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# One year into the pandemic, Iran's achievements



## Iran, Russia hold joint naval drills

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia started a naval drill in the northern parts of the Indian Ocean on Tuesday.

The drill started after a flotilla of Russian military vessels arrived in Iran's southeastern waters on Tuesday.

The Russian flotilla, comprising Stoiky frigate and Kola replenishment oiler, was given a salute by Army and IRGC vessels upon arrival in Iran's territorial waters, Tasnim reported.

The slogan of the naval exercise is "security of maritime commerce". The maneuver will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometers and it will last four days.

Russian commanders on board the visiting flotilla first held a meeting with Iranian peers at Chabahar port to make arrangements for the drill.

Admiral Gholamreza Tahani, the deputy commander of the Iranian Navy and the spokesman for the military exercise, said on Tuesday that "security is unstoppable" and "exercises for promoting security is unstoppable."

Tahani, who said the maneuver with Russia will be held annually, added the purpose of the exercise is "to strengthen security and its foundations in the region".

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## Tehran hosting 4 international exhibitions

TEHRAN - Four international exhibitions are being concurrently held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

As reported, the 17th edition of Iran's international exhibition of metallurgy (IRAN METAFO), the 11th edition of Iran's International Exhibition of Wood Industries Machineries and Related

Equipment (Woodex 2021), The 11th Iran's International Exhibition of Architecture, Interior Design, and Modern House (MIDEX 2021), and the 7th International Footwear, Bag, Leather and Related Industry Exhibition of Iran were the exhibitions that kicked off on Monday and will continue for four days.

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## ICRO music video airs Leader's views for Japanese people

TEHRAN – Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) has produced a music video airing the views of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei with Japanese subtitles.

The video entitled "Through the Eyes of Iran's Leader" reflects the Leader's views on the importance of book, reading and environment and science, and the nature of countries, the ICRO announced in a

press release on Tuesday.

Aspects of development and achievements of the country in social, economic, cultural and scientific fields have also been portrayed.

Following the June 2019 meeting of the former prime minister of Japan Shinzo Abe with Ayatollah Khamenei in Tehran, Japanese people have shown an interest in learning more about the Leader, the ICRO said.

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## Most U.S. sanctions have been counterproductive: Hippel

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI  
Iran warned Washington on Tuesday that the window to rejoin the 2015 nuclear deal won't remain open for an indefinite time.

Iranian authorities expect the White House to swiftly lift economic sanctions that former President Donald Trump illegally imposed on the country after withdrawing the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear pact (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) in 2018, as part of a campaign called "maximum pressure" against Iran.

However, Frank von Hippel, the former assistant director for National Security in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, believes that the sanctions failed to achieve their goals.

"There may be some U.S. sanctions unrelated to the JCPOA that will be kept, but most U.S. sanctions have been counterproductive by strengthening the political power of the hard-liners in Iran who do not want to negotiate over anything," Hippel tells the Tehran Times.

According to Hippel, American hard-liners like sanctions for the same reason. "So, in general, I think that sanctions are counterproductive."

The Iranian Parliament voted on December 1 in favor of a bill called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Safeguard Interests of the Iranian People," which tasked the government to suspend more commitments under the JCPOA.

Iranian lawmakers consider the move as an opportunity given to the Western side to facilitate Iran's oil sales and normalize its banking ties with the world in two months.

Confirming the failure of the American campaign to cripple Iran's economy, the American physicist says that "in most cases, I think U.S. forcing companies in other countries to join in U.S. sanctions by forcing them to choose between the U.S. and Iran's market is not a good idea."

Some political observers believe that America's pressure policies against other countries herald a decline of U.S. hegemony, as it lacks soft power and is being forced to resort to sanctions pressure to impose its will.

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## D-8 event promoting Iranian startups

TEHRAN – Twenty Iranian startups are showcasing their achievements at the 3rd Technology Investment Meeting (TIM 2021) of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation which started in Tehran on Tuesday.

Pardis Technology Park is hosting the two-day event both virtually and in-person, aiming to address the investment potentials in Islamic developing countries in order to open up an opportunity for foreign and domestic investors, ISNA reported.

D-8 includes major Muslim developing countries namely, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Some 30 percent of these startups are active in the field of health, others in fintech (financial technology), ICT, oil and gas, and artificial intelligence, he noted.

Good opportunities, such as abundant manpower alongside cheap knowledge-based and technological products, have attracted foreign

investors, despite unilateral sanctions, to consider the Iranian knowledge-based ecosystem.

Due to the prevalence of coronavirus and the observance of social distancing, some side programs of this event are held virtually, Akbar Qanbarpour, an official at Pardis Technology Park, stated.

The Strategic Technologies Center of Iran has announced that over 6,500 startups are now active in the country.

Last year, the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari called Iran the largest hub of startups in the region.

Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, startups, as well as knowledge-based companies, have been working round the clock to provide items to combat the outbreak.

They have taken notable steps to produce face mask, diagnostic kits, and disinfectants and manufacture advanced medical equipment such as ventilators, ICU and CT scan rooms.

## Ancient petroglyphs discovered in western Iran

TEHRAN – Another cluster of ancient petroglyphs has recently been discovered in a barren plain in Lorestan province, western Iran.

"The petroglyphs, which bear carved symbols and figures in the two colors of black and ochre, were discovered during an architectural survey conducted in Chegeni county of Lorestan province," the provincial tourism chief, Seyyed Amin Qasemi, announced on Monday.

"The drawings include animal, human, and plant motifs as well as scenes of hunting and

horseback riding," the official said.

The Islamic Republic is seeking an integrated UNESCO recognition for millennia-old petroglyphs scattered across the country.

Iran will put forward clusters of its millennia-old petroglyphs—located in Khomein county of Markazi province, and the ones dotted in the provinces of Isfahan and Lorestan—as a candidate for inclusion in UNESCO'S World Heritage list.

Teymarch petroglyphs, which are located

in Khomein county, have been estimated to be carved in a period spanning from 40,000 to 4,000 years ago, providing insights into past eras and cultures both by tools utilized for carving and themes being carved.

Last year, a prehistorical petroglyph, which bears Pahlavi script written by ordinary people of the time, was found during an archaeological survey in the Teymarch region of central Iran.

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## Iranian Olympic, Paralympic champions' busts unveiled

TEHRAN – The busts of six Iranian Olympic and Paralympic champions were unveiled on Tuesday at the Hall of Fame in Tehran.

Sports and Youths Minister Masoud Soltanifar and Reza Salehi Amiri, head of National Olympic Committee (NOC), attended the unveiling ceremony.

The bust of Hossein Rezaazadeh, who won two Olympics gold medals (2000 Sydney, 2004 Athens) and five world championships, was unveiled at the ceremony.

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## Professor says Washington will be less biased in favor of Riyadh

BY MOHAMMAD ALI SAKI

TEHRAN - An American professor says that U.S. foreign policy during Joe Biden's presidency will focus on human rights and democracy which can affect its ties with Saudi Arabia.

"U.S. policy going forward will likely be more conditioned by concerns about human rights and democracy, and less biased in favor of Saudi Arabia and Israel," Karl Kaltenthaler, professor of political science and director of Security Studies at the University of Akron, tells the Tehran Times.

"The policy goals for this administration are tempered by previous failed U.S. efforts to re-shape the region," Karl Kaltenthaler adds.

The professor also says a revitalization of the Iran nuclear deal has opponents, citing Washington's allies Israel and Saudi Arabia as examples.

However, he predicts "it is very likely that Iran and the U.S. will work out an arrangement to get the JCPOA back up and running."

The following is the text of the interview:  
**Do you expect Iran and the U.S. to reach an understanding over reviving the JCPOA?**

I think it is more likely than not that the United States and Iran will reach an understanding over reviving the JCPOA. This is a very important goal for both countries and not getting back into the agreement would be detrimental to the security of both countries. It will not be easy, on the other hand, to get both countries to agree on the conditions for reviving the deal.

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## IISS: How to curb Iran's missile program

By Azin Sahabi

The Iranian Parliament (Majlis) passed a bill some two months ago that obliges the government to reduce commitments to the JCPOA if sanctions are not lifted within two months. A part of the approval, titled "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights", entails halting the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT if the sanctions are not lifted by February 23.

Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told the Tehran Times on February 14, 2021, lawmakers are very serious to enforce the law.

In this context, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), a pro-Israel think tank which is quite close to the AIPAC, has commented on Tehran's official stance towards voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol.

Against this backdrop, recommendations on Iran's missile program are also worth mentioning. For instance, Mark Fitzpatrick, an expert on nuclear issues at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) has discussed Iran's missile program and how to limit it.



**"A double-edged sword"**  
In a policy analysis on Feb 11, 2021, Omer Carmi, a former fellow at WINEP and West Asia expert at the IDF (Israel Defense Force), describes the "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights" as a means to give "Washington a sense of urgency". He argues that "this approach could be a double-edged sword."

Carmi believes that Iran's position towards the JCPOA is a clear message to Washington that the Iranian party will arrive at the negotiation table with a clear playbook in hand to fulfill "a unified purpose."

WINEP stresses that Tehran is not in a hurry to conclude a deal and prefers to take the "Wait-and-See" strategy, since its final goal "is not a deal with Washington, but rather the removal of all sanctions."

As usual, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, one of the main architects of the Iran sanctions, accuses Tehran of conducting covert nuclear military researches, holding clandestine nuclear sites and insists that "Possible Military Dimensions" of Iran's nuclear program must be addressed. While repeating constant groundless accusations against Tehran, Carmi tries to turn the opposite side of the coin of suspending more commitments under the JCPOA by Tehran.

In this regard, the Israeli military expert believes that implementing the parliamentary law may induce a sense of urgency in the Oval Office, but the move indicates that "Iran is repeating its past errors with the IAEA."

He argues that enforcement of the law could hinder the International Atomic Energy Agency's ability to monitor Iran's nuclear program, "investigate suspected clandestine activity, and address the many concerns raised over the year."

WINEP which houses plenty of neoconservative, hawkish policy makers, also warns that any change or hindrance in Tehran's commitments to the IAEA "will push it closer to a non-compliance and would likely create more damage than value for Iran however, provoking the West and possibly alienating Russia and China."

While in less than a week, the Iranian Parliament's ratification will be enforced, analysts do not hesitate to comment on Iran's nuclear program from various aspects including Iran's missiles.

In this regard, IISS, a leading British strategic think tank has shed light on Iran's missile program and stresses: "Tehran will never give up its missile development program. There is time to prevent such a dangerous development – but not by making unrealistic demands on Iran to stop all missile development. That Tehran will never do."

### IISS: Curb Iranian missiles "realistically"

Fitzpatrick, also a non-proliferation and disarmament expert at IISS, explains about Iran's ballistic missiles and analyzes a report submitted by the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea sanctions to the UN Security Council on 8 February, 2021. The report claims that North Korea and Iran "have resumed cooperation on long-range missile development projects."

Analyzing Iran's missile program technically as well as reminding Iran and North Korea's cooperation during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s, Fitzpatrick describes the UN report "worthy of notice".

In this context, he describes Iran's space program a robust one with space launch vehicles which to date has not had a military application. However, the expert argues that these vehicles "theoretically could be repurposed for military use, something no other nation has done with the kind of liquid-fuel engines that are currently the mainstay of Iran's space launch program."

Against the backdrop, the British institute states: "There is no reason to be confident that its (Iran's) civilian and military programs will remain separate."

In this regard, Fitzpatrick argues: "Iran depends on missiles for deterrence and defense, not to mention national pride. It does not need ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missile). Iran does not require any missiles with a range beyond 2,000km, given that all the potential targets in the region are within this radius."

Therefore, the IISS which claims Iran is designing Shahab-3 "to clearly carry nuclear weapons", draws a blueprint for a "realistic" missile negotiation with Iran as a reason to shape an "ambitious diplomacy."

Fitzpatrick reiterates that such a path will not be easy to pass but if Tehran's negotiating counterparts accept that Iran will never capitulate in terms of its missile program, there exist at least some prospect of success.

In this context, the IISS recommends:

- "Missile negotiations with Iran should aim to lock in this range limit (2,000km)."
- "And to persuade Iran to accept transparency measures and engine limits for its space launches."
- "Ideally, Iran should also forego the missiles in its arsenal such as the Shahab-3 that were clearly designed to carry nuclear weapons."

# Iran, Russia hold joint naval drills

**1 →** He also said, "The most important message of this exercise is peace and friendship for neighboring countries and those in the region," according to Press TV.

"Iran, in the 43rd year after the [1979 Islamic] Revolution's glorious victory, has reached a level of maturity in maritime science and technology that it is hosting world powers a second time for a combined drill."

