



Iraqi FM to arrive in Tehran on Wednesday *Page 2*

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Iran basketball paired with the U.S. in Olympics *Page 3*



75 idle mines revived in Markazi Province *Page 4*

Congratulations on birthday of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA) and Mother's Day

American bottleneck

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Helmand water right to be provided after 48-year pursuit



© File photo

Iran's achievements in fight against cancer

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
The development of cancer caregivers and specialists, increasing the number of service providers, and implementation of early diagnosis programs, along with support by NGOs and charities are the major steps Iran has taken in the fight against cancer.

Although the country is far from the ideal situation, the development trend has been appropriate. Ali Ghanbari-Motlagh, head of the cancer prevention department of the Ministry of Health said.

Referring to the annual identification of 135,000 new cases of cancer in Iran, he said that the National Cancer Registration Program, implemented in 2017, reported that among the 135,000 annual cancer cases registered in the country, 52 percent are men and 48 percent women.

Pointing to breast and prostate cancer as the most common cancers in women and men, respectively, he said that cancers of the breast, prostate, colon, skin, and gastric are the five common in the country.

Lifestyle changes in recent years have led to prostate cancer replacing gastric cancer in men since the Iranian calendar year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012), he added.

Ghanbari-Motlagh went on to note that 16 percent of annual deaths, amounting to 51,000, are related to cancer, which makes it the second leading cause of death in the country after cardiovascular diseases.

Some 14 percent of Iranians develop cancer during their lifetime, which is lower than in the world average of 20 percent. Also, 7 percent of cancer patients die, while the probability of recovery is 50 percent.

Cancer patients more likely to die of coronavirus

"We tried to find out the link between cancer and Covid-19 prevalence, and we found out that 3,775 cases of covid-19 were among cancer patients," he stated, adding, so far, it showed that people with cancer are twice as likely to die of coronavirus as normal people.

Air pollution, third leading cause of cancer

Regarding the impact of air pollution on the incidence of cancer, Ghanbari-Motlagh stated that "We do not know how much, but we know that air pollution is effective in the incidence of cancer, and this depends on the degree of exposure to polluted air."

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Iranian Artists Forum to host Intl. Art Festival of Resistance

TEHRAN – The sixth International Art Festival of Resistance will open at the Iranian Artists Forum on February 8 with a top selection of artworks in the forms of poster, sculpture, typography, illustration, cartoon and caricature.

Works by artists from over 50 countries will go on view at the forum observing health protocols and social distancing, the organizers announced in a press release published on Tuesday.

Plans were for the festival to be held during November 2020, the director of the Public Relations Office of the festival, Mehdi Bakhshi, said.

"However, many people asked the organizer to postpone the festival due to the pandemic," he added.

"Finally, the organizers decided to postpone the festival to February 2021 when some

other festivals celebrate the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution," he noted.

A selection of paintings submitted to the festival will be showcased at the Palestine Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran.

The director of the cartoon section of the festival, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, earlier said that the cartoon section of the festival focuses on themes of "We Defeat Coronavirus" and "The U.S. Decline".

Alireza Zakari, Majid Khosro-Anjam and Mohammad-Ali Rajabi are the jury members of the cartoon section.

The cartoons on the theme of "The U.S. Decline" are quite interesting, and the coronavirus, and the health workers have also been warmly welcomed by the cartoonists.

The Revayat Cultural Foundation is the organizer of the event that will be running until February 19.

Glimpses of bread making in Iran

BY AFSHIN MAJLESI

Since the olden days, bread has been the staple diet of the folks living in the semi-arid Iranian plateau. Traditional and ethnic Persian breads are famed for their strong flavor, quality, and diversity.

The Persian word for bread is "nan" which you can find in great works by nearly all top Iranian poets and literary men, both modern and classics such as Ferdowsi, Khwaja Abdullah Ansari, Rumi, Saadi, Ebne Yamin, Saib Tabrizi, and Sohrab Sepehri.

Among the Iranian nation, "nan" is recognized as "barakat" meaning God's blessing. Iranians treat bread with respect due to its holy place in their ancient culture.

"Nan" can also be traced in the Sasanian inscriptions of the third century CE. Also, analyzing historical documents show that the word "nan" is mentioned in the Pahlavi texts of the 9th century. A definition of sangak—one of the most popular Iranian breads—was found in the comprehensive Persian encyclopedia "Borhan-e-Ghate" in 1651.

The traditional Persian cuisine is interwoven with a wide variety of breads due to two main reasons. Firstly, bread is considered as the main food of the Iranian people and its consumption in the daily diet is very common. Secondly, Iran is an integrated country that accommodates various ethnic communities.

Iranian flatbread is produced by cooking fermented dough, basically made from wheat flour, yeast, and water.

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Judicial officials visit Imam Khomeini shrine to renew loyalty to ideals of Islamic Revolution

Top judicial officials, including top judge Ebrahim Raisi, visited the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini, to renew their allegiance to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution. The visit took place as Iran is celebrating the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. This year's celebrations started from January 31 and will last until February 10.



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HRW urges Biden to renounce Trump's slurs against critics of Israel

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has called on new U.S. President Joe Biden to defend free speech, including peaceful calls for a boycott of Israel, and publicly renounce his predecessor Donald Trump's legacy of branding human rights groups and activists critical of Israel and its settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian lands as "anti-Semitic."

Eric Goldstein, acting Middle East and North Africa executive director at the HRW, stated on Monday that the Democratic leader should oppose laws that penalize companies seeking to cut ties with West Bank settlements — which are illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention — in order to avoid complicity in inevitable human rights violations of the structures.

Goldstein then expressed doubts that Biden would end Washington's attempts to tar the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)

movement, in ways that threaten free speech.

The BDS movement was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations that were pushing for "various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law."

Thousands of volunteers worldwide have since then joined the campaign, which calls for people and groups across the world to cut economic, cultural and academic ties to Tel Aviv, to help promote the Palestinian cause.

Goldstein went on to say that former hawkish U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo did not stop at accusing the pro-Palestinian BDS movement of being "anti-Semitic," but also lumped in groups that use international law as a basis to urge businesses to shun Israeli settlements.

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U.S. has long been divided: American writer

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - An American writer says that the United States is divided into camps over supporting unregulated globalism.

"One camp, favor unregulated globalism, want to transition to a world led by China and perhaps India," Charles Ortel tells the Tehran Times.

"The other camp looks at globalist organizations and sees claims of success that are not supported by convincing evidence, and clear suggestions of influence peddling, corruption, fraud, waste and other abuses," the pro-Trump author adds.

Asked about dangers of a "deep state" in America, Ortel notes that "President Eisenhower warned of the dangers posed by the military-industrial complex in his farewell speech to America in January 1961."

He warns that "Americans have willingly engaged with social media and in transactions that give governments and bad actors access to information that can be used to control citizens."

The following is the text of the interview:

Q: What is Trump going to do now that he has lost to Joe Biden in the presidential elections? Do you predict Trump would form an opposition bloc?

A: Unlike most former Presidents, Donald Trump has extensive business interests, a major brand name, and a vast network of supporters.

In business, one obvious place to focus is creating a vibrant set of media and social media platforms for the tens of millions of conservatives who likely have been suppressed or even censored on Twitter, Facebook, and traditional news outlets.

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CSIS scenario for nuclear talks: A roadmap to failure

By Azin Sahabi

TEHRAN — The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a think tank based in Washington, DC which conducts policy studies and strategic analyses of political, economic and security issues throughout the world.

As number one think tank in the United States across all fields in 2019, the center publishes numerous reports about the Islamic Republic of Iran as a permanent key area of focus for the Oval Office. Given Joe Biden's tendency to reenter the JCPOA, the prominent scholars at CSIS have addressed the issue from strategic and geo-political aspects.

Iran will not capitulate

In a commentary on January 25, 2021, Jon B. Alterman, director of the Middle East (West Asia) Program at CSIS, speculates on Iran's likely tactics to seek advantage in the so called "follow-on" negotiations with the U.S. and its partners. In a commentary titled "Iran Will Still be a Slog", Alterman argues that what the Trump's administration hailed as a "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran proved fruitless. There was no regime change in Tehran, the missile program continued and Tehran began enriching large amounts of uranium to much higher concentrations. In fact, as the maximum pressure campaign was met with strengthened "maximum resistance" from Iran, it was all in vain.

In spite of Biden's administration statements on pursuing a different policy towards Iran, Alterman believes no different outcome will be reached. He argues: "The more the administration pursues the Iranians, the more the Iranians will pull back, in a bid to increase their leverage. Yet, the more the United States pulls back, the more the Iranians will try to force the United States to engage."

Therefore, he stresses that Washington should not anticipate that "a supposedly wounded Iran will capitulate". In fact, the best path forward for the U.S is to "anticipate a drawn-out process punctuated by crisis."

Iran's likely tactics in negotiations

Alterman stresses that U.S.-Iranian conflict is "one of vastly unequal parties" and given multidimensional pressures Iran struggles with, Tehran is pretty convinced to be in a comprehensive existential battle. Therefore, "the Iranian government pulls out all the stops. Its playbook at this point is fairly clear, and it has three principal elements."

"Determination to show strength"

To elaborate on the first element that he believes Iran will adhere to, Alterman reminds that when President Donald Trump called Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the UN General Assembly in 2019, he didn't leave his room to answer the call. In this context, the expert argues: "The Iranian government is convinced that showing weakness is a fatal mistake, and its determination to show strength often pushes it to overplay its hand."

"Using time as leverage"

The CSIS scholar claims that "Iran uses time as leverage" as the second principle. He believes during nuclear negotiations with the Obama administration, the Iranian side demonstrated no hurry to reach a conclusion. He adds, "After all, the United States was trying to manage the world, but Iran was focused principally on managing the United States."

"Creating urgency"

The American strategist also says, "The third principle is to create urgency among negotiating counterparts, to reinforce the conclusion that Tehran is more dangerous when it is isolated than when it is engaged."

To support his hypothesis, Alterman accuses Iran of conducting sabotage acts. He describes them as "difficult to attribute, at least immediately, and therefore more difficult to respond to."

Like his counterparts at the U.S. think tanks, he accuses Iran of arranging cyber-attacks and reiterates that it was Iran that conducted drone attacks on the Saudi Aramco oil processing facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais in September 2019. Also, he claims that Tehran attacked the four commercial ships on May 12, 2019, off Fujairah's coast in the Gulf of Oman to reinforce the threatening perception of Iran amid rising tensions with the U.S. in the Persian Gulf.

In addition, the American think tank describes Iran's recent remedial activities that are formally declared and are based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA as a means to "create urgency". The author also describes Iran's nuclear program as "an instrument to regulate diplomatic tensions rather than as a scientific endeavor."

"Seeing negotiations with Iran in terms of JCPOA is a mistake"

Alterman points out that many U.S. allies and partners are impatient to return to the JCPOA. On the other hand, Arab states in the Persian Gulf feel great threat that such a return would put them in danger. The fellow also reiterates that the 2015 agreement suffers from sufficient defects in terms of sunset provisions as well as significant ambiguities over the enforcement mechanism. However, Alterman emphasizes that notwithstanding this, "seeing negotiations with Iran in terms of the JCPOA is a mistake. There is no easy return. Instead, what is on offer is a long and difficult set of negotiations."

The author believes that with Iran's June 2021 presidential elections ahead, Tehran is unlikely to conclude an extensive agreement.

Alterman also comments on the attitude of Iran's next president towards the negotiations. Nearly without a shadow of doubt, he states that Iran's June 2021 presidential elections "will almost certainly produce a leader far more skeptical of negotiations than outgoing President Hassan Rouhani. In the interim, Iranians will fight to position themselves for the forthcoming negotiations, using all three strategies noted above."

He summarizes the Iranians' negotiation strategy as "embarking on a process of negotiations, not finding a solution" and concludes: "There will be an Iran deal, and then another Iran deal, but they (Biden's team) are unlikely to be able to strike the Iran deal that eliminates threats from Iran once and for all."

