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Top IRGC commander: We can hit moving targets in the ocean

TEHRAN – The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, said on Saturday that targeting aircraft carriers and warships by long-range ballistic missiles is part of Iran's defense strategy.

Speaking at the final stage of the Great Prophet 15 military drill on Saturday, Salami said, "One of our most important goals in defense policies and strategies is to reach the ability to hit enemy weaponry, including aircraft carriers and warships, using long-range ballistic missiles. It is

usual to hit moving targets in the sea by low-speed cruise missiles, but using long-range missiles is a great defense breakthrough for us because we can hit moving targets in the ocean from the heart of our land," according to the Tasnim news agency.

The IRGC carried out the final stage of the drills on Saturday with strategic operations of long-range ballistic missiles that successfully hit the mock enemy's vessels 1,800 kilometers away in the Northern Indian Ocean.

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Iran ready to raise oil output to pre-sanction level

TEHRAN – Managing director of National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) said on Sunday that Iran is ready to rapidly increase its oil production back to the pre-sanction levels, IRNA reported.

"Iran is ready to halt the deliberate reduction in oil production and increase its output to 95 percent of the pre-sanction level in just one day," Ahmad Mohammadi said. The official noted that more than 80

percent of the country's oil production capacity comes from the southern oil-rich regions, adding: "Given the government's goal of exporting 2.3 million barrels of oil and gas condensate per day during the [Iranian calendar] year 1400 (begins on March 21), a big share of the mentioned figure will be produced in the southern oil-rich regions."

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Spanish translation of "My Uncle Soleimani" appears in Venezuela

TEHRAN – A Spanish translation of "My Uncle Soleimani", a book that reflects Martyr Qassem Soleimani's affection for children, has recently been published in Venezuela.

Published by the El Faro International Publishing House, the book was introduced in capital Caracas during a ceremony at-

tended by Mayor Erika Farias Pena, the head of the Capital District Government, Jacqueline Faria and Iranian Ambassador Hojjatollah Ansari.

The mayor read an excerpt from the book for the cultural figures and other people who attended the ceremony.

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Young coaches need support, coach says

BY FARROKH HESABI
 Saipa football coach Pirouz Ghorbani believes that the presence of young coaches in the Iran Professional League (IPL) has brought new sharp ideas and tactical concepts into football.

"The league has become more dynamic over the past years as the level of the teams is so close and most of the teams with young coaches are playing good football these days," Ghorbani said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

Saipa earned a late win over Zob Ahan on Friday. The victory sent the Tehran based football team to the ninth place at the IPL table.

Ghorbani, who is Ebrahim Sadeghi's assistant coach at Saipa, talked about his decision to join Saipa and the current condition of the team.

"Working with Sadeghi, who is one of the best Iranian coaches in my opinion, convinced me to join Saipa. He is a courageous coach who dares to field youth players and gives them time to improve. This is the strategy of Saipa football club. Establishing a style of play or a footballing philosophy at a club requires patient and consistent efforts and the coaching staff has been supported by the club management. I think Saipa officials should support Sadeghi and do not think about winning trophies in the short-term. This is due to the huge financial investment of the big Iranian clubs comparing to a club like Saipa," said the former Iran national team player.

Asked about the quality of the 2020-2021 IPL, Ghorbani responded: "If we want to talk about the quality of players, I think Esteghlal and Sepahan are the best squads. However, no team emerge as the clear favorites to win the league. Persepolis, Esteghlal, Sepahan, and two or three other teams have the chance to win but nothing is guaranteed for them."

Ghorbani, who played almost a decade in Esteghlal, was under pressure during the recent months by the angry Esteghlal fans in social media. The reason was that he had called the Blues archrivals, Persepolis, as 'the most technical team in Iran' in one of his interviews.

"Unfortunately, there is something wrong with social media in our country. You should just say the things that people like to hear, regardless of what the actual facts are. But I have my own life philosophy," Ghorbani added.

The idea of 'exceptionalism' is deeply ingrained in our national DNA: American author

By Mohammad Mazhari
 TEHRAN – An American author says toppling governments around the world is one of Washington's "specialties".

"Overthrowing governments is one of our specialties," Stephen Kinzer tells the Tehran Times. Kinzer also criticizes U.S. exceptionalism. "The idea of 'exceptionalism' is deeply ingrained in our national DNA," Kinzer tells the Tehran Times.

"Last week gave us a glimpse, on a greatly reduced scale, of the havoc we have wreaked elsewhere."

Kinzer, a former New York Times journalist, says no nation like the U.S. intervenes in others' domestic issues.

The following is the text of the interview:
How do you assess the recent mob attack on Capitol building by pro-Trump protesters? What is the message of this

incident for the U.S and the world?

A: Over the last century, no nation has intervened as often as the United States in so many countries so far away from its own borders. Overthrowing governments is one of our specialties. Last week (January 7th) gave us a glimpse, on a greatly reduced scale, of the havoc we have wreaked elsewhere.

U.S. administrations and institutes mostly back protests against governments all around the world but when it comes to the U.S., they rally around national integrity. Isn't it a kind of double-standard?

A: The idea of "exceptionalism" is deeply ingrained in our national DNA. Americans grow up presuming that, as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright famously asserted, "We are the indispensable nation, we stand taller and we see further than other countries."

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Anti-Netanyahu protests resume across Israel for 30th week in a row

Thousands demonstrated against Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and at traffic junctions, bridges and intersections nationwide for the 30th week in a row on Saturday.

In Jerusalem, thousands marched through the city toward Paris Square, the central site of the demonstrations in the capital, adjacent to the prime minister's official residence on Balfour Street. Hundreds of protesters braved a cold night in Jerusalem on Saturday to press on with their calls for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to step down over corruption charges against him.

Demonstrators gathered at a Jerusalem square near Netanyahu's official residence. The weekly protests have been taking place for over seven months.

Netanyahu is charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three cases involving billionaire associates and media moguls, charges that he denies.

The protesters insist Netanyahu cannot prop-

erly lead the country while under indictment for corruption.

His trial is set to begin evidentiary hearings next month.

Israel will hold its fourth national elections in two years in March, in what will likely be another referendum on Netanyahu as he faces a challenge from defectors within his Likud party.

The protesters also say Netanyahu and his government have bungled the coronavirus response.

The country has seen its economy hit hard by virus restrictions throughout the year and is again under a nationwide if partial lockdown amid surging infection rates.

Netanyahu and his allies have used Israel's vaccination drive, in which more than a tenth of its population has been immunized, to try to belittle the protesters and their cause. They say the prime minister is working to end the outbreak while they hold demonstrations.

Iran, Nicaragua to expand museum relations

TEHRAN – The National Museum of Iran and the National Museum of Nicaragua have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to lay the ground for further cooperation including the arrangement of joint online shows during the current coronavirus era.

On Wednesday evening, the signing ceremony of the MoU was held online in Tehran and Managua.

Jebrael Nokandeh, the director of the National Museum of Iran, Majid Salehi, the ambassador

of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Nicaragua and Isaac Lenin Bravo Jaen, the ambassador of the Republic of Nicaragua to Iran were present in Iran National Museum meeting room, an official with the museum told the Tehran Times.

The Minister of Culture of the Republic of Nicaragua, Luis Morales, and Javiera Pérez Guerra, the director of the National Museum of Nicaragua attended the event online at the National Museum of Nicaragua in Managua.

Majid Salehi's welcome was the initiator of

the ceremony. He considered museums as an important factor in expanding cultural relations and friendship between the two countries.

Nokandeh called the event, "a turning point" in the cultural and museum relations between the two countries and said: "Despite the circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease, the signing of this memorandum deepens the determination of the two countries to deepen the cultural relations between the two nations."

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'Compliance-for-compliance' approach needed to reinstate JCPOA: Harvard researcher

BY M.A. SAKI
 TEHRAN – Stephen Herzog, a research fellow at the Project on Managing the Atom at Harvard University, predicts that Iran and the U.S. will follow a "compliance-for-compliance" approach to revive the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Biden—with the support of the E3—and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani intend to pursue a "compliance-for-compliance" approach to reinstating the deal," Herzog tells the Tehran Times.

"This will likely need to involve a phased timeline of de-escalation measures by both sides," Herzog adds.

On January 4th, Iran resumed enriching 20 percent uranium at the Fordow nuclear facility in response to Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), reimposition of illegal economic sanctions, failure by the Europeans to protect Iran from sanctions as well as the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, which Iran holds Israel responsible for through a collusion with the Trump administration.

However, the Harvard researcher believes the Islamic Republic is not going to develop nuclear weapons.

Contrary to claims by the U.S. and Israel, Iran has never been seeking to develop nuclear weapons. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has declared production, stockpiling, and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) as haram—religiously banned.

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Imam Reza shrine hosts mourners of Prophet's daughter

Pilgrims commemorated the martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), at the holy shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad on Saturday night.

This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the ceremony was held under strict health protocols.

Military chief: Any act against Iran will face maximum strong response in shortest time

POLITICAL TEHRAN – The highest ranking Iranian military commander said on Saturday that the launch of ballistic missiles at mock enemy targets at a distance over 1,800 kilometers carried as a meaningful choice, warning the enemies that any threat to Iran's national interests would face a harsh response in the shortest possible time.

Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, said the operation to blast mock enemy targets with long-range ballistic missiles in the southern areas of the Sea of Oman and the northern parts of the Indian Ocean at a distance of over 1,800 kilometers carried a heavy weight.

Bagheri made these remarks while attending a large-scale military exercise staged by the IRGC Aerospace Force in the central desert of Iran.



"Choosing a bunch of long-range missiles against naval targets illustrates that if the enemies of the Islamic Republic have ill intentions against our national interests, maritime trade routes, and territory, they will come under missile strike and will be destroyed," the top general warned.

He also noted that the Payambar-e Azam 15 (the Great Prophet 15) drill and the other intensive exercises that have been held over the past 15 days and will continue for the next five days indicate the readiness of the Iranian Armed Force in all arenas.

Bagheri went on to say that Iran is not seeking to launch any offence, but made it clear that any hostile move against Iran will face a strong response "with maximum power and in the shortest time".

Various classes of long-range ballistic missiles were launched in the final stage of the drills on Saturday morning to detonate the hypothetical enemy's warships from a distance of 1,800 kilometers north of the Indian Ocean.

IRGC chief Hossein Salami said on Saturday one of the military exercise's goals is to be able to target "enemy war vessels" including aircraft carriers.

On Friday, the IRGC fired dozens of "next-generation" missiles in central Iran that hit their land targets.

"This is the roaring sound of a large number of the Guard's ballistic missiles, which have this time been equipped with detachable warheads and can be guided outside the Earth's atmosphere," the national TV said as a barrage of missiles was launched.

Shortly after, the IRGC also tested "suicide drones", that were shown to hit a variety of land targets.

Russia: Iran a victim of terrorism and a pioneer in war on terror

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Maria Zakharova, the spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry, on Saturday rejected U.S. allegations of Iran's link with al-Qaeda, saying Iran itself is a serious victim of terrorism and a pioneer in the fight against terrorism.

Speaking to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Zakharova said there is a lot of evidence suggesting Iran's serious efforts to counter terrorists, particularly in Syria and Iraq.



Zakharova also noted that the U.S. officials' silence about Iran's effective fight against terrorists shows that they want to distort the realities about the Islamic Republic.

On Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used his last days in office to accuse Iran, without any evidence, of being the al-Qaeda's "new home base". He claimed that his remarks were part of what he called "declassified U.S. intelligence".

