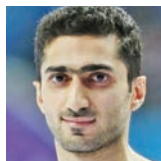




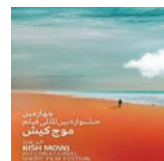
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Iran's Keikha likely to miss Olympics after FIG World Cup postponed *Page 3*



China isn't the USSR: Texas University professor *Page 5*



Mowj Intl. Short Film Festival to kick off today *Page 8*

On JCPOA, U.S. actions should speak louder than words, Leader says

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Iran, Russia hold joint naval exercises



© Mehr

Rouhani talks to Merkel, says JCPOA 'unchangeable'

TEHRAN – In a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday afternoon, President Hassan Rouhani criticized Europe for failing to honor their commitment to the nuclear deal and raising new issues in relation to the 2015 agreement, officially called the JCPOA.

Noting that moves to include new issues in the JCPOA is something "impossible", Rouhani told Merkel, "The JCPOA is a document approved

by the (UN) Security Council and is the product of long years of efforts by Iran and six great countries in the world, and it has a definite framework that is unchangeable."

Rouhani also said if Europe is really seeking to preserve the JCPOA and realize its goals it must prove it in practice. The president added, "The only way to protect the JCPOA is cancellation of inhuman U.S. sanctions."

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Aluminum ingot production up 65%

TEHRAN- Production of the aluminum ingot in Iran rose 65 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.

The country's aluminum ingot output stood at 364,783 tons during the ten-month period of this year.

Aluminum ingot production also

rose 58 percent to 39,560 tons in the tenth month of this year (December 21, 2020 – January 19, 2021), as compared to the same month in the previous year.

Annual production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase 63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

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TEHRAN - On the second and last day of their joint drills in the northern Indian Ocean, which its main purpose was commercial security in the sea, the Iranian and Russian naval forces exercised freedom of two hijacked ships and extinguishing fire.

Admiral Gholamreza Tahani, spokesperson of the joint naval exercises, said, "On the second day of combined drills in the northern Indian Ocean, and based on a scenario, the rescue operations of two cargo ships hijacked by pirates while

sailing in international waters was carried out by surface and air units."

After sending an emergency message by the cargo ships to Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC) of Chabahar, first the operation area was identified and searched by a SH3D helicopter of the Iranian Navy and then the Iranian-made destroyer Jamaran ordered the warships stationed in the region into two groups consisting of Iranian and Russian units to liberate the vessels, he explained.

Continued on page 2

Hosting 2022 World Cup qualifiers a necessity for Iran

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN

Iran football federation has officially submitted the request to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to host the 2022 World Cup qualifiers matches in Group C. There is any other way for the federation to host the competition since the new fixture is more difficult for Iran than it seems.

Iran national football team, who sit third in the group, have a one more match than Iraq and Bahrain. According to the previous schedule, Iran had to host Hong Kong in Tehran and travel to Phnom Penh to meet Cambodia in March. These two matches are easier than the matches against Bahrain and Iraq in June. And it was an opportunity for the team to rest for two months. But according to the new fixture, Iran must play every three days in June.

It's while Iraq and Bahrain, who are favorites to win the group, can rest more because they will play three matches.

Iran have lost to Bahrain and Iraq in their away matches and had to entertain them at home but if a country like Bahrain will be chosen as the hosts, it will be difficult for Iran to win their matches.

Iran football team need four wins out of four matches and it means that the team have to take advantage of their hosting right.

Bahrain and Iraq have come forward and notified the AFC of their keenness to host those games and it could be very bad news for the Dragon Skocic's team.

To host the matches against Hong Kong, Bahrain and Iraq were the natural right of Iran according to the previous fixture but the Confederation has been forced to reschedule the competition in light of COVID-19 pandemic.

Iran, as one of the Asian heavyweights, have qualified for the FIFA World Cup in the 2014 and 2018 and look forward to participate in the prestigious competition for the third time in a row.

But the team face difficult situation if they will be forced to play in another country.

Skocic has already said to host the remaining matches is in their favor but it doesn't matter to them to play everywhere else, but the federation should not take the comment seriously. It matters. Iran shouldn't budge an inch.

Jalaluddin Rahmat founded modern Sufism

BY AFIFAH AHMED

On Monday afternoon, I received a short message from a friend of mine containing sad news that Jalaluddin Rahmat had passed away.

Kang Jalal, as he was commonly called, was an Indonesian Shia Muslim scholar whose ideas influenced the country in the 1980s and 1990s. Social media was soon filled with messages of condolence for the death of this Islamic litterateur by thinkers and politicians, as well as people who were companions of him or had many memories in common.

While I was grieving, I remembered my memories of 1996-98, when I was studying at Shahid Mottahari High School in Jakarta, whose director and founder was Jalaluddin Rahmat. The high school and its institute were founded in 1992 and soon became one of the most prominent schools in Jakarta. At this school, like other students, I discovered my interests

and talents using the new teaching methods that Mr. Jalal provided.

In fact, the dynamic and modern educational atmosphere of this school made its graduates have higher abilities compared to other students. Kang Jalal, for example, invited various religious and political figures to come to the school to discuss current issues and different religions and beliefs. The freedom of expression and freedom of opinion was practically a basic part of this school and its education program. Another issue that we witnessed in the school of Jalaluddin Rahmat was the large number of books and the very large and valuable library that Jalal himself had collected.

Jalal's interest in reading had enriched the library. Jalal's son always told him that for you, a heaven is a place full of books.

Continued on page 5

Lower house of French parliament approves anti-Islam bill

The lower house of the French parliament has approved a controversial bill that it says is aimed at curbing "Islamist separatism" but that has raised concerns about targeting religious freedom and stigmatizing Muslims.

French lawmakers passed the bill — originally dubbed the "anti-separatism" bill — at the French National Assembly on Tuesday, with 347 legislators voting in favor, 151 against, and 65 abstaining.

The legislation will now be passed to France's upper house, the conservative-led Senate, where French President Emmanuel Macron's party does not hold a majority.

"It's an extremely strong secular offensive," French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said ahead of the vote. "It's a tough text... but necessary for the republic."

Among the more than 70 articles of the legislation, there are those about tough measures against online apologists for acts of violence.

According to Press TV, the legislation also expands the ability of the state to close places of worship and religious schools, as well as to ban extremist preachers.

It also tightens rules on the funding of mosques, associations, and non-governmental organizations belonging to Muslims.

The French government says the bill will strengthen the country's secular principles, but critics argue it targets the Muslim community and imposes restrictions on almost every aspect of their lives.

The bill was introduced by Macron last year supposedly to stamp out what he called "Islamist separatism" following the murder of a school teacher by a Muslim teenager of Chechen origin.

Teacher Samuel Paty was murdered after he showed his students insulting caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) earlier published by the magazine Charlie Hebdo. The assailant was killed by French police near the scene of the attack.

Towards higher energy efficiency

BY MEHDI GARSHASBI

TEHRAN - Cities are ground zero for the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the pre-existing structural weaknesses. As we respond and work towards recovery, we look to our cities as hubs of the community, human innovation, and ingenuity.

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Iran is among the 10 largest emitters of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) in the world, and the residential and commercial building sectors are the main contributors to this challenge. Increasing energy

efficiency in existing and new buildings contributes significantly to reducing emissions and addressing climate change. To overcome this challenge, UNDP has partnered with the Government and Tehran Municipality to improve the energy efficiency by 25% for existing buildings and by 60% for new buildings.

The initiative consists of 190 pilot projects in residential, public, and office buildings. Energy use audits and digital information system and a market-based financial instrument are three key components and incentives to engage the

public and expand the initiative.

Smart control and monitoring systems are being installed in buildings paving the way for smart buildings. Smart building solutions improve sustainability and energy efficiency and through gathered data from smart sensors and meters, building management systems provide efficiency through improvements in lighting, fire, and security systems. These buildings also enhance personal safety, comfort, and security.

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Govt. interference in steel market counterproductive, says expert

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI

TEHRAN - As a major source of revenue for Iran, the country's steel industry has been one of the main points of focus for the government's strategic development plans over the past few years.

As a result, this industry has been witnessing significant growth and development and Iran's place has been constantly rising among the world's top steel producers. However, despite the growth in the global arena, the domestic market for this strategic product has been witnessing some turbulence recently and the prices of steel and steel products have been soaring.

In this regard, the government has proposed a plan dubbed "Development and sustainable production of steel chain" to control the steel industry and balance the country's steel market.

This plan, however, has been facing some criticism from the country's private sector and major steel producers, claiming it to be counterproductive and in need of serious amendment.

Iranian steel industry

Despite the hardships created by the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, Iranian steel production increased by 13.4 percent in 2020 over the same period the previous year, according to the World Steel Association (WSA), making Iran the world's 10th largest crude steel producer.

Based on WSA data, the mentioned growth was achieved in a condition where the average global growth in this sector stood at -0.09 percent.

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© ISNA / Mohammadreza Bolandi

Coronavirus: Carpet Museum of Iran reopens to visitors

TEHRAN - After months of closure due to coronavirus, the Carpet Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran once again opened its doors to visitors on Wednesday.

Tens of individuals, researchers, and holidaymakers sized the opportunity to tour the museum, which is chockfull of magnificent, rare, and historical rugs, carpets, kilims, and pictorial rugs.

Continued on page 6

Indonesian Shia leader Jalaluddin Rakhmat dies from Covid-19

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** - Jalaluddin Rakhmat, leader of the Indonesian Shia Muslims, died from Covid-19 at the age of 72 in Santosa Hospital in Bandung on Monday.



Jalaluddin Rakhmat was the founder of Ahlulbayt Alayhole-slam in Indonesia.

The news of his death was announced by one of the religious scholars at the Motahari scientific and education foundation in Jakarta, IRNA reported.

Most of Indonesia's roughly one million Shia are concentrated in the Jakarta metro area.

Indonesia, located off the coast of mainland Southeast Asia in the Indian and Pacific oceans, has the largest Muslim population in the world. About 90 percent of its population are Muslim and the remaining 10 percent are Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist.

Indonesia is also the fourth populous country in the world.

Zarif categorically dismisses speculation about his presidential candidacy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday categorically dismissed speculation about his candidacy for the June presidential elections.

Recently a list has been posted on social media in which names of Zarif's speculative cabinet members have been mentioned.

Zarif jokingly said the authenticity of the cabinet list ascribed to him is as serious as the cartoon characters posted on social media.

Iranian presidential election will be held on June 18, 2021 in which principlists will most likely win.

Talking to reporters after a cabinet meeting, he said, "My decision is the same that I had already announced.....and my decision is still the same."

Zarif had previously dismissed speculation about his presidential candidacy, saying he is not fit for such a job. In his interviews with foreign media outlets Zarif had said he wants to return to his previous profession as university professor.

Iran and Japan agree to boost defense cooperation

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – In a video teleconference on Tuesday the defense ministers of Iran and Japan stressed the importance of making efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation and continue communications between the two countries' defense authorities.

Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami also congratulated Kishi Nobuo on his appointment as Japan's defense minister.

Kishi also called for Iran's cooperation in providing security of navigation and safe passage of vessels, including those related to Japan, in the Persian Gulf waters.

The two ministers also exchanged views on expanding cooperation, including in the Center for Maritime Safety in Indian Ocean located in Chabahar region in southern Iran, according to Press TV.

The Iranian minister went on to say that state terrorism is the source of instability and insecurity in the region, citing the heinous assassinations of Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani by the U.S. and scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh by the Israeli elements as examples.

"The cowardly assassination of the anti-terror legendary commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and outstanding nuclear scientist Doctor Mohsen Fakhrizadeh proved the U.S. and Israeli state terrorism," General Hatami stressed.

Kishi also pointed to Japan's naval presence in the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman, saying it is not dependent on any alliance.

He said that the Japanese Navy is trying to maintain security of the country's ships in West Asia, seeking Iran's cooperation in this regard.

U.S. acknowledges Iran seeking to resolve Yemen conflict

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The U.S. special envoy for Yemen Timothy Lenderking says Iran has an opportunity to help resolve the conflict in Yemen while calling for the Islamic Republic to "put its best foot forward" amid the Biden administration's renewed push for diplomacy, according to The Hill.