### India will join naval drills

Iranian Navy Commander Hossein Khanzadi told the IRIB on Tuesday that India will also join the exercises. The Navy chief also said the purpose of the joint drills is "maritime security" and "collective security" in the region.

"Since last year, a series of combined maritime security exercises have been held with the participation of regional and world countries .... In the drill, which



began today, the Russian Navy has joined the exercise site and the Indian Navy will also participate," Khanzadi remarked.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Iran's deputy army chief for coordination, said on Sunday that the joint exercise with the powerful naval forces of Russia has a clear message that the Iranian Navy has reached the level of world naval powers in terms of equipment, human forces, techniques and tactics, command and control, as well as modern telecommunication systems.

"The navy exercise will be staged with the purpose of ensuring security in north of the Indian Ocean," he remarked.

In December 2019, Iranian, Russian and Chinese naval forces held the first ever joint drill in the Gulf of Oman and northern parts of the Indian Ocean, focusing mostly on counter-terrorism and anti-piracy tactics.

## Government confirms Iran will stop implementing Additional Protocol

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — Ali Rabiei, the Iranian government spokesman, reaffirmed on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic will suspend a voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT due to the U.S. and other parties' disloyalty to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran has already written a letter to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) notifying the UN body that it will halt the Additional Protocol, which allows unannounced and intrusive inspections.

In the letter to the IAEA, Iran has announced that the measure will go into force on February 23.

"Based on the sixth paragraph of the Parliament's bill and given the fact that sanctions have not been lifted so far, the government and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI)

are required to suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol which will decrease the supervisions and inspections beyond the Agency's safeguards agreements," Rabiei told a press conference, according to Fars.

He stressed the measure does not take time and can be carried out rapidly.

The government spokesman added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is still a member of the safeguards agreements, which means that a major part of the inspections which are not within the framework of the Additional Protocol will continue."

"Therefore, stopping the voluntary implementation of the protocol does not mean terminating cooperation with the Agency. This cooperation will continue and the Islamic Republic of Iran will definitely inform the Agency of all its moves in advance in

a letter, as has been the case so far," Rabiei explained.

Noting that this new measure is against Iran's will, he said, "It was adopted due to the U.S. delay in lifting sanctions and fulfilling its obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231. We continue to consider the nuclear deal a credible agreement and the best possible agreement, and we are ready to immediately reverse all steps taken under paragraph 36 of the nuclear deal to their original status as stated in the nuclear deal provided that the U.S. and other parties to the agreement revive their undertakings."

The spokesman expressed the hope that the Biden administration and three European members of the nuclear deal (France, Britain and Germany) would take the closing window of opportunity to keep diplomacy alive.

## 'No armed forces member involved in Fakhrizadeh assassination'

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — The General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a report on Tuesday declaring the person who participated

in the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, an Iranian scientist, had been fired from the armed forces due to his addiction and immorality. It said the person was receiving training in

2014 and he was not a permanent employee of the armed forces.

During the training course it was found out that the person was not fit for the job and

was expelled.

Fakhrizadeh was assassinated on November 27 outside Tehran. Iran holds Israel responsible for the assassination.

## German, French foreign ministers hold talks on JCPOA

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has talked with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian on ways to keep the Iran nuclear deal as the deadline set by Tehran for the lifting of unilateral U.S. sanctions draws near.

In a post on its Twitter account on Monday, the German Foreign Office said the two chief diplomats held a "trustful discussion" over phone about a range of issues, among them the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

On Sunday, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab also said that he had discussed "the nuclear issue around Iran" with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The talks come ahead of February 23, when Iran, under a law passed last December by the Parliament (Majlis), is set to stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's Safeguards Agreements unless the U.S. lifts illegal economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

According to the nuclear law, the deadline for halting

the implementation of the JCPOA is February 21. Yet Iran extended the deadline by two days, setting Feb. 23 for enforcing the law.

"Act of Parliament will be executed on time (23 Feb) and the IAEA has been informed today to ensure the smooth transition to a new course in due time. After all, goodwill brings about goodwill!" Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, tweeted on Monday.

The Additional Protocol allows snap visits by the IAEA of Iran's nuclear facilities.

According to the parliamentary ratification, named "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights," the government is tasked to restrict IAEA inspections to nuclear sites unless other parties to the JCPOA fully comply with the deal.

The JCPOA was reached between Iran and a group of countries then known as the P5+1 — which included the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany — in July 2015. It was ratified in the form of

UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

However, in May 2018, then-U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally quit the JCPOA and reimposed the sanctions that had been lifted under the UN-endorsed deal and added new harsh ones.

Iran remained fully compliant with the JCPOA for an entire year waiting for the co-signatories to meet their commitments and offset the impacts of the U.S. withdrawal.

But, as the European parties continued to renege on their obligations, the Islamic Republic moved in May 2019 to suspend some of its JCPOA commitments under articles of the deal covering Tehran's legal rights in case of non-compliance by the other side.

The new administration of U.S. President Joe Biden says Iran should move first to restart the JCPOA. However, Tehran says it will retrace its nuclear countermeasures once the U.S. lifts its sanctions in a verifiable manner.

Iran's ambassador to the UN, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, has said Iran has not quit the JCPOA to return to it.

## FP writes Iran is adopting resistance economy strategy to minimize sanctions impact

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — Pursuing maximum pressure strategy to inflict more pain won't cause Tehran to negotiate with the U.S. or halt its nuclear activities, according to Foreign Policy magazine.

As the Joe Biden administration is seeking to rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, much of the debate has centered on whether the U.S. government will lose leverage. Some experts and officials argue that if the Biden administration returns to the JCPOA, the United States will squander the leverage built in recent years through former President Donald Trump's maximum pressure campaign.

While U.S. sanctions have hurt Iran's economy and restricted Iran's access to financial resources, they have not succeeded in changing Tehran's behavior concerning its nuclear program. Instead, it has encouraged Iran to boost its nuclear activities, missile program, and regional activities.

The magazine says a leverage is only effective if it produces desired policy outcomes.

It also acknowledges that inflicting pain or adding pressure is neither an effective nor sustainable negotiating strategy.

Foreign Policy argues, "By reviving the nuclear accord, the U.S. government will not squander any sanctions leverage, but if it plays its cards wisely, it could enhance its position for follow-on negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and regional activities."

In response to the maximum pressure effort, Tehran sought to increase its own leverage. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has increased its naval military drills in the Persian Gulf, signaling it has ability to harm U.S. interests and those of its allies.

The U.S. conservative magazine reports, "Iranian officials indicated in January that they would expand their nuclear program by resuming uranium enrichment to a 20 percent level, which is much higher than the low-level 3.67 percent limit set by the 2015 deal."

It explains Iran's strategy to resist the

sanctions. "To minimize the impact of sanctions and U.S. leverage, Iran has focused on investing in a resistance economy infrastructure to diversify the economy in ways that it will be more inward-looking and less reliant on foreign trade, particularly with the West. Today, Iran is nowhere near the brink of collapse. The country, rather, is projected to see an economic recovery in 2021," it wrote.

In 2020, the Trump administration sought to bury the Iran nuclear deal for good. Biden is determined to breathe new life into the pact.

Foreign Policy advises the new U.S. administration to "return to the deal with a compliance-for-compliance approach because it can stop Iran's quickly-growing nuclear program in its tracks. This move would not undermine U.S. leverage but rather enhance it. It would allow the United States to stop the ticking clock on Iran's nuclear advancements, mitigate the possibility of a military confrontation between Iran and Israel or the United States, and restore multilateral diplomatic efforts."

The magazine hopes a return to the deal would create an opportunity to reach an "agreement on regional issues and other areas of contention. These issues are critical to the security interests of the United States and its regional partners, and Tehran is unlikely to engage in any talks on these issues unless the JCPOA is restored."

"An important component of U.S. leverage is sanctions relief. With both sides committed to compliance, lifting sanctions on Iran will not give Tehran an overnight economic boost strong enough to disincentivize further negotiations... as some fear. Non-JCPOA-related sanctions will remain in place, and even with the JCPOA-related sanctions lifted on paper, the practical side of operationalizing trade and transactions will not be swift. Iran would only begin a slow process of economic recovery. But relief will give the United States the upper hand at the negotiating table, exchanging more immediate economic incentives for additional concessions," the U.S. magazine writes.

## Zarif: Intl. developments won't affect 'strategic' Iran-China ties

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has hailed Iran's "strategic partnership" with China, saying developments on the world stage cannot affect the friendship between the two partners, whose bilateral ties have seen a significant boost over the past five decades.

Zarif wrote an article for The People's Daily on Tuesday to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Iran and the People's Republic of China.

"Tehran-Beijing relations have developed significantly in the past half a century, with bilateral ties being constantly on the rise and cooperation in various fields turning Iran and China into reliable partners [for one another]," he wrote.

Zarif also noted that exchanges between Iran and China have a long history and that the two states maintain their trade and cultural ties through the ancient Silk Road.

Both countries, he added, are committed to a politically independent foreign policy, pursue economic cooperation and support each other in different international issues.

"In January 2016, Iran-China relations were upgraded to the level of strategic partnership. The leaders of the two countries have repeatedly stressed that changes on the international scene will not affect friendly relations between them," the top Iranian diplomat wrote.

"Iran-China relations have withstood the test of time, especially in the difficult time of the coronavirus pandemic... The two countries have unconditionally backed each other in various fields and achieved useful results," he added.

Zarif further expressed hope that Iran would play a greater role in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global infrastructure development strategy to link Asia, Europe and beyond.

"Undoubtedly, the development of Iran-China relations — which is based on mutual respect for [mutual] sovereignty and independence as well as their different social systems — is a win-win cooperation. It will also turn into a huge source of power for mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries in the future," he emphasized.

Over the past 50 years, Zarif wrote, China has become an important power in the global economy and the international political arena, while Iran has emerged as a significant power in West Asia.

"Iran and China need more than ever to strengthen bilateral relations to create a new kind of partnership," he added. "Although there are opportunities and challenges in the development process, we will never forget the friends who supported us in difficult times."

In recent years, Tehran and Beijing have been working to finalize the Sino-Iranian Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which was announced in a joint statement during a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Tehran in 2016.

The cooperation roadmap consists of 20 articles, covering Tehran-Beijing ties in "Political," "Executive Cooperation," "Human and Cultural," "Judiciary, Security and Defense," and "Regional and International" domains, according to the statement released back then.

# Iran will execute nuclear law to halt Additional Protocol on Feb. 23: ambassador

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran will implement a nuclear law obligating the government to halt implementing the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on February 23, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, said on Monday.

"Act of Parliament will be executed on time (23 Feb) and the IAEA has been informed today to ensure the smooth transition to a new course in due time. After all, goodwill brings about goodwill!" Ambassador Gharibabadi said in a tweet on Monday.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, commented on the tweet. He said Gharibabadi's tweet meant that Iran would continue to implement the Additional Protocol for two more days.

"That means that Additional Protocol will continue to apply to IAEA activities in Iran for additional 2 days. Not many, but now when we face race against time every day counts. We need to try to make real progress on JCPOA implementation before Navruz at the latest (21.03.2021)," the Russian diplomat said in a tweet on Monday night.

Navruz or Norouz is the name for the Persian New Year which starts on March 21.

On February 21 the Iranian government will be obligated to start implementing a nuclear law that was passed mainly to compel the West to realize that Iran will resume the full implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal — formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — only after the remaining parties to the JCPOA as well as the U.S. started keeping their end of the bargain.

On December 10, the official gazette of record for the Islamic Republic of Iran published a 9-article law that set the stage for Iran to substantially increase its nuclear activities, including raising the level of uranium enrichment to up to 20% in early January.

The nuclear law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights," outlines a step-by-step strategy for Iran to force the West into changing its policies toward Iran, according to Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

"By enacting the Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions, the Parliament aims to exert pressure on Western parties and force them into changing their policies," Amouei told the Tehran Times on Sunday.

The nuclear law stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspending the voluntary implementation of



the Additional Protocol in few months if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the JCPOA.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) started to increase the level of uranium enrichment to 20 percent.

The sixth article of the law clearly stipulates that if the remaining parties to the JCPOA — Germany, France, China, Russia and the UK — failed to facilitate Iran's oil exports and the return of Iranian oil revenues in two months, the Iranian government would be obligated to stop inspections beyond the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, including the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, which allows unannounced and intensive inspections of nuclear sites.

Gharibabadi said Iran has sent a letter to the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) informing him of its decision to stop implementing voluntary measures as of February 23, according to a statement issued by Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN in Vienna.

"This action was taken in implementation of the law approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, for the lifting of sanctions and protection of the interests of the Iranian people and is in line with the rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA and due to non-compliance by the other parties with their commitments to lift illegal sanctions," Gharibabadi said.

