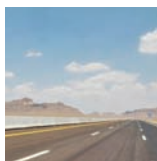


Iran says UN investigator has no authority to comment on Ukrainian plane crash *Page 3*



Iranian duo shortlisted for International Women's Day Recognition awards *Page 3*



Rouhani inaugurates major freeway near capital Tehran *Page 4*



"Sun Children" star Zamani cast in war drama "The Bakeri Martyrs" *Page 8*

Biden shows U.S. true colors

See page 3



Expert Mozafari supports referees in FFIRI's elections

BY FARROKH HESABI

In less than 48 hours, Iranian football federation will see its new president in the elections which will be held on Sunday, Feb. 28.

Ali Karimi, Mostafa Ajorloo, Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem, and Kiumars Hashemi are the final four candidates who will compete for the presidential seat.

But apart from the presidency of the federation, the competing for membership in the board of directors of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) is also fierce. Based on the new FFIRI statutes, the number of board members has increased from 9 to 11. In the list of the FFIRI's board candidates, the eye-catching point is the presence of 13 ex-referees.

Navid Mozafari, former Iranian referee and the AFC Regional Referee Instructor, believes that some of the referee candidates have no chance to be elected as the board of directors' member.

"It was shocking to me that a lot of former referees have registered for the elections. I have no idea why some of them have participated in the elections because they clearly have no chance to win. However, about some others, I believe that they deserve to be in the new federation's board of directors because of what they have done during their careers both as a referee and as a director," Mozafari said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"According to the amended FFIRI's statutes, the head of football federation's Referee Committee must be a member of the board of directors. So, it is an important election for the Iranian refereeing community as well. The next Referee Committee has a challenging job in the upcoming years, so I hope the elected person will be experienced enough and well-prepared to handle the problems of Iran football refereeing," he added.

Mozafari took his official referee's degree in Germany in 1989 and was nominated to the international Referee list by the FFIRI.

"The new statutes have paved the way for the election to be close to FIFA's standards. The number of voters has increased to 89 however it could be much more, for example, the number of voters in Germany is 200, and we could emulate the world's top football associations such as Germany but we didn't. But despite that, the FFIRI's elections would be a turning point for Iranian football if the best ones are elected. The country's football must progress towards meritocracy and now is the best opportunity for our football to make it happen," the refereeing expert concluded.

I invite all travelers interested in culture to visit Iran: Venezuelan tourism minister

TEHRAN – "I invite all [potential] travelers who are interested in culture to visit Iran and see that Iran is a peaceful and hospitable country," Venezuela's Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade Ali Padron Paredes has said.

"I am stunned by the beauties of Isfahan", Padron Paredes added in an interview with CHTN on Thursday while touring the ancient city during his four-day visit to the Islamic Republic.

The minister had toured several travel destinations and museums in Kerman before flying to Isfahan. He called his visit to Kerman as memorable.

"I convey to the people and the government of Iran greetings of the people and the government of Venezuela."

"I enjoyed the journey to Iran and I want to experience this pleasure again. Iran has very hospitable and friendly people who are also friendly with the Venezuelan people," the minister stated.

Before setting off for Isfahan, Padron Paredes

and his Iranian counterpart Ali-Asghar Mounesan inked a memorandum of understanding to deepen mutual tourism ties.

Back in October, Mounesan exchanged views with former Venezuelan Tourism and Foreign Trade Minister Felix, Ramon Plasencia Gonzalez, in a video conference to deepen tourism relations, especially through simplifying visa rules, launching fam tours, and setting up exhibits. They also agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding in a bid to broaden bilateral ties.

Last November, Mounesan said that visa-free access and direct flights are the two important advantages for Iran and Venezuela to develop tourism cooperation.

The relationship between Venezuela and Iran became more serious following an official visit by the then Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to Tehran in 2001.

Continued on page 6

Zarif stresses Iran committed to back Syria in terror fight

TEHRAN - Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister, has assured his Syrian counterpart that Tehran will keep supporting the Damascus government in the fight against terrorism in the efforts to guarantee security and stability across Syria.

In a telephone conversation on Friday with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad, the top Iranian diplomat emphasized

that the Islamic Republic will continue to support Syria in various fields, notably in combatting terrorism.

Zarif also asserted the need for efforts to restore security and stability to all Syrian territories and achieve a solution that would preserve the interests, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria, Tasnim reported.

Continued on page 2

S. Korea to release \$1b of Iran's frozen assets soon

TEHRAN – Head of Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce has said that \$1 billion of Iran's frozen funds in South Korea will soon be transferred to an Iran-Switzerland financial channel to be paid for foodstuff, medicine, and medical equipment.

According to Hossein Tanhaei, the medicine items that are set to be imported into the country have been negotiated

and determined in coordination with the Health Ministry.

The mentioned developments regarding the release of Iranian frozen funds in South Korea have been achieved following a meeting between the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati and the South Korean Ambassador to Tehran Ryu Jeong-Hyun on Monday.

Continued on page 4

"Book of Defense" studying Imam Khomeini's leadership role in Iran-Iraq war released

TEHRAN – The Sacred Defense Research and Archives Center has released a book entitled "Book of Defense" that surveys the leadership role of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as Sacred Defense in Iran.

Speaking during the unveiling ceremony organized at the center on Wednesday, the director of the Socio-Cultural Stud-

ies Department of the center, Mohsen Qazi, said that the book contains Imam Khomeini's discourses on the war derived from Sahifeye Nur, a series containing Imam Khomeini's speeches on various topics.

He said that the Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works had approved the book.

Continued on page 8

One martyred, four wounded as U.S. attacks anti-terror forces on Iraq-Syria border

One person has lost his life and four others have been wounded in the U.S. military's air raid against positions of resistance forces operating against terror groups on the Iraqi-Syrian border, an informed source tells Press TV.

The casualties were caused in the early hours of Friday, as the American airstrike targeted facilities used by forces of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) — better known as Hashd al-Sha'abi — at a border point in eastern Syria, where the resistance group has been fighting remnants of the Takfiri Daesh terror group in coordination with the governments in both Arab countries.