Concerning Biden's approach towards Yemen, The Hill wrote, "President Biden has elevated U.S. engagement to resolve what the United Nations has described as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and a 'living hell' for children, with more than 24 million people requiring humanitarian assistance."

The U.S. president declared America intends to end its support for the Saudi-led offensive operations in the country, and criticized the war as contributing to civilian casualties and worsening the humanitarian crisis.

He also lamented the former administration's last-minute terrorist designation for the Houthis, which the UN warned would contribute to a mass famine in the country.

According to The Hill, Lenderking, who was appointed by Biden as special envoy, put U.S. support behind the UN-led peace process for resolving the conflict in Yemen.

U.S. envoy said that in conversations in the region and inside Yemen "there is a profound desire" to end the conflict and called on key stakeholders such as Iran to work toward that end. "This is an opportunity for Iran to rally behind this effort and support a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Yemen," he remarked.

Lenderking said he would "leave it for others to discuss" whether the U.S. would speak with Iran about resolving the conflict in Yemen but added that he did speak with U.N. envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths about his most recent visit in Tehran.

Ayatollah Khamenei: This time Iran heeds only actions not words about JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Leader of the Islamic Revolution clearly announced on Wednesday that Iran just wants action not words or promises for implementing the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks during a virtual meeting with a group of people from Tabriz on the anniversary of the city's uprising against the tyrannical regime of Pahlavi a year before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"Today, I only want to just say one word about the JCPOA; we have heard a lot of words and promises which have been contradicted in practice," the Leader asserted.

"Mere words don't help; promises are useless. This time only action. If we see action from the other side we will also act (accordingly)," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

The statement by the Leader come as the new administration of Joe Biden has expressed willingness to bring back the U.S. into the multilateral nuclear pact that his predecessor Donald Trump ditched.

Elsewhere, the Leader said the country should try to neither conceal nor deny the areas in which it is lagging behind.

Nevertheless, "all in all, the situation now is very different from what it used to



be before the Revolution, and we have made numerous advancements today," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

However, the enemy projects the instances of frustration many times bigger, and does not reflect the at all, the Leader said.

The adversaries, Ayatollah Khamenei added, are doing so in order to frustrate the youths and make the Iranian people grow

pessimistic about the future.

The country, in turn, is duty-bound to use its advancements to make up for its shortcomings, despite the adversaries' malign attempts.

'Presidential election provides a very great opportunity'

Meanwhile, Ayatollah Khamenei urged a lively enthusiastic participation in the country's upcoming presidential elections that is

slated to be held on June 18.

The Leader considered a high electoral turnout and the election of the right person for the position to be the "cure for the country's chronic pains" and what "guarantees its future."

Ayatollah Khamenei described the polls as a "very great opportunity" for the country, where the public contribution would push back against hostilities, Press TV reported.

"This opportunity should, therefore, not be lost," the Leader said, noting, "The livelier the election, the greater the popular reception of it, and the broader effects and benefits for the country," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

In contrast with the pre-Revolution era, it is now the Iranian people that govern the country and decide its fate, the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said enemies will try to exercise their enmity towards the country under various guises, including by accusing it of violating human rights or finding fault with its nuclear energy program, missile activities, and regional influence.

"One, however, should pay note that these are all pretexts," the Leader cautioned and urged "reinforcement of national identity" and "increasing internal power" as the two vehicles through which the nation could triumph against all adversarial plots.

IAEA inspectors will not be expelled from Iran: Rouhani

"The world must know that the JCPOA is unchangeable"

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that Tehran's decision to suspend a voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would not mean that Iran intends to expel the UN nuclear agency's inspectors.

Speaking during a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said, "What is to happen is that Iran will stop implementing the Additional Protocol as of February 23, but no (IAEA) inspector is going to be expelled from Iran."

The Additional Protocol allows an intrusive inspection of the Iranian nuclear facilities. However, the Iranian Parliament adopted a law in December obliging the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to install advanced centrifuges, increase the level of nuclear enrichment to 20 percent and halt the Additional Protocol if the illegal sanctions against Iran are not lifted.

Based on the law, the AEOI has already installed advanced centrifuge machines, increased uranium to 20 percent. The date to suspend the Additional Protocol falls on Feb. 23.

Iran has insisted all these steps are reversible if the parties to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – honor their commitments.

Rouhani said limiting access to nuclear sites does not mean that Iran is seeking to produce nuclear arms.

"It might be interpreted as a sign of plans to obtain nukes, but this is totally incorrect," Rouhani noted, according to Tasnim news agency.

"Weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, have no place in Iran's defense strategy and Islamic Republic rules out any plan to hold nukes," the Iranian president added.

Pointing to the religious decree issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on prohibition of nuclear arms, he emphasized, "We do not seek secret nuclear

activities, not yesterday, not today and not tomorrow. This is our definite decision, whether or not the U.S., Europe and the United Nations want it."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani said, "The world must know that the JCPOA is unchangeable. America has no path but rejoining the JCPOA."

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday that Iran will remain a party to the NPT Safeguards Agreement, although the government will be obliged to prevent foreign access and monitoring beyond the Additional Protocol.

With the deadline looming, the three EU parties to the JCPOA – France, the UK and Germany – have not taken any practical measure to meet their commitments. However, they are urging Tehran to remain committed to the agreement.

The new U.S. administration has also refused to lift the anti-Iran sanctions imposed by former U.S. president Donald Trump and has set conditions for a return to the nuclear deal.

Iran, Russia hold second day of joint naval exercises

Iran-Russia drill aimed to free hijacked vessels



1 → "The special operations forces of the Iranian Army and Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) navies along with Russian forces were deployed on the hijacked ships' decks by air landing and also simultaneously penetrated from the surface, arrested the pirates and carried out the scenario of operations to free the ships," Fars quoted Admiral Tahani as saying. Pointing to the military scenarios, he high-

lighted, "Capturing the pirates, extinguishing the fire set by pirates as a smoke screen to delay the rescue operations and treatment of the wounded," were part of the drill.

Iran-Russia "Marine Security Belt" drills are underway with the slogan "Collective Cooperation at Sea for the Security of Maritime Trade" in a 17,000-kilometer area with a message of peace and friendship.

According to Iranian Navy Commander Hossein Khanzadi, the Chinese were to participate in the war games but it coincided with their New Year holidays.

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.

Los Angeles Times acknowledges first move to revive JCPOA must be taken by U.S.

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — One of Donald J. Trump's greatest blunders as president was to repudiate the 2015 international agreement in which Iran accepted significant limitations on its nuclear program — restrictions designed to halt some part of its nuclear activities, according to Los Angeles Times.

Rather than persuading Iran to admit tougher restrictions, as the Trump administration hoped, the decision to quit the deal in 2018 and impose economic sanctions gave the Islamic Republic the incentive to not fulfill some of its commitments under the accord, the American newspaper writes.

The publication sought to exaggerate Joe Biden's promises over the Iran nuclear deal and wrote, "During last year's campaign, Joe Biden promised that the United States would rejoin the agreement — known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — if Iran returned to strict compliance."

Nevertheless, the newspaper acknowledges the revival of the JCPOA will be difficult for several reasons, including the fact that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate, will not be able to seek reelection in June.

According to Los Angeles Times, Iranian conservatives who are willing to escalate Iran's nuclear activities have been provoked not only by Trump's use of economic sanctions to exert "maximum pressure" on Iran but last year assassination of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, who led the Islamic Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, by the U.S. military drones.

The newspaper argues Iran's move to ignore some provisions of the JCPOA also complicates President Biden's decision-making. Last year Iran announced that it would no longer observe the agreement's restrictions on uranium enrichment, which banned the country from enriching the purer kinds of uranium. It has since used more powerful advanced centrifuges in the enrichment process, which the agreement also prohibited, and is now producing 20%

enriched uranium — far above the 3.67% enrichment has been set in the JCPOA.

Iran has asserted at times that it is the responsibility of Biden to make the first move. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister, told CNN, "It was the United States that left the deal. It was the United States that violated the deal. It was the United States that punished any country that remained respectful and compliant with the deal. So it is for the United States to return to the deal, to implement its obligations."

However, the Biden administration has stressed that Iran must act first. In an interview with CBS broadcast, the president was asked: "Will the U.S. lift sanctions first in order to get Iran back to the negotiating table?" He answered, "No."

Antony J. Blinken, new U.S. secretary of state, has made similar statements. He told CNN, "If Iran returns to compliance with its obligations under the nuclear agreement, we would do the same thing and then we would work with our allies and partners to try to build a longer and stronger agreement and also bring in some of these other issues like Iran's missile programs."

Moreover, Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security advisor, has signaled a greater urgency, saying that "a critical early priority has to be to deal with what is an escalating nuclear crisis as [the Iranians] move closer and closer to having enough fissile material for a weapon."

"Biden is right to insist that Iran return to full compliance, but it would be a mistake for him simply to wait for that to occur before demonstrating to Iran — and to America's European allies who helped negotiate the JCPOA, along with China and Russia — that he is serious about salvaging the agreement," Los Angeles Times wrote.

The newspaper recommended Biden's administration to "authorize Robert Malley, Middle East (West Asia) expert,

U.S. special envoy for Iran, to open a channel of communication with Iran. The U.S. should also seriously consider a suggestion by Zarif that the U.S. and Iran take synchronized steps leading to Iran's return to full compliance and the reversal of Trump's rejection of the JCPOA."

It says, "The JCPOA wasn't a perfect agreement. Although some of its provisions are permanent, others will expire between 2025 and 2030," adding, "During last year's campaign, Biden said that if he were elected and Iran returned to compliance, the U.S. would rejoin the JCPOA as a starting point for negotiations on strengthening and extending its provisions. The JCPOA can be improved on, but returning to the agreement is the necessary first step."

Engaging Iran on the nuclear issue will face opposition from those in Congress and especially Israel who have denounced the JCPOA, the newspaper wrote. Iran's support for regional resistance groups and its missile program have to be addressed by Biden's administration, Los Angeles Times proposed.

The newspaper reiterated the unfounded allegations against Iran and wrote, "Preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons remains a paramount priority. A nuclear-armed Iran would destabilize the region, provide the Islamic Republic with dramatically more influence and likely inspire other nations in the region to pursue their own nuclear ambitions. Finally, if Iran possessed nuclear weapons, it might be tempted to use them in a crisis — or the fear that it could do so might lead other countries to launch a preemptive strike."

Nonetheless, Los Angeles Times highlighted some advantages of the accord, underlining, "The JCPOA was a bulwark against these threats, and the United States under Trump recklessly undermined it. On this issue, as on so many others, Biden must move boldly to undo his predecessor's mistakes."

Rouhani talks to Merkel, says JCPOA 'unchangeable'

1 → For her part, Merkel said it is necessary to keep alive the JCPOA as an international agreement and called for resolving differences surrounding the nuclear agreement through dialogue.

She also called for strengthening cooperation between Iran and Germany and also

among all countries to secure and stabilize the West Asia region.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the presidential chief of staff, has also said the 2015 nuclear deal is "valuable only if it meets the interests of our establishment."

Vaezi also said Iran held long years of ne-

gotiations on the nuclear issue and it reached a "result and an agreement and we do not negotiate again about our agreement," IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The German foreign minister has suggested including Iran's missile program in the JCPOA. France has also proposed

including regional countries such as Saudi Arabia and even Israel in possible talks on the nuclear deal.

Iran has insisted the nuclear deal is not renegotiable.

Germany, France, and Britain are three European members of the JCPOA.

On JCPOA, U.S. actions should speak louder than words, Leader says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In his latest remarks on the current state of play between Iran and the United States, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei underlined the need for Washington to take tangible measures before Tehran makes any move on the 2015 nuclear deal.

Addressing the people of East Azerbaijan province on Wednesday morning, the Leader pointed out that the Islamic Republic has heard many words and promises from the other side about the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but this time only actions matter, and if the Islamic Republic sees actions from Europe and the U.S., it will act too.

“About the JCPOA, promises were made by the other side. I am saying one thing: We’ve heard many promises which were broken and contradicted in practice. Mere words don’t help. This time only action! Action! If the Islamic Republic sees action from the other side, it will act too,” Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding, “We set the condition and the condition will not be retreated from.”

