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# A fake carrot to Iran



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## Iran advises Macron to avoid taking indiscreet, hasty positions

TEHRAN — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, on Saturday asked French President Emmanuel Macron to avoid taking "indiscreet and hasty" positions regarding the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

Speaking to reporters in Paris on Friday, Macron said, "Dialogue with Iran will be rigorous, and they will need

to include our allies in the region for a nuclear deal, and this includes Saudi Arabia," Al Arabiya reported.

Khatibzadeh said, "The JCPOA is a multilateral international agreement ratified by Security Council Resolution 2231" and it "is non-negotiable and its parties are clear and unchangeable."

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## Tehran hosting intl. exhibits of mines, auto parts, paint

TEHRAN — The 16th International Exhibition for Mines, Construction Machinery and Related Industry and Equipment (Iran ConMin), the 15th International Auto Parts Exhibition, and the 20th International Paint, Resin, Coatings, Composites, and Plating Industries Fair (IPCC) opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The opening ceremonies of the exhibition

were attended by senior officials including the country's Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini.

As reported, some 130 Iranian companies, some of which are representatives of foreign exhibitors, are taking part in the ConMin exhibition to showcase their latest achievements and products in the mining industry.

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## ECO CEO says calligraphy provides window on lofty literature, world without violence

TEHRAN — The Tajik president of the ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran has said that calligraphy provides a window on lofty literature and a world without violence.

Sarvar Bakhti made the remarks during the closing ceremony of the First Raqs-e Qalam International Exhibition and Conference of the Silk Road Calligraphy on Thursday.

"By means of calligraphy art, we can find the way into the profound meaning of poetry and an exalted discourse; we fall in love with the beauty and arrive in a world without violence," he said.

"For this reason, we see that our mosques, prayer places and tombs are embellished with calligraphy art," he added.

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## Bright future ahead of Iran Para skiing

**BY MASOUD HOSSEIN**  
Sadeh Kalhor is poised to book a place at the 2022 Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing, China. The 42-year-old Para skier has already participated in the Games five times.

He began skiing at age three. At age 18, he lost his leg after colliding with a cable in a ski slope.

After his accident he wanted to remain active, so he began Para skiing as he already loved the sport.

Kalhor debuted for Iran at the 1998 Paralympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, where he didn't finish in the Slaloms events but finished in 20th place in Super-G LW2. He has also partaken in 2002 (Salt Lake City, the U.S.), 2006 (Turin, Italy), 2010 (Vancouver, Canada), and 2014 (Sochi, Russia) so far.

Kalhor was part of the skiers who competed at the Dizin International Para Alpine Skiing on Jan. 27 and 28 at the Dizin International Sports Complex and came first in three events.

"I want to win a berth in the Games for the sixth time," Kalhor told Tehran Times. "I'm satisfied with my performance in the competition but I know that the athletes have difficult task in the Winter Games since the competition will bring the best world's Para skiers together in Beijing."

Kalhor was Iran's only Para skier in the four Paralympic Winter Games but five skiers took part at the 2018 Winter Paralympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Issa Saveh Shemshaki, head of Iran's Para Skiing Association, says that more athletes have started Para skiing in the recent years and it shows that there is a bright future ahead of the sport in the country.

"We are happy to say that the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has trusted us and Iran was chosen to host nine international events in the current year. We have hosted four tournaments so far. The representative of the World Ski Federation attended the Dizin event and closely monitored the quality of the competition," Saveh Shemshaki said in an interview with Tehran Times.

"Our Para skiers have high chance of winning quota places at the 2022 Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing, China," he added.

## Sometimes it takes a volcano to start the healing

**BY MUNIR A.SAEED**  
Let me start by saying something some may consider outrageous.

One day, not long from now, many may look back on the four years of Donald Trump's presidency and consider it to be not just the worst choice Americans made, but, ironically, the best thing that happened to America and the world. Why? The U.S. needed Donald Trump to save it from itself.

Biden's inaugural speech introduced a new narrative and his first presidential directives — so far — suggest that he means what he said. At least when it comes to immediately undoing some of his predecessor's foolish yet harmful publicity stunts. But, it's only the beginning and the road is long and challenging. Undoing other decades-old wrong policies will take much more than the stroke of a new presidential pen. And that is where Biden's

past may become useful in his presidency, not just to redeem his own participation in those past decisions, but to change America's image of itself and the destructive global consequences of that self image.

In a previous article I wrote, "Trump was not the problem. Trump was the result of the problem". It took the shock of a volcanic four years for Americans and the world, hopefully, to finally realize that. It took the unprecedented magnitude of a destructive world war for the Germans to realize and get rid of the cumulative growth of a mindset that brought Hitler to power. Fortunately, neither Americans nor the world have had to pay that kind of heavy price again — not yet, anyway. Hopefully, all is not lost. We can avoid that outcome. But the dangers have not been completely overcome.

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## New protests in Paris against global security bill

Mass rallies have been held in Paris and other French cities after the lower house of parliament passed in the first reading late November a controversial security bill criminalizing the dissemination of photos and videos of police officers "with intent to harm" them.

Sputnik is live from Place de la Republique in Paris as protesters take to the streets once again to rally against the 'Global Security Bill'.

Article 24 of the bill entails up to a year in prison and a 45,000 euro (\$53,400) fine for disseminating videos and photos identifying police officers with an intention to harm them — penalties that critics deem a threat to press freedom. In a bid to address the concerns, the lower chamber of French parliament amended the clause.

Protests erupted on several occasions last year, in opposition to stringent lock-

down rules, mandatory mask-wearing and the government's education policies during the pandemic.

But a fresh wave of civil unrest is expected to break out if the French Government imposes a third lockdown.

Such a move is heavily opposed by large sections of the population, with a poll by French newspaper Le Figaro finding 60 percent would be against another lockdown, with just 40 percent backing the move.

Similarly, an Elabe poll for BFMTV and published yesterday found more than half of the French (52 percent) are against a strict new lockdown like the one last March.

This shows a marked decline, with 93 percent in favor of lockdown on 18 March 2020, following by 67 percent approval for the second lockdown on October 29.

Just 48 percent back the third.

## DNA obtained from ancient skeletons found in northern Iran

TEHRAN — DNA samples have been extracted from some ancient skeletons being unearthed in Liar-Sang-Bon, an archaeological site and cemetery in Amlash region, Gilan province, northern Iran.

"Research being conducted on the skeletons discovered at Liar-Sang-Bon reveals that they date back to the Parthian (247 BC — 224 CE) and Sassanid (224 CE-651) periods," CHTN quoted Vali Jahani, the deputy provincial tourism chief, as saying on Thursday.

"The latest studies and experiments on the

discovered skeletons, which have been performed by experts from the University of California, and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, show all the skeletons discovered at this ancient site have Amlash DNA [the samples demonstrate they were natives to the region]," the official said.

Liar-Sang-Bon was initially identified [in the Iranian calendar year] 1391 (March 2012-March 2013) while its related mapping and demarcating projects were completed in 1393 and its first season of excavation commenced in

1395, according to Jahani.

"The archaeological site of Liar-Sang-Bon is one of the most significant cemeteries in Gilan. And the site underwent an exact five-year archaeological survey, which was started in 1391 under my supervision.... The result was the discovery of about 100 ancient tombs, a considerable number of historical objects, and very important information about the style and custom of burial of the people of that period," Jahani explained.

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## COVID-19 shadow on Sadeh

**BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI**

TEHRAN — The Zoroastrian Festival of Sadeh, like other big celebrations worldwide affected by the coronavirus pandemic, was held in Iran on Friday with a limited audience under strict health protocols.

The festivity is nowadays more popular among Iranian Zoroastrians in the cities of Yazd, Tehran, Shiraz, and Kerman. Narratives say that the feast is to remember the mythical discovery of fire. That's why they set fire to a big pile of wood when the event reaches its climax.

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## U.S. wants to weaponize JCPOA to eliminate Iran's deterrent missile capabilities: American analyst

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

TEHRAN — An American geopolitical analyst says Washington is trying to use the JCPOA as pretext to weaken Iran's defense system through expanding negotiations to other topics such as Iran's defensive missile capability.

"The U.S. wants to weaponize the JCPOA as a means for reducing and eventually outright eliminating Iran's missile deterrent capabilities, which would, in turn, weaken its defenses and thus make it more vulnerable to conventional attacks from its foes," Andrew Korybko tells the Tehran Times.

In the long negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States plus Germany), the parties had avoided contentious issues beyond the nuclear realm in the belief that resolving the nuclear issue was the highest international security priority and including other issues could overload the agenda and jeopardize reaching any agreement.

As the Biden administration is formulating its Iran policy, there is an intense debate in Washington over whether a straightforward return to the Iran nuclear deal will be expedient.

Many hawks in the U.S. insist that President Joe Biden must also address Iran's missile program in addition to the original deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

However, Korybko emphasizes that "the nuclear deal should remain focused on its titular topic and shouldn't expand to include others such as missiles, regional influence, and whatever else."

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## The Heritage Foundation to the Oval Office: Not to back off any sanctions, cast the new deal as a treaty

By Azin Sahabi

The Heritage Foundation is an American conservative think tank in Washington, D.C. which has a significant influence on U.S. public policy making.

It is also considered as one of the most influential conservative public policy organizations in the United States. The think tank has been one of the key non-state actors under Democratic and Republican administrations, including in George W. Bush, Clinton and Obama's administrations in terms of shaping and directing anti-Iran sanctions.

According to the "2018 Global Go-To Think Tank Index", released by the University of Pennsylvania, Heritage was ranked as the No. 1 think tank when it comes to impact on public policy. It was also first in the "Best Use of the Internet" category.

The most cited Heritage experts who comment on West Asia, national security, cybersecurity, missile defense and terrorism are James Phillips, James Jay Carafano and Peter Brookes.

They publish numerous reports, policy papers and commentaries especially about the Islamic Republic of Iran. Like its conservative counterparts, Heritage redundantly accuses Iran of sponsorship of terrorism, pursuing nuclear weapons, escalating nuclear noncompliance and expansionist approach in West Asia.

Since the beginning of January, given Biden's stated policy to renegotiate with Tehran if Tehran returns to "strict compliance", the think tank has commented on the issue significantly, mostly by Phillips and Carafano.



From left to right: James Phillips, Michael Rubin, Richard Goldberg, Ilan Berman

Some of their latest commentaries and reports on Iran's nuclear program follows:

### Principal strategy: Sanctions in place plus normal Arab-Israeli relations

Carafano, a 25-year Army veteran, has testified many times before Congress as an expert on foreign affairs, defense, intelligence and homeland security issues.

He describes Biden's return to the JCPOA as "the most self-destructive mistake" the new president can make. On his January 19 appearance on Fox News, he explained that Iran "wants another sweetheart nuclear deal from Biden's administration". Carafano, who calls the JCPOA "deeply flawed", believes that returning to the deal and the likely sanctions relief "would squander U.S. bargaining leverage."

In addition, in a commentary titled "Why Going Back to Iran Nuclear Deal Is Folly", he condemns Tehran to "cheating and blatant violations of the JCPOA". In this regard he argues: "If America rejoined the Iran deal as is, Iran would not be held accountable for past cheating and blatant violations of the deal."

As a well-known supporter of Israel, Carafano stresses that one of the goals of the process of normalization between the Arab nations and Israel is "pushing back against Iran" and without the guarantor of U.S. engagement "the process would die."

He further notes: "Mr. Biden ought to keep the (Iran) sanctions and arms embargo in place. They must also continue moving the process of normalization of relations between the Arab nations and Israel. With a united Middle East (West Asia), the pressure of sanctions and a unified front with the Europeans, the U.S. will be in the strongest position to secure the strongest deal for our national security. We should not back off any sanctions."

The fellow overtly emphasizes: "The U.S. shouldn't reenter Iran nuclear deal—Iran sponsors terrorism and seeks nuclear weapons." He adds: "The left's policies were all wrong during the Obama years, and they still have no good answers for how to deal with the problems the U.S. faces with Iran now."

