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© File photo

Soleimani showed U.S. and Israel are sources of terrorism: Islamic Jihad official

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

TEHRAN – A senior official of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad says that General Qassem Soleimani succeeded to show the peoples of the region that America and Israel are sponsors of terrorism.

“The martyr Qassem Soleimani used to see the American and Zionist occupation as the source of terrorism and sponsorship of terrorism in the world,” Khalid al-Batsh tells the Tehran Times.

“He considered that the occupation of Palestine, the invasion of the Lebanese lands and the presence of American forces in Syria, Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan are terrorism and occupation,” the Palestinian politician argues.

The following is the text of the interview: **Why do we find a sharp difference between the scourge of “terrorism” between the Western world powers and the axis of resistance?**

Undoubtedly, there is a big difference between the concept of the oppressed people of terrorism and the major powers’ colonial concept of terrorism.

The Western powers, sponsored by the U.S. administration and Israel, see every person resisting their project as a terrorist, and believe that everyone who opposes the Zionist project and seeks to liberate its people from the occupation of Israel is a terrorist.

From here any entity or any person who is hostile to America and confronts its ambitions and Israeli expansionist policies is considered a “terrorist.”

The inclusion of the Iranian Revolution Guard Corps on the American terrorism list is also an attempt to intimidate Iranians and to discourage them from resisting the Zionist regime and also to scare the supporters and allies of Iran in the region.

However, Iran’s allies, whether the resistance forces, Hezbollah, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movement know very well that the American enemy is trying to undermine their position in the region, and they see themselves in a state of clash with the American-led coalition. America’s policies are hostile to the Islamic nations but they are ready to pay the price.

I believe that the side who assassinated martyr Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, and also Palestinian leaders in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, was the Zionist regime.

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Iran diplomat says ‘window is closing’ for Biden to rejoin nuclear deal

Iran’s highest-ranking diplomat in the USA warned the Biden administration it “must act quickly” to return to the 2015 nuclear deal abandoned by President Donald Trump “because the window is closing” for Washington to lift economic sanctions before Tehran’s deadline, USA Today reported on Thursday.

Iran’s parliament set a deadline of Feb. 21 for Biden to lift U.S. sanctions as part of a move back into the now-breached agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. If the United States fails to act, Iran plans to suspend some inspections of its nuclear sites by United Nations nuclear inspectors – a key provision of the accord – and further boost uranium enrichment.

“We have said time and again that if the U.S. decides to go back to its international commitments and lift all the illegal sanctions against Iran, we will go back to the full implementation

of JCPOA, which will benefit all sides,” said Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, in exclusive remarks to USA TODAY.

If Iran’s deadline passes without some kind of compromise, it could effectively push Iran one step closer to the 90% uranium enrichment level required for a nuclear weapon. Iran has been enriching at about 20%, a violation of the accord, as part of its response to the U.S. exit from the deal.

Ravanchi said in the interview the UN nuclear inspectors would not be expelled from Iran, but additional access to its nuclear sites it provided on a voluntary basis would be halted.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the United States will rejoin the accord only after Iran comes back into compliance. This means, in part, limiting uranium enrichment to less than 4%.

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U.S. establishing new military base in Hasaka

The U.S. occupation forces have begun to build a new military base in al-Yaroubia area in Hasaka, Syria, deploying logistic materials and military equipment there, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA).

Citing local sources on Thursday, the news agency said 10 military troop carriers were brought to al-Malikiyah city in northeast of Hasaka to be moved to al-Yaroubia area near the Iraqi border.

The United States claims its forces are there to “fight terrorism,” but Syria says Washington is plundering its oil.

Since late October 2019, the United States has been redeploying troops to the oilfields controlled by Kurdish forces in eastern Syria, in a reversal of former President Donald Trump’s earlier order to withdraw all troops from the country.

Trump has said Washington sought eco-

nom interests in controlling the oilfields in the country.

On July 30, 2020, and during his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo confirmed for the first time that an American oil company would begin work in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)-controlled northeastern Syria.

The practice of seizing or taking advantage of oil resources in a foreign country, without the consent of the sovereign authority, amounts to a violation of international law.

A U.S.-led military coalition has been bombing what it claimed was positions of the Daesh terrorist group inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The strikes have on many occasions resulted in civilian casualties and failed to fulfill their declared aim of countering terrorism.

Iran’s IAEA envoy: Extra-ordinary cooperation may be no longer on agenda

TEHRAN- Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, has warned about a possible change in the level of cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Gharibabadi’s remarks came in response to the conditions set by the new U.S. administration for returning to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the common name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

Antony Blinken, the new U.S. secretary of state, has said the United States will only return to the nuclear

deal once Tehran meets its commitments.

In a tweet, Gharibabadi wrote, “Cooperation and good-will are two-way streets NOT a one-way boulevard. The new law of the parliament has given also another chance to maintain the extremely unprecedented and impressive cooperation with the IAEA by removing the sanctions.”

In another tweet, he asserted, “Let’s hope to see the opportunities won’t be missed and the extra-ordinary cooperation is not back to ordinary.”

On his first day as the top U.S. diplomat, Blinken

confirmed President Joe Biden’s willingness to return to the accord rejected by his predecessor but refused to accept Iran’s demand from the U.S. to act first.

“Iran is out of compliance on a number of fronts. And it would take some time, should it make the decision to do so, for it to come back into compliance and time for us then to assess whether it was meeting its obligations,” Blinken told a news conference on Wednesday.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran’s foreign minister, has urged the U.S. to rejoin the deal first by lifting economic and financial sanctions.



© Tehran Times / Masoud Hossein

Para skiers compete in Dizin

TEHRAN – Five Iranian Para skiers and one Romanian athlete took part in the Dizin International Para Alpine Skiing on Jan. 27 and 28.

The competition served as a qualification event for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

The Games will feature a maximum of 736 Para athletes and 78 medal events.

Dizin is located in the Alborz mountain range, about 70km North from Tehran. It’s the most famous and the largest ski piste and winter sport center in Iran.



Intl. festival of Iranian tribes goes online

TEHRAN – Iran’s 14th edition of the International Festival of Tribes Culture has commenced virtually due to the outbreak of coronavirus.

Hosted by the northern city of Gorgan in Golestan province, the festival seeks to promote the vibrant nomadic cultural heritage of the country, Golestan’s governor-general Hadi Haqshenas said, addressing the opening ceremony on Thursday.

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“Second announcement”
BISOTON TAMIN Paper Company
Tehran- Iran

BISOTON TAMIN Paper Industrial Company intends to purchase Stock Preparation Line for its Board Grade paper production plant (225 t/day). Manufacturers who intend to participate in an aforementioned tender are requested to submit their “Intention to participate” letter including references & resume via following email address until Sunday 31st January 2021.

Email address: info@roninco.com
The company is authorized to reject or accept each or every tender within the framework of its internal trading regulations.

Robert Malley: More demanding for Tehran to deal with

By Azin Sahabi

TEHRAN — U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to appoint Robert Malley as special envoy for Iran was reported on January 28 by The New York Times, citing two senior State Department officials. A senior State Department official confirming earlier reports, reassured the Associated Press of the appointment, too.

As the State Department official clarified, it seems that Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's key picks for decision making on Iran are old-handed experts with diverse point of views. In fact, Malley, as the leading figure in this regard, has notable records not only on Iran but also the broader West Asia, including Arab-Israeli conflict. The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, referring to Blinken, said:

"Secretary Blinken is building a dedicated team, leading that team as our Special Envoy for Iran will be Rob Malley, who brings to the position a track record of success negotiating constraints on Iran's nuclear program."

He adds: "The secretary is confident he and his team will be able to do that once again."

Malley is a veteran West Asia expert

Biden pick for this demanding position in the Department of State has been president and CEO of the International Crisis Group since 2018. The Washington-based think tank writes vastly on various issues regarding Iran's domestic and international affairs in English, Persian and Arabic.



In addition, Malley has held numerous senior positions in the Democratic administrations of Obama and former President Bill Clinton. His area of expertise are West Asia and the Persian Gulf policymaking. He advised Biden's team during the 2020 campaign on the above issues. Moreover, Malley, the son of an Egyptian-born Syrian Jew journalist, was an informal adviser to Obama's 2008 campaign but resigned after it emerged he had met representatives of the Palestinian group Hamas while working for the International Crisis Group. Malley was later brought into the Obama administration as a top West Asia adviser.

Malley as a top national security official in the Obama administration, played an effective role in brokering the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China) Germany and the European Union.

Also, under the Clinton and Obama administrations, Malley helped organize the 2000 Camp David summit as special assistant to Bill Clinton.

Malley's pros and cons

Despite his rich record in West Asia affairs, when Malley's name first grabbed the headlines as a leading candidate succeeding Elliott Abrams, the former neoconservative Trump's envoy for Iran, some GOP figures and pro-Israel groups criticized the choice. They expressed concern that he would be soft on Iran and tough on Israel vis-à-vis a number of foreign policy veterans praising him as a respected, even-handed diplomat.

Given Biden's interest to re-enter JCPOA, some U.S. and foreign Iran hawks, opposing the approach, have been vocal in criticizing Malley.

For example, on Jan. 21, Eli Lake, a conservative journalist blamed Malley in Bloomberg News for ignoring "Iran's human rights abuses and regional terror."

Also, Tom Cotton, a Republican Senator from Arkansas retweeted Lake's piece and said: "Malley has a long track record of sympathy for the Iranian regime & animus towards Israel."

Along this, Joel Pollak, a conservative political commentator and current senior-editor-at-large for Breitbart News is opposing Malley, too.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yaakov Amidror, a former Israeli major general and Israeli national security advisor, have expressed opposition to Malley's appointment. Amidror has stated that if the U.S. re-enters the JCPOA, Israel may take military action against Iran.

On the other hand, more than 200 groups and foreign policy experts have defended Biden's reported front-runner for special envoy to Iran. They signed an open seven pages letter published on January 28 of in which some self-proclaimed pro-democracy U.S. think tanks and groups such as Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), the Quincy Institute, the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) and J Street have described Malley as having the diplomatic chops needed for "fixing our broken policy towards Iran."

The above organizations supportive of Malley while stressing Biden's rejoining to the JCPOA, argue that since Trump left the nuclear deal, "Iran's civil society is weaker and more isolated, making it harder for them to advocate for change."

A brief content analysis of the letter reveals the authors' overt hostility towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Like their counterparts, they accuse Iran of human rights abuse, praising Malley as an effective figure shaping the JCPOA which "significantly curbed Iran's nuclear program."

With regard to praise of Malley apart from overt admiration of Trump's policy towards Tehran expressed by Biden's team can signal the hypothesis that the likely approach of the new envoy can be a modified copy of his predecessors, Brian Hook and Elliott Abrams. But maybe his strategy will be killing with a cushion.

Biden's likely architect of JCPOA 2: A demanding challenge

Blinken, who is known to be more interventionist than his last boss, President Obama, expressed harsh remarks on Iran during his confirmation hearings. While Malley had been a critique of Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA as well as his maximum pressure campaign against Iran, he firmly believes in military essence of Iran's nuclear program. While condemning Trump's approach towards Tehran, he denounced the JCPOA and explained that throughout Trump's presidency "Iran's nuclear program grew, increasingly unconstrained by the JCPOA. Tehran has more accurate ballistic missiles than ever before and more of them. The regional picture grew more, not less, fraught."

Therefore, it is expected that the leading figure of Blinken's team will be one of the primary architects of a possible JCPOA 2. Also, this is worth considering that perhaps dealing with Malley will be more challenging for Tehran because the Oval Office under Biden seems determined to shape a deal to reach broader goals such as curbing Iran's missile program besides letting Arab regional actors participate in the negotiation process.

‘Do not rush for annihilation,’ Iranian general warns Israel

Iranian Armed Forces spokesman says Zionist regime's war threats are 'really illusions'

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Two Iranian generals has responded to war rhetoric by Israeli officials who have threatened military attacks on Iran's nuclear sites as Biden took office in January 20, 2021.

Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan, military advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and former defense minister, on Thursday downplayed Israeli threats against Iran, saying Israel does not dare to fire even a single bullet at Iran.

"They do not even dare to fire a bullet at dear Iran," General Dehqan tweeted.

Emphasizing that Iran's doctrine is defensive, yet he said Iran's strategy is "based on severe punishment for the aggressors."

According to Fars, he also warned Israelis, "Do not rush for annihilation."

Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces, also shrugged off the Israeli military officials'



Shekarchi

threats against Iran, saying, "The threats of the Chief of Staff of the Zionist regime's



Dehqan

army have psychological warfare aspects, and if they are true, they are really illusions."

Iran's Vaezi: We have not quit nuclear deal to rejoin it

1 → Iran started to gradually reduce some of its nuclear commitments only one year after the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA and imposed the harshest ever sanctions against Iran in violation of the agreement and UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorses the accord. Iran reduced its nuclear commitments based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

In a tweet on Thursday, Zarif also responded to Blinken,

saying, "The U.S. violated the JCPOA, blocked food and medicine to Iranians, and even punished adherence to the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the nuclear deal."

Zarif then asked, "Throughout that sordid mess, Iran abided by the JCPOA, only took foreseen remedial measures. Now, who should take 1st step?"

"Never forget Trump's maximum failure," he told his

American counterpart in his twitter account.

In a press conference in Istanbul on Friday with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu, Zarif also said this demand by the new team of the Biden administration that Iran should fully comply with its obligations first is not logical because it is the U.S. which has pulled out of the JCPOA.

"Now it is the duty of the U.S. to return to the JCPOA first," Zarif insisted.

Iran has stockpiled 17 kilogram of %20 enriched uranium

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said on Thursday that after the implementation of the strategic law on lifting sanctions, Iran has accumulated about 17 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium.

Paying a visit to the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP), Kamalvandi said that as a technical organization, the AEOI is obliged to fully implement the legal approvals.

According to "The Strategic Action to

Lift Sanctions Act" approved by the Iranian Parliament, Rouhani's administration was obliged to accelerate Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Article one of the law orders the AEOI to immediately after the ratification of the act, produce 20%-enriched uranium for peaceful purposes and stockpile at least 120 kilograms of it annually, and fully and promptly meet domestic need for uranium enriched above 20-percent purity level for peaceful purposes.

Iran started enriching uranium up to 20%

purity at its Fordow facility on January 4.

Kamalvandi noted the AEOI, as a technical entity, fully enforces the law, and the parliament and the government will decide to suspend the Additional Protocol to the NPT, and the AEOI is fully prepared to do so.

Pointing to installing IR-2m centrifuges, he announced that according to the parliament's law on the strategic plan for lifting the sanctions on the Natanz nuclear site, Iran will install 1,000 IR2m centrifuge machines within three months.

Regarding other parties' commitments

to the JCPOA and the U.S. return to the accord, officials have underlined that the Iran's nuclear organization will wait for the decisions of the top Iranian politicians.

"It's not only the enrichment. We have achieved a lot in the field of radiopharmaceuticals, yellowcake production, and oxygen," the spokesman remarked.

The senior nuclear official underscored that there are currently 17 kilograms of 20% enriched uranium stockpiles, adding the nuclear industry's capability is not comparable to previous years.

Turkey, Iran, Russia emphasize Syrian Constitutional Committee to focus on peace

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran, Turkey and Russia issued a joint statement on Thursday with regard to the Syria crisis, calling on the Syrian Constitutional Committee to reach an agreement between parties to end the war in Syria.

Following consultations on the margins of the fifth meeting of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, the three countries, as guarantors of the Astana peace talks, released a joint statement emphasizing their support for a sovereign, independent and united Syria.

According to Anadolu Agency, Iran, Turkey, and Russia urged the Syrian Constitutional Committee on Thursday to seek compromise and consensus among the sides to end the decade-long war.

Praising the fifth meeting of the committee in Geneva, the statement underscored that the committee had been



created by the Astana guarantor nations to endorse efforts for a political and peaceful solution to the crisis.

Iran diplomat says 'window is closing' for Biden to rejoin nuclear deal

1 → "President Biden has been very clear in saying that if Iran comes back into full compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA, the United States would do the same thing," Blinken said Wednesday.

Tehran wants Washington to rejoin on the same terms it left the accord. Ravanchi's comments underscore the difficulties Iran and the United States face in resuming nuclear diplomacy, as both sides insist the other must act first.

"The party that needs to change course is the United States, and not Iran," said Ravanchi, who helped negotiate the agreement that Trump withdrew from in 2018. He said Iran cannot accept a "renegotiation of the nuclear deal."

Washington accuses Iran of escalating tensions through provocative acts such as seizing cargo ships in the Persian Gulf (a vital route for oil supplies), backing Iranian proxies who have repeatedly launched rockets at the U.S. embassy in Iraq and imprisoning Iranian Americans on false spying charges.

Blinken said the United States is a "long ways" from meeting President Joe Biden's aspiration to rejoin the deal.

"Iran is out of compliance on a number of fronts, and it would take some time, should it make a decision to do so, for it to come back into compliance and for us then to assess whether it was meeting its obligations. So we're not there yet, to say the least," Blinken said at a news briefing.

Iran counters that Washington, not Tehran, is behind escalating tensions. It points to the Pentagon's killing of Iran's top commander, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad last January and the assassination of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, its top nuclear scientist, outside Tehran in November. Iran's

government accuses Israel, with U.S. support, of being behind Fakhri-zadeh's killing.

Iran insists that it is not interested in developing a nuclear weapon and that its nuclear activities are intended for civilian purposes only.

Nasser Hadian, a professor of international relations at the University of Tehran who has close links with officials in Iran's Foreign Ministry, predicted that the United States and Iran would return to the nuclear deal as it existed under President Barack Obama's administration.

"Washington may not be happy about it, but it knows it's the only game in town," he said.

Republicans in Congress, as well as some Democrats, press Biden to make the most of Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran. Under that policy, the Trump administration slapped hundreds of sanctions on Iran. Lawmakers said Biden should use that leverage to force Iran to curb that they its activities, including its ballistic missile program and its support for what they call proxy groups.

"I fear returning to the JCPOA without concrete efforts to address Iran's other dangerous and destabilizing activity would be insufficient," Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., the incoming chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Blinken at his confirmation hearing Jan. 19.

Menendez said there is bipartisan support for a "comprehensive diplomatic approach" that would limit Iran's "antagonistic" activities.

Republicans have been far more vocal in their campaign to dissuade Biden from rejoining the deal.

"Unfortunately, the Iranian regime thinks

it has successfully waited out the maximum pressure program that we have in place," said Idaho Sen. James Risch, the top Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee.

Blinken said the priority is to get Iran's nuclear capabilities "back in the box," then try to negotiate over other concerns.

If the JCPOA can be revived, he told lawmakers Jan. 19, "we would use that as a platform to build, with our allies and partners, what we called a longer and stronger agreement and to deal with a number of other issues that are deeply problematic in the relationship with Iran."

Ali Vaez, an expert on Iran with the Crisis Group, a nonpartisan organization that seeks to prevent conflict, said Iran's Feb. 21 deadline "has now basically thrown a ticking time bomb into this process."

If there's no progress by that date, he said, "I'm afraid ... that significant nuclear escalation is on the horizon."

He said the Biden administration faces a difficult calculation: Alienate members of Congress and ignite a domestic firestorm, or "prevent Iran's nuclear program from crossing the Rubicon towards weaponization."

Despite the obstacles, Vaez said there is "political will on both sides" to revive the JCPOA.

Biden could issue an executive order revoking Trump's withdrawal from the deal, he said. Iranian leaders could issue a similar decree declaring their intention to come back into compliance. The two sides could then craft a road map that would spell out "staggered but coordinated and simultaneous steps for coming back to full compliance with the deal," Vaez said.

Vaez said Iran could be open to a broader deal once the United States rejoins the JCPOA,

despite Tehran's rhetoric to the contrary.

Seyed Mohammad Marandi, an American-born Iranian political analyst at the University of Tehran, said the deadline was intended to signal to the Biden administration that Iran is aware that much of the Trump administration's actions were done by decree.

"This is about testing his sincerity," he said. "Just as Biden has been busy reversing many of Trump's executive orders, he could easily do this with the Iranian nuclear deal. There's nothing particularly complicated about this. It has nothing to do with Congress. Biden's hands are by no means tied. He can do it with one signature."

Marandi said, "Iran didn't appease Trump for four years, and it's not going to appease Biden," whom Tehran views to be in a weakened position domestically because of social divisions and an economic crisis caused by the raging coronavirus pandemic.

U.S. sanctions on Iran target many of the drivers of its economy, such as the oil industry. These measures impeded Iran's access to personal protective equipment, vaccines and health services during its coronavirus outbreak, which is the worst in the Middle East. The Trump administration said that by withdrawing from the nuclear accord and reimposing sanctions, Iran would come crawling back to the United States. That hasn't happened.

Ravanchi said the sanctions "are taking a heavy toll on all Iranians, and particularly vulnerable segments of the society. Even medicines are not being spared from sanctions during the pandemic."

He said it's time for the Biden administration to "gain the trust of the Iranian people."

Saudis betting on the wrong horse

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In the early weeks of his appointment as Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif requested a meeting with General Qassem Soleimani, the former commander of Iran's elite Quds Force, to discuss how to patch up relations with Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, Zarif proposed to offer a regional initiative to discuss with Saudi authorities issues related to Bahrain, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, places where Iran had been locked in a bitter dispute with Saudi Arabia. But General Soleimani proposed the Yemen file, which was yet to be in the limelight at that time.

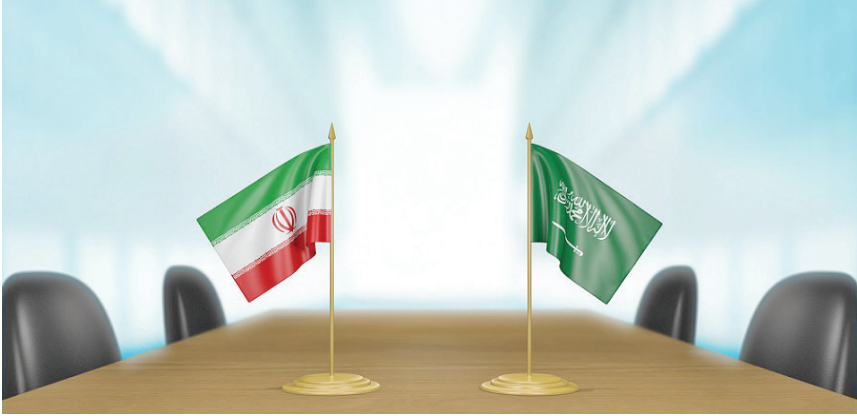
Zarif agreed to start off with that file. So he sent a message to former Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal through a person who was able to act as a secret backchannel to top Saudi officials.

The Saudi response was disappointing. Al-Faisal gave a very short answer to what appeared to be a long message of Iran. "The Arab world is none of your business," al-Faisal retorted.

This correspondence took place during the former leadership of Saudi Arabia, which was less hostile toward Iran than the current one.

Over the past seven years, Zarif has continued to extend his hand to Saudi Arabia with no success. The Saudis and their allies did not respond to Iran's initiatives, including the recently introduced Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE). And when Donald Trump assumed office in 2016 the Saudi unwillingness to engage in a dialogue with Iran was even intensified.

Throughout Donald Trump's presidency, the Saudis brushed away all mediation efforts undertaken by a number of countries such as Pakistan and Iraq. They preferred to wait and see how the so-called "maximum pres-



sure campaign" of the Trump administration would end with Iran.

To their chagrin, Trump lost the November election. Although Joe Biden is no friend of Iran, the Saudis and their allies have been worried about a possible thaw in Iran-U.S. relations. To dispel these concerns, Zarif and Iran's foreign policy apparatus in general once again intensified their efforts to bridge the gap between Tehran and Riyadh. The Iranian foreign minister published at least eight tweets in Arabic — mostly to urge Iran's Arab neighbors to resolve their differences with Tehran through dialogue — since Donald Trump lost the U.S. presidential election in November.