The remarks come amid heightened tensions over the nuclear deal due to the Biden administration’s stubborn insistence on continuing the failed policies of the Trump administration.

Biden officials have said that the U.S. will not rejoin the JCPOA before Iran returns to strict compliance with the deal and if Iran does so, they will return to the nuclear deal only to use it as a starting point for follow-on negotiations with Iran in a bid to replace it with a longer, expansive deal.

Iran has made it clear that it will not reverse the nuclear steps it has taken in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA. In addition, Iran has said it will not renegotiate the nuclear deal.



After years of calling on the JCPOA parties to implement their obligations, Iran gradually began reducing JCPOA commitments on the first anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal from the deal. In its latest move, Iran raised the uranium enrichment level to 20%. It also intends to stop implementing the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on February 23.

Instead of ensuring Iran’s legitimate interests in the JCPOA, the Europeans joined the Biden administration in calling for new nuclear and non-nuclear negotiations with Iran, a move that dampened hopes of a quick revival of the JCPOA and prompted Iran to double down on its nuclear activities.

Iran will implement a nuclear law obligating the government to halt implementing the Additional Protocol 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.

All of Iran’s remedial measures are intended to restore balance to the JCPOA. Iranian officials have said time and again that these measures are reversible upon U.S. compliance with the JCPOA.

“The ball is in the U.S. court now. When it lifts illegal sanctions in practice, everything will return to the right path,” Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said in a telephone conversation with his Swiss Counterpart Guy Parmelin on Tuesday.

However, the Europeans and the

Americans keep shirking from their obligations by not taking the initiative to salvage the nuclear deal. They expect Iran to continue to fully implement the JCPOA while it has long been hollowed out by the White House.

But this approach doesn’t work with Iran because it seems to be hell-bent on moving ahead with its plans to halt implementing the Additional Protocol. Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will pay a visit to Iran next week but this visit is unlikely to dissuade Iran from stopping the implementation of the Additional Protocol.

Iran is determined not to give in to Western pressure because if it succumbs to this pressure, the West will continue to dictate its demands.

“The Islamic Republic has faced super-powers’ hostility since day one. What’s the reason for this hostility? It’s because the Islamic system refuted domineering order’s norms - i.e. dominating and giving in to domination - that ruled the world and were the domineering order’s lifeblood,” the Leader said. “The domineering order has always looked for excuses against the Islamic Revolution. One day it’s human rights, once vilifying theocracy, once the nuclear issue and once regional issues. They’re all excuses. The key concern is that Iran won’t give in to their domination.”

Therefore, the Biden administration should abandon Trump-era pressures if it really wants to rekindle diplomacy with Iran. During his February 4 speech at the State Department, Biden boasted that “America is back. Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy.” But rhetoric is no longer enough. He needs to translate his words into actions on the ground. At the end of the day, actions speak louder than words.

IAEA director general to visit Iran on Saturday

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will pay a visit to Iran next week to discuss “technical” issues, Iran said on Wednesday.

“IAEA DG travels to Tehran on Saturday for technical discussions with the Atomic Energy Organization on how to continue cooperation in the light of new arrangements and development. As already announced, art. 6 of the new law will be implemented as of Feb 23,” Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, said in a tweet on Wednesday.

Gharibabadi was referring to an Iranian nuclear law that will go into effect next week.

The law, which was passed by the Iranian Parliament some two months ago, includes other things as well.

The nuclear law, officially called “Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation’s Rights,” 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 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

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 IAEA safeguards, including the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, which allows unannounced and intensive inspections of nuclear sites.

Iran resumed nuclear enrichment to 20 percent on January 4.

On Monday, Gharibabadi said Iran will implement the nuclear law obliging the government to halt implementing the Additional Protocol on February 23.

“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.

Iranian, Swiss presidents hold phone talks

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani spoke by phone with his Swiss counterpart Guy Parmelin late on Tuesday to discuss bilateral and international issues.

Rouhani described the good relations between Tehran and Bern as historical and deep, and stressed that it is necessary to develop and deepen these good relations more than before and within the framework of the joint cooperation roadmap, considering the high capacities in both countries.

Underlining the need to further boost Tehran-Bern relations, the Iranian president said, “Fortunately, Iran-Switzerland relations are in a good state by drawing a roadmap for relations in various political, cultural and economic fields, such as transportation, health, medicine, agriculture and science and technology, even during the tough U.S. sanctions.”

“We are seeking to further facilitate the activities of important Swiss companies that have continued to operate in Iran despite sanctions,” he added, according to a statement issued by the Iranian presidency.

According to the statement, Rouhani also called for the necessary measures to be taken effectively for the Swiss financial channel and the implementation of those joint agreements that have been suspended due to the policies of the previous U.S. administration, and a step towards the use of capacities.

Underlining that resolving problems through threats, pressure and coercion against the Iranian people has certainly failed, Rouhani pointed out that “maximum U.S. pressure has completely failed with the resistance of the Iranian people, and it is only through methods based on rationality and mutual respect that problems can be overcome.”

He described the re-discussion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is a product of the long efforts of different countries, impossible and contrary to UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and said, “Tehran’s strategy towards the JCPOA is completely clear. The practical lifting of sanctions by the United States, and not just on paper, will lead us back to fulfilling the obligations

that we have reduced according to the deal.” “Now the ball is in America’s court, and whenever it effectively lifts illegal sanctions, everything will get back on track,” the president noted.

Earlier in January, Rouhani reiterated the same position. He said the new U.S. administration should return to international regulations and resolutions including UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA in 2015.

“If they (the Biden administration) sincerely return to law, it’s naturally we will return to our commitments. It became clear for the world and our nation that the policy of maximum pressure and economic terrorism against Iran has failed 100%,” Rouhani stated.

The Iranian president also said the ball is in the U.S. court and that the U.S. needs to return to the JCPOA.

“The ball is in the U.S. court now. If Washington returns to Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal, we will also fully respect our commitments under the deal,” he remarked.

Similarly, Iran’s Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi had also underlined the need for Washington to take the first diplomatic move.

“The ball is in the U.S. court,” Takht-Ravanchi told NBC News in a recent interview. “It is totally up to the new administration. So as soon as they implement their obligations, Iran has said on numerous occasions that Iran will return to the full implementation of its undertakings.”

On Wednesday, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, also said that the U.S. needs to take action and that this time Iran would act only after it sees actions speak louder than words.

Addressing the people of Azerbaijan province via video conference on Wednesday, the Leader said, “About the JCPOA, promises were made by the other side. I am saying one thing: We’ve heard many promises which were broken and contradicted in practice. Mere words don’t help. This time only action! Action! If the Islamic Republic sees action from the other side, it will act too.”

He added, “We set the condition and the

condition will not be retreated from.”

In addition to the JCPOA, the Iranian president also discussed regional issues in his telephone conversation with his Swiss counterpart.

He described the Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE) initiative as a step to encourage collective security in the region and welcomed any constructive and operational initiative by countries such as Switzerland, emphasizing, “Undoubtedly, in an insecure environment, everyone in the region and in Europe will be harmed, and Iran is ready to take confidence-building measures if the other countries in the region show the necessary will.”

As regards Yemen, Rouhani referred to the bad situation of the Yemeni people, calling for an immediate ceasefire, the sending of aid, the prevention of arms transfers to some countries in the region, and finally the start of Yemeni-Yemeni talks as the final solution to return peace to the country.

President Parmelin, for his part, congratulated the government and people of Iran on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution noting that “Bern is willing to develop relations with Iran in areas of mutual interest and will make every effort in this regard.”

He expressed satisfaction with the activities of Swiss companies in Iran, despite U.S. sanctions, and referred to the Swiss financial channel and its role, and said that Switzerland is committed to transferring Iranian assets in some countries to this channel.

The Swiss president also described the current situation in the international arena as another opportunity for all parties to return to fulfill their obligations, and said that Switzerland was ready to make efforts in this direction.

Parmelin also stressed the importance of returning security to Yemen and strengthening regional cooperation, saying that Iran, given its effective role in the region, could help restore peace to Yemen with the help of other countries, including the European Union.

UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths paid a visit to Iran during which he met with senior Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

and his special assistant Ali-Asghar Khaji.

Zarif and Griffiths discussed the latest status of the Yemen crisis, and explored avenues to achieve peace and stability in the Arab country, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry following the meeting.

The chief Iranian diplomat highlighted the developments following the beginning of the Yemen crisis, especially the history of Iran’s moves and initiatives in these years through different channels, and elaborated on the Islamic Republic’s viewpoint regarding the need to end this big humanitarian crisis in the region, and the necessity of mitigating the pains and problems of the deprived people of Yemen.

Zarif noted that a political solution, rather than an imposed war, is the only way to resolve the Yemen crisis.

Iran’s top diplomat said Tehran is fully prepared to support any effective role played by the UN in settling the crisis considering the very difficult conditions caused by the war and economic siege imposed on the people of Yemen.

The UN envoy, in turn, highlighted the importance of being aware of Iran’s views on the establishment of peace and calm in Yemen.

He also elaborated on the UN’s viewpoint on the settlement of the Yemen crisis through the establishment of a ceasefire, delivery of economic aid and resumption of political talks.

Immediately after Saudi Arabia led a war against Yemen in March 2015 to restore a government loyal to Riyadh, Iran presented a four-point plan to the UN to end the war. Iran’s proposal called for the cessation of hostilities and an immediate end to all foreign military attacks, direct delivery of medical and humanitarian aid, the resumption of political talks and the creation of a broad Yemeni unity government.

“It is imperative for the international community to get more effectively involved in ending the senseless aerial attacks and establishing a ceasefire,” Zarif wrote in a letter to then UN chief Ban Ki-moon in April 2015.

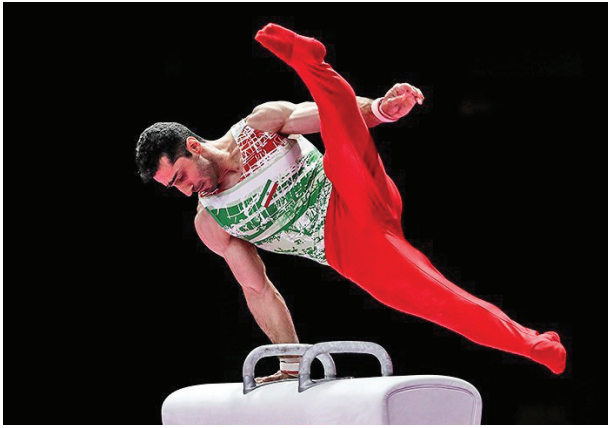
Iran also reached out to the Persian Gulf’s Arab states to advance security and stability in the region.

SPORTS

Iran’s Keikha likely to miss Olympics after FIG World Cup postponed

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Saeedreza Keikha will likely miss Tokyo Olympic Games after the next month’s Apparatus World Cup in Doha was postponed as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

The Iranian gymnast had to participate in the event since it was the Olympic qualification process.



Keikha and Mahdi Ahmad Kohani had won silver and bronze medal respectively in Melbourne, Australia last year.

The Iranian athlete needed to participate at the FIG World Cup in Doha but the postponement of the event could jeopardize Keikha’s chance of booking a berth at the Olympics.

Qatar’s capital was due to host the event from March 10 to 13 but the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) has said new dates will now need to be confirmed.

The event was the last scheduled Apparatus World Cup which is part of the qualification process for this year’s rearranged Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Ninety-eight men and 98 women are due to compete in artistic gymnastics at the Games, with 82 male places and 84 female spots already decided.

The rest of the field was due to be confirmed in Doha and through the Continental Championships.

Doha’s Aspire Dome hosted the 2018 World Championships.

The postponement of the city’s World Cup is the latest blow to the FIG’s Olympic qualification process after the entire All-Around World Cup series was cancelled last week.

Four events were supposed to make up the Series - with the first held in Milwaukee in the United States last year.

All three of the other competitions - in Stuttgart, Birmingham and Tokyo - were postponed until 2021 but the German and British events have now been cancelled entirely.

The World Cup in Tokyo - a test event for the Games - is still due to go ahead in May.