CSIS scenarios: Roadmaps to failure

The Center for Strategic and International Studies which houses over 100 of the world's top experts in residence is considered as one of the most influential centers in terms of scenario building, policy design and setting roadmaps for the U.S. decision makers. Undoubtedly, due to the complexities of the Iran nuclear negotiations, U.S.'s non-compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA as well as domestic divisions over the issue, future talks will be quite demanding. In addition, given conflicting interests of the two main parties besides high level of distrust, the risk of failure is considerable. On the other hand, Joe Biden had described his mission as "Rescuing U.S. Foreign Policy after Trump," with Iran's issue at the top of the list. In this context, it seems that CSIS's scenario building in terms of the possible results of future talks with Tehran is aimed to put the ball in Iran's court. In other words, the CSIS which describes the Iranian side's strategy as "embarking on a process of negotiations, not finding a solution", tries to induce the perception that in case of any failures in the negotiations, the one who should be blamed is the Islamic Republic of Iran, not the American side.

‘Opportunity for security collaboration between Iran and India’

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — General Amir Hatami, the Iranian defense minister, is going to visit India to participate in a ministerial meeting of the Indian Ocean Region states and negotiate on promotion of defense and security cooperation between Tehran and New Delhi.

Rajnath Singh, the Indian defense minister, has invited General Hatami to attend the forthcoming meeting of the defense ministers of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), according to Tashnim.

Brigadier General Hatami will hold meetings on the sidelines of the event with senior Indian political and military officials on expanding political, security and defense ties.

In addition to delivering a speech to the ministerial meeting of the Indian Ocean Region, Hatami will take part in the opening of the biennial Aero India air show that is planned



to be held in Bangalore on February 3-5. According to Indian media reports, Rajnath

Singh will host all defense ministers of the Indian Ocean Region on February 4, 2021.

Iran successfully launches new domestically-built satellite carrier

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Hosseini highlighted the successful test of the satellite carrier and noted, "One of the most important achievements of this space experiment is gaining the most powerful solid fuel engine."

"This satellite carrier, after tests and technology stabilization, will be ready to put operational satellites into orbit, and its main feature is to reduce the costs," he explained.

Iran has one of the advanced satellites programs in West Asia, however, the Western countries see Iran's missiles as a conventional military threat to regional stability.

Due to the rising tensions between Iran and the U.S. in recent years, the former U.S. administration have imposed sanctions on Iran's defense and space industry. Although the sanctions have created some economic difficulties, how-

ever, they couldn't stop Iran's determination to strengthen its defense and space industries.

Regarding the importance of defense and space program for Iran's national security, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has emphasized that Tehran would not be "deceived" by the United States' offer of negotiations and would not give up its missile and space program.

Korean crew will leave Iran soon

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, says the crew of the seized Korean ship are allowed to leave

Iran soon.

"Following the South Korean government's request and the assistance of Iran's Judiciary system, the crew of the Korean

ship, which was seized on charges of causing environmental pollution in the Persian Gulf, will leave the country in a humanitarian move by the Islamic Republic of Iran," he

announced on Tuesday.

Nonetheless, he underscored, "The judicial investigation of the ship and captain's trespass case continues through legal channels."

More advanced centrifuges operating as U.S. refuses to lift Iran sanctions: diplomat

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, has declared Iran will accelerate its nuclear program by operating more advanced centrifuges.

In a post on his Twitter account on Tuesday, he wrote, "Thanks to our diligent nuclear scientists, two cascades of 348 IR2m centrifuges with almost 4 times the capacity of IR1 are now running with UF6 successfully in Natanz. Installation of 2 cascades of IR6 centrifuges has also been started in Fordow. There's more to come soon."

Nevertheless, he has highlighted that the cooperation between Iran and the IAEA is very crucial, tweeting, "The IAEA is yet able to verify and is informed of the progress as planned."



Since Trump, the former U.S. president, quitted the nuclear accord in 2018 and imposed severe sanctions on Iran's economic sectors, Iran has decided to resume its nuclear activities in stages.

Iran's parliament has approved a legislation that would suspend the implementation of unannounced visits to nuclear facilities and require the government to boost its uranium enrichment if European countries do not provide relief from oil and banking sanctions.

The ratification also obliged the government to resume enriching uranium to 20%, and to install new centrifuges at nuclear facilities at the Natanz and the Fordo sites.

The government has already resumed enriching uranium to the level of 20 percent and starting installing new centrifuges.

Iraqi FM to arrive in Tehran on Wednesday

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — The Middle East Eye has announced that Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hossein is scheduled to visit Iran on Wednesday, February 3.

An informed source in the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs also confirmed the news, according to Al-Ahd News Agency.

The news has not yet been officially confirmed by Baghdad or Tehran, but media sources say the Iraqi foreign minister is expected to meet

with Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's foreign minister, regarding various issues.

Foreign Minister Hossein paid an unannounced visit to Tehran on September 28, 2020. Previously, Mustafa al-Kazemi, the Iraqi prime minister, traveled to Tehran to negotiate with Iranian officials over the relations between two countries.

The Iraqi foreign minister's visit to Tehran will take place as Jeanine Antoinette Hennis-Plasschaert, the UN Special Representative for Iraq, visited Tehran on Sunday for a two-day visit, according to a statement from the UN Office in Iraq. Hennis-Plasschaert held talks with Iranian officials on regional issues as part of efforts to support Iraq's stability.

The statement said that Hennis-Plasschaert had previously visited some countries, including

Iran, to strengthen the mission of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) under Security Council Resolution 2522, which facilitates dialogue.

In a meeting with Hennis-Plasschaert, Ali Akbar Velayati, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on international affairs, said Iran is ready to assist Iraq while stressing that the next parliamentary election in Iraq would be "very determining."

Blinken says U.S. will rejoin JCPOA if Iran reverses its nuclear measures

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken says his country will return to the Iran nuclear deal if Tehran returns to compliance with the terms of the agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"U.S. is willing to return to compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal if Iran does," Blinken says in interview with NBC News on Monday.

Iran and the U.S. are caught in a dispute that which side should first honor its obligations under the JCPOA.

Analysts say it was the U.S. that quit the JCPOA and imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran and naturally it should take the first step in removing sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Iran is still a party to the nuclear deal. It only started to decrease some of its commitments exactly one year after former President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the agreement and slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in line with his "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran.

Iran says its nuclear steps are in accordance with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which has "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."

On the question over who must take the first step in returning to the JCPOA, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told CNN late on Monday that this issue could be resolved by European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

Borrell could put his "hat on" as coordinator for the Joint

Commission of the JCPOA "and sort of choreograph the actions that are needed to be taken by the United States and the actions that are needed to be taken by Iran," Zarif said.

Blinken also claimed that Tehran was months away from being able to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon, adding it could be only "a matter of weeks" if Iran continues to lift restraints in the nuclear deal.

In December the Iranian parliament approved a legislation obliging the government to increase uranium enrichment to 20 percent and suspend the Additional Protocol to the NPT if the sanctions against Iran are not lifted within two months.

In line with the implementation of the parliamentary act called "strategic action to lift sanctions", the government started enriching uranium to 20 percent on January 4.

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

In his Monday interview with the CNN, Zarif said, "If we wanted to build a nuclear weapon we could have done it some time ago."

Zarif added. "But we decided that nuclear weapons are not, would not augment our security and are in contradiction to our, eh, ideological views. And that is why we never pursued nuclear weapons."

Blinken also highlighted the importance of multilateralism and added the Biden administration will "work with U.S. allies

and partners on a 'longer and stronger' agreement encompassing other issues."

Asked about whether the release of detained Americans, which was not part of previous talks, would be an absolute condition for an expanded nuclear treaty, he did not commit.

"Irrespective of ... any deal, those Americans need to be released. Period," he remarked, saying, "We're going to focus on making sure that they come home one way or another."

Trump quit the JCPOA in 2018, claiming it did not do enough to restrict Iran's nuclear and missile programs or its influence in West Asia.

According to Press TV, Zarif also told CNN that the JCPOA did not include Iran's defensive capabilities because the U.S. was not prepared to stop its arms sales to the region as a precondition.

"The nuclear deal was negotiated based on what we could agree and what we could not agree. This is the deal that was made," Zarif said.

"The United States has to accept that ... we decided not to agree upon certain things, not because we neglected them, but because the United States and its allies were not prepared to do what was necessary. Is the U.S. prepared to stop selling arms to our region?"

Zarif said Iran "spends a seventh of Saudi Arabia on defense, with 2.5 times its population."

"If it wants to talk about our defense ... is the U.S. prepared to reduce hundreds of billions of dollars of weapons it is selling to our region?"

Tehran University observes Solidarity Day

To express solidarity with the innocent people of Kashmir, the Urdu department of Tehran University arranged a webinar in collaboration with the embassy of Pakistan in Tehran on 1st February 2021.

The webinar, titled "Role Played by Persian Poets in Promotion of Persian Culture in Kashmir", was the third event in a series of seminars hosted by Tehran University on Kashmir in recent years.

The Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Rahim Hayat Qureshi, participated

as chief guest of the virtual event. The event was also attended by university professors, faculty members, scholars, media personnel and students.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ali Kavosi Nejad highlighted the role played by a Pakistani scholar of Kashmiri origin, Khawaja Abdul Hameed Irfani, in introducing Allama Iqbal to the Iranian nation and building bridges between Kashmir and Persian language and literature.

Tracing the history of Persian poetry in Kashmir, participants including Dr. Vafa

Yazdanmanesh, Mr. Ahmad Shehryar and Dr. Farzaneh Azam Lotfi, shared their perspectives on various literary accounts including references to Kashmir in Persian prose and poetry.

Stressing the importance of Kashmir Solidarity Day, Ambassador Qureshi emphasized that the beauty of the Kashmir Valley was marred by Indian security forces.

He noted that since the military siege of Jammu & Kashmir, the people of Kashmir had been subjected to atrocities and human rights abuses. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran

Khan, has repeatedly raised the Kashmir issue during his address to the UN General Assembly, drawing attention to the continued violations of various UN Security Council resolutions and India's behavior under international law.

In his concluding remarks, the ambassador thanked the Iranian leadership, especially Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, for extending continuous support to the people of Kashmir and raising concerns over the human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir.

American bottleneck

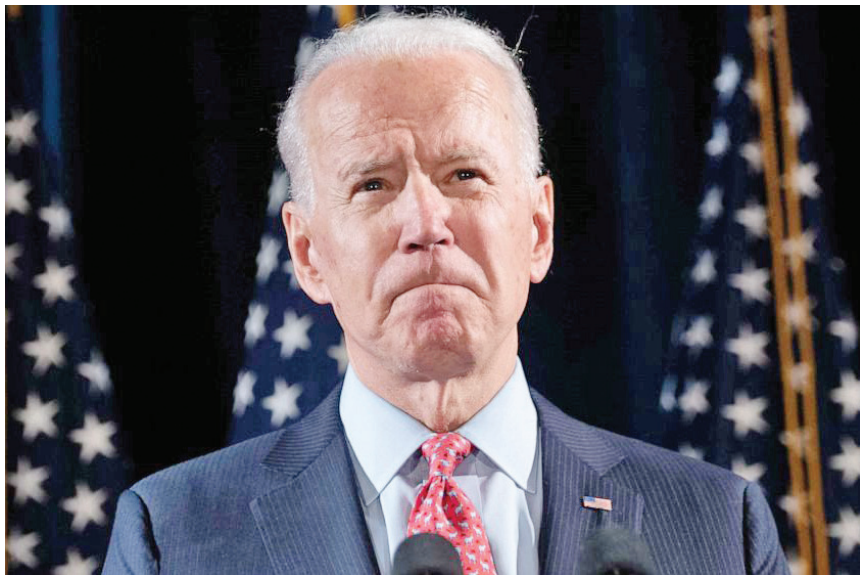
POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Biden administration has now made it clear that it expects Iran to make the first move to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. On the other hand, Iran has also said that it expects Washington to break from the failed policies of the Trump administration and return to the nuclear deal.

Both sides say they are not in a rush to get the deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — revived. The U.S. has even signaled that it's still a long way from rejoining the deal, even though it claimed that Iran has reduced the breakout time to a few months.

During his confirmation hearing in the Senate, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. was by no means close to reviving the JCPOA all while implying that Washington would not be quick to make a decision on how to deal with the nuclear deal, a position that seemed to be inconsistent with Biden's campaign promise.

Biden had promised in a mid-September op-ed for CNN that he will offer Iran a credible path back to diplomacy if it returns to strict compliance with the JCPOA. Biden reiterated this position after winning the U.S. election in November but said that reviving the deal would be hard and very difficult in what appeared to be a calculated policy of tempering expectations from his administration in terms of quickly reversing Trump's policy on Iran.