In a statement issued after the assault, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the raid had been "deliberate" and meant to "de-escalate the overall situation in both eastern Syria and Iraq."

The military action, the first of its kind under U.S. President Joe Biden, was said to be in

retaliation for recent attacks against American bases and missions in Iraq, which Washington has blamed on so-called "Iran-backed" Iraqi resistance groups.

according to the latest such attacks, Rockets hit Baghdad's Green Zone, which houses the U.S. embassy and other missions, on Monday. The American military base at Erbil International had similarly been attacked days earlier.

The Iraqi resistance groups and many Iraqi officials have, however, roundly dismissed Washington's allegations, blaming rogue elements.

"This is nothing!" Lavrov says U.S. notified Russia few minutes in advance

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov of Russia, an ally of Syria, said on Friday that the United States had notified Moscow of the impending attack on the PMU facility "four or five minutes ahead of time."

Scholar says it's not clear Biden can overcome polarization soon

BY M.A. SAKI

TEHRAN – An American academic says she is not sure Biden can deal with the polarization in the U.S. which has resulted from Donald Trump's policies.

"It is not clear that President Biden can overcome the polarization any time soon, though the American people very much hope for that," Elizabeth Sanders tells the Tehran Times.

"Since the Civil War of 1861-65, the two parties have not been so polarized. That is a very unfortunate situation," Sanders points out.

The rise of polarization over the past years has made many Americans worried about the state of politics.

Republicans and Democrats are more divided along political and ideological lines — and partisan antipathy has been going deeper and more extensive — than at any point over the last two decades. These trends manifest themselves in myriad ways, both in politics and in everyday life.

Many pundits consider the attack on the Capitol building on January 6 as a turning point in the

history of the United States.

For this reason, Joe Biden has a long road ahead to repair the deep-rooted division in America, especially when it comes to polarization between the two main parties: Democrats and Republicans.

Following is the text of the interview:

What are the repercussions of Biden's win in presidential elections domestically and internationally? Do you predict any fundamental shift in U.S. policies?

Continued on page 5

Resolution in the hands of Yemeni parties, says ex-U.S. ambassador to Sanaa

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – Urging regional powers to cooperate for a settlement of conflict in Yemen, the former U.S. ambassador to Sanaa, says the key to ending the conflict in Yemen lies in the hands of the Yemeni parties.

"The conflict in Yemen is primarily a civil war and the resolution is in the hands of the Yemeni parties," Gerald Michael Feierstein tells the Tehran Times.

"Nevertheless, regional powers, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran, must play a role in supporting the diplomatic negotiating process and encouraging the Yemeni parties to find peaceful solutions to their differences," Feierstein adds.

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia launched a coalition war against the Yemeni Houthis to reinstate the toppled Yemeni government. The Saudi crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) vowed to reinstate the Mansour al-Hadi government in a few weeks. However, after more than six years of relentless bombardments, which some of them constitute examples of war crimes, the Saudi-led coalition have failed to reach any of its goals.

The insurgency in Yemen was part of the Arab Spring.

The UN has said the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is the worst in modern history.

During the war in Yemen, prior to Biden's presidency, the U.S. provided logistical and intelligence support to the Saudi-led war on Yemen.

Continued on page 5



The elderly, war-disabled getting COVID-19 vaccine

TEHRAN – The vaccination against COVID-19 of the elderly and the disabled war veterans being kept in nursing homes across Iran began on Thursday, ISNA reported.

Along with the vaccination of medical staff, 110,000 war veterans who were disabled during the Sacred Defense (the 1980-1988 war imposed by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein) and the elderly who are living in daycare centers will be vaccinated, Iranian Food and Drug Administration spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said.

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AFPC: Messengers of Israeli officials to U.S.

By Azin Sahabi

Tehran started the enforcement of Iran's parliamentary law regarding suspending the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT on February 23. Called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Interest of Iranian Nation", the law obligates the Iranian government to stop implementing some nuclear commitments.

Such a move, which is in line with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA, sets certain conditions for Iran to reverse its nuclear decisions.

The move was declared two days after the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) agreed on the Iranian law.

Just a day before the deal went into force, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a meeting with Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi to discuss Israeli strategy against the Iranian nuclear program, since Biden's arrival at the White House.

On February 24, just a day after the implementation of the law, Gantz said: "The IDF is currently working to build up our forces and is preparing itself for any scenario, including one in which we would need to take [operational] action to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons."

It seems that these think tanks are in a rush to recommend the Biden White House to take the worries of Israel to heart. Denouncing the Obama administration's diplomatic path towards Iran's nuclear program, the think tanks warn that Israel is fearful that history could soon repeat itself.

Message from Israel

Among major pro-Israel foreign policy think tanks, the American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC) has been quite vocal and among the experts, Ilan Berman, has penned the greatest number of commentaries on the issue.

The institute is staffed by noted specialists in foreign and defense policy who work closely with members of Congress, the executive branch, and the policymaking community.

Berman has consulted for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as well as the U.S. Departments of State and Defense. He regularly proposes several testimonies before the U.S. Congress to draw roadmaps to undermine Iran. This fellow has been called one of America's "leading experts on the Middle East (West Asia) and Iran" by CNN.

On the same day of implementing Iran's parliamentary law, Berman, in an article titled "What Israel Is Telling Biden About Iran", writes: "Officials in Jerusalem are sending the Biden Administration a clear message: there no need to rush to renege Iran, and a lot of risk in doing so."

In this regard, the expert refers to the expressions made by Major General Tamir Heiman, the head of the Israeli Military Intelligence (often abbreviated to Aman).

The Jerusalem Post, on February 9, quoted the Israeli general who declared Tehran has not stopped investing in its nuclear program "but due to the actions carried out by the U.S. and Israel, is at an unprecedented low point".