But the FIG has been forced to reallocate quota places for Tokyo 2020 as a minimum of two competitions must be held to validate the results of the entire Series.

Russia, China and Japan have been given additional berths in the men’s competition with Russia, China and the US benefitting in the women’s event.

IPL: Mojtaba Hosseini takes charge of Zob Ahan

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mojtaba Hosseini was named as Zob Ahan coach Tuesday night after canceling his contract with Naft Masjed Soleyman.

The 47-year-old coach replaced Rahman Rezaei who was sacked in early February.

Hosseini has penned an 18-month contract with Zob Ahan. Zob Ahan parted ways with Rezaei after a poor run of form for the club.

Under leadership of Rezaei, Zob Ahan earned just one win out of 14 matches in Iran Professional League (IPL). The Isfahan based football club lost five times and registered eight draws which left the team in the 14th place in the 16-team league.

Hosseini had already worked at Zob Ahan from 2014 to 2017 as assistant and coach.

He started his playing career with Nassaji Mazandaran in 1988 and played in the team until his retirement in 2004. Six years after his retirement, he began his coaching spell as the assistant coach at Nassaji. After Golmohammadi took over the reins of Saba in June 2012, he became the assistant coach of Saba but resigned from his position in January 2013 to join to the Golmohammadi’s technical staff at Persepolis.

Iranian forwards nominated for AFC International Player of the Week

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian rising stars Jafar Salmani and Allahyar Sayyadmanesh have been nominated for this week’s AFC International Player of the Week.

Mehdi Taremi continued his relentless scoring spree, and Salmani and Sayyadmanesh showed the future is bright.

Mehdi Taremi (FC Porto, Iran)

87 minutes, 1 goal, 11 duels won (1-1 v Braga)

90 minutes, 1 goal, 83% pass accuracy (2-2 v Boavista)

Yes, there has been some thought given to re-naming this column after the Iranian striker.

You now expect goals from any match involving Taremi. This week he lobbed the goalkeeper in a Cup match against Braga, before kicking off a comeback with a deflected effort against Boavista to take his tally to 15 for the season.

Jafar Salmani (Portimonense, Iran)

90 minutes, 1 goal, 1 assist, 7 interceptions (4-1 v Gil Vicente)

Another Iranian player making a name for himself in Portugal is Jafar Salmani, the recently arrived former Sanat Naft Abadan talent who provided an assist in the opening minute before rifling home his first Primeira Liga goal in a 4-1 win over Gil Vicente

Allahyar Sayyadmanesh (Zorya, Iran)

90 minutes, 1 assist, 17 duels won (2-1 v Desna)

Also thriving in bitterly cold conditions was Zorya Luhansk’s on-loan Iranian forward Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, who crafted a superb assist against Desna in a match which saw him link up with countryman Shahab Zahedi for the first time.

Washing machine manufacturing rises 53% in 10 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Manufacturing of washing machines in Iran has increased 53.2 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 880,500 washing machines 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 manufacturing 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.

Monthly red meat production increases 38% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that production of red meat in Iran stood at 40,400 tons in the tenth month of the current Iranian calendar year (December 21, 2020 – January 19, 2021), showing 38 percent growth compared to the same month in the past year.

The SCI's report said that beef and veal had the lion's share in the country's red meat output during the tenth month with 23,500 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 13,600 tons, goat meat with 2,500 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 775 tons.

The head of Iran's Livestock Provision Council has called on the government to purchase the red meat at guaranteed prices to support the producers.

Mansour Pourian has also recommended the exports of livestock to support the producers while bring foreign revenue for the country.

Saying that the purchase of red meat at guaranteed prices started in the country in the middle of the fourth Iranian calendar month of Tir (early July, 2020), Pourian announced that 4,000 tons of red meat have been purchased in this way by the State Livestock Affairs Logistics Company since then.

The purchase of red meat at guaranteed prices is already done in 15 provinces, including Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, Gilan, Alborz, Yazd, Isfahan, Fars, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khuzestan, East Azarbaijan, and Semnan, he said, adding that it will be then conducted in the other provinces as well.

Iran's deputy agriculture minister, Morteza Rezaei, has said that the total production of red and chicken meat is expected to reach 3.5 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

He said red meat production will reach 880,000 tons, while chicken meat output is expected to reach 2.7 million tons.

"Considering the measures taken, the egg production will reach 1,650,000 tons, the honey output will reach 113,000 tons, and the production of fresh silk cocoons will reach 1,650,000 tons", the official added.

Pointing to the per capita consumption of protein products in the country, Rezaei said: "Currently the per capita consumption of red meat is 12.5 kilograms, chicken meat 31.25 kilograms, raw milk 124 kilograms, eggs 11.72 kilograms and honey 1.35 kilograms."

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after.

However, the consumption per person is around a third of what is normally seen in countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in Islamic law.

The major part of Iran's red meat imports comes from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they comply with religious rules.

Govt. interference in steel market counterproductive, says expert

1 → The country was ranked third among the world's top steel producers in terms of production growth, after Uzbekistan and Moldova which both have small outputs compared to Iran.

As mentioned earlier, in Iran, the steel industry is one of the 11 strategic industries which plays a significant role in the country's industrial development because of its contribution to major development indicators such as value-added, job creation, exports, market share, and the level of knowledge and technology.

The plan

Therefore, examining the opportunities and threats in this industry has been of utmost importance for the country's policymakers, so following the government proposal, the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) approved the "Development and sustainable production of steel chain" plan for regulating the market.

According to this plan, all of the steel chain products are required to be offered and sold based on the prices set in the country's commodity exchange market (known as Iran Mercantile Exchange or IME), and only producers and their representatives are allowed to export the excess of their products for a limited period.

The government believes that the only way for managing the steel market and preventing the fluctuation in prices would be to supply the steel chain products only through IME.

Bahram Shakouri, the chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s Mines and Mining Industry's Committee, however, told the Tehran Times on Tuesday that the government's interference in the steel industry and setting prices by authorities (and not by the market's supply and demand) would



pave the way for corruption and rent in the market and would also be a hurdle in the way of exports.

He emphasized that developments in the steel sector would have a great impact on many other industries so that regulatory prices or government interventions in this area will result in disruptive impacts on other areas.

According to the latest report by the parliament's Industries and Mines Committee, steel consumption in Iran was about 16-15 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020) and is expected to hover around the same figures in the current year.

Considering the 30 million tons of output, the country will be able to export nearly half of its production. So having comprehensive plans in this area (exports) should also be of

significant importance for the policymakers in this sector.

But it seems that the government's new plan is not much supportive when it comes to exports, Shakouri regretted.

The suggestions and solutions

In this regard, the official believes that instead of creating excess regulations and cumbersome bureaucracy concerning the distribution and pricing of steel chain products, the government should focus more on monitoring and supervision by using tariffs (like many other countries) as a major tool for regulating the market.

That means whenever there is the need for certain commodities in the country the government can lower the import tariffs of those commodities, for traders to be able to import them or vice versa (increase tariffs to

prevent the exports of certain commodities needed inside the country).

According to Shakouri the prices of any commodity in a healthy economy should be set by the supply and demand in the market and not by authorities.

"And even if the government is forced to set prices under certain situations, the criterion must be global prices; we had previously suggested that the prices for the domestic market be set 10 to 15 percent lower than the global prices for steel chain products," the official added.

Other experts and analysts believe that instead of pricing and regulations the government can also focus on encouraging and supporting the downstream industries in order to produce products with more added-value.

Iranian steel is mainly exported in the form of ingots while this can change and the steel could be used in other industries like home appliances and electronics to create products with higher added value.

According to Arman Khaleqi, the secretary-general of the House of Industry, Mines, and Trade of Iran, the best way to regulate is to achieve higher value-added growth in this [steel] chain.

"This means converting our iron ore reserves to manufacture products such as home appliances, automobiles, and machinery after turning them into steel sheets."

So it can be said that having a balanced and dynamic steel sector requires constant dialogue and coordination between the policymakers on one hand and the organizations and associations active in this field on the other hand.

This will result in choosing better and more appropriate paths to achieve prosperity and development in this industry.

Majlis plan to reform ICCIMA law criticized for changing its nature

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s Economic Research Center has said that Majlis (parliament)'s plan for changing the ICCIMA's legal structure will make it an executive body, in which case the chamber will no longer be a trade union representing the private sector.

"Changing the ICCIMA law is against the chamber's guild and non-profit nature," ICCIMA portal quoted Mohammad Ghasemi as saying.

A number of MPs have recently submitted a bill titled "Amending the ICCIMA Law and its annexes" to the parliament, proposing to change the legal nature of the Iran Chamber of Commerce from a non-profit to a public non-governmental organization.

This issue, which many of the ICCIMA members believe will affect the whole existence of the ICCIMA as a national organization, has been criticized by economic activists and experts.

According to Ghasemi, changing the chamber's legal structure from a non-profit organization to a public non-governmental organization means allowing government institutions

to interfere in the affairs of the ICCIMA.

Referring to the experience of developed countries in this regard, the official says: "Chambers of commerce all around the world are increasingly reducing their dependence on government and moving towards eliminating government aids and focus more on representing the private sector to provide effective services,".

"The proposed plan, however, is clearly against this general approach and seeks to strengthen the role of the government in the chamber under the pretext of the lack of proper functioning of this institution," Ghasemi regretted.

Earlier this week, ICCIMA announced forming a joint committee with the Research Center of the Iranian parliament, the parliament's Economic Committee, and the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry for reviewing the parliament's plan for changing the chamber's law with the aim of strengthening the private sector.

The plan was reviewed and discussed in a meeting between the parliament's Economic Committee members and the representatives of the private sector including the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie.

In the meeting, held on Monday, finally a plan to amend

this law was put on the agenda.

All speakers at the meeting stressed the need to strengthen the ICCIMA as the oldest and largest representative of the private sector in the country and to maintain the chamber's independent identity.

Based on the decision of the parliament's Economic Committee, the task of reviewing the details of the plan for amending the ICCIMA law and completing it was entrusted to a joint working group whose members are representatives of the parliament's Research Center, ICCIMA Research Center, the parliament's Economic Committee and the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Speaking in the gathering, Mohammad Reza Pour-Ebrahimi, the chairman of the parliament's Economic Committee, noted that the purpose of approving the general amendments to the ICCIMA law is to improve the capabilities of the private sector and eliminate existing weaknesses, so all materials of the current plan and future proposals will be measured by this criterion.

According to him, it was decided that the details of the plan would be considered by the parliament's Economic Committee after reviewing it in early next year (begins on March 21).

Aluminum ingot production up 65%

1 → Iran's major aluminum producers produced 275,716 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The country's aluminum ingot production in the past year fell eight percent in comparison to the figure for its preceding year.

The data show that among the country's top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company

(IRALCO) had the best performance registering a four-percent rise during the mentioned period.

In last April, during the inauguration ceremony of Iran's biggest aluminum production complex (in the central Fars province), the former industry minister said the country's aluminum production is expected to be doubled with that unit going operational.

The official put the value of the Iranian mining industry's production at about \$22

billion, saying that the country is relatively self-sufficient in minerals and a great deal is also exported every year.

He went on underlying the country's capacities in the sector, saying that Iran is ranked 18th among the world's top aluminum producers, and with this new plant going operational the country will climb four places to stand at 14th place."

Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot



by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Resilient economy conference held in Tehran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The seventh annual conference of resilient economy was held in Tehran on Wednesday through video conference, IRIB reported.

Held on the anniversary of the announcement of the general policies of Iran's resistance economy, the mentioned conference aims to identify challenges and present policy solutions based on the resistance economy model.

This year's conference was mainly focused on regional trade. In this regard, the event covered a variety of areas including the role of regional bilateral and multilateral trade

in international relations, interaction with trans-regional economic unions and programs, introducing strategies for boosting domestic production through regional trade, and the government's responsibilities in developing regional trade.

Over the past years, and especially since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions on the Iranian economy, the country has been pursuing a "resilient economy" that is less dependent on oil, and more focused on developing other aspects of domestic production.

In this regard, the Iranian government has been de-

fining several prioritized projects each year under the framework of a plan for moving toward the prospects of the oil-free resilient economy, and a Resilient Economy Command Headquarters has also been established to supervise the affairs related to these projects and ensure a smooth and continuous movement toward the mentioned goals.