The main theme of these tweets was that Iran will not negotiate with the West over the region and the countries of the Persian Gulf region should patch up differences through dialogue without the presence of foreigners.

"Our dear neighbors, the opportunity is available to us to re-reflect on the issue of regional security. As we know, such security cannot be bought with money and cannot

be achieved by accumulating weapons. The only way to establish security and stability is through broad regional cooperation among the countries of the region, and Iran has always emphasized its readiness to activate such cooperation," Zarif said in the latest Arabic tweet on Thursday.

Earlier on January 19, Zarif had welcomed an offer by Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani to hold a summit between the leaders of Iran and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

But all Zarif's efforts were left unanswered by Saudi Arabia and its allies. To be sure, the Saudis together with the Emiratis have heard Iran's calls for dialogue. But they refused to respond positively.

"Tehran is trying to open the door to [Persian] Gulf dialogue," reported the Saudi-owned Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper. But the newspaper said Saudi Arabia rejected Iran's efforts because it believes that Iran supports what it called "terrorist groups."

"The Saudi answers were clear. Because Iran and its support for terrorist groups in the region constitute a threat to the [Persian]

Gulf," the newspaper continued.

Whether the Saudis and their Emirati allies would continue to reject Iran's reconciliatory efforts remains an open question. But they seem to be once again adopting a wait-and-see approach to see how the new U.S. president would deal with Iran. They have called on Biden to include them in any future talks with Iran, something, that if done, they think would prevent Washington from repeating what they call "Obama-era mistakes" in terms of dealing with Iran.

The Saudi-UAE opposition to Iran's goodwill gestures seems to be based on an assessment that the new U.S. administration will not go soft on Iran even if Biden himself doesn't want to play hardball with it.

"We largely rule out the issue of repeating the scenario of former President Barack Obama's administration in the region," wrote Mohammad Khalfan al-Sawafi, an Emirati analyst, in an opinion piece for the London-based Al-Arab newspaper.

Pointing to the recent remarks by U.S. Secretary Antony Blinken on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, al-Sawafi said these remarks show that the Biden administration wants to say that there are some mistakes that were made when the U.S. trusted Iran, a clear reference to the signature Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran.

"To a large degree and with some clarity, this talk means that the new U.S. administration will not be tolerant of Iran's leaders," al-Sawafi said of Blinken's remarks.

The Emirati analyst thus concluded that this U.S. approach paves the way for the Biden administration to stay the course.

"Merely thinking about cooperation with Iran means, according to the previous logic [of the Obama], a new adventure in increasing the number and size of political and security crises in the world," al-Sawafi noted.

Iran FM holds talks in Georgia and Turkey

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has held talks with the leaders of Georgia and Turkey about bilateral and regional issues such as the crisis in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

In Georgia, Zarif met with Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili and Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia. He also held a telephone conversation with his Georgian counterpart David Zalkaliani during a visit to Tbilisi.

Zarif's visit to Tbilisi was part of a regional tour that included Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey.

During his stay in Tbilisi in the fourth leg of a tour of the Caucasus Zarif had a meeting with the Georgian president on Thursday morning to discuss the latest status of relations between Iran and Georgia and the situation in the region, according to a statement issued by Iran's Foreign Ministry.

"The top Iranian diplomat congratulated Georgia on holding successful parliamentary elections, highlighted the historical relations between the two countries, and conveyed an invitation from the Iranian president for Ms. Zourabichvili to make a state visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran," the statement said. "On bilateral issues between Iran and Georgia, Foreign Minister Zarif expressed hope for promotion of cooperation between the two (near) neighbors in various fields of mutual interest, particularly the trade and economic interaction."

The chief Iranian diplomat also called on Georgia to resolve problems facing the Iranian truck drivers and the Iranian nationals who reside in Georgia.

Zarif discussed the recent war in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. He explicated the Islamic Republic of Iran's stance on using the opportunity in the wake of the recent clashes in the Karabakh region for the expansion of regional cooperation to the benefit of all parties and informed the Georgian president of the talks he has held on the subject in the regional countries.

"Transit corridor connecting Black Sea to Persian Gulf"

For her part, President Zourabichvili highlighted the

historical ties between Georgia and Iran, pointing to the issues relating to the corridors connecting the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, and emphasized the importance of economic cooperation between the two neighbors, joint investment, and cooperation in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Zarif discussed similar issues with Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia. He discussed topics pertaining to the relations between the two neighbors and the latest developments in the region following a recent flare-up of clashes in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, according to a separate statement issued by the Iranian foreign minister.

"Pointing to the economic and trade cooperation between Iran and Georgia, Foreign Minister Zarif said the two countries' business sectors are willing to maintain and enhance trade cooperation and work on the joint production of goods," the statement said. "He also cited a series of problems in bilateral trade ties and the restrictions on the banking, transit and transportation activities, calling on the Georgian prime minister to address these problems."

The chief Iranian diplomat also touched on the latest conditions in the region after the Karabakh conflict and offered Iran's evaluation of the circumstances with the purpose of establishing regional stability and calm.

In a tweet on Thursday, Zarif said, "In Tblisi, met with President

Zourabichvili_S and PM GakhariaGiorgi and held phone talk with self-quarantined FM DZalkaliani. Excellent discussions on expanding perennial bilateral ties & regional cooperation—especially a transit corridor connecting Black Sea to Persian Gulf."

"Special opportunities"

Zarif met with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu on the final leg of his tour. The two foreign ministers held a joint press conference after their meeting.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey had very good relations with each other in difficult circumstances and will continue these relations seriously in any situation," Zarif

said, adding that Tehran and Ankara have "special opportunities" to cooperate on a variety of issues ranging from Syria to the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Zarif noted that six countries in the region — Iran, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia— now have the opportunity to advance all-round cooperation in spheres of land routes, energy and railway.

Azeri, Turkish and Iranian FMs to meet in Tehran in near future

He expressed hope that these countries would continue to cooperate on regional issues. Zarif announced that Iran will convene a meeting between the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran in Tehran in near future.

"Today we had a very good conversation about transit, trade and energy cooperation, and we continue our mutual efforts to solve the problems of companies and individuals of the two countries that are investing in the other country," Zarif said of his talks in Turkey.

"The presence of Turkish companies in Iran is very important for us and we hope that these companies can continue their presence in Iran without any obstacles. We are waiting for Mr. Erdogan in Iran and, God willing, we will determine the date soon, both for the High Summit on Strategic Co-operation and the Summit of the Astana Process," the chief Iranian diplomat continued.

He underlined the need for the countries of the region to move away from the differences of the past and build on what was accomplished in the past.

"During our visits to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia and Georgia, we emphasized that the past should be used positively as a path to the future and construction, and that the existing ceasefire should be ratified and strengthened through economic cooperation," Zarif said, referring to the Russian-brokered ceasefire deal between Azerbaijan and Armenia that put an end to a 44-day between the two South Caucasus countries over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Zarif urges dialogue with regional Arab states to maintain security

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on Iran's Arab neighbors to seize on the opportunity to advance cooperation among the region's countries.

"Our dear neighbors, the opportunity is available to us to re-reflect on the issue of regional security. As we know, such security cannot be bought with money and cannot be achieved by accumulating weapons. The only way to establish security and stability is through broad regional cooperation among the countries of the region, and Iran has always

emphasized its readiness to activate such cooperation," the Iranian foreign minister said in a tweet in Arabic on Thursday.

This is the sixth time Zarif is tweeting in Arabic to advance the dialogue between Iran and its Arab neighbors. The chief diplomat has intensified his messaging efforts toward Persian Gulf's Arab states since Joe Biden won the U.S. presidential election in November. Zarif sought to reassure the countries of the region that Iran is not going to negotiate with the West over the region.

"Dear neighbors Why ask US/E3 for inclusion in talks with Iran when: a) There

won't be ANY talks about OUR region with them as they're the problem themselves b) We can speak directly about our region without outside meddling. Hormuz Peace Endeavor (#HOPE) is still on the table," Zarif tweeted on December 8 after Saudi Arabia and its allies in the region called on the U.S. to include them in any future talks with Iran.

He also welcomed a recent proposal by Qatar on launching dialogue between Iran and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

In a recent interview with Bloomberg TV, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani once again ex-

pressed hope that a summit between leaders of the six-member Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Iran would happen.

"We are hopeful that this [summit] would happen and we still believe that this should happen. And I think this is also a desire that being shared among the other GCC countries. I just mentioned to you that there is a difference between the countries on the way how to approach such a dialogue. Also from the Iranian side. They have expressed their willingness several times to engage with the GCC countries," the Qatari foreign minister said.

UN chief calls for U.S., Iran to revitalize nuclear deal

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on Thursday for the United States and Iran to work together to break their current stalemate on the international nuclear accord but said he did not expect a quick outcome.

New president Joe Biden's Democratic administration said it was ready to return the U.S. to the accord, after predecessor Donald Trump withdrew the country in 2018, but Washington and Tehran each expect the other to make the first move.

"There's a lot of work to be done," but "I don't expect an immediate solution," Guterres said during a press conference when asked about the possibility of mediating a way out of the impasse.

"I believe that everyone, all those who entered the JCPOA and other interested parties must work together to reduce uncertainties, to face difficulties and obstacles," he said, referring to the accord by its formal name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Without answering the question as to possible me-

diation, he said the matter is "progressively moving towards a situation where we can have an agreement that is essential for peace and stability in the (Persian) Gulf and the world."

The deal was agreed between Iran, the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany in July 2015.

"The JCPOA was a big diplomatic victory and an essential element for peace and stabilization in the (Persian) Gulf," Guterres said, adding that "we regret that the agreement has been called into question."

"It's obvious that there are difficulties and obstacles, that there is an increased complexity because the U.S. left (the agreement) and took additional measures (of sanctioning Iran). At the same time, Iran has taken some steps to develop its nuclear capabilities," he added.

In response to the U.S. leaving the deal and imposing sanctions, Iran reneged on several of its nuclear commitments, though it insisted the measures were reversible.

On Wednesday, U.S. Secretary Of State Antony Blinken

said that his country will only return to the nuclear deal once Tehran meets its commitments.

"Iran is out of compliance on a number of fronts. And it would take some time, should it make the decision to do so, for it to come back into compliance and time for us then to assess whether it was meeting its obligations," Blinken said during a news conference, adding, "We're not there yet, to say the least."

In response, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that the U.S. must take the first step because it was the U.S. that withdrew the agreement and normally it must be the "first step."

Zarif said the U.S. "violated" the JCPOA, "blocked food/medicine to Iranians" and "punished adherence" to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the accord, whereas Iran "abided by JCPOA" and "only took foreseen remedial measures."

"Now, who should take 1st step? Never forget Trump's maximum failure," Zarif tweeted.

SPORTS

FIFA President Infantino mourns loss of Mehrdad Minavand

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — FIFA President Gianni Infantino has expressed his deep condolences to Iran Football Federation over the passing of Mehrdad Minavand.

Minavand died at the age of 45 Wednesday night after losing battle against COVID-19. He started his career at Tehran based football club Pas in 1994 but joined Persepolis a year later.

The left winger also played for Austrian club Sturm Graz and Charleroi from Belgium before returning to Persepolis once again in 2002.

Minavand was a member of Iran national football team in the 1998 FIFA World Cup, where they registered their first-ever victory in the competition against the U.S. in France. He also won a bronze medal with the Persians in the 1996 AFC Asian Cup.

"Words seem inadequate to express the sadness I feel. Minavand's legacy and his achievement, especially his personality, his work ethics and his human qualities will not be forgotten, and he will be truly missed."

"On behalf of the international football community, I wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the Iran Football Federation, and to his family, friends and loved ones," FIFA President Infantino said in his condolence message to Iran.