AFPC emphasizes that Israeli's intelligence institutions are infamously tight-lipped about their strategic estimates. Thus, the analyst believes that such a disclosure on Iran's nuclear program was nothing short of unprecedented.

Berman, points out that even before Joe Biden's took office, the incoming figures of the Oval Office made abundantly clear that at the very center of their agenda towards West Asia, talking with Tehran would sit.

AFPC also reminds that, in late January, Biden's new national security adviser Jake Sullivan told the Washington Post that Biden considers "an urgent restoration of the international nuclear deal with Iran as a first step to deal with a range of threats from that country."

In parallel, on February 1, in his first television interview since he took office, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, claimed that Tehran was just "weeks away" from gaining the required fissile material to produce a nuclear weapon.

AFPC adds that about two weeks later, the secretary of state, called European foreign ministers to tell them that Washington would join them in seeking to restore the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

Berman stresses that these series of moves could indicate that the U.S. is proffering "preemptive concessions to the Iranians as a good-faith gesture." He argues that some in the Biden administration's circle have suggested that the Oval Office should choose a "more for more" approach in Iran talks or let the deal fall apart. For example, Ilan Goldenberg, a foreign policy and defense expert at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), advocates this policy and argues: "The U.S. must be willing to give more to Iran in any follow-on arrangement. More sanctions relief. More incentives for more concessions."

Berman reiterates that according to the Israeli military intelligence official, "In its current situation, Iran considers a nuclear deal the only way out of the crisis, and hence it is trying to go back to the deal it signed in 2015."

Concerning Heiman's remarks, AFPC argues that if this interpretation is precise, it indicates that for the Iranian side, neither the 2015 JCPOA nor the one which Biden hopes to conclude in the future is a "meaningful constraint on their strategic trajectory."

Hanging on "Iran: A State Sponsor of Terror" as a perpetual analytical premise, Berman recommends the White House to "reassure officials in Jerusalem (and in other regional capitals) by explaining how, precisely, it plans to balance its new push for reengagement with Iran's regime and its support for America's traditional Mideast partners."

Against this backdrop, with the quarterly meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Board of Governors next week, the recent American move regarding Tehran's cooperation with IAEA is worth mentioning.

The U.S. diplomats circulated a document on Thursday in which Washington's concerns that Iran should fully cooperate with inspectors are listed and calls for a resolution to "express the Board's deepening concern with respect to Iran's cooperation with the IAEA."

It seems that the recent unproductive move by the American side is a formally articulated version of recommendations made by think tanks to convince Biden to follow the footprints of Trump in terms of the Iran deal. In fact, all recommendations proposed by fellows such as Berman, are quite in line with those heard from Israeli and American hawks. But such recommendations which are informally released by a foreign policy expert do not grab the headlines. Meanwhile, formal statements declared by an official may become viral. Maybe, think tanks such as AFPC function as messengers from Israel to the U.S. to serve the interests of Tel Aviv.

Main battle in presidential polls will be between principlists, Hashemi Taba predicts

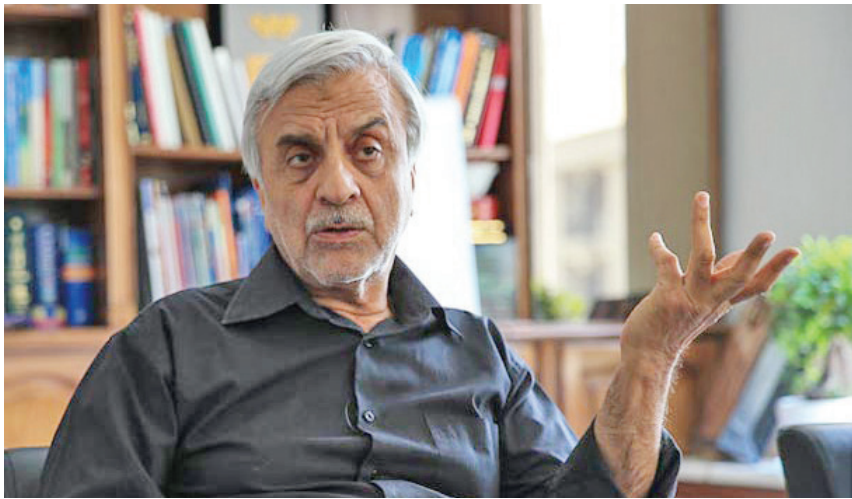
POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mostafa Hashemi Taba, a reformist activist, predicts that the main competition in the June presidential election in Iran will be among principlist candidates.

Regarding 2021 presidential election in Iran, Hashemi Taba stressed, "The reformists may have a minor role in coming election. It seems leading principlist candidates will compete with second rate reformist activists."

Regarding the speculation of Qalibaf candidacy, the Iranian parliament speaker, he said, "Qalibaf is the right person for management affairs. We need to compare the capabilities of Qalibaf with those who compete in the next election."

On turnout in the presidential election, Hashemi Taba noted, "The country and the political system will lose if Iranians take part in the election at a low rate."

Hashemi Taba ran unsuccessfully in the 2005 and 2017 presidential elections.



Ali Motahari announces presidential candidacy
Ali Motahari, the former senior principlist

MP, announced on Thursday that he intends to run for the 2021 presidential election. "According to the condition of the country

and my abilities, I decided to run for the presidential election," Motahari said.

The former deputy parliament speaker emphasized that political parties should not boycott the election, adding, "The Guardian Council needs to confirm the qualification of those who accepted the Iranian Constitution to increase the rate of participation (in the election)."

'Construction Party may back Larjani candidacy'

Meanwhile, Mohammad Atrianfar, a leading reformist activist and a senior member of the Servants of Construction Party, says, "If reformists are prohibited from fielding their main candidate, perhaps they will decide to support Ali Larjani to stand for presidential election."

Also, Asadollah Badamchian, the secretary of Islamic Coalition Party, highlighted that his party is not seeking to eliminate reformists in election and said, "We don't believe the reformists need to be eliminated. We believe reformists have to rectify themselves. Nevertheless, reformists eliminated others when took power."