Iran is "the new Afghanistan", Pompeo alleged at a news conference in Washington. "Unlike in Afghanistan, when al-Qaeda was hiding in the mountains, al-Qaeda today is operating under the hard shell of the Iranian regime's protection."

Tehran said the "baseless" accusations show Washington's frustration and the failure of its so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran, according to Tasnim.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif dismissed the allegations as "warmongering lies", pointing out to close ties between the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump and Saudi Arabia, the home country of most of the 9/11 terrorists.

"No one is fooled," Zarif tweeted. "All 9/11 terrorists came from @SecPompeo's favorite ME destinations; NONE from Iran." Elsewhere in her remarks, Zakharova said that according to available evidence, "Iran is itself a victim of terrorism and among the pioneers in the fight against terrorist outfits."

The Islamic Republic is an honest country in the fight against terrorism, she said, adding that there is no information about Tehran's possible links to al-Qaeda.

U.S. officials are silent on Iran's effective battle against terrorists, and their approach shows a smear campaign against Tehran, Zakharova emphasized.

Pompeo's claims came despite American authorities' acknowledgment of Washington's role in creating terrorist groups in the region, including al-Qaeda and Daesh (ISIL or ISIS).

Pakistan PM: Pompeo's attempts to link al-Qaeda to Iran intended to please Israel

Imran Khan says the world doesn't believe Pompeo's allegations that Iran has links with al-Qaeda

POLITICAL TEHRAN – The prime minister of Pakistan said the purpose behind U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's anti-Iran remarks is to appease the Zionists, but the world does not believe in his false allegations, IRNA reported on Saturday.

In an interview with Pakistani Bol News, Imran Khan stressed that Pompeo's accusations against Iran and its affiliation with al-Qaeda are never credible and the world does not accept such remarks.

He added Pompeo's tenure has almost expired, however, his accusations are very dangerous and their main goal is to gain the sympathies of the Zionists.

"There is no doubt that Pompeo is making such baseless accusations against Iran to satisfy Israel. Of course, he may be preparing for the 2024 elections and with this aim, he is seeking the support of the Zionist lobby," Khan noted.

He added only the Zionist regime in the region is seeking to weaken Iran.

"No country like Iran has stood on its own two feet that is why the United States is trying to create unrest in Iran after Syria and Iraq," the prime minister warned.



Imran Khan added, "Unfortunately, all the policies of the Secretary of State of the Trump administration are focused on satisfying the Zionist regime."

In remarks on January 12, Pompeo claimed that al-Qaeda has now a new base

in Iran, an allegation that he failed to provide any proof for it. Even some U.S. officials have cast doubts over Pompeo's remarks.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded to Pompeo's alle-

gations, saying, "No one will be deceived. All the terrorists involved in 9/11 event were from favorite countries of Mike Pompeo in the Middle East, and none from Iran."

Former U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton had admitted that it was the U.S. that "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 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.

Top IRGC commander: We can hit moving targets in the ocean from the heart of our land

Ballistic missiles successfully hit mock enemy's vessels 1,800 kilometers away in Northern Indian Ocean

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, Major General Salami, IRGC Aerospace Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh and a number of top brass were present during the last stage of the drill.

After detection of the hypothetical enemy ships' position by the IRGC Aerospace reconnaissance systems, long-range ballistic missiles of various classes were fired from Iran's central deserts and successfully hit and destroyed all targets in the Northern Indian Ocean some 1,800 kilometers away.

The IRGC started the first phase of the drills on Friday morning, during which the ground-to-ground ballistic missiles were fired and offensive drone bombers operations were put into action in the public area of Iran's central desert.

During this stage of the wargames, after the attack of the IRGC Aerospace's offensive bomber drones from all sides to the missile shield of the hypothetical enemy and complete destruction of targets, the new generation of IRGC ballistic missiles, those from the classes of Zolfagar, Zelzal and Dezful, were mass fired at targets, dealing fatal blows to the mock enemy bases.

The missiles were multiple re-entry vehicles (MRVs) with the capability of jamming and going through the enemy missile shield.

In relevant remarks on Friday, General Hajizadeh said

his forces have created a new power in the Great Prophet drill through a combination of a variety of capabilities with artificial intelligence.

"Through the combination of new missile capabilities and drone operation with artificial intelligence, today a new power was born in the Guards. The first stage of the drill was a simulator for attacking the enemy's power points and defensive lines," Hajizadeh said. "This stage was carried out using a combination of drones and missiles".

The commander also explained, "First, drone units targeted the defensive systems of the hypothetical enemy, and then, ballistic missiles destroyed the main assets and sections of the enemy base. Missiles used in this stage of the drill are a new generation of ballistic missiles equipped with detachable warheads and low RCS (radar cross-section). The time for preparation and operationalization of these missiles has been decreased by 90%. These missiles are operational and can be launched in less than five minutes after deployment."

Attacking the hypothetical enemy from all sides and altitudes, hampering the enemy's defensive ability, infiltrating enemy's missile shield by detachable warheads, and using equipment designed and produced by domestic experts are among features of the drill, the commander said.

Great Prophet drills are annual missile tests and exercises conducted by the IRGC. The first series of the drills began in July 2008.



In recent years, Iran has made great achievements in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing essential military equipment and systems.

The Iranian Armed Forces test their preparedness and capabilities as well as their latest equipment and weaponry in different drills several times a year. For example, during last few weeks, a wide range of newly-developed missiles and torpedoes as well as a large number of homemade weapons, tools and equipment including UAVs and choppers have been tested by the Iranian Army and IRGC.

Iran officially warned the U.S. of legal action for harassing diplomats

POLITICAL TEHRAN – In a statement on Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tehran has officially warned the U.S. that it will bring a lawsuit with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) if Washington continues illegal actions against the Iranian diplomats.

Saeed Khatibzadeh said Iran has issued an official memorandum in that regard

and submitted it through the Tehran embassy of Switzerland, which represents U.S. interests in Iran.

"In this memo, the American side has been warned that Iran will bring the U.S. to the International Court of Justice if Washington fails to stop its illegal actions against Iranian diplomats at international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whose headquarters are located on U.S. soil," the spokesman said.

Khatibzadeh added, "It has been a long time that the U.S. government has, in breach of international law, imposed many restrictions on Iranian diplomats and their families at international organizations in the United States, and these actions have disrupted and obstructed

the performance of diplomats of Iran and several other countries."

"Despite its commitments as a host of several international organizations, the U.S. has never been a good host," he said, adding, "The U.S. has, through the history of the UN, tried to harass and annoy the diplomats as wells families and children of the diplomats of countries with which it has bilateral differences."

French FM says it is urgent U.S. returns to JCPOA, asks Iran to revise nuclear policy

POLITICAL TEHRAN – The French foreign minister has said it urgent that Tehran abides by the terms of the nuclear agreement and Washington returns to the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

According to the nuclear deal Iran reached with the 5+1 nations (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany), Tehran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian's comments came in an interview published on January 16, just days before President Donald Trump -- who withdrew the United States from the deal -- leaves office.

While Trump quit the nuclear deal and introduced illegal sanctions on Iran in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the other parties, including Europeans, failed to protect Iran from U.S. sanctions.

Trump's successor, President-elect Joe Biden, faces an immediate challenge posed by Iran's acceleration of its nuclear program, including its move this month to start pressing ahead with plans to enrich uranium to 20 percent fissile strength at its Fordow nuclear plant.

With presidential elections in Iran due in June, Le Drian said it was urgent to tell the Iranians that their enrichment activities have gone far enough and to bring Iran and the United States back into the accord.

On January 4, the same day that Iran started the 20% uranium enrichment, Ira-

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

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have been rising since Trump withdrew the United States from the deal in 2018, arguing that it did not go far enough, and started imposing crippling sanctions as part of a "maximum pressure" campaign aimed at forcing Iran to negotiate a new accord.

"The Trump administration chose what it called the 'maximum pressure' campaign on Iran. The result was that this strategy only increased the risk and the threat," Le Drian told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

"This has to stop because Iran and -- I say this clearly -- is in the process of acquiring nuclear [weapons] capacity."

Tehran has always denied pursuing nuclear weapons, saying its nuclear program is strictly for civilian purposes.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has issued a decree banning the production, proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear arms. The Leader has said such weapons are religiously haram (forbidden).

Biden has said he will return the United States to the deal if Iran resumes strict compliance with it. Iran says sanctions must be lifted before it reverses its nuclear decisions.

Le Drian also said that even if both sides were to return to the deal, it would not be enough.

The French foreign minister said, "Tough discussions will be needed over ballistic proliferation and (what he called) Iran's destabilization of its neighbors in the region."

The top French diplomat made no mention that Western countries are providing lethal weapons to Israel - which makes repeated military threats against Iran - and Persian Gulf Arab states. In new moves the U.S. has agreed to sell F-35 fighter jets to the UAE and some other regional states that changes the balance of power in the region.

"The Trump administration chose what it called the 'maximum pressure' campaign on Iran. The result was that this strategy only increased the risk and the threat," Le Drian tells the Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

Separately, European powers on January 16 warned Iran against starting work on uranium metal-based fuel for a research reactor, saying it contravened the nuclear deal.

"We strongly encourage Iran to end this activity, and return to full compliance with its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without delay, if it is serious about preserving this agreement," France, Britain, and Germany -- three European countries party to the nuclear deal -- said in a joint statement.

The statement added that Iran has "no credible civilian use" for uranium metal.

"The production of uranium metal has potentially grave military implications," the statement said, while noting that under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran committed to not engage in the production of uranium metal or conduct research and development on uranium metallurgy for 15 years.

Actually, Iran embarked on the new nuclear policy aimed to restore the balance of rights and obligations in the nuclear deal that has long been implemented one-sidedly by Iran. The policy is aimed at persuading the European signatories to the nuclear deal that their poor track record in implementing their commitments under the deal is no longer acceptable to Iran.

Iran made the nuclear move after years of pursuing talks with the Europeans to convince them that if they really want to maintain the JCPOA, there is no other way than normalizing economic ties with Iran as envisioned by the JCPOA.

Lethal democracy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Businesses and shop owners in Washington DC are once again boarding up their windows to protect their properties in case further rioting breaks out during the Biden inauguration on January 20. They are concerned about what happened during the recent attack by Trump supporters on the Capitol.

Over the past few days, all states have taken precautionary measures ranging from boarding up windows to erecting fences around government buildings to prevent any repeat of the January 7 deadly riots at the U.S. Capitol. Further, all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (DC) have been put on high alert for possible violent protests ahead of Joe Biden's inaugurations on Wednesday. National Guard troops in camouflage and flak jackets and heavily armed state troopers were deployed to state capitals throughout the U.S. A group of National Guard troops has also been sent en masse to Washington DC to maintain security during the inauguration, a move that made the U.S. capital look more like a garrison town.

These measures were taken after the FBI warned of "armed protests" being planned at all 50 state capitals and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC in the days leading up to Biden's inauguration this week, according to an internal bulletin obtained by CNN.

"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitals from 16 January through



at least 20 January, and at the U.S. Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," the FBI bulletin said.

The FBI also tracked reports of threats to harm Biden, VP-elect Kamala Harris and Speaker Nancy Pelosi. These threats seem to have changed Biden's agenda. The president-elect was expected to travel to Washington by train. But The Associated

Press reported that Biden will no longer be taking an Amtrak train to Washington for his inauguration because of security concerns.