He added, "In this letter, we asked the Agency to take the necessary measures as soon as possible to implement Iran's requests to suspend various voluntary actions, including the implementation of the Additional Protocol."

"From now on, cooperation between Iran and the IAEA will continue solely on

the basis of safeguard commitments, until the lifting of sanctions in a practical and tangible manner paves the way for Iran to return to the implementation of these measures," the Iranian ambassador concluded.

Iranian lawmakers have told the Tehran Times that ceasing implementation of the Additional Protocol will include measures such as turning off the surveillance cameras that were placed in Iran's nuclear facilities in accordance with the Additional Protocol.

"The Islamic Republic has accepted a higher level of inspection as part of its obligations under the JCPOA. Prior to the nuclear deal, Iran was a member of the NPT and has a safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, but after the JCPOA Tehran agreed to implement the Additional Protocol voluntarily as well as some additional monitoring of its activities," Amouei said in his interview with the Tehran Times.

"The Majlis has obliged the government to suspend the implementation of the Additional Protocol and a further safeguard monitoring if Iran's oil sales and banking ties with the world are not facilitated by February 21 or 23," he noted, adding, "This does not mean expulsion of IAEA inspectors, but access based on the Additional Protocol will be cut off. Inspections related to the Additional Protocol will be stopped. The surveillance cameras that were placed in accordance with the Additional Protocol will be unplugged. However, the entire Iranian nuclear program remains under the safeguards of the Agency."

Akbar Alizadeh, a member of the parliamentary committee, also echoed the same position.

Alizadeh told the Tehran Times that Iran would stop implementing the Additional Protocol within a week if the U.S. refused

to lift sanctions.

Asked whether the Americans or Europeans have done anything to convince Iran not to implement the nuclear law, Alizadeh said the West is not taking the initiative to address Iran's concerns.

"We hope that they would come to their senses and lift the sanctions but, unfortunately, there is no sign that they are going to do so," the lawmaker told the Tehran Times.

Alizadeh said Iran will stop "intrusive inspections" that are being done in accordance with the Additional Protocol, whose implementation will come to an end soon.

Alizadeh said the measure will include unplugging the cameras that were placed in Iran's nuclear facilities according to the protocol.

Several other Iranian officials have linked the continuation of the intensive inspections to the lifting of sanctions.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Monday Iran will end its voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT Safeguards Agreement if the other parties to the JCPOA fail to honor their commitments by the deadline.

"This measure means an end to inspections beyond the Safeguards Agreement, but does not mean an end to all inspections. In fact, Iran is a member of the Safeguards Agreement and the NPT, but the implementation of the Additional Protocol will be halted," he pointed out.

President Hassan Rouhani also said that Iran will return to full implementation of its commitments under the nuclear deal with world powers if the United States removes all "illegal" sanctions it has unilaterally re-imposed on Tehran after quitting the accord.

Rouhani made the remarks in a Monday meeting with visiting Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Rouhani stressed the need for the removal of all anti-Iran sanctions by the U.S. and Washington's respect for UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the nuclear deal.

"Anytime that the United States removes illegal sanctions and returns to law, Iran will immediately return to implementation of all its commitments under the JCPOA," the Iranian president continued, according to Press TV.

Pointing to the end of Trumpism in the U.S. and the new president's announcement of different policies, including his intention to return to the JCPOA, Rouhani said, "Today, it has been proved to the entire world that the maximum pressure policy has failed and the new U.S. administration has no option but to make up for the mistakes of the previous administration and to fulfill its legal commitments."

## Iran deputy FM, Qatari envoy discuss regional issues

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Seyed Abbas Araghchi met on Monday with Ali bin Fahad al-Hajari, the special representative of Qatar's foreign minister for regional issues, to discuss regional issues.

"In this meeting, referring to the good relations between the two countries, Araghchi underlined the need to continue consultations on bilateral and regional issues and added that creating regional security and stability within the framework of regional talks is possible with the presence of all countries in the region and without foreign interference," Araghchi said in a statement on Monday.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran talks only with the countries of the region about the security of the Persian Gulf region," he continued.

The Qatari diplomat, for his part, stressed the need for paying attention to the region's political and economic development, pointing to the common destiny of the region.

Al-Hajari pointed out that the best form of relations is to resolve crises politically and alleviate concerns through dialogue.

He also expressed Qatar's willingness to boost relations with Iran in various spheres.

Al-Hajari was accompanying Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in his visit to Iran.

The chief Qatari diplomat met with his Iranian counter-

part Mohammad Javad Zarif.

"During the meeting, Zarif welcomed his Qatari counterpart and offered congratulations on Doha's recent success in ending the blockade imposed against the Arab country. He further highlighted the importance of bilateral relations between Tehran and Doha in the eyes of the Iranian nation and government, and expressed the Islamic Republic's preparedness for expansion of collaboration with Qatar in different fields," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Elaborating on Iran's principled policy of opposing the policies that are based on coercion and force in the region, Zarif emphasized the necessity for cooperation among regional countries to settle the issues and achieve a set of regional arrangements that bring about further stability, and said bilateral relations between Iran and Qatar play a key role in this path, according to the statement.

The Qatari foreign minister, for his part, appreciated all the assistance provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the time when Qatar was under a blockade, and said his trip to Tehran was in line with expansion of bilateral relations and within the framework of regular consultations between the two countries.

He also underlined the region's need for a new approach and all-out collaborations, and expressed his country's preparedness for playing an effective and pivotal role in this regard.

The chief Qatari diplomat finally expressed hope that the existing problems will be settled within the framework

of regional initiatives as soon as possible.

**Qatari emir's message handed over to Rouhani**  
Al Thani also held a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in which he handed over a written message from Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to Rouhani.

During his meeting with the Qatari foreign minister, Rouhani pointed to recent developments in the region and the need to develop joint cooperation between Tehran and Doha.

"Relations between the two countries have been very good and developing in recent years, and with the new international conditions, opportunities should be used to develop and deepen relations and cooperation," Rouhani added.

"Iran and Qatar can develop relations in various fields, including economic, commercial, cultural, scientific and tourism, and cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries can play an important role in this direction," the Iranian president said, according to a statement issued by the Iranian presidency.

Expressing that the progress of any country in the region will be achieved through establishing peace and stability in the region, the president welcomed dialogue and cooperation with the countries of the Persian Gulf and stressed, "We remain committed to the Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE) initiative and believe that peace and stability in the region will not be achieved except through cooperation and dialogue between the countries of the region, and it is the countries of the region that must decide for their own."

## Iran strongly rejects rumors about Erbil attack

Officials said that the rockets were launched from an area south of the main city Erbil near the border with Kirkuk province and also fell on some residential areas close to Erbil airport.

An unidentified group called Awliyaa al-Dam claimed responsibility for the attack.

"The American occupation will not be safe from our strikes in any inch of the homeland, even in Kurdistan, where we promise we will carry out other qualitative operations," the group said, according to Aljazeera.

The United States reacted angrily to the base assault outside the international airport in Erbil, capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

"We are outraged by today's rocket attack in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Initial reports indicate that the attacks killed one civilian contractor and injured several members

of the Coalition, including one American service member and several American contractors," Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said in a statement.

While Iraqi authorities are still conducting investigations into the attack, some media outlets propagated rumors linking the attack to Iran.

But Iran strongly rejected these rumors.

"Iran not only strongly rejects these rumors, but also flatly condemns suspicious attempts to attribute the attack to Iran," Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian ministry said.

"Iran regards Iraq's stability and security as a key issue for the region and neighboring countries, and dismisses any move that would disrupt tranquility and order in this country," he added.

He described such actions as "suspi-

cious," urging the Iraqi government to issue the necessary orders to deal with those behind such moves.

Local authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan are investigating the attack. Masrour Barzani, prime minister of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, said he spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken about the attack.

"I condemn in the strongest terms tonight's rocket attacks on Erbil. I urge all Kurdistanis to remain calm. I've instructed security services to start a full investigation and spoke with PM @MAKadhimi on ways to cooperate and identify the outlaws behind this terror attack," Barzani said in a tweet on Monday.

"I spoke with @SecBlinken about the cowardly attack on Erbil. We agreed to coordinate closely in the investigation to identify the outlaws behind it," he added.

## SPORTS

### Iranian Olympic, Paralympic champions' busts unveiled

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Busts were also unveiled of four wrestlers Abdollah Movahed, Abbas Jadidi, late Nasser Givvehchi and Jahankar Tofigh at the Hall of fame.

Movahed claimed a gold medal at the Mexico City 1968 Olympic Games. He also won five world championships gold medals.

Jadidi took a silver medal at the Atlanta 1996 Olympics and a gold medal in 1998 world championships in Tehran.

Late Givvehchi claimed a silver medal at the Helsinki 1952 Olympic Games.

Tofigh, who died from liver disease at the age of 39, won Iran's first gold medal at the World Wrestling Championships and also a bronze medal at the Helsinki 1952 Olympics.

In the ceremony, the bust of former sitting volleyball player Ali Kashfia was unveiled. Kashfia won four Paralympic gold medals (1988, 1992, 1996, 2000) during his career.

Since June, the busts of Iranian Olympics and Paralympic medal winners have been unveiled.

### Iran fixture at 2022 World Cup qualifiers announced

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed new fixture dates for Iran's upcoming matches at the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

Iran national football team were originally scheduled to meet Hong Kong and Cambodia on March 25 and 30 in Tehran and Phnom Penh, respectively but the matches were postponed to June.

Now, the Confederation has announced the new dates for the remaining matches.

According to the decision, the 'Persian Leopards' will play Hong Kong and Cambodia on June 3 and 7.

The matches against Bahrain and Iraq will be held on June 11 and 15.

Due to the coronavirus concerns, the remaining matches will be held at the centralized venue.

Iran has already lodged a request to host the matches. Iran, who sit third in Group C, have four must-win matches.

### Iranian skiers to participate at FIS Nordic World Ski Championships

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Iran will send eight skiers to the 42nd FIS Nordic World Ski Championships.

The Championships will be held from Feb. 22 to March 7 in Oberstdorf, Germany.

Sattar Seid, Danial Saveh Shemshaki, Yasin Shemshaki and Alireza Moghddid will represent Iran's men's team and Samaneh Beirami Baher, Sahel Tir, Zahra Saveh Shemshaki and Farzaneh Reza Soltani will take part at the competition as Iran's women's team.

It will be the third time Oberstdorf hosted the world championships, the event having been hosted the championships two times in 1987 and 2005.

### Iran submits request to host World Cup qualifiers Group C

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Iran officially submitted on Tuesday its request to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to host the 2022 World Cup qualifiers matches in Group C.



According to AFC's decision, the Qualifiers have been postponed to June.

Iran will play Hong Kong and Cambodia on June 3 and 7.

The matches against Bahrain and Iraq will be held on June 11 and 15.

Due to the coronavirus concerns, the remaining matches will be held at the centralized venue and Iran submitted its request to host the four remaining qualifiers.

Iran sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

### Exhibition match held in memory of late Minavand, Ansarian

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — An exhibition match between veteran players was held in memory of former Iran and Persepolis players Mehrdad Minavand and Ali Ansarian.

A team consist of players who have played in Persepolis and Esteghlal teams defeated a side featuring Iran at the 1998 World Cup 3-2 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

The match brought former stars like Ahmadrza Abedzadeh, Ali Daei, Karim Bagheri, Ali Karimi, Khodadad Azizi, Alireza Mansourian, Yahya Golmohammadi, Rahman Rezaei and Mohammad Khakpour together.

Minavand and Ansarian passed away at the age of 45 and 43 respectively within a week due to coronavirus.



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Ministry has strongly rejected rumors ascribing a deadly rocket attack on the Iraqi city of Erbil to Iran.

"The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman categorically rejected allegations ascribing the Monday night's rocket attack on the city of Erbil in the Iraqi Kurdistan region to Iran," the ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

An American airbase in Erbil came under a rocket attack on Monday night. The attack killed a foreign civilian contractor and wounded nine others, including Americans.

## Majlis approves amendments of budget bill

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – The Iranian parliament (Majlis) on Tuesday approved the amendments of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1400, which starts on March 21, IRNA reported.

The amendments were approved during an open session of the parliament with 211 votes in favor, 28 votes against, and six abstentions.

The parliament had earlier rejected the outlines of the budget bill, which was submitted to Majlis by Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri on December 2, 2020, and urged the government to reform the bill and submit it to the parliament again.

As reported, in the reformed budget bill the government has reduced the resources from the National Development Fund (NDF) and increased the ceiling of the incomes from publishing treasury bonds by 530 trillion rials (about \$12.6 billion), according to Mojgan Khanlou, spokeswoman of the Parliament Budget Committee.

Also the government has proposed to reduce its expenses by 400 trillion rials (about \$9.5 billion) to prevent the need for increasing tax incomes, Khanlou said.

