

Defending women's rights a top priority: Judiciary chief *Page 2*

Esteghlal move back on top, Persepolis beat Foolad: IPL *Page 3*

U.S. Capitol Complex put in lockdown due to 'external security threat' *Page 5*

Owj to compete in Fajr festival with seven films *Page 8*

Trumpism behind French face



See page 3

No enrichment limit based on NPT: Takht Ravanchi

TEHRAN – Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the UN, has said based on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) there is no limit for enriching uranium for civilian uses.

"In NPT there is no ceiling for enrichment," Takht Ravanchi told the IRNA news agency published on Monday.

The ambassador said the level and amount of enrichment depends on whether it is going to be used for a nuclear power plant or for a submarine.

On January 4, Iran resumed enriching uranium to level of 20 percent. The International Atomic Energy Agency was notified of the decision and it is monitoring the process.

"So long as activities are peaceful we have no problem based on the NPT," the ambassador remarked.

Iran started to gradually remove cap on its nuclear activities based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Continued on page 2

Tehran hosts 14th Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee meeting

TEHRAN – The 14th meeting of Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee was held on Monday at the place of the Iranian Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in Tehran, IRIB reported.

The two sides inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the expansion of economic cooperation at the end of the meeting.

The MOU was signed by Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime

Minister Shahin Mustafayev, who co-chaired the meeting.

Speaking in the meeting, Dejjpasand referred to the historical, cultural, social, and economic relations between the two countries, and said: "Iran, especially the private sector, is fully prepared to take part in Azerbaijan's projects, especially in the field of technical and engineering services."

Continued on page 4

Second Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine receives clinical trial approval

TEHRAN – The second homegrown COVID-19 vaccine developed and proposed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute has been approved to begin a clinical trial.

The clinical trial protocol has been approved by both the Food and Drug Administration and the National

Committee for Ethics in Biomedical Research.

However, the protocol should be returned to the Food and Drug Administration to receive a license to begin clinical research, and then the clinical trial can begin.

Continued on page 7

Iranian province says ready to help restore cultural heritage in war-torn Karabakh

TEHRAN – Tourism chief of Iran's East Azarbaijan said on Monday the province could soon start restoration of cultural heritage sites and monuments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

"Recently, a request was sent by the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the [Iranian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was redirected to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to assist in the reconstruction, restoration and improvement of historical monuments in the liberated areas," IRNA quoted Ahmad Hamzehzadeh as saying on Monday.

"Cultural heritage experts and restorers in East Azerbaijan are ready to be dispatched to these areas," the official said.

"Having highly experienced and skilled teams of cultural heritage professionals, East Azarbaijan has a very high capacity to help the

friend and neighboring country of Azerbaijan to restore, rebuild and even re-design and monitor the destroyed historical monuments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region."

The official noted that the presence and participation of East Azarbaijan's experts in the restoration of historical monuments in the liberated areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan is subject to the decision of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a disputed territory, internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but its population is majority Armenian.

The Nagorno-Karabakh region is one of four frozen conflicts that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Legally recognized as a part of Azerbaijan, it declared independence in 1991 and then defended that independence in a war with Azerbaijan that lasted until 1994.

Continued on page 6

Zakharova says some Trump supporters inquiring about Russian citizenship

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said she receives messages via social networks from supporters of U.S. incumbent President Donald Trump asking for information on how to receive Russian citizenship.

"The most frequent commentary I receive via social networks from the United States is how to receive Russian citizenship," she said in an interview with the Voskresny Veche (Sunday Evening) with Vladimir Solovyov program on the Rossiya-1 television channel.

According to Zakharova, such messages are coming from those who supported the Republicans who fear possible persecution because of their political views, TASS reported. "Welcome to reality," she noted.

Earlier, the U.S. company Twitter said that it had permanently blocked access to

Trump's personal account due to his violations of rules and also for fear he might try to trigger unrest. Also, he was stripped of the right to upload posts to Facebook and Instagram pages until his term of office expired. Apple temporarily removed from App Store the microblogs service Parler, very popular with Trump's supporters.

On January 6, a group of Trump's supporters forced their way into the building of the U.S. Congress in an attempt to upset the certification of results of the U.S. November 3 presidential election, in which Democrat Joseph Biden emerged the winner. According to the authorities, during the unrest a woman demonstrator was shot. Also, three unrelated deaths, described as medical emergencies, were reported. A Capitol police officer died after the clashes.

Continued on page 5

Today the Resistance is stronger than ever before: Syrian American analyst

BY AMIR MOHAMMAD ESMAEILI

TEHRAN - Steven Sahiounie, a Syrian American award-winning journalist, tells the Tehran Times that although the U.S. and its regional allies "have pumped billions of dollars" in West Asia and have assassinated resistance leaders, the Axis of Resistance is stronger than ever before.

"The U.S. and its regional allies have failed to prevent the expansion of the Axis of Resistance, even though they have pumped billions

of U.S. dollars to demonize them in the media, and have assassinated several leaders such as General Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Imad Fayeze Mughniyeh, and others," Sahiounie tells the Tehran Times.

"For example, today the Lebanese Resistance and Palestinian Resistance are stronger than ever before and 'Israel' doesn't dare to launch a war against them," noted Sahiounie, who lives in Lattakia, Syria, and has been covering the war in Syria since 2012.

The following is the full text of the interview: **How do you see the role of the Axis of Resistance in West Asia's equations?**

A: The role of the Axis of Resistance in the West Asia region is fighting imperialism, and working on liberating the occupied lands of Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, who are occupied by 'Israel', as well as liberating the entire region from the United States' occupation, which is political, economic and military.

Continued on page 5

Pakistan can attain prominent global stature via Iran and China: analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A member of an Islamabad-based think tank believes that a triple partnership between Iran, China, and Pakistan can enhance Islamabad's global position.

"For Pakistan, if this triangle was properly made, it will surely attain a prominent stature in the global arena," Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai, a senior research associate at Strategic Vision Institute (SVI), tells the Tehran Times.

"Iran is a crucial player in the Middle East (West Asia) due to its strategic and security influence in addition to its natural resources, historical and cultural linkages," Yousafzai adds.

However, the rapprochement between these three regional players has adversaries.

"The U.S. won't want this partnership to be strengthened as it can threaten or at least challenge the U.S. interests in the region," notes Yousafzai, who says his views do not represent the official policy of the SVI.

The following is the text of the interview: **Pakistan, Turkey and Iran are to resume operations of the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) railway. What is the importance of this development for Pakistan and other partners to the project?**

A: The Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) railway track that was launched in 2009 under the umbrella of the Economic Cooperation Organization is of great significance to all the three-member states:

Continued on page 5



© Mehrzad Shahrabadi

Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works holds meeting

The directors of the various branches of the Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values came together in their annual meeting at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran on Monday to discuss the foundation's latest offerings and plans.

The meeting was attended by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri, Police Chief Hossein Ashtari, and the director of the foundation, Brigadier General Bahman Karegar.

People are right to worry about sportsmanship

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN
Some people worry about the future of sportsmanship since it has gradually been disappearing from the sports. The fact is sports without chivalrous behavior is nothing.

Norwegian-American football player Knute Kenneth Rockne had said "one man practicing sportsmanship is far better than a hundred teaching it."

An Olympic medal is priceless but no athlete is allowed to consider himself superior to the other people due to what he has achieved in the sports competitions.

The Iranian people will never forget legendary wrestler Gholamreza Takhti because of his sportsmanship not for medals he won in Olympics.

Popularly nicknamed Jahan Pahlevan - "The World Champion" - because of his chivalrous behavior, he was the most popular athlete of Iran in the 20th century, although dozens of Iranian athletes have won more international medals than he did.

On Wednesday, Hadi Saei, two-time gold Olympic medal winner, slapped the secretary of Iran taekwondo league organization, accusing the official of welcoming him late in the competition's hall.

Disciplinary Committee of the Iran Taekwondo Federation suspended Saei, who is the most successful Iranian athlete in Olympic history with two gold medals and one bronze, for one year.

Many people are right to worry about the future of the sportsmanship.

The people love celebrities because they are an integral part of each society and public figures should behave in public in a responsible way.

Saei should Stop giving himself airs as soon as possible since winning a medal is not everything but winning the others' hearts is more important. Takhti will remain forever a true champion for the Iranians for what he has done for his nation.

Hundreds of thousands of mourners commemorate Takhti's death anniversary after half a century. With malicious behaviors such this, people lose faith in their figures and it could be upsetting. Sports should bring the people together because of the nature it has.

Saei should publicly apologize for the wrong behavior he has done.

He should not waste the time, since so many Iranian taekwondo athletes have idolized him.

So, unfortunately, some people are right to worry about the future of sportsmanship since it has gradually been disappearing from the sports.

A view of the fractured U.S. by a non-neo liberal...

By Martin Love

As a long-time observer and with no stash of insider information and no affiliations with Power or powerful interests anywhere but who over 50 years has been on occasion in and out of the Middle East (West Asia) including several Arab countries and Apartheid Israel, one has at this particularly fraught time drawn a few conclusions even if they are not original.

For one, the U.S. now seems to be embedded in an irreversible, self-inflicted decline (from what it has been for decades as the world hegemon) ... unless Joe Biden and successors, if any are in future even possible, can manage to ignite positive perceptions of the country by positive deeds and realignments overseas.

The initial mistake after World War 2 was allowing the Military Industrial Complex to expand to dominate the U.S. economy while broad U.S. industrial might narrowed and the economy became financialized. The Vietnam War was the initial gross debacle based on lies, and then along came the failures of Presidents Reagan and Clinton (witnessing the fall of the Soviet Union) to capitalize on its apparent world economic and military hegemony by choosing to attempt to amplify and boost both even further by unnatural, destructive militarism.

In the waning years of the 20th century so-called leaders in the U.S. looking ahead saw that other countries such as China, a resurgent Russia and others, even Iran, were beginning to assert their own economic power and influence and sovereignty. What might far better have occurred was the solidification of U.S. leadership by natural, humanistic, non-military means whereby the U.S. might have become a generous benefactor literally sharing finite leadership with others, especially rivals, in the realization that it did not have to dominate absolutely but could extend the stage to and with other countries in the knowledge that their own prosperity would reflect back on the U.S. and permit a shared world leadership to flourish, too. And where a balanced resolution of disputes dominated generally by order of, say, an empowered United Nations organization capable of enforcing peaceful and mostly positive, healthy relations between diverse nations.

At exactly the time, say around 2000, when the U.S. realized or projected that China and Russia and other countries such as Iran were likely to become bigger competitors for influence by virtue of their own advances and resources, the U.S. government literally began to go wild with paranoia and greed.

The immediate result then was 9/11 as most likely a staged event to justify the so-called War on Terror which itself has fostered a worse terror, particularly in West Asia, and which in fact has been and remains a bloody (and failing) effort by the U.S. to maintain exclusive dominance in world affairs. The U.S. came up with the insane notion, boosted by Zionist demands, that by destroying or trying to destroy a number of other Mideast (West Asian) nations, including Iraq and Libya and of late even Syria and Iran, it might prevail with its belligerent push for further dominance. The U.S. made or boosted alliances, particularly in the Middle East, with bad and equally sorry actors such as Apartheid Israel and Saudi Arabia, neither of which are "democratic" and which, along with some other countries, exhibit the worst of human impulses exactly at odds with alleged (and long unsupported) "American" ideals of fair play and behavioral decency. In Israel for example, B'tselem, that country's leading human rights group, has unequivocally and just recently labeled Israel a full-blown Apartheid state, not to mention Israel's continued attacks on its neighbors such as Syria.