**JCPOA: Too flawed to put Iran in a strong box**  
James Phillips, a senior research fellow for Middle Eastern (West Asian) affairs at the Heritage Foundation, has written extensively on regional issues and international terrorism since 1978.

A former research fellow at the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, serves as a member of the Board of Editors of Middle East (West Asia) Quarterly, the leading conservative journal of Middle Eastern (West Asian) policy studies.

His articles have appeared in several newspapers such as USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Times, New York Post and Chicago Tribune.

Reiterating exact recommendations expressed by Carafano, even using the same words, the expert replicates terms such as the "flawed" Iran nuclear deal, "squander the bargaining leverage" as well as "Iran restoring nuclear extortion".

Furthermore, Phillips stresses: "The U.S. cannot afford to return to the JCPOA because the nuclear deal never put Iran into a strong box."

Describing the nuclear program as "Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions", he suggest the necessity of leaving the door open for diplomacy with Tehran but NO RETURN TO THE JCPOA besides keeping sanctions in place until reaching "a new and much more restrictive arrangement".

### Recommendations to the Oval Office:

Phillips with a long record of congressional testimonies like Carafano on West Asia's security issues, recommends the Biden Administration to:

"Insist on a new deal—making clear that otherwise there will be no deal."

"Maintain sanctions on Iran: No lifting of sanctions, if Tehran wants economic incentives, they should come in the form of a limited disbursement of its frozen assets, not in the suspension of sanctions."

"Demand that Tehran come clean on its past nuclear efforts. No trust on Iranian nonproliferation promises in the future unless Tehran acknowledges its nuclear weapons efforts in the past."

"Consult regional allies Israel and the Arab (Persian) Gulf states. Put a high priority on building a collective security and economic framework that knits the region together."

"Cast a new nuclear agreement as a treaty with bipartisan support of the U.S. Congress. Not to repeat the original sin of the Obama Administration trying to bypass Congress by structuring the deal as an executive agreement."

# Taliban visit to Iran coordinated with Afghan government: analyst

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Nozar d e s k Shafiei, a senior analyst on international issues, says the arrival of Taliban negotiators in Iran is coordinated by the Afghan government, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Explaining about the reasons of the Taliban visit to Iran, Shafiei said, "In the current situation, the peace talks between the Taliban and the U.S. is facing challenges because a new administration has taken power in the U.S."

"Biden's security and foreign policy team believe that what was negotiated during the Trump era should be reevaluated because the Trump administration has given a lot of concessions and the peace agreement should be revised," he remarked.

Pointing to the Biden administration's policy towards Afghanistan, he said the U.S. and Taliban officials are consulting with countries which have an influence in Afghanistan.



He underlined the geopolitical significance of relations between Iran and Afghanistan

and said, "The presence of the Taliban in Iran does not harm the relations between Iran

and Afghanistan, because these meetings have definitely happened with the coordination of the Kabul government. The Afghan government knows that Iran is negotiating with the Taliban, and these negotiations are aimed at bringing peace to Afghanistan."

"Iran is one of the countries seeking to promote peace in Afghanistan, and it can contribute to Iran's development and security," he asserted.

Pointing to security interdependence between Iran and Afghanistan, the expert said, "Iran's effort is to develop Afghanistan. Iran develops when the region is a developed; as long as there is conflict, countries cannot advance."

"The U.S. policy is to handle the crisis, however, it has led to another crisis, and the Americans are currently reluctant to resolve the crisis in the country because a failed Afghan government can justify the presence of the U.S. presence in this country and the region," he pointed out.

## 34 MPs present bill to support axis of resistance in face of Israeli threats

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Some 34 Iranian lawmakers have introduced a bill to establish a military alliance among the axis of resistance groups and countries to counter threats from the Israeli regime.

Abolfazl Abutorabi, a member of Iran's parliament, announced that the proposal to set up "defense and security treaty of the resistance groups" has been submitted to the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

According to the proposed bill "if the Zionist regime

attacks any of the resistance front's countries or takes action against them, the other member states or liberation movements of the treaty will make every military, economic, and political effort to counter the threat."

The bill states that the Supreme National Security Council will determine which groups will be considered as a liberation movement.

In remarks in May 2020, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said Iran will "support and assist any nation or any group who opposes

and fights the Zionist regime" of Israel.

"The Zionist regime has proven it won't abide by any treaty and understands no logic except force. The nature of the Zionist regime is incompatible with peace, because the Zionists seek to expand their territories and will certainly not be limited to what they have already occupied," Leader of the Islamic Revolution tweeted.

Members of the "Axis of Resistance" are said to include Iran, Syria, and Lebanon's Hezbollah, the Houthi-led government of Yemen, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

## Envoy urges the world to put a stop to Israel's crimes

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations, on Friday criticized the international community's inaction towards the Zionist regime's crimes, saying it cannot continue forever.

In a virtual meeting of the United Nations Security Council on "The situation in the Middle East (West Asia), including the Palestinian question", Takht-Ravanchi noted, "The Palestinians ended the year 2020 while the occupation of their lands and the brutalities of the occupying power persisted."



Pointing to "the killing of over 70 Palestinians, including nearly 20 children and women", he stressed "Israel wounded over 6,740 others, including a large number of

women and children, demolished or seized over 590 Palestinian properties, as well as displaced nearly 690 Palestinians in the year 2020."

"The Israeli regime also continued its military adventurism and destabilizing practices in the region, including through invading some regional countries, particularly Syria. It also continued further saber rattling and openly and repeatedly threatened regional states," according to Iran's envoy to the UN.

He criticized the Security Council for its inability to end the decades-long occupation of Palestine, saying the Council has failed "to

protect the very basic rights of millions of oppressed Palestinians at home and abroad, and to confront an occupying regime that has shamelessly committed all four core international crimes, not once but several times."

Underscoring that "the international community must also do whatever it can to address this crisis", he reminded other members of the UN Security Council about the U.S. duty "to put an end to its irresponsible policy of unreservedly supporting the unlawful acts of the Israeli regime as well as complete and systematic shielding of Israel against the Security Council's criticism."

## Iran advises Macron to avoid taking indiscreet, hasty positions

**1 →** The Foreign Ministry spokesman added, "The U.S. has pulled out of this agreement and Europe has been unable to maintain it, and if there is a desire to revive and maintain the deal, the solution is simple, all the sanctions imposed by Trump must be lifted."

Saudi Arabia is one of the main suppliers of arms to the Persian Gulf Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Analyst are of the opinion that such remarks by the French leader shows that France is seeking to strengthen its stronghold in the region.

"French weapons, along with other Western weapons, are

not only the cause of the massacre of thousands of Yemenis but also the main cause of instability in the Persian Gulf region," Khatibzadeh regretted.

He highlighted the importance of stability in the region and said, "Without averting exports of weapons from France, Britain, the United States, and other countries, one cannot expect stability and tranquility in this sensitive region."

**No place for Saudi involvement in JCPOA: senior MP**  
A senior Iranian lawmaker has also said there is no place for the Saudis in the JCPOA.

"There is no justification for the involvement of Saudi in

the JCPOA," said Amouie, the spokesman for the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

He added a great ambiguity is surrounding the Saudi nuclear program itself.

The lawmaker also said Iran has clearly announced that it is ready to directly enter talks with Riyadh officials to settle disputes.

"One of the issues that should be discussed with the Saudis is their purchase of arms and their moves against the Yemen people," the parliamentary committee spokesman remarked.

## Biden priority is dealing with Iran's nuclear program: Sullivan

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on Friday that a critical early priority for the Biden administration is to resolve the nuclear stalemate with Iran, saying Tehran is getting closer to having enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon

"From our perspective, a critical early priority has to be to deal with what is an escalating nuclear crisis as they (Iran) move closer and closer to having enough fissile material for a weapon," Sullivan told an online program sponsored by the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Iran has been repeatedly saying that it has no intention to build nuclear weapons. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has declared production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear arms, as haram (religiously banned).

In May 2019, exactly one year after Donald Trump officially withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Iran in line with his "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran, the Islamic Republic announced that its "strategic patience" is over and started to gradually remove cap its nuclear activities at bi-monthly intervals. At the time Iran announced if the JCPOA parties honor their commitments, Iran will immediately reverse its decisions.

Under the JCPOA, Iran is tasked to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanction.

Seeing no action on the part of the JCPOA parties after five years, in December the Iranian Parliament adopted a legislation, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights", according to which the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) is obliged to speed up nuclear activities if U.S. sanctions are not lifted within

two months.

The nuclear law stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspending the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in few months if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations.

In line with the parliamentary approval, on January 4 the AEOI started to increase uranium enrichment to 20% at the Fordow nuclear plant.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif stated at the time that the resumption of 20% uranium enrichment was done in line with the nuclear law.

"We resumed 20% enrichment, as legislated by our Parliament. IAEA has been duly notified. Our remedial action conforms fully with Para 36 of JCPOA, after years of non-compliance by several other JCPOA participants. Our measures are fully reversible upon FULL compliance by ALL," Zarif tweeted hours after Iran resumed the 20% uranium enrichment.

AEOI spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi announced on Thursday that its organization has produced over 17 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium since January 4.

Iran's highest-ranking diplomat to the UN has warned the Biden administration it "must act quickly" to return to the nuclear deal abandoned by Trump "because the window is closing" for Washington to lift economic sanctions before Tehran's deadline.

"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 published on Thursday.



Writing in the New York Times on January 27, Takht-Ravanchi also said, "The window is closing. If the new (U.S.) administration does not meet its obligations and remove sanctions in short order, it will destroy the possibility for engagement within the nuclear agreement."

He added, "A full and honest lifting of the sanctions will create a new atmosphere that will help ease tensions in the region and beyond."

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in Istanbul on Friday, Zarif said Iran's nuclear activities do not mean that Tehran is seeking to build an atomic bomb.

He once again stressed that Iran expects the U.S. to return to the JCPOA before Tehran halts its increased enrichment activities and returns to compliance with the accord.

"The moment the United States fulfills its commitments, we would be prepared to fulfill ours," Zarif told reporters in Istanbul.

"The United States unilaterally withdrew from this comprehensive course of action," Zarif told journalists. "It is the duty of the United States to return to this agreement and to fulfill its obligations."

Again, Zarif announced on Friday that Iran will not accept demands by the United States that it reverses acceleration of its nuclear program before Washington lifts sanctions.

The demand "is not practical and will not

happen", Zarif said.

"If the United States fulfils its obligations, we will fulfil our obligations in full," Zarif had said earlier.

On Friday, Sullivan did not say that Iran should first reduce its nuclear work before the U.S. rejoins the agreement.

On Wednesday U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Iran should act first to reduce its nuclear activities.

"Iran is out of compliance on a number of fronts," Blinken told a news conference in Washington, DC.

"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.

Zarif quickly responded on Twitter, saying Iran had "abided by the JCPOA" and had only taken "foreseen remedial measures".

"Reality check for @SecBlinken: The US violated (the) JCPOA," Zarif tweeted.

Iran has said that its move are in accordance to paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

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

Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president's chief of staff, said on Friday that Iran has never withdrawn from the nuclear deal so that it would be the first to return to its obligations.

"We held negotiations once and the issue of the JCPOA has been closed. Our stance on the JCPOA was clear and we have maintained our past approach," Vaezi told IRNA when asked about Blinken's remarks that Iran should first return to the deal.

Vaezi stressed, "As President Rouhani has repeatedly said, only when the U.S. returns to its obligations, Iran will fulfill its commitments."



# Iran FM visits Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif arrived in the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan on Saturday morning in a surprise move as he was not expected to pay a visit to the autonomous region.

Zarif's visit to Nakhchivan comes on the heels of his regional tour that included Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey. During this tour, the Iranian foreign minister discussed a variety of bilateral and regional issues, especially the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis.

Upon his arrival in Nakhchivan, Zarif said he visited the autonomous region to discuss "transit possibilities" after the Nagorno-Karabakh war.

"At the end of our regional that included five countries we came to Nakhchivan to discuss transit possibilities and cooperation in the region after the Nagorno-Karabakh war. And God willing, by cooperating with the region's countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as other countries in the region, would be able to advance transit cooperation and create enduring peace," Zarif told reporters in Nakhchivan.