These concerns were exacerbated on Sunday after CNN reported that the U.S. Capitol Police arrested a Virginia man as he attempted to pass through a police checkpoint in downtown Washington Friday with fake inaugural credentials, a loaded handgun and

over 500 rounds of ammunition.

These incidents have once again highlighted how deep the U.S. is divided in the wake of Biden's win in the November election. Biden had campaigned allegedly on uniting the American people and healing the divisions created by the Trump administration. But after he secured election win, Biden and his fellow Democrats are now moving toward brutally suppressing a large group of Americans who did not vote in favor of the Democratic Party. The Democrats and their mainstream media were quick to label protesters attacking the U.S. Capitol as pro-Trump "mobs", urging the law enforcement forces to quash them as soon as possible. The Capitol Police used lethal force to repress the protesters, killing at least four people.

If these incidents had occurred in a non-Western country, the U.S. diplomats would have worked their butts off to denounce "violations of human rights". But they are now tight-lipped about the situation in their country, though Washington is now looking more like heavily guarded U.S. embassies in war-torn countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

The recent developments also revealed the true color of the U.S. democracy, which tolerates criticism as long as it is expressed in television shows and on social media platforms, not on the streets.

Zarif criticizes E3 for non-compliance with JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has responded to recent remarks by his French counterpart who called for "tough discussions" on Iran's ballistic missiles and its regional role, saying that the European signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal did nothing to save the deal, officially called the JCPOA.

"E3 leaders—who rely on signature of OFAC functionaries to carry out their obligations under JCPOA—have done ZILCH to maintain JCPOA. Remember @EmmanuelMacron's still-born initiative or UK non-payment of court-ordered debt? JCPOA is alive because of Iran and not E3, @JY_LeDrian," Zarif said in a tweet on Sunday.

The chief Iranian diplomat also said France is destabilizing the West Asia region and protecting those who "chainsaw their critics."



"Dear colleague: You kick-started your cabinet career with arms sales to Saudi war criminals. Avoid absurd nonsense about Iran. Reality check: YOU are destabilizing OUR region. Stop protecting criminals who chainsaw their critics and use YOUR arms to slaughter children in Yemen," the

Iranian Foreign Ministry said in another tweet.

Zarif was apparently responding to recent remarks by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in which he accused Iran of trying to acquire nuclear weapons capacity.

"The Trump administration chose what it called the maximum pressure campaign on Iran. The result was that this strategy only increased the risk and the threat," Le Drian told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper, according to a Reuters report. "This has to stop because Iran and I say this clearly - is in the process of acquiring nuclear (weapons) capacity."

Le Drian also said that the return of Iran and the United States to the Iran nuclear deal—formally called JCPOA—is not enough.

"Tough discussions will be needed over ballistic proliferation and Iran's destabilization of its neighbors in the region," he said.

Iran raps EU for blacklisting Syria's top diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran's Foreign Ministry has denounced the European Union's decision to add Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad to its sanctions list as "unreasonable" and "unwise."

"Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh slammed the European Union for its unreasonable, non-constructive, and unwise decision to blacklist Mr. Faisal Mekdad, the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday, a day after the EU put Mekdad on its sanctions list.

"The EU's move to sanction the Syrian foreign minister will escalate the crisis in the Arab country and further complicate the political settlement of this crisis," the spokesman said.

He pointed out that the EU decision will only widen the trust gap between Syria and the European Union.

"Such an unpleasant measure will only result in further divergence and distrust between Brussels and Damascus. At a time when the Syrian crisis needs a political solution, blacklisting the country's foreign minister as the person in charge of Syria's foreign policy means nothing but obstructing the peace process," Khatibzadeh continued.

Describing the decision as "unwise," the spokesman strongly called on the European Union to reconsider its decision, especially at a time when it was expected to condemn the Zionist regime's attacks and aggression against the Syrian territory in violation of the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and express its serious opposition to the U.S.'s unjust sanctions against the Syrian nation.

On Friday, the EU added Mekdad to its sanctions list, claiming that the foreign

minister shares responsibility for what it called "violent repression" against the Syrian population.

"The Council today decided to add Faisal Mekdad to the list of persons subject to EU restrictive measures on Syria, in light of his recent appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs," the European Council said in a statement on Friday.

Mekdad was appointed as the new foreign minister of Syria in November following the passing of his predecessor Waleed al-Muallem.

The European decision brings to 289 the total number of persons targeted by a travel ban and an asset freeze, with 70 entities also facing punitive measures.

The European sanctions currently in place against the Syrian government were introduced in 2011 when the Syrian crisis began. At that time, the European Union accused the Syrian government of repressing its population and imposed sanctions on it in accordance with this accusation. Under the EU sanctions on Syria, companies and prominent business people who benefit from their ties with the Syrian government and from the war economy are also subject to sanctions.

"Additional restrictive measures adopted by the EU include a ban on the import of oil, restrictions on certain investments, the freezing of assets held by the Syrian central bank in the EU, and export restrictions on equipment and technology that could be used for internal repression or for the monitoring or interception of internet or telephone communications," the European Council said.

The relevant legal acts, including the names of the person concerned, have been published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Biden must unconditionally return to JCPOA: senior MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Shahrar Heydari, deputy head of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has called on U.S. President-elect Joe Biden to unconditionally return to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The lawmaker said if Biden unconditionally implements the nuclear deal—officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—Iran will also implement its commitments under the deal.

"But if the Western parties raise the issue of negotiations and buy more time, this will certainly not benefit Iran," Heydari told Tasnim on Sunday.

Underlining that Iran's main goal in preserving the JCPOA is to lift sanctions, he said, "If the cruel sanctions that were imposed on the Iranian nation under Trump are not to be lifted, the JCPOA will certainly be a loss for Iran."

The lawmaker pointed out that Iran and the P5+1 had undertaken to implement the commitments they made within the JCPOA. "The Islamic Republic of Iran fulfilled these obligations, but the United States withdrew from this international agreement, and the Europeans did not fulfill their obligations under the pressure of the White House, brought the JCPOA close to destruction," Heydari remarked, noting that the Western parties to the nuclear deal have reneged on their commitments while Iran transparently implemented its obligations.

The deputy head of the parliamentary committee pointed out that restrictions on Iran's banking transactions, insurance, aviation and shipping industries were supposed to be lifted under the JCPOA but after the U.S. withdrawal from the deal, these restrictions remained in place, which prompted Iran to reduce its nuclear commitments.

According to Heydari, the best op-

tion for Iran to respond to the Western non-compliance is to implement a nuclear law passed by the Iranian Parliament in early November.

The nuclear law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect Nation's Rights," outlines a step-by-step strategy for Iran to force the West into reconsidering its sanctions policy against Iran by increasing nuclear activities. It stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in few months if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the JCPOA.

In early January, Iran raised the level of Uranium enrichment to up to 20% in line with the nuclear law. Heydari said this move was made under the watch of the UN nuclear watchdog.

On January 4, Iran officially started enriching uranium to 20%. "A few minutes ago, the process of producing enriched uranium to 20% purity has begun. And the first product of UF6 enriched uranium will be produced in a few hours," Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on that day.

Rabiei also said that President Hassan Rouhani had issued an order stipulating that the nuclear law should be implemented.

"We resumed 20% enrichment, as legislated by our Parliament. IAEA has been duly notified. Our remedial action conforms fully with Para 36 of JCPOA, after years of non-compliance by several other JCPOA participants. Our measures are fully reversible upon FULL compliance by ALL," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on the same day as Iran started the 20% uranium enrichment.

Iran dispels rumors about South Korean ship, says legal proceedings underway

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, has responded to rumors about the possible release of a South Korean ship recently impounded by Iran for technical reasons.

In a statement on Saturday, the spokesman said that legal proceedings are underway into the case of the South Korean ship seized by Iran for environmental concerns.

"Legal proceedings are underway into the case of the South Korean ship seized in the Persian Gulf waters upon a judicial order due to polluting the environment," he noted. "So, any developments in the case are subject to decisions by judicial officials."

Khatibzadeh stated that any decision by Iran on the ship would be merely announced by the Iranian Judiciary's spokesman.

"The stances and decisions of the Judiciary are merely

announced by its spokesperson, and any remarks made in this regard by people other than relevant authorities have no legal grounds," he asserted.

On January 4, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) impounded the MT Hankuk Chemi carrying 20 crew members, including five South Koreans, for polluting the environment. Following the seizure, Khatibzadeh said that the South Korean ship's seizure was "a total technical issue."

"Based on initial reports coming from local authorities, the issue is completely technical, and the vessel was led ashore upon a judicial order because the vessel had been polluting the sea," the spokesman said in a statement following the seizure of the ship.

"Like other countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran is sensitive about such offenses, especially polluting the marine environment; so, it deals with such offenses in accordance

with the law," he continued. "This was not an exceptional incident, and similar incidents had earlier occurred in Iran and in other countries' waters, and it is something usual, and further information will be announced accordingly."

Last week, a senior South Korean diplomat traveled to Iran in a bid to secure the release of the ship. The diplomat, Choi Jong-kun, held talks with several Iranian officials over a range of issues including Iran's seizure of the South Korean ship in the Strait of Hormuz. But the talks ended in failure.

Iran also castigated South Korea for its move to politicize the issue of the seized ship, saying the country's behavior was not understandable.

"The South Korean government's behavior in this regard is not understandable and is rejected," Khatibzadeh said. "We urge the Korean government to deal with this technical issue logically and responsibly."

SPORTS

Sitting volleyball league the best preparation for Paralympics: Rezaei

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Iran sitting volleyball head coach Hadi Rezaei says that the league competition acts as a best tournament as part of preparation for the Tokyo Paralympic Games.

Rezaei, who is also head coach of Iranian club Mes Shahr Babak, says that COVID-19 pandemic has caused the most significant disruption to the sporting competitions and domestic events can help the players to stay fit.

Mes Shahr Babak, Iran league title contender, lost to Shahrdari Varamin 3-1 on Saturday in the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled's Hall.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Rezaei said that Mes Shahr Babak still are the favorites to win the title.

"As you see, two teams have benefited from national team's players and the issue had caused huge excitement. It was comparable to a final at the world championship," Rezaei said.

"Iran sitting volleyball team have been invited to many tournaments over the past months but we would rather participate in the tournaments which consist of our main rivals. Bosnia and Herzegovina sitting volleyball team are main opponents. Russia, Egypt and Brazil are also the teams who are favorites to win the Paralympic Games," he added.

Iran sitting volleyball team, known as dream team, have won Paralympics six times out of 11 times. However, Rezaei says that there is no guarantee for the Persians to win the title for the seventh time.

"As you know, we have strong rivals in the world and it means that we have a difficult task ahead. We want to win the gold once again and will do our best but we have to prepare well for the Games," Rezaei concluded.

The Men's Sitting Volleyball Paralympic Qualification Tournament is set to take place from 1-5 June in Duisburg, Germany. The seven teams are expected to compete for the one last spot into the eight-team Tokyo 2020 field. The winner would join hosts Japan, 2018 World Championship winners Iran and runners-up Bosnia and Herzegovina, and zonal qualified teams China, Russia, Brazil and Egypt.

Majid Jalali appointed Nassaji coach

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Long-serving coach Majid Jalali was named as new head coach of Nassaji football club.

The 64-year-old coach has penned an 18-month contract with Ghaemshahr based football club.

Jalali replaced Vahid Fazeli in Nassaji.