Thus we have arrived at 2021 and a world, and a West Asia, but especially a United States, in social and political disarray as it faces deep internal divisions that were embarrassingly unveiled on January 6 with the attempt by insurrectionists around the Capitol to nullify the November elections and ensure Donald Trump's second term.

Does Washington even understand a tiny bit what a joke the U.S. appears to be overseas a few days before Biden's inauguration with over 20,000 troops installed around the Capitol to try to obviate civil disorder and violence on January 20th in the wake of Trump's exit towards a well-deserved oblivion? It must! This and other problems have given the U.S. aspects of a burgeoning Banana republic, not the leader of the so-called "free world".

Joe Biden, a possibly senile old man with a past checkered by earlier assents for bad decisions as a Senator and as a Vice President (like the wars on Iraq, and Afghanistan and the proxy war on Syria) is not likely to heal the divisions inside the U.S. going forward without the adoption of serious, overt humility, recognition and even apologies for the vast policy errors of the past 20 years along with a wholesale reorientation of the U.S. towards the honest promotion of true justice at home and abroad.

The U.S. has brought itself to a point where it teeters in many ways, including the financial, towards various forms of bankruptcy such that with any further misguided attempts to double down on failed policies to ward off a relative (if not absolute) collapse could make matters quite worse both internally and across the world. Israel, a chief U.S. ally, has been lately threatening that if Biden is successful in resurrecting the JCPOA, it will attack Iran on its own – counter to U.S. interests. Iran would of course attempt to defend itself and it's unlikely the Biden Administration would have the courage not to join a war on Iran, which has in justifiable defense promised to react to any attack. This is the great danger of the U.S. having a faux ally such as Israel.

Not since World War 2 has humanity at large been so at risk, and one can posit largely because of the manner in which the U.S. has operated with arrogance and military pursuits in the past two decades especially. The historical (and still extant) stains of racism (and ethnic cleansing inside the U.S. in the 19th century) and xenophobia projected abroad has been in effect amplified further to a degree in the past years towards other people, other cultures and other polities, especially during Trump's disastrous tenure in the White House. Average Americans of good conscience and reasonable intelligence tremble at the current situation. Had wisdom prevailed in recent decades it would not have to be so.

In the waning years of the 20th century so-called leaders in the U.S. looking ahead saw that other countries such as China, a resurgent Russia and others, even Iran, were beginning to assert their own economic power and influence and sovereignty.

Iranian parliament speaker censures Israel for banning delivery of vaccine to Palestinians

POLITICAL TEHRAN

d e s k Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of the Iranian Parliament, on Monday condemned the Israeli regime for banning delivery of the Coronavirus vaccine for the Palestinian detainees and those living in refugee camps.

Ghalibaf made the remarks in a virtual meeting with the heads of the parliamentary national security and foreign policy committees of the countries who are defenders of Palestine.

"The move of the Zionist occupiers, who have banned delivery of vaccine for Palestinians detainees in the Covid-19 crisis, is a double disaster hurting the conscience of every human being with every religion and creed," Ghaibaf regretted.

Appreciating the leaders of Palestine resistance movement, he added, "The enemies are seeking to target the unity of Islamic Ummah by imposing sanctions, and arbitrary and unilateral actions".

The senior lawmaker said, "Undoubtedly, we, as representatives of the parliaments of Islamic countries, have gathered to defend Al-Aqsa Mosque, as a common religious identity of Muslims, by concentrating the slogan of Quds as the



core of our unity- all against normalization of relations with Zionist regime."

Galibaf went on to say, "The continuous atrocities of the Zionists against the suppressed Palestinians, particularly those who live in the Gaza Strip, will not be forgotten. The Islamic

Republic of Iran, as the supporter of Palestinians and axis of resistance, named Dey 29 as the day of 'Gaza, the Symbol of Palestine Resistance'."

In the Iranian calendar year, Dey 29 falls on January 18.

"As you know, the occupation of

'We don't shy from crushing aggressors,' Zarif warns as B52- bombers fly over Persian Gulf

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned on Sunday that Iran is not "shy" to destroy aggressors, noting that the defeat of Saddam Hussein's army who invaded Iran in 1980 serves as a good example for potential invaders.

The threats by the chief Iranian diplomat came after two U.S. B-52 bombers were seen flying over the Zionist regime's skies on Sunday morning toward the Persian Gulf.

"While we have not started a war in over 200 years, we don't shy from crushing aggressors. Just ask your BFFs who supported Saddam," Zarif tweeted.

BFFs means "best friends forever".

Zarif advised the White House dwellers that if the flying of B-52 bombers over the Persian Gulf are meant to intimidate Iran it is better that the heavy costs for such missions be spent on the country's health sector to prevent more Americans die from Covid-19.

"If your B-52H 'Presence Patrols' are meant to intimidate or warn Iran, you should have spent those \$billions on your taxpayers' health," Zarif remarked.

This was the fifth time American B-52 bombers were flying in the area.



Defending women's rights a top priority: Judiciary chief

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Ebrahim Raisi, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Judiciary, says, "We are obliged to defend women's rights".

Speaking at a meeting of the Supreme Council of Judiciary on Monday, Raisi said, "We have taken measures to introduce a bill to ensure the security and dignity of women and have submitted it to the government".

The Judiciary chief made the remarks on the occasion of the martyrdom anniversary of Fatemeh Zahra (SA), the daughter of Prophet Mohammad (S) and the wife of Imam Ali (AS), the first Shia Imam.

He asserted that "the Quran, humanity, justice, and the first Imam of Shia are four central points of Fatemeh Zahra's speeches, and are sufficient to indoctrinate the people and guide the individuals toward the salvation."

By depicting the life of Fatemeh Zahra (AS) as the best example of unity and coalition building in the Islamic society, Raisi said, "Britain's narrative about Shia Imams in the frame of Hollywood's illusion will lead to division, however, we don't acknowledge neither the extremist view of woman as an isolated person nor the Western view of woman as a goods".

He added, "An excellent woman, as Fatemeh Zahra (SA), is God seeking, selfless, the main part of family, and influential in the society in a way that she plays a key role in politics and society."

In his point of view, the top judge said, women have a "vital role to know the enemy, to encounter adversary, to resist suppression, and to defend Velayat (rule of supreme jurisprudent)."

'Progress in production of Iranian vaccine'

The Judiciary chief also appreciated the efforts of Iranian physicians to contain Covid-19 pandemic, saying, "The production

of vaccine is a valuable measure which can immunize the public against the virus."

He added, "When the Barakat Foundation and Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order decided to produce the Covid-19 vaccine, the enemy got furious and expressed his irritation by imposing sanctions on the foundation and Astan Quds Razavi."

The senior judge pointed to the word of Ayatollah Beheshti who has said, "America, be angry with us and die from this anger."

He believes that "the great steps taken by Iranian specialists to produce the Covid-19 vaccine are a source of authority and power which visibly made the enemy furious."

Iran's missile drill in the shadow of rising tension between Iran and U.S.

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran's ballistic missile exercise in recent days caused quick and negative reactions by Israel. Israeli officials have expressed their worries over Iran's military drills in Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean due to Iran's capability to fire high tech and anti-ship missiles towards simulated targets.

With regard to its determination to use long range ballistic missiles against hostile workshops and aircraft carriers, Iran tested surface-to-surface ballistic missiles and drones in half area of Iran's territory.

Rising military and political tensions between Iran and Western countries, especially the U.S., have provoke Iranian military officials to plan various military drills at the final days of the Trump administration. Interestingly, these missiles can hit targets 1,800 km away, therefore, they are capable of destroying hostile ships in the Persian Gulf.

Dezful, a kind of Zolfaghar missile, has a



700 km range and 450 kilogram warhead, therefore, it is able to hit any targets in West Asia. Moreover, Emad, Sejil and Ghadr missiles are used in the maneuver to show Iran's resolve to defend its security and interests by conventional weapons.

In addition to missile, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps unveiled bomb carrying drones which enhance Iran's ca-

pacity to transform the balance of power in West Asia. The Jerusalem Post reported that some of these drones have a 2,000 km range, meaning they can hit different targets in Israel depending on where they are launched.

Meanwhile, Trump's foreign and security team has declared that America want to add Israel to CENTCOM mission, coordinating military activities among the U.S., Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Israel. Nevertheless, the Pentagon has not announced how the move will affect its planning and operations in the region.

According to Air Force Magazine, Israel and the U.S. want to send a "strong deterrent message of unity and continued U.S. commitment to regional leadership".

Concerning its military capabilities, the Islamic Republic of Iran has clearly announced that it will never discuss or negotiate over its defense capacities, notably its missile program, even if the U.S. rejoins nuclear deal

and lifts its unilateral economic sanctions.

Nonetheless, it seems there is a huge disagreement between Israel and the incoming American administration regarding Biden's likely decision to return to the nuclear accord. Indeed, the right wing government in Israel is making tremendous efforts to persuade Biden's security team to rejoin the nuclear deal conditionally. By doing so, Netanyahu intends to encourage the next U.S. government to set negotiating agenda with Iran based on nuclear as well as missile issues.

Despite testing of conventional surface-to-surface missiles by Iran, Shimon Stein and Shlomo Brom, the experts of the Institute for National Security Studies, have recommended the U.S. to maintain the priority of the nuclear program. They hope the Biden administration to establish a framework for regional dialogue, including Arab countries and Israel, in order to place strict constraints on range of Iran's missiles and its regional behavior.

Iran tests missiles under watch of U.S. nuclear sub: Associated Press

Iran fired cruise missiles Thursday as part of a naval drill in the Gulf of Oman under surveillance of what appeared to be a U.S. nuclear submarine dispatched to the region amid heightened tensions between the two countries.

Helicopter footage of the exercise released by the Iranian Navy showed what resembled an Ohio-class guided-missile submarine, the USS Georgia, which the U.S. Navy last month said had been sent to the Persian Gulf, the Associated Press reported.

The Iranian Navy did not identify the submarine, but warned the boat to steer clear of the area, where missiles were being launched from land units and ships in the Persian Gulf and the northern part of the Indian Ocean. When asked for comment on the reported submarine sighting, Cmdr. Rebecca Rebarich, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet,

responded: "We don't talk about submarine operations."

Later Thursday, Iran's media said a "foreign" vessel had "intended to approach the naval drill" and departed soon after the Iranian Navy's warning.

The two-day drill began on Wednesday with the unveiling of the largest vessel in the Iranian Navy, the latest in a series of Iranian military exercises during the waning days of the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump. Over the weekend, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps held a naval parade in the Persian Gulf. On January 5-6, Iran deployed unmanned aircraft to stage a large-scale drone maneuver across half the country.

Iran's TV broadcast footage of the missile launches on Thursday but didn't provide their range or other details. In July, Iran said it test-fired cruise missiles with a range of

some 280 kilometers.

"Enemies should know that any violation and invasion of Iranian marine borders will be targeted by the cruise missiles from both coast and sea," said Adm. Hamzeh Ali Kaviani, the spokesman for Thursdays' exercise.

Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. in 2018 from Iran's nuclear deal, in which Tehran had agreed to limit its uranium enrichment in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. Trump cited Iran's ballistic missile program among other issues in withdrawing.