In Nakhchivan, the chief Iranian diplomat met with Vasif Talibov, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of Nakhchivan. Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyed Abbas Mousavi attended the meeting.

The autonomous region has been in the limelight since the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh war. The Russian-brokered deal that put an end to the war stipulated that a new route connecting Armenia to the Armenian enclave in the Nagorno-Karabakh region



would be established. The ceasefire also included an article stipulating that "new transport links" between Azerbaijan and the exclave of the Nakhchivan Autonomous region, a move that caused huge debates – and in some cases concerns – in the region as the war was being fought far away from Nakhchivan.

The last article of the ceasefire deal vaguely stipulates, "All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles and cargo in both directions. The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service shall be responsible for overseeing the transport connections. As agreed by the Parties, new transport links shall be built to connect the

Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the western regions of Azerbaijan."

During his visit to Azerbaijan, Zarif pointed to the issue of corridors, according to two statements published by the foreign ministries of Iran and Azerbaijan.

"The Iranian foreign minister finally described the establishment of calm in the region as a great opportunity for mutual cooperation in the transit industry and bringing into operation the East-West and the North-South corridors," the Iranian statement said.

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry confirmed that the two ministers discussed the issue of corridors while implying that the Nakhchivan-Azerbaijan corridor was also discussed.

"During the meeting, the ministers discussed the current situation in the region, the implementation of the trilateral statements of November 10, 2020 and January

11, 2021. It was noted that new opportunities for cooperation have been opened up in the region, including the prospects for the development of North-South and South-West transport and transit corridors," Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The last article of "the trilateral statements of November 10, 2020" deals with the issue of Azerbaijan-Nakhchivan transport links so this issue was likely a part of the Iranian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers' discussion.

Zarif also discussed the issue of transit routes with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in Istanbul on Friday morning, according to a separate statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

"He also discussed Iran-Turkey cooperation in the fields of transit, business, energy and mutual efforts to resolve the problems of the companies and economic players of both countries," the statement said.

In his Saturday meeting with Talibov, Zarif expressed satisfaction over the liberation of Azerbaijani territories during the Nagorno-Karabakh war, underlining the need to promote regional cooperation, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement after the meeting.

"Explaining his regional trip and the talks, as well as the views of the officials of the mentioned countries, Dr. Zarif spoke of the public welcome for regional cooperation and underlined its importance, especially in establishing transport connections in the region and transit routes, in particular the important role of Nakhchivan in this regard," the statement said.

## A fake carrot to Iran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Joe Biden's selection of Rob Malley as Iran envoy has sparked bitter dispute between hawks and progressives. They have launched media campaigns defending or opposing his selection. Hawks accuse him of going soft on Iran while progressives underline that the appointment of Malley will rekindle diplomacy with Iran.

But both groups fail to recognize that Malley is no friend of Iran and will work to secure the interests of the United States at the end of the day.

The first wave of criticism against the appointment of Malley came from a vague group called the National Union for Democracy in Iran (NUFDI) which sent an open letter to then-Secretary of State nominee Antony Blinken, urging him not to appoint Malley to the position of special envoy on Iran.

The group claimed that Malley was not interested in pursuing dialogue or consultation with what it called "Iranian human rights activists."

"Mr. Malley's record outside of government concerns us further. As head of the International Crisis Group, he has singularly focused on cultivating close relationships with Iranian government officials," the group claimed.

Opposition to the appointment of Malley, the chief Middle East adviser in President Barack Obama's second term and current president of the International Crisis Group, originates in his past positions on engaging Iran even though he will almost certainly act differently as a government official. In

fact, being a government official is a whole lot different than being head of a non-governmental think tank, something that opponents of Malley failed to grasp.

On the other hand, progressives joined forces to defend the appointment of Malley as if he had a magical charm to put an end to U.S. malign behavior toward Iran. On Thursday, a group of these progressives put out a statement firmly defending the selection of Malley.

"Those who accuse Malley of sympathy for the Islamic Republic have no grasp of – or no interest in – true diplomacy, which requires a level-headed understanding of the other side's motivations and knowledge that can only be acquired through dialogue," the statement said.

The statement portrayed Malley as a man who will rekindle diplomacy with foes, identify possible areas of agreement and resolution, and, abracadabra, de-escalate tensions between Tehran and Washington as if nothing happened under Trump.

"Rob Malley is an extremely knowledgeable expert with great experience in promoting U.S. security through diplomacy rather than war. He would be an excellent choice for the role of Iran envoy," Senator Bernie Sanders said in a tweet after Jewish Insider reported that Malley was under consideration to be the Biden administration's envoy on Iran.

Opponents and proponents of Malley have one thing in common: both of them believe that he will facilitate talks between the governments of the U.S. and Iran. Pro-

gressives even sought to suggest that the appointment of Malley was an early carrot to Iran, implying that Iran should be grateful for that.

But this is exactly where opponents and proponents of Malley get it wrong. Judging by the Biden administration's remarks on Iran, Malley will make it even more difficult for Iran to reach understanding with the U.S. in any future talks.

Biden officials have now made it clear that they want to expand the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – not just simply rejoin it. And this will make any kind of negotiations between Iran and the U.S. harder than in 2015, when the two reached the JCPOA while Malley was a member of the U.S. negotiating team.

Imagine if Iran says no to a Malley demand on its missile program or regional activities in any future talks. The Biden administration would tell the whole world that it's Iran, not the U.S., that doesn't want to return to diplomacy.

Malley will not make decisions on Iran. Instead, he will largely be responsible for coordinating and implementing the White House Iran policy just like any other diplomat in the State Department. He will likely be a smokescreen for the Biden administration's soft bullying against Iran. In this sense, Malley would be far from being a driving force for renewed diplomacy with Iran. He is by no means a carrot to Iran, not even a fake one.

## Head of Israeli military in hot water over 'empty' threat against Iran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Top Israeli military figures have denounced as "empty" and "inappropriate" the recent threats against Iran issued by the Israeli regime's army chief of staff lieutenant general Aviv Kochavi.

Kochavi issued on Tuesday stark threats against Iran and its allies in the region. He said that Israel is not welcoming the expected efforts by the U.S. and its European allies to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He claimed that he had ordered several plans to launch offensive operations against Iran while voicing Israel's opposition to any efforts to revive the JCPOA or even to improve it.

"I have instructed the IDF to prepare several operational plans in addition to existing ones, which we will develop throughout the coming year. The power to initiate them lies with the political echelon. However, the offensive options need to be prepared, ready and on the table," Kochavi said in remarks delivered at the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies 14th Annual International Conference.

"I would like to clarify my position regarding the JCPOA: Even if an improved agreement is reached, it will be a bad agreement at the operational and strategic level. Therefore, such an agreement must not be enabled," he continued.

The remarks were met with strong criticism from high-level Israeli military figures, according to Press TV.

Amos Gilad, a former head of Israeli Military Intelligence, said the threat of military action against Iran was an empty one and such a strike would never happen without the backing of the United States.

"You think you would carry out a strike without strategic cooperation with the United States? It will never, ever happen," Gilad said in an interview on the 103FM radio station on Wednesday. "Understand that these are all just words."

He warned that harsh remarks that contradict the position of the new American administration "could be seen as defiance" by the White House, adding, "That's not how you lead a policy."

Chuck Freilich, a former deputy national security adviser of the Israeli regime, also censured the claim as "fear-mongering"

and "unnecessary".

"I don't know of any serious person who thinks they are going to use [nuclear weapons]. Maybe they exist, but I don't know them. But I think that's fear-mongering, just unnecessary and inappropriate," Freilich told The Times of Israel on Thursday.

Freilich also speculated that Kochavi's remarks were aimed at getting a military budget increase.

"He wouldn't be the first chief of staff to raise various threats as a means of priming the budgetary pump," he said, adding that Kochavi "could have said, 'Iran is a nuclear danger, and we're not convinced that the deal will resolve it.' He could have found a different way to express it."

Iranian officials also strongly responded to the Israeli threats. Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president's chief of staff, dismissed the threats as "psychological warfare."

"Our people and the people of the region both are familiar with the rhetoric of the Zionist regime's officials. They talk more and seek psychological warfare, and they have virtually no plan and no ability to do so," Vaezi told reporters on the sidelines of the

cabinet meeting on Wednesday, according to the ISNA news agency.

"Our armed forces are trained in defending Iran, and the various drills we have held are a sign that we do not intend to go to war, but we are serious about defending the country," Vaezi said.

He also said that some Israeli officials think that everything they say will be accepted by Washington. According to Vaezi, during the Trump administration, the former president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, was the functionary of the Zionists in Washington and served the interests of Israel but now things have changed after Joe Biden won the U.S. election.

"I think the new U.S. administration is independent like other countries and that this Zionist regime's rhetoric is psychological warfare," the president chief of staff continued.

Vaezi pointed out that the U.S. will possibly return to the Iran nuclear deal but Israel and Saudi Arabia are working to make sure that that won't happen.

"Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime are lobbying in Washington but we should not take that seriously," Vaezi noted.

## SPORTS

### Persepolis earn late win, Sepahan beaten by Shahr Khodro: IPL

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team earned a much-needed 2-1 win over rock-bottom Machine Sazi here in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday.

Vahid Amiri scored the first goal for Persepolis after beating the offside trap in the 25th minute. The Persepolis players didn't celebrate their goal and dedicated that to their former No.25 midfielder Mehrdad Minavand who passed away Wednesday night due to COVID-19.



Peyman Babaei equalized the match from the penalty spot in the 70th minute but Ahmad Nourollahi scored the winner in the injury time.

Sanat Naft missed the chance to move top of the table after a 0-0 draw against Mes in Rafsanjan.

In Isfahan, Sepahan lost to Shahr Khodro 3-1 in a home match.

Sajad Shabbazzadeh gave Sepahan lead from the penalty spot in the 20th minute but Amin Ghaseminejad leveled the score eight minutes later from the spot.

Ahmad Aljabouri netted a brace in the 73rd and 93rd minutes. Sepahan defender Giorgi Gvelesiani was sent off in the 89th minutes.

Foolad and Paykan played out a goalless draw in Ahvaz.

Tractor also suffered a 1-0 home loss against Aluminum Arak in Tabriz. Omid Singh scored the only goal of the match from the penalty spot before the halftime.

Esteghlal remain top of the table with 23 points. Sanat Naft and Sepahan are second and third respectively with 22 points.

### New date for 2021 FIVB Volleyball U19 World C'ship announced

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Board of Directors of FIVB has accepted Iran Volleyball Federation's proposed date for the 2021 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U19 World Championship.

The tournament was scheduled to be held in Shiraz, Iran from Jan. 9 to 16 January but was postponed due to coronavirus concerns.

Now, the Iranian volleyball federation has announced that the competition will be held from Aug. 24 to Sept. 2 in the country.

It will be the 17th edition of the FIVB Volleyball Boys' U19 World Championship, contested by the men's national teams under the age of 19 of the members of the FIVB, the sport's global governing body.

Italy is the defending champions, having won their second title in Tunisia.

Players must be born on or after 1 January 2003.

### Young Iranian footballer Yousefi dies of cardiac arrest

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Malavan left-back Farhan Yousefi passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest on Friday.

Yousefi was 22.

The Bandar Anzali-born defender played at all levels of Malavan football club.

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

### Iran wins two golds at J5 Kish Island 2021 Tennis Tournament

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mandegar Farzami and Ali Yazdani from Iran claimed two gold medals at the J5 Kish Island 2021 Tennis Tournament.

Farzami defeated Russian Irina Artemova 6-2, 6-3 at the Girls' final and won the gold medal.

Yazdani also seized a gold after defeating his countryman Kasra Rahmani 6-0, 6-2 in the Boys' final.

In Doubles' section, Iranian team consists of Parnia Roknabadi and Fatemeh Zanjani lost to Turkey team (Lara Eroglu, Sude Ince) 6-0, 5-7, 10-6 in the final match.

The tournament brought tennis players from the U.S., Germany, Turkey, Mali, and Romania together.