Jalali started his coaching career in 1986 as Vahdat coach and has led many Iranian teams over the past 35 years.

Under guidance of Fazeli, third bottom Nassaji earned just two wins out of 11 matches.

The 39-year-old coach was sacked shortly after the 1-1 draw against rock-bottom Machine Sazi on Friday.

Saei suspended for one-year after bust-up with official

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Disciplinary Committee of the Iran Taekwondo Federation has suspended Hadi Saei for one-year and fined him \$400 after an altercation with an official during the league competition on Thursday.

Saei, who is technical manager of two teams, got involved in a clash with secretary of Iran league organization, accusing him of not respecting his position.

The most successful Iranian athlete in Olympic history with two gold medals and one bronze, has been suspended for one year from taking part in the league.

Saei can file an appeal against the ban within the next three days.

Brentford complete permanent signing of Ghoddos

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Brentford football club have finalized a deal to add Saman Ghoddos to their squad on a permanent basis.

The 27-year-old Iranian winger initially joined The Bees from Amiens SC on loan in September on loan. This was due to be a one-year loan, but all parties have agreed to complete a permanent transfer.

Saman has signed a Brentford contract until the summer of 2023 and there is an option for an extra year, brentfordfc.com reported.

The Iran international completed his move on the same weekend he scored the winner for The Bees in an Emirates FA Cup win over Middlesbrough, after setting up the first goal for Halil Dervisoglu.

Ghoddos made his debut in the Carabao Cup win over Fulham and set up a goal for Marcus Forss with one of the first touches of his Brentford career. He has made 19 appearances for Brentford so far, 16 of them in the EFL Championship and eight of them from the start. He has been on the losing side only once in his 19 games for The Bees.

Born in Malmö, Sweden, to Iranian parents, Saman worked his way through the Swedish lower leagues before making his name at Östersunds FK. He was part of the squad that won the Svenska Cup in 2017, their first major trophy, and won the club's Player of the Year award, a prize he would pick up again the following season. That cup win earned OFK a Europa League place and Saman played in all 13 of Östersunds' European games, scoring four goals, on their run from the Second Qualifying Round through to a Last 32 tie against Arsenal.

He moved to Amiens in August 2018 after Iran's World Cup campaign in Russia, where he played all three group games. That was his second piece of international recognition after scoring one goal in two games for Sweden. Saman won his 22nd cap for Iran late in 2020 and has two goals to his name for the Persians.

Tehran, Dakar hold webinar on boosting trade

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) held a webinar on the expansion of trade with Senegal in collaboration with the Dakar Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture.

In the webinar which was attended by the officials and representatives of the two countries' private sectors, including the heads of the two chambers, the two sides discussed ways for the expansion of trade ties, the TCCIMA portal reported on Friday.

The officials stressed the need to increase awareness of the capacities and opportunities for cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking in the online event, the TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari expressed dissatisfaction with the level of trade between the two countries considering their great capacities and said: "the trade between Iran and Senegal in the previous [Iranian calendar] year (ended on March 19, 2020) was only \$1.8 million."



Noting that Senegal's annual trade value is estimated at \$12.3 billion, Khansari said: "Senegal's most important export items include foodstuff and agricultural products such as fish, seafood, cotton, peanuts, mangoes, as well as petrochemicals, gold phosphates, and cement."

Due to the geographical location of Senegal and the port of Dakar as a naval base, this country and the city of Dakar can become a gateway for Iran's exports to West and Central Africa, the official stressed.

Khansari also invited the head of the Dakar Chamber to visit Iran in the near future.

Elsewhere in the webinar, Hesamedin Hallaj, TCCIMA deputy head for international affairs noted that holding such events is the first step for the expansion of economic relations between the two countries.

"We will try to hold similar programs and webinars in the future so that the two sides become more familiar with each other's capacities and potentials," he said.

The head of the Dakar Chamber for his part expressed his country's readiness for expansion of cooperation with the Iranian private sector.

IME's value of weekly trades up 17%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) has risen 17 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations department, 561,840 tons of commodities valued at more than \$254 million were traded at this exchange in the past week, showing also 27 percent growth in terms of weight.



The exchange sold on its mineral and industrial trading floor 162,267 tons of commodities with a trading value of more than \$92 million. On this floor the IME traded 102,637 tons of steel, 2,160 tons of copper, 1,900 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 20 kg of gold bars and 20,500 tons of zinc dust.

Furthermore, the IME hosted trading of 397,993 tons of oil and petrochemical commodities on both domestic and export rings of the exchange with a total trading value of more than \$163 million, including 67,500 tons of vacuum bottom, 184,909 tons of bitumen, 57,866 tons of polymeric products, 33,282 tons of chemicals, 33,000 tons of lube cut, 1,978 tons of base oil, 50 tons of argon and 20,225 tons of sulfur.

Also, there were 1,578 tons of commodities traded on the IME's side market.

As previously reported, over 2.77 million tons of products worth \$1.32 billion were traded at the IME during the ninth Iranian calendar month Azar (November 21-December 20, 2020), indicating 57 percent growth in terms of value compared to its preceding month.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

In late April, 2020, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

Giant South Pars field secures Iran's gas supply in winter

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Steady production from Iran's giant South Pars gas field, which the country shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, has ensured uninterrupted and sustainable supply of natural gas across the country during the cold season.

The mentioned gas field is expanded over an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field, currently divided into 24 standard phases on the Iranian side, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Currently, 14 gas refineries in southern Iran are processing the natural gas extracted from the giant South Pars gas field.

The implementation of new phases in this field in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2020) has further increased the production from this reservoir, cementing the role of this field in supplying the country's natural gas needs.

Iran is currently producing over 810 million cubic meters (mcm) of natural gas daily which is mostly used inside the country for the domestic sector and also as fuel for



the power plants and a small portion is also exported to neighboring countries like Iraq.

Speaking to IRNA on Saturday, the managing director of the 8th South Pars Refinery said that the increase in the giant gas field's output from phases 20 and 21, which have gone fully operational in the current year, is going to ensure a steady supply of gas in the cold season.

"Phases 20 and 21 have produced 13.14 billion cubic meters of gas in the first seven months of this [Iranian calendar] year

(March 20-October 21, 2020)," Hadi Chabok said, adding: "This refinery has produced about 11.672 billion cubic meters of sweet gas during this period."

The 8th South Pars Refinery receives the gas produced in phases 20 and 21 through pipeline.

He pointed to the suitable operating conditions in the mentioned refinery and said: "The reliability of this refinery was 54.99 units this year, which is an excellent level."

According to Chabok, phases 20 and 21

have fulfilled 100 percent of their production commitments and the production from these phases increased by two percent in the first seven months of this year.

Each of the phases 20 and 21 now produce 52 million cubic meters of gas, 75,000 barrels of gas condensate, and 400 tons of sulfur daily. One million tons of liquefied natural gas and one million tons of ethane are also produced annually.

Back in November 2020, Kambiz Sefati, the operator of the 8th South Pars Refinery, had said that the refinery recorded the best performance in production and safety among all the refineries of the South Pars complex.

"Engineers and employees of this refinery were able to take a big step toward the realization of the "surge in production" motto by the production of 10.66 billion cubic meters of gas since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2020) and 77,760 man-hours of work without accidents."

Last year, the 8th refinery had also announced that the amount of associated petroleum gas flaring in this refinery was reduced nearly to zero.

All the offshore operations of the development project of the South Pars gas field, except for phase 11, were completed in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020) and the development of Phase 11 is currently underway by an Iranian company.

Iran ready to raise oil output to pre-sanction level

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Mentioning the deals signed between the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and domestic contractors for developing the country's oil fields, Mohammadi said: "In addition to the projects for increasing oil production, which were awarded last week, we have other plans to maintain the production levels as well."

"We have projects in the form of annual financial and operational programs that are pursued and include above-ground and underground sections such as well operations, facilities and pipelines," he explained.

Iran's oil exports have declined significantly in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20) due

to U.S. sanctions, but has never fully stopped. Reuters confirmed in September 2020 that Iran's oil exports had risen sharply in the mentioned month, to an estimated 1.5 million barrels per day.

Last week, NIOC signed eight deals worth €1.2 billion with domestic companies for developing the country's oil fields.

The mentioned contracts were inked by NISOC and the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), as employers, and eight domestic companies for the maintenance of the production level and increasing recovery factor of several oil fields.



1st shipment of Indian equipment arrives in Chabahar port

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The first consignment of Indian equipment for the development of port activities at Iran's Chabahar port worth \$8.5 million has arrived in the southeastern port, the director-general of Sistan-Baluchestan Province's Ports and Maritime Department announced.

"The first shipment of strategic loading and unloading equipment worth \$8.5 million has arrived in Chabahar port to mark the activation of the contract between the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and the Indian side," Behrouz Aghaei said on Sunday.

According to Aghaei, the mentioned



equipment is going to be installed in Shahid Beheshti port, as part of a contract between the two sides, based on which India is going

to invest \$85 million in this port.

The official noted that the Indian side is going to operate in Shahid Beheshti port in the form of a build-operate-transfer (BOT) contract and this is the first time that such a contract is implemented in one of the country's ports with 100 percent foreign investment.

Back in July 2020, PMO Head Mohammad Rastad had said that India is pursuing the construction and installing of the necessary equipment in Chabahar port under the framework of a BOT contract.

Rastad had noted that the grain suckers, gate cranes as well as gantry cranes of Shahid Beheshti port were installed last year, and only the equipment related to the commitment

of the Indian operator were remained to be imported and installed in this port.

India is the only foreign country that is currently participating in a major development project in Iran despite the U.S. sanctions.

The Chabahar Port development project is the anchor for the expansion of economic relations between the two nations.

India is going to install and operate modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

The strategic port in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country's economic affairs.

Steel products output increases 9.5%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Production of steel products in Iran has risen 9.5 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), as compared with the corresponding period in the past year, according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data put the country's steel products output at 19.1 million tons in the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was 17.5 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Iran's export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020) rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

As reported, the country's major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in



the previous year.

Iranian government levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since late September 2019, as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has urged the government to prevent the exports of raw minerals in order to be processed in the country for making products with more added value.

The industry ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili has said that while 10 years ago Iran exported more than 20 million tons of unprocessed iron ore, the figure fell to six million tons last year.

TV sets manufacturing rises 57% in 9 months yr/yr

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Manufacturing of TV sets in Iran has increased 57.6 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 901,500 TV sets have been manufactured in the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was 572,200 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.

The idea of 'exceptionalism' is deeply ingrained in our national DNA: American author

'Toppling governments one of Washington's specialties'

1 → To replace the governments we overthrow, we often promote corrupt demagogues. Now we face the same combination at home: insurrection and demagoguery.

Why did you publish a tweet saying: "My friends abroad keep reassuring me: There can never be a coup in the United States because there is no American embassy there?"

The joke is that coups in most countries happen not for domestic reasons, but because of intervention by covert agents who work from the U.S. embassy. This is not completely true, but true enough so that everyone gets the joke.

Is there any mechanism in the American constitution to prosecute a president who violates the law?

We do have an impeachment procedure but it is political in nature, not legal. In the



U.S. as in most countries, politics often is more powerful than the law.

The Democratic Party of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden succeeded to take control of the Senate. Do you expect the victory would lead to a change in U.S. policies, especially in foreign pol-

icy areas?