Following the re-imposition of unprecedented American sanctions on Iran, Tehran gradually and publicly abandoned the deal's limits on its nuclear program as a series of escalating incidents pushed the two countries to the brink of war at the beginning of last year.

No enrichment limit based on NPT: Takht Ravanchi

1 → (Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.)

Takht Ravanchi went on to say that

when Iran started to gradually reduced its commitments to the JCPOA it announced that "we no longer see any ceiling for ourselves."

"In fact, we announced 20 percent at that time. We did not mention 20 percent

but we said we do not see any ceiling for ourselves. Therefore, what we are now doing based on the ratification of the Majlis (Parliament) is not something new."

The top diplomat also said it is too soon to make judgment on the approach of Joe

Biden and his team toward the JCPOA.

He also said it is a reality that anti-Iran lobbies are active in the United States.

Cooperation between Arab countries and the Zionist regime have led to intensification of lobbies against Iran.

Trumpism behind French face

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In an abrupt reversal of its Iran policy, France has struck a hardline tone on Iran, adopting more or less a Trumpian approach toward the Islamic Republic in a range of pressing issues such as the 2015 nuclear deal.

All this while, France has admitted that this approach did yield positive results under the Trump administration. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian recently said that the Trump administration's sanctions campaign against Iran has failed to reduce tensions and resolve differences. However, the chief French diplomat raised a set of thorny issues that the Trump administration had used to justify its "failed" policy on Iran in the first place: Iran's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons, its defensive missile program and regional influence.

When President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Iran nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — on May 8, 2018, he claimed that the deal was flawed because it did not permanently restrict Iran's nuclear program and curb its ballistic missiles and regional role.

Ever since, the European signatories to the JCPOA — France, Germany and the UK (E3) — have expressed regret over the U.S. decision to quit the nuclear deal, claiming to be "tirelessly" work to preserve a deal they did nothing to save. Over the past two years, the E3 have put out countless statements regretting the U.S. approach toward Iran. But not any longer. They are now adopting the same approach a few weeks after the man who introduced it began leaving the White House.

In a recent interview with the Journal du Dimanche newspaper, Le Drian called for new talks with Iran on non-nuclear issues while accusing Iran of building a nuclear weapons capacity.

"Tough discussions will be needed over ballistic proliferation and Iran's destabilization of its neighbors in the region," the French foreign minister told the newspaper, according to a Reuters report.



He also echoed the position of German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on the JCPOA, saying that the return of Iran and the U.S. to the nuclear deal would not be enough.

Le Drian said the so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran increased the risk.

"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," he noted. "This has to stop because Iran and — I say this clearly — is in the process of acquiring nuclear (weapons) capacity."

The French foreign minister followed in the footsteps of his German counterpart, who said the JCPOA was no longer enough.

"A return to the previous agreement will not suffice anyway. There will have to be a kind of 'nuclear agreement plus,' which is also in our interest. We have clear expectations of Iran: no nuclear weapons, but also no ballistic missile program that threatens the entire region. Iran also needs to play a

different role in the region," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in a recent interview with the German magazine, Der Spiegel. He added, "We need this agreement precisely because we distrust Iran. I have already coordinated with my French and British counterparts on this."

Le Drian's remarks elicited a strong response from Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. In two tweets on Sunday, Zarif told Le Drian to avoid making absurd remarks on Iran.

"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 stillborn initiative or UK non-payment of court-ordered debt? JCPOA is alive because of Iran and not E3, @JY_LeDrian," Zarif tweeted.

He added, "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 French foreign minister's latest position on Iran was a clear break from Europe's policy on Tehran over the course of the Trump administration. And this happened right after Joe Biden won the U.S. presidential election in November. Since then, France has been trying to fill the vacuum created in the region as a result of the Trump loss.

French President Emanuel Macron spoke by phone with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman earlier this week shortly before the publication of Le Drian's remarks on Iran. The two leaders' telephone conversation sparked speculation that France is planning to go hard with Iran to fill the vacuum left by Trump in the region and portray itself as the new protector of the Persian Gulf's Arab states, whose leaders feel insecure after Trump's departure.

The Saudi crown prince sought to tempt the French president into playing the role of Trump and becoming the protector of him instead of Trump, according to the Al-Alam news channel. Citing unknown observers, the news channel reported that bin Salman offered financial support for Macron and his party in the upcoming French election in exchange for Macron taking a headline position against Iran, among other issues.

According to Al-Alam, the Saudis have demanded that the French take a tough stance toward Iran, convince Biden's team not to return to the 2015 nuclear deal, try to mediate between bin Salman and President-elect Joe Biden, and try to persuade him to put on the shelf the issues of Muhammad bin Nayef, Jamal Khashoggi, Saad al-Jabri, jailed female activists, and the Yemen war.

"It seems that the French authorities have responded immediately to the first Saudi request [positively], which is to exert pressure on Iran and obstruct America's return to the nuclear deal. This was evident from Foreign Minister Le Drian's statements against Iran," Al-Alam said.

South Korea moves anti-piracy unit away from Strait of Hormuz

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a bid to calm tensions with Iran, South Korea has decided to move its anti-piracy naval unit operating near the strategic Strait of Hormuz away from the waterway, South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported on Monday.

Citing a diplomatic source, the new agency said that the move was made to "foster a positive mood ahead of negotiations with Iran over a seized oil tanker and its sailors."

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, Iran 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," Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said in a statement following the seizure of the ship.

South Korea sent a delegation led by First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun to Iran in an effort to resolve outstanding issues between Tehran and Seoul such as the seizure of the ship and Iran's frozen assets in South Korean bank accounts. The delegation arrived in Tehran on January 10.

The retreat of the Cheonghae Unit came before the South Korean delegation arrived in Iran.

"To create a good atmosphere for the negotiations, the Cheonghae Unit, to which Iran has responded sensitively, was taken away (from the strait)," the diplomatic source was quoted by Yonhap as saying. "It was a decision to send a friendly signal to Iran ahead of the negotiations."

The first round of Iran-South Korea negotiations ended in failure as the East Asian country proposed to barter a whopping \$7 billion of Iran's assets blocked in South Korean banks for ambulance vehicles and coronavirus test kits, a



proposal decried by Iran as "shameless."

During his visit to Iran, Jong-kun met with Iran's central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati to discuss how to release the Iranian assets. According to Iranian media, the South Korean diplomat proposed to provide Iran with ambulances and coronavirus test kits using Iran's assets. But Iran rejected the offer, saying that it is willing to use its money in purchasing foods and medicines. Iran also said that the Korean proposal did not include the release of all Iran's frozen assets.

The South Korean delegation also failed to secure the release of the seized ship. In a statement on Saturday, Khatibzadeh said that legal proceedings are underway into the case of the South Korean ship.

"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."

Following the seizure, Seoul sent the 4,400-ton Choi Young destroyer of the naval unit to the waters near the Strait of Hormuz, a move that prompted Saeed Badamchi Shabestari, Iran's ambassador to South Korea, to expressed Iran's displeasure over the deployment.

Iran and South Korea seem to be locked in a dispute over the seizure of the ship and the blocked assets but the two countries are willing to resolve their differences. They are exploring ways to settle the dispute.

A Foreign Ministry official in Seoul claimed that Tehran made a request to use part of its frozen funds to pay off its UN membership fees in arrears.

"It is true that (the method) has been desired by the Iranian side. We are in consultations with related government agencies of ours and the UN side to see what options we have," the official told Yonhap on condition of anonymity, without elaborating further.

Khatibzadeh confirmed on Monday that Iran has proposed that the UN uses Iran's assets in South Korea.

"Iran's latest proposal in this regard was to pay this debt by having the UN use Iran's seized assets in South Korea with the permission of the Central Bank, which is being discussed with the UN Secretariat and the necessary arrangements are being made," said the spokesman.

"Given that the United States has encroached upon Iran's international assets before, the Islamic Republic of Iran insists that the UN not use an American intermediary bank to receive our country's membership fee, or that this organization guarantee the financial transfer channel," he continued.

Khatibzadeh said Iran has always paid its UN membership fee despite restrictions imposed by U.S. sanctions.

"Despite restrictions caused by the United States' unilateral sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran has, in recent years, always paid its UN membership fee using the few financial transfer channels available to it. This year, too, as the U.S. blocked channels available to transfer financial resources, Iran has been in talks with the UN Treasury since long ago in order for the world body to introduce a safe channel [for money transfer]," he explained.

Iranian Army to stage 'offensive' military exercise on Tuesday

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Army's Ground Force will hold an offensive military exercise on Tuesday near the country's southern coasts of Makran, top military generals announced on Monday.

"The Iranian army's Ground Forces will stage military drill tomorrow, with the participation of airborne forces, special and rapid reaction forces near the coasts of Makran, in the south of the country," Chief of Staff of Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri was quoted by the al-Alam news channel as saying.

The military general added, "We have achievements in the defense and military fields that cannot be disclosed."

Bagheri also said that the only way for the country to neutralize threats and dangers is to get strong in all fields.

Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, commander of the Army's Ground Force, said on Monday that the military drill will be "offensive."

Underlining the unique goals and characteristics of the drill, General Heidari said, "Following the major changes that were done to the structure of the Ground Force's units in the wake of the order of the Leader of Islamic Revolution, this drill will be held by the Army's Ground Force in an offensive and target-oriented manner for the first time."

The Army's drill comes on the heels of another drill held by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) during which the IRGC fired long-range ballistic missiles into the Indian Ocean.

"One of our most important defense policy goals is to use long-range ballistic missiles against enemy warships, including aircraft

carriers and warships," said IRGC chief Major General Hossein Salami.

General Salami also said that Iran is now capable of striking moving targets in the ocean.

The Iranian military is holding drills amid soaring tensions between Tehran and Washington in the final days of the Trump administration.

In the latest sign of escalation, the U.S. once again flew two B-52 bombers over the region, a move that elicited a strong response from Iranian officials. General Bagheri said the U.S. move has no "operational value."

"Over the last month, an aircraft carrier, helicopter carrier, and USS Georgia submarine were pulled from the Persian Gulf region to a distance of more than 1,000 kilometers away from Iranian coasts," the general said on Monday. "The totality of the enemy's activities, which they call saber-rattling, shows

that they are fearful of the Islamic Republic of Iran's defense capability."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also responded to the U.S. move, saying that Iran will not "shy from crushing" invaders.

"@Potus: If your B-52H 'Presence Patrols' are meant to intimidate or warn Iran, you should have spent those \$billions on your taxpayers' health. While we have not started a war in over 200 years, we don't shy from crushing aggressors. Just ask your BFFs who supported Saddam," Zarif said in a tweet.

He was responding to an announcement by the U.S. Central Command that B-52 bombers have conducted second presence patrol in the region.

"U.S. Air Force B-52H 'Stratofortress' aircrews successfully completed a presence patrol in the Middle East today, marking the second such mission of 2021," the U.S. Central Command said in a statement on Sunday.

SPORTS

Esteghlal move back on top, Persepolis beat Foolad: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team defeated Tractor 3-1 in Tabriz to move back top of Iran Professional League (IPL) table in Matchday 11 on Monday.

The Blues, who earned a late draw against Persepolis in Tehran derby last week, registered a valuable win in Tabriz's Yadegare Emam Stadium.

Esteghlal Malian striker Cheick Diabate scored twice in the 38th and 65th minutes. Mehdi Ghaedi also scored for Esteghlal on the hour mark.