"The most important factor in the amendment was the discussion of the subsidized foreign currency and the amount of oil revenues; The oil revenues in the amended bill were not changed, and the subsidized foreign currency would still be allocated for essential goods like medicine and crops" she noted.

The previously proposed national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 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 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 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 were estimated at 1.99 quadrillion rials (about \$47.3 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.

## Value of 10-month tire export hits \$8.7m

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Iran exported 4.378 million tons of tires worth \$8.781 million during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020- January 19, 2021), according to the data released by Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

As previously reported, the country has produced 225,269 tons of tires during the ten-month time span, showing a 20-percent rise compared to the same period of time in the past year.

In terms of number, a 20-percent growth has been also achieved through the production of 20.913 million tires.

As reported, 132,741 passenger car tires were produced in the mentioned time span, showing a 24-percent growth.

Some 20,695 tons of van tires were produced, indicating a nine-percent growth.



Also, 47,859 tons of truck and bus tires were produced, showing a 15-percent rise.

Production of the tires of light agricultural vehicles experienced a growth of 49 percent to stand at 3,609 tons, and that of the heavy ones rose 13 percent to stand at 15,081 tons.

Meanwhile, 5,284 tons of road building and industrial vehicle tires were produced, with a 13-percent growth compared to the first ten months of the past year.

The bicycle and motorcycle tire output stood at 16,182 tons, indicating 32 percent growth.

In early August 2020, an official with Iran's Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry said that increasing the amount of investment making for the production of the tire in the country is a necessity.

Kamran Kargar, the acting head of planning, supplying, and market regulating office of the ministry, said the consumption of tires is noticeable in Iran due to the country's big transportation fleet.

"Now the ground is properly prepared for the production of light and heavy vehicle tires in the country, and investment making will play a significant role both for the establishment of new production units and for launching development projects", the official noted.

Having an annual production capacity of 426,000 tons of tire, Iran accounts for 41 percent of tire output in the West Asian region, according to the deputy director of the non-metal industries office of the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Mohsen Safdari has said that 11 tire production units are active in the country creating jobs for 14,500 people.

He said 426,000 tons is the nominal capacity, while the real output is less than this figure as some units are working with 60-70 percent of their capacity.

"Iranian tire industry is dependent on foreign raw materials by 40 percent, so we are self-reliant by 60 percent in this field", the official announced.

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of "Pickup in Production" for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of "Surge in Production" for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic's determination to achieve this goal.

To this end, the Iranian ministries besides the private sector have been outlining their programs for the surge in production.

## Tehran hosting 4 international exhibitions

The opening ceremonies of the mentioned exhibitions were attended by senior officials including Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, and the Head of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) Hassan Zamani.

The exhibitors are presenting their latest products and services during these exhibitions which are being held in full compliance with health and safety protocols.

# Water, electricity projects worth over \$232m put into operation

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian inaugurated 24 major water and electricity projects valued at 9.75 trillion rials (about \$232.1 million) in five different provinces through video conference on Tuesday.

Inaugurated in the 41st week of the Energy Ministry's A-B-Iran program, one of the mentioned projects was put into operation in Alborz, six projects were inaugurated in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, five went operational in Lorestan, nine were inaugurated in Qazvin and the other four were put into operation in North Khorasan.

The projects included several power supply projects, some power line reconstruction projects, two one-megawatt solar power plants, some water management, and wastewater treatment projects, as well as



several water supply projects.

A-B-Iran program (the acronym A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), during which the minister made several trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

Since the beginning of the second phase of the scheme in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2020), every week several energy projects have gone operational across the country.

According to Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, in the second phase of the program 250 projects were going to be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) of which so far over 240 have gone operational.

## TV sets manufacturing rises 44%

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Manufacturing of TV sets in Iran has increased 44.7 percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data show that 995,000 TV sets have been manufactured in the ten-month period of this year.

Earlier this month, the director for the electrical and metals industries and home appliances office of the ministry, said the manufacturing of home appliances will hit a record high in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

Keyvan Gardan said that according to the plans and the efforts made, despite the continuation of sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic, this year the record of home appliance production will be broken after the victory of the Islamic Revolution (1979).

Making the remarks in a meeting of the industry owners with the directors of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade in the field of formulating the strategy of Iran's home appliance industry on the horizon of 1404 (March 2025-March 2026), the official added, "Production was projected to grow

by 30 percent this year, reaching a record of 12 million sets of home appliances, but the target was realized by the end of the tenth month (January 19)".

Despite all the sanctions and problems, this industry has been able to continue to grow decisively in the past two and a half years, he said, adding, "Of course, with the ban imposed on the import of home appliances, the people also cooperated and supported this industry, which led to its growth."

He pointed to the \$37-billion home appliance market of the neighboring countries and the region and the \$5-billion domestic market capacity and said, "We are trying to allocate more of this market to our country by providing conditions."

Two months ago, the secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran said that domestic production of equipment and parts used in the home appliance industry has saved Iran \$220 million.

Currently, Iranian producers have indigenized the knowledge for manufacturing 70-75 percent of the country's home appliance needs, Abbas Hashemi said in a press conference in late December.

According to Hashemi, the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran has established a parts man-

ufacturing department, the purpose of which is to promote the position of component makers in the association to deepen domestic manufacturing of the required parts and equipment in this industry while providing a platform for home appliance manufacturers and component makers to stay connected.

The official noted that the country has managed to export up to \$250 million of home appliances in the previous years and currently, the production and assembly lines for Iranian home appliances have been set up in some of the countries in the region and Iran is exporting its products to the target markets by sending Completely Knocked Down (CKD) kits to the mentioned production lines.

Iran has various comparative advantages in this industry in terms of supplying raw materials such as steel sheets, petrochemicals, copper and brass sections, the abundance and low costs of energy and workforce in addition to the strategic position of the country, compared to other countries in the region, he said.

"So, the development of exports to countries in the region and to the neighboring countries is possible even despite the strong regional competitors," Hashemi added.

## Copper anode output increases 19% in 10 months on year

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Production of copper anode in Iran has risen 19 percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021), as compared to the corresponding period in the past year.

As reported, 292,715 tons of copper anode was produced in the ten-month period of this year.

The copper anode output also rose 41 percent in the tenth month of the present year, from that of the same month in the previous year.

In the tenth month of this year, 29,643 tons of the product was produced in the country.

Last month, the head of National Iranian

Copper Industries Company (NICIC) said the country's copper production is going to break new records in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

Speaking on the sidelines of the 16th International Exhibition for Mines, Construction Machinery and Related Industry and Equipment (Iran ConMin), Ardeshir Sa'd-Mohammadi announced a 12-percent increase in the Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex's production in the current year.

"The complex will reach a production record of 280,000 tons by the end of this year," the official told IRIB.

He also noted that the production of the copper anode is also going to hit a new record

by the year end.

"This year, the production of the copper anode in the country will grow by 16 percent," he said.

According to Sa'd-Mohammadi, Iran's copper production capacity is going to reach 550,000 tons by the Iranian calendar year 1403 (begins on March 20, 2024).

"Considering €2.5 billion of new investment made in Sarcheshmeh Copper complex, and the implementation of 29 new projects in this industry, we hope that the country's copper production capacity will reach 550,000 tons by the year 1403."

He pointed to the high quality of the Iranian copper, saying: "Iranian copper has a

very good quality and with 99.999 percent purity, has its own customers around the world and we hope with this quality of products we can improve our global position in the copper industry."

Iran has seen its copper exports doubled in the past Iranian calendar year despite a series of bitter sanctions imposed by the United States aimed at hampering the Islamic Republic's trade of lucrative metals.

A senior official at Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Iran's largest metals and mining holding, has said that the value of exports for main copper products reached more than \$1 billion over the past year.

## ICCIMA holds meeting to explore exporters' issues

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) held a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the problems of the country's exporters and to offer solutions for such issues, ICCIMA portal reported.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from government bodies and the private sector, including the representatives of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the Foreign Affairs Ministry, and the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) as well as a handful of the country's exporters.

Speaking in the meeting, ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Ansari stressed the need for supporting the country's exporters and said: "export and exporters are supported by highest executive authorities of all countries around the world; if Iranian exporters are to take steps to

develop the country's economy, they must be able to compete in the international arena, and this can be realized only by the serious support of the country's authorities."

Elsewhere in this event, the TPO Head Hamid Zadboum underlined the importance of ranking the country's exporting companies, and said: "We are currently seeking to update the TPO's framework based on studies conducted on trade promotion organizations in other countries to take necessary steps in this regard."

According to Zadboum, the administrative structure in Iran has created many problems for the trade system, and in order to resolve these problems, the public, the parliament, and government bodies must be involved and take serious steps in this regard.

Further in the meeting, the speakers expressed their views on the requirements for the development of the country's

exports and pointed to the concerns and challenges of the exporters.

Developing an export strategy, a clear roadmap, and appointing an exclusive authority body for this sector were among the demands of exporters that were emphasized in this meeting.

Improving the quality and quantity of the country's logistics, reducing the costs of money transfers in trade, supporting exporters to participate in international exhibitions for promoting their products, establishing direct communication between embassies and economic organizations, holding specialized meetings to review the export challenges of each commodity group and ultimately determining the export quota for each commodity group to avoid unnecessary bans were other issues raised at the meeting.

## 10-month exports to Arab partners exceed \$10.7b

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – The value of Iran's exports to its Arab trade partners in the region reached \$10.705 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), Farzad Piltan, the director-general of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries, said.

According to Piltan, the value of Iran's total non-oil exports during the mentioned 10 months stood at about \$28 billion, IRNA reported.

The country's major Arab trade partners in the said period include Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Syria, and Bahrain.

Among Iran's top trade partners, Iraq was ranked the second export destination with about \$6.3 billion worth of goods exported to the country, followed by UAE, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait which were ranked second, 7th, 10th, and 12th, respectively.

Other Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen (from the Persian Gulf

region) and Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon (from West Asia) were not included in the list of the top 20 Iranian export destinations during the period under review, the official said.

Iran's trade data also show that during the first 10 months of the current year, about \$16.646 billion worth of commodities were exported to 15 neighboring countries, of which about \$10.705 billion were exported to the Arab neighbors.

Iran's top three non-oil export destinations during this period were China, Iraq, and the

United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Saudi Arabia was still the last in the list of the neighboring trade partners with zero trade exchange.

The total value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first 10 months of the current year reached \$58.7 billion, according to Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi.

In the mentioned 10 months, Iran imported \$30.639 billion worth of goods, while the exports stood at \$28.63 billion.

## Current economic issues discussed in TCCIMA meeting

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – The 20th meeting of the board of representatives of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) was held on Tuesday, in which representatives of the private sector addressed current economic issues and criticized the performance of executive bodies in terms of issuing several directives.

During the meeting, the research plan of the TCCIMA to help reform the comprehensive banking law was unveiled, and then a report on the operation of the National Development Fund (NDF) and its services to those active in the economy sector was presented by the chairman of the fund's executive board.

Representatives of the private sector presented numerous reports on their ac-

tivities during the meeting.

The meeting also presented serious criticisms of the economic policy approach in the country.

Farhad Nili, an economist who, along with a team of banking experts, conducted a study on the draft of the country's comprehensive banking law on behalf of the Tehran chamber, summarized the results of the study and stated that in the com-

ing months, the chamber will work with the parliament's economic committee to improve this law.

Also in this meeting, the chairman of the executive board of the National Development Fund, in the presence of representatives of the private sector, presented a report on the performance of the fund and the services that can be provided to the private sector.

# Most U.S. sanctions have been counterproductive: Hippel

1 → "The U.S. made a number of serious and difficult-to-forgive mistakes in its foreign policy since the end of World War II. One was the overthrow of Iran's elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953," Hippel says, adding, "Others were the Vietnam War and the overthrow of the governments of Guatemala and Chile. Among the most recent was President Trump's decision to take the U.S. out of the JCPOA."

Besides the international crises that the Trump administration left for Joe Biden, the U.S. today faces multiple domestic problems such as racial discrimination and internal division.

"The U.S. is in very serious trouble internally but I hope we will be able to deal with our problems of political division and inequality," Hippel notes.

Hoping that the U.S. can play a leading role in the world, the American academic emphasizes that the U.S. should not unilaterally try to impose its will on other countries.

"We can play a leading role but we should not act unilaterally against other countries," Hippel suggests.

While Iranian authorities are highly skeptical of the new U.S. administration's desire to rejoin the JCPOA and lift the sanctions, Hippel, who now teaches at



**The U.S. made a number of serious and difficult-to-forgive mistakes in its foreign policy since the end of World War II. One was the overthrow of Iran's elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. Others were the Vietnam War and the overthrow of the governments of Guatemala and Chile. Among the most recent was President Trump's decision to take the U.S. out of the JCPOA.**

Princeton University, argues that the Biden administration is serious to renege the deal but it needs to move more rapidly.