Biden will make substantial changes to government policies relating to education, transportation, labor, energy, immigration, and other domestic issues. There will be no major change in foreign policy. The U.S. will continue seeing Russia and China as enemies

and working more often to confront them than to compromise. There will, however, be some change in policy toward Iran. How substantial the change will remain unclear? It is the subject of intense debate behind the scenes in Washington and the incoming Biden administration.

How do you assess American police's behavior after pro-Trump fans stormed the Capitol Hill in comparison with its reaction to the summer protests? Was the Insurrection Act applicable?

President Biden himself said it: "No one can tell me that if it had been a group of Black Lives Matter protesting yesterday, they wouldn't have been treated very differently than the mob of thugs that stormed the Capitol. We all know that's true. And it is unacceptable. Totally unacceptable. The American people saw it in plain view."

Now the U.S. faces the same combination of "insurrection and demagoguery" at home.

In the U.S. as in most countries, politics often is more powerful than the law.

'Compliance-for-compliance' approach needed to reinstate JCPOA: Harvard researcher

1 → Increases in uranium enrichment levels are intended to show the United States and the E3 the high costs of not abiding by JCPOA," according to Herzog.

The following is the text of the interview:

What message is Iran sending to the United States and the E3 (Britain, France, Germany) by announcing it has begun 20% enrichment of uranium?

To start off, I do not believe the Islamic Republic is developing nuclear weapons. The evidence indicates that military nuclear research in Iran stopped in 2003. My reading is that increases in uranium enrichment levels are intended to show the United States and the E3 the high costs of not abiding by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. Iran is also exceeding the agreement's limits on the number of gas centrifuges and quantity of enriched uranium. To date, these actions are reversible. Majid Takht-Ravanchi, the Iranian ambassador to the United Nations, reiterated this last week.

While I understand the logic of the Iranian strategy, it appears to be backfiring by escalating tensions. That is, the message leaders in Tehran may be intending to send isn't the message that is being received. Now, many hawks who seek confrontation are using these moves to claim proof of Iranian intent to proliferate nuclear arms. There is no credible evidence to support these allegations. Yet, the move by Tehran still seems ill-advised.

Going from the 3.67% low-enriched uranium permitted under the JCPOA for fueling reactors to 20% highly-enriched uranium is a lot of effort. It is much harder to do this than to increase the U-235 concentration from 20% to 90% needed to build a bomb. So, intentionally or not, what we are seeing is a dramatic reduction in the breakout time to develop nuclear weapons. This risk jeopardizing nuclear diplomacy and empowering those who might seek to attack Iran.

To what extent can Iran's move press the United States and the E3 to fulfill their commitments under the JCPOA?

In a perfect world, diplomacy would be direct and unambiguous. But this is, unfortunately, not the world we live in. The nuclear diplomacy of Iran, the United States, and the E3 is also a function of the domestic politics of each country. Such policies allowed outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump to falsely denigrate the Iran Nuclear Deal and withdraw even though Iran was verifiably complying. This is to say, political actors seeking to prevent the revitalization of the JCPOA will not just go away because Joe Biden takes office.

I believe that, rather than making it easier for the Americans and the Europeans to adhere to the deal, any escalation will create difficulties for pro-JCPOA politicians. It will be politically untenable for these leaders to reverse all sanctions so long as the Islamic Republic isn't in compliance. Each step Iran takes to exceed the JCPOA's limits will need to be reversed before its interlocutors will fully embrace their commitments.

For this reason, my understanding is Biden—with the support of the E3—and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani intend to

pursue a "compliance-for-compliance" approach to reinstating the deal. This will likely need to involve a phased timeline of de-escalation measures by both sides. For instance, the United States could take steps to better allow Iran to sell oil and natural gas on international markets while Iran simultaneously reduces the number of centrifuges at the Natanz and Fordow facilities. Then, the sides could pursue another series of such measures. It is likely only through this sort of graduated timeline that Iran, the United States, and the E3 will be able to build confidence in each other's intentions. But I think it is doable.

Iran says that the United States must return to the JCPOA and that it will not negotiate over its missiles, which form cornerstone of its strategic deterrence. Do you predict Iran and Biden's administration can reach an understanding in this regard?

Regarding the JCPOA, yes. As we discussed, I absolutely think that the Biden and Rouhani administrations will be able to do the hard work of diplomacy to begin the path toward fully restoring the deal. Hopefully, the winner of the 2021 Iranian presidential election will also be committed to working with other partners in the deal. Biden has been a supporter of the JCPOA from the start as vice president under Barack Obama. And many officials from the Obama administration who worked on developing the framework for cooperation will return to the White House and State Department. I expect them to roll back the failed Trump policy of "maximum pressure," which has only resulted in Iran increasing its nuclear capacity.

Regarding Iran's large and growing inventory of ballistic and cruise missiles, I think the answer is more complicated. I understand many Iranians look to the legacy of Saddam Hussein's abhorrent missile attacks on Iranian civilians as a justification for their own missiles—viewing it as a defensive program for deterrence. But Iran's missile attacks across Iraq and Syria in recent years, and new missiles with ranges capable of reaching Europe, raise concerns about the defensive nature of the program. I think the Iranian government should consider publishing a "white paper" about its missile strategy to avoid misperception and inadvertent escalation.

This view of Iranian missiles as offensive and threatening capabilities is prevalent among U.S. and E3 policymakers. For this reason, Biden's incoming National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has noted the administration wants missile diplomacy with Iran after the sides have reinstated the JCPOA. Many in Tehran will surely be resistant.

It is difficult for politicians in Washington to support much broader engagement with Iran so long as U.S. allies feel threatened

"The president (Trump), having been soundly defeated in an election and presiding over a legacy of failures, is like a wounded animal."

Experimental U.S. COVID vaccines cause illness and deaths

By Stephen Lendman

What's going on in the U.S. and West is a state-sponsored conspiracy against human health and well-being—a widespread crime against humanity.

We're being lied to and deceived by Big Government and Big Pharma in cahoots with Big Media.

Experimental unapproved COVID vaccines don't preserve and protect health as falsely promoted.

They risk serious harm to health or death. They create customers for other drugs that in combination can also be hazardous.

Time and again, vaccines cause diseases they're supposed to protect against.

According to data explained by Burning Platform.com, mass-vaxxing with COVID vaccines already caused "severe reactions (to) thousands" after being jabbed, including deaths.

Harmful "side effects (are) more common after (a) 2nd dose."

It's happening in nations where Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are used for vaxxing—what should be banned, not promoted.

According to molecular biologist/immunologist Dolores Cahill, individuals vaxxed with their experimental mRNA vaccines will start

dying a few months later.

Others are experiencing convulsions, partial paralysis, and hospitalizations from potentially serious illnesses.

According to the Norwegian Medicines Agency, 23 elderly people in the country died after vaxxed with Pfizer's vaccine.

As a result, the agency warned the elderly and frail Norwegians "not (to be) vaccinated for COVID."

Thousands of doctors, scientists and other medical experts are warning against mass-vaxxing with experimental COVID vaccines.

Last October, eminent epidemiologists Drs. Martin Kullendorff, Sunetra Gupta, and Jayanta Bhattacharya warned "about the damaging physical and mental health impacts of the prevailing COVID-19 policies."

Doctors for Truth founder Dr. Elke De Klerk said "(w)e do not have a medical pandemic or epidemic."

"(P)anic is caused by (worthless) false positive PCR tests" that occur nearly always.

Hundreds of German Doctors for Information said the following:

"The Corona panic is a play. It's a scam. A swindle."

"It's high time we understood that we're in the midst of a global crime."

U.S. Frontline Doctors slammed fraudster Anthony Fauci, calling him a "political doctor"—masquerading as a promoter of healthcare and healing he doesn't give a damn about, just profiteering.

Scientist David Martin earlier said the following:

Pfizer and Moderna's experimental mRNA technology "is not a vaccine. This is an mRNA packaged in a fat envelope that is delivered to a cell."

"It is a medical device designed to stimulate the human cell into becoming a pathogen creator."

"It is not a vaccine. Vaccines actually are a legally defined term... under public health law."

"They're a legally defined term under CDC and FDA standards."

"(A) vaccine specifically has to stimulate both an immunity within the person who is receiving it, but it also has to disrupt transmission."

"(T)hat is not what this is. They have been abundantly clear in saying that the mRNA strand that is going into the cell...is not to stop transmission. It is a treatment."

If publicly explained this way, "it would not get the sympathetic ear of the public health authorities, because then people would say, well what other treatments are there?"

Wyoming's Public Health Department director Dr. Igor Shepherd called COVID vaccines "biological weapons of mass destruction."

We're scammed by governments and media press agent supporters of maximum profit-making at the expense of human health and well-being.

Orchestrated mass deception in the West suppressed accurate numbers of illnesses and deaths from COVID vaxxing.

They're largely unknown because of attributing them time and again to a preexisting condition or other cause—to suppress dangers from COVID vaccines.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Children's Health Defense explained the following:

"We don't know the true risk of (serious illnesses or) death from (COVID) vaccine(s) since regulators have rendered (them) invisible by attributing them all to coincidence."

"A 2010 study funded by HHS concluded that (the) VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System) captured 'fewer than 1% of injuries.'"

"In other words, the actual injury (and death) rates from mandated vaccines are more than 100x what HHS has been telling the public!"

Ignore Big Government, Big Pharma, Big Media propaganda.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. states brace for potential violence before Biden inauguration

State officials across the United States are preparing for potentially violent demonstrations in support of President Donald Trump in the days leading up to the January 20 inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

According to al Jazeera, states, including California, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Florida, had activated their National Guard forces to bolster security as of Saturday.

Authorities in Washington, DC were also bracing for more violence following the deadly storming of the seat of the country's legislature by pro-Trump rioters on January 6.

Meanwhile, a man with a loaded handgun and more than 500 rounds of ammunition has been arrested at a security checkpoint near the U.S. Capitol.

26 U.S. politicians warn of consequences of Houthi blacklisting

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's aide and a group of 25 American lawmakers have denounced a rushed decision by the outgoing administration to designate Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement a foreign "terrorist" organization, saying the move will exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn state.

On January 10, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo defied warnings from humanitarian groups and announced the blacklisting of Ansarullah.

According to Press TV, the designation is set to come into force on January 19, the eve of the inauguration of Biden, whose aides have hoped to mount a fresh push to end the U.S.-backed Saudi war on Yemen.

It freezes any U.S.-related assets of the Houthis, bans Americans from doing business with them and makes it a crime to provide support or resources to the movement.

Laschet succeeds Merkel as German CDU party leader

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's party has decided to keep its centrist course.

On Saturday, the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) elected Armin Laschet, the premier of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, as the new chair of the party.

Laschet is very much seen as the centrist successor to Merkel, who stepped down as party leader in December 2018 and has said she will not stand for reelection as chancellor. Laschet could be the one to replace her as chancellor, too, when Germany holds elections in September.

"He's definitely seen as the continuity candidate," Sudha David-Wilp, a senior transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund, said of Laschet, adding that he comes with "bonafide executive experience" as the leader of Germany's most populous state.

Laschet defeated Friedrich Merz, a much more conservative figure, in a runoff election, 521 to 466, during a party conference that was held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic. Merz is a hardliner who would certainly pull the CDU rightward in an attempt to pull some voters back from Germany's far-right party, Alternative for Germany, or AfD. (Another candidate, Norbert Röttgen, a former environment minister, was eliminated in the first round of voting.)