Mohammad Abbaszadeh scored a consolation goal in the 80th minute.

In Tehran, Persepolis earned a hard-fought 2-1 win over Foolad in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Mehdi Abdi was on target in the 29th minute and Luciano Pereira Mendes equalized the match from the penalty spot in the 64th minute.

Persepolis midfielder Ahmad Nourollahi scored the winning goal in the 77th minute.

Esteghlal lead the table with 22 points and Persepolis moved up to sixth place with 15 points with two matches in hands.



Fariba Mohammadian named Iran volleyball vice president

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Fariba Mohammadian was named as deputy president of the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) on Monday.

She has already worked as Iran's Women's Deputy Minister of Sports and head of Iran Skate Federation.

"Regarding your experience in the women's sports and with respect to Iranian girls' capacity to improve, I hope you help the women teams to reach a medal within 2023," IRIVF president Davarzani said.

Mohammadian replaced Mahnaz Shaddel who was working in the position as caretaker.

Iran's women's volleyball has been progressing fast in the recent years.

The Persians finished in fifth place in the 2018 Asian Club Championship in Kazakhstan.

Four Iranians nominated for 2020 Best AFC International Player

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Four Iranian players have been nominated for the Best AFC International Player of 2020.

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

For that reason, the-AFC.com has invited the fans to cast their vote in Asia's Choice — Fan Awards: Best AFC International Player in 2020, which is open to men's players registered to clubs outside the Asian continent.

Mehdi Taremi (Porto/IRN)

Few Asian players outside the continent experienced such a transformative year as Taremi, who finished equal top scorer in the Portuguese top-flight, subsequently earning a move to one of the country's biggest clubs.

Thirteen of his 21 goals for Rio Ave came in 2020, with a further six coming in the colors of FC Porto, as well as one in a rare international outing for Team Melli, as Taremi confirmed his status as one of Asia's top strikers.

Sardar Azmoun (FC Zenit/IRN)

A total 21 goals in all competitions, three pieces of silverware and equal billing with teammate Artem Dzyuba as the Russian Premier League's top scorer made 2020 a year to remember for Sardar Azmoun.

He scored multiple goals in a match on no less than six occasions, playing a starring role as Zenit navigated a series of challenges to win the League, Cup and Super Cup.

Ali Gholizadeh (RSC Charleroi/IRN)

One of a strong Asian contingent in the Belgian top-flight, and particularly at Charleroi, Gholizadeh prospered throughout 2020, delivering a string of excellent performances for the ambitious club.

A regular provider of goals and assists from his wide attacking midfielder role, Gholizadeh has shone in both domestic and continental action to establish himself as a key player.

Kaveh Rezaei (RSC Charleroi/IRN)

From scoring a league hat-trick in his third outing of the calendar year to a run of six goals in as many matches in August and September, 2020 was an impressive year for the Iranian international.

His goals helped Charleroi qualify for European football and, for a time, powered them to the top of the Belgian First Division A table, as Rezaei added his name to the impressive array of Iran forwards in Europe.

Ex-Iran volleyball coach Mansouri dies

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Iran volleyball coach Hassan Mansouri died on Sunday.

Mansouri passed away at the age of 65 due to cancer. He was laid to rest in his homeland Amol, northern Iran, on Monday.

Mansouri was assistant of South Korean coach Park Ki-won in Iran national volleyball team in 2002.

He also was head of Iran beach volleyball association. Mansouri worked in Iranian grassroots teams.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to his family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

U.S. return to JCPOA contingent on lifting sanctions under Trump: Vaezi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The United States' incoming administration can return to the 2015 nuclear deal only after lifting all sanctions that were imposed on Iran during the Trump administration, Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president's chief of staff, said on Monday.

Responding to a question on whether the Iranian government has set any preconditions for a possible U.S. return to the Iran nuclear deal, Vaezi said, "What we say is that

whatever has happened under Trump's administration must go back to the pre-Trump era. We are serious about this issue."

"Therefore, all kinds of sanctions on companies and individuals should be lifted," he told Tasnim.

Vaezi outlined how Iran would deal with a possible return of the U.S. to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He pointed out that Iranian officials have made it crystal clear that

in the next era, Iran's policy would be "commitment for commitment", "implementation for implementation," and "announcement for announcement".

"Accordingly, in order for us to take reciprocal steps, we must be sure of what they exactly have to do."

He also dismissed any contact between Iran and the team of the U.S. president-elect, underlining that the country's official positions have already been declared by the president and the foreign minister.

Tehran hosts 14th Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee meeting

1 → “Signing of this memorandum of understanding can cause a significant surge in the economic relations between the two countries,” the minister stressed.

Mustafayev, for his turn, expressed gratitude for Iran’s political support during the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, saying: “The two countries’ cooperation has witnessed a significant expansion in the past few years and we now have a much stronger relationship.”

“Today’s memorandum of understanding could provide a new impetus for both sides to advance their goals and hopefully we will witness the growth of trade relations between the two countries,” he added.

Despite ups and downs in Iran-Azerbaijan ties, the two countries’ relations have entered a new, dynamic, and promising stage of development in recent years.

Domestically-manufactured 3-cylinder engine unveiled

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s top auto maker Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) unveiled a domestically-made three-cylinder engine in a ceremony attended by senior officials including the Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini.



As reported by IRIB, the unveiling ceremony was also attended by the head of the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran, head of Iran’s Department of Environment, and some MPs, deputy industry and oil ministers, as well as the IKCO Head Farshad Moqimi.

Reducing fuel consumption, improving engine performance, reducing engine volume, consuming clean fuel and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are some of the main features of this national three-cylinder engine.

Iran blames EU on INSTEX ineffectiveness

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI), in response to Germany’s blaming Iran for the ineffectiveness of EU trade channel with the Islamic Republic called INSTEX, said Europeans’ lack of courage is the main cause behind the failure of this financial channel.

The comments came after the German Deputy Foreign Minister recently claimed that INSTEX financial mechanism, which was set up two years ago to facilitate trade between Europe and Iran, had not been effective and that Iran was responsible for the failure of INSTEX because it did not agree to the terms of the deal.



Reacting to the mentioned remarks, the CBI said in a statement on Twitter that INSTEX was designed to save the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) but it did not work because European governments weren’t able to find a finance conduit and they didn’t have enough courage to maintain their economic sovereignty.

INSTEX was supposed to shape trade relations between Iran and Europe independent of U.S. sanctions, not define it within the framework of sanctions, the statement added.

Back in December 2020, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, had said that INSTEX has proved ineffective over the past two years.

“The system must have proven its efficiency after two years,” he said, according to Press TV.

INSTEX (the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) has been designed by the European Union to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31, 2019, by France, Germany, and Britain, the three European countries party to the nuclear deal.

The mechanism was supposed to be a financial channel and a special mechanism for transferring money in spite of U.S. sanctions on Iran. Its objective was to facilitate Iran’s transactions with European companies. Iran says the mechanism has failed to meet its goal.

After Europe failed to protect Iran’s interests under the JCPOA, Iran began to reduce its nuclear commitments on May 8, 2019 — exactly a year after President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal and imposed harsh sanctions on Iran.

Iranian exports to Eurasia up 30% in 12 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of the Iranian exports to the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) rose by 30 percent during the 12-month period from October 27, 2019, to October 26, 2020, compared to the preceding 12 months, the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran said in a report.

Based on the report, Iran exported 2.863 million tons of goods worth \$1.091 billion to the EAEU member countries in the said period, compared to the 2.657 million tons valued at \$842 million in the previous year’s same period.

The exports from the Islamic Republic to the mentioned union also increased by eight percent in terms of weight.

The value of total non-oil trade between Iran and the members of the Eurasian union reached \$3.419 billion in the period under review, up eight percent compared to the figure for the same period in the previous



year, the data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry showed.

According to the mentioned report,

Iran also imported 6.696 million tons of commodities worth \$2.328 billion in the mentioned period, registering a 20 percent

and a 0.04 percent increase, respectively, compared to the preceding 12 months.

The increase in the trade between the two sides comes after signing a free trade agreement which allows Iran to trade nearly 862 commodity items subjected to preferential tariffs with the mentioned union.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached the mentioned free trade agreement in October 2018. This interim agreement which makes the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU possible, officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran’s exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic’s plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

Over 4,600 rail industry equipment items locally produced

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian manufacturers have managed to indigenize the knowledge for the production of over 4,600 rail industry equipment items, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) told IRNA.

According to Mohammad-Hadi Ziyaei, RAI also intends to use the capacities and capabilities of domestic manufacturers for indigenizing the knowledge for another 550 items which are currently imported into the country.

In this regard, collaborating with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, RAI has also managed to prevent the imports of locomotives and wagons into the country and has replaced foreign models with domestic ones over the last two years.

Ziyaei noted that his organization has established a website on which the details about the needed parts and equipment items have been presented for domestic knowledge-based companies and manufacturers to make it easier for them

to work on.

“In this system, 550 items that are still imported from abroad have been listed and knowledge-based and research companies have been invited to indigenize them,” he said.

By relying on the capabilities and capacities of domestic companies and by providing financial resources for investors in this sector, the production of the railway fleet, including freight and passenger wagons and locomotives, has increased by 84 percent and 20 percent, respectively, over the past two years, the official added.

Iranian railway fleet currently includes a total of 627 locomotives units and over 1,923 passenger, service and self-propelled wagons.

The development of the railway sector is one of the macro policies of the Iranian government as it has been emphasized by the general policies of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

In this regard, the national railway fleet has constantly



received new domestically-made locomotives and wagons in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2020), which is named the year of “Surge in Production” by Leader of Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Over \$1.7b paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in 9 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Over 73.93 trillion rials (about \$1.76 billion) has been paid for financing the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished projects with the progress of over 60 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The mentioned facilities have been paid in line with the policies of the resistance economy.

Meanwhile, according to the ministry’s data, 27,953 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country during the nine-month period, which marked a 40.3-percent increase year on year.

The estimated investment making for these units was more than 3.64 quadrillion rials (about \$86.87 billion), up 50 percent compared to the figure for the past year’s same time span.

The units are predicted to create jobs for 627,548 persons, indicating 37.8 percent growth year on year.

During the said period, also 5,083 licenses were issued for the commission of newly completed industrial units, indicating an in-



crease of 8.3 percent compared to the same period last year.

Over 1.48 quadrillion rials (about \$35.26 billion) was invested in the mentioned units, registering a 282.2-percent increase compared to last year’s same nine months.

As previously announced by the ministry, the issuance of permits for setting up industrial units in the country increased 16 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

Most of the issued permits were related to the food industries; and Semnan, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi were the provinces receiving the highest number of permits.

The acting head of Iran Small Industries

and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has recently announced that 1,170 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year.

Asghar Mosaheb said that reviving the mentioned units has created jobs for 19,446 persons.

The official said there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran’s industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry was initially planning to revive 1,500 idle units in the current year, but then it revised its programs to revive 2,000 units.

Bringing the mentioned 1,170 units back to the production cycle, the plan for reviving such units in the present year has been completed by 78 percent.

According to Mosaheb, preventing the inactive status of the industrial units is a major plan of ISIPO, while lack of liquidity, problems in terms of supplying raw materials and machinery, and absence of market are the main reasons making the units inactive.