### Taremi scores against Gil Vicente

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran forward Mehdi Taremi scored once again as Porto defeated Gil Vicente 2-0 at the Taça de Portugal Friday night.

Jesús Manuel Corona and Taremi scored for the Dragons in the 10th and 88th minutes, respectively.

Porto qualified for the semifinals with the win. It will meet Braga to book its place in the final match.

The Taça de Portugal is an annual association football competition and the premier knockout tournament in Portuguese football.

Estoril and Benfica have also advanced to the semis.

## Washington, Moscow held 'serious and meaningful' dialogue on JCPOA

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Sullivan has said in an interview that Washington and Moscow have held serious talks about the situation around the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The U.S. diplomat said in an interview with TV Rain that the Biden administration was carefully considering the prospect of the United States returning to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Russian Sputnik News reported on Saturday.

When asked about the U.S. position on Iran, Sullivan said that Washington was carefully considering the issue of returning to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear problem, adding that there was a

serious and meaningful dialogue on this topic with Russia.

He also said that there is currently no need for a reboot of the Russia-U.S. relations and the two countries should maintain constant dialogue despite the existing disagreements.

Sullivan pointed out that U.S. President Joe Biden had recently talked about serious disagreements between Russia and the United States. The ambassador did not say whether these disagreements include the Iran deal or not.

The comments came against a backdrop of renewed efforts by the new U.S. administration to revive the JCPOA from which the Trump administration withdrew in May 2018.





## Tehran hosting intl. exhibits of mines, auto parts, paint

**1 →** This year due to the coronavirus pandemic no foreign company is attending this four-day event directly.

As for the Auto Parts Exhibition, the four-day event hosts more than 200 companies, manufacturers, and agencies active in the industry to present the latest technologies in this field while exchanging information and exploring collaborative cooperation.

A special pavilion has also been set up in this year's event in which foreign companies are able to interact with their Iranian counterparts through online platforms to exchange knowledge and technology and to discuss future cooperation.

Some 72 Iranian companies are also presenting their latest products and services at the IPCC exhibit.



Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony of Iran ConMin exhibition in Tehran on Saturday.

Head of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO), head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), and the managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company were also among the officials who attended the opening ceremony of the mentioned exhibitions.

Due to the special conditions caused by the pandemic, only managers, businessmen, scholars, and experts are allowed to visit this year's exhibitions. Ordinary people are, however, able to visit the exhibitions virtually.

## Azar oil field nominal production reaches 65,000 bpd

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iran has started extracting 65,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil from Azar field which is its full capacity in the first development phase, the managing director of Iran's Oil Industries Engineering and Construction Company (OIEC) said.

According to Gholamreza Manouchehri, the first phase of the field's development project has reached 97 percent of physical progress and the project will be officially inaugurated in near future.

Pointing to the Azar field's special geological conditions, the official said: "This issue had made the development of this field very difficult, and international companies that had previously done the exploration work in this field, believed that only they would be able to develop this field."

"However, domestic companies took over the development of the field, and both financing and implementation were successfully done by capable Iranian companies."

Manouchehri further stated that the project has been financed by the National Development Fund (NDF), adding: "Currently, this project is 97 percent complete and has reached a nominal production of 65,000 barrels per day."

Under the first phase plan, 18 wells have been drilled in the field, all of which are completed, the official said.

Azar, one of the joint fields with Iraq, spans an overall area of 482 square kilometers in southeast of Mehran town in the western Iranian province of Ilam.

The field is estimated to hold 2.5 billion barrels of oil in place. The volume of possible oil reserves to be extracted from the Azar field is estimated to be around 400 million barrels.

Back in July 2017, Russia's Gazprom signed a cooperation agreement with OIEC over the development of the oil field. In December 2017, the two companies submitted their joint plan to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to develop the field.

The Russian company, however, left the project in early 2018, and OIEC took over.

As there are still no processing facilities installed at the place of this field, its output is going to be sent to the processing facilities of Dehloran oil field through a 120-km pipeline, according to Shana.

The field is developed jointly by OIEC and Oil Industry Pension Fund Investment Company (OPIC).

## Imports through Bazargan border crossing exceeds \$330m

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Some 240,182 tons of commodities worth \$330.867 million have been imported into Iran through Bazargan border crossing since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), according to the Bazargan customs director-general.

The value and volume of imports have decreased by 38 percent and 44 percent, respectively, compared to the same period in the previous year due to the coronavirus pandemic, Mojtaba Bazgir told IRNA on Saturday.

According to Bazgir, industrial machinery, iron or steel products, aluminum, automobiles, paint, and composite extracts, steel structures, adhesives, welding metals, ash, rubber, and rubber products, as well as textile and fabric were among the top commodity items entering the country through the mentioned crossing.

Located in West Azarbaijan Province, Bazargan is one of the three border crossings between Iran and Turkey; this border, which is Iran's gateway to European countries, is located at Bazargan District in Maku County.

It is the most important Iranian ground border for importing and exporting.

In late February 2020, the border crossing was closed due to the outbreak of the coronavirus; it resumed operation after a three-month hiatus.

Iran sees trade with Turkey as key in efforts to confront the U.S. sanctions that have sought to undermine Tehran's oil exports. Petrochemical products account for a major share of Iran's exports to Turkey although the U.S. bans have made it difficult to settle payments between businesses in the two countries.

Turkey also relies on Iran as a major market for its manufacturing goods, including industrial machinery and garment, while it also sends to Iran some sizable shipments of crops and fruits that are not cultivated in the country.

Iran has traded 122.8 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$58.7 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), according to the Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi.

# VP inaugurates development projects in southwestern province

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri inaugurated a number of development projects in the southwestern Khuzestan province on Saturday, IRNA reported.

In addition to inaugurating some projects, the official will also study the province's economic problems and follow up on ongoing projects in the province during his two-day visit.

In the first day of his trip, Jahangiri put the largest airport hall in the southwest of the country into operation.

The hall set up at Ayatollah Jami International Airport of Abadan has doubled the passenger capacity of the airport.

As stated by the deputy managing



## Fishery exports increase 6% in 10 months on year

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's value of fishery export has risen six percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to an official with Iran's Fishery Organization (IFO).

Isa Golshahi, IFO's director-general for quality improvement, processing, and market development, put the ten-month fishery export at 114,000 tons worth \$399 million, which was also four percent more than the last year's figure in terms of weight.

This year, with the completion of technical instructions and the launch of two industrial units for the production of dried fish and tiny dried fish, another product has been added to the country's fishery export basket, the official announced.

He stated that the amount of dried fish exports reached about 18,000 tons with an approximate value of \$18 million, adding that Oman, Myanmar and Malaysia are among the country's new export target markets.

Golshahi further expressed hope that through the export expansion plans, the country can achieve at least three new export markets and several new export products will be

added to the export basket in the next year.

The official put the country's fishery consumption per capita at 13.3 kilograms.

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

The country's annual fishery output stood at 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons. This amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The output is anticipated to reach 1.5 million tons this year.

The country's fishery export stood at 146,000 tons worth \$538.9 million in the past year, while the import was 29,000 tons valued at \$98.9 million, so Iran's fishery trade balance was \$440 million in the previous year.

The export is anticipated to reach 150,000 tons valued at \$600 million in the current year.

Enjoying high quality, Iran's fishery products were sold easily in the export markets, and also some new export destinations welcomed these products in the past year.

New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations opened up for Iranian fishery products in the previous year.

## South Pars phase 22-24 LPG storage tanks go operational

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Two liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) storage tanks of phase 22-24 of Iran's South Pars gas field have gone operational and ready to store 80,000 cubic meters of gas, the head of Iran's Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) announced on Saturday.

According to Mohammad Meshkinfam a total of four storage tanks, including two propane and two butane tanks, have been constructed for the mentioned phases, two of which have been completed and ready for receiving gas.

Meshkinfam stated that after cooling the



natural gas, the loading of the propane tank with a capacity of 45,000 cubic meters and the butane tank with a capacity of 35,000 cubic meters will begin.

## Arvand Free Zone attracts \$51m of foreign investment in 9 months

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Arvand Free Trade Zone, in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan, attracted \$51 million in the form of approved foreign investment projects during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), according to an official with Arvand Free Zone Organization.

Seyed Ali Mousavi, the deputy head of Arvand Free Zone Organization for investment and economic affairs, said that the investment has been made mainly by China, Turkey, and Iraq.

The official underscored that despite all problems created by the coronavirus pandemic in the world, and also those due to the U.S. sanctions on the country, the status of investment making is proper in Arvand Free Zone.

As recently announced by Morteza Bank, the secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council, the amount of investment attracted in Iran's free zones has climbed 57 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the corresponding period in the past year.

The official said that despite the limitations and barriers due to the foreign currency, tax and customs issues, as well as the sanctions, and coronavirus pandemic, some valuable achievements are witnessed in terms of investment making in the free trade zones and special economic zones of the country.

The development of free trade zones and special economic zones through production, exports and investment is one



of the goals of creating these zones in the country.

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

President Hassan Rouhani has recently inaugurated 61 projects worth 92 trillion rials (about \$2.19 billion) in some of the free trade zones and special economic zones of the country through video conference.

The projects were put into operation in the production, industry, trade, and infrastructure sectors of the zones in Hormozgan, Gilan, Bushehr, Qom, East Azarbaijan, and Markazi provinces, creating jobs for 3,200 persons.

Implementation of development projects in these areas shows the serious efforts and determination of the gov-

## Commodities worth \$893m exported from East Azarbaijan Province

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Commodities valued at \$893 million were exported from East Azarbaijan Province, in northwest of Iran, during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), according to a provincial official.

Leili Oranqi, the director-general of the customs department of Tabriz (the capital city of East Azarbaijan), said over 1.8 million tons of products have been exported from the province to 105 countries during the mentioned time span.

She mentioned Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan as the major export destinations of the province's products in the ten-month period.

The official further said that the province's ten-month export shows a five-percent rise in terms of value, while 14-percent fall in terms of weight, as compared to the corresponding time in the past year.

Iran has traded 122.8 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$58.7 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Of the total volume of the country's non-oil trade in the mentioned period, 94.541 million tons worth \$28.63 billion was the share of exports and about 28.249 million tons valued at \$30.639 were the imported goods, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said.

According to the official, the exports of non-oil goods in this period decreased by 17.7 percent and 20 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

The figures, however, grew significantly compared to the previous calendar month (December 21, 2020-January 19, 2021), the official added, noting that the upward trend is expected to continue in the coming months.

In comparison to the previous year's same time span, the imports of the mentioned commodities also declined by two percent and 15.5 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, according to the IRICA head.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations

director of the Arvand Free Zone Organization (where the airport is located), during the inaugural ceremony of the mentioned hall, the project to build a new terminal at Abadan airport, a side building, and landscaping have been implemented in the form of a 50-percent partnership between the Arvand Free Zone and the Iranian Airports and Air Navigation Company.

The operation for rebuilding the flood-hit areas of the province was also started in the presence of the first vice president.

Jahangiri is accompanied by the agriculture minister, industry, mining and trade minister, the head of environment organization, and some deputy ministers during his travel to Khuzestan.



Among the plans and programs that the country is implementing in the present year to develop the aquaculture industry, it could be referred to the continuous monitoring of fishery exports, evaluating and monitoring of the performance of provinces, holding specialized desks in Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) to release related reports and discuss the competitive advantages of the products to be exported, and recognize new export markets.

cilities of phase 14 of the field.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf waters, is currently divided into 24 standard phases on the Iranian side and is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

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

ernment to prosper the business environment within the framework of the policies of the resistance economy and achieve the goals of the surge in production this year, as well as increase export capacity, foreign currency earnings and employment.

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

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

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

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

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

during this period were China with \$7.2 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$6.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$3.7 billion, Turkey with \$2 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.9 billion.

The mentioned countries imported a total of 69.5 million tons of goods worth \$21.3 billion from Iran in the said 10 months, accounting for 73.5 percent and 76 percent of the total exports in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$7.9 billion, the UAE with \$7.4 billion, Turkey with \$3.4 billion, India with \$1.8 billion, and Germany with \$1.4 billion worth of imports.