Fresh protests in France against controversial security bill

Tens of thousands of protesters marched across France Saturday to denounce a security bill critics say would restrict the filming of police and posting images to social media, notably to document cases of police brutality.

Thousands marched in Paris and cities across France, many of them angry about they say was the "disproportionate" response by police when they broke up an illegal New Year's rave in Brittany that attracted some 2,400 people, AFP reported.

Estimates of the turnout varied widely between the authorities and the activists: while police put the total turnout across the country at 34,000, organisers insisted it was closer to 200,000.

Resistance News

Abbas issues decree setting date for general elections

Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority President, issued on Friday evening a presidential decree regarding holding general elections in three stages.

According to the decree, the legislative elections will be held on 22/5/2021 and presidential elections on 31/7/2021. The results of the Legislative Council elections are the first stage in the formation of the Palestinian National Council.

The National Council will be completed on 31/8/2021 in accordance with the Basic Law of the Palestine Liberation Organization and national understandings.

This announcement came after Abbas met the head of the Central Elections Committee, Hanna Nasir, at the presidential headquarters in Ramallah.

Abbas directed the Election Commission to start launching a democratic election campaign in all provinces of the country, including Occupied Jerusalem and to initiate a national dialogue focusing on the mechanisms of this process.

For its part, Hamas Movement welcomed the issuance of presidential decrees regarding the general elections, the National Council, the Legislative Council and the Presidency.

In a statement on Friday evening, the Movement affirmed its keenness to ensure success of the election process in the interest of the Palestinian people, who have the absolute right to choose their leaders and their representatives.

Hamas stressed the importance of preparing the environment for free and fair elections, in which the voter expresses his will without pressures or restrictions.

"We need to proceed without hesitation in completing the entire electoral process leading to rebuilding the Palestinian political system and drawing a comprehensive national strategy to confront the Zionist occupation", Hamas underlined.

For his part, the speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Aziz Dweik, welcomed the issuance of Abbas's election decree which he considered a positive step.

Dweik said in a press statement, "We want transparent elections and guarantees that the occupation will not intervene to influence the elections."

He underlined that lifting the restrictions on the Gaza Strip is a basis for progress towards finding a national solution at the national level.

Landscaping, clean-up project completed on ancient fortress in Rey

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A landscaping and clean-up project has been recently completed on the ancient fortress of Rashkan in the historical city of Rey, which is situated south of Tehran province.

The mission was carried out in collaboration with three non-governmental groups (NGOs) active in the tourism and cultural heritage fields, Rey's tourism director Amir Mosayeb Rahimzadeh said on Sunday.



Some volunteers also collaborated to clean and collect garbage from the fortress' surrounding areas, the official added.

Dating back to the Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE), Rashkan fortress was built at the top of a solid mountain with plaster, limestones, and marble stones to help defend the city against invaders. The main parts of the castle were still standing until the Qajar era (1789-1925) but have since fallen into ruin.

Several excavations carried out at the historical site have uncovered the remains of some other structures from different historical eras. From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortresses were designed primarily to defend territories in warfare and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime. Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists.

Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire and it was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivalled in western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Islamic writers described it as a city of extraordinary beauty, built largely of fired brick and brilliantly ornamented with blue faience (glazed earthenware). It continued to be an important city and was briefly a capital under the rule of the Seljuqs, but in the 12th century, it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects. In 1220 the city was almost destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

Iranian, Japanese museums discuss preservation, exploitation of cultural heritage

TOURISM TEHRAN — Experts from the National Museum of Iran and the Museum of Teikyo University of Japan have explored ways to enhance cooperation in various museology arenas during a webinar on Wednesday.

Novel approaches to the preservation and exploitation of cultural heritage constituted the core of the event, which was also attended by officials from Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Properties, and the northern Golestan province, an official with the National Museum told the Tehran Times.

Coordinated by Fereidoun Biglari, the deputy director of the National Museum, and Kazuya Yamauchi of the Teikyo University, the webinar included three main sessions and five lectures on cooperation between the two museums, as well as exploitation and protection of cultural heritage.



Top Iranian archaeologist Jebrael Nokandeh, who presides over the National Museum, and Yamauchi of Teikyo gave opening speeches, welcomed participants, and gave an introduction about the background of cooperation and the importance of results obtained so far.

In the first session of the online conference, Takashi Oikawa, and Akira Fujisawa from the University of Teikyo briefed on joint efforts made by the two establishments.

In the second meeting, Hossein Dabbagh from Golestan province's department of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts explained about projects carried out to protect and restore the Seljuk-era (1037-1194) monument of Imamzadeh Noor in Gorgan.

Protection and the use of historic castles in Japan was another subject discussed at the session by Kazuhiko Nishi, an expert from Tokyo Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

The third session of the webinar consisted of two lectures. Maral Dadashzadeh of the National Museum of Iran, first spoke about Egyptian Blue or Lapis Lazuli Paste, and the final speaker of the webinar, Akira Fujisawa of the Teikyo University, spoke about the use of copper alloys in the Iranian Iron Age. In the end, the attendees agreed to publish the results of the speeches.

The National Museum of Iran is somewhat chockfull of priceless relics that represent various eras of the country's rich history. Its structure was completed in 1928 based on the design by French architect André Godard who was also an archaeologist and historian of French and Middle Eastern Art.

Iran, Nicaragua to expand museum relations

→ He added: "In the first step and until the situation normalizes, the two museums will try to get acquainted with each other's potentials through webinars, to be able to plan for future practical collaborations."

"Iran is one of the oldest civilizations in the world and it is an honor that the 125th anniversary of the National Museum of Nicaragua has coincided with the signing of this memorandum," said Luis Morales, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Nicaragua.

It is an honor to be present at the signing ceremony of this Memorandum of Understanding and I consider it an important step in strengthening relations between the two countries," said Javiera Pérez Guerra, the director of the National Museum of Nicaragua.

She explained that the National Museum of Nicaragua, with the support of the Ministry of Culture, has added new galleries to the museum and that the country's cultural diversity, especially its African roots has had a great impact on the enrichment of the National Museum.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Nicaragua to Iran, Isaac Lenin Bravo Jaen said: "The signing of this memorandum



National Museum of Iran Director Jebrael Nokandeh (C), Majid Salehi, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Nicaragua, and Isaac Lenin Bravo Jaen, the ambassador of the Republic of Nicaragua to Iran attend a signing ceremony at the National Museum in Tehran on January 16, 2021.

will strengthen the relations between the museums of the two countries and shows the interest of the two countries in peace

and stability in the world."

"This document is a clear message to the world that in such difficult circumstances,

world peace can be strengthened."

At the end of the ceremony, Majid Salehi, ambassador of The Islamic Republic of Iran in Nicaragua, stated that both embassies will make every effort to implement the issues agreed upon in this memorandum to be a key step in strengthening cultural relations between the two countries.

Chock-full of the nation's rich history, the National Museum of Iran showcases hundreds of collections including ceramics, pottery, stone figures, and carvings, mostly taken from excavations at Persepolis, Ismailabad (near Qazvin), Susa, Rey, and Turang Tappeh to name a few. Its structure was completed in 1928 based on the design by French architect André Godard who was also an archaeologist and historian of French and Middle Eastern Art.

The National Museum of Nicaragua is located in the old National Palace of Nicaragua, one of the most spectacular buildings of Nicaraguan architecture in the capital. The collection of the National Museum is nowadays housed in a monumental building and it offers a great variety of exhibitions, ranging from prehistorical bones and pre-Columbian ceramics (4,000 years old) to modern paintings and recent sculptures.

Iran named vice-chairman of UNWTO specialized committee

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran has been selected as the vice-chairman of the Committee for the Review of Applications for Affiliate Membership, one of the specialized panels of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The selection was made during an online meeting hosted by Iran on Saturday amongst the members of the committee including Côte d'Ivoire, Jamaica, China, Azerbaijan, and Saudi Arabia, Mohammad Qasemi, the director for marketing and advertising at Iran's tourism ministry announced.

The webinar was held simultaneously with the 31st Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) along with six committees on tourism, roads and communications, trade, agriculture, industry, and energy to discuss ECO's programs and plans on each subject in member countries, the official added.

The Islamic Republic was also appreciated for hosting

the 5th International ECO-Silk Road Food Festival in 2019, he added.

The 6th International ECO-Silk Road Food Festival was also scheduled to be held in the city of Zanjan in 2020, which was postponed indefinitely in an attempt to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. ECO region with an area of more than 8 million square kilometers stretching from central to the south and south-west Asia and a population of around 450 million inhabitants is well-known for its natural beauties, as well as a diversity of its historical-cultural heritage.

Specialized committees of UNWTO Members advise on management and program content. These include: the Programme and Budget Committee, the Committee on Statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account, the Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness, the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, and the Committee for the Review of



Applications for Affiliate Membership.

The specialized committees are subsidiary organs of the UNWTO Executive Council; except the World Committee on Tourism Ethics which is a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, and their role is to advise on management and program content.

No harm to Hormozgan historical sites by quake

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A medium-sized 5.5 magnitude earthquake that struck Hormozgan on Saturday caused no damage to historical structures and sites across the southern Iranian province.

"Due to the severity of the earthquake and the importance of historical buildings, [cultural heritage] experts started inspecting possible harms across the epicenter [Bandar-e Kong] and its surroundings," CHTN quoted Reza Borouand, the provincial tourism chief, as saying on Saturday. "Fortunately, reports indicate that no



damage has been inflicted to the historical texture of Bandar-e Kong and historic buildings in the vicinity of the port city."

The earthquake rocked coastal areas across Hormozgan, including the Qeshm island in the Persian Gulf in the early hours of Saturday. The quake that occurred at a depth of 19 km has not killed anybody, the spokesman for the Emergency Medical Service of Iran said.

The temblor has caused limited damages to several rural houses. A 35-year-old man injuring his leg while running away after the quake has received medical care.

Known as the province of islands, Hormozgan province is located on the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. It embraces scenic islands among which Kish, Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most beautiful ones and top tourist destinations in southern Iran.

The country sits on major seismic faults and experiences one earthquake a day on average. In 2003, a magnitude 6.6 earthquake flattened the historic city of Bam, killing 26,000 people. A magnitude 7 earthquake that struck western Iran in 2017 killed over 600 people and injured more than 9,000.

Tens of tourism projects underway in Ardebil province

HERITAGE TEHRAN — More than 150 tourism-related projects are currently underway across Iran's northwestern Ardebil province although the COVID-19 pandemic has brought travel and tourism to a near-standstill, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Although tourism has been suffered immensely from the coronavirus outbreak in the country, the investment projects related to this sector are still in progress to cement travel infrastructure, Nader Fallahi announced on Saturday.

The mentioned projects will prepare the province's tourism sector for the post-coronavirus era, when the number of tourists and travelers is expected to rise magnificently, the official added.

Last April tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.

In December 2019, Fallahi announced that seventeen tourism projects, worth 1,500 billion rials (some \$35



million) would be inaugurated in the province in near future. He said that the objective to launch tourism projects in the province is to provide tourists from all over the world and domestic tourists as well with the opportunity to use these facilities and select Ardebil

as their prime destination.

Back in November Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said that investment in the tourism sector and boosting tourism infrastructure hasn't stopped despite the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

Over the past years, a large number of tourism projects have been commenced across the country, some of which have come on stream, he added. This volume of investment indicates that investors have high hopes for the future of this industry in the post-coronavirus era and for the next years to come, the tourism minister said.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardebil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

New eco-lodge units to come on stream in northcentral Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — New eco-lodge units will be added to the traditional hospitality sector of Damghan, an ancient town situated in Semnan province, north-central Iran.

