tower last Saturday,

said on Tuesday that his statue is a better likeness of the legendary commander than those inferior statues of him set up across the country following his assassination.

“My main motivation for making this effigy was to make a statue that suits the dignity and character of the martyr, something that will be acceptable,” Kangarani said in a press release published on Tuesday.

“Of course, this is the second one I have made. When the commander was alive I wanted to make one but he did not agree, however, after his martyrdom I kept in touch with the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran and made one within 18 days,” he said.

He said that he was next commissioned by Martyr Soleimani’s family and the Soleimani Foundation to make the effigy, which he completed within 40 days.

“The good point about these hyper realistic effigies is that they can easily communicate with the visitors. I must say that I personally like hyper realistic sculptures. I have done bronze statues but these give me a much

deeper feeling,” he added.

“I began my career in 1997 and I have so far made over 350 hyper realistic, bronze and fiber glass statues for museums in Iran and other countries,” he said.

“The very first hyper realistic effigies that I made were two statues of the legendary actor Ezzatollah Entezami, which are situated in the Film Museum of Iran and the Ezzatollah Entezami Museum,” he said.

He said that he was later invited by Madame Tussauds, a wax museum in London, for collaboration, and that he made several effigies of celebrities including Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Elizabeth Taylor and Elvis Presley.

He said that when a bad bust or statue is set up in the city, both the sculptor and the commissioner are guilty.

“When a commissioner is not exact in his order, and when a sculptor is not committed, they both move towards a kind of work that is not good in the end,” he concluded.

When East Meets West forum to present Iran’s “Fill in the Blanks”

A R T **TEHRAN** — The acclaimed Iranian documentary “Fill in the Blanks” will be presented during the 11th edition of the When East Meets West forum, an Italian co-production meeting that will be held in the northeastern city of Trieste from January 25 to 28.

Directed by Atieh Zare’ Aranadi, the film revolves around Melina, a girl who lives with her grandparents after her parents have broken up. They have started new lives with new marriages, and consequently, neither of them can get custody of Melina. However, she tries to make some arrangements to live with her mother.

“Fill in the Blanks”, also known as “Get Filled in the Blanks”, was selected as best film last December at the 14th edition of



A poster for “Fill in the Blanks” by Atieh Zare’ Aranadi.

Cinéma Vérité, Iran’s major international festival for documentary films.

It is a co-production between the Associate Directors in Belgium and the Documentary and Experimental Film Center in Iran.

Twenty other film projects from 13 countries will also be presented at the forum, which will be taking place on the sidelines of the Trieste Film Festival.

The projects in development – 10 feature documentaries and 11 fiction features – were selected out of a record number of 387 submissions from 56 different countries.

Over 500 decision makers and professionals from all over the world will take part in this forum.

Among the projects also are “A Picture to Remember” by Olga Chernykh from Ukraine, “A Safe Place” by Sara Summa from Germany,

“A Winner Is Seen at the Start” by Zhannat Alshanova from Kazakhstan, “Age” by Gustav Agerstrand and Asa Ekman from Sweden, “Bye Mom!” by Marie De Hert and Ellen Pollard from Belgium, “Europe-East” by Elena Rebeca Carini from Italy, and “Foals” by Salomé Hévin from France.

These projects will be competing for the Film Center Serbia Development Award, the EAVE scholarship at the EAVE European Producers Workshop, Flow Postproduction Award worth 15.000 EUR prize in post-production facilities, EWA Network Best Woman Director Award, the Producers Network Prize at the Cannes Marche du Film Producer’s Network, and the Pop Up Film Residency Award – a 3-week residency with the guidance of international mentors.

28 plays to compete at 39th Fajr Intl. Theater Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — 28 plays have been selected for the national competition section of the 39th Fajr International Theater Festival, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

The selection includes “Smoking Room” by director Saeid Zarei, “Pinocchio” by Mohammadreza Mahmudi, “Bodies” by Alireza Marufi, “Rashomon” by Ehsan Abdolmaleki, “Bloody Tuesdays” by Mohammad-Mehdi Khatami and “Nashk” by Amirhossein Ghaffari.

Also included are several provincial award-winning plays.