Intelligence Ministry has thwarted assassination plan by terrorist group

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Intelligence Ministry has declared that an assassination plot planned by a terrorist group was thwarted in northwestern Iran, according to Fars news agency.

According to the statement released on Wednesday, the ministry agents have foiled the terror operation in the southern parts of West Azarbaijan province in cooperation with provincial security forces.

It added that the two members of the terrorist team who was planning to carry out the assassination were killed in

clashes with security forces on Tuesday afternoon.

It added that the team was affiliated to a terror group based in Northern Iraq.

The team was to implement a terror attack in Piran-shahr, near Iraqi borders, adding that two Kalashnikov machine guns, grenades, and other ammunition were seized from them.

In a relevant development in August, a team of outlaws and anti-revolutionary militants was dismantled by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in the northwestern city

of Makou in West Azarbaijan province.

The IRGC Hamzeh Seyed al-Shohada base's public relations department announced in a statement that three members of the anti-revolutionary group who had crossed the Iranian borders were killed in clashes with IRGC forces.

It added that a large number of weapons, ammunition and military equipment were seized from them.

"None of the Iranian forces were wounded in the clashes," the statement said, warning that any threat and mischief against the country will receive a crushing response.

Zarif stresses Iran committed to back Syria in terror fight

1 → For his part, Mekdad called for enhancement of relations with Iran in various fields, particularly economic cooperation. He also thanked Iran for supporting the Syrian people in reducing the effects of unilateral economic sanctions.

The two foreign ministers also exchanged views about the results of the recent meetings within the framework of the Astana peace format held recently in Russia's Sochi, stressing the need for the Western parties to abide by the UN Security Council resolutions on Syria and the final communiqué of the Astana meetings, SANA reported.

Zarif and Mekdad also discussed Syria's Constitutional Committee and the results of its latest meeting in Geneva, where the participants affirmed that the committee should operate under the leadership and ownership of the Syrian people without any foreign interference.

In remarks on Feb. 22, Ali Asghar Khaji, the senior assistant to Zarif, expressed hope that the visit by UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria Geir Otto Pedersen to Damascus would help promote Syrian-Syrian talks and the 6th meeting of the Syrian Constitutional Committee in the near future, IRNA reported.

Speaking through video-conferencing with Italian Foreign Ministry Special Envoy for Syria Paolo Dionisi, Khaji referred to the Astana initiative in Sochi saying that different aspects of the Syrian crisis were discussed in the meeting and participants stressed political solution to the crisis, humanitarian aid to Syrians, and countering terrorism.

Guarantors of the Astana format – Iran, Russia, and Turkey – issued a statement to support the political solutions and Syrian Constitutional Committee, he said.

Also in a statement issued on February 17 in Sochi, Iran, Russia and Turkey condemned Is-

rael for its continuing military attacks in Syria. It said the attacks is undermining Syria's sovereignty and threatening the regional stability.

"Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, as the Astana format guarantor states, ... condemned Israel's continuing military attacks in Syria, which violate international law and international humanitarian law, which undermine the sovereignty of Syria and neighboring nations, and which threaten stability and safety in the region, and called for ceasing the attacks," the communique read, according to Sputnik.

U.S. admits "maximum pressure" policy on Iran failed

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Biden administration has acknowledged that Trump's "maximum pressure" policy against Iran has ended in failure, while Biden has not indicated he intends to redress the former president's wrongs, according to Press TV.

During a press briefing on Thursday, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price acknowledged, "The Trump administration's maximum pressure policy has failed to achieve each and every single one of its aims."

"I think when you look at the results of maximum pressure, you can only be left with one conclusion," Price said.

"Maximum pressure was supposed to result in a better deal. It was supposed to cow Tehran and its proxies, it was supposed to isolate Iran from the rest of the world, and it was supposed to leave America's interests in a better position," he remarked.

Pointing to the U.S. failed policy under Trump's administration, he noted, "In every single one of the issues he raised, the opposite has been true."

"We came nowhere close to anything resembling a better deal."

Nevertheless, he still suggested that the Biden administration will continue to pressure Tehran with close cooperation with the U.S.'s allies.

"Now, our approach recognizes that maximum pressure accompanied by the lack of diplomatic engagement got us to where we are," he said. "That is why we are embarking on a



different path, one that prioritizes real, principled, clear-eyed diplomacy – clear-eyed diplomacy with our partners and allies."

Back in May 2018, Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA reached under his predecessor Barack Obama, describing it the "worst deal ever", and pledging to press Tehran into negotiating a new deal through a "maximum pressure" campaign that included tough economic sanctions and military provocations.

Iran maintains that the three European parties to the deal, also known as the E3, paid only lip service to Tehran's calls to

safeguard its interests throughout the Trump administration. On the other hand, unlike Trump, the Biden administration has been successful in getting them back to fully support Washington's position on Iran.

Price explained that during the Trump administration, the U.S. was sitting at the opposite side of the table of its closest European partners and allies.

Regarding recent meeting between the E3 and the U.S.'s top diplomats, he stressed it was "a clear sign that for the first time in years, the United States was on precisely the same page as our closest allies and partners."

"And with that unanimity, with that cooperation, with those consultations, we enter this phase of diplomacy from a position of strength and we are confident that this is the sort of position of strength that will allow us to achieve our strategic goal," the U.S. spokesman remarked.

In remarks on Wednesday, Price acknowledged that Iran remained compliant with the JCPOA before the deal was ditched by Trump, and took steps away from the agreement only after the ill-judged measure.

"The IAEA, while the Iran deal, while the JCPOA was in full effect, while Iran was abiding by it, they expressed confidence that Iran was living up to its limits," he noted, saying, "I suspect if you go and ask them (the IAEA), they will tell you that they were satisfied by Iran's compliance with the deal."

The National Interest says U.S. has signaled its willingness to negotiate with Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Biden administration has already taken several steps that Tehran will view as an indication that President Joe Biden is very keen to avoid a confrontation and is eager to negotiate, according to the National Interest.