However, some observers say that the nuclear deal is dead since Trump pulled Washington out of the pact. They also say some European countries are now trying to impose new terms on the deal, a move that can complicate the situation due to Iran's refusal to renegotiate the terms of the deal.

Nevertheless, Hippel argues that "no additional conditions should be imposed for the U.S. rejoining the JCPOA beyond Iran coming back into compliance."

"I think that is where we will end up but we are currently delayed by a silly argument over who returns to compliance first, probably it will be easiest to deal with this problem by breaking each side's reentry into steps that can be interleaved," he suggests.

On the possibility that Iran may take more steps to approach China and other powers now that the West (America and the EU) has failed to implement its obligations, Hippel says, "This appears to be happening to some degree."

But, he adds, Iran wants to make sure that "it doesn't become so indebted to China that it loses its independence."

## Professor says Washington will be less biased in favor of Riyadh

1 → Both sides are constrained by opponents to the deal. In Iran, it is the hardline opposition to the deal and for the United States, it is both opposition within the U.S. to moving away from the maximum pressure policies toward Iran but also the opposition to reviving the deal from U.S. allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. But at the end of the day, it is very likely that Iran and the U.S. will work out an arrangement to get the JCPOA back up and running.

**Why the Biden administration is delaying the process while the U.S. was the side that pulled out of the pact and it is expected to take the first step.**

The Biden Administration did not withdraw from the deal, the Trump Administration did that. Since that time, the Iranian government has been enriching uranium at levels not allowed by the deal. The Biden Administration is calling on the Iranian government to halt the uranium enrichment and move back into compliance with the JCPOA rules. To the Biden Administration, it is clear that not everyone in the Iranian government is enthusiastic about moving back into compliance with the deal. In other words, the Iranian government does not seem to speak with one voice or show one position on the benefits of moving back into compliance with the JCPOA. Because of that, the Biden Administration is likely making sure the Iranian position on the JCPOA is clearly articulated by Iranian actions.

**What is your prediction of U.S. policy towards Yemen and human rights in the country? Would it be limited to just formal and superficial reforms, or the region will see a fundamental change?**

U.S. policy toward Yemen is evolving and will likely be less heavily weighted to taking the Saudi side in the conflict. President Trump was very close to the Saudi leadership and was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt on Yem-



en. The Biden Administration is very concerned about the humanitarian cost of the conflict in Yemen. Biden and his team seem genuinely concerned about the Yemeni people who have been caught in the middle of the conflict and they want them to get aid and relief as soon as possible.

**In West Asia every side accuses the other of playing a malicious role. What was the role of the Trump administration in dividing the region?**

The Trump Administration had very strong relationships with the leadership of Saudi Arabia and Israel. These relationships had a very powerful impact on U.S. policy toward the Middle East (West Asia). Trump also was convinced that Iran is the biggest cause of instability and threats to U.S. interests in the region. These three things were the key factors that contributed to Trump's thinking about the whole Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa region. This policy viewpoint created real problems for countries that wanted good relations with the U.S. and Iran, such as Iraq. U.S. policy going forward will likely be more conditioned by concerns about human rights and democracy, and less biased in favor of Saudi Arabia and Israel. It is also case

that the Biden Administration will be very cautious about new U.S. ventures to re-start the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The policy goals for this administration are tempered by previous failed U.S. efforts to re-shape the region. This administration has a much less ambitious set of goals for the Middle East (Middle East) than the previous two U.S. administrations.

**Do you expect Iran to lean more toward China and Russia after the West (America and the EU) failed to implement their obligations under the JCPOA?**

I think we are seeing that happen as I write these words. I also think this will likely continue. China and Russia have an incentive to try to bring Iran into their circle of allies as the relationship between the West and China and Russia deteriorates. Iran also has an incentive to get closer to Russia and China for economic and security reasons. China is particularly important for Iran economically. But as Iran gets closer to Russia and China, the more difficult it will be to re-establish trust with the West, particularly with the United States.

**Do you think the U.S. administration will continue using sanctions as a leverage against Iran?**

The American administration believes that economic sanctions have been devastating to the Iranian economy. The Biden Administration does believe it has leverage over Iran and hopes that it can use this leverage to change some Iranian foreign behaviors. The most important goal of the Biden administration toward Iran is to get that country to move back into the JCPOA and to be assured that Iran is not moving toward nuclear weapons. Secondly, the Biden Administration would like Iran to no longer develop missiles that are viewed as threatening to the security of U.S. allies in the region. Of the two goals, the first one is, by far, the most important one.

## The Revolution Continues in Tunisia

Protests have been occurring in Tunisia since mid-January 2021. On 26 January, 2021, hundreds of Tunisians marched from Ettadhamen in Tunis to the parliament building in Bardo, calling for the "overthrow of the system" and "development, jobs, freedom and dignity." As the crowd swelled, the protests became one of the largest this year. The police used barricades, water cannons and violence to stop them from reaching the parliament.

The march to the parliament was called after the death of a protester in Sbeitla a day before. The protester - identified as Haykal Al-Rachdi - was injured by a tear gas canister fired by the police during an earlier demonstration. The call for the protests was given by several parties including the Workers Party, the Democratic Current (Attayar), The United Democratic Patriotic Party and Echaab movement.

Since the beginning of the nightly clashes, more than 1,600 people have been arrested, including activists. Around 600 of those are minors. About 23,000 people in Tunisia are currently in jail, according to recent estimates by Lawyers Without Frontiers association. These numbers have not decreased over the years.

### The Tunisian Revolution

The first round of protests on 14 January, 2021, coincided with the 10th anniversary of the fall of President Ben Ali's regime. Ali's removal was the outcome of an intense struggle courageously waged by the masses. On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi - a Tunisian street vendor - set himself on fire following yet another instance of harassment and humiliation at the hands of local police and municipal officials.

Within hours of his self-immolation, protests began erupting across the town, rapidly gathering pace and spreading outwards to other urban centres. Bouazizi's death was long and agonizing. When he finally died on January 4, 2011, the conflagration sparked

by his act roared into the national capital. In a matter of days, Ali was forced into exile.

Tunisia's people did not only oppose the political authoritarianism of the Ali administration, but also the neoliberal policies under his rule, which created massive inequality, unemployment and widespread misery. The ruling class has completely ignored the latter dimension, choosing to impose further neoliberalism in the aftermath of the revolution.

Results have been the same: sustained agitations. In 2015, the protests of the unemployed went from the western Kasserine province to the main avenues of Tunis, the mining area of Gafsa, and Sidi Bouzid, the town that started the Arab Spring. What we are seeing today is the people's desire to complete the revolution they started in 2010.

### Economic Woes

In recent years, Tunisia has experienced significant economic problems. The country's economy shrank almost 9% in 2020 - the largest contraction since its independence in 1953. The official rate of unemployment is 16%. However, the majority of those employed are in seasonal and temporary jobs. Unemployment in the age group of 15 to 25 is over 36%. The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Extended Fund Facility imposed several austerity measures, causing the depreciation of the Tunisian dinar in 2017, and consequent inflation has impoverished the popular classes and sharply increased unemployment levels.

The lack of income and employment opportunities has led to the largest exodus of Tunisians from the country in recent years. Tunisians made up the largest number of irregular migrants, over 12,000, who arrived in Italy in 2020 on boats crossing the Mediterranean - five times more than the previous year. Tunisian migrants risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean and if they survive that, they face the European Union's brutal border regime and racist discrimination

in European countries.

Tunisia has a deficit estimated at 11.5% of GDP in 2020 and public debt at 90% of GDP. Consequently, the country will issue debt worth up to \$3 billion in 2021. Of this \$3 billion, \$2.3 billion is expected to come from the IMF. This loan package has its own program of reforms, consisting of cuts to high public wage bill, reduction of subsidies and privatization of some state-owned companies.

In sum, IMF will push for unabated austerity even as protestors decry the insensitive language of "deficit control." What the IMF is doing is not new. It was involved in two loan agreements in 2013 and 2016 whose conditionality-imposed wage freezes, tax increases and spending cuts.

### Political Instability

On average, governments in Tunisia have not lasted for more than a year since 2011, and three have succeeded each other in 2020 alone. Political instability has been the norm from the very start of the Tunisian revolution. Following Ali's departure for Saudi Arabia in the winter of 2011 and the interlude that followed, it was Ennahda that would become the leading party within the first two coalition governments voted in by Tunisia's electorate.

The first of these governments was led by Hamadi Jebeli, lasting from December 2011 to March 2013. On 19 February, 2013, Jebeli resigned following the growing discontent of the workers and youth against austerity measures, the rising cost of living, regional inequalities, unemployment, taxes, and escalating political violence.

The second was directed by Ali Larayeedh and held power from March 2013 until January 2014. The latter's mandate collapsed when the combination of persistent social turmoil and the assassinations of two prominent leftist politicians forced the resignation of his government. The Larayeedh government agreed to hand over power to a caretaker government of technocrats, led by Mehdi

Jomaa, in early 2014.

A new and relatively progressive and secular constitution was introduced on January 26, 2014, which eliminated the references to Islamic law whilst recognizing Islam as the religion of Tunisia. The constitution-making process occurred against a hypocritical background: the interim government under the directions of IMF kept increasing household electricity and gas prices, as well as fuel prices and taxes that would affect taxi drivers and farmers.

Tired by the neoliberal orientation embraced by the political forces, Tunisians have got disillusioned with the post-2011 political arena, trying to find alternative viewpoints. In 2013, public opinion data revealed the following: 74.5% of Tunisians expressed little or no confidence in government, 89.6% expressed little or no confidence in political parties, and 83.4% expressed little or no confidence in parliament.

Some 44.1% of Tunisians strongly agreed that "the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for" - a significant majority backed that same position - and only 3.5% of respondents aligned themselves with the position that "people should take more responsibility to provide for themselves." Some 90% of Tunisians strongly agreed that government should constitutionally guarantee social protection and health services to the poor.

As much as 30% of Tunisians agreed that taxing the rich to subsidize the poor constitutes an "essential characteristic of democracy" (with an additional 36.5% skewed towards the agree poll, and only 9.9% expressing strong disagreement). About 40.2% agreed that state aid for unemployed people is an essential characteristic of democracy (with an additional 35.1% skewing towards that poll, and only 4.5% expressing strong disagreement). Some 22.1% agreed that income redistribution is an essential characteristic of democracy.

## Amnesty International urges Saudi officials to free senior Hamas official

Amnesty International has called on Saudi officials to order the release of a high-ranking official of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement and his son, citing his worsening health condition and lack of access to adequate health care.

The human rights group said on Monday that the health of 83-year-old Dr. Mohammed al-Khudari has been deteriorating as he cannot obtain essential medical service, including care for his bladder catheterization, Press TV reported.

Amnesty International went on to say that Dr. Khudari had undergone surgery and was being treated for prostate cancer when Saudi authorities arbitrarily arrested him and his son, Dr. Hani, in early April 2019.

The Britain-based organization said the two Palestinians were brought before the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in the capital Riyadh one year later in a mass trial marred by serious due process violations.

Amnesty International has already called on Saudi Arabia's King Salman to order the dropping of unfounded charges against Dr. Khudari and his son, and their release.

It also urged the Saudi monarch to order the urgent transfer of the distinguished Palestinian figure to a hospital, where he is able to receive the essential specialized medical care he needs.

## Iraq rocket attack hits U.S. forces, killing contractor

At least three rockets have landed in the city of Erbil in the Iraqi Kurdistan, killing a civilian contractor and wounding several others including an American service member, according to a U.S.-led coalition spokesman.

Col. Wayne Marotto, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, said "there was one civilian contractor killed, five civilian contractors injured and one US service member injured" in the Monday night "indirect fire".

Former Iraqi foreign minister and senior Kurdish official Hoshiyar Zebari said "five Katyusha rockets" hit the city of Erbil and some diplomatic facilities and residential areas.

The airport was reportedly shut down and flights were halted for safety issues.

A newly-established militant group which calls itself "Saraya Awliya al-Dam" has claimed responsibility for the rocket attack.

## Repeated Israeli acts of aggression on Syria won't help to protect terrorists: Damascus

The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates has censured the Israeli regime over its repeated attacks on the Arab country, saying such acts of aggression will not help to protect the terrorist groups, which are wreaking havoc on the nation with the support of Tel Aviv and its allies.

The ministry, in two identical letters addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and rotating President of the Security Council Barbara Woodward, said Israeli forces launched a barrage of missiles at 01:18 local time on Monday from the direction of the occupied side of Syria's Golan Height and al-Khalil (Hebron) in the occupied West Bank on some targets near the Syrian capital, Damascus.