The annual conference of the resilient economy is an event held annually to review the achievements of the mentioned projects and to explore new prospects for further achieving the goals of the mentioned macro plan.

Over \$32b supplied for import of basic goods since last March

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Despite the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the Iranian economy, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has managed to supply \$32 billion for importing basic commodities since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), CBI governor informed on Wednesday.

Noting that the supply of foreign currency is done through the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), Abdolnaser Hemmati said during the current Iranian calendar month of Bahman (started on January 20) every day nearly \$80 million has been provided through NIMA.

According to the official, since the be-



ginning of the current year, \$9.2 billion of subsidized foreign currency (with the official rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been supplied for the imports of essential commodities like medicine and agricultural products.

Earlier in January, the Deputy Managing Director of Government Trading Corporation of Iran (GTC) said that four million tons of basic goods were imported during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021).

Amir Talebi noted that 194 ships carrying basic goods have been docked and unloaded in Iranian ports during the 10-month period to supply the country's strategic reserves.

In early October 2020, the CBI had announced that \$5.267 billion was supplied for importing basic commodities in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21, 2020).

Iran imported 25 million tons of basic

goods during the previous Iranian calendar year, based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

According to the IRICA Head Mehdi Mirashrafi, 35 million tons of commodities were imported into the country in the mentioned year, of which 25 million tons were basic goods.

"This year, the trend [of trade] has slowed down, and we hope that with the measures taken by the central bank, Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, and IRICA, we will be able to minimize the deposition of goods in the customs before and after clearance", Mirashrafi said last June.

China isn't the USSR: Texas University professor

Jon R. Taylor believes that China be considered a reliable ally for Iran

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — An American professor from the University of Texas says that the strategy that was applied by the U.S. against the Soviet Union during the Cold War won't work with China.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Jon R. Taylor, professor of political science and geography, notes that "engagement, competition" and "even a form of containment is now on the table" with China "but the same strategy employed against the Soviet Union during the Cold War won't work with China."

"China isn't the USSR and this is not the 'great game' of the 1950s-1980s. There is a need for pragmatism and managed cooperation on those areas of mutual concern," Taylor suggests.

The following is the text of the interview:

How do you evaluate the new U.S. administration's policy towards China? Is Washington going to curb Beijing? Is there any obvious strategy?

So far, President Joe Biden has attempted to tone down the harsh rhetoric experienced during the Trump Administration. That said, China-U.S. relations are at a key moment. He can either take advantage of the opportunity to stabilize and press for improved engagement in China-U.S. relations or conversely, he can continue to support a decidedly chilly relationship between the two countries.

Biden has stated that he's prepared for the U.S. to engage in "extreme competition" with China but not "conflict," all the while delineating his approach from Trump's.

Which begs the question about attempting to curb China's global ambitions? Frankly, that time has passed. Engagement, competition, and yes, even a form of containment is now on the table. But the same strategy employed against the Soviet Union during the Cold War won't work with China. China isn't the USSR and this is not the "great game" of the 1950s-1980s. There is a need for pragmatism and managed cooperation in those areas of mutual concern. Given the current political environment in Washington, that might be easier said than done.

What is the logic of China's power? Is it just an economic power or it will turn into a new military hegemon in the world?

Without engaging in too much humor here, do you have a full semester to discuss the answer to these questions? As China's power has continued to grow, its interests have also continued to expand. China's logic of power is like that of any great power – protecting critical and strategic interests, expanding areas of economic and political influence, and

“China’s strategy might best be summed up by this: focus on building and enhancing trade and financial cooperation and avoid America’s proclivity to involve itself militarily in the region. China has become a major economic competitor to the U.S. and the EU in the Middle East (West Asia) during the past decade, especially since the creation of the Belt and Road Initiative.”



“China’s logic of power is like that of any great power – protecting critical and strategic interests, expanding areas of economic and political influence, and projecting geopolitical leadership.”

projecting geopolitical leadership. The U.S. and some of its allies believe that China will turn into a global military hegemon. I'm not convinced, due in large part to reading and/or listening to discussions by Chinese scholars, commentaries by leading Party officials and theoreticians, and speeches by foreign policy and military policymakers. Few, if any, of these sources suggest that China is going to pursue global military hegemony. There are both internal and external institutional and political factors that will likely hinder any push for global military hegemony. That said, China is a major player in the global economy. Does it pursue economic hegemony? Sure, in the same way, that the U.S. and the EU pursue economic hegemony. China has engaged in a form of regional political hegemony that is couched in the language of consensus-building and economic cooperation. And in the wake of America's retreat into economic isolationism during the past four years, China has taken up the banner of leadership on global governance. It has also attempted to build alternative economic and political institutions that parallel established organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). But these are a far cry from American-style political or military hegemony.

While the U.S. tends to intervene in other countries' domestic issues under the pretext of human rights, China is reluctant to do so. What is your comment?

This is an excellent question. The United States has had a penchant to regularly intervene in the affairs of other nations. The result? Since the advent of the Cold War in 1948, the U.S. engaged in almost 200 military interventions. Ironically, the U.S. does not view itself as an aggressor state. More often than not, U.S. presidents have viewed the military intervention as an effective foreign policy tool used to address humanitarian concerns, regime change, democracy promotion, and counterterrorism strategies. Were some interventions justified? Sure. But many others were based on U.S. strategic interests and goals alone – which have often had a dismal record of effectiveness, cost, and necessity. Contrast this with China. Since 1950, it has engaged in just two conflicts – both on its periphery. While China has pursued a decidedly non-interventionist foreign policy, as a major power it has tried to both protect its economic and political interests while also maintaining its

long-held policy of non-interference, which has been a cornerstone of its foreign policy since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. China tends to demonstrate less interest in the domestic issues of other countries unless they pose a direct economic or military threat to China's interests or Chinese citizens. Right or wrong, this is in keeping with China's non-interference policy. Thanks to its growing global influence, I think that China will face increasing pressure to balance its policy of non-interference with a duty to assist in mediating conflicts. We've already seen this occur during the past 20 years as greater integration into global governance institutions has encouraged China to commit troops to UN peacekeeping operations. We will likely see more of this going forward.

Do you expect the formation of a China-centered alliance in Asia to push it to confront the U.S.? Or China is keen to collaborate with America?

Some would say that we have already seen the formation of one alliance: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Contrary to puffed-up commentaries from some observers, the SCO is not an "Asian NATO" or some sort of military alliance. It's a political bloc whose members have low, if non-existent, levels of military integration. There is the potential for deepening Sino-Russian cooperation on common security interests. But that doesn't mean a full-blown military alliance. The SCO has never engaged in any military, anti-terrorist, or peacekeeping operations. The SCO lacks NATO-style permanent military command structures. If there was an actual crisis that required its members to act, the SCO would have difficulty stitching together much beyond Chinese-Russian bilateral military cooperation agreements. Some members are at loggerheads with each other. And let's also keep in mind that China has almost as many adversaries as it has friends in Asia. There is a backlash in the region to China's increasing influence and power. Better to make friends through economic cooperation and reduce concerns. This is why the prudent approach for China is to encourage multilateral trade partnerships such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). These trade mechanisms create positive venues for relations with China while reducing potential skepticism about China's intentions. The fact that the U.S. is not participating in any of these initiatives

has to be viewed by China as a successful strategy.

How do you assess China's strategy when it comes to its ties with Arab countries like Saudi Arabia in West Asia?

China's strategy might best be summed up by this: focus on building and enhancing trade and financial cooperation and avoid America's proclivity to involve itself militarily in the region. China has become a major economic competitor to the U.S. and the EU in the Middle East (West Asia) during the past decade, especially since the creation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

They are more concerned with successful multilateral financial agreements such as the Belt and Road Initiative, bilateral partnerships such as the China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and diplomatic efforts such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal with Iran than with engaging in military intervention. Since the 1990s, China's interests have expanded to include interest in oil imports, trade, and investments. China has largely stayed out of the region's conflicts, choosing instead to criticize Western interference in both wars against Iraq and NATO's intervention in Libya. This approach has been increasingly useful given the history of conflict in the Middle East (West Asia) and China's stated policy of non-interference in foreign affairs.

Do you consider China a reliable ally for countries that have problems with the U.S., especially when we talk about Iran?

There's an old joke that China isn't as concerned about allies as it is about customers. While I think that this is a little specious, there is something to this. China maintains few military alliances and does not have the numerous economic and political allies of the United States. But this does not mean that China is somehow friendly and alone. It's not. For those who maintain good relations with China, the nation has a tendency to provide substantial support to its friends. Some would accuse it of buying friends. But that can be said of any great power aiming for global influence. Can China be considered a reliable ally, particularly for a nation like Iran? Yes. But unlike U.S. alliances built on military, political, and economic concerns, China's alliances are built primarily on political, economic, and soft power concerns. The China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is an example of this approach. This strategic partnership provides both sides with something significant: China gains a foothold in a nation that has long been a thorn in the side of the U.S. and China assists Iran in strengthening its economy and regional clout.

“They are more concerned with successful multilateral financial agreements such as the Belt and Road Initiative, bilateral partnerships such as the China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and diplomatic efforts such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal with Iran than with engaging in military intervention.”

Thousands take to Barcelona's streets to demand release of arrested rapper

Thousands of protesters took over some of Barcelona's streets on Tuesday evening to demand the release of a rapper arrested by Spanish police after being given a jail sentence on charges of glorifying terrorism and insulting royalty in his songs.

Dozens of police stormed Lleida university in northeastern Spain earlier in the day and arrested rapper Pablo Hasel after he had barricaded himself there. Hasel, known for his radical leftist views, missed a deadline last Friday to surrender to police to serve a nine-month jail term handed down in 2018 - a sentence that caused an uproar in Spain and led the government to announce it would make free speech laws less restrictive, Reuters reported.

Hasel was convicted over lyrics and tweets that included references to the Basque separatist paramilitary group ETA, compared Spanish judges to Nazis and called former king Juan Carlos a mafia boss.

‘Stop playing with fire,’ Nasrallah warns Israel

Hezbollah's secretary-general has warned the Israeli regime not to play with fire, saying any Israeli act of aggression against Lebanon will be met by a strong response from the resistance movement.

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah made the remarks in a televised speech on Tuesday in commemoration of the martyrdom anniversary of a number of top Hezbollah commanders, including Imad Mughniyeh, who was assassinated in Syria in February 2008.

Nasrallah insisted that Hezbollah does not seek a military confrontation but it will display a resistance much stronger than ever before if it is pushed into one.

"Israel has never committed itself to international law, [the regime has] destroyed cities and killed civilians in all its wars," the Hezbollah chief said in the televised speech.

"We are not looking for a confrontation but we do not forget the blood of our martyrs," he underlined. "If a confrontation happens we will respond to it; if you attack our cities we will attack yours; if you target our villages, we will bomb your settlements."

Referring to Israeli combat drills that took place along the Lebanese border earlier this month, Nasrallah warned the occupying regime against intimidation and said the combat drills would be a dangerous game for the Israelis and would bring about undesirable consequences.

"Should war erupt, Israelis will see events they haven't witness since 1948. So, stop playing with fire. We are in the Resistance era," Nasrallah said, in reference to the illegal creation of the regime on occupied Palestinian territory in 1948.

During the televised speech, the secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement hailed as a "positive step" Washington's announcement to stop its support for the Saudi-led aggression against Yemen.

Nasrallah said the U.S. decision came as a result of the "steadfastness of the Yemenis" as the Yemeni forces and allied fighters from Popular Committees are in an advanced position on all fronts.

Britain says UAE should show that Dubai's Sheikhha Latifa is alive

Britain said on Wednesday it wants to see proof that Sheikhha Latifa, one of the ruler of Dubai's daughters, is still alive after the BBC published a "deeply troubling" video in which she said she was being held against her will in a barricaded villa.

"Given what we've just seen, I think people would just at a human level want to see that she's alive and well," British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab told Sky News television when asked whether he would support seeing some kind of proof from the United Arab Emirates that Sheikhha Latifa was alive.