Ever since Biden took office, the U.S. officials have sought to portray the U.S. as not being in desperate need to revive the JCPOA. Instead, they moved to wait for a while before taking any decision on Iran, falsely believing that Tehran is in need to get the U.S. to return to a deal



that did not benefit Iran at all.

But who desperately needs to get the deal revived? Iran or the United States? To answer this question one needs to take a look at the state of play in the nuclear deal dispute.

It is safe to say that Iran does not need to get the U.S. to return to the JCPOA at any cost simply because it has already weathered the storm. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been under U.S. sanctions since the early years of its establishment. These sanctions were temporarily eased under the Obama administration for a short period of roughly two years. But Donald Trump began cranking up sanctions on Iran soon after he assumed office in 2016. The Trump administration piled up sanctions on Iran like never before, a move that was sort of a blessing in disguise because these sanctions made Iran impervious to further pressure from

Washington.

The U.S. sanctions, although creating hardships for ordinary Iranians, deeply changed the dynamics of Iran's economy, which is no longer dependent on oil revenues. More importantly, the sanctions Trump imposed on Iran deprived the new U.S. administration of the sanctions tool.

There are no meaningful sanctions left to impose on Iran. Former U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien admittedly said in October last year that the U.S. had little opportunity left to impose new sanctions against Iran.

"One of the problems that we have faced with both Iran and Russia is that we now have so many sanctions against these countries that we have very little (opportunity) to do anything about it," O'Brien said.

The lack of sanctions opportunity against Iran prompted the former U.S.

administration to resort to military tools against Iran but the Trump White House soon realized that the U.S. military tools were no longer applicable to Iran because of Tehran's deterrence capabilities.

While the U.S. has used all of its military and non-military options, Iran has just started making use of the tools it has in its toolbox.

On Tuesday, Iran announced new nuclear measures, further reducing compliance with the JCPOA.

"Thanks to our diligent nuclear scientists, two cascades of 348 IR2m centrifuges with almost 4 times the capacity of IR1 are now running with UF6 successfully in Natanz. Installation of 2 cascades of IR6 centrifuges has also been started in Fordow. There's more to come soon," Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said in a tweet on Tuesday evening, adding that the IAEA is yet able to verify and is informed of the progress as planned.

Iran has also announced that it will reduce international inspections of its nuclear facilities in February if the U.S. failed to lift sanctions.

Iran has a whole lot of options at its disposal to deal with the U.S. non-compliance with the JCPOA. But the U.S. has all but exhausted its options against Iran. Some Washington hawks would love to say that the U.S. has what they call "a sanctions leverage" over Iran but with Iran's economy getting out of stagnation by the day, this leverage began ceasing to be leverage.

Therefore, Iran is not obligated to make the first move to revive the JCPOA. It is the U.S. that needs to find a solution to what it portrays as the imminent threat of Iran developing a nuclear weapon in few months.

Iran FM dismisses U.S. counterpart's claim on nuclear breakout time

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded to the claim by his American counterpart that Iran could be weeks away from developing nuclear weapons by saying that claim was more aimed at public opinion than reality.

"I think that is a statement of concern that is more addressed to public opinion than to reality. Iran does not seek a nuclear weapon. If we wanted to build a nuclear weapon, we could have done it some time ago. But we decided that nuclear weapons will not augment our security and are in contradiction to our ideological views. And that's why we never pursued nuclear weapons," Zarif said in an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour late on Monday.

The Iranian foreign minister was responding to earlier comments by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in which he claimed that Iran might be months away from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

In a Sunday interview with NBC News, Blinken claimed that Tehran was months away from being able to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon, saying it could be only "a matter of weeks" if Iran continues to lift restraints in the nuclear deal.

Blinken also expressed the U.S. willingness to rejoin the nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — but he conditioned the U.S. return on Iran first reversing all the nuclear measures it adopted in response to the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA under Trump.

The chief U.S. diplomat pointed out that the U.S. is willing to return to compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal if Iran does and then works with U.S. allies and partners on a "longer and stronger" agreement encompassing other issues.

During his election, then-candidate Joe Biden promised to return to the JCPOA. And after winning the U.S. presidential election in November, Biden said he still stood by his election promise but said that delivering on this promise would be "hard" and "very difficult."

Biden did not present any timetable for the U.S. to return to the JCPOA and his secretary of state even said the U.S. is not in a rush to rejoin the nuclear deal. During his confirmation session in the Senate, Blinken had said the U.S. was still a long way from reentering the nuclear agreement with Iran, thereby implying that the U.S. may wait for some time before rejoining the deal.



But the Iranian foreign minister underlined the U.S. does not have the luxury of biding its time on Iran.

"The time for the United States to come back to the nuclear agreement is not unlimited. The United States has a limited window of opportunity," Zarif warned, noting "because President Biden does not want to portray himself as trying to take advantage of the failed policies of the former Trump administration."

Responding to a question on Biden's mid-September op-ed for CNN in which he vowed to rejoin the JCPOA if Iran strictly complies with it, Zarif said the U.S. needs to restore the broken trust and then address the issues stipulated in the September op-ed.

"First of all, the United States needs to establish its bona fides to come back to the nuclear deal. The United States is not in the nuclear deal. And it's not in the nuclear deal because of its own decision to withdraw without taking the routes that were available to it within the nuclear agreement," the Iranian foreign minister noted.

He also pointed to the nuclear steps Iran took in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA. On the first anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal, Iran embarked on a policy of gradually reducing its commitments under the JCPOA. It took five steps in this regard. In early January, Iran further reduced commitments by starting 20% uranium enrichment.

Zarif said these steps were taken in line with the terms of the deal itself, and thus they do not constitute a violation of the deal.

"Iran used the mechanisms in the nuclear agreement in order to limit its cooperation. If you read paragraph 36, we acted in strict accordance with the nuclear agreement," Zarif pointed out.

The chief Iranian diplomat, who led Iran's nuclear negotiations with the West, called on the U.S. to return to the JCPOA, underlining that if Washington does so, Iran will immediately follow suit.

"Now, the United States needs to come back into compliance and Iran will be ready immediately to respond. The timing is not the issue. The issue is whether the United States, whether the new administration, wants to follow the failed policies of the Trump administration or not."

Turning to Biden's "other issues of concern," Zarif implied that Iran is ready to discuss these issues but not in the framework of the JCPOA because this deal was signed as a result of Iran and the U.S. knowingly deciding to agree on what they could agree upon.

The nuclear deal was negotiated based on what Tehran and Washington could agree and what they could not agree, Zarif remarked. "This is the deal that was made. The United States has to accept what we agreed upon. We decided not to agree upon certain things not because we neglected them but because the United States and its allies were not prepared to do what was necessary. Is the United States prepared to stop selling arms to our region?" he continued.

Zarif says EU's Borrell can 'choreograph' the process of reviving JCPOA

With respect to the issue of who makes the first move to revive the JCPOA, Zarif noted that EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell can "choreograph" the process of reviving the deal.

According to Zarif, there can be a mechanism through which Borrell would synchronize or coordinate what can be done to revive the JCPOA.

"JCPOA has a mechanism built into the deal that is the Joint Commission. And the Joint Commission has a coordinator. The coordinator has two hats — it used to be Federica Mogherini now it is Josep Borrell. He has two hats; One hat is he is the high representative of the European Union for foreign defense policy. The other hat is the coordinator of the Joint Commission. He can put his hat as the coordinator of the Joint Commission and sort of choreograph the actions that are needed to be taken by the United States and the actions that are needed to be taken by Iran," Zarif stated.

Kuwait voices readiness to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Kuwait is ready to act as a go-between to deescalate tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia when appropriate conditions are created, a Turkish news agency reported on Tuesday.

"Kuwait is ready to pursue its mediation between Saudi Arabia and Iran when the appropriate conditions are created," Anadolu Agency quoted diplomatic sources familiar with the matter at Kuwait's Foreign Ministry as saying.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that "the exchange of ideas and discussion in order to bring closer points of view has not been stopped, and it is constantly continuing."

"Kuwait has always sought to bridge the gap in viewpoints and resolve dif-

ferences through diplomatic ways," the sources continued, noting that there is no mediation at present.

They added, "All that was published about the resumption of mediation is nothing but analyses that are not based on accurate information."

According to the sources, the points of difference between Saudi Arabia and Iran are not limited to Yemen, but rather to Iraq, Syria and Lebanon as well, and all these files are interrelated.

The sources noted that "the agreement of the two sides reflects positively on the region in general, which is what Kuwait seeks on a permanent basis and hopes to achieve."

Kuwait has been mediating between Qatar and the so-called Arab Quartet, which includes Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.



Kuwait also seems to be conveying messages between Iran and some countries of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. On January 26, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Seyed Abbas Araghchi visited Kuwait to tell the Arab country that Iran will not negotiate with the West over the region's issues.

"I met today with the Minister of

Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait and it was a very useful meeting during which I confirmed that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not negotiate with the member states of the nuclear agreement on any issue other than the method of implementation. Regarding the security of the Persian Gulf region, we are ready for dialogue exclusively with the countries of the region without any foreign intervention," Araghchi said in a tweet following a meeting with the top Kuwaiti diplomat.

Iranian foreign minister also echoed the same position since Joe Biden took office. He reiterated on various occasions that Iran will not negotiate with the West on regional issues in a bid to soothe Iran's Arab neighbors' concerns about a possible bargain between Iran and the West.

SPORTS

Iran basketball paired with the U.S. in Olympics

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team have been drawn with powerhouses the U.S. and France in the Men's Olympic Tournament.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Basketball Tournaments draw for both the Men and the Women finalists was held behind closed doors Tuesday at FIBA headquarters, the Patrick Baumann House of Basketball.

The eight national teams plus four slots reserved for the national teams clinching a spot in the Men's Tournament through the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournaments were split into the three preliminary groups of four teams each.

The four remaining tickets will be punched in through the four Olympic Qualifying groups planned to be held from June 29 to July 4.

In both tournaments, a new competition system has been put in place for Tokyo. The Group Phase will consist of three groups of four teams each. The teams placed first and second in each group, and the two best third-placed teams in the Group Phase qualify for the Final Phase.

"It's exciting to learn more about the Olympic schedule and who our preliminary round opponents will be in Tokyo," U.S. men's coach Gregg Popovich said. "The three Olympic preliminary groups appear well balanced, and there are a good number of teams who have legitimate shots at the gold medal in Tokyo."

Twenty-four top teams from across the globe, 12 men and 12 women, will go for gold at the Olympics, starting July 25 in Tokyo. Men's Tournament draw results:

Group A
Iran
France
The U.S.
OQT Victoria winner (Canada, China, Czech Republic, Greece, Turkey, Uruguay)
Group B
Australia
OQT Split winner (Brazil, Croatia, Germany, Mexico, Russia, Tunisia)
OQT Belgrade winner (Dominican Republic, Italy, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Serbia)
Nigeria
Group C
Argentina
Japan
Spain
OQT Kaunas winner (Angola, Korea, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Venezuela)

Mehdi Taremi dedicates his award to late Minavand

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Porto forward Mehdi Taremi dedicated his award to former Iran and Persepolis midfielder Mehrdad Minavand.

Taremi was chosen as the Man of the Match Monday night after his eye-catching performance against Rio Ave in Primeira Liga.

He helped his team beat Rio Ave 2-0 and remained in title race.

At the end of the match, Taremi respected his countryman holding a shirt with Mehrdad Minavand's name on its back.

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

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

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



ŠKF Sered complete signing of Iranian defender Salimi

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Slovakian top-flight football club ŠKF Sered have completed the signing of Iranian defender Iman Salimi on Monday.

Salimi has penned a five-month contract with ŠKF Sered. The 24-year-old player has joined the Slovakian team as a free agent player.

"First of all, I want to thank my family. I am very happy to be here in Sered, I want to show my qualities on the field and help the club and my new teammates," Salimi said.

Marian Cerny, General Manager of the club, is so happy with the new signing, skfsередfutbal.sk reported.

"We are glad to sign Iman Salimi. Today, the player signed a contract and joined the team. He is a very good football player. We promise him that he will be an important part of our team. He wants to help the club. We also help him to establish himself in Europe. We believe that he will also be part of a successful team," Cerny said.

2022 World Cup to be held with fans: Infantino

The 2022 World Cup will be held in stadiums full of spectators, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said on Monday.