# U.S. wants to weaponize JCPOA to eliminate Iran's deterrent missile capabilities: American analyst

**1 →** The following is the text of the interview:

**U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken says Iran must move first to restart the nuclear deal, while Iran says America must remove sanctions first. Given that the U.S. under Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal unilaterally and imposed sanctions, is it reasonable to ask Iran to reverse its nuclear steps first?**

It may be rational, but politics doesn't always work based on reason despite wishful thinking to the contrary. The U.S. is conventionally much more powerful than Iran in the military and economic sense, which is why it wants to pressure Tehran to make the first move. Iran has powerful asymmetric military capabilities, but they're irrelevant insofar as coercing the U.S. to make the first move instead.

As it stands, the U.S. will only make the first move as a so-called "goodwill gesture", which might be reversible and not even undertaken for sincere interests, but rather to get Iran to reciprocate and then possibly manipulate it to pull back once again in order to generate a pretext for justifying further pressure upon it.

**In view of the fact that Trump's "maximum pressure" policy against Iran ended in failure, do you think Biden intends to preserve Trump's sanctions leverage to get more concessions from Iran?**

Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" policy succeed in terms of inflicting heavy damage on the Iranian economy, but it failed to coerce Tehran to undertake any unilateral political concessions on the nuclear issue or any others. Biden inherited a formidable toolkit to pressure Iran and will probably leave all options on the table as is the norm. In reality, though, he probably won't resort to military force to coerce the country into capitulating to its demands since that could lead to unacceptable costs if it spirals out of control. It's much more likely that he continues using economic and political instruments to that end instead.

**How do you assess Biden's team of advisors and secretaries? Will Biden push the U.S. towards a**



softer foreign policy?

Biden's rhetoric is comparatively (keyword) softer than Trump's was towards Iran, but he seems to be just as much of a hawk against China, or at least is disproportionately influenced by those anti-Chinese hawks that are embedded in his country's permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies ("deep state"). The new administration consists of many Obama-era and -influenced officials who will probably revert back to those policies, albeit modified to adapt to the changing international circumstances created by Trump. Regarding Iran, this might see a false pretense of comparative "friendliness" and "goodwill" as part of a plot to strategically disarm Iran by trying to trick its decision-makers into lowering their guard.

**Regimes like Saudi Arabia and Israel try to hinder the revival of the JCPOA or at least make it more difficult. Do you think they can achieve their goals in the Biden administration?**

"Israel" will always retain powerful influence within

the U.S. due to its extensive lobbying network, while Saudi Arabia's influence might lessen a bit with the new administration. In any case, both of them will try to obstruct the revival of the JCPOA, but it's unclear to what extent they'll succeed. After all, they failed to prevent its initial implementation under the Obama Administration, and it's a matter of professional pride for many of those veterans who are returning to serve under the new administration to revive the accord. If anything, the Biden Administration might make some concessions towards those two in order to address some of their concerns over the deal such as permanently redeploying U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia like some reports have indicated and/or authorizing more yearly so-called "aid" to "Israel".

**Is the JCPOA renegotiable as some Western nuclear deal parties are talking of restricting Iran's missile capability despite the fact that Tehran has clearly announced that it won't accept negotiations over its conventional defensive and deterrent capabilities?**

Anything can always be renegotiated in theory, but whether or not it happens in real life is oftentimes another story. The U.S. wants to weaponize the JCPOA as a means for reducing and eventually outright eliminating Iran's missile deterrent capabilities, which would in turn weaken its defense and thus make it more vulnerable to conventional attacks from its foes. The nuclear deal should remain focused on its titular topic and shouldn't expand to include others such as missiles, regional influence, and whatever else. In the event that the U.S. and Iran truly restart negotiations in good faith, Tehran mustn't let itself be tricked to expand the scope of this deal to include anything else.

**Do you think the U.S. and Israel will agree to make West Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ)?**

No, not at all. They want to reserve the right to deploy and use such weapons, and never will they voluntarily impose any limits on their so-called "freedom of action" in this respect.

## U.S. to finalize procedures on New START extension by Feb 5

The United States is optimistic about completion of procedures on extension of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between Moscow and Washington by February 5 for a five-year period, a representative of the Department of State told TASS on Friday when commenting on Russian President Vladimir Putin's signing of the bill extending the treaty into a law.

"There are still steps that should be finalized. But we are optimistic that the extension [of the document], which obviously meets our national security interests, will be finalized before expiration [of the document] on February 5," the representative said.

According to TASS, the law ratifies the agreement on extending the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the Russian

Federation and the United States, dated April 8, 2010, which Russia and the U.S. made on January 26, 2021, through an exchange of notes, the Kremlin said on Friday. The extension of the treaty meets Russia's national interests as it makes it possible to maintain transparency and predictability in strategic relations between the two countries and preserve global strategic stability, press

service noted.

On January 26, Moscow and Washington exchanged notes on extending New START. Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Joseph Biden of the United States welcomed the move in a telephone call. On the same day, Putin submitted a bill on extending New START for five years - by February 5, 2026 - to the State Duma (the lower house of parliament).

## Italy permanently halts arms sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE

Italy has halted the sale of thousands of missiles to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) due to their involvement in the Yemen conflict, making permanent an 18-month temporary suspension.

"Today I am announcing that the government has revoked the authorizations under way for the export of missiles and aircraft bombs to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates," Italy's Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said.

"[This is] an act that we considered due, a clear message of peace coming from our country. For us, respect for human rights is an unbreakable commitment," said Di Maio, who did not mention Yemen but had referenced the conflict there when he ordered the initial suspension in July 2019.

According to al Jazeera, Italy's Peace and Disarmament Network, a campaign group, hailed the move as "historic" and estimated that it would see orders for more than 12,700 ordnance cancelled.

The blocked sales were part of a total allotment of 20,000 missiles worth more than 400 million euros (\$485m) agreed in 2016 under a center-left government led by former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the disarmament group said.

It "puts an end, once and for all, to the possibility that thousands of ordnance manufactured in Italy could strike civilian facilities, cause casualties among the population or contribute to worsening the already serious humanitarian situation", the group said.

There was no public reaction from Saudi Arabia or the UAE by the time of publication.

In 2019, several European Union countries froze arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which heads a military coalition fighting Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen in a conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people.

The United Nations describes Yemen as the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with 80 percent of its people in need of aid.

## 8 Afghan security personnel killed in Taliban attack

A suicide bomber drove a vehicle loaded with explosives into a base for Afghan defense forces in the country's east, killing at least eight security personnel in an attack claimed by the Taliban.

The pre-dawn assault on Saturday took place in the restive province of Nangarhar where the Taliban has claimed several deadly assaults targeting government forces.

It came two days after the Pentagon said the Taliban was not living up to promises made in a deal signed with Washington last year, including reducing violence and cutting ties with al-Qaeda.

The eight were killed when the bomber hit the base with a Humvee, the office of Nangarhar's governor said in a statement.

The deputy head of Nangarhar's provincial council, Ajmal Omar, confirmed the attack but put the number of dead soldiers at 15 with five wounded.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said his group carried out the attack.

## Sometimes it takes a volcano to start the healing

**1 →** Taming the mindset is not an event, it's a process, and one that must start immediately. Those who allowed it to be implanted and fester, if now also entrusted to change it, must be put on a very short leash. And the sooner the cleanup starts, the earlier the healing can begin. Joe Biden came as a result of 4 years of Trumpism. He was repeatedly not America's first choice, but rather, finally, the alternative for a majority who went to the voting booth convinced that anyone is better than Trump. Just anyone!

Biden will be doing himself and America a disservice if he allows himself to be dominated by the media hype now predictably proclaiming him "the" savior. Building that kind of high expectations is dangerous, and Biden has the experience to hopefully not fall into that trap. Rather than the media, Biden must focus on the mission ahead. The challenges facing him are formidable. America must change, domestically and globally.

Biden's own inauguration would not have been possible without the highest security measures that were put in place following the attack on America's legislative buildings. Despite Biden's claims, it was not democracy that won the day, but the more than 20,000 armed soldiers deployed to lockdown the capital city that enabled Biden to be inaugurated. That is more than the American soldiers currently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined. For the first time since its civil war, America's vast war machine was pointing its guns towards itself inside its own streets and not towards a foreign enemy overseas, real or imagined. It wasn't a foreign power or "Islamic" fundamentalists that threatened to derail America's peaceful transfer of power, but a white Christian American mob led by white Christian American leaders. Ironically, the army that stood guard to save American democracy and its constitution, and were prepared to die for that cause included many from the religious and ethnic minorities who are often the victims of racial profiling and discrimination!

In Yemen, the former military strong man and president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, used to claim that the military is the safety valve. A claim that I have always felt corrupted everything we must stand for. It is the institutions of governance that must be the safety valve of our political process. On January 20 of 2021, in Washington, which is one of the citadels of the institutions of governance, it was the military that saved the day to ensure the peaceful transfer of power. The elected political, judicial and legislative institutions of governance and the democratic political process they represent had progressively failed to protect the country. What precedent that mobilization has set in motion remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that America is not out of woods yet. Not by a long shot. And Americans cannot afford the deception of, again, being led by leaders and America's powerful mercenary media into believing otherwise. There are more than 70 million Americans, about 20% of that country's population, many armed and ready, who voted for Donald Trump and his fascist call to MAGA.

If Biden is serious about healing America internally and rebuilding the nation that 77% of its people feel has become bad (according to a CNN poll), then he must change how Americans view themselves. The decades-old deception that Americans have been systematically fed has to be replaced by bringing home its current realities and the need for change. The age old mantra, "the first step to solving a problem is to recognize its existence" has never been truer or more profoundly needed. Any thing else is destructive.

Globally, Biden must lead America back to America where it is needed most. He spoke of engagement and partnership. He must, if he wants to save America's global image, make that new narrative a commitment that is translated into practical policy. He will find an audience willing to give America, yet again, one more opportunity to move to the right side of history. We are eager to engage and partner with America, but not to be bullied by it. Biden has been part of that leadership that brought about America destructive foreign policies. He could now be the healer, the leader who leads America to changing its course and build partnerships. Dictatorship is imposed by military muscle and tuggery. Leadership is earned through engagement and partnership, when and if needed. Biden might be forgiven for telling his domestic audience "we have never failed". Whether those "feel good" words send the right message to a nation in desperate need of solutions for past policies, is for Americans themselves to determine. But outside the U.S., in every one of its brutal misadventures, from East Asia to the Middle East (West Asia) to South America, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, America failed miserably. Because people, by nature, reject intervention and all those who come to lead or tell them how to live. We may despise our own rulers but we may despise more those who come unsolicited to tell us how to revolt against our rulers. Especially when they come with a self-serving agenda of their own. In these places America is not viewed as a leader as much as a bully. The image of America is represented by the likes of Raytheon whose missiles have killed thousands in weddings, funerals and even school buses. And by Erik Prince whose mercenaries brutally killed civilians then obtained a presidential pardon for doing so. Going forward, neither Biden's presidency nor America's recovery process can afford to allow its worst characters to be America's global ambassadors. Biden and America must make a choice. They can no longer at once be a global power demanding the world's respect and the greatest purveyor of violence in the world by military invasions and arms selling to the world's most ruthless despots.

*Munir A. Saeed author is a former president of TAWQ, a non-partisan Yemeni democratic alliance. He currently lives in exile.*

**Neither can relations between nations be sustained if they are only built with ruling tyrants rather than peoples. The two opposites do not mix.**

## I sing for all Iranians

**Bahman 14-15 at 21:00**

**Hamrahe Aval online concert  
Free of Charge in Rubika & iGap App**



## HAMRAHE AVAL to hold an online concert in RUBIKA and iGap

On the occasion of Birth Anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (PBUH) and Mothers' Day as well as concurrent with the auspicious anniversary of Ten-Day Dawn Celebrations (marking the glorious victory anniversary of Islamic Revolution) HAMRAHE AVAL (Mobile Company of Iran, MCI) will hold an online concert in the presence of two outstanding pop and traditional music singers in line with fulfilling its social responsibility.