Shaikh Salman extends condolences on passing of Minavand

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Asian Football Confederation (AFC) President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa has sent his condolences to the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) and to the family and loved ones of Mehrdad Minavand.

The ex-Iran midfielder passed away at the age of 45 on Wednesday after contracting COVID-19 last week, the-afc.com wrote.

Minavand represented the Iran national team at the FIFA World Cup France 1998 and was instrumental in leading Team Melli to its first-ever victory in the global showpiece when it defeated USA 2-1 at the Stade de Gerland in Lyon.

The AFC President said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest challenge in modern history and the Asian football family mourns the loss of a true icon of our great game who unfortunately has left us too soon."

"Mehrdad Minavand served as an inspiration to millions of fans and to so many of today's generation of players and on behalf of the whole Asian football family, please accept my deepest and heartfelt sympathies on his passing," added Shaikh Salman.

Minavand also led Iran to a third-place finish at the AFC Asian Cup 1996 in the United Arab Emirates. The accomplished midfielder also enjoyed an illustrious club career featuring for Iranian giant Persepolis FC before moving to Austria's Sturm Graz where he played a key role in leading the club to the Austrian Bundesliga League, Cup and Supercup treble.

The thoughts and prayers of the AFC and the rest of the Asian football community are with the loved ones and friends of Minavand, the FFIRI and the Iranian football family during this difficult time.

Esteghlal held by Naft Masjed Soleyman: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran Professional League (IPL) leaders Esteghlal were held to a 1-1 draw by Naft Masjed Soleyman on Friday.

The players observed a minute's silence before kick-off in memory of former Iran and Persepolis midfielder Mehrdrar Minavand who passed away Wednesday night, losing battle to COVID-19.

In the match held in Masjed Soleyman's Behnam Mohammadi Stadium, Esteghlal goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini scored an own goal in the 32nd minute but the Blues' captain Vouria Ghafouri leveled the score in the 70th minute.

In Ghaemshahr, Zob Ahan registered their first ever win in the current season after 13 weeks in a match against struggling Nassaji. 10-man Zob Ahan won the match 3-2.

Darko Bjedov, Abdollah Hosseini and Milad Jahani scored for Zob Ahan and Mohammadmehdi Nazari and Ayyoub Kalantari were on target for Nassaji.

Zob Ahan were reduced to 10 men before the halftime after Mojtaba Haghdost received a red card.

In Tehran, Gol Gohar edged past Saipa 1-0 thanks to a goal from Younes Shakeri in the 75th minute.

Saipa forward Majid Aliyari was sent off in the 70th minute after receiving his second yellow card.

On Saturday, Persepolis will host rock-bottom Machine Sazi, Sepahan meet Shahr Khodro in Isfahan, Tractor play Aluminum in Tabriz, Mes face Sanat Naft in Rafsanjan and Foolad host Paykan in Ahvaz.

Ali Ansarian health condition is stable

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Persepolis defender Ali Ansarian is recovering from Covid-19 and his health condition is stable, officials said on Friday.

He was admitted to Farhikhtegan Hospital in Tehran after he tested positive for Covid-19, last week.

His teammate Mehrdad Minavand passed away Wednesday night after losing battle with coronavirus.

The total number of people infected with the coronavirus in Iran hit 1,405,414, the Health Ministry said Friday.

Speaking at a daily press conference, Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said the number of people tested positive for COVID-19 during the past 24 hours across the country has risen to 71 after the detection of 6,573 new cases since Thursday.

According to her report, the number of the total death toll reached 57,807.

Elaborating on the latest situation of the coronavirus pandemic in Iran, Lari added some 1,196,374 of whom have either recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

Lari underlined that 3,990 COVID-19 patients are in critical conditions and under treatment in intensive care units of the hospitals.

Since its outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic has infected about 100 million people across the world, of whom over 2,100,000 people have lost their lives.

The number of people infected with COVID-19 across the world has exceeded 101 million and the death toll is over 2.18 million.

Production by major automakers exceeds 730,000 in 10 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 730,787 vehicles during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), the data released by Codal website showed.

According to the data, during the mentioned period, IKCO manufactured 388,094 vehicles, of which 41,608 were produced in the tenth Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 21, 2020-January 19, 2021).

SAIPA manufactured 262,038 vehicles in the mentioned period, of which 27,462 were manufactured in the tenth month.

Pars Khodro also manufactured 80,655 vehicles, of which 7,856 were manufactured in the tenth month.



Iranian carmakers had exported about 1,300 vehicles to nine countries, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Syria, UAE, Spain, China, Iraq, and Turkey during the previous Iranian calendar year.

Based on the data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, 468,699 vehicles were manufactured in Iran during the first half of the current year (March 20-September 21, 2020), which has been 23.4 percent higher than the figure for the same period of time in the past year.

During this period, 425,925 passenger cars were manufactured in the country, registering a growth of 21.9 percent compared to the first six months of the previous year. The production of trucks also reached 39,519 units in the said time span, which has increased by 40.4 percent compared to the last year's same period.

Considering the mentioned data, while the growth in output has been realized in the first half, car manufacturing is also planned to rise in the second half.

Mohsen Salehinia, the new head of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO), has mentioned planning for increasing car manufacturing in the second half, and said, "We are investigating and finalizing the issues in this due".

Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi had said earlier this year that 1.2 million vehicles were planned to be manufactured in the present year, which seems a realistic figure given the surge in production policies of this year.

Iranian oil exports rising in Jan. despite sanctions: trackers

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian oil exports are climbing in January after a boost in the fourth quarter despite U.S. sanctions, Reuters reported based on figures from SVB International and two other firms.

Last week, Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Amir Hossein Zamaninia said the country has started boosting its oil production and will be able to reach pre-sanction levels within two months.

Iranian oil won't create any surplus in the oil market and the market will be able to accommodate the country's maximum oil output of around 3.9 million to four million barrels a day, Bloomberg quoted Zamaninia as saying on the sidelines of Iran Oil Show in Tehran.

19 idle industrial units revived in Ilam Province

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by the head of Industry, Mining and Trade Department of Ilam Province, in the west of Iran, 19 idle industrial units have been revived in the province since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).



Mentioning his department's efforts for reviving the idle units in the province, Reza Mohammad Rahimi said that the stagnant units returning to the production cycle, in addition to realizing a resilient economy and boosting production, will help create jobs and improve the living condition of the people of this province.

The official also said that new investment makings are welcomed in the province.

Mohsen Salehinia, the previous head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), 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.

Iran registers 3rd highest production growth in world

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's crude steel production increased by 13.4 percent in 2020 while the average global growth in this sector stood at -0.09 percent, according to the World Steel Association (WSA) latest report.

The country was ranked third among the world's top steel producers in terms of production growth, after Uzbekistan and Moldova which both have small outputs compared to Iran, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) reported.

Based on the report, Iran produced 29.03 million tons of the mentioned commodity during 2020 compared to the last year's nearly 25.6 million tons.

Uzbekistan's steel production grew by 42.6 percent, and Moldova's output increased by 18.7 percent in 2020, followed by Iran with the production growth of 13.4 percent.

Meanwhile, WSA states that crude steel production in the world fell 0.09 percent to stand at 1.829 billion tons in 2020.

According to the World Steel Association, similar to the past two years, Iran stood



at the 10th place among the world's top steel producers in 2020, after countries like China, India, Japan, and Russia.

Iran produced 2.6 million tons of crude

steel in December 2020, which was 19.2 percent higher than the figure for December 2019, the same report confirmed.

The average global production growth

in the mentioned month was 5.8 percent.

As the world's top producer, China produced 1.052 billion tons of crude steel in 2020, up 5.2 percent compared to 2019. India and Japan ranked second and third in the world with production of 99.5 million and 83.1 million tons, respectively.

The production of South Korea, Japan, and India as the leaders of the industry, however, decreased by 6 percent, 16.2 percent, and 10.6 percent, respectively.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by external factors like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The Islamic Republic had also outshined the world steel producers during the first 10 months of 2020, as based on the WSA previous report the country produced 23.8 million tons of the mentioned commodity during the January-October, 2020 period, 12.6 percent more than the figure in the same 10 months of 2019.

Water, wastewater management projects worth \$1.33b inaugurated

1 → As reported by IRNA, with the construction of irrigation and drainage networks in Golestan province, the net income of farmers through both irrigated and rainfed cultivation will increase by 58 percent and 159 percent, respectively, and the irrigation water productivity index will also increase by 44 percent.

The mentioned projects are aimed at promoting proper use of water, soil, and other natural resources, stabilize the population in rural areas, increase agricultural production, create effective employment and finally, increase the income and welfare of villagers and develop the northern, western and northwestern regions of the country.

Since the beginning of the current calendar year, which has been named the year of "surge in production" by the

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, the government has urged various bodies and ministries to take the necessary measures for the realization of the year's motto.

In this regard, since the beginning of the year, every week several major projects have gone operational in various sectors.

The Energy Ministry has implemented a program called "A-B-Iran" based on which the ministry inaugurates several energy projects every week, and the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry is also following a new scheme called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports" under which the ministry has inaugurated numerous projects so far.



1,160 new industrial units established in Iran since late Mar. 2020

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some 1,160 new industrial units have been established and gone operational in Iran's industrial parks since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced on Wednesday.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of a visit to a production unit in Khorasan Razavi Province, Ali Rasoulzadeh put the total investment made in the mentioned industrial units at 150 trillion rials (about \$3.57 billion).

According to Rasoulzadeh, the inaugurated units have created job opportunities for over 20,000 people.

The official noted that his organization



will take all the necessary measures to support the newly established units and also to help those who want to establish new units put their projects into operation.

"Fortunately, this year's budget bill has allocated a good amount for providing the necessary infrastructure in industrial parks," he said.

He further noted that although about 22-24 percent of the country's industrial units were inactive and semi-active in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020) the figure has decreased to 18.7 percent this year.

According to Rasoulzadeh, 1,170 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current year, crating 19,400 job opportunities.

Based on the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry data, the 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.

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S. sanctions.

In fact, 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.

In this due, the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) 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.

TSE records a slight weekly growth of main index

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — After several weeks of drop, TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), could finally register growth in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index rose two percent to stand at 1.207 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Saipa Company, Social Security Investment Company, Tehran Oil Refining Company, and Isfahan Oil Refinery were the most widely followed indices.

In early August 2020, when all the major stocks around the world were experiencing serious declines, TEDPIX surpassed two million points.

This situation created some skepticism among investors regarding the creation of a bubble in the market, and some economists and market analysts also warned about the government's over-interfering in this market.

The government, however, continued offering more and more of its entities on the market and further encouraged people to invest in the market.

Turning the fears of the investors into reality, TEDPIX started a downward trend in mid-August and has since slumped about 38 percent.

What President Rouhani called one of the most "astounding rises" in the history of the stock market, became one of the most dramatic swings on record.



Now, the big question would be "what is on the horizon for the Iranian stock market?"

Farhang Hosseini, a capital market expert, told the Tehran Times on Tuesday that although several external factors, including the disputes between the oil and economy ministries over the offering of the second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), increase in interest rates, the ambiguities in the next year's national budget bill, and etc. have contributed to the decline of the TSE's main index over the past few months, the main

Iran, Turkey target 1m tons of rail freight transport in 2021

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The rail freight transportation between Iran and Turkey is going to be increased to one million tons in 2021, Turkey's Transport and Infrastructure Ministry said in a statement.

The two sides have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in this regard during a gathering of railroad representatives in Turkey's capital Ankara on January 12-13, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to the statement, this MOU will be the opening chapter of a new era in the rail transportation cooperation

between the two countries.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, three train services were run daily between Turkey and Iran in 2020, transporting 564,000 tons of cargo, the statement said.

"In this regard, all necessary measures have been taken to increase the volume of transport between the two countries to one million tons in 2021."

As reported by Rail Freight, the statement also announced that freight trains would also run between Turkey and Pakistan via Iran on a common tariff between the three countries. It added that talks are still ongoing to set this tariff.