The coronavirus will be defeated or we will have learned to live with it, Infantino said in a virtual meeting in Geneva alongside WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"I am very, very confident (it) will be incredible, will have the same magic, uniting the world," he told a virtual meeting. "We will be back to where we have to be."

World Cup players were not a priority group for vaccines against COVID-19, he said.

The 2022 World Cup is supposed to take place in Qatar between on November 21-December 18, 2022.

(Source: Reuters)

Majlis rejects general outlines of budget bill

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian parliament (Majlis) on Tuesday rejected general outlines of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1400, which starts on March 21, ILNA reported.

The bill was rejected during the open session of the parliament with 99 votes in favor, 148 votes against, and 12 abstentions.

On December 2, 2020, Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri submitted the administration's draft of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year to the Majlis.

The proposed budget amounted to about 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$579.928 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), with a 20-percent rise from the current year's approved budget.

The bill has estimated the government's budget at 9.298 quadrillion rials (about \$221.38 billion), with an increase of 47 percent from the figure of the current year.

It has envisaged 3.175 quadrillion rials (about \$75.595 billion) of incomes, while 6.37 quadrillion rials (about \$151.666 billion) of expenses.



Revenues from exporting oil, gas, and gas condensate are estimated at 1.199 quadrillion rials (about \$10.83 billion), up 323 percent from 454.9 trillion rials (about \$10.83 billion), approved in the current year's budget.

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

In Late December 2020, the parliament's ad hoc budget review committee had assessed the oil revenue outlooks provisioned in the budget bill during a meeting with Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh and the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati.

Following the parliament's decision, the budget review committee will discuss amendments to the bill.

This is the third consecutive year that the parliament has rejected the budget proposal.

The bill will be eventually approved after the necessary amendments are made and approved.

TEDPIX falls 28,000 points on Tuesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 28,238 points on Tuesday.

Over 12.518 billion securities worth \$114.559 trillion rials (about \$2.727 billion) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday.

The first market's index dropped 25,575 points, and the second market's index lost 39,961 points.

After several weeks of drop, TEDPIX could finally register growth in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index rose two percent to stand at 1.207 million points in the past week.

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

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

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

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



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

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

Farhang Hosseini, a capital market expert, has told the Tehran Times that although several external factors, including the disputes between the oil and economy ministries over the offering of the second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), increase in interest rates, the ambiguities in the next year's national budget bill, and etc. have contributed to the decline of the TSE's main index over the past few months, the main reason for this decline is the unconventional valuation (to be more precise the over-valuation) of entities in this market for encouraging liquidity inflow.

Behzad Samadi, a market analyst and board member of a major broker in Iran, believes that the recent declines in the main index of the TSE has nothing to do with the fundamental and technical issues of the market.

He believes the main reason for this situation is the interference of the government and over-encouraging of the masses for entering the market without having the slightest knowledge even about the fundamentals of this market.

"Like its decline, the drastic growth of the market did not have any technical and standard basis," he said.

According to Samadi, the bubble created in the TSE's main index was partly the result of the excitement instilled by the government, and partly due to the huge gap between some entities' real value and the prices for which they were offering their shares.

67 industrial, mining projects to be inaugurated during "Ten-Day Dawn"

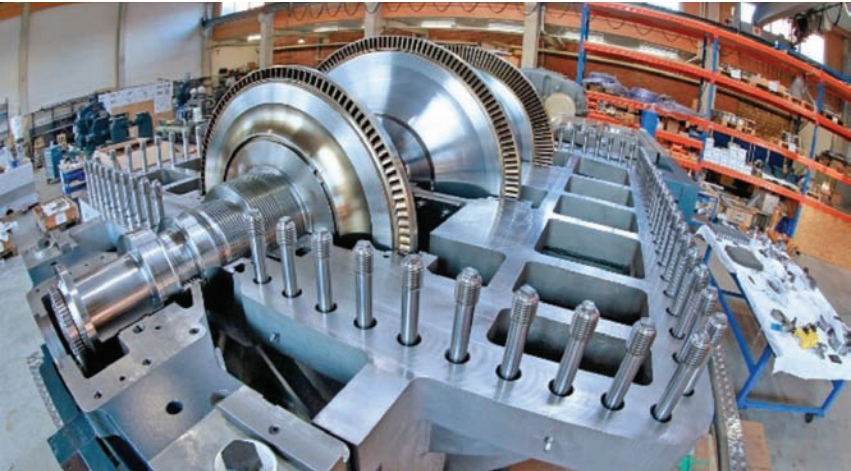
ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 67 major industrial and mining projects worth 600 trillion rials (about \$14.2 billion) are scheduled to be inaugurated during the Ten-Day Dawn (this year from January 31 until February 10), Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi announced.

According to Zarandi, the mentioned projects are going to create direct job opportunities for over 15,000 people across the country, IRNA reported.

Most of the projects will be put into operation in Kerman, Khorasan Razavi, Yazd, and East Azarbaijan provinces, the official said.

Five of the mentioned projects with a total investment of 70 trillion rials (about \$1.6 billion) will be inaugurated in Zanjan province on Thursday, he noted.

Every year, during the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations, numerous infrastructure pro-



jects are inaugurated or commenced to mark the development of the country after the

Islamic Revolution.

In the current Iranian calendar year (ends

on March 20) which has been named the year of "surge in production" by the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Ali Khamenei, the government is determined to support domestic production and promote the country's non-oil exports.

In this regard, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has been pursuing a program to inaugurate 200 industrial, mining, and trade projects across the country during the current year.

Back in May 2020, Zarandi had said that 1.69 quadrillion rials (about \$40.23 billion) has been invested in the mentioned projects that are going to create job opportunities for 41,000 people.

The mentioned program has been defined in line with the government's strategies for developing the country's infrastructure in order to realize the "Surge in Production" motto.

Capital market realizes over \$119b of financing in 10 months

1 → Dejpasand further described the private sector as an independent sector that easily expresses its views by attending various forums and meetings, adding: "We have achieved good results in this field, which is undeniable."

"Today, Iran is free from absolute dependence on oil, and the volume of non-oil exports is more than the oil exports. The share of non-oil exports in total exports has increased significantly and this trend is expected to continue after the sanctions are removed," he stressed.

Speaking in the meeting, Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie also pointed to the focus on regional development as one of the council's priorities in the upcoming Iranian calendar year 1400, and said that it was necessary to identify provincial capacities through construc-

tive interaction between the private sector and government.

"Although there is much emphasis on the role of the private sector in the economy, there is still no belief that the government cannot achieve economic development without the private sector," he regretted.

The Iranian government has started implementing a strategy to cut reliance on oil and promote domestic production using internal capacities over the past few years and especially since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions.

The capital market was one of the major areas in which this new strategy manifested. As part of the mentioned strategy, the government defined a holistic program to encourage the country's production sector to enter the capital market and use its huge capacities for funding development projects and boost production.



Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand (1stR) and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (2ndR) in the 102nd dialogue council of the government and the private sector on Monday.

NPC pursuing development of petchem industry in Makran region

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — National Petrochemical Company (NPC) is seeking to complete the value-chain in the downstream petrochemical sector in Makran coasts, turning the region into a new petrochemical hub, NPC Head Behzad Mohammadi said on Monday.

"Due to the strategic position of Makran, development of the petrochemical industry in this region and creating a petrochemical hub would be a smart move," Mohammadi said on the sidelines of a visit to the southeastern region.

The official noted that NPC is ready to cooperate in various fields in order to remove obstacles and problems and to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of projects in Makran region.

Iran's coastal strip of Makran along the



Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman enjoys the potentials to be the country's new economic and industrial hub, especially in terms of launching petrochemical and steel complexes.

Lying near the country's massive gas resources which can be used as feedstock

to petrochemical complexes, the stretch has great potentials for the development of the country's petrochemical industry.

NPC has been providing the necessary infrastructure on Makran coasts to develop the region into Iran's new hub of the petrochemical industry. It can bring employment in the region and also turn Chabahar, which is the country's only oceanic port, into an important trade and industrial port of Iran.

The petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the petrochemical export is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

According to Iranian Oil Minister

Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, the country is currently producing nearly 70 million tons of petrochemical products annually.

Back in August 2020, Zanganeh had announced that 27 petrochemical projects worth \$17 billion will go operational across the country by March 20, 2021.

By the end of the year, the country's petrochemical production capacity will be increased by 25 million tons per year, the minister had stated.

"One of the most important tasks of the petrochemical industry is to prevent the sale of raw materials by completing the value chain in the oil and gas industry, as well as supplying downstream feedstock for the domestic industries while preventing more than \$5 billion in foreign currency from leaving the country annually."

Regulations for tax on houses, luxury cars to be announced soon

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran National Tax Administration (INTA) said that the regulations for the tax on houses and luxury cars will be announced soon, adding that this annual tax has been collected and a heavy fine has been imposed on those who run away from it.

Regarding the reason for the delay in approving the bylaws for the mentioned tax, Omid-Ali Parsa said: "The bylaws were sent to the government by the INTA a long time ago and have recently been approved by the government's economy committee."

The bylaws will be announced in coming days and then taxation of houses and luxury cars will be started, and heavy fines will be imposed on those who evade the tax, the official stated.

Back in last October, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami had said that the ministry has referred a list of 194,000 vacant housing units to Iran National Tax Administration to be taxed under the new vacancy tax law.

The minister said that the owners of these houses have been informed in this regard via receiving SMSs.

In September 2020, Deputy Transport Minister for Housing and Construction Affairs Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh had said that in the first stage of the implementation of the program for collecting tax from the country's vacant housing units, only units belonging to natural persons are targeted.

The Iranian parliament (Majlis) had approved the double-urgency plan of the vacancy tax law in mid-July 2020.

The mentioned plan is mainly aimed at lowering the housing rental rate in the country.

Expressing his agreement over the approval of the mentioned plan, Hossein Hossein-Zadeh Bahraini, a member of the Majlis Economic Committee, said, "Our problem in the housing sector is not the demand higher than the supply, while the number of residential units is more than required."

This plan is vital, as many families are struggling for renting the homes, while there are many empty units, the MP further reiterated.

75 idle mines revived in Markazi Province

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, 75 idle mines have been revived in Markazi Province, central Iran, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).

Saeed Jafari Karahroutdi, the head of Markazi Province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, also referred to the five axes defined by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade in this year, and mentioned one of these axes as the domestic production movement and said: "The establishment of four specialized desks in Markazi Province has been one of the sub-sections of this axis, which has succeeded in this regard, and 125 percent of this goal has been achieved this year, as five specialized desks have been activated."

According to the available statistics, the number of active mines in the country is more than 5,600 mines, from which an average of 400 million tons of various minerals are extracted annually, and the share of construction materials is estimated at 60 to 65 percent.

Currently, 257 mines are being equipped as part of a comprehensive program for reviving idle small-scale mines across the country.

Reviving 200 idle mines and setting up 25 processing units have been planned for the current Iranian year (ends on March 20, 2021).

Last year, 146 mines were revived throughout the country.

According to the information released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), the most small-scale inactive mines are located in Khorasan Razavi Province and the least of them are located in the south of Kerman Province and North Khorasan Province.

As reported, under the framework of the mentioned program, 672 idle mines have been identified and prioritized in the current Iranian calendar year, and diagnostic procedures have been performed on 194 mines to determine the reasons for the halt in their production.



The mentioned program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO's missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces.

The previous head of IMIDRO has mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step toward materializing "Surge in Production", which is the motto of the current Iranian calendar year, it also plays

a significant role in job creation throughout the country, Khodadad Gharibpour has said.

Following this program, so far various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite, and dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for resolving their issues.

According to the head of the Iranian Mining Engineering Organization (IMEO), the mines of Iran have 27 widely used minerals.

Taqi Nabi said that Iran produces 13 major minerals in the world and is among the top 10 countries in this due.

He further referred to the government's plan for reviving the idle mines across the country, and said, "The government has taken good steps to return the closed mines to the production cycle, and good expert measures have been taken."

Mining units are given a three-month opportunity to determine the status of stagnant and inactive mines in order to revive them, he added.

Iran has done well to resist Trump's maximum pressure: research scientist

By Mohammad Ali Saki

TEHRAN – An executive director and principal research scientist at the Center for International Studies says that Iran could resist America's "maximum pressure" successfully while Europe failed to help Tehran.