Britain is concerned about the footage and the United Nations will be following up on the video, Raab told the BBC.

Texas freeze leaves millions in northern Mexico without power

Freezing weather in the U.S. state of Texas left almost five million people in northern Mexico without power early on Monday, as a shortage of natural gas disrupted electricity production.

According to al Jazeera, Mexico's government-owned utility, the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE), said on Monday its operations were interrupted as the winter storm in Texas froze natural gas pipelines.

Mexico uses gas to generate about 60 percent of its power, compared with about 40 percent in the United States, and the country built pipelines to take advantage of cheap natural gas from its northern neighbor.

Resistance News

Sheikh Barghouthi: Israel's arrests will not intimidate us

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Senior Hamas official Sheikh Omar al-Barghouthi has affirmed that the recent Israeli arrest campaign against Palestinian national figures in the West Bank will not deter anyone from participating in the coming elections.

In press remarks, Sheikh Barghouthi called for necessarily agreeing on a unified national plan to confront Israel's targeting of Palestinian leaders in the West Bank in order to protect the citizens' will and their voices.

The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) at dawn Tuesday kidnapped senior Hamas officials Yasser Mansour (lawmaker) and Sheikh Adnan Asfour from their homes in Nablus city.

The IOF also kidnapped recently Hamas officials Sheikh Khaled al-Hajj and Sheikh Abdul-Baset al-Hajj from their homes in Jenin.

Last January, the Shin Bet intelligence service summoned Sheikh Barghouthi for interrogation and threatened him with imprisonment if he tried to stand for any upcoming elections to be held in the Palestinian arena.

Jalaluddin Rahmat founded modern Sufism

1 → Jalaluddin Rahmat also read a lot of books and since he was fluent in English, Dutch, French, German and Persian, he was always aware of the latest scientific sources in the world, so his writings and works can be considered as more in-depth articles than other thinkers. Today, some of Jalaluddin Rahmat's books are among the textbooks of the highest-rank Indonesian universities.

This Islamic thinker conducted several writings in the field of Sufism. Jalal's acquaintance with Sufi ideas began in 1964 when he attended a conference in Colombia on Haider Bagir and Andang Saifuddin. At the time, he became acquainted with Iranian thinkers and the concept of Sufism. This acquaintance led to a visit to Iran and holding meetings with Iranian thinkers. During this visit, he visited the tombs of great Sufis such as Bayazid Bastami, Imam Mohammad Ghazali, Athar Neyshabouri, Saadi, and Hafez. After this trip, Jalal's approach to religion became more mystical, and he wrote several books on Sufism and mysticism.

Regarding Jalal's approach to Sufism, it should be noted here that Jalal's view of Sufism was novel and described by himself in his works. Jalal did not have a traditional view of Sufism, in contrast, he took mysticism from Sufism and adapted it to the updated concepts of religion. Jalal in fact



founded modern Sufism. By reproducing mystical concepts of Sufism, Jalal sought to apply them to society in order to spread Islamic ethics throughout society.

He was able to conduct this in Motahhari School, which he managed, and with his unique approach, he was able to create both order and Islamic ethics in the student community. One of Jalal's actions in this way was to use the symbols and manners of the Sufi elders. Eventually, Jalal developed his theory in the following years and wrote books on the

relationship between ethics in civil society and jurisprudence, and religious psychology with a mystical approach.

Although Jalaluddin Rahmat has been introduced to the scientific community as a scholarly figure, Indonesians knew him for his services for the underprivileged and poor people. His role in this way is very special and unique.

Jalal always said to the students of his school, "We can find God in delivering service to the people." From the foundation of his school, he always sought to serve the deprived. Of course, Jalal did not hold to chanting.

He started a campaign called "Spirituality Camp" in 1994 to register volunteers to provide free services to disadvantaged families in remote areas.

In fact, volunteer students went to deprived areas for a week to provide free educational and cultural services. Kang Jalal himself came among the volunteers every night during the camps and held lectures and discussions on religious and philosophical concepts.

In fact, he sought to elevate himself, his students, and his community scientifically, morally, and spiritually.

Today he is no longer with us, but works of him and those of his disciples show that his path will be continued.

This article was initially published in tirtio.id

Exquisite Persian calligraphies added to intangible cultural heritage list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A total of 33 Iranian calligraphic works, being kept at the Mir-Emad Calligraphy Museum in northern Tehran, have recently been inscribed on the national list for the intangible cultural heritage.

Dating from the Safavid (1501–1736) and Qajar (1789–1925) eras, the calligraphies are attributed to top artists of the time including Mir-Emad, Ahmad Neyrizi, and Abdol Majid Taleqani, amongst others, IRIB reported.



Mir Emad (1554 – 1615) is one of the most celebrated Persian calligraphers. It is widely believed that the Nasta'liq style of Persian calligraphy reached its highest elegance in Mir Emad's works.

Nasta'liq script, the predominant style of Persian calligraphy during the 15th and 16th centuries was innovated by Mir 'Ali of Tabriz, the most famous calligrapher of the Timurid period (1402–1502).

A cursive script, Nasta'liq was a combination of the naskhi and ta'liq styles, featuring elongated horizontal strokes and exaggerated rounded forms. The diacritical marks were casually placed, and the lines were flowing rather than straight. Nasta'liq was frequently incorporated into the paintings of the early Safavid period (16th century) and is traditionally considered to be the most elegant of the Persian scripts.

Sassanid arch bridge to undergo vital restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The ancient arch bridge of Pol-e Dokhtar (literally meaning Girl Bridge) in the western province of Lorestan is planned to undergo some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The project aims at repairing and strengthening parts of the Sassanid-era (224 CE to 651) monument, which was damaged at the heavy flooding in 2019 and are at the (high) risk of erosion, Seyyed Amin Qasemi announced on Wednesday.

A budget of over one billion rials (about \$24,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, the official added.



With 270 meters long, Pol-e Dokhtar was built on the remains of an ancient structure dating back to the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC).

Only one 18-meter-high arch has remained from the original structure, which was a passage between two ancient cities of Shapur Khast and Jundi Shapur.

Inscribed on the National Heritage list, the bridge has been restored several times over the years.

In 2019, days of devastating flooding and heavy rain inflicted damage to tens of cultural heritage sites in Lorestan; for instance, it washed away parts of a historic hill, on top of which the famed Falak-ol-Aflak Castle is nested.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

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

Coronavirus: Carpet Museum of Iran reopens to visitors

➔ Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and their good quality. Among Persian carpets, particularly those of the classic period, the medallion may represent an open lotus blossom with 16 petals as seen from above, a complex star form, or a quatrefoil with pointed lobes.



Medallion carpet is any floor covering on which the decoration is dominated by a single symmetrical centerpiece, such as a star-shaped, circular, quatrefoil, or octagonal figure.

The name, however, is sometimes also given to a carpet on which the decoration consists of several forms of this kind or even of rows of medallion figures.

206 tourism projects put into operation in Tehran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iranian tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Tuesday inaugurated 206 tourism-related projects in Tehran province through a video conference.

The tourism infrastructure of Tehran province is essentially needed to be developed due to its political and commercial importance, IRNA quoted the minister as saying during the inauguration ceremony.

The projects, which include hotels, apartment hotels, eco-lodge units, tourist complexes, boutique hotels, traditional restaurants, travel agencies, and handicrafts workshops, are estimated to generate 936 jobs.

Furthermore, the mentioned projects will be adding 816 beds to the hospitality sector of the Iranian capital.

Establishing more eco-lodges as well as different types of accommodation centers could facilitate traveling and staying in this metropolis, the minister said.

Referring to the outbreak of the coronavirus and the problems and issues it



has caused to the travel sector, Mounesan noted that smart travels under the

supervision of the tourism and health ministries is the only way to overcome

Ecosystem of Marvdasht, once seat of power for Achaemenid Empire, souled be safeguarded: official

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The biome and ecosystem of Marvdasht plain, which is home to the UNESCO-registered sites of Persepolis and Pasargadae as well as tens of other magnificent structures, souled be safeguarded properly, the director of Persepolis site underlined on Wednesday.

"Paying attention to the ecosystem and natural capacities of the Marvdasht plain as a part of the landscape of the UNESCO-tagged Persepolis could be effective in developing tourism in the region," Hamid Fadaei said.

The ecosystem of Marvdasht plain, which was once the seat of power for the Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC) in southern Iran, has been one of the most important factors in the creation and development of several thousand years of civilization in this region, he explained.

That is why the remains of different settlements and cultures have been discovered during many excavations carried out in ancient hills and historical sites of the plain, the official added.

The protection of ancient water structures in Persepolis, applying clean transportation policies inside the UNESCO-tagged site, the site's waste management to beautify the environment are parts of the measures taken to preserve the region's ecosystem, he explained.

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.

The royal city of Persepolis, which ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

The ancient region, known as Pars (Fars), or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenian army at Arbela in 331 and burned Persepolis apparently as revenge to the Persians



because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

Persis became part of the Seleucid kingdom in 312 after Alexander's death. The Parthian empire (247 BC–224 CE) of the Arsacids (corresponding roughly to the modern Khorasan in Iran) replaced the Seleucids' rule in Persis during 170–138 BC. The Sasanid Empire (224 CE–651) had its capital at Isthr. Not until the 18th century, under the Zand dynasty (1750–79) of southern Iran, did Fars again become the heart of an empire, with its capital at Shiraz.

Centuries of friendship: Iranian travel insiders mark Chinese Spring Festival online

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – For the third consecutive year, a host of Iranian travel insiders mark the Chinese Spring Festival during an online campaign named "Centuries of Friendship; the Third Chinese Spring Festival in Iran".

Apart from the goal of strengthening cultural ties, the event is expected to refresh the name of Iran in the memory of the tourism market of China, Mohammad Qasemi, the director for marketing and advertising at the tourism ministry said on Wednesday.

"The campaign, which is currently underway, seeks to highlight the name of Iran to attract more travelers from China," he said.

With records of some 170 million outbound tourists per annum, the massive travel market of China could have a major effect on Iran's tourism industry during the post-coronavirus era, the official added.

Various videos and online programs promoting Iranian tourist attractions in the Chinese language have been prepared and have been uploaded on different tourism and cultural sites, he explained.

The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19



has brought the world to a standstill, and tourism has been the worst affected of all major economic sectors.

Back in March, the UN specialized agency for tourism announced that it expected international tourist arrivals would be down by 20 percent to 30 percent in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures.

However, earlier this month the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) announced that world tourist arrivals fell by 72% over the first ten months of the year.

Restrictions on travel, low consumer

confidence, and a global struggle to contain the coronavirus pandemic are amongst factors contributing to the worst year on record in the history of tourism.

Iran has also suffered the same fate as its foreign arrivals plunged 72% during the first eight months of the year when compared to 2019.

Critical situation

Last October, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan warned that Iran's cultural heritage and tourism will be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

Mounesan in August said that Iran's tourism has suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The tourism industry of the country was growing and progressing well but unfortunately, it has faced the coronavirus outbreak, which brought the industry into a standstill."

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

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

The minister said the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to 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.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Ruins of two Sassanid forts to be demarcated in southeast Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – The ruins of the Sassanid era (224 CE–651) forts, locally named Qaleh Dokhtar and Qasr-e Ardashir-e Papakan, will be demarcated soon in the southeastern Kerman province.

Several archaeological trenches will be dug to scientifically pave the way for the determination projects to define their legitimate boundaries and properties aimed to extend support and maintenance.

"Unfortunately, the mentioned fortresses are [currently] positioned within the [modern] urban areas [of Kerman] where many constructions can be seen in surroundings of the ancient monuments," Freydoun Fa'ali, the provincial tourism chief, announced on Wednesday.

Such [illegal] constructions have been caused troubles for the landowners in this area, the official added.

Therefore, one of the main reasons for the revise [of a previously-conducted demarcation] is to precisely determine legal boundaries and properties as well as the associated criteria based on a fresh archaeological survey, Fa'ali explained.



On dun-colored ridges at the eastern edge of Kerman (the provincial capital) rise the lumpy outlines of the two timeless mud-fortress ruins.

This area would have been Kerman's most ancient

settlement – while there's not a great deal left to see, the surrounding wasteland retains a small selection of older buildings, including a huge, recently restored beehive-shaped ice house.