The collection includes “Pandemic” by director Reza Purtorabzadeh, “Bob Bara” by Nima Imanzadeh, “Awakening in Time of Blood” by Ehsan Janami, “Growing” by Shoaib Maktabdari, “Reboot” by Amirhossein Ajir Arshad, “Uninvited” by Alireza Mahmudi and “I Am Staring at the Sea so No One Takes It Away” by Hassan Sobhani.

The plays in the guest section are “Ajax” by Fateh Baadparva, “Amongst Great Number of Fish” by Amir



“Shah Mahi” by Reza Baharvand. (Iran Theater) Delfani and “A Cassette” by Mohammad Akbari.

In addition, 12 plays have been picked for the Soldier of the Revolution, a section dedicated to street theater, this year.

The plays have been selected by a team of stage artists:

Tohid Masumi, Saeid Kheirollahi and Mohammad Larti.

“Those Years” by director Bahareh Saeidinia, “His is Champion Akbar” by Mostafa Dehasht and Bahar Bordbar, “Cocoon of the Revolution” by Puya Emami, “Life with the Taste of Gunpowder” by Mojtaba Khalili and “In the Name of” by Akbar Qahremani are among the plays.

Also included are “The Ring” by Nesa Soleimani, “General” by Saeid Badini, “Soldier of the Commander” by Amin Purmand, “Commander of the Shrine” by Amir Amini, “Messenger” by Hessameddin Iranmanesh, “No One Is a Man like You” by Behnam Kaveh and “When Hell Freezes Over” by Mehrdad Kavus Hosseini.

The festival will be running from January 30 to February 9 this year.

According to the director of the festival, Hossein Mosaferi Astaneh, the international competition of the 2021 edition of the event will not be held due to a spike in coronavirus cases around the globe.

John Dos Passos’ “The 42nd Parallel” published in Persian

A R T **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of American novelist John Dos Passos’ “The 42nd Parallel” from the U.S.A. Trilogy has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Ali Kahrobai is the translator of the book released by the Saless publishing house.

With his U.S.A. trilogy, comprising “THE 42nd Parallel”, “1919”, and “The Big Money”, Dos Passos is said by many to have written the great American novel.

While Fitzgerald and Hemingway were cultivating what Edmund Wilson once called their “own little corners,” Dos Passos was taking on the world. Counted as one of the best novels of the twentieth century by the Modern Library and by some of the finest writers working today,

U.S.A. is a grand, kaleidoscopic portrait of a nation, buzzing with history and life on every page.

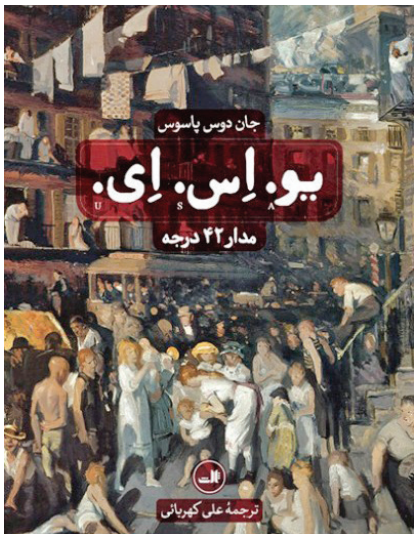
The trilogy opens in 1930 with “The 42nd Parallel”, where we find a young country at the dawn of the twentieth century. Slowly, in stories artfully spliced together, the lives and fortunes of five characters unfold. Mac, Janey, Eleanor, Ward, and Charley are caught on the storm track of this parallel and blown New Yorkward. As their lives cross and double back again, the likes of Eugene Debs, Thomas Edison, and Andrew Carnegie make cameo appearances.

Over his long and successful career, Dos Passos, most notable for his U.S.A. trilogy, wrote 42 novels, as well as poems, essays and plays, and created more than four hundred pieces of art.

Dos Passos used experimental techniques in the trilogy, incorporating newspaper clippings, autobiography, biography, and fictional realism to paint a vast landscape of American culture during the first decades of the 20th century.

Though each novel stands on its own, the trilogy is designed to be read as a whole. Dos Passos’ political and social reflections in the novel are deeply pessimistic about the political and economic direction of the United States, and few of the characters manage to hold onto their ideals through the First World War.

The novel reflects the author’s sympathy, at the time of writing, for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and his outrage at its suppression, for which the book expresses a deep grudge for President Woodrow Wilson.



Front cover of the Persian translation of John Dos Passos’ “The 42nd Parallel”.