ISIPO’s Previous Head Mohsen Salehinia had said that providing liquidity is the main

issue for many of the country’s production units, so based on the arrangements made, these units can receive part of their needed liquidity through bank facilities.

“Currently, the share of the country’s production and industrial units in receiving bank facilities is about 31 percent and it is necessary to allocate a larger share of banking facilities to the country’s production and industry,” he had stated.

Strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

To this end, the current Iranian calendar year has been named the year of “Surge in Production”, and all governmental bodies, as well as the private sector, are moving in line with the materialization of this motto.

Regarding its significant role in the realization of the mentioned goal, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has already defined its main programs for supporting domestic production in the current year.

The ministry’s seven main axes of the surge in production are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

Commodities worth \$4.3b exported from Bushehr Province

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Products valued at \$4.3 billion have been exported from Bushehr Province in southwest of Iran during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), according to a provincial official.

Hassan Hosseini, the head of the province’s Industry, Mining and Trade Department, mentioned petrochemical, agricultural, and industrial products as well as minerals as the main commodities exported from the province in the mentioned time span.

The value of Iran’s non-oil trade in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year stood at \$52 billion, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The total volume of the country’s non-oil trade was 110 million tons in the mentioned nine months, of which over 85.2 million tons were exported commodities and about 25 million tons were imported goods, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi announced.

The official put the total value of the imports into the



country during the said time span at \$26.8 billion, while the value of exports was reported to be \$25.1 billion.

According to Mir-Ashrafi, 17.5 million tons of the imported commodities into the country in the period under review were basic goods, accounting for the lion’s share of

the imports in terms of weight.

Iran’s top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$6.4 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$5.9 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$3.3 billion, Turkey with \$1.8 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.7 billion.

Meanwhile, the country’s top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$7 billion, the UAE with \$6.3 billion, Turkey with \$3 billion, India with \$1.6 billion, and Germany with \$1.6 billion worth of imports.

Like all other countries around the world, Iran’s trade with its foreign partners has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, however, the situation is getting back to normal and the country’s trade is reaching its pre-pandemic levels.

As previously announced by the IRICA head, the value of Iran’s non-oil trade stood at \$85 billion in the past Iranian calendar year of 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020).

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi put the weight of the country’s annual non-oil trade at 170 million tons and said this amount of trade was achieved despite the severe sanctions.

TEDPIX loses 36,000 points on Monday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** —TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 36,989 points to 1.149 million on Monday.

Over 4.32 billion securities worth 41.905 trillion rials (about \$997.73 million) were traded in the TSE on Monday.

The first market’s index fell 30,497 points, and the second market’s index lost 62,810 points.

TEDPIX had dropped 6.5 percent in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index stood at 1.229 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Group, Social Security Investment Company, Saipa Company, and National Iranian Copper Industry Company were the most

widely followed indices.

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

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



Pakistan can attain prominent global stature via Iran and China: analyst

1 → Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. Its significance is many-fold: being short, reducing the cost of the fare, and time-saving, boosting trade between the member states along with other benefits. It will boost trade between the member states and will provide a chance of its extension to Europe. It can be easily connected to Europe through the Marmara undersea railway tunnel. The successful operation can catch the attention of the regional countries to join the project.

How can the project change the political equation in the region?

The project as I said earlier is quite significant to the region in general and the members in particular in the success and changing the political equation in the region is yet to be decided by time. The sanctions Iran is facing can be a hurdle to the success of the project. However, as the Biden administration wants to normalize its relations with Iran and accommodate the Iran nuclear issue in a best possible way can enhance the chances of its success that could lead to changing Iran's economic complexities.

How do you see Iran's position in the Chinese project of "One Belt One Road (OBOR)"?

Iran is among the countries involved in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The enhancement and success of the BRI can have two-fold results for Iran: negative as well as positive. In a positive sense, it will provide Iran a chance to revive its historical role in the ancient Silk Road through this project and will boost its trade easily with the outer world. However, its success has the potential to provide for a demerit to Iran: China will enhance its political influence in the region and Iran that can provide for



competition between Tehran and Beijing. Thus, in addition to challenges, hope and fear will go parallel with Iran's active participation in the project.

What challenges may jeopardize the launch of this project?

BRI may have great potential not only for China but for the regional countries as well. However, there is debate on how China kept this plan secret the stage of planning and the benefits of BRI, which is supposed to be for China mostly. Besides, the BRI is more likely to serve the Chinese economic interests while ignoring the interests of other countries, communities, and companies. Thus, the most important issue for China in the next step is to conduct a better analy-

sis of the interests of various stakeholders, including itself.

Which sides (regional or global) may compete Iran-China-Pakistan rapprochement?

There are several areas of cooperation between Pakistan, Iran, and China. However, some challenges that exist are more linked to their individual security and politico-economic interests. In the post-U.S. withdrawal scenario, China-Pakistan-Iran interests are converging vis-a-vis Afghanistan and would like to play their active role to minimize the role of any adversary to the large possible extent. The U.S. won't want this partnership to be strengthened as it can threaten or at least challenge the

U.S. interests in the region. Also, China's recent strategic partnership deal with Iran is alarming for Delhi. The deal, if implemented, would have a great adverse impact not only on India's grand strategy in Iran, but could also further undermine India's multi-dimensional, balancing act foreign policy in South Asia, Central Asia, and indeed in the (Persian) Gulf region. Indian policymakers must be worried that the massive China-Iran deal could give China formidable clout and multi-dimensional long-term influence over Iran. Thus, the project will outshine the Indian investment in Chabahar.

Do you think that Pakistan is serious to form a new partnership with Iran and China?

Pakistan has a close partnership and friendship with China for a long. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has added a new strategic dimension to the China-Pakistan relationship where there is less possibility for any adversary in the future to hamper this relationship. Whenever the gap enlarges between Islamabad and Washington, Pakistan gets close to its natural ally: China. On the other hand, Pakistan's relations with Iran have improved to large extent since a year. Iran is a crucial player in the Middle East (West Asia) due to its strategic and security influence in addition to its natural resources, historical and cultural linkages. China's rise, economic linkages, Belt and Road Initiative, its permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council place it in the line of world powers. Thus, for Pakistan, if this triangle was properly made, it will surely attain a prominent stature in the global arena.

Today the Resistance is stronger than ever before: Syrian American analyst

1 → What are the unique features of the Axis of Resistance?

The unique features of the Axis of Resistance are the cooperation between the various resistance groups; mutual respect between the allies; unlike the U.S., which acts like they own their allies.

The U.S. and its regional allies have been trying to prevent the expansion of the Axis of Resistance. Have their policies been successful?

The U.S. and its regional allies have failed to prevent the expansion of the Axis of Resistance, even though they have pumped billions of U.S. dollars to demonize them in the media, and have assassinated several leaders such as General Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Imad Fayeze Mughniyeh, and others. For example today the Lebanese Resistance and Palestinian Resistance are stronger than ever before and 'Israel' doesn't dare to launch a war against them.

The Western media is trying to introduce the Axis of Resistance as a kind of expansion of Shiite influence over the region. What do you think?

Those claims made by Western media are propaganda. The Palestinian Resistance is made up of Sunni Muslims, and one of the Lebanese Resistance parties and the Syrian



Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) are completely secular. Syria, Iraq, and Iran are populated by highly mixed communities of various religions.

What effect will the assassination of the resistance leaders have on the future of the resistance movement?

The martyrdom of resistance leaders will strengthen, and mobilize the people of the region because resistance

in this part of the world is an ideology, and is not based on an individual, but their cause, which the West has failed to comprehend.

Scholars believe that the U.S. is not a strong ally for Arab monarchs as its power is declining domestically and internationally. For instance, recently, Richard Haas, wrote that the United States is declining and the post-American era has begun. What is your thought?

The domestic problems in the U.S. have affected their stand on the world stage. The support of radical Islam as a tool for 'regime change' and the destruction of other nations has left the U.S. without any moral authority. The rise of Iran, China, and Russia against Western imperialism has created a new world order, which is more balanced.

How do you assess the normalization process between the Arab countries and Israel?

The relationship between several Arab countries and 'Israel' is not new. It is a relationship that goes back decades, but they never announced it publicly before, due to the various Arab populations which would refuse to accept it. That is why the U.S. and 'Israel' have been using the Arab oil monies in a propaganda campaign through the media to demonize the resistance for several decades.

Populist Trump product of neoliberalism, U.S. culture, history

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Referring to the possibility of the return of "Trump the Second", Prof. Suzuki says the world should prepare itself to become less reliant on the U.S. adding that Trump is a product of neoliberalism and U.S. culture and history.

As history shows, civilizations don't last forever and finally collapse mostly due to internal failures. The fate of past societies holds frightening lessons for what may lie ahead for some societies.

Coronavirus pandemic, record unemployment, and escalating social unrest are all pushing American society close to the breaking point.

A couple of days ago, thousands of pro-Trump protesters rallied in Washington DC for the Million MAGA March, turning out to support President Trump and back his claims of voter fraud in the U.S. election.

Regardless of the rightness or wrongness of his claim, the world is witnessing the developments going on in the country which has always tried to introduce itself as a model of freedom and democracy. The developments shocked many around the world. Experts who have studied the collapse of civilizations in the past warn that the U.S. is exhibiting symptoms of a society in real existential peril.

We discussed the issue and recent developments in the U.S. with Kazuto Suzuki vice dean and professor of international politics at the Public Policy School of Hokkaido University, Japan.

Here is the full text of his interview:

How do you assess Trump's personality?

His actions, decisions, and behavior are based on his own interests. He does not care about the future of the country or the party. He only cares about himself. He is selfish and egoistic. Everything he does can explain everything from his obsession to himself.

What are the damages that he inflicted to the U.S. internally and internationally? and generally how do you assess his failures and achievements for the U.S. during the past 4 years?

There is a long list of damages to the U.S. He destroyed the reputation of the U.S. as the beacon on the hill. The power of the U.S. was based on the image that democracy, freedom, equal opportunity for success, and individualism, but such power is heavily damaged. Internationally, the U.S. lost credibility to lead the Western states and to impose the democratization process on dictatorial states. The U.S. has given up the leadership in international organizations, and now China is gaining ground in this arena. Failure: rebalancing trade with China;

denuclearization of North Korea; preventing Iran from developing nuclear capabilities; preventing Russia from interfering with U.S. cybersystems; preventing migrants from flowing in; maintaining the alliance with Europe; regime change in Venezuela; preventing China to oppress democratic movement.

Success: Rapprochement between Israel and Arab states; blocking multilateral processes in WTO, WHO, Universal Postal Union, etc; supporting Taiwan.

Many believe that due to his irrational approaches and behavior, the era of the world without U.S. leadership has begun. What do you think of this?

I think there is a possibility that Biden can bring the position of the U.S. as the leader in the Western world, and the world is expecting him to do so. But it is also possible that the "Trump the Second" may come into power in near future, and we have to prepare for that case. So, people will welcome the return of the U.S., but at the same time, people shall start preparing to be more autonomous and less reliant on the U.S.

Don't you think that the dominance of neoliberalism in the U.S. has paved the way for the emergence of a populist like Trump?

Neoliberalism is one of the reasons, but I think it is more important to focus on the

way in which people think what the "fact" is. A religion such as Evangelism and fake news providers created alternative reality and people (even Trump) believed in those "facts". I think it is rooted deeply in the culture and history of the U.S.

How can existing deficiencies be amended?