"Turkey, Iran and Pakistan have reiterated that they want to revive services of the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad train, not later than this year. This would boost traffic between Iran and Turkey even further."

Back in August 2020, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami and Turkish Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Adil Karaismailoglu held talks in a video conference session to discuss cooperation between the two neighbors.

In the meeting, Eslami emphasized the need for the development of rail transport between Iran and Turkey and noted that



currently the only railway border between the two neighbors is through the Razi border to Van in Turkey.

Soleimani showed U.S. and Israel are sources of terrorism: Islamic Jihad official

1 → This is an open battle with Israel. They consider us terrorists because we are fighting for the sake of truth and revolution, and we consider them occupiers of our land. We must fight them, and our relationship with them will remain in this way because we will not accept coexistence with an occupier.

How do you evaluate Iran's policies represented by General Soleimani to find a common ground between the regional countries and peoples to fight all types of terrorism?

Qassem Soleimani represents the successes of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian approach in fighting terrorism.

It is a source of pride for Iranians that General Qassem Soleimani formed the first nucleus of what today we described as the "axis of resistance" under the supervision of the Islamic Republic.

Today the American administration and the Zionist enemy, when talking about an enemy in the region, they mean the axis of resistance. Martyr Qassem Soleimani engineered this axis by his continuous and tireless efforts, which led to establishing the first structure of the resistance in the region.

He did it in close collaboration with his brothers in the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Yemen, and became a symbol of the resisting the Zionist regime and American projects. Hence, his martyrdom was aimed at sending a message to Iran and a blow to the axis of resistance.

Martyr Qassem Soleimani used to see the American and Zionist occupation as the source of terrorism and sponsorship of terrorism in the world, and he considered that the occupation of Palestine, the invasion of Lebanese lands and the presence of the American forces in Syria, Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan are terrorism and occupation.

Therefore, terrorism and occupation are one phenomenon, and both of them mean the suppression of peoples and the abolition of their rights, control their wealth and capabilities; and Qassem Soleimani was a symbol of resistance to terrorism and occupation, which is the trademark of the American administration and Zionism and their allies in the region and the world.

Do you think that the martyrdom of



great commanders such as General Soleimani will impede combat against terrorism and occupation?

The targeting of great commanders like martyr Qassem Soleimani and the leaders of the Palestinian and Islamic resistance is a dangerous development.

But this targeting was the first evidence that these leaders have gained their goals and were successful to stand in the face of the American-Zionist project.

The most important thing that these leaders have accomplished is the unity of the Arab-Islamic narrative and the unity of the oppressed peoples' narrative when they confront the Zionist enemy on the land of Palestine or when they resist the American policies in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and the (Persian) Gulf.

Now we realize that martyr Qassem Soleimani was targeted after the liberation of Bukamal in Syria. Soleimani was placed on the target list and became a red line after his historic achievement to retake Bukamal from America's allies.

What is the main link between terrorism and occupation?

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, this revolution has been confronted and besieged by the axis of terrorism led by the U.S. and with its Arab allies, to deprive the Iranian people of their legitimate rights.

Therefore, the Islamic Revolution in Iran

and the Iranian people and all lovers of freedom and justice were victims of American terrorism.

Iran, after its revolution, and when it became a reliable power in the region, started to play its natural role in fighting terrorism; terrorism which was being sponsored by Israel and America. Then, Iran started to support the Islamic resistance movements in Lebanon and Palestine to confront the Zionist enemy and confront the American projects in the (Persian) Gulf, in order to protect itself and its people and also protect the Palestinian and Lebanese people and the rest of the nations that are exposed to invasion and aggression.

What the Islamic Republic has done in the recent period in the fight against Israeli-American terrorism is a great and appreciated effort. I think that Iran's efforts have tangible results, and no one in the world can ignore the Iranian role in resisting the American expansionist policies in the region.

I believe that the Islamic Republic today has proved that it was successful in securing its interests and what it needs to defend. Consequently, the West is striving hard to put pressure on the Islamic Republic and direct blows to it, as happened with martyr scientist Dr. Fakhri Zadeh when he was assassinated, using satellites.

So, Iran is under Western pressure because it hosts the bases of strength and renaissance and it is at the gates of possessing the advanced technology and knowledge that ultimately

qualifies it in securing its defense needs.

Undoubtedly, when the Iranian development reaches its height, Iran will have a greater role in resisting terrorism and injustice in the region.

I believe that the peoples of the region place great hope on the role of Iran, not only the countries of West Asia but all the oppressed peoples in the region.

We wish Iran peace and stability to finish its tasks and projects. The West will not have mercy on Iran, and today they put pre-conditions on Iran to return to the nuclear deal while they are not adhering to the 2015 agreement.

They offer new conditions for returning to the nuclear deal. In any case, the leadership of the Islamic Republic is aware of the interests of the country. Iran represents hope for millions of the oppressed, free and revolutionaries in the Islamic and Arab world.

What is your comment on Arab coalitions to undermine Iran in the region?

Those who brought the West to the region and formed coalitions, fake alliances and groups, are trying to establish an American-Arab-Israeli alliance in the region with the aim of suppressing the axis of resistance and also confronting and deal a blow to the Islamic Republic.

They want to undermine Iran's peaceful nuclear project. All these regimes and entities have one aim: remaining on the thrones.

Their leaders follow American orders, but the peoples in the region do not accept that, and independent governments also reject it.

Therefore, the keyword here is resistance to Israel and its expansionist projects.

This is what martyr Qassem Soleimani realized, and he and his partners in this project and this axis worked to accomplish, and therefore if the goal of establishing the Zionist-Arab-American alliance is to protect Muslims and Sunnis, it must be said that it will not protect the peoples of the region, rather will accelerate their overthrow.

What we see today of the shameful normalization of ties with the Zionist regime by Arabs reveals the hidden plots.

They are betting on the wrong position in order to protect themselves. They are betting on the enemy to protect them, and this is a contradiction.

In 'historic' move, Italy blocks arms sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE over Yemen crimes

Italy has permanently stopped exports of arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) amid worries over the two regimes' continued war crimes in Yemen, in what human rights campaigners praised as a "historic" move that sets "an important precedent" for other European countries.

Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio announced the halt on Friday, citing Rome's commitment to ending the bloodshed in Yemen and protecting human rights.

In an interview with Italy's *il Fatto Quotidiano* newspaper, Manlio Di Stefano, undersecretary for foreign affairs, said the decision was to make last week after Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte gave the green-light to a relevant recommendation made by Di Maio.

The Italian Network for Peace and Disarmament said the decision would block the sale of around 12,700 missiles to Saudi Arabia, which was part of a total allotment of 20,000 missiles worth over 400 million euros agreed in 2016 under the ex-administration.

'Spotlight now on the UK, other European arms sellers'

Andrew Smith from the Campaign Against the Arms Trade told the Middle East Eye online news portal that the Italian decision sets a "vitaly important precedent" for other European countries that keep selling weapons to the Saudi regime, despite its atrocities in Yemen.

"The Italian government should not have been arming Saudi forces in the first place. The arms sales they have supported have fueled a brutal war and helped to create a humanitarian catastrophe," Smith said.

The activist such arms exports must come to an end, "so must the political support that has underpinned them." Conte had in 2018 expressed a desire for his government to end arms sales to Saudi Arabia due to its devastating war on Yemen as well as the state-sponsored assassination of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate a year earlier.

Italy's latest decision followed an announcement by new U.S. President Joe Biden earlier this week that there would be a pause in arms exports to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi as his administration reviewed the exports.

The temporary ban will reportedly include the sale of precision-guided weapons to Saudi Arabia and advanced F-35 fighters to the UAE.

The Biden administration's decision was welcomed on Thursday by prominent human rights group Amnesty International, which called on the European countries to follow suit.

Backed by the U.S., the UK and other Western states, the Saudi regime and a coalition of its allies have been engaged in a military against Yemen since early 2015 with the aim of reinstalling a Riyadh-friendly government there.

The campaign has failed to achieve its goals, thanks to the resistance put up by the Yemeni army and allied popular groups, but it has left the poorest Arabian Peninsula state mired in the "world's worst humanitarian crisis," as the United Nations put it. (Source: Press TV)

Blast near Israeli embassy in Delhi on 29th anniversary of India-Israel ties

A blast occurred near the Israeli embassy in New Delhi and three vehicles were damaged in it.

The Delhi Police said no injuries have been reported so far. It said the low-intensity blast occurred at 5.05 pm. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Delhi Police Special Cell have reached the blast spot to investigate the matter.

The entire area has been cordoned-off and heavy deployment of police forces has been made. A team of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has also been rushed to beef up security around the Israeli embassy.

"A very low-intensity improvised device went off at 5.05pm near 5 APJ Abdul Kalam Road near Jindal house. No injury to any person has been reported nor any damage to property was witnessed, except windowpanes of some vehicles parked nearby," the Delhi Police said in a statement.

It added, "Initial impressions suggest this was a mischievous attempt to create a sensation."

Speaking to India Today TV the Israeli Ambassador to India confirmed that "the mission is on high alert and everyone is fine inside".

This blast at the Israel embassy in New Delhi comes on a day when India and Israel celebrate 29 years of India-Israel diplomatic relations.

Biden administration pauses weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE

The United States is reviewing weapons sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorized by former President Donald Trump, a move that Secretary of State Antony Blinken said was "typical" of a new administration.

In his first press briefing on Wednesday, Blinken said the review aims "to make sure that what is being considered is something that advances our strategic objectives and advances our foreign policy".

The Wall Street Journal first reported on Wednesday that the Biden administration has imposed a temporary freeze on billions of dollars in weapons sales to the two countries, including the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and F-35 fighters to the UAE.

The move comes one week after Biden, who has promised to "reassess" Washington's relationship with Riyadh, was inaugurated. Since taking office, he has signed a string of executive actions to review or reverse some of Trump's key policies.

Security forces kill Daesh self-proclaimed leader in Iraq: Kadhimi

Iraqi Prime Minister and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces Mustafa al-Kadhimi says the country's security forces have managed to eliminate a high-profile member of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group during a counter-terrorism operation.

Kadhimi wrote in a post published on his official Twitter page that Abu Yaser al-Issawi, the self-proclaimed leader of the terror group in Iraq and its "deputy caliph," had been killed. He, however, did not provide any information about when and where the top-brass terrorist had been eliminated.

"We promised and fulfilled. I gave my word to pursue Daesh terrorists, we gave them a thundering response," the Iraqi prime minister tweeted.

According to Press TV, he added, "Our heroic armed forces have eliminated Daesh commander Abu Yaser al-Issawi as part of an intelligence-led operation. Long live Iraq and its patriotic armed forces."

We promised and fulfilled. I gave my word to pursue Daesh terrorists, we gave them a thundering response. Our heroic armed forces have eliminated Daesh commander Abu Yaser Al-Issawi as part of an intelligence-led operation.

Long live Iraq and its patriotic armed forces.

Resistance News

Abdullah II denounces Israel for not providing vaccine to Palestinians

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** —King Abdullah II of Jordan d e s k has criticized Israel for not providing the corona vaccine to the Palestinians, calling for the effective and fair distribution of the anti-virus vaccine across the world.

The Jordanian monarch was addressing a virtual speech on Thursday in the agenda meeting of the Davos forum which is organized by the World Economic Forum.

In response to one of the questions, King Abdullah considered that the Israelis successfully provided the corona vaccine for them but not for the Palestinians, according to the local Al-Ghad newspaper.

"Israel will not be safe from the virus without providing the vaccine to the Palestinians. We must ensure the effective and fair distribution of vaccines and treatments of the virus", he underlined.

He continued, "Dealing with the vaccine as a public good for the benefit of all is a moral duty to prevent the marginalization of low-income and poor countries while rich countries acquire the most promising vaccines."

The World Economic Forum - Davos was launched on Monday, as it is being held virtually until Friday to discuss the repercussions of COVID-19, with the participation of a number of world leaders, most notably Chinese President Xi Jinping, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron and others.