The attacks, the letters added, fall within the framework of the Tel Aviv regime's systematic policy of state terrorism and continuous support for terrorist groups in Syria, and are in flagrant violation of Security Council Resolution 350 (1974) and the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria.

The Syrian ministry further highlighted that the Israeli missile attack came at a time when Syrians were marking the 39th anniversary of the national strike of February 14, 1982, to express their rejection of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, which the regime has occupied since 1967.

## Erdogan says Turkey will expand operations against Kurdish militants

Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday Turkey will expand its cross-border operations against Kurdish militants after 13 captured Turks were killed in northern Iraq.

Turkey said on Sunday militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) killed the captives, including police and military personnel, as it was carrying out a military operation against the group, Reuters reported.

Erdogan also repeated Ankara's complaint that it had not received enough international solidarity.

"Whether you speak up or not, we know our duty. We will not give the terrorists a chance," Erdogan told supporters from his AK Party in the Black Sea province of Trabzon.

## Resistance News

### Hamas condemns Israel over blocking vaccines to Gaza

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Hamas on Tuesday blasted Israel's refusal to allow some 2,000 coronavirus vaccine doses destined for Gaza health workers through its blockade of the territory as a "violation" of international law.

The Palestinian Authority, based in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, had planned to send the Russian Sputnik V doses through Israel to Gaza, a separate territory run by Hamas, AFP reported.

But on Monday evening, the PA health ministry said Israel had blocked the delivery.

Israel's move marked "a real crime and a violation of all international laws and humanitarian standards," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said.

COGAT, the Israeli military department that runs civil affairs in the occupied Palestinian territories, said Monday that the PA had requested to transfer 1,000 vaccine doses to Gaza but that "this request is waiting for a political decision".

The Palestinian Authority on Tuesday urged the World Health Organization to "condemn Israel" for the obstruction.

## Ancient petroglyphs discovered in western Iran

→ 1 "This is the sixth petroglyph, engraved with Pahlavi script, which has so far been found in the highlands of Teymareh. And the petroglyph is estimated to date back to 2,200 years ago," according to Iranian archaeologist Mohammad Nasserifard.

Nasserifard had earlier proposed a bold hypothesis on a variety of petroglyphs that are scarred in the region, saying "some prehistorical residents of the Iranian plateau migrated to the Americas." His assumption is based on evidence from similarities between the petroglyphs and cave painting symbols in central Iran and the ones found in the Americas.



"After years of exploring ancient paintings inside Iran's caves and mountains and other parts of the globe, amazing achievements have been made in this regard," Nasserifard said.

"Appearance similarities, artistic styles, and uniform themes of ancient petroglyphs and cave paintings of this land (Iran) reveal many missing links in human history and arts one of which is the resemblance of ancient artifacts in Iran with ones found in the American continent."

In March 2020, a team of entomologists and archaeologists concluded that a previously-founded petroglyph showcases a six-limbed creature with the head and arms of a praying mantis. The rare 14-centimeter rock carving was first spotted in the Teymareh rock art site during surveys between 2017 and 2018, but could not be identified due to its unusual shape.

International experts Jan Brouwer and Gus van Veen have examined the Teymareh site estimating its carvings were made 40,000-4,000 years ago. Prehistoric rock art provides insights into past eras and cultures as archaeologists classify the tools for the carvings by specific eras. Incising tools include flint, metal, or thigh bones of hunted prey.

## Crafts marketplace opens in troglodyte cliff dwellings of Kandovan

→ 1 **TOURISM TEHRAN** – A permanent handicrafts exhibit and marketplace has been constructed on the premises of Kandovan's troglodyte cliff dwellings in northwest Iran.

Construction of a handicrafts center has finished in Kandovan to become an integrated venue for craftspeople who were selling arts in frequent booths and stalls across the historical village, CHTN quoted Ahmad Nemati, the director of the ancient site, as saying on Tuesday.

The marketplace has been designed and built following local regulations and standards including the architectural map of the ancient site, the official said.



Situated near the city of Osku in East Azarbaijan province, Kandovan is filled with scenic troglodyte homes in the shape of stony ice-cream cones that are still inhabited.

As to its shape and appearance, Kandovan is highly reminiscent of Turkey's Cappadocia, a UNESCO World Heritage site that features dwellings, troglodyte villages, and underground towns with traces to human habitat dating back to the 4th century.

There is also some well-equipped lodgings that travelers who opt for an overnight stay may use to experience the magic of the place in peace and quiet. Adjacent to the hillside residents are also storage barns and other fellow settlements.

## Oxus treasure, splendid set of prehistoric Persian metalwork

→ 1 **HERITAGE TEHRAN** – The Oxus treasure is the most important surviving collection of Achaemenid Persian metalwork. It consists of about 170 objects, dating mainly from the fifth and fourth centuries BC. This was the time of the Achaemenid empire, created by Cyrus the Great (559-530 BC), when Persian control stretched from Egypt and the Aegean to Afghanistan and the Indus Valley.

The Treasure seems to have been gathered together over a long period, perhaps in a temple. It includes vessels, a gold scabbard, model chariots and figures, armlets, seals, finger-rings, miscellaneous personal objects, dedicatory plaques and coins. It was found on the banks of the River Oxus, probably at the site of Takht-i Kuwad, a ferry station on the north bank of the river, according to the British Museum.

In May 1880 Captain F.C. Burton, a British political officer in Afghanistan, rescued a group of merchants who had been captured by bandits while travelling between Kabul and Peshawar. They were carrying with them this rich collection of gold and silver objects. Burton bought from them a gold armlet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Other pieces from the Treasure subsequently emerged in the bazaars of Rawalpindi. Some of those now in The British Museum were acquired by Major-General Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814-93), Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, and others were obtained by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, who was both a curator in the Museum and a generous benefactor. In due course Franks bought Cunningham's share of the treasure, and eventually the entire Oxus treasure was bequeathed by him to The British Museum.

# Ancient rock-hewn monument undergoes urgent restoration

→ 1 **HERITAGE TEHRAN** – A team of restorers and cultural heritage experts have commenced urgent works on a post-Achaemenid monument, which is known as Qadamgah. The rock-cut structure is located near the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, southern Iran.

An urgent restoration project has been started on Qadamgah, which is harshly damaged due to both vandalism and natural factors, Mostafa Rakhshandekhu, who presided over the restoration team, announced on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, the site has been developed a very ugly look due to numerous handwritings being inscribed on its face.... Moreover, natural erosion, fractures, the growth of shrubs and seasonal plants have inflicted severe damage to this magnificent structure."

Qadamgah or Chasht-Khor is unique in terms of the volume of masonry and mountain cutting, according to Hamid Fadaei, director of the World Heritage site.

By looking at the style of carving and also the signs of masonry tools and also comparing this place with the Achaemenid [rock-carved] tombs that were built in the heart of the mountain, the construction of the porch of Qadamgah is a reminder of the Achaemenid period, Fadaei explained.

Situated some 40 km south of Perse-



polis, Qadamgah consists of three platforms with rear walls and staircases and features cavities on the back wall and a now-dry spring and pond at the bottom.

Its function, however, has been a matter of debate, with the latest research pointing to a religious function related to the holy element Water.

The monument was first discovered by

Capt. H. L. Wells (from the Royal Engineers) in 1881 who published a drawing of the plan and section of it, but did not describe it. The structure and its purpose was later discussed by Forsat-od-Dowleh (1854-1920), Louis Vanden Berghe (1954), Giorgio Gullini (1964), Mohammad Taqi Mostafavi (1964), Calmeyer (1975), Rémy Bouchard (1979), Kleiss (1993), and

Jean-Claude Bessac (2007).

The structure has been built by cutting two deep terraces vertically from the top of the rocky limestone slope, forming three superimposed platforms with vertical rear walls. The monument lacks any built structures. Underneath the lower terrace, there has been a now-dry spring feeding a pool that overlooked the monument. The terraces are 13.50 meters wide.

The lower terrace is 3 meters above the ground. The upper terrace, which is 4.25 meters higher, is linked to the lower one by two rock-cut staircases on the sides. Three rows of five shallow cavities have been cut in rectangular form into the back wall above the upper terrace. Several shallow, hemispherical holes are also cut along the edge of the upper terrace.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars province.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showpiece and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

## Tehran conference to explore cultural impact of coronavirus on tourism

→ 1 **TOURISM TEHRAN** – The social and cultural impact of the novel coronavirus on the arenas of tourism and cultural heritage will be explored at a Tehran conference.

The event is set to be held at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism (RICHT) on February 17 and 18, according to organizers.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi are scheduled to deliver opening speeches.

A host of cultural experts, sociologists, academia, Iranologists, archaeologists, have been tourism insiders invited to the event.

The average of international travels to and from Iran fell by 84 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2020) from a year earlier.

Passenger traffic from land and air borders during the first nine months of this year compared to the same period

last year, decreased by 84.57% in incoming passenger traffic and 84.33% decrease in outgoing passenger traffic, according to the Customs Administration.

Furthermore, international tourist arrivals to Iran plunged 72% during the first eight months of the year when compared to 2019, according to data compiled by the World Tourism Organization.

Optimistic forecasts, expect the country would achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

According to a UNWTO Barometer, international arrivals plunged 81% last July and 79% in last August, traditionally the two busiest months of 2020 and the peak of the Northern Hemisphere summer season. The drop until August 2020 represents 700 million fewer arrivals compared to the same period in 2019 and translates into a loss of \$730 billion in export revenues from international tourism.



UNWTO's Panel of Experts foresees a rebound in international tourism in 2021, mostly in the third quarter of 2021. However, around 20% of experts suggest the rebound could occur only in 2022.

## UNESCO World Heritage: restoration work continues at Tabriz bazaar complex

→ 1 **HERITAGE TEHRAN** – A total of 200 shops have been restored in the UNESCO-designated bazaar of Tabriz during the current Iranian year (started March 2020), months after a blaze swept through the ancient site.

"The directorate of the UNESCO-registered complex issues 20 restoration permits on average for the shops located within the site... and 200 shops have undergone rehabilitation work since the beginning of the year," the provincial tourism chief, Ahmad Hamzeadeh announced on Tuesday.

In May 2019, a blaze inflicted damage



to sections of the marketplace, which embraces countless shops, over 20 caravanserais and inns, and several vast domed

halls, bathhouses, and mosques.

A labyrinth of interconnected covered passages that stretches for about 5 km, the historic bazaar of Tabriz has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2010 and was mentioned by Marco Polo when he traveled the Silk Road in the Middle Ages.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz, which is the capital of East Azarbaijan, embraces several historical and religious sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol

Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295-1304) and his successor Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

The city retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin. During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

## Persian handicrafts: Kilim of Harsin

→ 1 **HERITAGE TEHRAN** – Kilim is a handwoven flooring that is produced on looms and without the use of knots. It has long been used as a floor covering and is among the handicrafts of village or nomadic people of Iran.

The town of Harsin in the province of Kermanshah is one of the most important centers of Kilims weaving in Iran and its hand-woven products are internationally known with the same name.

One of the reasons that many men and women of Harsin take up making Kilims is that animal breeding is very common in the region and very high-quality wool is produced in Kermanshah and surrounding cities.

This provides one hundred percent natural material which has become a specific trait of Harsin Kilims. There are some similarities between Haesin Kilims and Shiriki Pich of Sirjan which makes it possible that they have affected each other in time. But Harsin Kilims are double-sided and their backgrounds are usually dark blue or red. Other colors such as white, green, crimson



red can be seen too.

Geographically, Harsin is located in the south of the ancient city of Kangavar. Reviewing reliefs of surrounding archeological sites proves that Kelims and

their attractive motifs were created in Harsin from at least two hundred years ago.

The motifs are made from memory and have passed from a generation to another, and can be divided into four groups; figurative; animals; floral; and objects. They have their own local name and are completely inspired by the natural environment and habitat of Harsin.

The weavers use these inspirations and incorporate them into abstract designs so that they can be applied in Kilims. Among the figurative motifs, we can find Cham or Chashm (eye) that is used as a talisman, Dast o Nav Dast (hand in hand) that is a symbol of union and friendship, and Bovi (doll) is a symbol of protectors of the family, home and city. Animal motifs are the abstract design of ducks, butterflies, catclaw, rabbits, jackals, scorpions, sparrows and snakes, etc.

Today Harsin Kilims can be found not only in this city but also in Gilan Gharb, Islamabad-e Gharb, and Javanroud.

## Three excavators arrested in northern Iran

→ 1 **HERITAGE TEHRAN** – Three men, part of a gang of illegal excavators, were detained early on Monday while doing some drilling in a rural house in northern Iran.

A metal detector and some ancient relics were seized from the culprits who were handed over to the judicial system for further investigation, IRNA reported on Monday.