"Iran has done well to resist Trump and Pompeo's ill-conceived maximum pressure," John Tirman tells the Tehran Times.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was inked in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – China, France, Russia, the UK and U.S. – plus Germany, together with the European Union.

But on May 8, 2018, the former U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the landmark pact and slapped sweeping sanctions on Iran as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran. The Trump administration imposed a total ban on Iran's oil export, the main source of Iran's revenues.

In a reciprocal move, Iran started reducing its commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal as it tried to pressure European countries to find ways to confront the U.S. unilateral sanctions. Iran took such a step after waiting for a full year. It started to gradually remove cap on its nuclear activities at bi-monthly intervals. At the time Iran insisted if Iran's economy is shielded from sanctions it will reverse its nuclear decision.

"(However,) the Europeans barely helped Iran; they've shown themselves to still be vassals of the United States. Iran did it on their own," Tirman notes.



The principal research scientist at the Center for International Studies says Trump's "policies were conventional Republican policies—tax cuts, deregulation, and certain braggadocio in foreign affairs."

The rising tension between Iran and the Trump administration pushed some observers to claim that the JCPOA is dead, especially after the Arab-Israeli normalization and their efforts to form a coalition against Iran.

But after Joe Biden's presidential victory in the November elections and his administration's promise to reverse Trump's policies, it is expected the White House rejoin the nuclear deal.

"JCPOA can be revived if Biden starts to unravel sanctions and Iran complies with

the restraints on the nuclear program," according to Tirman.

But the United States has declared that it would return to the deal only after Tehran meets its commitments, according to U.S. secretary of state Antony Blinken.

However, analysts say it is the U.S. that must take the first step and lift sanctions against Iran because it was Washington that quit the deal and imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran with the aim of strangulating its economy.

Iran's presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has said "Iran has not left the JCPOA so that it can return to it."

In an interview with CNN on Monday, Zarif said EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, as the coordinator for the JCPOA Joint Commission, could put his "hat on" and suggest "the actions that are needed to be taken by the United States and the actions that are needed to be taken by Iran" to revitalize the accord.

On his first full day as the top U.S. diplomat, Blinken warned of a long road until verification.

Saudi Arabia and Israel are sparing no effort to hamper the revival of the nuclear deal, claiming that the accord increased Iran's influence in the region.

"Biden has already taken into account the opposition of other regional players," Tirman says.

The American international relations expert believes that "steps can be outlined to build confidence that all sides will comply."

Asked about Trump's policies in his four years of presidency and the influence of the "deep state" in Trump's defeat, Tirman emphasizes that "there is no 'deep state' in the United States. His policies were conventional Republican policies—tax cuts, deregulation, and certain braggadocio in foreign affairs."

While "Biden is facing COVID-19 and must focus on the American economy," Tirman points out that "in foreign affairs, China and Russia remain the biggest challenges."

Regarding Trump's future in U.S. political sphere, the American expert concludes that it is difficult to predict but, "my sense is that the entire Trump family is finished politically."

U.S. has long been divided: American writer

1 → In politics, Trump is likely to continue reforming the Republican Party, concentrating on attracting voters hurt by unregulated globalism, especially including disaffected Democrats and Independents.

Trump is a master at creating and milking suspense over his future course of action. If he is successful in 2022 changing the complexion of the Republican party and taking the Senate, the House or both, he may well run for President again in 2023 and 2024.

What are Biden's main presidential challenges?

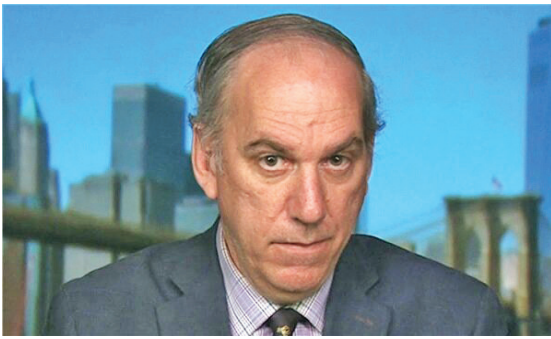
Politically, President Biden is caught between satisfying demands from hard-left progressives and suffering blowback from disgruntled Trump supporters. The more he placates the hard left, the more he will encourage those who revere the U.S. Constitution to rise up, peaceably in opposition and likely add to the Trump base.

Financially, the U.S. is twenty years down a path of reckless spending and borrowing to pay for vast bureaucracies that claim success fighting a raft of enemies, or progress redressing social injustice but cannot, or will not explain, with verifiable evidence, why Americans are better off in 2021 than we were in 2001, before September 11th.

These challenges are monstrous ones. Topping them off is Joe Biden's great difficulty relating to the average American, credibly showing he is sensible, in charge and actually tackling problems that affect most of us. At a time when technology and low-cost human labor pose daunting threats to American workers whose pay is high compared to world scale, the Biden administration seems determined to destroy private-sector jobs and reverse Trump's manifest success taming elements of our government bureaucracy.

Trump's critics say that he has divided the country. How can this rift be healed?

Americans have long been divided, particularly so since 1989. One camp, those who favor unregulated globalism, want to transition to a world led by China and perhaps India. This group typically includes academics, mainstream media, wealthy investors, executives at multinational companies and philanthropists. Here, and in many countries, those who worship at the World Economic



"Financially, the U.S. is twenty years down a path of reckless spending and borrowing to pay for vast bureaucracies that claim success fighting a raft of enemies, or progress redressing social injustice but cannot, or will not explain, with verifiable evidence, why Americans are better off in 2021 than we were in 2001, before September 11th."

Forum and similar locations believe their path is the one towards greater glory and that doubters are not smart enough to understand the progress they offer.

The other camp looks at globalist organizations and sees claims of success that are not supported by convincing evidence, and clear suggestions of influence peddling, corruption, fraud, waste and other abuses.

An irony is that technology gives most humans abilities to interact frugally without depending upon expensive gov-

ernments to protect us.

In the U.S. and in many nations with ageing expensive workforces, the battle between those advocating for unregulated globalism, and those favoring reform of ineffective and bloated governments at home is far from over.

What do you expect in regard to the impeachment bill against Trump?

Trump seems likely to have his lawyers question the validity of the second impeachment in several ways.

First, he may question the short length of time taken to gather and stress test the allegations inherent in the impeachment article.

Second, he may question whether a former President can be convicted in an impeachment trial in any case.

Third, he may refuse to participate in the proceeding unless the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court reconsiders and decides to officiate.

At this moment, the odds of finding 17 out of 50 Republican Senators to convict Donald Trump seem remote. So, it may be the House and Senate adjust their strategies and seek to pass motions of censure, instead.

What is your comment on what is called U.S. "deep state"? Does it have a determining role?

President Eisenhower warned of the dangers posed by the military-industrial complex in his farewell speech to America in January 1961. Since then, Americans have willingly engaged with social media and in transactions that give governments and bad actors access to information that can be used to control citizens, visitors and foreigners alike. When these deep state actors break laws, they seldom, if ever, are brought to account.

Accepting terms of service that are one-sided, to send an email, exchange information, or store data, we have become hostages, even slaves to digital masters, who are readily manipulated by security services, law enforcement and even by partisan politicians.

Until we change relationships with these digital overlords and until we change our patterns of interaction, each of us stands to lose much as we live out precious days and years of life remaining on this earth.

How can Democrats stop a Trump return to the White House?

Cristina Tzintzun Ramirez

After four chaotic years under former President Donald Trump, a new U.S. administration promises to bring unity to the country and work for all Americans. Democrats want to believe this is the end of Trumpian politics but that is unlikely to happen after Trump himself hinted at a new party – the Patriotic Party – made up of GOP exiles.

This party could motivate other candidates waiting in the wings, hellbent on sowing division and discord in our nation's democracy, to attempt to assume the power of the presidency. Our economic situation: stagnant wages, devastation on the working and middle class, and runaway inequality, are crushing problems for millions of Americans vulnerable to the promises of Trump-like figures.

Trump's racist and xenophobic rhetoric was not the only reason he rose to power, but it did help a frustrated white working class find someone to blame for their economic desperation. Democrats have a chance to beat back a future Trump presidential bid and regain voters by delivering on a progressive economic agenda.

Americans want economic change because even before COVID-19, things were not going well for them. In 2019, some 69 percent of Americans had \$1,000 or less in savings; 40 percent made less than \$15 per hour; one in five with student debt had defaulted on their

loans; and tens of millions of Americans had no retirement savings.

This bleak economic reality has led to most Americans becoming convinced that their children will be worse off than them.

Democratic Party leaders prefer to believe radical conservatives gave rise to Trump but the reality is his rise was also fueled by Democratic leaders who spent the last 30 years bending over backwards to please Wall Street and big business, selling out the labor movement, and supporting free trade agreements that sent millions of jobs overseas.

This convinced many Americans that the Democratic party no longer represented their needs. Now, Democrats have the opportunity to reverse this belief and make millions of American voters identify with and vote Democratic.

Moments of crisis – such as the one we are living now with the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession and climate change – can also be opportunities to move forward long overdue bold policy changes. With Democrats holding the power of the presidency, the Senate and the House of Representatives, there is nothing standing in their way (but their own disorganization) to take on the power of big business and the ultra-wealthy who have seen their wealth and power grow over the last 30 years while the vast majority of Americans have seen their net worth decline.

Lessons from the election and economic

crisis of 2008 should be a critical point of reference for Democrats on how to proceed at this moment. Back in 2008, Democrats also controlled the presidency, Senate and House of Representatives and were facing economic collapse triggered by the greed of Wall Street and big bankers.

But instead of bailing out Main Street, Wall Street and big banks were rescued, which enraged millions of Americans. Additionally, Democratic leaders wasted precious time trying and failing to win over moderate Republicans to their agenda.

President Barack Obama's two terms should teach us that now is not the time to negotiate with Republican party leaders. These are the people who held hostage Obama's authority to name a new Supreme Court justice, refused to raise the minimum wage, and gave billionaires and the largest corporations in the world one of the biggest tax breaks in our nation's history.

Now is the time to push for the economic change Americans need, take the pressure off middle-class and working-class families, and help pull our economy out of its current recession. To do so, Democrats have to take the following steps.

First, they have to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, which would give tens of million American workers a much-needed raise, increase spending, and grow our economy. Some 67 percent of Americans support

raising the minimum wage to this level.

Second, they have to cancel student debt, which would allow millions of Americans to purchase a home, start a small business and help grow our economy.

Third, they have to establish universal child care, which would support tens of millions of working families and put thousands of dollars back into the hands of families. In most states, it costs more to send your infant to daycare than to pay for their college education.

Fourth, they have to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would guarantee the right of American workers to join a union. Historically, nothing has proven more fundamental to growing the middle class than a strong labor movement.

These economic policies are supported by the majority of Americans who are desperate to see real change. Taking power in Washington needs to be the first step in dismantling Trumpian politics and the divisions he has sown.

Creating unity requires delivering on a broad economic agenda to change the lives of Black, brown and white Americans. Nothing would make Republicans like Donald Trump, Mitch McConnell or Ted Cruz more worried about their political futures than Democrats delivering the bold economic change the American people need.

(Source: Aljazeera)

HRW urges Biden to renounce Trump's slurs against critics of Israel

1 → He said the Trump administration upended the global politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Pompeo toured a settlement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank – the first such visit by a top U.S. official – on November 19 last year.

The trip to Psagot came a year after Pompeo said the settlements did not contradict international law, reversing a long-held U.S. position.

According to Press TV, the declaration outraged Palestinians, who oppose settlements on land they claim for a future independent state.

Goldstein further noted that the former U.S. secretary of state vowed the same day to list, and cut off funding to groups that support boycotts of Israel. Pompeo, however, did not release that list, for unexplained reasons.

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

Half of Americans want to see Senate convict Trump over Capitol riot

As former U.S. President Donald Trump gears up for his impeachment trial next month, a new poll has found that half of Americans want to see the Senate convict him for inciting an insurrection.

According to a Marist poll released on Monday, 50 percent said they want to see Trump convicted and impeached, despite the fact that he no longer resides in the White House. On the opposite end of the argument, 41 percent want to see him acquitted, RT reported.

When respondents are broken down into the two major political parties in the U.S., the split becomes, not surprisingly, far less even.

Among those who identify themselves as Democrats, 90 percent want to see Trump convicted, while 90 percent of Republicans want to see him acquitted. Among those who identify with neither party and prefer to call themselves Independents, 49 percent want the former president convicted, while 39 percent want him exonerated through the trial process, which will kickoff on February 8.