The units will be formed out of four historical mansions, which are currently being renovated and restored in Damghan with an average of 80 percent of completion so far, the provincial tourism chief has said.

These historical rural houses are being restored based on local architectural standards to preserve their traditional styles and originality, Mehdi Jamal announced on Sunday.

Establishing eco-lodge units could help

boost tourism in the region, which leads to economic prosperity in the post-coronavirus era, the official added.

Last June, the official announced that the number of eco-lodge units across the province is planned to be increased in near future. Increasing the number of eco-lodge units will strengthen and promote the region's tourism potential, the official explained.

Last November, the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan referred to the eco-lodges inaugurated across the country and noted that increasing the number of units could create job opportunities in rural areas and boost tourist arrivals in these regions.

He also noted that promoting ecotourism can help reverse migration and attract more foreign tourists. Apart from eco-lodge units, there are also boutique hotels and traditional accommodation centers which could flourish the tourism sector and provide infrastructure in these regions, Mounesan mentioned.

The tourism ministry has set a target to help build 2,000 eco-lodges by 2021, believing such guest houses could cater to sustainable development and job creation in the countryside and rural areas.

The culturally-diverse country never disappoints visitors when it comes to eco-tourism, sightseeing, and even tribal tourism as it is home to many regional



people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

Iran trying to start mass COVID-19 vaccination by next two months

SOCIETY TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said the government is trying its best to start mass vaccination against the coronavirus by the next two months with the priority given to medical staff and high-risk individuals.

The COVAX vaccines will be provided to the country by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20) or at the beginning of the next [Iranian calendar] year, Rouhani said on Saturday at a meeting of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

Other vaccines have also been purchased which will be available soon, he noted, adding, a co-produced vaccine called "Pasteur" will also be mass-produced during the spring.

Referring to the homegrown vaccines, he announced that two domestic vaccines that have been licensed for the clinical trial will also be available by the next summer.

Rouhani expressed hope that "the required vaccines will be provided to the people over time, and we will get away from this problem."

He called on the nation to follow the health protocols until the side effects of the vaccine are determined.

Homegrown vaccine

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, Kianoush Jahanpour, head of the Information Center of the Ministry of Health, said on January 10.

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 January 11, the second dose of the vaccine was injected into the three volunteers.

So far, 14 people have 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 determined, the second stage begins with the injection in 500 people, and after 28 days, the third phase begins with mass production.

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

COVID-19 daily new cases and mortalities

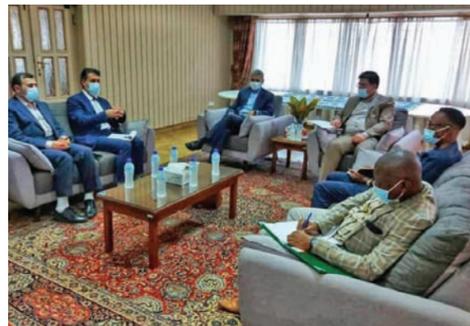
In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,016 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,330,411. She added that 1,119,137 patients have so far recovered, but 4,374 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 86 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 56,803, she added.

So far, 8,527,307 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 10 cities are in high-risk "red" zones, and 23 cities are in the orange zone and 163 in low-risk "yellow" zones.

Sierra Leone appreciates IRCS's health services



SOCIETY TEHRAN — Sierra Leone's Minister of Health and Sanitation, Alpha Wurie, has praised the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) for offering health services to the African country.

In a trip to Sierra Leone, Karim Hemmati, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, visited the IRCS medical centers in this country and discussed enhanced cooperation with Sierra Leone's Minister of Health and Sanitation and Christian Faya, head of the Sierra Leonean Red Cross.

It was agreed to extend the memorandum of understanding between the two countries, which

had been signed in 2017, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Accordingly, the IRCS expressed readiness to equip the medical facilities, as well as setting up specialized wards of obstetrics and gynecology, and hemodialysis in this medical center.

Wurie, for his part, praised the services provided by the Iranian Red Crescent Society and stated that the services will be a great help to the people of this country, which will be useful in expanding the bilateral cooperation.

In the meeting with Faya, Hemmati said that "we continue to provide services, despite all the challenges and problems caused by U.S. sanctions."

The IRCS medical centers have been providing services to the people in need in Freetown, since 2003, he stated, expressing readiness to provide more appropriate services to the people of this country by upgrading the medical equipment.

The promotion of services as well as the training of volunteers and staff in various fields, including COVID-19, are among the programs of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, which can also be done through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, he explained.

Faya also referring to the events that have taken place in this country over the past few years, said that incidents such as the Civil War from 1991 to 2003, the outbreak of infectious diseases such as Ebola, tuberculosis, and coronavirus, as well as the

landslide during these years, had caused problems for Sierra Leone.

IRCS's medical assistance and support for this country have been very useful and effective during the incidents, he added.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19, the Iranian Red Crescent has been able to support Sierra Leonean Red Cross to help people in need, Faya highlighted.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. While appreciating the services and assistance of the Iranian Red Crescent to the Sierra Leone Red Cross, they called for the continuation of these aids and services to the people.

IRCS services worldwide

On January 13, Hemmati said that the Iranian Red Crescent Society provides medical services to people in 13 Asian, African, and Latin American countries.

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.

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.

Iranian government submits 'violence against women' bill to parliament

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Iranian government has submitted a long-awaited bill for the protection of women against violence to the parliament.

The bill titled, Protection, Dignity, and Security of Women against Violence, had been under review since September 2019. It criminalizes any act or behavior that causes "physical or mental harm" to women "as a vulnerable gender".

In line with principles and goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution and in order to protect the dignity and security of women against kinds of violent behaviors, the bill has been submitted to the parliament, IRNA quoted Vice President for Parliamentary

Affairs, Hossein-Ali Amiri, as saying on Thursday.

It recommends a fund for safeguarding women's rights with provisions for providing medical expenses of the victims of violence, and imparting skill development training to them, he explained.

Special support for women

Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar said in October 2020 that the government has taken major steps for the advancement of women and families in Iran. "Through an inter-sectoral process, we developed national indicators for gender equity, which laid the ground for the first result based Plan for Women and Family Advance-



ment in 31 provinces and we recently launched the dashboard for monitoring indicators on gender equity and family prosperity."

Meanwhile, the national budget bill for the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022) has been

prepared in a way to support and pay special attention to women, especially female heads of households, rural women, and artisans.

Ebtekar noted that the budget for women's and family affairs has increased by 33 percent, reaching up to 320 billion rials (nearly \$7.6 million), with remarks suggesting special support for women.

She went on to highlight that the family is the cornerstone of human development, through the National Family Dialogue scheme. "We have taken an initiative to empower civil society in dialogue skills to enable family and social cohesiveness. The International Center for Family Dialogue has been recently launched in Tehran."

U.S. adds Iranian COVID-19 vaccine developers to sanctions list

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The U.S. Department of the Treasury has added Mohammad Mokhber, the president of the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order, and Barkat Ventures, which developed the first homegrown vaccine for the coronavirus, to OFAC's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list.



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

The daughter of Mohammad Mokhber was the first volunteer who received the vaccine.

Kianoush Jahanpour, head of the Information Center of the Ministry of Health, said on January 13 that some 72 percent of Iranians have expressed readiness to receive the domestically-made coronavirus vaccine.

Sixteen Iranian companies have been working on producing a COVID-19 vaccine since the beginning of the outbreak, and so far 12 companies have 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 humans, Jahanpour said.

Tehran Subway offering free-of-charge COVID-19 tests

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operation Company (TUSROC) is providing passengers with COVID-19 tests free of charge at one of its stations.

This program is in line with Tehran Subway's social responsibilities aiming to improve public health, both physically and



socially, IRIB quoted Mohsen Mohammadian, the TUSROC public relations director, as saying.

The program will run through January 19 at Shoosh station from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., he added.

COVID-19 restrictions

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

Health Minister Saed Namaki has said that the situation of coronavirus containment in the country is better than expected contrary to forecasts, and fortunately, new cases and deaths are declining.

The coronavirus control in the country, especially in the cities where restrictions were imposed, is improving, Namaki noted.

For the quarantine of patients who are financially struggling, over 40,000 beds in hotels, and guesthouses are needed, he stated.

When the plan started, 160 cities were in the 'red zone', but the figure has decreased to just six in the current situation, according to the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 109)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

دارای ... بودن (رسمی)

دانشگاه دارای چند دانشکده است. = دانشگاه چند دانشکده دارد.
تمرین ۴. جمله‌ها را با استفاده از "دارای" بنویسید:

- همدان آثار دیدنی زیادی دارد.
- البرز قلعه بلند و معروفی دارد.
- دانشگاه سال‌های مختلفی دارد.
- این مدرسه بهترین معلمان را دارد.
- ما دانشکده‌های زیادی داریم.
- تهران بزرگراه‌های مختلفی دارد.

تکیه گروه و جمله Group and Sentence Stress

A sentence may include one or more groups, with the stress on

the final word: شهر تهران، اولین پایتخت ایران (تکیه‌ی گروه)

There is usually one word in every sentence with the most prominent stress, more prominent than any group stress:

شهر تهران پایتخت ایران است. (تکیه‌ی جمله)

شهر همدان پایتخت ایران نیست. (تکیه‌ی جمله)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Knowledge-based companies unite to counter coronavirus

All knowledge-based companies in the country have been united to combat the coronavirus and many startups have been activated in this field, said Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology.

Some 200,000 nano masks are produced daily in the country, Sattari said, hoping that the output will reach 300,000 by the end of the week, IRNA reported.

He said Iran is one of the few countries that are able to manufacture machinery for producing nano masks which block particles less than three-tenths of a nanometer, including viruses.

شرکت‌های دانش بنیان برای مقابله با کرونا بسیج شده‌اند

سورنا ستاری معاون علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت تمامی ظرفیت‌های شرکت‌های دانش بنیان برای مقابله با ویروس کرونا بسیج شده‌اند و استارت‌آپ‌های زیادی در این حوزه فعال شده‌اند.

به گزارش ایرنا، ستاری با اشاره به اینکه در حال حاضر روزانه ۲۰۰ هزار عدد ماسک نانویی در کشور تولید می‌شود، گفت امیدواریم تولید این ماسک‌ها تا پایان هفته به ۳۰۰ هزار عدد در روز برسد.

وی گفت: ایران جزو معدود کشورهایی است که دستگاه‌های تولید کاغذ نانو فیلترهای ماسک را دارد که قادر هستند تا جلوی ذرات کمتر از سه دهم نانومتر، شامل ویروس‌ها، را بگیرند.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING
Loving humanity is second only to having faith in Allah as one of the best deeds in Islam.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

A collection of paintings by Mehdi Mashayekhi named "Brick Art" is on view in an exhibition at Negar Gallery.

The exhibit will run until January 26 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Mina Naderi is hanging her latest paintings in an exhibition entitled "Punctum" at Homa Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until January 26 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

CAMA - Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery is showcasing paintings by Atefeh Hosseini in an exhibition titled "Naoborot".

The exhibit runs until January 20 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

Paintings by Qasem Hajizadeh, Rana Farnud, Farshid Maleki, Farah Osuli, Alireza Espahbod, Mohammad-Ebrahim Jafari and several other artists are on view in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Sanctuary" will run until February 2 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

Photo

Silk Road Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of photos by Mahur Zahrai.