Iran and the U.S. are very interested in the same thing: in first talking about talks, and then negotiating some more. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei asserted that the United States "must lift all sanctions in practice" before Iran will return to the commitments it made as part of the nuclear deal. President Joe Biden holds that the United States will not remove the economic sanctions against Iran unless Iran fulfill its commitments under the accord.

"The United States is committed to not letting Iran develop a nuclear weapon. However, if sanctions do not work and Iran continues to enrich more and more uranium, making a material that can be used in a nuclear weapon, then the United States would have to use force to put a stop to it," the National Interest claims.

Contrary to certain claims, Iran has declared production, stockpiling and use of

weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) as haram (religiously banned). It is a fatwa, religious decree, declared by Ayatollah Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Actually, the Biden administration is less inclined to engage in another war in the Middle East (West Asia). His administration faces a very long list of challenges, including dealing with the pandemic and reviving the economy, addressing climate change, and responding to demands for social justice. Obviously, allocating resources to a war in the Middle East (West Asia) will decrease the resources that are available for domestic purposes.

Acknowledging the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq cost trillions, the publication said, "Recent armed interventions carried out by the United States have resulted in immense bloodshed and the United States has extremely little to show for these drives. In effect, they demonstrated that the United States is weak, in alliance with corrupt governments, ones that make short shrift of individual rights and that are increasingly leaning toward Iran. In short, the Biden administration has strong reasons to seek to avoid war with Iran."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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Biden shows U.S. true colors

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The new U.S. administration has followed in the footsteps of its predecessor in terms of continuing economic pressure on Iran and pursuing destabilizing activities in the region.

In a move reminiscent of the Trump administration's hooliganism, U.S. President Joe Biden ordered military attacks on resistance groups in Syria. The strike martyred a number of people whose main job was combating terrorism.

Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said in a statement on Thursday that the airstrikes were carried out by orders from President Biden, who campaigned on de-escalating tensions with Iran. Kirby also claimed that the U.S. aggression targeted Iran-backed groups.

"At President Biden's direction, U.S. military forces earlier this evening conducted airstrikes against infrastructure utilized by Iranian-backed militant groups in eastern Syria. These strikes were authorized in response to recent attacks against American and Coalition personnel in Iraq, and to ongoing threats to those personnel. Specifically, the strikes destroyed multiple facilities located at a border control point used by a number of Iranian-backed militant groups, including Kait'ib Hezbollah (KH) and Kait'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada (KSS)," Kirby claimed.

The Pentagon spokesman also alleged that the U.S. acted in a manner that aims to "to de-escalate the overall situation," a claim that stands in stark contrast to what the United States did in Syria.

The airstrikes came amid a renewed interest in diplomacy between Tehran and Washington following Joe Biden's win in the U.S. presidential election. Biden has long promised to rekindle diplomacy with Iran, reviving hopes for salvaging the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

During his election campaign, Biden had said that he will offer Iran a credible path to diplomacy.

"I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for



follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern," Biden wrote in a September op-ed for CNN.

But Biden quietly reneged on his campaign promise after he won the U.S. presidential election by saying that rejoining the nuclear deal would be hard and difficult because the nuclear deal is not enough and thus it should be expanded.

And this has drawn strong criticism from Iran, which has roundly rejected any prospect for new negotiations beyond the nuclear program, particularly negotiations over the country's missile program and its regional activities.

Iran called on the Biden administration to lift the sanctions its predecessor imposed on Iran after pulling out of it in May 2018, but the Biden administration refused to budge an inch. Instead, they keep calling on Iran to "return to compliance" with the JCPOA as if it was Iran that withdrew from this deal.

"Biden administration officials keep talking about Iran's compliance with JCPOA. In what capacity? U.S. ceased participation in May 2018, violated JCPOA & punished those complying with UN resolution. As of today, U.S. remains in EXACTLY same position. Before spouting off, COMPLY," Iranian For-

eign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on February 11.

The chief Iranian diplomat reiterated this position in another tweet on Thursday last week, saying that the U.S. behavior has not changed since Biden took office.

"U.S. admits that only after it 'left the JCPOA, Iran has taken steps away' while until then 'Iran was living up to its limits.' That U.S. behavior—the CAUSE—has not changed. E3 also culpable-no business w with Iran for 3 years. US/E3 must remove the cause, NOT ask Iran to stop ¶36 remedies," Zarif tweeted.

The Biden administration continues to follow its predecessor's lead in dealing with Iran, resorting to coercive diplomacy all while ignoring its campaign promises to break with Trump's failed policy on Iran.

In addition to holding tightly onto sanctions, the Biden administration also intends to ramp up diplomatic pressure on Iran by encouraging the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors to adopt a resolution against Iran.

Bloomberg reported on Thursday that U.S. diplomats circulated a document on Thursday which lists Washington's grievances and orders Iran to fully cooperate with inspectors. The proposed resolution would "underscore strong concern at the IAEA's findings" and "express the board's deepening

concern with respect to Iran's cooperation," Bloomberg said, adding that this resolution would suggest that Iran could be providing incomplete information on its nuclear activities, something that has potentially serious consequences, including another referral to the United Nations Security Council.

In response, Iran has threatened to end a deal struck with the U.N. nuclear watchdog last weekend temporarily salvaging much monitoring of its activities if the agency's board endorses the U.S.-led resolution next week, according to a Reuters report.

"Iran perceives this move as destructive and considers it as an end to the Joint Understanding of 21 February 2021 between the Agency and the Islamic Republic of Iran," Iran purportedly said in its letter to the IAEA, according to Reuters.

Iran has not commented yet on this letter. But an unidentified Iranian official told Nour News, a website close to Iran's top security body, that the U.S. "hackneyed" move to put forward a resolution against Iran is indicative of the U.S. intention to continue Trump's pressures on Iran.

"These hackneyed behaviors are a continuation of Trump's maximum pressure strategy and unveil the contentious intention of the new U.S. administration against Iran," the Iranian official said.