The chances of Trump being convicted remain up in the air. While Democrats control the Senate thanks to a 50-50 split and Vice President Kamala Harris being the deciding vote in a tie, 67 senators need to vote to impeach the former president, which means 17 Republicans would need to side with the Democratic Party. While some, like longtime Trump critic Mitt Romney, have indicated there is a chance they could vote to impeach, it will be an uphill battle for Democrats to get a whopping 17 to vote against their party's previous presidential nominee.

The House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump during his final days in office and accused him of inciting an insurrection, holding him responsible for the U.S. Capitol riot on January 6 where supporters of the president stormed the Capitol over concerns about election integrity. Five people ended up dying, including a police officer.

Top Chinese diplomat calls for China, U.S. to mend relations

China's top diplomat called on Tuesday for Beijing and Washington to put relations back on a predictable and constructive path, saying the United States should stop meddling in China's internal affairs, like Hong Kong and Tibet.

Yang Jiechi, director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chinese Communist Party, is the highest ranking Chinese leader to speak on China-U.S. relations since President Joe Biden took office, Reuters reported.

While reassuring the United States that China has no intention to challenge or replace the U.S. position in the world, Yang stressed that no force can hold back China's development.

Resistance News

General strike, clashes in Tamra city after two Palestinians killed

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— Two Palestinian young men were killed and two others sustained injuries, one seriously, on Monday evening when Israeli police officers opened fire at them in the Arab city of Tamra in Israel (the 1948 occupied lands), a few hours after a citizen was killed in a shooting incident in Nazareth city.

The crime raised the ire of hundreds of local residents who rallied in Tamra and closed Road 70 before clashing with police forces, who used tear gas and stun grenades to disperse the protesters.

One of the victims was identified as Ahmed Hijazi, a university student. He was killed during his presence in the area where police officers exchanged fire with gunmen.

Afterwards, the Tamra municipality on Tuesday declared a general strike in the city in protest at the killing of two Arab young men.

Earlier, 33-year-old Adham Bazie succumbed to a serious bullet injury in a hospital in Nazareth.

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Glimpses of bread making in Iran

➔ Several additives may be added to the wheat flour-yeast-water dough to increase the shelf life of bread and improve its sweetness, quality, or even nutritional value.

The most commonly used additives are vegetables (such as potato, onion, and spinach), fruits and nuts (such as raisins, walnuts, and peanuts), seeds (such as poppy, cumin, and sesame), salt, sugars, lipids, milk, egg, spices, and food starches.

In addition to countless kinds of flatbread that are baked throughout the country, numerous types of bread are produced by the ethnic groups. Sangak, barbari, taftoon, and lavash are the most popular kinds of bread, which are prepared in different composition, shape, size, texture, color, and flavor.



Flatbreads may be categorized in different ways as below: By the type of flour: wheat-based, barley-based, rice-based, etc. By the size and volume: flat, raised, and semi-raised. By method of cooking: hot stone-baked, tandoori, oven-baked, steam-baked, etc. By the type of ingredients added to wheat flour-water-yeast dough: sesame bread, potato bread, etc. By texture: doughy, soft, crispy, brittle, and dry. And finally, by whether or not the bread contains sugar: sweet and nonsweet.

Here are some of the most popular flatbreads ubiquitous in every corner of the country and even beyond:

Nan-e sangak

Sangak, a thin and flatbread, is one of the most common and popular breads in the country. It is considered as one of the national breads of Iranian cuisine. Its shape can be either triangular or rectangular, and it comes in two main varieties: plain and special, which is topped with poppy and sesame seeds.

Historical documents show that this bread was probably invented by the scholar and chief architect Shaykh Bahai during the Safavid dynasty. What is unique about the sangak bread is the way of baking in a traditional oven. Sangak in Persian means "pebble" or "small stone." This bread is baked on a bed of hot pebbles in an oven.

At least two bakers are required to prepare sangak. The dough is flattened on a slightly convex slab and is quickly thrust into the oven by the first person. Another baker removes sangak with a double-prong fork or skewer after a few minutes. Fig. 1 shows the two types of sangak bread.

Nan-e barbari

Nan-e barbari is wheat-based and leavened flatbread. It is usually formed into a long oval shape that is traditionally brushed with rooms, a flour glaze which gives it a light golden crust but keeps it light and airy on the inside.

Barbars are an ethnic group indigenous to northeastern Iran that borders Afghanistan. They brought this bread to Tehran during the Qajar ear. The baker rests the flattened dough on a table for preparation for the baking process. Sprinkling seeds such as sesame over the dough is very common before baking. Finally, the dough is carefully inserted with a long wooden paddle into a heated oven.

Nan-e taftoon

Taftun or taftoon, is a Persian word that is derived from "tafan", meaning "heating", "burning", or "kindling."

The flatbread is almost always prepared with whole wheat flour, milk, eggs, and yogurt. The dough is similar to pizza dough, resulting in a chewy, stringy texture. Traditionally, the dough is baked on the walls of a tandoor oven for about a minute and is then removed from the walls with a metal skewer.



Nan-e taftoon is often flavored with cardamom or saffron, while some cooks like to sprinkle it with poppy seeds on top. The bread is mostly eaten with kebabs, but it can be consumed with virtually anything on the side, such as cottage cheese, tomatoes, and bell peppers.

Nan-e lavash

Lavash is a soft and thin flatbread that is prepared in a clay oven, rotary oven, baking machine, or tandoor. It is one of the most widespread types of bread in Iran. The origin of lavash is most probably from Iran, according to the state of the encyclopedia of Jewish food. There is a tremendous variety in flavor and texture of this bread in Iranian cuisine. Some types of lavash are so thin that they will be dried quickly and a brittle and hard texture will be achieved. Also, lavash varies in size from about 30 cm in length to over 0.5 m, and in shape from circular to oblong or square.

Nan-e shirmal

Shirmal is a traditional Iranian flatbread made with maida flour, milk, saffron, and yeast. It is characterized by its strong saffron flavor and yellow color. The bread is traditionally baked in a tandoor oven and served warm, preferably with soups or meat dishes such as kebabs and curries.

The name shirmal means milk bread, referring to one of its key ingredients, imparting a slightly sweet flavor to the flatbread. For additional sweetness, some cooks like to add dried fruit into the dough. It is believed that shirmal has Persian roots, when numerous Persians traveled to India and Pakistan and learned the secrets of bread-making.

Tourism projects worth \$334m inaugurated nationwide

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday inaugurated tens of tourism-related projects via a video conference on the occasion of Ten-Day Dawn (Jan. 31- Feb. 10, marking the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution).

A total of 14 trillion rials (about \$334 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been channeled into the projects countrywide, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced on Monday.

Tourism-related projects worth 220 trillion rials (\$5.2 billion) had previously come on stream since President Rouhani inaugurated his second four-year term in 2017. With these new projects being taken into account, the total investments in this sector are added up to 234 trillion rials (\$5.5 billion), which is a new record, the tourism minister explained.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has played an important role in the country's currency earnings, as in 2019, the tourism sector's share of the country's GDP was \$11.8 billion, which is a very significant number, Mounesan said.

Referring to passenger flows, he stated some 8.8 million foreign nationals visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian year 1398 (March 20, 2019-March 19, 2020) before the coronavirus outbreak puts almost everything on a halt.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic and the damages it has caused to the country's tourism, this sector is still running



and several projects are underway, the official added.

Back in August, the minister announced that Iran's travel sector has suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, however, he mentioned that all the tourism businesses across the country will have the capacity to fully resume their activities both in domestic and foreign markets.

"Many tourism projects have been completed, or are being implemented, showing that a very good capacity has been created in the field of tourism in

the country and [this trend] should not be stopped," he explained.

Mounesan went on to say that 2,451 tourism-related projects worth 1,370 trillion rials (around \$32 billion) are being implemented across the country that signals a prosperous future for Iran's tourism sector.

The tourism minister also said the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the

world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

Some experts believe that the coronavirus pandemic may turn tours and travels into luxury items as observing health protocols will raise the cost of travel in the country.

Mohammad Ali Vaeqi, the vice president of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, warned earlier in June that with the continuation of the coronavirus outbreak, tourists may prefer individual travel rather than tours, adding that they may also choose to go on a trip by their vehicles and stay in tents or nature instead of hotels.

In the global scene, part of the new travel puzzle is the jet-set mindset focusing on tough hygiene care and social distancing as cardinal guidelines for slowing the spread of the virus. So the average expenditure will be raised for a typical traveler particularly inbound passengers so lesser ones can afford to buy privacy and space and safer travel amenities.

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. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Over 3,000 smuggled relics returned to Iran since August 2017: minister

HERITAGE TEHRAN — More than 3,000 historical objects that had been looted and smuggled out of Iran decades ago have been returned home since August 2017, when President Hassan Rouhani began his second administration, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Monday.

The twelfth government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has set a new [national] record for the repatriation of once smuggled historical relics by the means of cultural pursuits, [effective] diplomacy, and the legal actions, Mounesan explained.

He made the remarks during the opening ceremony of the Persian Gulf Regional Museum, which is a vast museum of cultural heritage and anthropology in the port city of Bushehr, southern Iran.

"More than 3,000 historical objects were returned to the country since the Twelfth Government took office, and these actions will be continuing," he said.

Only in one case, over Achaemenid-era clay tablets, which were on loan from Iran to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago since 1935, were returned home in 2019, the official added.

In December, 49 works of ancient art that had been

smuggled out of the country some four decades ago were brought back home with the aid of Swiss officials.

In February 2018, and following years of ups and downs, the fate of those ancient Persian artifacts, was left in the hands of a U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of Iran.

Archaeologists affiliated with the University of Chicago discovered the tablets in the 1930s while excavating in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire. However, the institute has resumed work in collaboration with colleagues in Iran, and the return of the tablets is part of a broadening of contacts between scholars in the two countries, said Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

The tablets reveal the economic, social, and religious history of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC) and the larger Near Eastern region in the fifth century BC.

Darius I, byname Darius the Great, (born 550 BC—died 486), king of Persia in 522–486 BC, one of the greatest rulers of the Achaemenid dynasty, who was noted for his administrative genius and his great building projects. Darius attempted several times to conquer Greece; his fleet was destroyed by a storm



in 492, and the Athenians defeated his army at Marathon in 490.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and to India.

Iran setting rules for possible New Year travels

TOURISM TEHRAN — Well-planned travels during the Persian New Year (Noruz) holidays, which will start on March 20, would be possible in close coordination with the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, the deputy tourism minister said on Tuesday.

In order to create social vitality during the holidays, the ministry has set some rules for possible Noruz trips to control and monitor them carefully, Vali Teymouri said.

"The trips will be possible only within the framework of planned tours through licensed travel agencies and under the supervision of the tourism ministry."

For people, who travel individually and outside of the tours, a reservation for an authorized accommodation center will be necessary, the official added.



He also emphasized that all travelers and tourists need to follow strict health protocols during their trips and stays.

Last March, which is the most bustling and booming period for the tourism sector because it culminates in Noruz, all celebrations were canceled in all 31 provinces

across the country, and all museums and historical sites, affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts went on a lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Last year, before the Persian New year, the tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan asked people to postpone or reschedule tours to help the tourism industry deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

"My suggestion to my dear people is that they do not cancel their hotel reservations and domestic tours as far as possible to help the tourism industry and prevent it from bankruptcy by making their reservations in time after the virus is controlled."

Iranians made 74 million overnight stays in their domestic trips during the Noruz holidays two years ago (2019), which showed a

20 percent increase year on year. And some 132 million visits to tourist attractions were registered during the mentioned period, which showed a 34 percent growth year on year, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

The Islamic Republic was ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in the globe in 2019, with 27.9 percent growth year on year, according to the latest statistics released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

However, the country expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots. 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.

Works by female crafters on display in Tehran exhibit

HERITAGE TEHRAN — An exhibition of handmade works by female crafters is currently underway at the Hashti Hall of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Tehran.

The exhibition features silver and filigree works from Zanjan, needlework and cross-stitch works from Tehran as well as Batik works from Alborz province, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Held on the occasion of the Ten-Day Dawn (Jan. 31-Feb. 10, marking the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution), the exhibition will run until next Wednesday.