The exhibit named "First Exercise: Decay" will run until January 22 at the gallery located at 103 Lavasani St. in the Kamranieh neighborhood.

Photos by a large number of renowned Iranian photographers, including Alfred Yaqubzadeh, Kiarang Alai, Parham Didevar, Mehdi Monem, Marzieh Khorsand, and Jamshid Bairami, are currently on display in an exhibition at Negah Gallery.

The exhibit will run until February 3 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.

Painting/sculpture

A collection of sculptures and paintings by Parvaneh Enadi is on display in an exhibition at Haft Samar Gallery.

The exhibition "In Search of Meaning" will be running until January 20 at the gallery that can be found at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kueh-Nur St., Motahhari Ave.

Multimedia

An exhibition of artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Yalda Jokar, Maryam Zahedi, Nasim Naraqjan, Mandana Nabakht, Zeinab Ahmadi, Maryam Emadi, and Behzad Abdi, is currently underway at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition will run until January 19 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.

Artworks in various media by Mehryar Hashemi, Samaneh Mohseni, Samira Abbasi, Sahreh Rafati, Roya Khakzad, Farnaz Haqiqi and several other artists are currently on display in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery.

The exhibit titled "My Desires" will run until January 13 at the gallery that can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

A group of artists, including Shima Lesani, Tannaz Adli, Saeid Kebriai and Farnam Farshad, is showcasing their latest artworks in an exhibition at Zarna Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until January 20 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.

Spanish translation of "My Uncle Soleimani" appears in Venezuela

Written by Mohammad-Ali Jaber, the Persian version of the book has been published by Ketabak Publications.

The book contains 20 stories, which provide a truly deep insight into the character of Commander Soleimani and enjoin children to think of the personality as a role model.

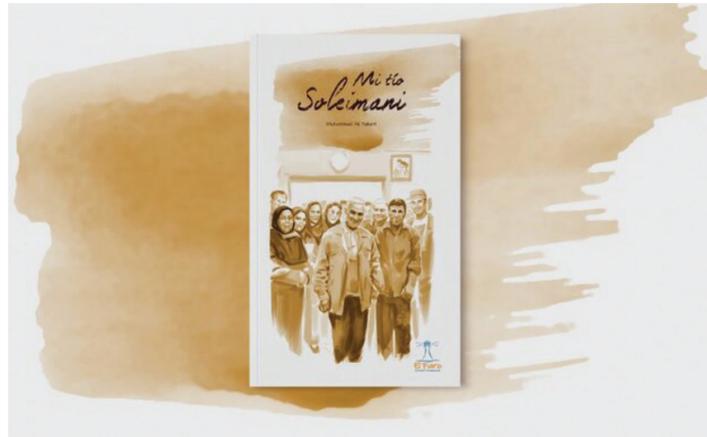
The book has been published both in Spanish and French, and has been distributed in Venezuela, Ecuador and Colombia by the publisher.

After his martyrdom on January 3, 2020, many books have been published about the Commander.

The Alhoda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute published the book "Great Commander".

The book was published on the first martyrdom anniversary of the commander and contains a series of articles written by Iraqi cultural figures.

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



A poster for the Spanish version of "My Uncle Soleimani" published by El Faro International Publishing House.

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

"Martyr Soleimani", a book giving a brief analysis of the personal characteristics of Commander Qasem Soleimani through his discourses and memories, has been published in 12 countries.

The book originally was written by Hojjatolislam Ali Shirazi in Persian and published by Khate Moqaddam Publications.

The book has been published in Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey, Georgia, Pakistan, Iraq and Syria, and will be published in France and Afghanistan in the near future.

The countries of Senegal, Chad and Nigeria have received the e-book versions of the book.

In addition, publishers across the country have commemorated the first martyrdom anniversary of Commander Qasem Soleimani by the release of several new books about the IRGC Quds chief.

The collection includes "I Am Qasem Soleimani" published by Mobasher Publications, "No End to This Man" by Rahe Behesht, and "Dear Soleimani" by Hemaseye Yaran.

Astan Qods Razavi's Institute for Youth also released "A Love Story".

Iran's "Coexist", "Quarantine", "The Note" honored at Meihodo visual media festival



A photo from Iranian photographer Maryam Saeidpur's series "Quarantine" won the gold medal in the graphic category of the Third Annual Meihodo International Youth Visual Media Festival in Japan.

documentarian Komeil Soheili, "Quarantine" by photographer Maryam Saeidpur and "The Note" by photographer Siavash Eydani, all

from Iran, have won the top prizes of the Third Annual Meihodo International Youth Visual Media Festival in Japan.

"Coexist" won the grand prize worth \$10,000. The short documentary is about life on a remote island in Iran where people coexist with nature.

Dela is a blind captain living in Hormuz Island in southern Iran. While tensions between Iran and the USA are ratcheting up due to the geopolitical situation of the island, he practices an old cultural tradition of making bread that contains three unexpected ingredients from the island. He goes fishing every day using his unique ability to hear the sound of fish in the ocean, then he collects the island's natural salt and its edible soil to bake the bread.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the awards ceremony was held virtually. In a video message published by the organizers, Soheili said, "It's such an honor and a pleasure for me and the team, and receiving an award provided such great energy to start the year with; I thank you and wish to meet you at the festival in Japan

next year in a safer world."

A picture from Saeidpur's series "Quarantine", which centers on living in quarantine during the pandemic, won the gold medal in the graphic category.

The silver prize of this category also went to "The Note", a short film about a man who wakes up and finds himself on a bed in the sea.

The festival's theme was "We Are All in This Together - Unforgettable Moments of 2020" while French actress Juliette Binoche was the guest of honor of the event.

In the Dramatic Short category, the gold prize went to "Heimat Europa" by Isabel Jansson from Germany, while "Untouchable" by Pi Chengdong from China received the gold award in the Themed Short section.

The Meihodo International Youth Visual Media Festival is one of the largest short film festivals in the world. It is an independent visual media festival sponsored by Meihodo, a Japanese corporation aiming to support young visual artists worldwide. The festival was founded in 2018 by Meihodo, Inc. and the Beijing Film Academy of China.

Movies from Iran line up for Bangladesh children's festival

A lineup of 22 Iranian movies including features, shorts and animations will be competing in the 14th Bangladesh International Children's Film Festival, which will be running from January 30 to February 5, the organizers have announced.

"Ocean behind the Window" by Babak Nabizadeh and "Metamorphosis in the Slaughterhouse" by Javad Darai will be screened in the feature films competition.

"Ocean behind the Window" centers on a small and remote island where people live under hardship. Borhan is an adolescent who has made an interesting decision to help his family and to introduce the island. He collects a group, holds a carnival and



"Ocean behind the Window" by Babak Nabizadeh.

performs traditional music and theater for tourists. Their lives on the island improve and more tourists come, but there is a big problem on the way.

"Metamorphosis in the Slaughterhouse" is about Shadi, a young girl from a village who once had lived with her family. Her parents had been accused of murdering a girl from the village, and they end up being murdered by the villagers in revenge. Her uncle adopts her, and now, Shadi must face the troubles that the people of the village have caused them.

"Audience Laugh" by Mohammad Namdar, "Autumn Winds, Spring Winds and Two Doves" by Sadeq Javadi, "Life Gone with the Wind" co-directed by Siavash Saedpanah and Omid Gharibi,

"Lowest Floor" by Omidreza Kheirkhah and "Oh Father" by Mahmud Sharifasl are among the short films selected to compete in the event.

"I Found out What to Do" and "Morning", both by Reyhaneh Kavosh, as well as "Jebeer" by Reyhaneh Mirhashemi will be competing in the animation section.

"I Found Out What to Do" is about Shirin who wants to surprise her mother on her birthday.

"Morning" is also a musical animation about the beauty of the beginning of a day in a city.

"Jebeer" shows a park ranger who patrols a national park, and his soul is intertwined with nature and all the creatures he protects.

Tehran Auction grosses about \$4 million

The 13th Tehran Auction has grossed about 880 billion rials (about \$4 million based on Iran's free-market exchange rate: \$1 = 221,000 rials).

"Memories of Hope", a diptych gouache and colored pencil created on cardboard by Aidin Aghdashlu in 2020, was the most expensive work sold at the auction on Friday as it fetched 120 billion rials (about \$550,000).

A total of 110 lots of modern and contemporary Iranian art were offered during the auction held at Tehran's Parsian Azadi Hotel.

The second most expensive work sold at the sale was

"Master and Disciple", a bronze sculpture by Parviz Tanavoli, who created the artwork in 2011. It fetched 67 billion rials (over \$300,000).

"DJE-DJA-DOU", an acrylic on canvas by Hossein Zenderudi, was the third most expensive work sold at the auction at 63 billion rials (over \$280,000).

It was followed by an untitled calligraphic painting on canvas from Mohammad Ehsai's series "The Whisper of Love" that was sold for 59 billion rials (about \$267,000).

An untitled painting by Mansur Qnariz was the sole artwork that failed to find a buyer at the auction.



Employees present Aidin Aghdashlu's diptych painting "Memories of Hope" during the 13th Tehran Auction at the Parsian Azadi Hotel on January 15, 2021. The artwork was the top seller fetching about \$550,000.

"Dead Poets Don't Write Detective Novels" at Iranian bookstores

A Persian translation of Bjorn Larsson's book "Dead Poets Don't Write Detective Novels" has recently been published by Nimaj Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Qasem Sanavi.

This deceptively light novel is a manifesto in favor of the beauty of the verb. It is a dazzling set of mirrors.

On a late stormy, rainy November night, the respected publisher Petersen of Arnefors and Soner arrives at the industrial harbor in Helsingborg to meet poet Jan Y Nilsson on the boat where he lives. In his briefcase, Petersen has the contract for the crime novel that he has persuaded Jan Y to write. He also tries to celebrate that he has sold the foreign rights to the near-finished novel at relatively high prices.

But will Jan Y sign the contract? Will he change his mind at the last minute when he is faced with the decision to irrevocably sell his poet's soul to the forces of the marketplace and put his reputation as a poet on the line? Petersen discovers the horrific answer shortly thereafter when he finds Jan Y hanged below deck.

Larsson has written a literary crime novel, a friendly



Front cover of the book Bjorn Larsson's novel "Dead Poets Don't Write Detective Novels".

ironic reflection on publishing houses and authors. It is exciting and thought-provoking, and the reader will recognize the tone from Larsson's earlier works.

"Dead Poets Don't Write Detective Novels" was nominated for the Italian Booksellers Prize Primo Baccala.

Born in 1953, Larsson teaches French at Lund University, Sweden. He has published several novels including "Long John Silver", "The Captain and the Dreams" and "Foreign Medici Prize".

Naturally because of his academic career, Larsson has published several university essays and books, mostly dealing with the French language and literature. But he has reached the great public with significant success as a bright novelist. In truth, his first work, a collection of short stories named "Splitter", was almost neglected. His first success was "Den Keltiska Ringen" (The Celtic Ring), a dark deep-sea spy story set between Denmark, Scotland and Ireland, and based on the aspiration of Celtic countries (Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and Galicia) to set themselves free and create a confederation.

"Long John Silver" is a fantastic mixture of childhood dreams and love for adventures and the seafaring life. The protagonist is obviously the famous one-legged pirate of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic "Treasure Island" who lives rich, old and almost alone in a forced Madagascan exile, remembering his past.