Second Announcement



Khouzestan Steel Company

IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

No. :428139

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE

15000 MT HIGH CARBON FERRO MANGANESE
WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

Mn	76 – 78 %	Min 76%
Si	1.2 %	Max
S	0.02 %	Max
C	7.5 %	Max
P	0.3 %	Max
Fe	Rest	
Size Of Pieces	20-60 mm	Min 90 %
	<20 mm	Max 10 %
Packing	Bulk in Container	
Delivery Date	March (2500 MT)	April (2500 MT)
2021	May (2500 MT)	June (2500 MT)
	August (2500 MT)	September (2500 MT)

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF:

EUR 50 "FIFTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

- ACCOUNT No.**0100013543943** AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ CENTRAL BRANCH"
- ACCOUNT No.**1902-750-4019644-1** AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ SHARIATI BRANCH" OR

Rials 2,000,000, "TWO MILION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

- ACCOUNT No.**0102513186002** AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"
- ACCOUNT No.**0100304453001** AT "SADERAT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"

AND PRESENT THE PAYMENT RECEIPT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

RAW MATERIAL & ENERGY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)
KM 10 AHVAZ – BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI ROAD
P.O.BOX: 1378
POST CODE: 61397-31398
AHVAZ – IRAN

Note1: BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK, IN THE AMOUNT OF **310,000 Euro OR 88,000,000,000 Rials FOR 15000 MT HIGH CARBON FERRO MANGANESE** AND MAY REDUSED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.

Note2: ALL BIDS MUST BE INFORMED US WHICH PARTICIPATE IN OUR TENDER UP TO **3thFeb, 2021**. WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS CONFIRMED AND THE TENDER DOCUMENT IS SENT TO YOU, YOU MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE **14thFeb,2021**.THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 10 AM ON THE **16thFeb,2021** IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHVAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.

Note 3: FOR MORE INFORMTION PLEASE CONTACT WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Tel No. : +98 61 32908115 / 32136159

Fax No. : +98 61 32908115

Mr.M.FARZINEJAD EMAIL : **m.farzinejad @ksc.ir** OR **VISIT:** **http://WWW.KSC.IR**

روابط عمومی شرکت فولاد خوزستان

Intl. festival of Iranian tribes goes online

➔ **1** Although the previous editions of the festival were popular among the foreign and Iranian participants and guests, this year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the festival is decided to be held online, he explained.

Transmitting and promoting customs and traditions of the tribes will lead to boost cultural identity, he noted.

Some 23 music ensembles are scheduled to have live performances during the festival, which will come to an end on Sunday.

The festival will also host different exhibitions of regional arts, handicrafts, souvenirs, and culinary traditions.



Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that the tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Accommodation facilities come on stream in UNESCO-designated Burnt City

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The construction operations of a tourism complex, which includes overnight accommodation facilities, have been completed in the UNESCO-registered Burnt City, southwest Iran.

The complex includes six accommodation units, three educational units, and sanitary facilities, CHTN quoted Majid Kalanouri, director of the World Heritage site, as saying on Thursday.

The complex is expected to bring more comfort to visitors of the site, the official said.

Known as Shahr-e Sukhteh in Persian, the site is situated at the junction of Bronze Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau, remains of the mud-brick city bear witness to the emergence of the first complex societies in eastern Iran.



Spanning an area of 280 hectares, the site had extensive commercial, political, and social relations with other important cities in the region. Founded around 3200 BC, the city was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC, during which time there developed several distinct areas within the city. These include a monumental area, residential areas, industrial zones, and a graveyard.

Previous rounds of excavations showed that the residents of the Burnt City had great skills in weaving, creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting. Four civilizations have lived in the city which was burnt down three times and not rebuilt after the last fire. The world's oldest animated picture, as well as the earliest-known dice, backgammon set, caraway seeds, and artificial eyeball, are among the most significant discoveries at the site.

New cultural heritage elements in western Iran added to national list

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A total of 15 new cultural elements, which are practiced in western Lorestan province, have been registered in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Thursday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the province, CHTN reported.

The skills of wearing the traditional headscarf of Golvani, the local game of Kolav-Rovan, and a traditional recipe for homemade soap were amongst entrées to the prestigious list.

The talent of making different flatbread and the skill of cooking Borujerd kebab were also added to the list, the report said.



Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, in c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC.

Of ancient highlight of the region are the Luristan Bronzes that comprise small cast objects decorated with bronze sculptures from the Early Iron Age, found in large numbers in Lorestan and Kermanshah provinces in western Iran.

Under Cyrus the Great, Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

Cleaning, documenting project completes on salt mummy

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A documenting and cleansing project has come to an end on an ancient salt man and his belongings being kept at an archaeology museum in Iran's Zanjan province, the head of the project has said.

"The salt man No. 5, which was discovered in Iran's Chehrabad Salt Mine decades ago, has been cleaned, documented, and photographed and now it is the subject of further studies by a team of archeologists and other experts, ILNA quoted Abolfazl Aali as saying on Thursday.

Showcased at Zolfaghari Museum, the temperature and humidity of the salt man are carefully monitored every day to make sure it enjoys standard and optimal conditions, he explained.

Earlier this month, Zanjan's provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand announced that a project for documenting and reorganizing [all] ancient salt men and their belongings was commenced in Zolfaghari Museum.

In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages, accidentally came across a mummified head, dated to 300 CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold



earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another "saltman," which was followed by further excavation unearthing remains of a human body along with a large num-

ber of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery.

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

is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular "saltman" was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, "before present" or 1750 years ago), the Sasanian Empire's height. The second "Saltman" was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first "saltman," the Sasanian era.

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

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

Lesser-known province seeks to gain foothold on tourism map

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Some 41 tourism-related projects are currently underway across Iran's southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

These projects will boost tourism and develop travel infrastructure in the region when they finally come on stream, Majid Safai announced on Thursday.

A four-star hotel and a water park are among the important projects being carried out in collaboration with the private sector, the official added.

He also noted that with the inauguration of the mentioned projects, more job opportunities will be created in the tourism sector, which will lead to better income for the locals.

Last September, a provincial tourism official announced

that over one trillion rials (some \$24 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to nine tourism projects across the province.

He also mentioned that developing tourism infrastructure in the province is one of the province's tourism department priorities and is being pursued seriously.

The lesser-known is home to various nomads and is a top destination for those interested in visiting in person the nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

The province attracted over four million people, mostly domestic travelers, during the Iranian year 1397 (ended



March 2019), according to data announced by the provincial tourism department.

Photo contest to spotlight UNESCO-tagged Soltanyeh, nearby monuments

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – The cultural heritage and tourism directorate of Iran's Zanjan province is set to launch a photography contest on the UNESCO-registered Dome of Soltanyeh and its surrounding historical and touristic sites.

Competitors are requested to post works to the Instagram account of the directorate from January 31 to February 9, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand announced on Tuesday.

A panel of professional media photographers will be judging the contest, and winners will be honored with exquisite prizes, the official said.

"This competition is to be held to highlight the importance of preserving natural and cultural heritage, monuments, antiquities, museums that exist in [the city of]



Soltanieh," he said.

The UNESCO-listed Mausoleum of Oljaytu, which is commonly known as "Dome of Soltanyeh" (Soltanyeh Cupola), is one of Iran's must-visit destinations for those interested in traditional Persian and gen-

uine Islamic architecture. The mausoleum is surmounted by one of the largest brick domes in the globe, though some mistakenly refer to it as "the largest dome in the world".

Meaning "Town of the Sultans", Soltanyeh was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century. According to UNESCO, the Mausoleum of Oljaytu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia. Here, the Ilkhanids further developed ideas that had been advanced during the classical Seljuk phase (11th to early 13th centuries), during which the arts of Iran gained distinction in the Islamic world, thereby setting the stage for the Timurid period (late 14th to 15th centuries), one of the most brilliant

periods in Islamic art.

UNESCO says, "Excavations carried out in the 790-ha Mausoleum of Oljaytu property have revealed additional vestiges of the old city, and a large part of this property has retained its archaeological character. As the ancient capital of the Ilkhanid dynasty, Soltanyeh represents an exceptional testimony to the history of the 13th and 14th centuries in Iran."

The very large dome is the earliest extant example of its type and became an important reference for the later development of the Islamic dome. Similarly, the extremely rich interior of the mausoleum, which includes glazed tiles, brickwork, marquetry, or designs in inlaid materials, stucco, and frescoes, illustrates an important movement towards more elaborate materials and themes.

New restoration work starts on windmills in southeast Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A fresh round of restoration work has been commenced on windmills situated in Hozdar historical area, Sistan-Balouchestan province, southeast Iran.

Known locally as Asbads, the windmills -- along with ones in other eastern portions -- are expected to win a collective UNESCO World Heritage status, CHTN reported.

Asbad used to be a smart technique to grind grains. It also bears testimony to the human being's adaption with nature by transforming environmental obstacles into

opportunities. "The earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Seistan [Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE," the Encyclopedia Britannica says.

Currently, avid visitors and researchers can examine the subtle yet simple mechanism in person as several windmills have been restored and brought back to life to testify how ancient Iranians harnessed the wind to make a living. In 2002 the windmills were recognized as a national heritage site by Iran.

Public baths in Iran and interesting customs behind

By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig

(Part 1/2)

Most people today have baths in their homes, but in the past, there were public baths that were not just for bathing but also a public place for family, social, business, and even political gatherings.

In the past, men would take a bath before sunrise until eight o'clock in the morning, and from that time until the afternoon, women would have a bath. Today, there are public baths in most parts of Iran, but the difference with the old baths is that a large hot water pool was used in the old baths; but in the new public baths, multiple showers have replaced the large hot tub, which did not conform to hygiene in any way.

It is interesting to know that washing in public baths had different etiquettes, which I will discuss in some of the customs of Iranian baths:

Archaeologists have concluded that the construction of public baths from the Achaemenid period, i.e. about three thousand years ago, has been common in all cities of Iran because the ancient Iranians, who had the

Zoroastrian religion, took a bath to participate in the ceremony, in addition to cleansing body has been a religious ritual.

After the spread of Islam in Iran, it was obligatory to perform religious practices such as prayer and fasting and entering the mosque, bathing after sexual intercourse, and also after the end of menstruation in this religion. Even men sometimes prayed toward the Holy Cube in the bath before sunrise due to the short time of prayer after bathing. Therefore, the Persian kings ordered the construction of public baths in cities and villages. For example, during the Safavid era, in the early sixteenth century, only 272 public baths were built in the capital Isfahan.

One of the customs of bathing in the past was that everyone who entered the bath greeted the people who were washing.

After greeting, the person would take some of the water from the tub with a copper bowl and pour it on the shoulders of the people in the bath, whether familiar or unfamiliar, even showing more love and affection to strangers because they believed, friends and acquaintances do not need compliments.

Also, there was expressing politeness and respect by massaging, e.g. if the newcomer in the bath courtyard saw acquaintances or close relatives, would go toward them to show politeness and respect and give them a massage, or the person would forcibly take washcloth and soap from their hands and rub their back. There is an Iranian proverb that says about two very close friends that "they are friends in the bath and the garden."

The role of baths in ancient times included:

- Baths were a public place for family gatherings and friendly.
- Some celebrations such as the bride and groom bath were held in these baths.
- Sometimes the baths became a place of quarrel or even assassination.
- Occasionally meetings and talks of government leaders were held in the bath.
- Baths have been the meeting place of elders, intellectuals and as a result of scientific debates and discussions between scholars, writers and scientists. Composing and reading poems in baths and reciting Shahnameh (a book of famous Persian epic poetry) has also been common. Verses from different poets have been installed on the



walls of the baths.

Baths also had functions for treatment. The existence of hot and cold water reservoirs is used to treat some diseases, and the bath is used in the past as a place of phlebotomy (venipuncture and cupping), colic and massage, removal of excess body hair, especially in the armpits and genital parts with special natural and traditional powder in a private room, sometimes men shaved their heads and applied henna.