A: I think it is up to the practice of Biden Administration. President-elect Biden has to work hard to make actions that will restore the credibility of the U.S., such as appointing WTO Director-General, returning to the Paris Accord, back to JCPOA, reinstate the normal tariff with China, etc. These may have some resistance in the U.S., but it is important for Biden to demonstrate his willingness to break with the past.

Trump gained about 50 percent of the votes of the American people (about 70 million) in the 2020 presidential election, do you think that Trump or Trumpism (better to say American exceptionalism) died or it will reemerge in the future?

It will not die, but it will submerge for a moment. But when someone plays the role of "Trump the Second", it may be revitalized. I think there is a deep division, and as long as the alternative media and alternative facts are circulating around, it is difficult to extinguish Trumpism.

Zakharova says some Trump supporters inquiring about Russian citizenship

1 → Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Monday that the fact that the administration of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has people Moscow already engaged in talks may help Russia's diplomacy avoid a "sluggish start" in launching dialogue.

"We know some of these people. On the one hand, it makes it possible to begin talks without a long break, without a sluggish start, if the U.S. side is willing to respond to our numerous proposals on the Russian-U.S. agenda that are still on the table," he told a news conference, commenting on reports about Biden's plans to appoint Antony Blinken as secretary of state and Victoria Nuland as assistant secretary.

The Russian top diplomat noted that appointments in Biden's team may mean that Washington's drive towards dominance will be continued. "Obviously, containing China and Russia will remain on the foreign policy agenda. It [Washington] is already thinking about what can be done not to let Russia and China consolidate in a way they could feel stronger than America," he explained.

China to sanction U.S. officials for 'nasty behavior' over Taiwan

U.S. officials who have engaged in "nasty behavior" over Chinese-claimed Taiwan will face sanctions, China's Foreign Ministry said on Monday, after Washington lifted curbs on exchanges between U.S. and Taiwanese officials.

Sino-U.S. ties have worsened as China has already condemned this month's easing, announced by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in the waning days of President Donald Trump's presidency, Reuters reported.

Further adding to China's anger, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Kelly Craft, spoke last week to Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, after a planned trip to Taipei was called off.

Asked at a daily news briefing how China would follow through on its pledge to make the United States "pay a heavy price" for its engagements with Taiwan, ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said some U.S. officials would face sanctions.

"Owing to the wrong actions of the United States, China has decided to impose sanctions on responsible U.S. officials who have engaged in nasty behavior on the Taiwan issue," she said, without elaborating.

When asked about U.S. sanctions on six mainland and Hong Kong officials announced last Friday over the mass arrests in Hong Kong, Hua said that China has decided to impose sanctions on U.S. officials, members of Congress, personnel at non-governmental organizations and their family members over their "nasty behavior" on the Hong Kong issue.

West tells Russia to free Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, Moscow pushes back

Western nations told Russia to immediately free detained Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on Monday, a day after he was detained at a Moscow airport after flying home for the first time since he was poisoned last summer.

Russia quickly rejected calls to release him, telling the West to mind its own business as police continued to hold Navalny in a Moscow police station.

"Respect international law, do not encroach on national legislation of sovereign states and address problems in your own country," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote on Facebook.

Navalny's case could trigger new sanctions against Russia, especially against an \$11.6 billion project to build a natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, with some EU countries saying they want the bloc to swiftly impose such measures.

Resistance News

EU urges Israel to halt settlement expansion in West Bank

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** —The European Union has urged Israel to halt its settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank.

On Sunday, the anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now said Israeli authorities advanced plans for the construction of 780 new illegal settler units in the occupied West Bank.

"Israel's latest decision to advance plans for the approval and construction of almost 800 new settlement units in the West Bank is contrary to international law and further undermines the prospects of a viable two-state solution," the European Commission's spokesperson on foreign affairs said in a statement.

The statement also called on the Israeli regime "to suspend the ongoing bidding process for the construction of new housing units for an entirely new settlement in Givat Hamatos".

The latest settlement announcements came after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu last Monday ordered construction plans advanced for the 800 new settler units in the occupied West Bank, days before the pro-settlements U.S. President Donald Trump's administration leaves office.

Also on Sunday, the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriate strongly condemned the Israeli regime's new settlement expansion plan.

The ministry's spokesman Dhaifullah al-Fayez said in a statement that the move marks a flagrant and grave violation of the international law and resolutions, most notably the UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

U.S. Capitol Complex put in lockdown due to 'external security threat'

The U.S. Capitol Complex was put into lockdown with no entry or exit, due to an "external security threat".

Capitol Police had issued a warning to people in all buildings within the complex to "stay away from exterior windows and doors" and for those outside to "seek cover".

But shortly afterwards they confirmed there was "no threat to the public", Sky News reported.

The Secret Service said firefighters had responded to a "small fire" near the area and that "out of an abundance of caution" the complex was temporarily shutdown.

The Capitol Complex on the National Mall in Washington

DC, is a group of 20 buildings and offices surrounding the Capitol building itself, that are used by elected officials, the federal government and its departments.

Advertisement

Earlier this month protesters stormed the Capitol building leaving five people dead - including a woman who was shot by police inside the building - and caused widespread shock and outrage in America.

Since the riot, there has been a tense atmosphere in the city, which on Wednesday hosts the inauguration of president-elect Joe Biden and his vice president Kamala Harris.

Former FBI boss James Comey told Sky News he was worried about the threat of violence from "armed, disturbed people" at the inauguration.

Biden inauguration: Watch and follow events on Sky News from 1pm on Wednesday, with the ceremony starting at 4pm

Comey said: "I'm worried because there are armed, disturbed people who are in this state of mind where they believe their country is being taken from them."

The National Guard has been descending on Washington to guard government buildings ahead of inauguration day, when officials say 21,000 will be on hand.

Iranian province says ready to help restore cultural heritage in war-torn Karabakh

➔ 1 While it enjoys no international recognition of sovereignty, Nagorno-Karabakh has been de facto independent since its declaration and has been supported militarily and economically by neighboring Armenia.



On 27 September 2020, a new war erupted in Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories, which saw both the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Armenia report military and civilian casualties. Azerbaijan made significant gains during the war, regaining most of the occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the culturally significant city of Shusha. The war ended on November 10, 2020, when a trilateral ceasefire agreement was signed between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia, which forced Armenia to return all the remaining occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh.

Old trees in Kordestan made national heritage

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A total of eight old trees standing in Iran’s Kordestan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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



Oak, plane, pistacia, morus, and walnut trees were among the new entries to the prestigious list, the ministry announced. The name Kordestan refers to the region’s principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), that name was given to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains. It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran’s Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century. Having an opulent tourist circuit with 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites, of which the vast Hyrcanian Forest and Lut Desert are among the natural properties, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

Centuries-old Persian carpets, paintings added to national heritage list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A total of 25 handmade rugs and carpets along with three oil paintings have been added to Iran’s cultural heritage list.

“Variety in texture, colors and patterns as the characteristics of these [handwoven] carpets, which date back to the 10th century AH, the 13th century AH, and the 14th century AH,” said Parham Janfeshan who presides over the cultural heritage department of Tehran province.

The objects are being kept at the Carpet Museum of Iran, and Negarestan Museum Garden, the official added.

Two paintings by Mohammad Ghaffari (1848-1940), better known as Kamal al-Molk, and one attributed to “Naghshbashi” were also added to the prestigious list, the official added.



Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and their good quality. The country’s official figures show the carpets have a significant share in Iran’s non-oil exports.

Among Persian carpets, particularly those of the classic period, the medallion may represent an open lotus blossom with 16 petals as seen from above, a complex star form, or a quatrefoil with pointed lobes. Toward each end of the carpet, there may be added to this centerpiece a cartouche form (an oval or oblong ornate frame), placed transversely, and a finial or pendant that sometimes is very large. In each corner of the field, there may appear a quarter-medallion, which may or may not have the same contour and the same appendages as the central medallion. Such combinations are still used in the decoration of modern Persian carpets.

Archaeological survey starts on ruined palaces of Tchogha Zanbil

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A team of **d e s k** archaeologists and cultural heritage experts have commenced a comprehensive survey on the ruined palaces of Tchogha Zanbil, which is a UNESCO-registered prehistorical site in southwest Iran.

“For years, the semi-eastern buildings in Tchogha Zanbil had been abandoned.... and annual conservation and restoration measures, such as those carried out on the ziggurat and surrounding temples, did not include those [eastern] buildings,” CHTN quoted, Atefeh Rashnoei, director of the World Heritage, as saying on Monday.

Remnants of all buildings, structures and relics, which are scattered across “the ancient city of Tchogha Zanbil” are of very high significance therefore this new archaeological survey aims to probe [ruined] palaces within the complex, the official explained.

In August, a digital mapping project was implemented on Tchogha Zanbil and its nearby archaeological site, Haft-Tappeh, using an advanced low altitude unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

Haft-Tappeh (literary meaning “Seven Mounds”) is located 15 kilometers to the south of the ancient city of Susa, itself a highly significant archeological site in southwest Iran.



Early excavations in Haft-Tappeh conducted by the late Iranian archaeologist Dr. Ezza-tollah Negahban yielded a large number of petroglyphs bearing cuneiform inscriptions in Akkadian, belonging to Elamite kings. The petroglyphs contain information on the religious beliefs, trading methods, and

the political, cultural, and social relations of the time.

UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil is widely known as the world’s best surviving example of Elamite architecture. The ruined ziggurat stands in Khuzestan province, southwest Iran. It was made a UNESCO site in 1979.

Home-based handicrafts businesses in Gorgan receive support

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Eligible crafters, who are running home-based businesses across Iran’s northern city of Gorgan, have received financial support from the government.

Some 1.9 billion rials (over \$45,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been paid in loans to the crafters in Gorgan during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), Gorgan’s tourism chief said on Monday.

This amount of money has been paid to the crafters and artisans, who developed handicrafts-related home-based businesses, Javid Imanian said.

As various fields of handicrafts are being practiced across the city, supporting and developing home-based businesses and handicrafts workshops could lead to generating job opportunities and better income for the crafters, the official added.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In late January, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the

WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran’s number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

Back in May, deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian noted that due to the outbreak of coronavirus, suitcase exports of handicrafts were completely stopped since the month of Esfand (the last month of the year), and official exports of handicrafts experienced a steep decline.”

“Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages,” she said.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported



officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

Bushehr wants UNESCO status for its historical texture

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – The historical texture of southwestern Bushehr province holds the potential to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

However, before developing a dossier, the historical texture needs to be revived and restored properly, Mohammad-Hossein Arastuzadeh said on Monday.

Such places, which are usually significant tourist attractions as well, are meant to keep culture and customs alive around the world, the official added.



The historical texture of Bushehr is one of these unique areas and with the

full cooperation of its residents and related organizations and departments, it would be qualified to be registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in the future, he explained.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr is one of Iran’s most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural mon-

uments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Petroleum museum to be established in southwest Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** –A petroleum museum is **d e s k** scheduled to be established in the city of Gachsaran, southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The museum will be set up in an area of 12 hectares, and is planned to display the old tools, equipment, and objects related to the discovery and production of the crude oil and gas in the region, Majid Safai said on Sunday.

A budget of 43 billion rials (about \$1 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the first phase of the project, the official added.