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

The cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qasemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific Region last January, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a "world city of [diverse] handicrafts". Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a



"world city of filigree". And Qasemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts, Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer-garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

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

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

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

Women's share of national budget rises by 61%

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — The budget proposed for women and family affairs has increased by 61 percent in the national budget bill for the next calendar year (starting on March 20).

Women, as half of the active population in any society, make an important contribution to development and growth, and financial support is needed to increase this effectiveness. The issue has been considered in the annual national budget.

The budget, which directly covers women and family affairs, is equivalent to 37 trillion rials (nearly \$880 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which increased by 61 percent compared to the current year's budget.

The largest share of women's budget is earmarked to the organizations active in the field of women and the family, which accounts for about 75 percent of the total credit, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

About 30 percent of the total women budget is allocated to children, 73 percent of which will be spent on supportive activities to meet the basic biological needs of children, and only about 30 percent is allocated to education and training issues.

The largest increase in credit is related to the "Allowance for improving the nutrition of children with metabolic diseases", which has increased almost 13 times compared to this year's budget.



Budget for women breadwinners up 50%

Supporting women heads of households in the form of insurance, services, and social support is another important issue, which accounts for 25 percent of the budget, which has grown by about 50 percent.

Female-headed households' share of the national budget accounts for 23 percent of the total credits for women and the family.

In Iran, there are 3 million women-headed households (WHH), out of a total of 22 million families, and most of the

WHH can be found in less developed areas of the country, according to the UNDP office in Iran.

Steps taken toward women's empowerment

Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, said in October that the government has taken major steps for the advancement of women and families in Iran.

"Through an inter-sectoral process, we developed national indicators for gender equity, which laid the ground for the first result based Plan for Women and Family Advancement in 31 provinces and

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

"Based on our review of legislation on women and family, we have proposed 10 new bills including the bill on the Protection of Women's Security Against Violence and several new laws," the vice president added.

"At least 2700 women-focused NGOs are active in Iran and we have plans for the empowerment of civil society activities, we have successfully implemented schemes like enhancing social resiliency, also the economic empowerment of thousands of women heads of the household through micro-credit Funds and Cooperatives," she added.

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

In the field of legislation, finalizing the bill to ensure the security of women against violence, which can play an important role in combating domestic violence, the implementation of the plan granting Iranian citizenship to children born to Iranian women and non-Iranian men, and the bill banning the marriage of girls under 13, has been among the government's efforts, she concluded.

Iran names candidate for Child-Friendly Cities Initiative



SOCIETY TEHRAN — The city of Isfahan has been awarded the Child-Friendly City candidacy logo, representing Iran in the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI).

Launched in 1996, the CFCI is a UNICEF-led initiative that supports municipal governments in realizing

the rights of children.

As a first step, UNICEF Iran and the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with Isfahan Municipality held the First National Conference on Child-Friendly Cities on January 16-17, 2019 in Isfahan, where urban managers, CFCI focal points, and representatives from municipalities across the country joined the debate to discuss the potential of Child-Friendly Cities.

A child-friendly city (CFC) is committed to improving the lives of children within their jurisdiction by realizing their rights.

It is a city where children have a good start in life and grow up healthy and cared for, have access to quality social services, express their opinions and influence decisions that affect them, participate in family, cultural, and social life, live in a safe secure and clean environment with access to green spaces, and have a fair chance in life regardless of their religion, income, gender or ability.

Child-Friendly Cities is a relatively new concept in Iran, however, there is a long-standing tradition of child-friendly

practices and initiatives. For instance, Tehran Municipality launched the School Mayor Initiative in 1993 which is still running today.

After the devastating 2003 earthquake in Bam, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Government, supported 110 children from 11 schools in Bam to develop a child-friendly neighborhood plan and created a child-friendly zone, which included the building of a child-friendly community center, school, and playgrounds in the city.

Many other ministries and organizations including the Municipalities and Rural Management Organization of Iran and the Office for Women and Family Affairs are supporting these efforts.

Iran is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The country adhered to the Convention in September 1991 and ratified it on July 13, 1994.

Currently, Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and Amman in Jordan are the two cities in West Asia that have got the CFCI membership.

Helmand water right to be provided after 48-year pursuit

1 → according to which 26 cubic meters of water per second (equivalent to 850 million cubic meters per year) would be Iran's share of the Kajaki dam.

Despite the Helmand water right contract, since the late 1370s (falling on 1991-2001), the annual rainfall reduced in Afghanistan and Sistan region was haunted by drought, eventually, Hamoun Wetland dried up as the seventh international wetland in the world.

In addition, when the lake was dry, seasonal winds blow fine sands off the exposed lake bed and give rise to crippling sand and

dust storm in eastern and southeastern parts of Iran, affecting the livelihoods of about half a million people in Sistan, native and migratory birds and other wildlife.

Joint cooperation to preserve Helmand River

In order to draft the statute, meetings were held for two days in Zabol with the presence of two delegations consisting of officials from the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with their Afghan counterparts.

In these meetings, both parties were



committed to taking measures, including, a new mapping of the Helmand catchment,

maintaining the safety of surveying engineers as well as granting water rights of the border river.

On Tuesday, joint cooperation will begin for mapping in order to locate three water intake sites around the Helmand River in Iran, Mohammad Delmoradi, Sistan and Baluchestan regional water director said.

After the mapping, the necessary design and planning for the construction of the required structures will begin to facilitate the supply of the river's water right, he noted.

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7 health projects to be inaugurated in northwestern Iran

Seven health projects in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan will be inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani through a webinar on Thursday, ISNA news agency reported. A hospital, two specialized clinics, a comprehensive health service center, two health centers, and an emergency medical center will be among the projects, Javad Aghazadeh, chancellor of West Azarbaijan University of Medical Sciences said.

The hospital is ready to operate in an area of 30,000 square meters with 260 beds, which cost 1.6 trillion rials (nearly \$38 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), he highlighted.

One of the specialized clinics stretches to 1,800 square meters, for the construction of which 62.3 billion rials (about \$1.5 million) has been spent.

He also referred to the second specialized clinic and said that it is about 750 square meters and cost a sum of 27 billion rials (around \$600,000).

۷ پروژه عرصه سلامت در آذربایجان غربی افتتاح می شود

آذربایجان غربی هفت پروژه عرصه سلامت روز در آذربایجان غربی پنجشنبه توسط رئیس جمهور به صورت وبینار افتتاح می شود. دکتر جواد آقازاده رئیس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی آذربایجان غربی در گفت و گو با ایسنا گفت: یک بیمارستان، دو درمانگاه تخصصی، دو مرکز خدمات جامع سلامت، و یک مرکز فوریتهای پزشکی از پروژه های افتتاحی خواهد بود.

وی با اشاره به پروژه بیمارستان ایت الله خوئی گفت: این بیمارستان در مساحتی بالغ بر ۳۰ هزار مترمربع با ۲۶۰ تخت آماده بهره برداری است که برای ساخت این بیمارستان ۱۶۰۰ میلیارد ریال هزینه شده است.

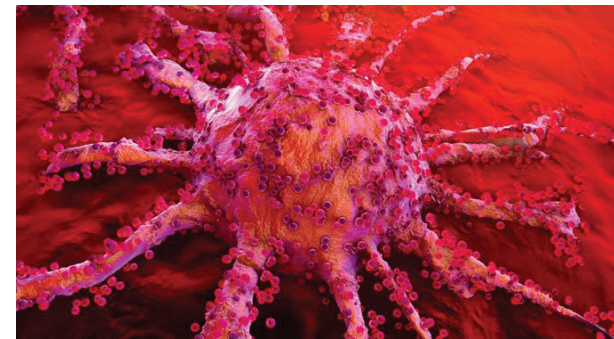
رئیس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی استان با اشاره به درمانگاه تخصصی سلماس نیز تصریح کرد: این درمانگاه ۱۸۰۰ متر مربع است که برای ساخت آن ۶۲۳ میلیارد ریال هزینه شده است.

وی به درمانگاه پلدشت نیز اشاره کرد و گفت: این درمانگاه ۷۵۰ متر مربع بوده که برای بهره برداری آن ۲۷۶ میلیارد ریال هزینه شده است.

Iran's achievements in fight against cancer

1 → After population aging and poor lifestyle, the third most effective factor in cancer incidence is air pollution, he highlighted.

Pointing to the effective factors in preventing cancer prevalence, he noted that some factors that are related to the people include proper weight control, sufficient physical activity, improving nutrition in terms of amount and calories, avoiding smoking, opium, and alcohol, and increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables.



Insurance covers 70% of treatment cost

Some 70 percent of cancer medicine and treatment cost is covered by the insurance. However, the Food and Drug Administration and the Ministry of Health also provide patients with 30 percent of the cost, that the patient has to pay, in the form of subsidies, he explained.

Cancer on the rise

Reza Malekzadeh deputy health minister said in February 2020 that "we anticipate that the number of cases will reach 150,000 by 2025, and during this period, there will be more than 5,000 cases annually."

He went on to say that 380,000 deaths occur every year in the country, of which about 122,000 are premature deaths, or nearly 40 percent of deaths happen to people aging 70 or less.

Among the premature deaths, 34,000 are related to cancer, he lamented, adding, 11,000 people aging less than 50 years lost their lives due to cancer.

National cancer control program

The national cancer control program was developed using the experiences of other countries, in particular, the World Health Organization's recommendations and the experts' opinions, which sets out the Ministry of Health's roadmap up to the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025- March 2026).

The purpose of the program is to reduce cancer prevalence and mortality while improving the quality of patients' lives, which can serve as a model for other countries, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The cancer preparation program was designed to determine the infrastructure and manpower needed over the next 6 years, to determine the type of centers, equipment, and distribution throughout the country using a geographic information system (GIS).

The program includes two important documents, namely, "development of national cancer care network" and "development of cancer human resources", which resulted in the establishment of the early diagnostic centers.

Prevalence in the world

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally, accounting for an estimated 9.6 million deaths, or one in six deaths, in 2018. Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach, and liver cancer are the most common types of cancer in men, while breast, colorectal, lung, cervical, and thyroid cancer are the most common among women.

Britain's population of wild cranes on the up with 64 breeding pairs

Cranes, which became extinct in the UK 400 years ago, have continued their recent comeback with a new high of 64 pairs recorded in a survey.

The common crane, which stands about 120cm (4ft) tall and is famous for its dancing courtship displays, vanished from Britain in the 1600s as a result of hunting and a decline in their wetland habitat. But the natural return of a few birds to Norfolk in 1979, and conservation work, including restoring peatland, protecting wetlands and a reintroduction programme, has helped the species stage a comeback, wildlife experts said.

The latest survey shows that the record 64 pairs across the UK in 2020 produced 23 chicks.

With the presence of other birds not in breeding pairs, conservationists said the population of cranes in the UK was now thought to be more than 200 birds.

More than half the cranes that have fledged since 1980 have done so since 2015, making the last five years very productive for the birds, they said.

The push has been helped by the Great Crane Project, a partnership between the RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Pensthorpe Conservation Trust, which began creating and improving existing habitat, as well as hand-rearing young birds for release on the Somerset Levels and Moors.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 122)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

clear	صاف	
season	فصل : هر قسمت از چهار قسمت سال	
hungry	گرسنه	
warm	گرم	
month	ماه /h/ هر قسمت از دوازده قسمت سال	
antonym	مُخَالَف	
especially	مخصوصاً /maxsu:san/	
	مِلَّت (جمع : مِلَّت ها، مِلَل) : همه ی مردم یک کشور	
neither ... nor ...	نه ... (و نه) ...	
when	وقتی که	
synonym	هَم معنی	
weather	هَوا	

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Lying would negatively influence your livelihood.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

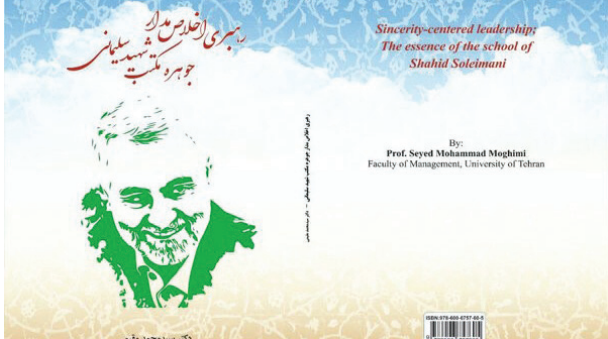
Book analyzing Gen. Soleimani's leadership qualities published

A R T TEHRAN — A book giving a scientific analysis about Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani's leadership qualities has recently been published.