Baths were sometimes used as shelters, and some people who fled various social or political events took refuge in baths and were not persecuted like in other holy places.

Iran issues permit to use Russian COVID-19 vaccine

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Iran’s Food and Drug Administration has issued a permit to both import and co-produce Russian COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, to urgently fight the pandemic, FDA spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour announced on Thursday.

The FDA has approved the Sputnik V vaccine made by the Gamaleya Center of Russia to counter the disease, he said, adding that the vaccine will be imported in the form of single-dose and five-dose vials.

Jahanpour went on to say that those other vaccines made in India, China, and Russia are also under evaluation by the FDA, IRNA reported.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Wednesday that there are four different ways to supply the coronavirus vaccine, including direct purchase from a foreign country, procurement from the World Health Organization’s COVAX facility, a joint production with a Cuban company as well as domestic production of the vaccine.

The clinical trial for the Coviran Barekat vaccine is also going well, and the Razi Institute is getting permission for a clinical trial, another company will also receive human trial permits by the next week, he explained.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the head of the Presidential Office, also said on Wednesday that “We have been negotiating with Russia, China, and



India for about two months to purchase the vaccine. Fortunately, the pace of negotiations with Russia has accelerated and the scientific team of the ministry of health confirmed the Sputnik V vaccine.”

Coordination has been made for the contract and it is planned to receive the first shipment before February 10, he said.

On January 24, Namaki announced that Iran will soon be one of the world’s important manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccine.

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, Jahanpour 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, 35 people have received the first dose of the vaccine, and this number should reach 56 people in the first clinical study phase.

Mohammad Mokhber, the head of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam said on January 19 that over the next month, 2-4 million doses of vaccine will be produced monthly, which will soon reach up to 4-24 million doses.

On January 18, 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.

COVID-19 daily new cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry’s spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,573 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,405,414. She added that 1,196,374 patients have so far recovered, but 3,990 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 71 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 57,807, she added.

So far, 9,176,899 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Safe schools increase nationwide



SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The number of old classrooms in need of reconstruction and retrofitting has been reduced from 30 percent to 19.5 percent over the past four years, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March

2017), the number of schools in need of reconstruction and retrofitting was 30 percent, of which some 12 percent must be completely rebuilt and 18 percent must be retrofitted. The rate has reached 19.5 percent, with 12.5 percent of schools in need of retrofitting and the rest rebuilding.

Tehran also has the highest number of old schools. In this province, measures have been taken to reconstruct the schools, but the capital still has the highest number of old schools, he lamented.

The national budget bill for the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022) has foreseen a 21-percent rise for the renovation and retrofit of schools.

He went on to note that this year (started March 21), there has been a significant increase in budget for renovation of schools, ISNA reported on Friday.

A total of 51 trillion rials (nearly \$1.2 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) was proposed for school renovation in the budget bill; which is 21 percent higher than that of the previous year, Rakhshanimehr said.

107,000 schools need renovation nationwide

There are some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which are dilapidated, not meeting safety standards, accounting for 30 percent of the schools nationwide.

Rakhshanimehr said in August 2020 that some 30 percent of the country’s schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors; there are 450 school-building charities in Iran.

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

President Hassan Rouhani officially inaugurated some 1,550 educational, training, and welfare projects across the country in November 2020 via video conferencing.

The projects included 1,422 educational places with 8,051 classrooms, 124 training centers, and 4 welfare centers, measuring a total of 1.1 million square meters.

The Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools started operating in the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), which received a budget of 8.5 trillion rials (about \$200 million).

Reforestation projects implemented in Khuzestan

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – Two reforestation projects on tree plantation and surface water management were put into operation in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on Thursday, IRNA reported.

The projects were launched in sand and dust hotspots of Mahshahr city during a ceremony held virtually with President Hassan Rouhani in attendance.

Over the past two years, reforestation plans have included plantation on 6,500 hectares in the cities of Ahvaz, Karun, Mahshahr, and Hoveyzeh, Kourosh Kiani, Director of provincial natural resources organization, said.

The surface water management plan will be implemented on 10,010 hectares, which will reach 13,500 hectares by the end of the year (March 21), he added.

Referring to a budget of 310 billion rials (nearly \$7.3 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) spent on the projects, he said that 223,000 out of 350,000 hectares of sand and dust sources in Khuzestan province have been controlled by implementing projects of moisturizing the soil, planting seedlings and vegetation, surface water management, and grazing management.

Since the past decade, southern and western provinces of the country are frequently hit by severe sand and dust

storms, as well as drought, which is caused by both internal and external hotpots. Major external SDSs sources are Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

It was around the year 2005 that the first signs of sporadic SDS appeared in southwestern Iran. Just seven years later, sand and dust storms became so persisting and terrible that PM concentration reported 22 times above the safe levels.

In fact, Iran has been repeatedly exposed to SDSs due to its presence in the arid and semi-arid parts of the world; consumption, changing the pattern of cultivation, and climate change have increased the negative effects of this phenomenon.

The SDSs hotspots in other countries stretch to 330 million hectares, with an average of 150 million tons of dust generation per year, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for SDSs mitigation, said in October 2020.

He went on to say that important dust sources in the country’s provinces estimated at 34.6 million hectares, with an average amount of 4.24 million tons of dust per year, of which 122.7 kilograms of dust per hectare is raised annually.

A sandstorm or dust storm is a meteorological phenomenon usually caused by strong and turbulent winds blowing over loose soil or



sand and sweeping up large quantities of sand or dust particles from the ground, clouding the air and reducing visibility drastically.

How to mitigate the effects of SDSs

According to EcoMENA, sand and dust storms cause significant negative impacts on society, economy, and environment at local, regional and global scales. There are three key factors responsible for the generation of sand and dust storms – strong wind, lack of vegetation, and absence of rainfall. The environmental and health hazards of such storms cannot be reduced permanently, however, its impact can be reduced by taking appropriate measures.

As the dust cloud rises, it reduces horizontal visibility which can impact human life in many ways. The fine suspended particles also contain contaminants, bacteria, pollen, which cause negative health impacts

such as allergies and respiratory diseases. Dust also carries airborne pollutants such as toxins, heavy metals, salt, sulphur, pesticides, etc. which cause significant health impacts when people inhale the contaminated dust. Dust can corrode buildings and other built infrastructure as it contains a high level of salts.

The effects of sand and dust storms can be reduced by using a number of health and safety measures and environmental control strategies. Large-scale sand and dust storms are generally natural phenomena and it may not be always practicable to prevent it happening. However, control measures can be taken to reduce their impacts. Localized small-scale dust emission due to human-induced activities can be reduced by using temporary mechanical methods such as concrete barrier, mulching, tree buffer, etc.

Taking appropriate control of dust raising factors such as increasing the vegetation cover where possible can help in the stabilization of the soil, sand dunes, and form windbreaks. Additionally, the use of native plants and trees as the buffer can reduce wind velocity, and sand drifts at the same increase the soil moisture. Designing buildings appropriately and conduct air infiltration testing during building commissioning can also help the adverse effects of sand and dust storm.

Iran ready to provide hi-tech expertise to Kenya

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari has expressed readiness to provide Kenya with expertise in high-tech industries.

During a three-day visit to Kenya, Sattari met with Betty Mania, Secretary of the Kenyan Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development, discussing ways to expand bilateral relations, IRNA reported on Friday.

Sattari stated that currently, 6,000 knowledge-based companies are operating in Iran, generating a revenue of about \$12 billion last year, he highlighted.

Large startups have been formed in our country which are exporting knowledge-based products to other countries, he highlighted.

Sattari also emphasized that 40 knowledge-based companies are accompanying the Iranian delegation to Kenya, which can be a good opportunity for technology transfer, noting that representatives of these knowledge-based firms held talks with 130 Kenyan companies leading to bilateral cooperation.

About 50 technology parks have been formed throughout Iran, he stated, expressing readiness to share the experience with Kenya.

Referring to Iran’s special place in emerging technologies, he said that Iran ranks fourth in the world in nanoscience, with an emphasis on joint projects and cooperation in technology and knowledge transfer between the two nations.

“Despite U.S. sanctions, Iran achieved scientific growth, and with the help of the technology ecosystem and domestic scientists, we were able to become one of the top countries in the field of technology in the region,” he highlighted.

Mania, for her part, said that Iran and Kenya can cooperate in the development of agricultural products. For example, the north of Iran has good conditions for the expansion of agricultural activities.

“Kenya has good conditions in the field of tea production and we are ready to provide all necessary arrangements for the export of tea to Iran,” she stated, pointing to the diversity of fruits in Kenya as one of the areas of bilateral cooperation.

During the trip, Sattari inaugurated the Iran House of Innovation and Technology (IHIT) in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi on Wednesday, as the first center in Africa.

The IHIT, by supporting innovative ideas, holding technological and innovative events will be a platform for the development and promotion of Iranian knowledge-based companies, startups, and creative industries.

Technological achievements of Iran

Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

Currently, some 6,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

In recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology has been supporting knowledge-based companies active in the production of sanctioned items.

Iran also implemented a plan to return Iranian elites from the top 100 universities in the world, through the national model, the facilities are provided for their return, by creating technology parks, innovation centers, and factories.

The plan was able to bring back 2,000 Iranian students from the top 100 universities in the world over a three-year period, amounting to 600 people a year.

Sattari also told the Tehran Times in October 2020 that “U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20).

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year.”

To date, 42 knowledge-based companies with a total value of 2.8 quadrillion rials (nearly \$66.6 billion) have been listed on the stock exchange and they will soon turn into the biggest businesses in the county, Sattari said.

LET’S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 119)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Common Pronoun

ضمیر مشترک “خود”

خود "own, self" is used for all persons as a formal common pronoun to indicate possession and emphasis:

فرهنگ خود را دوست داریم. (رسمی)

تو خود با همه آشنایی. (رسمی)

In the normal language, خود is replaced by the joined possessive pronouns:

کتاب‌های خود را به او دادم. (رسمی) = کتاب‌هایم را به او دادم. (عادی)

● تمرین ۳. به جای “فرد”، ضمیر پیوسته بنویسید:

۱. بعد از ده سال کشور خود را می‌بینم.

۲. با دوستان خود کمی گردش می‌کنی.

۳. فردا با معلم خود آشنا می‌شود.

۴. ما درس خود را یاد می‌گیریم.

۵. شما با برادر خود بازی می‌کنید.

۶. همه به استاد خود سلام می‌کنند.

هر، هرکس، هیچ، هیچ‌کس

هر، هرکس و ترکیبات دیگر آن ممکن است هم فعل مثبت بگیرند و هم فعل منفی:

هر روز اینجا کار می‌کنم. هر روز اینجا کار نمی‌کنم.

هر کسی می‌تواند اینجا کار کند. هر کسی نمی‌تواند اینجا کار کند.

هیچ، هیچ‌کس و ترکیبات دیگر آن فقط فعل منفی می‌گیرند:

خواست چیزی بخورد هیچ پول نداشت.

می‌دانم که هیچ‌کس اینجا نمی‌آید.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Air pollution has no effect on coronavirus prevalence: expert

Air pollution has no special effect on the incidence of the disease, and our studies showed that there is no connection between these two issues, Ali Maher, deputy chief of Tehran special working group for coronavirus control said.

Pointing to the coronavirus outbreak in winter, he noted that the prevalence of coronavirus in winter depends on the people, if they observe health protocols, the infection will reduce.

Because there has been no evidence that temperature affects the prevalence, therefore the only way to control the virus is the observance of health protocols by the people, he highlighted, ILNA reported.

آلودگی هوا تأثیری بر روی میزان ابتلا به ویروس کرونا ندارد

علی ماهر معاون ستاد مقابله با ویروس کروناي استان تهران در گفت‌وگو با ایلنا گفت: آلودگی هوا هیچ تأثیر خاصی بر روی این بیماری ندارد و بررسی‌های ما هم حاکی از عدم ارتباط بین این دو موضوع است.