The official also described the U.S. push to censure Iran at the IAEA as a "distractive move aimed at continuing inaction and pressure on Iran."

Joe Biden has not changed the U.S. policy against Iran after he won the U.S. election. He criticized Trump for so many issues at home and abroad but ended up following exactly his bullying campaign against Iran, something that drew criticism even from some Biden proponents.

"If the Biden administration screws up rejoining the JCPOA by insisting Iran 'make the first move'—even though it was the US that left the deal in 2018 while Iran was still in full compliance—it will be a sign that they aren't as adept at diplomacy as they claim to be," Stephen Walt, a professor of international affairs at Harvard Kennedy School, said in a tweet on Thursday.

U.S. behavior has not changed, Zarif says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad has castigated the new U.S. administration for not changing tack on Iran, urging the White House to remove the cause that forced Iran to reduce its nuclear commitments.

"US admits that only after it 'left the JCPOA, Iran has taken steps away' while until then 'Iran was living up to its limits.' That US behavior—the CAUSE—has not changed," Zarif said in a tweet on Thursday.

The foreign minister was referring to U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price's remarks during his February 24 press briefing, at which he said that Iran started to reduce its nuclear commitments with the 2015 nuclear deal — formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—after the U.S. withdrew from it.

"Over the course of the past couple years — ever since May of 2018 when the United States left the JCPOA, Iran has taken steps away from the nuclear deal, the nuclear deal that, when it was in effect, was verifiably and permanently blocking Iran's ability to acquire a nuclear weapon," Price claimed.

The spokesperson pointed out, "We can't go back to the Joint Commission and make clear when we think Iran has come into violation of the JCPOA. Look, again, I would point

you to the fact that we have full faith and full confidence in the director general of the IAEA, full faith and full confidence in the IAEA. The IAEA, while the Iran deal, while the JCPOA was in full effect, while Iran was abiding by it, they expressed confidence that Iran was living up to its limits."

Priced added, "Now, this is a — not an uncomplicated set of issues, and I know you're referring to some of these technical matters. But the IAEA — and I certainly wouldn't want to speak to them, but I suspect if you go and ask them, they will tell you that they were satisfied by Iran's compliance with the deal. Iran was complying with the deal."

Zarif also criticized the European signatories to the JCPOA — France, Germany and the UK (E3)—for not doing business with Iran for three years after the Trump administration pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal.

"E3 also culpable-no business with Iran for 3 years. US/E3 must remove the cause, NOT ask Iran to stop ¶36 remedies," the chief Iranian diplomat said.

Following Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA, Tehran embarked on a policy of gradually reducing its nuclear commitments in response to the U.S. imposition of economic sanctions on Iran.

Iran started to reduce JCPOA commitments at bimonthly

intervals exactly one year after the U.S. left the agreement and imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Even at the time Iran insisted that if the remaining parties to the deal, especially the Europeans, shield Iran from U.S. sanctions it will reverse its decisions.

Zarif has long said that Iran's measures in this regard are consistent with the terms of the JCPOA, particularly paragraph 36, which he asked the Europeans to read.

"Have our E3 partners ever read para 36 of JCPOA & Iran's many letters on that basis? By what logic is the onus on IRAN to stop its remedial measures undertaken a full year after the US withdrew from—and continues to violate—the JCPOA? What have E3 done to fulfill their duties?" Zarif tweeted on February 12.

One day earlier, Zarif had said that the Biden administration has failed to break with Trump's Iran policy of imposing economic pressure on Iran.

"Biden administration officials keep talking about Iran's compliance with JCPOA. In what capacity? U.S. ceased participation in May 2018, violated JCPOA & punished those complying with UN resolution. As of today, U.S. remains in EXACTLY same position. Before spouting off, COMPLY," Zarif tweeted.

Iran says UN investigator has no authority to comment on Ukrainian plane crash

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry Saeed Khatibzadeh has responded to UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard's comments on the Ukrainian plane crash in Iran by saying that the UN investigator had no authority to comment on the crash.

"The incident is outside the UN official's remit based on her mission objectives stipulated in a UN Human Rights Council resolution," Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Wednesday.

"In international law, there are specific as well as precise legal and technical frameworks to look into this issue, and the rapporteur's sphere of activity has nothing to do with these regulations and frameworks; rather, the rapporteur's unwarranted involvement might have an unconstructive impact on the legal procedures as well," the spokesman said, adding, "She has put forward numerous points indicating the

information which she had received and was the base of her report was distorted, tainted with numerous mistakes, biased and irrelevant."

"Accordingly, some charges have been leveled against the Islamic Republic of Iran without any valid evidence and documents," he added.

Khatibzadeh pointed out, "It specifically seems that she has got involved in this issue hastily, and the result of this hasty action was an unprofessional, invalid and undocumented text which has resulted in questions and ambiguities about the motive behind this move."

He underlined that even if Callamard considered reviewing the case within her purview, she could have waited until a technical report on the incident as well as an indictment for the accused were issued.

"A technical report on the incident was drawn up in accordance with international standards on December 29, 2020 and sent

to relevant countries," Khatibzadeh said.

"So far, three countries have sent to the relevant authority their technical viewpoints about this report. Most of those views confirmed the technical report," the spokesman continued.

"Moreover, based on comments made by the relevant official, the final report will be made public by the end of the current Persian Year (ending March 20, 2021)," Khatibzadeh said.

"The report, which contains hundreds of pages, precisely, professionally and comprehensively deals with factors contributing to the accident and other relevant issues," he explained.

According to Khatibzadeh, an indictment for those accused in the case is about to be issued by Iranian judicial authorities. The court will soon begin looking into charges against the accused once the case is completed at the military prosecutor's office, the spokesman continued.

Iraqi FM due in Tehran on Saturday

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein is expected to arrive in Tehran on Saturday for the second time in a month, according to an Iraqi news agency.