Qaleh Dokhtar (literally meaning the Maiden Castle) was reportedly made by upon the order of Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire in ca. 209 CE. The nearby Palace of Ardashir Papakan (Qasr-e Ardashir-e Papakan) was built in 224 CE by King Ardashir I as well.

Under the Sassanians, Iranian art experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as the palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, one of the most characteristic and striking relics of Sassanian art are rock sculptures carved on abrupt limestone cliffs, for example at the historical sites Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam.

Metalwork and gem engraving became highly sophisticated. Scholarship was encouraged by the state, and works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

No vaccine as effective as Iranian vaccine against UK variant

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Test results have shown that the Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine is highly effective against the British mutated coronavirus virus and no other vaccine in the world has been so effective, Minoo Mohrez, member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has stated.

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

Iranian medical knowledge showed that they are highly capable of producing vaccines in the world, she highlighted, Vatan-e Emrooz Persian Daily published on Wednesday.

Successful results of the homegrown vaccine indicate that no side effects have emerged on the volunteers so that after the final stage of the clinical trial, which will be done next month, mass vaccination will



Minoo Mohrez, member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control

begin, Mohrez said.

"We are compiling scientific articles about human trial of the vaccine, and if it is published, the world will undoubtedly be informed about the capabilities of this vaccine."

Phase one of the clinical trial is nearly over so that now all 56 volunteers have received the first dose of the vaccine and 30 have received the second dose of the vaccine, while the other volunteers will soon receive the second dose and then the second phase will receive a license to start, Mohrez explained.

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.

Japan, UNDP continue support to restore Lake Urmia

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — During a ceremony held in the Japanese Embassy in Tehran on Wednesday, the Government of Japan contributed \$3 million to help revive Lake Urmia through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive permanent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

The ceremony was attended by Japanese Ambassador to Tehran Aikawa Kazutoshi, UNDP Representative in Iran Claudio Providas, and Department of Environment Deputy Director Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh.

The contribution will be implemented as a component of UNDP's ongoing Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project — a joint project between Iran's Department of Environment and UNDP. This is Japan's eighth contribution to UNDP Iran.

The new initiative titled "The Project for Promoting Environmental Management and Sustainable Livelihoods in LU and other wetlands" aims to strengthen the sustainable management of natural resources in the fragile ecosystems of the country, while enhancing the economic and livelihood options of communities dependent on such ecosystems — by introducing climate-smart practices, drawing on the successful experience of Japan-UNDP-DOE cooperation in the Lake's Basin.

By using the capacity built and the lessons learned during seven phases of the project implementation, this new project will be scaled up to additional pilots (and its satellite wetlands) and 2 new replication sites, including Shadegan Wetland (Khuzestan Province), and Bakhtegan Wetland (Fars province).

The project targets the better application of the ecosystem approach in Lake Urmia and its satellite wetlands by making the wetland management committees more active and developing monitoring reports, promoting local participation in sustainable soil and water management and biodiversity conservation by out-scaling the project methods

to 140 new villages (80 pilots in Lake Urmia basin and 30 for each of Shadegan and Bakhtegan Wetlands) through the application of an integrated approach while institutionalizing sustainable agriculture practices in the existing 183 villages initiated during 2014-2020.

It also targets to up-scale the project achievements at the national and international level and incorporates the model in high-level documents of the country, as well as enhancing the economic resilience of local communities through a more integrated approach.

This project will also focus on upscaling Lake Urmia restoration achievements and lessons learned to two other internationally important wetlands in Iran (Shadegan and Bakhtegan Wetlands) as part of a national plan.

Conservation efforts

So far, UNDP has implemented several initiatives to stop the degradation trend and restore this important Lake and other wetlands in the country. These efforts have significantly contributed to the stability of Lake Urmia and introducing new approaches based on the improved management of its basin. By the end of the seventh phase, the project was implemented in 183 villages.

Project key achievements and activities during the past seven phases included 35 percent saving in water, and 40 percent decline in chemical pesticide use, significant improvement in inter-sectoral collaboration in the Lake Urmia basin among related organizations, significant improvement in social responsibility among local communities for the restoration.

Some 13,500 farmers introduced to the project, 4,370 of whom were trained; and 242 jobs were generated through the project.

More than 6,000 students and 463 teachers were trained on the role of local communities in the restoration of Lake Urmia, 15 village festivals were held, and 140 exhibitions were held in which farmers got familiar with SA techniques.

However, there are still several priority areas of work, including "wise use of land and water resources and agriculture water-saving", "innovative sustainable economic initiatives", "urgent biodiversity conservation" and "awareness-raising" to stabilize the results of the past projects and restore the lake to its optimum ecological situation with the



water level of 1274.1.

In addition to almost \$7 million in financial support from the Japanese government, so far more than \$1 billion has been spent on the project in total.

Lake's surface area doubled in 6 years

At the beginning of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program in 2013, the Lake's level was about 1270.32 meters, 1783 square kilometers in surface area, and 1.14 billion cubic meters in volume, which indicates a 50 percent increase in the lake's surface area in comparison to the current water level.

Lake Urmia's surface area has reached 2,785 square kilometers, indicating a more than 100 percent rise compared to the lowest volume recorded in the Iranian calendar year 1393 (March 2014-March 2015).

The current level of the lake stands at 1271.24 meters, which increased by more than 1.2 meters compared to the lowest recorded amount, according to Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province.

The volume of water also raised by 3.26 billion cubic meters, which has increased more than 5 times compared to the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) and before the Lake Urmia Restoration Program started, he highlighted.

Last year (March 2019- March 2020), over 1.4 billion cubic meters of water released into the lake.

Iran to set up permanent exhibition of knowledge-based products in Armenia

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran is going to set up a permanent exhibition of products manufactured by knowledge-based companies in Armenia.

A delegation comprising representatives of 26 Iranian knowledge-based companies headed to Armenia on Wednesday with the aim of promoting their technological products and expand the market in the neighboring country.

Organized by the vice presidency for science and technology, the delegation is scheduled to hold meetings with Armenian high-tech and health ministers and pay a visit to Alliance free zone during the four-day visit, ISNA reported.

The delegation is comprised of companies active in the fields of textile, agriculture and related machinery, construction, petrochemicals, cosmetics and hygiene, organic food, and digital equipment.

On January 27, Vice-President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari, met with Armenian Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan in Tehran to discuss ways to expand technological cooperation.

Praising Iran's scientific and technological achievements, Kerobyan said "We agree with the implementation of a project in the field of creating a joint technology park between Iran and Armenia as soon as possible and the for-



mation of a team to develop bilateral cooperation."

Sattari, said for his part, that Iran has four million students with high knowledge capacity so that the country relies on them to

move toward a knowledge-based economy.

There are currently 6,000 knowledge-based companies operating in Iran, and last year they generated a revenue of about \$12 billion, he highlighted.

He emphasized that Iran has the largest startups in the region in the field of information and communication technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, stem cells, etc., and about 50 technology parks have been formed throughout Iran.

Noting that 98 percent of the medicine needed in the country is produced domestically, he said that a large number of Armenian scientists and academics are studying in Iranian universities.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Guardian Council ratifies bill on soil conservation

The Guardian Council ratified the bill on soil conservation which has been passed by the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) earlier in February, Masoumeh Hosseinpour, director general of department for parliamentary and legal affairs at the Department of Environment (DOE) has announced.

As per the law, any trade or export of soil is prohibited, and only the excretion of minerals or exportation of low amounts of soil for research purposes is excluded after meeting the legal process, she noted.

She went on to add that under the law, the judiciary system seeks to establish specific centers in order to pursue the related issues or violations, mining activities are also subject to compliance with environmental regulations.

لایحه حفاظت از خاک توسط شورای نگهبان تایید شد

مدیر کل دفتر حقوقی و امور مجلس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اظهار داشت: لایحه حفاظت از خاک بعد از تصویب مجلس شورای اسلامی، به تایید شورای نگهبان رسید. به گزارش گروه محیط زیست خبرگزاری فارس، معصومه حسین پور، گفت: در قانون حفاظت از خاک انتقال خاک به خارج از کشور ممنوع است و فقط خروج مواد معدنی و مقادیر کم خاک به منظور امور پژوهشی پس از رعایت فرایند قانونی مربوط مستثنی است.

مدیر کل دفتر حقوقی و امور مجلس سازمان محیط زیست درباره نقش دیگر نهادها در این قانون گفت: بر اساس این قانون قوه قضائیه به منظور رسیدگی به جرائم موضوع نسبت به ایجاد شعب تخصصی اقدام و به جرائم مربوط خارج از نوبت رسیدگی می‌کند. بر اساس این قانون عملیات معدنی هم منوط به رعایت ضوابط زیست محیطی خواهد بود.

Refugees in Iran to get better healthcare

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A trilateral meeting on offering better healthcare to refugees in Iran was held in Tehran on Tuesday with the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ivo Freijssen, in attendance.



Some 140 young Afghans are studying at Vahdat Primary School in the city of Isfahan. © UNHCR/Mohammad Hossein Dehghanian

Officials from the interior ministry and the health insurance organization were also present in the meeting, Mehr reported.

Freijssen appreciated Iran for providing refugees with health and insurance services, announcing readiness to help the country improve the services.

He read a message from Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, thanking Iran for its appropriate services to refugees, saying that the global community appreciates and honors Iran for its unparalleled services to refugees.

Refugees in Iran

Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted urban refugee populations worldwide, with approximately 3 million Afghans living in the country, according to UNHCR.

Iran is hosting around one million documented foreign nationals, and perhaps another one million are illegally living in the country, the deputy interior minister Javad Naserian has said.

Some 700,000 foreign nationals illegally residing in Iran are expelled annually from the country, but many of whom return back for different reasons, IRIB reported.

At the end of 2018, Iran hosted close to one million refugees, making it the sixth-largest refugee host country in the world.

Iran also was the eighth largest refugee-hosting country in the world in 2019, hosting 951,142 Afghan refugees and 28,268 Iraqi refugees, according to the UNHCR.

One of the largest and most protracted urban refugee populations in the world is living in Iran; about 97 percent of refugees live in urban and semi-urban areas, while three percent are residing in 20 refugee resorts run by the UNHCR's main government counterpart.

Undocumented Afghans have access to free primary health services and similarly free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like nationals.

Towards higher energy efficiency

1 → To promote a cleaner environment, issuing a tradable "white certificate" is also among the goals of this project. White certificates are issued for achieving a minimum of energy savings.

Energy Services Companies (ESCOs) implement energy efficiency retrofit projects in residential or public buildings through guaranteed or shared-based savings contracts.

Energy Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) will capture the amount of saved energy and consequently, the output from energy efficiency projects will be linked to the Iranian energy efficiency and environment market (E3M) through the white certificates.

This white certificate can be traded in the stock market and the high tariff energy consumer will be able to buy the demanded energy from energy sellers i.e. the building owners. This way, a cycle of green financing is shaped in energy efficiency while the amount of CO2 emission will be decreased simultaneously through applying energy-efficient solutions.

These unprecedented times when many are facing socio-economic, public health, and climate action challenges, calls for strategies that bring more efficiency to communities as a component of a much-needed broader approach to building forward better in an equitable and inclusive way to ensure everyone enjoys clean air, healthy and comfortable living environments, quality jobs, and affordable energy.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 132)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

● تمرین ۳. مصدرها را به منفی گذشته ی نقلی تبدیل کنید:

۱. ما از این شعر چیزی (فهمیدن)

۲. او چیزی از خانه ی شما (برداشتن)

۳. پسرها هنوز سوار مترو (شدن)

۴. در این پارک به ما (خوش گذشتن)

۵. من هنوز با هیچ کس (صحبت کردن)

۶. شما از صبح تا حالا (نشستن)

■ Nominal Suffix

■ پیوند اسمی "ی" /i/

بعضی از اسمها را با پسوند "ی" /i/ درست می‌کنیم. پسوند "ی" تکیه می‌گیرد و اغلب اسم معنی می‌سازد:

نادان + ی ← نادانی

تاریک + ی ← تاریکی

میهمان + ی ← میهمانی

شیرین + ی ← شیرینی

آشنا + ی ← آشنایی (ی اول همخوان میانه ی است.)