This online concert will be broadcast through RUBIKA App. at the following addresses free of charge: <https://go.rubika.ir/mci> & [https://igap.net/www\\_mci\\_ir](https://igap.net/www_mci_ir)

**Salar Aghili**, renowned and prominent traditional music singer will perform at **21:00** on Tuesday, Bahman 14 and **Farzad Farzin** prominent pop music singer will perform at **21:00** on Wednesday on Bahman 15.

**Salar Aghili** will perform music pienes including "IRAN", "I Stay Alone", "Khousheh Chin", "Mother", "Che Begouyam", "Be Man Bespar Dastat Ra", My Hometown, O Stable Grandeur", "Negar" while **Farzad Farzin** pop music vocalist will perform music pienes like "Where Can I Find You", Shanzelizeh", "Ayandeh, Future", "Mahe Asal (Honeymoon)" and "Nafas, Breath".

With the arrangements and measures taken by **HAMRAHE AVAL**, online concert of **Salar Aghili** and **Farzad Farzi** will be free of charge for all internet users in the country.

## Employment

**Max. age: 28**

**Fluent in English, at least BA degree, with three years of experience in commercial or operational field**

**Base salary: 5 million toman**

**Pls. send CV in English to: [hr.ticlgp@gmail.com](mailto:hr.ticlgp@gmail.com)**

**Contact: 02144208513**



## Over 200 tourism projects to come on stream in Tehran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN**—A total of 206 tourism-related projects are scheduled to be inaugurated soon across the Iranian capital on the occasion of Ten-Day Dawn (February 1-10, marking the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution).

Ten accommodation centers including hotels, apartment hotels, eco-lodge units as well as tourist complexes, restaurants, and handicrafts workshops will come on stream, Tehran province's tourism chief said on Saturday.

A budget of seven trillion rials (about \$167 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the projects, which are expected to generate a total of 930 job opportunities, Parham Janfeshan said.



The mentioned projects will also add 816 beds to the hospitality sector of the Iranian capital, the official noted.

Hugging the lower slopes of the magnificent, snow-capped Alborz Mountains, Tehran is much more than a chaotic jumble of concrete and crazy traffic blanketed by a miasma of air pollution. This is the nation's dynamic beating heart and the place to get a handle on modern Iran and what its future will likely be.

The metropolis has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Ray. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

## A peek into Chigh-Bafi, a nomadic ancient handicraft

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Chigh-Bafi is the art of weaving a kind of fabric that covers the walls of nomadic people in the western province of Ilam.

This handicraft product is woven by the skillful hands of nomadic women. According to the Dehkhoda word encyclopedia Chigh is "a Turkish word and shutter like weave that is made of common reed and thin wood branches and hanged in front of the entrance door. However, in different regions it is known with different names such as Alaghigh, Chikhh, Chit and Chig."

The most important material of Chigh is a kind of reed and hair goat that is produced from the herd of nomads themselves. The reed is hollow and grows wildly in the natural habitat of nomads. The weaver gathers the reeds from the surrounding land of the rivers.

Depending on the diameter of the reeds, they are divided into three or four pieces, so that each piece is ten centimeters in width. Then they are woven together by the spun wool yarn that is usually colorful.



The female weavers analyze the design in their minds and weave each piece separately. Then they are arranged next to each other to make the intended design. Since the nomads have always been tent dwellers and the Chigh has been used as the covering of the tent walls, the history of the Chigh has entwined with the history of nomadic tents.

Not only is Chigh a beautiful and fascinating product, but also it prevents the heat, cold, wind and dust to enter the internal space. One reason is that the reeds are hollow which allows them to act as a filter. On the occasion of raining and cold weather, the humidity adds to the volume of the reeds and makes them attach to each other and prevent the cold. When the weather is hot and dry, the reeds shrink and leave spaces for the air to pass through.

In addition, the hair goat produces a strong shade which makes a Chigh an ideal awning. Another interesting characteristic of hair goat is that it is a natural repeller of insects and snakes.

The traditional Chigh is decorated with symbolic and versatile motifs such as "Togh Savar", "Eask" or gazelle, "Ghezhak" or crab, "Pardal" or eagle feather, star, duck and geometric motifs that are inspired by both nature and memory of the weaver.

The tools of making a Chigh are no more than the simple and primitive sickle, knives, grinds, scissors, needle and stitching awl, and it is the taste and skills of the women weavers that make these products valuable.

Today, considering the design of the Chigh and the fact that the distance between the reeds are adjustable, this product can also be used as shutters, dividers, wall coverings and decorations in urban houses, too.

# Perspective on tourism advertising needs improving, and a lot of money, Iranian minister says

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The strategy of tourism advertising needs to be improved in Iran, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Saturday, adding that the country should spend more amount of money on it like what it does in other sectors such as the industry and agriculture.

With the current budget allocated to this sector, not much can be done, especially in the international arena, ISNA quoted Mounesan as saying.

While other countries such as Turkey have achieved good results with advertising without any restrictions on tourism, those Iranian officials and people who have resources consider advertising a waste of money, rather than an investment, he added.

This view needs to be corrected as the budget allocated by the government to this sector is very limited, and tourism advertising is not the government's priority yet, he explained.

Referring to the measures taken by the tourism ministry such as producing and preparing various contents and brochures in this regard, he noted that the ministry tries to make



significant use of cyberspace to introduce the country to the world.

To pursue the ministry's goals, other platforms such as YouTube have taken into account as well, he added.

He also noted that familiarization tours between Iran and China, besides the advertisements on cyberspace, have been effective on the number of inbound tourists to the country. Before the coronavirus pandemic puts

everything on a halt, similar actions taken by the tourism ministry in Oman led to a 350 percent increase in the number of Omani tourists visiting Iran, Mounesan said.

Advertising is one of the most important factors that help the tourism industry to generate tourists from both the local and international marketplace. The tourism sector is responsible for promoting the natural resources, culture, and heritage that help every visitor in experiencing the destination. Tourism advertising helps the visitor to get familiar with the place even before visiting it personally.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. So it will undeniably try its best to achieve a relatively ambitious goal but when that happens the travel industry is likely to look more altered.

## DNA obtained from ancient skeletons found in northern Iran

**→ 1** "By conducting dating experiments in a comparative method, it was determined that the ancient site of Liar-Sang-Bon dates back to the Parthian and Sassanid periods."

However, the site was partly looted by antique seekers during a two-year gap in archaeological seasons, the senior archaeologist noted in 2018.

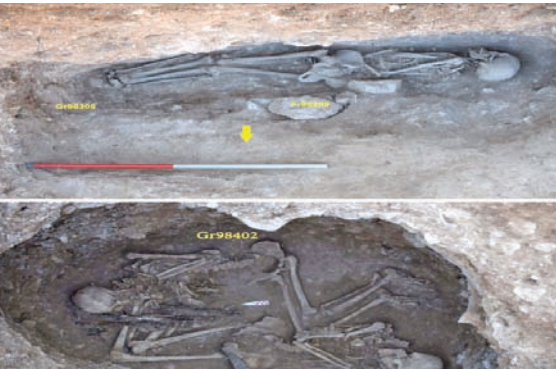
Amlash, now a county in Gilan province, was a small village in southeastern Gilan in 1959. The name originates from the nearby Alborz valleys where archaeological artifacts were discovered during excavations. The artifacts range in date from the late second millennium BC through the Partho-Sasanian period, but most of the objects are dated to the 9th-8th century BC.

Dating and meaning of the known objects (bronze weapons and animal figurines, human statuettes of terra cotta and

bronze, pottery animal effigy vases, and burnished black, gray, or orange pottery vessels) is complicated by insufficient archaeological contexts.

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

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action — it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.



## Chinese envoy hails Iranian tribes festival

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Chinese ambassador to Iran has hailed an Iranian tribes festival, which is currently underway online, as one of the important events capable of strengthening friendship between the two nations.

The Chinese envoy, Chang Hua, virtually attended the 14th edition of the International Festival of Tribes Culture, saying festivals of this kind can strengthen the Iran-China friendship, Mehr reported on Friday.

This was the second time the top diplo-



mat takes part in the event, which kicked off in Gorgan, the capital of northern Golestan

province on Thursday.

"In a message sent to the event online, the envoy pointed to his last year's presence at the cultural event, saying that he had wished to inform his Chinese friends of the festival after the last year's event but because the event is taking place virtually this year, his wish had come true," the news agency said.

Live performances, different exhibitions of regional arts, handicrafts, souvenirs, and culinary traditions constitute the core of the event, which will come to an end late on Sunday.

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.

## Historical hills, sites, mansions in Hamedan made national heritage

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A total of 13 historical sites and aging structures across Iran's Hamedan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list in a bid to receive more protection than ever before.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Saturday in separate official letters it submitted to the governor-general of the west-central province.

Archaeological hills of Bujan, Shir-Ali, Ganjuran, and Aq-Tape as well as historical sites of Zinuabad and Anjire Sarabi were among the new entrees into the prestigious list.

The list also includes Merianj Bridge, Samavati, Mirabian and Mazuchi mansions, and Tuyserkan Tobacco Company.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little



remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamadan has had many names: it was possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana,

to the Medes, and Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

About 1220 Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the inhabitants massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy.

Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

## Public baths in Iran and interesting customs behind

**By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig**

*(Part 2/2)*

Here is a brief overview of the architecture and components of an Iranian bath:

Baths were built next to mosques in all cities and villages of Iran and were opened before the morning call to prayer. The old baths were a few meters below the level of the alley and the corridor of the Bazaar to allow water to enter the big tub and also to protect it from the winter cold.

In the bath building, stone, brick, and a mixture of sand and lime mortar were used. The dressing room, hallway, and the hothouse were the main part of the Iranian bath, which was designed based on traditional Iranian and Islamic medicine.

Each of these three sections created three different atmospheres in terms of temperature, namely cold, warm and temperate. The building of the baths was designed based on four natures: hot, cold, dry, and wet. Each space was separated from the other spaces by a corridor and vestibule so that the temperature and humidity of each space did not suddenly change concerning its adjacent place and the air temperature did not drop suddenly.

The dressing room was a covered courtyard with a large pool in the middle and high platforms around which remove their clothes. There were poles around the locker rooms and colorful glass balls were hung on the poles. The master of the bath sat on one of those platforms or one of the platforms. A

large lamp and sometimes chandelier hung from the roof of the dressing room above the pool. The air in the locker room was completely cold and dry and in traditional Iranian medicine was equivalent to autumn.

On a stool near the pool, they placed a large earthenware bowl containing plums and plum juice and several small bowls with wooden spoons, and in winter they poured beetroot juice with a little vinegar instead of plums and plum juice into that large bowl for use of customers.

The vestibule space between the locker room and the hothouse is equivalent to the winter season. This space is made of a small vestibule so that the heat and heat accumulated in the hothouse do not leave immediately and the person can enter the locker room with a delay from the hothouse.

The hothouse was octagonal or quadrangular with thick walls and a place for bathing and washing, with a hot water tank and a cold water tank. A metal plate with a diameter of 60 to 110 cm was placed in the bottom of the tub, which was the boundary between water and fire under the tub so that they always had hot and cold water. The temperament of this part was warmer and equivalent to spring. The roof of the hothouse was higher and in its main arch, there was a large hole that acted like a lighting system, which in Iranian architectural terms is called Goljam.

The fuel for baths in the past was desert thorns, firewood and animal dried defecation. Under the bathtub, there was a fireplace or a firebox, and a large copper vessel was placed



under the floor of the tub, and a fire was lit under it so that the tub water would be warm during the night and warm for bathing in the early morning. Even in some baths architecture, such as Mehdi Qoli Beyk bath in Mashhad, which has built from the middle of the wall of one of the sides of the bath, a cold small water stream that runs directly from the Qanat or aqueduct for customers to drink while they are in the bath for a long time.

The main occupations of the bath

- Tontab: is the person who keeps the bath and bathwater warm and cleans the bath.