The police forces traced the excavators

following reports by local people in Bala-deh district of Nur county, Mazandaran province, the report said.

Soaked in a vibrant history, Mazandaran (also known as Tabarestan) was a cradle of civilization since the beginning of the first millennium BC. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, it was almost overrun in about 720 CE by the Arab raiders.

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol in-

vaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty. The northern section of the region consists of a lowland alongside the Caspian and an upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains.



# One year into the pandemic, Iran's achievements

By Faranak Bakhtiari

**TEHRAN** — A year has passed since Iran reported the first case of coronavirus infection on February 19. The country has made great efforts to combat the pandemic through boosting production of medical items, forming volunteer groups, and implementing different schemes, and the most precious of which was the medical staff's dedication.

"In those early days, we all felt that we entered a new dark world much like those shown in horror movies, and the only thing we felt was a deluge of misinformation, conspiracy, and fear," Mahmoud Saedi, an infectious disease specialist, told the Tehran Times.

After a while, the medical staff appeared tired but the desire to save the lives of the people and the country motivated them to dedicate themselves, he added.

He went on to say that the medical community was the first who closely witnessed people's grief, loss of loved ones, and how destructive the virus was, but stayed firm to combat the pandemic.

"And their true devotion was the most important part of the fight against the epidemic, without a doubt, and if they gave up, we would have been defeated," he also said.

"Once a patient referred to us who was severely infected with COVID-19 so that we told her to quarantine herself, and take treatment, but there was little hope for her to survive, after two weeks she came and we were happy with her recovery, but she said that she lost her husband, and that was a real tragedy for all of us," he noted.

"At that time, we were trying not to lose hope, while giving people hope, and that was the toughest part," Saedi added.

The world came to know about the novel coronavirus for the first time when China reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) that a mysterious respiratory disease of unknown origin emerged in the city of Wuhan in Hubei province on December 31, 2019.

The virus continues to spread at a slow burn so that an estimated 109 million people have been infected worldwide, and 2.42 million are dead.

## Medical staff's sacrifice

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, Iranian nurses have been at the forefront of the fight against the disease.

Many healthcare workers lost their lives or mourned their colleagues in the fight against COVID-19 disease and in the path toward saving the lives of people and patients. They worked around the clock to significantly control the epidemic and minimize the number of deaths.

In this difficult struggle, the increase in the disease caused a large number of doctors and nurses to fall ill and leave the service cycle, and their colleagues had to work three shifts so that no to leave any patients untreated.

Over the past months, about 60,000 nurses have been infected with COVID-19, more



than 100 of whom lost their lives.

Maryam Hazrati, deputy health minister for nursing said in May 2020 that some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country were at the forefront of the coronavirus fight.

## Self-sufficiency

With the outbreak of coronavirus, Iran surged its production to meet the country's need for self-protective equipment along with medical and pharmaceutical items to fight against the virus, at a time when other developed countries were struggling with a severe lack of personal protective tools.

Iran is one of the top five manufacturers of coronavirus antigen-based rapid detection kits in the world; as homegrown antibody rapid test, which can detect coronavirus in 15 to 20 minutes, was unveiled in Tehran on November 17, 2020.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times in September 2020 that some of the knowledge-based companies reached a production capacity of more than 200-300 thousand diagnostic kits per day, which surpassed the country's need for diagnostic kits, and there is a great export potential.

Pointing out that multiplying the production of COVID-19 equipment led to significant measures that led to foreign currency saving for the country, he said "it also helped us cope with problems and not to run out of equipment because no matter how much money we gave, no country had the equipment to sell."

He also announced that two types of diagnostic kits are now mass-produced by knowledge-based companies, first one is the RT-PCR tests, 8 million of which are being produced per month; while the other is serology-based tests that a total of 400,000 are being manufactured monthly and is expected to reach up to 2 million.

At present, 40 advanced ventilators are manufactured daily in the medical equipment

sector, he explained.

Knowledge-based companies can produce any medicine effective in countering coronavirus or approved by the scientific committee within a week to 10 days, he noted.

Mehdi Kashmiri, director for technology and planning at the science ministry, said in July that about 450 knowledge-based companies were active in the country for manufacturing protective equipment and treatment products to fight the coronavirus.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the products manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

## Volunteer efforts in light of pandemic

In the fight against coronavirus, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Basij along with the Ministry of Health and other responsible organizations, has undertaken important activities, from rapid diagnosis and screening to providing medical services and shelter, but the most important activity of this population has been informing the public about healthcare and treatment.

Since the onset of the outbreak, more than 980 voluntary plans and projects to contain the epidemic has been implemented across the country, with 72,694 volunteers participating in the implementation of these projects, Karim Hemmati, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, said in May 2020.

The first phase of public donations was allocated to provide health and essential items for the deprived and unprivileged areas, and besides, 500,000 patients suffering special

diseases were provided with essential health items, he stated.

Through the second phase, the IRCS, to provide medical items for COVID-19 patients in hospitals, purchased 100 ventilators worth approximately 160 billion rials (around \$3.8 million), 52 devices have been provided with the help of charities and public participation, he added.

With the efforts of the Basij, a national plan named after martyr Qassem Soleimani so far the decreased transmission chain of the disease by 50 percent.

Martyr Soleimani's plan is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Basij, and the Red Crescent Society, through which volunteer forces provide information, testing, diagnosis, referral of suspects to health centers, and offer services by visiting people's homes.

Some 22,530 monitoring teams have been formed within the framework of the plan since December 2020 with 103,000 members, of which more than 270,000 are in contact to identify COVID-19 patients, said Jafar Sadeq-Tabrizi, head of the Network Management Center of the Ministry of Health.

Some 6,730 home care teams have been formed in the country with the participation of 18,000 forces, who have taken care of 41,000 people at home, and rapid result tests have been performed on 7,500 suspects, he explained.

Since December 2020, with the participation of 61,000 people, more than 10,000 monitoring teams have been formed. About 782,000 visits and monitoring of various places and centers have been

## Vaccination

Iran started mass vaccination with Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine, with the priority given to medical staff, the elderly, and people with underlying diseases; and is also going to be co-produced by the two countries.

Importing vaccine from COVAX, a global initiative to ensure rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, is also on the agenda.

On January 27, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said that there are four different ways to supply the coronavirus vaccine, including direct purchase from a foreign country, procurement from the World Health Organization's COVAX facility, a joint production with a Cuban company as well as domestic production of the vaccine.

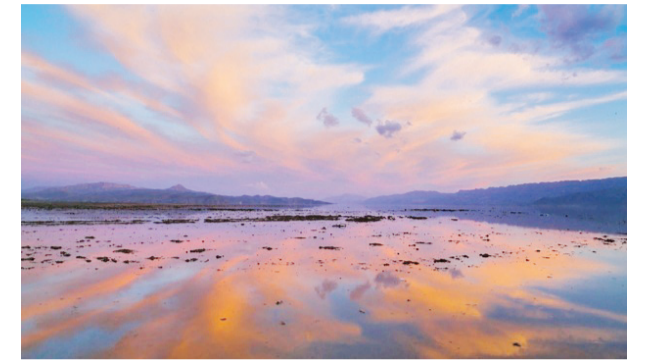
He emphasized that Iran will soon be one of the world's important manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, was unveiled and injected into three volunteers during a ceremony on December 29, 2020.

Meanwhile, Iran and Cuba have formed a 'strategic alliance' through working jointly on a project for producing a potential coronavirus vaccine.

## Tehran meeting highlights 'inseparable link between wetlands and life'

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN**— On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of signing the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, a ceremony was held on Tuesday at the Department of Environment to emphasize the need for protecting wetlands as they play a key role in life of societies.



As the theme of the event denotes "Inseparable Water, Wetlands, and Life", the environmental protection effect of wetlands and their social, cultural, and economic functions were discussed during the one-day meeting attended by representatives from international organizations, IRIB reported.

During the meeting, First Vice-President Es'hag Jhangiri said that some \$370 million has been allocated over the past three years to protect wetlands and combat sand and dust storms in the country.

Over the last few years, the importance of wetlands and their protection came into consideration, and over time, the law on protection, rehabilitation, and management of wetlands was approved in the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016).

In November 2020, Ali Arvahi, the director of the Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project, said a comprehensive management program was being implemented for 18 wetlands of the country.

The comprehensive program for the protection of Parishan, Shadegan, Urmia, Qara Gheslugh, Qourigol, Miqan, Choghakhor, Zarivar, Hamoon, Bakhtegan, Alagol, Gavkhoni, Noruzlu, Soldoz, Kani Barazan, Haray Minab, Ne'or and Gandoman wetlands has been approved and is being implemented, he added.

Iran currently has 25 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), covering a surface area of 1,488,624 hectares.

The Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

The Convention on Wetlands is the oldest of the modern global intergovernmental environmental agreements. The treaty was negotiated through the 1960s by countries and non-governmental organizations concerned about the increasing loss and degradation of wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds. It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

World Wetlands Day is observed annually on February 2, emphasizing the importance of the wetlands and sustainable use of these valuable ecosystems.

According to the Ramsar Convention, wetlands remove water pollutants, control storms, curb climate impacts absorbing 30 percent of land-based carbon, share great biodiversity helping human life, store and supply water, and help 1 billion people to make a living worldwide.

Moreover, wetlands are home to 40 percent of all species, and provide a great part of the food supply, while being an important source of flourishing tourism in the countries.

Iran also has a great share of wetlands, as 105 wetlands are in the country stretching 3 million hectares of land.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 131)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

تمرین ۱. مصدرها را به گذشته نقلی تبدیل کنید:

- این زن و شوهر همیشه با هم ..... (کار کردن)
- من چیزهای زیادی در باره او ..... (فهمیدن)
- شما او را دیر ..... (معرفی کردن)
- آنها کارشان را زود ..... (شروع کردن)
- او انشایی در باره فرهنگ ..... (نوشتن)
- تا حالا چند نفر از مهمانها ..... (وارد شدن)

The present perfect is used to describe an action or state in the past which is still continuing or the effects of which are felt:

I have taught since 1370. از سال ۱۳۷۰ درس داده‌ام.

It also refers to some indefinite time in the past:

I have read this poem. این شعر را خوانده‌ام.

تمرین ۲. مصدرها را به گذشته نقلی تبدیل کنید:

- آنها ما را هم به مهمانی ..... (دعوت کردن)
- او موزه‌ی تاریخ را به من ..... (نشان دادن)
- ما همه‌ی پنجره‌ها را از دیروز ..... (بستن)
- شما چیزهای زیادی در اینجا ..... (آموختن)
- تو هندوانه‌ی قرمز و خوشمزه ..... (خریدن)
- تا حالا به شما ..... (خوش گذشتن)



Be kind to me!

## Rapid spread of mutated COVID-19 in Iran 'a real concern'

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The rapid spread of the more-contagious UK variant of COVID-19 in Iran is a real concern, the country's health officials have warned.

Deputy Health Minister Kianoush Jahanpour said on Tuesday that 17 cases of the mutated virus have so far been identified across the country.

Signs of the fourth wave of the disease have been seen in some provinces, he said, adding that the new wave is much more dangerous than the previous ones.

Meanwhile, Health Ministry's spokeswoman Sima-Sadat Lari said the recent rise in the number of COVID-19 patients in Khuzestan province is 'highly worrying', adding that in the province of Ilam, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Bushehr, Fars,

Isfahan, and Semnan a rising trend in new cases is seen as well.

On Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani emphasized the necessity for people to follow health protocols, as a new wave of coronavirus may hit the country within the next two months.

Noting that facing such a great calamity was unprecedented during the century, he said that despite all the advances in medical knowledge, the outbreak of such a global pandemic was unpredictable to anyone.

Iran has taken the primary steps to develop and produce the COVID-19 vaccine and the country's experts are confident that the project will be finalized in March so that Iran will begin mass vaccination with the domestically-produced vaccine, he stated.



## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## E-motorbikes come to curb air pollution in metropolises

The first phase of electric motorcycles development project will be implemented aiming at reducing air pollution in Tehran and other metropolises, IRNA news agency reported.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Tuesday that electric motorcycles will be promoted in big cities in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Through the first phase of the project, electric motorcycles will replace the regular ones used by the Ministry of Energy and state-run companies, he explained.

Ardakanian went on to say that, in addition to electric motorcycles being manufactured and marketed from now on, existing motorcycles will also change to use electricity sources.

## آغاز طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوا

مرحله نخست طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران و دیگر کلانشهرها آغاز می‌شود.

به گزارش ایرنا، رضا اردکانیان وزیر نیرو روز سه شنبه گفت برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با همکاری وزارت صنعت، معدن و تجارت انجام خواهد شد.

وی افزود: هدف این طرح در گام نخست، برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌های مورد استفاده وزارت نیرو و شرکت‌های دولتی است.