Citing a source familiar with the matter, Iraqi Middle East News reported on Friday that the Iraqi foreign minister will travel to Tehran for the second time in less than a month.

The source did not give more detail about the visit and the issues that Hussein will discuss with Iranian officials.

The chief Iraqi diplomat paid a visit to Iran in early February during which he met with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security

Council Ali Shamkhani and President Hassan Rouhani.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement at that time.

During the meeting, Zarif expressed his appreciation to the Iraqi government for judicially following up on the assassination of the two anti-terror leaders, Major General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, expressing hope that anyone who ordered and carried out this criminal act would be punished through legal follow-up, according to the statement.

"Ending the presence of the American forces in the region would be the best response to this terrorist act," Zarif said.

Foreign Minister Hussein, for his part, described the visits of the delegations of the two countries as a sign of the two sides' commitment to bilateral relations. Reviewing the issues of relations between the two countries in various fields, he explained the views of the Iraqi side in this regard.

The Iraqi foreign minister also met with Shamkhani, who expressed appreciation to Iraq for issuing an arrest warrant against former U.S. President Donald Trump who had ordered the assassination of General Soleimani and al-Muhandis.

SPORTS

Iranian duo shortlisted for International Women's Day Recognition awards

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has released the shortlist for the 2021 International Women's Day Recognition, with winners to be announced on 8 March's global celebration of women and gender equality.

This is the second year, since its inception in 2013, the International Women's Day Recognition has expanded into categories, awarding primarily women in the Paralympic Movement who inspire and emulate the Paralympic ideals, and serve as positive role models.

Five outstanding female candidates each, make up the Builder and Next Generation categories, respectively. Three organizations have been shortlisted for the National Paralympic Committee and International Federation (NPC/IF) category.

Batoul Moshref Javadi, who serves as Vice President of Women Affairs for the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled, has been shortlisted for Builder category. This category recognizes sustained and consistent leadership over a period of time, advocacy, overall contributions and impact promoting and supporting women in sport.

Back-to-back Paralympic champion Zahra Nemati has been also shortlisted for next Generation category. She participated at the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in May 2018, she was designated as the first Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Ambassador by the president of Global Understanding (GU) Regional Action Centre in Iran.

Mehdi Pashazadeh named Machine Sazi coach

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Pashazadeh was appointed as head coach of Iranian top-flight football team Machine Sazi on Wednesday.

Pashazadeh, who parted company with First Division team Pas Hamedan last week, will lead Machine Sazi for the rest of the season.

The 47-year-old coach replaced Saeid Akhbari in the Iranian football team.

"I am well aware that we have a difficult task ahead but I'm here to avoid relegation. We want to finish as high as possible. I've already worked at Tabriz based football teams and have good memory of working here," Pashazadeh said after taking charge of Machine Sazi.

Pashazadeh started his playing career at Esteghlal in 1992 and joined Bayer Leverkusen six years later.

He has started his coaching career in Admira Wacker II in 2006 and has also headed Rah Ahan, Parseh, Shahrdari Tabriz, Aluminum Arak, Nassaji Mazandaran and Shahrdari Tabriz.

Machine Sazi sit bottom of the table in Iran Professional League.

Zahra Nemati runner-up at Fazza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Zahra Nemati from Iran fell short in the final match of the Fazza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament, losing to her Turkish rival Sengul Yagmur 6-2 at the recurve women open.

The back-to-back Paralympic champion had previously defeated Pooja Khanna from India and Nataliya Malykh from Ukraine in the previous round.

Merve Nur Eroglu from Turkey also won the bronze medal after beating Ukraine's Nataliya Malykh 6-2.

More than 70 Para archers from 11 nations took part in the seventh edition of the event in Dubai, the UAE.

Esteghlal, Persepolis learn fate at Hazfi Cup

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal and Persepolis football teams, as the most decorated teams in Iran's Hazfi Cup, learned their rivals at the competition's Round of 32.

Esteghlal will face Iran Professional League team Paykan in the stage, while Persepolis meet second-tier Mes Novin Kerman.

The first leg will be played on March 11 and 12, with the return leg a month later.

Below, is the full list of the draw:

- *Aluminum Arak – Havadar Tehran
- *Zob Ahan – Shahr Khodro
- *Nassaji – Saipa
- *Malavan Anzali – Vista Turbine Tehran
- *Sanat Naft – Damash Parseh
- *Paykan – Esteghlal
- *Sepahan – Mes Rafsanjan
- *Esteghlal Mollasani – Shahin Bandar Ameri
- *Naft Masjed Soleyman – Kheybar Khorramabad
- *Gol Gohar Sirjan – Mes Kerman
- *Tractor – Shahrdari Mahshahr
- *Shahrdari Bardaskan – Khooshe Talaei Saveh
- *Mes Novin Kerman – Persepolis
- *Pars Jonoubi Jam – Pas Hamedan
- *Etehad Kamyaran – Qashqai Shiraz
- *Machine Sazi – Foolad

The Iran's Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975 and Esteghlal are the most successful club with seven titles, followed by Persepolis who have won six titles.

Rezaeian's free kick chosen the best of 2020

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Ramin Rezaeian's goal from set-piece was chosen the Best Free-kicks of AFC Champions League 2020.

He defeated his compatriot Ali Karimi in the poll organized by the-afc.com.

In the match against Sharjah, Rezaeian struck the pick of goals to send Al-Duhail 2-0 up early in the second half after Almoez Ali had scored the opener for the Qataris in the 40th minute.

The Iranian international had joined Al Duhail just three weeks prior after enjoying a magnificent individual 2019-20 season, scoring 13 times for his former side Al Shahania in the Qatar Stars League.

Rezaeian won the poll with 85 percent of votes.

Karimi, former Esteghlal midfielder, who scored a goal against Pakhtakor from the set-piece, finished in second place with 14 percent.

Industrial parks’ power outage problem discussed in TCCIMA meeting

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — During the 72nd session of the private sector-government dialogue council of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), which was held at the place of TCCIMA on Wednesday, the private sector representatives discussed the issue of electricity outages in the industrial parks and the resulted losses and damages.