- Dallak, duty: washing, rubbing the body of customers by washcloth which made from rough fabrics or soft towel and sometimes massage to others

- Massager, task: massaging of people in bath

- Bath master, duty: the owner manages a private bath

- Bell boy or Pado, task: Arranging customers' shoes and moving dry and wet slippers, giving "Long", which is a special fabric that was given to customer men to tie it around their waist instead of shorts or briefs, but female customers usually were tying "Long" from the upper part their body to the knee. It is interesting to know that in the past, another of Pado's tasks was to transfer rich men and women's clothing baskets, copper bowls (to get water from the tub), and copper trays (usually used by women to sit on the bath floor) from their homes to the bath and sometimes the whole bath became private just for them.

- Horn, duty: blowing the horn at dawn and informing people that the bath-water is hot.

The most famous old baths:

- Ganjali Khan Bath in Kerman.
- Fin Bath in Kashan.
- Mehdi Qoli Beyk Bath in Mashhad.
- Qazi Bath in Gorgan.
- Golshan Bath in Lahijan.
- Khan Bath in Yazd.
- Ali Qoli Aqa Bath and Rehnan Bath in Esfahan.

- Vakil Bath in Shiraz.
- No or new (another name is Haaj Taqi) Bath in Shahrood.

Of course, nowadays most of these baths became to anthropology museum.



# Iran, Russia agree on coproducing COVID-19 vaccine

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has signed an agreement for coproducing the Russian-made COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, in the country.

Considering Iran's high capacity in the vaccine production sector, the two countries agreed to coproduce the vaccine in Iran, IRNA quoted Kazem Jalali, the ambassador of Iran to the Russian Federation, as saying on Saturday.

In this line, a delegation from the Iranian health ministry will head to Moscow by the next 10 days, he added.

He went on to say that the first shipment of the Russian vaccine will be sent to Tehran in the next few days.

The second and third shipments will be received by the end of February, and the same procedure will continue every two or four weeks, Jalali noted.

With the coproduction of the Russian vaccine, Iran can meet its domestic needs and play as an export hub in the region, he highlighted.

On Thursday, it was announced that Iran's Food and Drug Administration has issued a permit to both import and coproduce the Russian vaccine.

The vaccine made by the Gamaleya Center of Russia will be imported in the form of single-dose and five-dose vials.



**People be sure of Sputnik V safety**

Mass Sputnik V vaccination against COVID-19 has been underway in Russia for several months, and some Russian officials, as well as the military, medical staff, teachers, and professors have been vaccinated, so Russian scientists and officials are confident in its safety, Jalali stated.

On the other hand, about three mil-

lion people have been vaccinated inside Russia so far, and so far no side effects have been reported among those who received it, he added.

He went on to emphasize that the most important point in the safety and efficacy of this vaccine is that many countries, for example, Turkey, the UAE, India, Hungary, and South Korea have signed agreements

with Russia to vaccinate their citizens and also co-produce the vaccine.

## Iran-Cuba vaccine

Iran has previously started joint production of the COVID-19 vaccine with Cuba, which has passed the first phase of human testing with success.

Iran's coronavirus vaccine jointly made with Cuba has successfully passed the first stage of the clinical trial and the second stage is underway in Cuba, which will soon enter the final stage, Alireza Vahabzadeh, an adviser to the health minister, wrote on his Twitter account on January 11.

## COVID-19 daily new cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Saturday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,317 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,411,731. She added that 1,202,893 patients have so far recovered, but 3,964 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 82 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 57,889, she added.

So far, 9,230,386 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 18 cities are in medium-risk "orange" zones, and 124 in low-risk "yellow" zones.

## Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine beats UK variant

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The first homegrown COVID-19 vaccine proved effective on the United Kingdom mutated virus, Hassan Jalili, director of COVIRAN BAREKAT vaccine research group has stated.

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. So far, 35 people have received the first dose of the vaccine.

Since one of the capabilities of any effective vaccine is being able to protect the body against virus mutations, the blood plasma of the first three volunteers who received the domestic vaccine was tested, he explained.

"The volunteers have received the vaccine in two stages, so it was expected that their blood plasma fights the virus," Jalili added.

Tests have shown that the vaccine can successfully neutralize the mutated virus, he highlighted, Fars news agency reported on Saturday.

## Switzerland negotiating to buy COVID-19 vaccine from Iran

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — The Swiss health ministry is negotiating with twenty countries, including Iran, to buy the coronavirus vaccine, and has established 'special contacts' in this regard.

"We have good relations with the Iranian health sector. Health institutions in Iran are well organized and fully equipped for clinical trials and data sets," Nora Kronig, Vice-Director General of the Federal Office of Public Health of Switzerland, said, IRIB reported on Thursday.

Five Iranian institutions are on the list of the World Health Organization's candidates for the vaccine, she noted.

Production of COVID-19 vaccine is being followed by 16 Iranian companies since the beginning of the outbreak, and so far 12 companies applied to produce the vaccine, 8 of which are operating, one of the companies have entered the human trial phase, and two more companies will soon test the vaccines on human, the Iranian Food and Drug Administration spokesman Kianoush 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.

## Air pollution is linked to permanent vision loss, study finds

Air pollution has been linked to an increased risk of progressive and irreversible vision loss, a large, long-term study found.

University College London researchers hypothesized that air pollution might heighten the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Science Daily reported. It described how scientists drew on data from 115,954 study participants aged 40-69 with no eye problems at the start of the study in 2006. Followups with 52,602 of the participants in 2009 and 2012 measured structural changes in retina thickness

and/or the number of light receptors present — both indicators of AMD. Ambient air pollution measures were combined with official traffic, land use and topography information to estimate the annual average air pollution levels at participants' home addresses during this same time period.

Comparing that data, the findings, published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, showed that all air pollutants — except for coarse particulate matter — were associated with changes in retinal structure. Alarming, people living

in the most polluted areas were at least eight percent more likely to report having AMD.

"People who live in a more polluted area report macular degeneration more frequently," Paul Foster, a professor of glaucoma studies and ophthalmic epidemiology and the study's lead author, told CNN.

"Even relatively low exposure to air pollution appears to impact the risk of AMD, suggesting that air pollution is an important modifiable risk factor affecting risk of eye disease for a very large number of people," he told Science Daily.



**Without water, everything withers**

## Special clinic to be launched to relieve bereaved coronavirus families

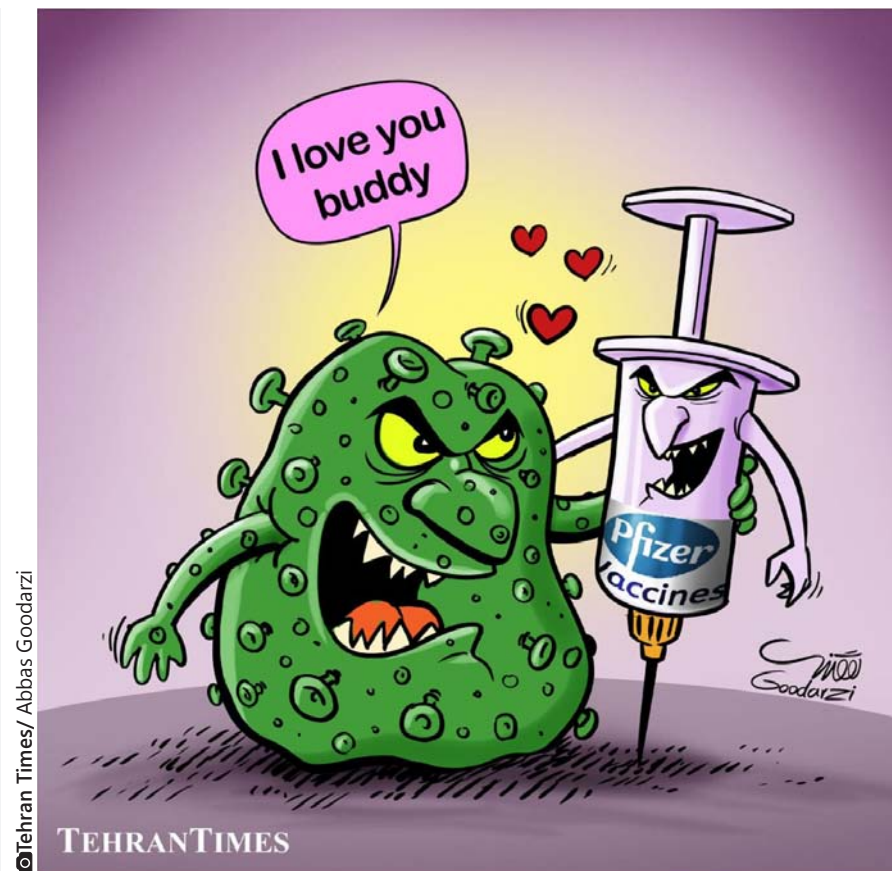
A special clinic will be opened for the first time in the country to provide free psychological services to families who have lost their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic. The clinic is called "Soog" (literally meaning mourn) will be inaugurated at Shahid Beheshti Educational and Medical Center in Zanjan province on Wednesday.

The outbreak of coronavirus has changed the lifestyle of many families, Ehsan Fakoor, head of the mental health department of Zanjan University of Medical Sciences said. Sudden changes in life cause stress, while the coronavirus itself has doubled the stress due to its contagion and the number of lives it has claimed in the world to date, he regretted.

## افتتاح 'کلینیک سوگ' برای تسکین خانواده‌هایی که اعضای خود را بر اثر کرونا از دست داده‌اند

رئیس گروه بهداشت روان دانشگاه علوم پزشکی زنجان از افتتاح نخستین کلینیک سوگ در کشور برای ارائه خدمات رایگان روان‌شناختی به خانواده‌هایی که اعضای خانواده خود را به دلیل ابتلا به کرونا از دست داده‌اند خبر داد و اظهار کرد: این کلینیک ۲۳ مهرماه امسال در مرکز آموزشی درمانی شهید بهشتی زنجان کار خود را آغاز خواهد کرد.

فکور با بیان اینکه شیوع ویروس کرونا باعث شده است تا سبک زندگی بسیاری از خانواده‌ها دچار تغییر شود، ادامه داد: ایجاد تغییرات ناگهانی در زندگی باعث ایجاد استرس می‌شود، این در حالی است که خود ویروس کرونا به دلیل واگیردار بودن و نیز آمار فوتی‌هایی که تا به امروز در دنیا به جا گذاشته، این استرس را دوچندان کرده است.



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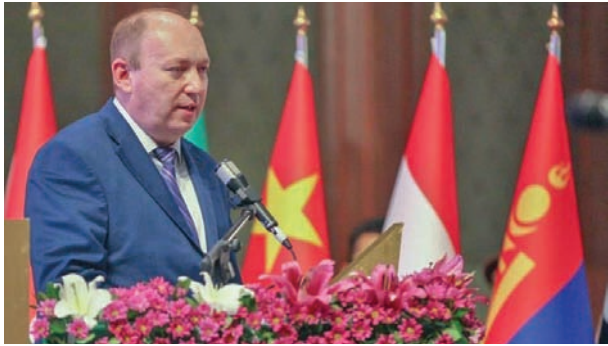
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The greatest Jihad is to battle your own soul.  
To fight the evil within yourself.  
*Prophet Muhammad (S)*

ECO CEO says calligraphy provides window on lofty literature, world without violence

➔1 He said that calligraphy art helps increase the beauty and the eternity of what is inscribed, leading the visitors to “a pure emotional world where those gentle souls are living without any hatred.”



ECO Cultural Institute President Sarvar Bakhti speaks during the closing ceremony of the First Raqs-e Qalam International Exhibition and Conference of the Silk Road Calligraphy at the conference hall of the Iran Mall in Tehran on January 28, 2021. (IRIBNEWS/Ahmad Belbasi)

“In the contemporary world, the only thing that can help to protect ourselves from evils and preserve our heritage as well is culture,” he said and added that calligraphy art can support people in this way.

He also expressed his thanks to the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO for organizing the exhibition and conference.

Calligraphy works by 203 artists from 30 countries were showcased at the virtual exhibition, which officially opened on January 20 in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad.

A selection of artworks from the event was also put on view during an exhibition at the Iranian Academy of Arts in Tehran on January 22.

During the closing ceremony of the exhibition held at the Iran Mall, a large shopping mall in Tehran, 20 artists from Uzbekistan, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Oman, Mongolia, South Korea, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, China, Azerbaijan and Iran were selected in a drawing for a week-long visit to Mashhad, the northeastern Iranian city that is home to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS).