The Gachsaran oil field was discovered in 1928 and



Six amazing and overlooked travel sites in Iran

(Part 1/2)

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – There are **d e s k** hundreds of amazing sites and monuments that might not be on everyone’s travel radar though the ancient land has a well-worn tourist circuit, encompassing attractions in the ancient cities of Shiraz and Isfahan to name a few.

For those wanting to get off the beaten path, the country has a wealth of lesser-known destinations that rival the stunning beauty and historical significance of their more famous counterparts.

Here are six of the best:

Rudkhan Castle

Hidden in the humid green forests of Iran’s northern Gilan province is Rudkhan Castle, a medieval military fortress whose origins predate the rise of Islam in Iran.

Few foreign tourists have visited the site,

which is a popular attraction among Iranians.

Work started on the castle during the Persian Sassanid era, between 224 CE and 651. The hike up to the castle, which is situated along two peaks of a verdant mountain, takes more than an hour, prompting many locals to call Rudkhan the “Castle of a Thousand Steps.”

To this day, there is no precise information regarding the date of its construction. However, what’s known is the castle was continually in use until the Zand Dynasty in the 18th century.

To access the castle one has go through a hilly winding route in a dense forest. Upon the arrival a big entrance gate flanked by relatively tall towers welcomes visitors.

Stepping inside, there are residential quarters, a bathhouse and a running spring passing through. This spring was the main

water source for the fort but following an earthquake it ran dry.

However, with the tireless efforts of Iran’s Cultural Heritage Organization the spring is flowing again.

The east side of the fort is a bit smaller and has more military characteristics. It consists of two towers, another entrance, a prison and an emergency exit. Above the north and south walls are a number of octagonal areas and the deliberate cracks in their walls are assumed to have been for monitoring the adjacent area and shooting arrows at approaching enemies.

Above the front entrance was once an inscribed plaque (which is currently on display in a museum in Rasht) stating that the fort had been renovated for the first time between the years 1539 and 1542 for Sultan Hesamoddin. Historians say that during that



A view of Rudkhan Castle

time the castle was known as the Hesami Fort.

Though being threatened and even partly eroded by excessive humidity and vegetations rooting in the chinks of its old but lofty walls, Rudkhan Castle is still standing tall in very good condition as compared to other castles of the same time.

Special education budget rises by 35%

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The budget of the Special Education Organization has increased by 35 percent in the national budget bill for the next calendar year (starting on March 20), Seyed Javad Hosseini, head of the Organization, has announced.

A total of 1.7 trillion rials (around \$40 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been proposed for special education in the budget bill, which shows an increase of 35 percent, he stated, IRNA reported on Monday.

This is while another 2 trillion rials (about \$44 million) has been proposed, and if it receives approval, the Organization's budget will experience a rise of over 300 percent, he noted.

He went on to say that the additional budget is planned to be spent on facilities needed by the students suffering from disabilities, including wheelchairs, hearing aids, and glasses.

The Ministry of Education will receive a budget of 1.1 quadrillion rials (nearly \$26 billion), equivalent to 13.4 percent of the whole national budget, which has increased by 72.5 percent compared to the current year, he explained.

The government submitted the draft of the national budget bill for the next year to the parliament (Majlis) on December 2, 2020.

The proposed budget amounted to about



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

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

253,000 special students studying in Iran

Hosseini in October 2020 said that some 253,000 students with special education needs are studying in 1,600 special education schools in the country, and the number of students has increased 17 times since its establishment.

He added that there are 8,008 students

with special education needs in the villages of the country, mainly in Khorasan Razavi, Tehran, Gilan, Mazandaran, and Hormozgan provinces.

This organization provides services tailored to the needs of students in each region. Therefore, the linguistic, regional, and indigenous needs of students in these schools are taken into account.

Education designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational program. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioral, intellectual, emotional, and social capacities.

Educational program in special needs education may follow a similar curriculum as that offered in the parallel regular education system, however, they take individuals' particular needs into account by providing specific resources (e.g. specially trained personnel, equipment, or space) and, if appropriate, modified educational content or learning objectives.

These programs can be offered for individual students within already existing educational programs, or be offered as a separate class in the same or separate educational institutions.

National day for rare diseases proposed



SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — February 26 has been proposed to be designated as the national day of rare diseases in the Iranian official calendar, ILNA news agency reported on Monday.

Approved by the Public Culture Council, affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the proposal will be included in the official calendar of the country after the approval of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution and the announcement of the presidency.

Rare Disease Day is internationally celebrated on the last day of February to raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical

representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families.

The Rare Diseases Foundation of Iran has been celebrating this day since 2009 by holding international conferences with the participation of officials, artists, athletes and supporters, and ambassadors of rare diseases.

The proposal to nominate the National Day of Rare Diseases was also supported by the Ministries of Interior, Health, Welfare, and Education.

Naming the National Rare Diseases Day and introducing more of these diseases to the community can play an effective role in identifying and achieving more accurate statistics of these patients.

National Document on Rare Diseases

The National Document on Rare Diseases has been approved in December 2020, with the aim of preventing the birth of infants with rare diseases, medical and therapeutic problems.

Patients with rare diseases launched and signed a petition calling for drawing up a national document on rare diseases on the occasion of Rare Disease Day, February 28, 2019.

The National Document on Rare Diseases, which was recently prepared in collaboration with the Rare Diseases Foundation and the University of Tehran and was drafted by prominent domestic and foreign experts.

The main vision of this document is to prevent the birth of infants with rare diseases and to solve the medical and therapeutic problems of rare patients in the country.

Rare diseases prevalence

Between 6,000 and 8,000 types of rare diseases have been registered worldwide, and in Iran, 344 types of rare diseases have been identified.

According to the statistics published in 2019, the number of rare diseases identified in Iran has reached 332 types of diseases and about 4,750 people are covered by the Rare Diseases Foundation of Iran.

Out of a thousand population, 2 people get a rare disease, while the prevalence can be curbed by changing people's culture, screening, identifying, preventing the births, and raising awareness.

According to WHO, rare diseases are often serious, chronic, and life-threatening. The European Union (EU) definition of a rare disease is one that affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 people. At present, more than 6000 rare diseases are known; around 80 percent of them are genetic disorders and half of them occur during childhood.

Grouped together, rare diseases affect 6–8 percent (or about 30 million people) out of the 508 million population of EU countries. This roughly equals the estimated prevalence of diabetes in the World Health Organization European Region, which in 2013 was 6.8 percent of 658.7 million adults in the 20 to 79-year age group.

Rare diseases are associated with a high psychological burden for the patient but they can also have a major impact on a patient's family. In addition to the health burden on patients, few of these diseases have an effective drug treatment available.

\$3m of smuggled goods, currency discovered

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Smuggled goods and currency worth 130 billion rials (nearly \$3 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) have been discovered in the country over the past week, Sohrab Bahrami, the deputy police chief has announced.

During the last week, all kinds of smuggled goods, including gold, currency, shoes, glasses, fuel, electronics, food, and infant formula, were discovered in the country with the specialized measures and round-the-clock efforts of the anti-trafficking police, he stated.

The discovered goods were handed over to the organization for the collection of smuggled fuel of the National Petrochemical Company, and 11 smugglers were



arrested and handed over to the judicial authorities, he explained, IRNA reported on Monday.

Smugglers fined \$570m in 8 months

From the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2020) until November 16, 2020, smugglers of fuel and

livestock were fined 24 trillion rials (about \$570 million), representing a 47 percent increase compared to the same period last [Iranian calendar] year.

Out of a total of about 42,000 smuggling cases, about 28,000 were related to export smuggling, of which 20,000 are related to the smuggling of fuel and petroleum products, mostly to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to a lesser extent to Turkey and Iraq.

A number of these cases are related to livestock trafficking. Most of the cattle are smuggled to Iraq, and then to the Persian Gulf countries.

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

parliament, said.

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

Iran, which has a 900-kilometer border with Afghanistan, has been used as the main conduit for smuggling Afghan drugs to narcotics kingpins in Europe.

Despite high economic and human costs, Iran has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan was implemented with the priority of given to customs, tobacco, and transit goods.

Second Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine receives clinical trial approval

1 → The vaccine is protein-based, which employs recombinant versions of the spike protein and tutors the immune system against the virus by producing antibodies.

According to the proposed protocol, 13 volunteers will receive the vaccine through the first phase, and then 120 people enter the research in four different groups.

Normally, if the first phase is successful, the acceptable dose of the vaccine will be determined, and based on the results of phase one, the second phase will begin with 500 people.

In all stages, the National Committee for Ethics in Biomedical Research and the senior experts will supervise the project.

Mass vaccination by next 2 months

On Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani 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 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.

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 Monday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 5,806 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,336,217. She added that 1,125,499 patients have so far recovered, but 4,348 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 83 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 56,886, she added.

So far, 8,580,126 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.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 110)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

■ **Shift of Sentence Stress**

تغییر تکیه‌ی جملہ

Sentence stress will shift from the question word to the preceding

noun when the noun is compared with a related word in a

previous statement:

Mahyar is ten years old.

مہیار دہ سال دارد.

What about/ How about Mahsa?

مہسا چی؟ مہسا چطور؟

دُرک

● تمرین ۱. "ص" یا "غ" بگذارید و غلط‌ها را تصحیح کنید:

۱. () دانشگاه تهران دانشگاه مادر است.
۲. () دانشگاه تهران چهار هزار دانشجو دارد.
۳. () دانشجویان دانشگاه تهران در ۵۰ رشته تحصیل می‌کنند.
۴. () تهران فقط دانشگاه‌های کوچک دارد.
۵. () بزرگ‌ترین دانشگاه ایران دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی است.
۶. () دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی یک میلیون دانشجوی دختر دارد.

تَکْرِش

● تمرین ۱. جوابِ سؤالات زیر را کامل بنویسید:

۱. تهران چند دانشگاه دارد؟
۲. دانشگاه تهران در کجاست؟
۳. چقدر دانشجو دارد؟
۴. دارای چند رشته‌ی تحصیلی است؟
۵. دانشگاه آزاد چند دانشجو دارد؟
۶. آنها در کجا تحصیل می‌کنند؟

● تمرین ۲. در انشای این درس، دانشگاه تهران را با دانشگاه‌های

کشور تان مقایسه کنید یا فقط در باره‌ی دانشگاه‌های کشور تان بنویسید.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ج

Iran capable of manufacturing any medicine in two years

Iranian pharmaceutical industry and scientists are capable of producing any kind of medicine over a two-year period, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, head of Food and Drug Administration, has said.

Some medicines are not currently manufactured domestically as their production is not economically justifiable because of low consumption, he added, IRNA reported.

In some cases, medicines are new pharmaceutical molecules that have recently been produced worldwide, he noted.

“The U.S. has sanctioned medicine as far as possible, but we have been able to provide patients with the required medicine, and currently there is no shortages,” he explained.

ایران می تواند هر دارویی را ظرف دو سال تولید کند

رئیس سازمان غذا و دارو گفت هر دارویی را می‌توانیم طی ۲ سال در داخل کشور تولید کنیم.

به گزارش ایرنا، محمدرضا شانه ساز روز دوشنبه گفت این یک بلوف نیست و صنعت داروسازی و دانشمندان کشور توان تولید همه داروها را دارند.