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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
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**GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

Be afraid of nothing but sins.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

IRIB making sequel to controversial docudrama on Jason Rezaian spy case

A R T TEHRAN — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) is making a sequel to “Gando”, a controversial docudrama that revolves around the spy case of Iranian-American journalist Jason Rezaian.



Actor Payam Dehkordi portrays Jason Rezaian in the Iranian TV series “Gando”.

Produced by Mojtaba Amini, the 30-episode series was aired in July 2019 on IRIB Channel 3. It is about Jason Rezaaian who served as Tehran bureau chief for the Washington Post. Director Javad Afshar's crew has begun shooting on location in Garmdarreh, a suburb of Karaj near Tehran. Dariush Farhang, Vahid Rahbani, Sogol Tahmasbi, Ali Afshar and Shahrzad Kamalzadeh were among the actors in the first series. They are also collaborating with the cast in the new project. Rezaian was arrested in Iran in July 2014 and was convicted of espionage in a trial in 2015. On January 16, 2016, he and three other U.S. citizens were released in exchange for the release of seven Iranians who were accused or convicted of sanctions violations. The series faced some criticism from the government and the Foreign Ministry, which were portrayed as uninformed, neutral and westernophile organizations in the production. The 10th edition of the Ammar Popular Film Festival honored the crew of “Gando” during a ceremony in January.

“Fear and Misery of the Third Reich” coming to Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — Reading performances of German playwright Bertolt Brecht’s “Fear and Misery of the Third Reich” will be held in Tehran at Mehregan Theater and Sarv Cultural Center. Milad Sasani is the producer of the reading performances, which will be directed by Amir Amiri on Saturday at Mehregan Theater.



A poster for the reading performances of German playwright Bertolt Brecht’s “Fear and Misery of the Third Reich” at Mehregan Theater and Sarv Cultural Center in Tehran.

Written in exile in Denmark and first staged in 1938, it was inspired in part by his trip to Moscow where he had been researching tasks for the anti-Nazi effort. Brecht is acknowledged as one of the great dramatists whose plays, work with the Berliner Ensemble and critical writings have had a considerable influence on the theater. Brecht was one of the twentieth century’s most influential theater artists. He was the main proponent of the genre named epic theater. His landmark plays include “The Threepenny Opera”, “The Life of Galileo”, “Mother Courage and Her Children” and “The Caucasian Chalk Circle”.

“Cocoon and Butterfly” named best at Roshd Intl. Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — “The Cocoon and Butterfly” was crowned best at the 50th Roshd International Film Festival, receiving the gold award of the Iranian festival, which promotes films on educational topics for children. The film tells the story of Parvaneh, a seven-year-old girl who lives with her father in a northern Iranian village, where she lost her mother in a fire several years earlier. Her leg was also injured in the fire and her father doesn’t let her go to school since it is a long distance from their home. He also doesn’t allow anyone to teach Parvaneh even basic literacy. However, Yavar, a boy in their neighborhood, decides to teach her literacy furtively. Directed by Mohammad Salehinejad, the film also won the Golden Butterfly for best feature film at the 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Tehran last October. “Chor: The Bicycle”, a drama film directed by Indian filmmaker Khanjan Kishore Nath and produced by Sanjive Narain, won the

silver award of the Roshd festival. The gold award for best animated film went to “The Eleventh Step” by Maryam Kashkulinia from Iran. “The Eleventh Step” is about a little lion cub, born in a zoo. He lives in a cage that is only ten steps long. On the eleventh step, he bangs his head against the bars, but one day the zookeeper leaves the cage door open. “Autumn Winds, Spring Winds and Two Doves” by Sadeq Javadi won the silver award in this section. The movie produced at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) is about a boy who sets out on an arduous journey to his friend. A dove and a horse help him reach his destination. “The Beginning” by Indian filmmaker Sandeep Kumar Verma was selected as best short at the festival. It’s a journey of a kid, set in the mystical mountains of the Himalayas to learn where his grandfather has gone after he died and what happens after death.



A poster for “The Cocoon and Butterfly” by Mohammad Salehinejad.

Mowj Intl. Short Film Festival to kick off today

A lineup of 41 films in the national section and 20 films in the international section will be competing at the festival this year, director of the festival Ebrahim Hesari said in a press release published on Wednesday. The films are coming from Sweden, Iraq, Morocco, Spain, Tanzania, France, Lebanon, Austria, Syria, Peru and several others, he added. Founder of the River Film Festival in Italy Emilio Della Chiesa, film producer Irina Ruiz Figueroa from Panama and actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya from Iran are the jury members of the international section of the festival this year. Kianush Ayyari, Turaj Aslani, Hooman Seyyedi, Mahvash Sheikhholeslami and Mohsen Ostadali are the jury members of the national section. Emilio Della Chiesa is a graduate of the School of Architecture (Venice), a cinematographer and Director

of River Film Festival, Padova. Ten years ago Emilio founded the River Film Festival, which has now grown into an international film festival. He has subsequently served as a member of the jury at various other festivals around the world. Irina Ruiz Figueroa is a graduate of the International School of Film and Television of Cuba. She started making historical documentaries for the Interoceanic Panama Canal Museum. She has also produced several short films, independent documentaries and TV series. Motamed-Arya, who has played in over 70 films, is famous for her roles in such acclaimed movies as “The Blue-Veiled” and “Gilaneh”. She has been honored with a Crystal Simorgh for best actress four times at Iran’s Fajr Film Festival, and also has won awards at over 80 international events.

Shahrzad Theater Complex to host reading performances of “Medea”

A R T TEHRAN — Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater Complex will be playing host reading performances of “Medea”, an ancient Greek tragedy written by Euripides. The performances set for February 20 and 27 will be directed by Afshin Qasemi with a cast of 14 actors, including Golnaz Eidi, Ali Shahbazi, Azin Aqai, Sara Zamzam and Saman Alizadeh. “Medea” is based upon the myth of Jason and Medea and first produced in 431 BC. The plot centers on the actions of Medea, a former princess of the kingdom of Colchis, and the wife of Jason. She finds her position in the Greek world threatened as Jason leaves



A Poster for director Afshin Qasemi’s reading performances of “Medea” at Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater Complex.

her for a Greek princess of Corinth. Medea takes vengeance on Jason by murdering Jason's new wife as well as her own children, after which she escapes to Athens to start a new life. Euripides’ play has been explored and interpreted by playwrights across the centuries and the world in a variety of ways, offering political, psychoanalytical, feminist, among many other original readings of Medea, Jason and the core themes of the play. Iranian directors have frequently referred to this play and its themes over the past few decades. In May 2019, Ali-Asghar Rasekh-Rad

directed a loose adaptation of the tragedy at Qashqai Hall. He had earlier staged “Medea” during the 22nd International Iranian Festival of University Theater in Tehran. “The play shows a certain reverence for mothers and women,” he said at that time. “In the original story, Medea’s love leads to hatred and revenge due to a great sense of betrayal, but in our version, the betrayal led her to showcase motherly dignity,” he mentioned. Iranian theater troupe Bohemi led by director Fariborz Karimi performed “Medea” at the 42nd edition of Festival of Monodrama and Mime, which took place in Belgrade, Serbia in June and July 2017.

Fifteen children’s books shortlisted for Flying Turtle Awards

CULTURE TEHRAN — Fifteen books have been selected as finalists to compete during the 9th edition of the Flying Turtle Awards, which are presented annually to top children’s books in Iran. Winners will be honored virtually on the Book City Institute’s Instagram, the organizers announced in a press release on Tuesday. However, no exact date was mentioned for the event. “Edson Arantes do Nascimento and His Himalayan Rabbit” by Jamshid Khanian is one of the major contenders for the award. The fiction is about a writer who is faced with a strange thing, which pops up from his story, and someone, namely Edson Arantes do Nascimento, asks him about his Himalayan rabbit. “An Evil Dragon Whose Eyes Had Astigmatism/Had Not!” by Feridun Amuzadeh-Khalili. This book illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelu intends to encourage pacifism among children. It is about a dragon who doesn’t want to resort to violence on his way to achieve its goals. “Iran Garden”, a poetry collection by Hossein Gole-Golab, is also among the nominees. The book carries illustrations by a number of prominent Iranian artists, including Parviz Kalantari, Nureddin Zarrinkelk and Gholam-Ali Maktabi. “You Are a Tourist” by Shahrzad Shahrjerdi has also



This combination photo shows the front covers of a number of books nominated for the Flying Turtle Awards. received a nomination. In this book, a number of tourists share their experiences of visiting various places, arguing why they chose to be an adventurer. “Bears and Other Carnivores” from the series “The Mammals of Iran” by Ali Golshan and a number of wildlife photographers is also competing for the award. “Stories of Zulu”, a series by Payam Ebrahimi that carries basic moral training for children, has also been nominated

for the honor. Other nominees are the Persian translations of several books written by overseas writers, including “Confessions of an Imaginary Friend” by American writer Michelle Cuevas. The book has been translated into Persian by Zahra Chupankareh. Nobody likes Jacques Papier besides his sister. When he comes across a cowgirl at the park and she informs him that he’s an imaginary friend, just like her, Jacques’s world is forever changed. “Panorama: A Foldout Book” co-written by Fani Marceau and Joëlle Jolivet is among the foreign books nominated for the award. The book has been rendered into Persian Mohammad-Nasser Modudi. Following is the list of other nominees: Polly Ho-Yen’s “Where Monsters Lie” translated by Shima Hosseini, Mahmoud Darwish’s “Think of Others” translated by Hossein Mottaqi, Sam Gayton’s “The Snow Merchant” translated by Sara Qanavati, Cathy Cassidy’s “Sami’s Silver Lining” translated by Fereshteh Judaki, Rafik Schami’s “The Storyteller of Damascus” translated by Omid Sadeqi-Seraji, Asa Lind’s series “The Sand Wolf” translated by Namdar Nasser-Qasri and Sarah Crossan’s “Moonrise” translated by Keivan Obeidi-Ashtiani. The Book City Institute and the Children’s Literature Studies Periodical are the organizers of the Flying Turtle Awards.

Chris Priestley series “Tales of Terror” comes into Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of English writer Chris Priestley’s series “Tales of Terror” has recently been published by Peydayesh Publications in Tehran. The series, which includes “Uncle Montague”, “The Black Ship” and “Tunnel’s Mouth”, has been translated into Persian by Sima Taqavi. This spine-tingling, thrill-packed novel has more than enough fear-factor for the most ardent fan of scary stories. Uncle Montague lives alone in a big house, but regular visits from his nephew, Edward,

give him the opportunity to recount some of the most frightening stories he knows. As each tale unfolds, it becomes clear that something sinister is in the air. From the account of a curious boy who intrudes on Old Mother Tallow’s garden to a shy girl’s ghostly encounter during an innocent game of hide-and-seek, a pattern emerges of young lives gone awry in the most terrifying of ways. Young Edward begins to wonder just how Uncle Montague knows all these ghastly tales, and ultimately discovers that his mysterious uncle’s life has a darker side than he ever imagined. “The Black Ship” is a follow-up to “Uncle

Montague”. This is another creepy middle-grade story collection with a chilling frame. This time, the stories are all tales of the sea: pirates and plagues and storms aplenty. When Ethan and Cathy fall ill during a storm, their father must leave them to fetch the doctor, but they are not alone for long. A sailor comes begging for shelter. So, the children agree to let him sit out the throes of the storm as they listen to his grisly tales. But something about the man puts Ethan on edge, and he is anxious for the storm to blow over, their father to return and the long night to come to an end. Storms whistling through the sails, evil

pirates pacing the floorboards, and of course, a haunted ship of ghostly beings. A boy is put on a train by his stepmother in the book “Tunnel’s Mouth” to make his first journey on his own. But soon that journey turns out to be more of a challenge than anyone could have imagined as the train stalls at the mouth of a tunnel and a mysterious woman in white helps the boy while away the hours by telling him stories, stories with a difference. Chris Priestley is both a writer and an illustrator. He has published several works of fiction and nonfiction for young readers. He lives with his family in Norfolk, England.