Immanuel Wallerstein’s “Utopistics” published in Persian

A R T TEHRAN – American sociologist and economic historian Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein’s 1998 book “Utopistics: Or Historical Choices of the Twenty-First Century” has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Saad is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Mohammad Ghafari.

The twentieth century has witnessed both the triumphs and failures of the dreams that have informed the modern world. In “Utopistics”, Wallerstein argues that the global order that nourished those dreams is on the brink of disintegration.

Pointing to the globalization of commerce, the changing nature of work and the family, the failures of traditional liberal ideology, and the danger of profound environmental crises, the founder of world-systems analysis argues that the nation-state system no longer works.

The next twenty-five to fifty years will see the final breakdown of that system, and a time of great conflicts and disorder. It will also be a period in which individual and collective action will have a greater impact on the future than has been possible for 500 years.

“Utopistics” distills Wallerstein’s hugely influential work on the modern world-system in an accessible way.

This fascinating and provocative look into our collective political destiny poses urgent questions for anyone concerned with social change in the next millennium.

Wallerstein is perhaps best known for his development of the general approach in sociology, which led to the emergence of his world-systems approach.

He was a senior research scholar at Yale University from 2000 until his death in 2019, and published bimonthly syndicated commentaries through Agence Global on world affairs from October 1998 to July 2019.

He was the 13th president of the International Sociological Association (1994–1998).

Fajr Film Festival to open today

A R T TEHRAN – The 39th d e s k Fajr Film Festival, Iran’s major film event, will open in Tehran and also in 30 provinces and five free zones today with 16 films contending for a Crystal Simorgh, the organizers announced on Saturday.

“During the previous editions, we had submitted films to the provinces one by one and 10 films were submitted to each province, but this year all the films are available in all the provinces, while we have made our best efforts to have a safe and fresh festival,” Fajr president Mohammad-Mehdi Tabatabaiejad said in an online press conference held at the Milad Tower.

“All those who have registered at samfaa.ir to reserve tickets will receive a code and can vote to select best audience film,” he said.

Tabatabaiejad added that a sizeable number of movie theaters will host the event across the country.

He said that a good number of young, talented filmmakers are taking part in the festival this year, and he hoped that the audience would be happy with the films at the end of the event.

“All the individuals are quite aware of the health protocols, and all the movie theaters managers are asked to observe the health protocols—disinfecting the halls, urging the audience to wear masks—while they should be tested for fever before entering the halls and observe social distancing during the screenings,” he added.

About screening documentaries and short films, he also said, “Most of the documentaries have already been streamed



A poster for the 39th Fajr Film Festival.

on different platforms, some of which have been watched over 40,000 times, and short films were also screened during the Tehran Short Film Festival, and there seems to be no need to screen them again.”

A total of 16 films will be contending for a Crystal Simorgh.

“Ablaq” by Narges Abyar, “Bihamchiz” by Mohsen Qarai, “The Sniper” by Ali Ghaffari, “Ti Ti” by Aida Panahandeh and “180° Rule”

by Farnush Samadi are among the films.

“Romanticism of Emad and Tuba” by Kaveh Sabbaghzadeh, “Once Upon a Time, Abadan” by Hamidreza Azarang, “Bright” by Ruhollah Hejazi, “Zalava” by Arsalan Amiri, “Setareh Bazi” by Hatef Alimardani and “Shishlik” by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian are also included.

The lineup also includes “Gijgah” by Adel Tabrizi, “Mama” by Arash Anisi, “Expediency”

by Hossein Darabi, “Mansur” by Siavash Sarmadi and “Yadu” by Mehdi Jafari.

Among the members of the jury of the official competition are Nima Javidi, director of the acclaimed drama “The Warden”, and Sareh Bayat, star of the Asghar Farhadi’s Oscar-winning drama, “A Separation”.

Also on the jury is Bahram Tavakkoli, director of the acclaimed war drama “The Lost Strait”, which was highly acclaimed at the Fajr festival in 2018, earning awards in six categories including best film and best director. He is also the director of “Gholamreza Takhti”, a biopic about legendary Iranian wrestler Gholamreza Takhti.

Mostafa Kiai, director of the comedy film “Motreb”, which has become Iran’s box office hit of the year by grossing 380 billion rials (about \$9 million) in 2020, has also been selected for the jury.

The jury is also composed of cinematography director Morteza Pursamadi, producer Jamal Sadatani and cultural manager Mohammad Ehsani.

In addition, the jury members of the short films and documentaries are Saied Puresmaeli, Amir Tudehrsta, Mohammad-Ali Farsi, Mohammad Kart and Sam Kalantari.

Additionally this year, seven productions from the Owj Arts and Media Organization, a major institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema, will be screened at the festival.

They include the spy movie “The Government Expediency” by Hossein Darabi, “Karo” by Ahmad Moradpur and “Mansur” by Siavash Sarmadi.

National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art honors winners



Winners pose after being honored during the closing ceremony of the 11th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center on January 29, 2021.

A R T TEHRAN – Winners of the 11th d e s k Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art were honored during a ceremony at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center on Friday.

Ziba Pashan, Raheleh Kazempur and Olduz Nabizadeh

received their awards from the organizers of the event, which was held under the auspices of Iran’s Ceramic Artists Association.

The 11th edition of the biennial was inaugurated at Niavaran Cultural Center in November after a nine-year hiatus, and the exhibition was both online and physical for the viewers.

The closing ceremony was attended by honorees, a limited number of visitors and a number of art and cultural officials.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Visual Arts Office director, Hadi Mozaffari said that the biennial moved a long path during the hard years and was able to resume again after nine years and during the difficult situation of coronavirus restrictions.

“This exhibit shows how important and how influential this medium can be and hereby I need to express my gratitude to the members of Iran’s Ceramic Artists Association for their good collaboration, dignity and politeness,” he added.

The director of the event, Hirbod Hemmat-Azad, also said, “Today, ceramics continues its way slowly and constantly, and this biennial displayed the potentials of the art of ceramics.”

He expressed thanks to the young artists, art and cultural officials and Iran’s Ceramic Artists Association.

This biennial, which has resumed after 9 years, also indicated that Iran is a great and rich country, especially in the field of art with young artists, he said.

Dorna Abyak, Mohsen Tohidi, Roya Haqiqi, Delaram Riyazati, Ali Zamani and Vahid Azizi were among other artists who were honored at the ceremony.

The International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) was the “spiritual sponsor” of the biennial this year.

Located in Geneva, Switzerland, the academy was founded in 1952 by Henry J. Reynaud, who chaired the academy until his death in 1964.

The goal of the IAC is to stimulate friendship and communication between professionals in the field of ceramics in all countries.

“Coup 53”, “The Art of Living in Danger” among Oscars eligible doc features

A R T TEHRAN – “Coup 53” d e s k and “The Art of Living in Danger”, Iran’s co-production with the UK, U.S. and Germany, are among 238 movies eligible for consideration in the documentary feature category of the Academy Awards 2021.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Thursday released its official entries for the 2021 Oscars in the categories of documentary feature, animated feature and international films.

Directed by Taqi Amirani, “Coup 53” received the audience award at the 14th edition of Cinéma Vérité, Iran’s major international festival for documentary films, last December.



A poster for “Coup 53” by Taqi Amirani.

While making a documentary about the Anglo-American coup in Iran in 1953, Amirani and editor Walter Murch find an extraordinary and never before seen archive.

Documents and 16mm footage recount this story in unprecedented detail, with explosive revelations about secrets hidden for 66 years. From a historical documentary about four days in August 1953, the film becomes a living investigation that exposes the roots of Iran’s volatile relationships with the United Kingdom and the USA.

In “The Art of Living in Danger”, director Mina Keshavarz discovers a family secret about her grandmother’s death. Her grandmother, forced to marry at a young age, gave birth to seven children and took her own life at the age of 35 during her eighth pregnancy.

The film was selected as best documentary

at the Busan International Film Festival in 2020.

Earlier the academy announced that “Am I a Wolf?” by directed by Amir-Hushang Moin and “Song Sparrow” directed by Farzaneh Omidvarnia from Iran are among the 96 short animated movies qualifying for the Academy Awards 2021 longlist.

Director Majid Majidi’s child labor drama “Sun Children” is also Iran’s submission to the foreign-language category of 2021 Oscars.

Shortlists will be revealed on February 9 and the nominations will be announced on March 15. The 93rd Academy Awards are set for April 25 on ABC.

Tehran virtual book fair grosses over \$2.6 million

CULTURE TEHRAN – The virtual d e s k edition of the Tehran Book Fair has grossed over 640 billion rials (over \$2.6 million based on Iran’s free-market exchange rate: \$1 = 245,000 rials).

The fair, which opened on January 20, was brought to an end on Friday, after the organizers extended the fair twice for four more days.

17 international webinars were also organized on various cultural topics during the event.

The virtual fair was open around the clock and over 1.2 million books were ordered, the Iran Book and Literature House announced in a press release published on Saturday.

The books will be delivered to all the various cities across the country for free.

The book fair was inaugurated in a ceremony held at the Iran Book and Literature House attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, Iran Book and Literature House director Ayyub Dehqanqar,



A bookshop in Tehran. and Union of Tehran Publishers and Booksellers director Hooman Hassanpur. Culture Minister Salehi believed that the publishing

industry had experienced a great loss during the coronavirus era in Iran and in the world, calling the virtual book fair a new experience that can be a valuable event.

“The virtual space has helped the publishing industry. E-books and podcasts have helped promote book reading in this space,” he said.

“The world of today is the world of data, and the more knowledge and power we have, the better we can reinforce cultural movements,” he added.

The 33rd edition of Iran’s most important cultural event was scheduled to be held in April 2020, and Turkey was slated to be the guest of honor, however, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance canceled the fair due to a massive rise in the death toll from coronavirus in the country.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the ministry and the Iran Book and Literature House, the main organizers of the book fair, decided in the end to run the event online.

Christine Nostlinger’s “Dwarf in the Head” appears in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN – A Persian d e s k translation of Christine Nostlinger’s “The Dwarf in the Head” (“Der Zwerg im Kopf”) has been published by Afarinegan Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Gita Rasuli.

Shortly before the first day of school, Anna discovered him, the tiny dwarf with a fingernail in the purple pointed cap. Without being asked, he has settled in her head and is now interfering in everything, something which turns out to be extremely practical as Anna can discuss any of her problems with

him. And she has plenty of them, because she is a child of divorce and lives with her dad. Mum is responsible for her in the afternoon. It’s quite complicated, but it’s even more complicated at school because Anna loves Peter, but Hermann loves Anna. So it’s only good when a dwarf-like that intervenes.

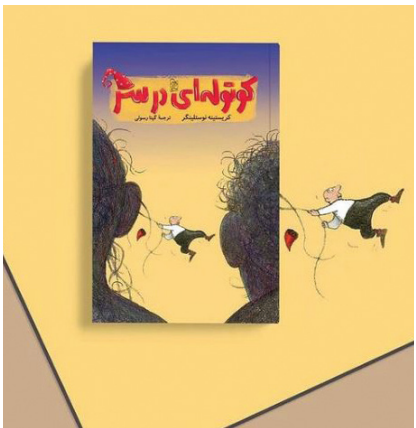
Christine Nostlinger was an Austrian writer best known for her children’s books.

By her own admission, Nostlinger was a wild and angry child. After finishing high school, she wanted to become an artist, and studied graphic arts at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna. She worked

as a graphic artist for a few years, before marrying a journalist, Ernst Nostlinger, with whom she had two daughters.

The majority of Nostlinger’s production is literature for children and for young people, but she also wrote for television, radio and newspapers. She centers on the needs of children in her work, with an anti-authoritarian bent. She does not shy away from tackling difficult subjects like racism, discrimination and self-isolation.

Her first book was “The Fiery Red Friederike” (“Die feuerrote Friederike”) published in 1970, in which she illustrated herself.



A poster for the Persian translation of Christine Nostlinger’s “The Dwarf in the Head”.