اردکانیان اضافه کرد بر این اساس علاوه بر اینکه از این پس موتورسیکلت برقی تولید و وارد بازار می‌شود، موتورسیکلت‌های موجود نیز برای مالکان آنها برقی می‌شوند.

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The elderly are the sources of mercy and divine blessing.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

ICRO music video airs  
Leader's views for Japanese people

“More music videos have also been produced to raise people's knowledge of the Leader's views on various topics across the world,” the organization noted.



A scene from the ICRO music video on Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Abe met Ayatollah Khamenei to pass him on a message from Donald Trump, former U.S. president.

The Leader dismissed Trump as a person not worthy of a response or a message, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem.

“We have no doubts about your (Japan's) goodwill and seriousness, but regarding what you quoted from the U.S. president, I personally do not consider Trump worthy of exchanging any messages with, and do not have and will not have any response for him,” the Leader told Abe.

The ICRO has many publications in various languages about the Leader.

Earlier in May 2020, the organization published the second volume of the Thai version of “A 250-Year-Old Person”, a book containing a collection of speeches and writings of Ayatollah Khamenei about the household of Prophet Muhammad (S) in Bangkok. The first volume of the book was published in 2019.

Earlier in September 2019, Eslamica, a publishing house based in the German city of Bremen, released the book under the title of “Der 250-Jährige Mensch” in collaboration with the ICRO.

An English version of “A 250-Year-Old Person” has previously been published by Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly.

Fajr Music Festival to present revolutionary songs at Rudaki Open-Air Theater

Several groups will be performing revolutionary songs at the Rudaki Open-Air Theater near Vahdat Hall on the margins of the 36th Fajr Music Festival.

“Children of Iran” by conductor Mehrdad Seyyeda, “Shahid Faraji” by Hossein Nasiri, and “Light of Lamp” by Hadi Qassemi will be giving several performances, the organizers have announced.

The songs were due to be performed in large numbers during the festival, however, in the current situation of the Coronavirus restrictions in Tehran, the organizers decided to perform the songs at the open air spaces.

Some of the performances will take place in the morning and some in the afternoon during the festival, which will be running until February 21.

The 36th edition of the festival kicked off Tuesday with streaming performances on fajrmusicfestival.com, nay.ir, and tiwall.com after canceling the in-person edition in Tehran due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Austrian duos Vila Madalena is one of the groups, which gave their performance on the very first day of the festival.

ISTAM Ritual Groups, Respina String Quartet, Namad String Quartet and Jav Ensemble were also among the Iranian participating musicians on the first day.

A number of international musicians have been invited to give performances during the festival.

The musicians include cellist Martin Melendez from Cuba, pianist Moritz Ernst and saxophonist Timo Vollbrecht from Germany, and pianist Gianna Fratta and violinist Dino Di Palma from Italy.

In addition, the Austrian duos Vila Madalena and Sain Mus will also perform at the festival.

Accordianist Nikola Zaric and clarinet and saxophone player Franz Oberthaler are the members of Vila Madalena, and the Sain Mus duo features guitarist Phillip Erasmus and cellist Clemens Sainitzer.

Revolution Poetry and Fiction Festival honors winners

TEHRAN — Winners of the 12th Revolution Poetry and Fiction Festival were honored during a ceremony on Monday at Tehran's Art Bureau.

Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization director Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi and several other cultural officials joined the literati attending the ceremony.

No book was picked as best adults' novel section, while “Fog and Smoke” by Sajjad Khaleiqi was named best children's novel. “Daddies Don't Get Lost” by Monireh Hashemi was selected as best children's short story, and the award for best adult short story was given to “Castle” by Mehdi Purfard.

In the revolution poetry section, the award for the single modern poetry was given to Fahimeh Qaedi's “White Language”, and the award for the single classical poetry was given to Maedeh Hashemi's “Unequal War”.

“Rain Is Angel” by Hossein Abdi received the award for best children's poetry collection, and “Peace on the Barrel of the Gun” by Monireh Hashemi was honored as the best young adult poetry collection.

“Culture in the Skin of Eagle” by Abbas Baqeri was selected as best modern poetry,



A winner bows before the audience after being honored at the 12th Revolution Poetry and Fiction Festival at the Andisheh Hall of the Art Bureau in Tehran on February 15, 2021. (Mehr/Saeidreza Razavi)

and “Flight” by Alireza Mohammad-Alibeigi received the award for best classical poetry. Revolutionary poets Ali-Mohammad

Moaddab, Sadeq Rahmani and Ali Davudi were among the poets who attended the program.

Also on Sunday, a hall at the bureau was named after Iranian poet and translator Tahereh Saffarzadeh (1936-2008).

Saffarzadeh, a female scholar, poet and translator who died of cancer in 2008, is famous for her bilingual translation of the Holy Quran in Persian and English.

She also translated a selection of the Nahjul-Balagha of Imam Ali (AS) into Persian and English.

The ceremony was also attended by a number of cultural officials who talked about the cultural activities of the late Saffarzadeh.

Speaking at the ceremony, veteran poet Mohammadreza Sohrabinejad said that Ms. Saffarzadeh had conducted deep studies about the Holy Book of Quran and religious studies, and her translation of Quran is one of the very best of translations.

“Late Saffarzadeh was a great personality who served the revolution and religion,” he added.

Poet Sadeq Rahmani called her a great researcher who spent the first years of her activity on poetry and literature.

Her great success was her simple language, he said adding that she was also successful in Quran translation. “English translations of Quran and Nahjul-balagha of Imam Ali (AS) are among her best activities,” he added.

Iranian troupe to perform play on World War II in Stuttgart

“We Are Different” at the Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran since January 31, and the last performance will go on stage today.

“We have rehearsed for a year to stage the play, and we will perform it for three nights at the Stuttgart Theater House,” he told the Persian service of MNA on Tuesday.

“The troupe is performing the play in six languages, and I plan to stage it at international festivals across the world,” he added.

Co-written by Sobhan Babai and Shirali, the story of the plays is about a senior commander of the Allies and his men, who are assigned the task of assassinating a top German commander. In the heat of their mission, they find out that they all are the victims of a conspiracy from their top leaders, and have no chance of escape.

“Despite the pandemic restrictions, our performances

have been warmly received, and I believe that when you have a compelling story it will find its audience,” Shirali noted.

A cast of 24 actors has spent several months learning languages to portray German, Russian, French, British, American and Iranian characters in their native languages. Iranian theatergoers have watched the performances with subtitles.

Shirali said that he never limits his plays to a specific time or geographical place, and added that people can have their own personal perceptions of the play.

“Some people may find it a romance, and others may view it as a political or social story, but I have tried not to limit my play to a single genre, rather, I'm seeking a new and different relation with the audience,” he stated.

Mehdi Rafiei, Sobhan Babai, Sadaf Safari, Sara Abbasi and Javad Sahar are members of the cast.



Members of director Arman Shirali's troupe perform “We Are Different” at the Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran on February 3, 2021. (Payamekhabar.ir/ Ali-Asghar Ez'hari)

TEHRAN — Iranian director Arman Shirali plans to stage a play on World War II at the Stuttgart Theater House in Germany in early spring. His troupe has been performing the play entitled

Inscribed testament of Commander Soleimani unveiled at Tehran art show

TEHRAN — A copy of the testament of Commander Qassem Soleimani inscribed by calligrapher Bahman Heidari was unveiled Tuesday during the Song of Sabalan Persian Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition at the Art Bureau in Tehran.

The exhibition features 50 works of calligraphy, calligraphic paintings and Persian paintings by 25 artists from the northwestern Iranian city of Ardebil. The showcase has been organized in collaboration with the Ardebil branch of the Art Bureau.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Art Bureau director Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman and several officials from Ardebil.

Speaking at the ceremony, Hojatoleslam Qassem Jafarzadeh, the director of Ardebil



Calligrapher Bahman Heidari poses with an inscribed copy of the testament of Commander Qassem Soleimani at the Song of Sabalan Persian Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition at the Art Bureau in Tehran.

department of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, said that the

exhibit tries to promote a series of national, cultural and religious teachings to the visitors. He called art a transnational and trans-religious language, which includes calligraphy, poetry, music and visual arts.

“We are responsible to move towards the high goals of Commander Soleimani, since we believe he is alive, and his life and manners are in line with the lofty ideals of the Islamic society for which had made great efforts,” he added.

“We commissioned this artwork in our department in Ardebil and wanted to have a share in these great goals,” he noted.

“These great goals are beautifully inscribed in this testament in the language of art,” he added.

The inscribed testament will be donated to the family of the Commander.

The exhibition will continue for 10 days. After his assassination in Baghdad in January 2020, numerous cultural events were organized about Commander Soleimani.

The Palestine Museum of Contemporary Art organized an art exhibit in which a selection of paintings and calligraphy works created by 60 Iranian artists during a two-day workshop at the Farshchian University of Iranian-Islamic Arts went on view under the title of “Tall Cypress of the Islamic Revolution” in February.

The Revayat Cultural Foundation organized a photo contest on the funeral of the martyr in the virtual exhibition named “My Commander” in September.

The photo contest was held in several categories including single photo, series, cellphones and young adults.

Luxembourg festival picks “Careless Crime”, “Botox”

TEHRAN — “Careless Crime” and “Botox”, two films from Iran, will go on screen in the 11th edition of the Luxembourg City Film Festival taking place from March 4 to 14, the organizers have announced.

“Careless Crime” by Shahram Mokri will be competing in the official competition section, while “Botox” by Kaveh Mazaheri is an entry in the non-competition section.

“Careless Crime” goes back forty years to the uprising to overthrow the Shah's regime in Iran, when protestors set fire to movie theaters as a way of showing opposition to Western culture. Many cinemas were burned down. In one tragic case, a theater was set on fire with four hundred people inside, most of whom were burned alive. Forty years have passed, and in contemporary Iran, four individuals also decide to burn down a cinema. Their intended target is a theater showing a film about an unearthed, unexploded missile.



A scene from Shahram Mokri's drama “Careless Crime”.

The film has been screened at several major international festivals and won several awards, including the best original screenplay award at the Venice festival and the Silver Hugo of the jury at the Chicago International Film Festival.

Co-written by Nasim Ahmadpur and Mokri, the film also won the award for best screenplay at the 19th Dhaka International Film Festival in Bangladesh.

“Botox” is about sisters Akram and Azar. Both lie about their brother's disappearance, telling everyone he fled to Germany. Day after day, the lie becomes bigger and more unmanageable, leading everyone to a dark and mysterious destiny.

“Botox”, a co-production between Iran and Canada was named the best feature at the 38th Torino Film Festival.

The film co-written by Mazaheri and Sepinud Najian also won the award for best screenplay at the Italian festival, which took place in Turin from November 20 to 28.

“Ministry of Pain” on Balkan war exiles published in Persian

TEHRAN — Croatian writer Dubravka Ugresic's 2004 novel “The Ministry of Pain” has been published in Persian in Tehran.

Nasrin Tabatabai is the translator of the book published by No Publications.

Having fled the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, Tanja Lucic is now a professor of literature at the University of Amsterdam, where she teaches a class filled with other young Yugoslav exiles, most of whom earn meager wages assembling leather and rubber S&M clothing at a sweatshop they call the “Ministry”.

Abandoning literature, Tanja encourages her students to indulge their “Yugonostalgia” in essays about their personal experiences during their homeland's cultural and physical disintegration. But Tanja's act of academic

rebellion incites the rage of one renegade member of her class and pulls her dangerously close to another, which, in turn, exacerbates the tensions of a life in exile that has now begun to spiral seriously out of control.

An English translation of the novel by Michael Henry Heim was published in 2007.

Ugresic earned her degrees in comparative literature, Russian language and literature at the University of Zagreb, and worked for twenty years at the Institute for Theory of Literature at the university, successfully pursuing parallel careers as a writer and a literary scholar.

She started writing professionally with screenplays for children's television programs, as an undergraduate. In 1971, she published her first book for children “Mali Plamen”, which was awarded a prestigious Croatian

literary prize for children's literature. Ugresic published two more books, “Filip i Srećka” and “Kucni Duhovi”, and then gave up writing for children.

As a literary scholar, Ugresic was particularly interested in Russian avant-garde culture. She was a co-editor of the international scholarly project Pojmovnik Ruske Avangarde, (A Glossary of the Russian Avangarde) for many years.

She rediscovered forgotten Russian writers such as Konstantin Vaginov and Leonid Dobychin, and published “Nova Ruska Proza”, a book on Russian contemporary fiction.

She translated fiction into Croatian from Russian, and edited anthologies of both Russian contemporary and avant-garde writing.

She is based in Amsterdam today, working as a freelance writer.



Front cover of Croatian writer Dubravka Ugresic's 2004 novel “The Ministry of Pain”.