Written by Seyed Mohammad Moqimi, a management professor at the University of Tehran, "Sincerity-Centered Leadership: The Essence of the School of Shahid Soleimani" was released by the Raahdan Publishing House in Tehran.

Since Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei had said earlier that sincerity is the most significant characteristic of Soleimani, the scholar has centered on this topic in his book, the publisher wrote in an introduction.

The analysis has been made based on the context of Soleimani's speeches, the Leader's discourses and the comments made by his comrades.



Cover of the book *"The Sincerity-Centered Leadership: The Essence of the School of Shahid Soleimani"*.

The book also provides deep insight into the factors contributing to sincerity to help arrive at a better understanding of the issue. Soleimani has been the subject of numerous books published following the martyrdom of the IRGC commander in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

Among the books is "Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani" written by Hojjatolesalm Ali Shirazi in Persian.

This book gives a brief analysis of the personal characteristics of Commander Soleimani through his discourses and memories. It has been published in 12 countries.

"Guest of Iraq Written by Iraqi Personalities" has been published by Iran's Cultural Office in Baghdad.

The book has been written by several Iraqi cultural figures about the lofty characteristics of the commander.

Early in January, the Alhoda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute published "Great Commander", which carries a series of articles written by Iraqi cultural figures.

Iran's Cultural Office in Turkey has released a Turkish translation of "Our Happy Comrade" ("Bizim Bahtiyar Dostumuz"). The book is about Commander Qassem Soleimani's valor.

Iranian, Turkish media officials meet in Ankara

A R T TEHRAN — Iran's Deputy Culture Minister d e s k for Press Affairs Mohammad Khodadi met with Turkish Presidency's Deputy Director of Communication Çagatay Özdemir in his recent visit to Turkey.

Plans to expand cultural relations were discussed during the meeting, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance announced on Tuesday.

Khodadi proposed holding a media conference in Iran or Turkey with the regional countries in attendance to reinforce bilateral ties.

"We need to save and protect the strong relations that our ancestors have made before us. The cultural and historical commonalities of Iran and Turkey are far more than the commonalities with other countries," he said.

He said that the two countries enjoy brotherly relations, adding, "Two brothers might have differences in thoughts and ideas, but they are still brothers and this goes back to their historical and cultural commonalities."

He emphasized that the meetings helped the two countries reflect news far from any negative currents made by Arabic media.

He also noted that the Persian departments of the Turkish media and the Turkish departments of the Persian media are both active helping to promote the news of both countries.

He said that the two countries need to have direct relations to help prevent any possible misunderstandings.

For his part, Özdemir also noted that many media tensions between the two countries are rooted in western media.

He emphasized joint collaborations and keeping more in touch with the media to help decrease the tensions and misunderstandings.

Where Is Friend Kiarostami?: Pompidou Center, MK2 Films to review oeuvre of Kiarostami

A R T TEHRAN — The d e s k Pompidou Center in Paris and the French company MK2 Films have teamed up to exhibit an oeuvre of Abbas Kiarostami, the world-renowned Iranian artist who was an old hand in numerous art media, in a program named "Where Is Friend Kiarostami?"

The center has announced that the entire works of Kiarostami, from films to photos and poems, will be showcased in the major exhibition that will be organized at the center from May 5 to July 5.

The center will also review 46 films by Kiarostami in a retrospective from April 15 to July 4. Numerous guests are scheduled to attend the showcase.

The Kiarostami Foundation has also contributed to the exhibits, which will feature collections of videos and documents, series of his unpublished photographs, sequences of his most beautiful films and presentations of his works on classical and contemporary poetry.

Masumeh Lahidji, Iranian interpreter and one of Kiarostami's close collaborators, is supervising the retrospective.

In an interview with the Pompidou Center, Lahidji expressed her thanks to the worldwide recognition of Kiarostami's 1987 drama, "Where Is the Friend's Home?"

She added that Kiarostami opened



"The Wind Will Carry Us" by Abbas Kiarostami.

a window to the rich and profound cinematography in Iran.

She noted that the global recognition reached its peak with the Cannes Palme d'Or for his "Taste of Cherry" in 1997.

"He established himself as a source of

inspiration for many young filmmakers, who were notably able to work alongside him during the workshops that he held across the world until his last breath," she stated.

About his relationship with Persian poetry, Lahiji said, "Like all Iranians, Kiarostami was

Makhtum-Qoli Faraghi's sculpture to embellish hometown Gonbad-e Qabus

Gonbadi said in a press release published on Tuesday.

Makhtum-Qoli is considered to be the founder of authentic Turkmen literature by the people who speak the language.

The mausoleum of the poet is located in Aq-Tuqai village in Golestan Province.

May 18 marks the birth anniversary of Makhtum-Qoli Faraghi, and a series of programs are usually held annually to honor the poet during the month of May.

Makhtum-Qoli was educated in the cities of Bukhara and Khiva in Uzbekistan. He was fluent in the Arabic, Persian and Turkic languages, and particularly in Chagatai, the dominant Turkic language of Makhtum-Qoli's region at the time.

But his best poetry was written in the Turkmen language, and he could be considered the father of the Turkmen language in many ways.

Turkmen was an underdeveloped language when

Makhtum-Qoli was young. Writers and scholars were producing work in the two dominant languages, Persian and Chagatai, but Makhtum-Qoli would change that for his people.

Makhtum-Qoli not only wrote poetry in Turkmen, but also he developed and enriched the language through his works. His poetry is organically connected with folk poetry.

Makhtum-Qoli's civic poetry contains several strains, a condemnation of intertribal discord; a call to ponder the struggle for existence conducted by those who have been deprived of earthly blessings.

Youssef Azemoun is the author of "Songs from the Steppes of Central Asia: The Collected Poems of Makhtumkuli", which not only includes translations of the Turkmen poems into English, but also provides some details of Makhtumkuli's life, much of which remains unclear to this day.

"Rumi's Secret" unlocked at Iranian bookstores

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — A Persian d e s k translation of Brad Gooch's "Rumi's Secret: The Life of the Sufi Poet of Love" has recently been published by Negah Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Puran Kaveh.

The acclaimed New York Times bestselling author of "Smash Cut", "Flannery", and "City Poet" delivers the first popular biography of Rumi, the thirteenth-century Persian poet revered by contemporary Western readers.

The love poems of Rumi, a Persian poet and Sufi mystic born over eight centuries

ago, are beloved by millions of readers in America as well as around the world. He has been compared to Shakespeare for his outpouring of creativity and to Saint Francis of Assisi for his spiritual wisdom. Yet his life has long remained the stuff of legend rather than intimate knowledge.

In this breakthrough biography, Gooch brilliantly brings the man to life, and puts a face on the name Rumi, vividly coloring a world in his time and place as rife with conflict as our own. The map of Rumi's life stretched over 2,500 miles.

Gooch traces this epic journey from

Central Asia, where Rumi was born in 1207, traveling with his family, displaced by Mongol terror, to settle in Konya, Turkey.

Pivotal was the disruptive appearance of Shams of Tabriz, who taught him to whirl and transformed him from a respectable preacher into a poet and mystic. Their vital connection as teacher and pupil, friend and beloved, is one of the world's greatest spiritual love stories. When Shams disappeared, Rumi coped with the pain of separation by composing joyous poems of reunion, both human and divine.

Ambitious, bold and beautifully written, "Rumi's Secret" reveals the unfolding of Rumi's devotion to a "religion of love", remarkable in his own time and made even more relevant for the twenty-first century by this compelling account.

Gooch is the author of the acclaimed biographies "City Poet" and "Flannery" as well as other nonfiction and three novels. The recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities and Guggenheim fellowships, he earned his Ph.D. at Columbia University and is a professor of English at William Paterson University in New Jersey.

Doc tells future generations truth of war against terrorism in Syria

By Ali A. Jenabzadeh

TEHRAN — Following the outbreak of the war against terrorism in Syria, an all-out effort began by certain media outlets to portray the facts on the war upside down. The criminal and the victim were transposed in the narrative provided by those outlets to justify the illegal engagement of countries like the U.S. and its allies in the war. Since then, numerous Iranian and non-Iranian filmmakers have tried to produce documentaries and movies about the reality of the crisis. One of those documentary filmmakers is Vahid Farahani who has recently completed his film "Why Syria?". He believes that to properly study the issue, it should be considered from many different angles.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Farahani said, "As opposing media organizations appeared to be unshakeable in justifying their illegitimate cause, an insufficient effort was made by the Axis of Resistance to thoroughly explain different aspects of the issue."

The following is the full text of the interview:

Your documentary, in format and structure, has international standards and high quality. As I heard, you are planning to write a trilogy with the same theme. So, do you want to keep the same format in your future movies?

In the first step, we didn't think of such a model for filmmaking. However, when we witness the feedbacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen, we think that we should produce such documentaries in the future.

So when you were making the film, you did not plan for future ones that would be in line with the current production?

Yes, that is right.

You did not leave anything unfinished for the future?

No, the movies are completely independent. Maybe their stories are totally different from each other.

Ok, since our audience is international and they might not know you, introduce yourself a little. Who is Vahid Farahani? How you got interested in the resistance axis?

I began with making clips and documentaries in the field of Islamic awakening ten years ago. I knew working with camera since I was a child. My father, Majid, was working with filmmaker Morteza Avini on his documentary project Ravayat-e Fath

© TEHRAN TIMES / Shahab Chayoumi



Iranian filmmaker Vahid Farahani attends an interview with the Tehran Times.

(Narration of Victory) on the Iran-Iraq War. My father was the comrade of Martyr Avini. Due to my background in the field of documentary, I was interested in it.

I began my activities in 2009. I intended to make money from my knowledge as a computer engineer to make my films in the future. My first activity was at the international level. I made the documentary "To Bayt-al-Muqaddas" in 2012. I joined an Asian caravan that had begun a tour from India and Pakistan and then arrived in Iran. Then we took a road trip from Turkey to Lebanon and Syria. This was the first I was making a film in the field of Palestine and in support of freedom seekers. They all gathered on the border of Palestine and I made a documentary.

People from different parts of the world, including European countries, Australia, and the U.S., joined the caravan. After completing the documentary, I asked director Nader Talebzadeh to watch it. He liked it and agreed to do the narration for the documentary.

After that, I have made some other films in Iraq. After the Syria crisis and the formation of ISIS, we decided to travel to Syria. Finally, we made a connection with the Badr Brigade in Iraq to travel to the country. We continued working with our comrades there. Firstly, they did not trust us. We held meetings with Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada. Interestingly, they told us that a team from BBC had visited the area a week before to report the resistance group. I asked what

was interesting for them? They said that the reporters were amazed to see that the resistance groups hang the picture of Iran's Leader on their wall.

We made a documentary with the help of soldiers about the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) or Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi. In that time, PMF was gradually forming. We went there to make a documentary about their organization and the formation of the PMF. At that time, there was no film on this issue and resistance. The documentary was entitled "Borderless, Love". It had great feedbacks in Iran as well as Iraq and then in Lebanon. With such a CV, we were now able to continue our work in this field easily.

After a while, the cultural section of the PMF asked us to make a portrait documentary from a martyred Iraqi leader, and PMF commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. This may be the first and only portrait documentary made about this character. We named it "A Selfie with Abu Mahdi". He really had an open view toward reporters, letting them ask their questions freely.

We have also traveled to Syria from time to time. The documentary "With Patience, Life" is about the siege of Al-Fu'ah and Kafriya. The year before that, we had produced the documentary "With Death, Life" which was about the siege of Nubl and Al-Zahraa. Another documentary that I made was about immigration and the damage of the war to Syrians entitled "Aleppo, City That It Was".

It was my concern to do a positive media project about the axis of resistance. I witnessed the troubles facing the Iraqi forces as well as Liwa Fatemiyoun, and Liwa Zainebiyoun. On the other side, I saw that many media outlets are getting together against the resistance axis. It was really annoying. The resistance forces were really concerned about the life of the future generations. When you talked with them, they said they are on the battlefield to save future generations. However, due to the lack of strong media, we could not familiarize people with the notion of resistance.

It was really my concern that, for example, after ten years when the children of martyred combatants go to school and others ask them about their fathers, some documentaries would exist for them to refer to.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