به گفته شانه ساز، برخی اقلام دارویی که اکنون در داخل تولید نمی‌شود به علت کم مصرفی است زیرا توجیه اقتصادی ندارد یا مولکول‌های دارویی جدیدی هستند که به تازگی در دنیا تولید شده‌اند. او ادامه داد: آمریکا هر دارویی را که توانسته تحریم کرده اما ما توانسته ایم از راهپایی که می‌دانیم داروهای مورد نیاز بیماران را تامین کنیم و اکنون دارو به میزان کافی در سراسر کشور وجود دارد.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Painting exhibit to raise funds for children with cancer

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A charity exhibition of paintings by 64 children will open online in Tehran to raise funds for children suffering from cancer.

The exhibition named "I Win" will open on the website of the Mahak Charity Society, a Tehran-based major medical center for children with cancer, on Friday, the organizer of the event, Tara Behbahani, announced in a press release on Monday.



This combination photo shows a selection of paintings to be shown at the charity exhibition named "I Win".

"This exhibit provides a good reason to give a helping hand, to see the Mahak Medical Center for Children, which stands firm and upright, and to observe the hopeful faces of its children as they look to the future, and help with the high costs of treating their illnesses," Behbahani said.

"The bright days of celebrating their victory over cancer and deleting the word 'cancer' from the encyclopedia of diseases is not too far off," she noted.

"This is the 14th year we are organizing the charity exhibit for the benefit of the children with cancer. This year the exhibit was postponed and we decided to hold it online due to the pandemic," she added.

The exhibit will be running for one week.

Behbahani has held the charity exhibition every year for the past 14 years, and the artworks have been created by children attending her painting classes.

All revenue from the exhibition will be donated to the Mahak Charity Society.

Hirmand publishes two short stories by D. H. Lawrence in one book

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of D. H. Lawrence's short stories "A Modern Lover" and "Tickets, Please" has been published in a single book by Hirmand Publications in Tehran.

The stories have been translated into Persian by Farid Qadami. "A Modern Lover" is the sixth of the writer's sixty-seven short stories. A young man returns home to his first love to declare



his feelings for her but the moment is lost when the girl will not give in. "Tickets, Please" is about John Thomas Raynor who is an inspector on the trams and Annie Stone is a conductress. He is good-looking and cocky, and he's been out with all of the conductresses but Annie. She has a sharp tongue, and she believes, knows his measure. Nonetheless, an exciting evening at a local fair leads to growing intimacy, and when Raynor proves uninterested in more than flirtation, Annie's revenge is terrible.

D.H. Lawrence, in full David Herbert Lawrence, (1885- 1930) was an English author of novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, travel books and letters. His novels "Sons and Lovers" (1913), "The Rainbow" (1915), and "Women in Love" (1920) made him one of the most influential English writers of the 20th century.

His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization. In them, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, and human instinct. After a brief foray into formal poetics in his early years, his later poems embrace organic attempts to capture emotion through free verse.

Iran nominates Zahra Amini for workshop at Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has nominated Zahra Amini for a workshop at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Monday.

The BIB-UNESCO Workshop of Albin Brunovský, which is organized on the sidelines of the biennial for young illustrators from developing countries, will be held from October 17 to 23.

The IIDCYA selected Amini for the workshop in collaboration with the Iranian Association of Children's Book Illustrators and the Children's Book Council of Iran.

Participants in the workshop will be selected from among the illustrators nominated by countries from across the world.

Amini, 25, is a graduate of visual communication from the Sepehr Art University in Isfahan. Her illustrations have decorated numerous books, including "A Daisy Flower", "Javad Loves Cooking", "Call Me Weary" and "Thorns".



An illustration by Zahra Amini.

The first edition of the BIB-UNESCO Workshop of Albin Brunovský was organized in 1985 in cooperation with

the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (VSVU) in Bratislava.

Iranian illustrators are frequent

visitors to the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, which is organized in the capital of Slovakia.

Iranian illustrator and writer Hassan Musavi won the grand prix of the biennial for his book "The Boxer" in 2019. Iranian illustrator Ali Buzari was a member of the BIB jury.

Published by the Fatemi publishing house, "The Boxer" narrates the story of the hectic life of a champion who is struggling between kindness and violence, the more he boxes, the smaller his surrounding world becomes.

Dar Al Hadaek, a Lebanese publishing house specializing in publishing and distributing Arabic children's books and magazines, purchased the rights to the Arabic version of the book in 2020.

In addition, illustrator Narges Mohammadi won a Golden Apple of the biennial in 2017 for her works in the book "I Was a Deer".

Written by Ahmad Akbarpur, the book is about a deer that has been severely injured. The deer knows that it must flee from the royal hunters.

Owj to compete in Fajr festival with seven films

a major institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema, will be screened at the 39th Fajr Film Festival.

Animated adventure film "Dolphin Boy" by Mohammad Kheirandish and the spy movie "The Government Expediency" by Hossein Darabi will be competing in the official section of the event, which will take place in Tehran during February.

"Karo" by Ahmad Moradpur and "Mansur" by Siavash Sarmadi will also be screened in this section.

"Mansur", which was earlier entitled "Owj 110", is a highlight of the lineup. It is a biopic about the late commander-in-chief of the Iran Air Force, Mansur Sattari.

Sattari was one of the main Iranian commanders during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. He was killed in a plane crash near Isfahan in 1995.

At the time, Sattari and his colleagues were working on the project "Owj 110", which Iran initiated to make its first jet strike fighter, Azarakhsh.

"Karo" is about a teenage wrestler from Kermanshah,

who is selected for the national team to compete in an international tournament.

"Dastmal Sorkhha", a documentary by Hanzaleh Tajeddini, has been selected to be screened in the documentary competition.

The documentary is about Asghar Vesali and Ali Teimuri, the commanders of Dastmal Sorkhha, an Iranian military group that joined Mostafa Chamran in the Kordestan region in the early 1980s to fight against the separatists.

"Committee" by Abdolhossein Badrloo will also be screened in the section. The documentary is about the Islamic Revolution Committees, a law enforcement force in Iran acting under the Ministry of the Interior in the early years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

"I Am American", a short film by Omid Mirzai, is another Owj production at the Fajr festival.

It is about an American correspondent who is captured by the ISIS terrorists in Iraq. He is waiting for a rescue operation from the U.S. forces.

Yari festival to open with actor Ali Nasirian's message

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 20th edition of the Yari Iranian Film Festival in the Swedish capital of Stockholm will be inaugurated Sunday with the opening message of stage and screen actor Ali Nasirian.

Four Iranian cineastes, Nosrat Karimi, Khosro Sinai, Hassan Barjani and Kambuzia Partovi, who had collaborated in previous editions of the festival and have passed away last year, will be commemorated on the opening day of the event on Sunday.

The Yari Film Festival will go totally online this year. The first day will begin with the screening of one feature and four short films, and will continue with nine more films and nine shorts and



Actor Ali Nasirian in an undated photo. (Iran Theater)

documentaries in the coming days.

Among the lineup are "Nabat", a feature by Pegah Arzi. The film is about Saeed, a middle-aged man who lives a quiet life with his daughter, until a woman enters their lives.

The short films include "Love Can Not Be Quarantined" by Jinus Pedram.

The film is about Hedayat, a taxi driver in Tehran, and his wife Sarah, who teaches online due to COVID-19. Sarah has just undergone a kidney transplant and her husband does not go home to avoid placing Sarah's life at risk. Instead, he quarantines himself in the car for a while until the COVID-19 situation clears up. Sarah is dissatisfied with this arrangement and cannot stand

being alone, so she convinces him to come home.

"The Blue Bed" by Alireza Kazemipour narrates the story of a middle-aged woman named Zahra who picks a girl named Negar on the street and insists on taking her home, leaving Negar in doubt about the middle-aged woman's motivation.

Love is everything for Fahimeh, and in her every single breath, but she is still lonely and she is so hopeful in the short "50 Years Love" by Negar Vand.

The festival is organized every year by Yari, an Uppsala-based charity organization that helps street children in Iran to go to school and also raises funds for the construction of schools and libraries for children.

93 calligraphy works to compete in Fajr Festival of Visual Arts

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A collection of 93 calligraphy works have been selected to compete in the 13th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts to be held in the Saba Art and Cultural Institute in February. "The works have been selected out of 511 works submitted by 239 calligraphers," a member of the jury Mojtaba Malekzadeh said in a press release published on Monday.

He noted that most of the works are in the nastaliq style of calligraphy.

He further noted that most of the young artists have more interest in calligraphic paintings, however, the classic type of calligraphy still has its own devotees.

"The reason could be that calligraphic painting is still new and probably has no specific definition," he said.

He also noted that what will make the final judgment hard would be that all styles of calligraphy must be judged together this year while in the previous editions each style was judged in its own category.

"We understand the current condition of the country and I think in the calligraphy section it would be better if we have more than one honoree," he remarked.

Member of the cartoon section of the festival Masud Ziai also announced that 49 cartoons will be competing



A poster for the 13th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts.

in the cartoon section of the festival this year.

The collection has been selected out of 266 submissions by 100 artists.

In a press release published in late December, the organizers called on Iranian artists who have been honored at international events to participate in the festival.

"Interested artists who have received international awards at the biennials and festivals in 2019 and 2020 are invited to attend the new section named 'World

Stars of Iranian Art'," director of the festival Ali-Ashraf Sandoqabadi said.

"We have been in contact with several associations, which have so far introduced 300 artists to the secretariat. However, others who are interested can get in touch with the secretariat of the festival," he added.

He mentioned that the submitted works will be published in the book of the festival.

He said that the organizers will also honor the veteran artists, adding, "Last year, the honoring ceremony was planned but was postponed due to the spread of coronavirus, but this year we have plans to hold the honoring ceremony."

He also said that an exhibition of lithographs by curator Ahmad Vakili will also be held on the margins of the festival.

"The winners of the Visual Arts Festival for Youth of the past three years as well as the winners of the two previous editions of the Fajr Festival of Visual Arts, the fifth Iranian International Calligraphy Biennial, and the 11th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art can submit their works to the secretariat. Their works will also be judged for the final awards," he concluded.

Tehran Intl. Short Film Festival to open on Wednesday

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 37th edition of the Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) will open on Wednesday.

All the nine movie theaters at the Iran Mall, a new major trade center in Tehran, will be dedicated to the festival, which will be running for five days with a limited number of visitors.

The short films will also stream online for filmgoers during the event, and winners will be announced on January 25.

In a press release published on Saturday, the deputy director of the center, Akbar

Tashakorinia, said that the cineplex of the center will dedicate all its energy to better host the festival.

"I think the festival is an important event for Iran's film industry. It is a festival to discover and introduce talents, and this is the first time the mall is hosting a festival and we hope we can do our best while we try to observe the health protocols and social distancing during the event," he remarked.

Mohammad-Mehdi Asgarpur, Mohammadreza Delpak, Nasser Safarian, Esmaeil Monsef, Bahram Tavakkoli, Ruhollah Hejazi, Roqiyyeh Tavakkoli, Ashkan Rahgozar



A poster for 37th edition of the Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF).

and Hamidreza Lotfian are the jury members for the national competition.

"Brotherhood", a co-production between Canada and Tunisia by Canada-based Tunisian director Meryam Joobeur, received the grand prize in the international competition of the 36th Tehran International Short Film Festival in Tehran in November 2019.

The film is about the tensions within a Tunisian family when their older son, who has been away for several years, returns home with a new Syrian wife who wears a full niqab, igniting his father's suspicions that his son has been fighting for ISIS.