وی با اشاره به وضعیت شیوع کرونا در زمستان ادامه داد: وضعیت میزان ابتلا به ویروس کرونا در زمستان بستگی به رفتارهای مردم دارد و اگر رفتاری که برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس در نظر گرفته شده را به درستی انجام دهیم، میزان شیوع کاهش پیدا خواهد کرد، چون شواهدی بر اینکه دما در میزان همه‌گیری تأثیرگذار باشد را پیدا نکردیم و بنابراین تنها رعایت مردم مسئله اصلی برای کنترل این ویروس است.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When two persons are together, two of them must not whisper to each other, without letting the third hear; because it would hurt him.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

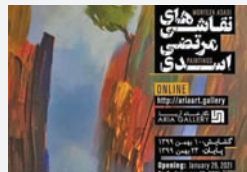
WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ Shirin Gallery 1 is playing host to an exhibition painting by Hamed Noruzi entitled "Sting Therapy". Majid Sadeqinejad is also showcasing his latest collection named "Return" in an exhibit at Shirin Gallery 2.

The exhibitions will run until February 11 at the galleries located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Morteza Asadi is underway at Aria Gallery. The exhibit will be running until February 13 at the gallery located at No. 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.



■ A collection of paintings by Shahram Karimi is on display in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery. The exhibit will be running until February 18 at the gallery that can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.



■ An exhibition paintings by Kasra Golrang is currently underway at Homa Gallery. The exhibit titled "Plants in Continuance" will continue until February 9 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



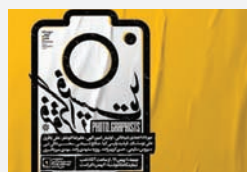
■ Sadaf Hesamian is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery. The exhibit will be running until February 11 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.

Drawing



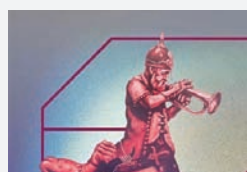
■ A collection of drawings by Ensieh Akbarzadeh is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibition will run until February 10 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.

Photo



■ An exhibition of photos by Mehdi Mirbaqeri, Hassan Karimzadeh, Ali Buzan, Saleh Tasbihi, Sirus Taslimi, Alireza Anushfar and a number of other photographers is underway at Atbin Gallery. The exhibit named "Photographers" will run until February 9 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

Multimedia



■ Artworks in various media by Mehdi Dashti, Mohsen Karami, Mamak Hejazi, Ehsan Nasri, Ali Khaleq, Iraj Shafei and dozens of other artists are on view in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery. The exhibit runs until March 3 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



■ Works by Tabib Aram, Mohammad-Hossein Khatamifard, Amir-Hossein Radai are on display in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery. The exhibit named "Kind" will continue until February 16 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.



■ Atashzad Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of artworks in various media by Zahra Samkhanian, Ainaz Abbaspur, Aida Sadeqi, Sogol Fadai, GHolamreza Khalili, Fatemeh Bateni and several other artists. The exhibit will run until February 2 at the gallery that can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

Miami festival selects “Sun Children” for Intl. Oscar Contenders

A R T TEHRAN — The 38th d e s k Miami Film Festival plans to review the acclaimed Iranian drama “Sun Children” in the International Oscar Contenders, the festival program that will screen a shortlist of the foreign-language submissions to 2021 Oscars.

Directed by Majid Majidi, the film tells the story of 12-year-old Ali and his three friends. Together, they work hard to survive and support their families, doing small jobs in a garage and committing petty crimes to make fast money. Everything changes, however, when Ali is entrusted to find a hidden treasure underground but must first enroll at the Sun School, a charitable institution that tries to educate street kids and child laborers.

The movie had its Iranian premiere during the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran last February, garnering the Crystal Simorghs for best film, script and set design.

Numerous international events, including the 77th Venice Film Festival, have also screened the movie. The festival honored the film's star Ruhollah Zamani with the



“Sun Children” by Majid Majidi.

Marcello Mastroianni Award.

The 33rd International Film Festival for

Children and Youth in Isfahan also awarded Majidi as best director and Zamani as best actor.

Strand Releasing, a leading U.S. distributor of foreign language, American independent and documentary films in theaters, on DVD/Blu-Ray and via video-on-demand, has purchased U.S. rights to “Sun Children”.

Eight other submissions to the 93rd Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category will also be screened in the International Oscar Contenders of the Miami Film Festival, which will take place in the U.S. city from March 5 to 14.

“And Tomorrow the Entire World” by German director Julia Von Heinz and “Apples”, a co-production of Greece, Poland and Slovakia by Christos Nikou, are highlights of the lineup.

“Charlatan” by Agnieszka Holland from Czech, “Memories of My Father” by Fernando Trueba from Colombia, “A State of Madness” by Leticia Tonos Paniagua from Dominican and “Quo Vadis, Aida?” a co-production of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria, Romania, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, France, Norway and Turkey by Jasmila Zbanic are also among the movies.

39th Fajr Theater Festival to kick off today

will keep us hopeful, while the difficult situation can bring new opportunities, by turning the challenges into opportunities,” he noted.

Several halls including Vahdat, Molavi, Iranshahr and Hafez as well as the City Theater Complex will be hosting the plays during the festival, which will be running until February 9 this year.

28 plays have been selected for the national competition section of the 39th edition of the festival.

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

Also included are several provincial award-winning plays. The collection includes “Pandemic” by director Reza Purtorabzadeh, “Bob Bara” by Nima Imanzadeh, “Awakening in Time of Blood” by Ehsan Janani, “Growing” by Shoaib Maktabdari, “Reboot” by Amirhossein Ajir Arshad, “Uninvited” by Alireza Mahmudi and “I Am Staring at the Sea so No One

Takes It Away” by Hassan Sobhani.

The plays in the guest section are “Ajax” by Fateh Baadparva, “Among a Great Number of Fish” by Amir Delfani and “A Cassette” by Mohammad Akbari.

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

The plays have been selected by a team of stage artists: Tohid Masumi, Saied Kheirollahi and Mohammad Larti.

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

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

Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival picks seven traditional shows

A R T TEHRAN — A lineup of d e s k seven traditional puppet shows will be performed during the 18th Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival running in Tehran during March.

The puppet shows have been chosen from 14 submissions by a selecting board composed of Poup Azimpur, Shahrzad Mobarhan and Davud Fat’hali Beigi.

The lineup includes “The Last Autumn Celebration” by Ali Jabbari, “Salim Khan Court” by Zahra Amini, “Salim Khan Court” by Safar-Ali Mohammadzadeh, “Salaman and Mobarak” by Mahmud Dehqan Harati, “Stay in the Jar” by Amir-Hossein Ensafi, “Favorite of the Stage” by Hossein Rabiei and “Korsibazi” by Mohammadreza Azadfar.

As a prelude to the festival, Iranian expert Hamidreza Ardalan is also scheduled to hold an online workshop on Monday under the title “Puppets and Seven Rituals



“Suitcase and Cute Dog” by Albert Beigjani. (Iran Theater/Atefeh Arani) of Transmodernism”.

“The workshop centers on the seven words dot, letter, name, circle, repetition, silence and death. These words have been

the turning points in the formation of human culture,” Ardalan has said.

The festival will open with a tribute to puppet show director Golzar Mohammadi, who was the secretary of the 18th edition of the festival.

The 42-year-old puppeteer died in March 2020 after months of suffering from cancer.

Mohammadi was a graduate of theater and had directed several puppet shows, including “Tiba and Tibuni” and “King Jamshid and the Monster”.

The 17th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival was held in August 2018 with parents and children holding their dolls and puppets who joined a large carnival of puppets and walked from the Mina Dome at the Abbasabad Cultural Complex to Ab-o-Atash Park where the opening ceremony was held.

Live musical performances featuring songs from popular TV series and a vast

collection of popular characters from puppet shows turned the opening ceremony into a joy-filled event.

Festival director Marzieh Borumand delivered a short speech wishing happiness for all, and asked people to resolve their problems through sympathy and compassion.

Borumand who was overwhelmed to see the large crowd of people at the opening ceremony hoped to hold the next edition in the Azadi Stadium next year.

She invited people to watch the puppet shows selected for the festival and said, “I am sure any individual regardless of tastes can find his/her own play to watch during the event.”

Puppeteer Azadeh Purmokhtar said, “We should not forget real life. Let’s give our children a chance to play with water and with soil. Green children are more creative. The sky of our puppets is blue.”

Plays by Luigi Pirandello, Albert Camus hit stages at Tehran theaters

A R T TEHRAN — Plays by Italian dramatist Luigi Pirandello and French writer Albert Camus have gone on the stages of theaters in Tehran.

Pirandello’s “Right You Are”, also known as “If You Think You Are” directed by Majid Zarezadeh is on stage at the Mehrab Theater.

Asmar Musavinia is the translator of the play produced in three acts in Italian in 1917 as “Così è se vi pare” and published the following year.

This work, like almost all of Pirandello’s plays, contrasts art and life, demonstrating that truth is subjective and relative.

No one has ever seen Signor Ponza’s wife and her mother, Signora Frola, together. Councilor Agazzi, Ponza’s employer, investigates Ponza’s private life. Ponza claims that his wife is really his second wife, the first having died in an earthquake that destroyed all verifying documents. Likewise, his wife only pretends to be Signora Frola’s daughter to humor Signora Frola, who, he claims, is insane. Thoroughly bewildered, Agazzi demands to meet Ponza’s wife, who arrives, heavily veiled, proclaiming herself as both the daughter of Signora Frola and the second



This combination photo shows posters for “Right You Are” and “The Just Assassins”.

wife of Ponza. The “truth” of the matter remains a mystery.

Neauphile-le-Chateau Theater is playing host to theatergoers for Camus’ 1949 play “The Just Assassins”.

Mohammad Chitsazi directs the play based on a Persian translation by Khashayar Deihami.

In February 1905 in Moscow, a group of terrorists who were part of the revolutionary socialist party organized

an attempt on the life of the Grand Duke Serge, an uncle of the Tsar. This attempt, and the unusual circumstances leading up to and following it, is the subject of “The Just Assassins”.

“No matter how extraordinary some of the situations in this play may seem, they are the truth. This is not to say that ‘The Just Assassins’ is a historical play, but all the characters actually did exist, and behaved as I have written. I only tried to make realistic the things which really happened” Camus wrote about the play.

“I kept the real name of the hero, Kaliyev. I didn’t do this from lack of imagination, but out of respect and admiration for those men and women who, in the most contemptible of efforts, were still not able to get rid of their own hearts.

“Progress has been made since then, it is true, and the hate which weighed down those exceptional souls into intolerable suffering has now become a comfortable system. But that is even more reason to bring back these great ghosts and the story of their justified revolt, their difficult brotherhood, and the unmeasurable efforts they made to put themselves in tune with murder — and thus to show where their true faith lay.”

Actor Reza Kianian to showcase new photo collection “As She Slowly Walks Away”

A R T TEHRAN — Actor d e s k Reza Kianian plans to display his latest collection of photos “As She Slowly Walks Away” in an exhibition that will open at Etemad Gallery 1 on February 5.

The exhibitions will be running for 12 days at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.

Kianian has previously held several solo exhibits while he has also attended

several group exhibits.

In February 2017, he highlighted the magic of colors in his photo collection titled “Infinite Blue” at Tehran’s Art Center.

The collection was composed of 24 photos, 12 of which feature photos of the galaxy and the other 12 objects left on the Anzali Marsh.

“I have never traveled to the galaxy but the galaxy has traveled within me,” he had said in a press conference about

his exhibit “Infinite Blue”.

“The galaxy showed itself in every little thing around me. I was deeply surprised. I was always wondering about the endless magic of the galaxy since I was a young adult and I had cried over this immensity over and over again. And now the galaxy has called to me. It descended all the way down to me; just for me. You might not believe it, but I was able to record the photos of the galaxy,” he added.



A poster for actor Reza Kianian's photography exhibition “As She Slowly Walks Away”.