Representatives of the private sector also stressed the need to compensate for these damages.

During the meeting, which was participated by Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, the governor-general of Tehran, the direct and indirect effects of gas and electricity outages on guilds, industry, agriculture and people were examined.

At the beginning of the meeting, the chairman of the mentioned dialogue council said, “In the issue of power and gas outages, we were faced with incorrect policies of service providers”, adding, “Due to these outages, many units had problems and of course some used this opportunity to increase the price of their products.”

Later in the meeting, the managing director of Tehran Industrial Parks Company presented a report on the damages caused by power outages in the industrial parks.

‘Iran-EAEU \$30b trade possible’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of trade between Iran and the members of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) can reach \$27 billion - \$30 billion, as there are ample capacities in this regard, according to an official with Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Although, this figure has not yet materialized due to the lack of knowledge about the two sides’ capacities, Behrouz Hosn-Olfat, the director-general of the TPO’s office of European and American countries, stated.

The value of trade between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union’s member states stood at \$1.8 billion during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021), according to a report released by Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA).

The TCCIMA’s report says that the mentioned amount constitutes three percent of Iran’s non-oil trade during the ten-month period.

Meanwhile, the value of the Iranian exports to the members of the union have risen by 30 percent during the 12-month period from October 27, 2019, to October 26, 2020, compared to the preceding 12 months, the TPO has said in a report.



Based on the report, Iran exported 2.863 million tons of goods worth \$1.091 billion to the EAEU member countries in the said period, compared to the 2.657 million tons valued at \$842 million in the previous year’s same period.

The exports from the Islamic Republic to the mentioned union also increased by eight percent in terms of weight.

The value of total non-oil trade between Iran and the members of the Eurasian union reached \$3.419 billion in the period under review, up eight percent compared to the figure for the same period in the previous year, the data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry showed.

According to the mentioned report, Iran also imported 6.696 million tons of commodities worth \$2.328 billion in the mentioned period, registering a 20 percent and a 0.04 percent increase, respectively, compared to the preceding 12 months.

The increase in the trade between the two sides comes after signing a free trade agreement which allows Iran to trade nearly 862 commodity items subjected to preferential tariffs with the mentioned union.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached the mentioned free trade agreement in October 2018. This interim agreement which makes the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU possible, officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran’s exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic’s plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

Rouhani inaugurates major freeway near capital Tehran

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated a 158-kilometers-long freeway near capital Tehran through a virtual ceremony, IRNA reported.

Implemented with a total investment of 70 trillion rials (about \$1.66 billion), the freeway project called “Ghadir” connects Abyek city in Qazvin province to Varamin in southern Tehran after passing through the Alborz province.

Over 70 percent of the financing for this project was provided by the country’s private sector, while the other 30 percent was supplied by the government.

As reported, some 49 large bridges, 690 small bridges, two tunnels, 12 intersections, and 32 parking lots have been constructed along this highway.

This project which has completed part of the country’s east-west and north-south freeway corridors, will shorten the route and facilitate the transportation between



the northwestern regions of the country to the northeastern areas.

The construction of the mentioned six-lane freeway was started in the Iranian calendar year 1394 (ended on March 20, 2016).

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony,

Rouhani said the project is an achievement for the country at a time when boosting the national economy is a top priority.

He underlined that the project was implemented and completed according to schedule.

The president said the more freeways

and major highways are developed, the more the traffic flow will be eased, the less fuel consumption will be, and the less time transportation will take.

Country’s highways to stretch by 7,500km

Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami who also attended the opening ceremony underlined the significance of developing the country’s major transportation routes for the government and said: “The total length of the country’s highways which was 12,500 km in [the Iranian calendar year] 1392 (ended on March 21, 2014) is going to reach 20,000 km by the end of the current government’s incumbency (August 2021).”

He further noted that the total length of the country’s freeways, which was 2,100 km in the Iranian calendar year 1392, is going to increase by more than 50 percent to reach 3,300 km by the end of the government’s incumbency.

S. Korea to release \$1b of Iran’s frozen assets soon

1 → In the meeting which was held on the invitation of the South Korean embassy, the two sides negotiated the ways and protocols for allocating a pair of Iranian funds in South Korea for purchasing essential goods from third countries.

Earlier on Wednesday, Hemmati had said that at least \$1 billion of Iran’s frozen assets in South Korea will soon return to the country as the first stage of the unfreezing process.

“In the meeting with the South Korean envoy, we stressed how Iran could use its resources,” the official told reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting.

According to CBI, over seven billion dollars of Iranian oil revenues have been frozen in two South Korean banks since September 2019, when Washington’s sanctions waiver for South Korea’s imports of Iranian oil expired.

Iran has repeatedly called on Seoul to abandon its “illegal” policies and release the Iranian assets that it has frozen due to the U.S. sanctions so that Tehran can step up its fight against COVID-19.

Earlier, President Hassan Rouhani had reacted to Seoul’s blocking of Iranian assets, saying: “South Korea’s ban on

Iran’s use of its central bank resources to buy basic goods, medicine, and humanitarian items is by no means acceptable, and we expect Seoul to lift this restriction as soon as possible.”

Following the intensification of disputes between the two sides, South Korean Vice Foreign Affairs Minister Choi Jong Kun visited Iran in January and met with senior Iranian officials including the CBI governor for discussing ways for resolving the issue.

In the meeting with Choi, Hemmati called on the South Korean government to take an independent approach towards the issue of releasing Iran’s resources in the country, saying: “Seven billion dollars belonging to the Iranian nation has been blocked in South Korean banks for more than two years, this is unacceptable and Iran definitely will not be indifferent towards this issue.”

Referring to a previous visit to Seoul, Hemmati said: “A year and a half ago, I had talks with South Korean officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, about this issue, and they promised assistance and cooperation, which unfortunately were not realized.”



After the Korean official’s visit to Iran, the two sides finally agreed that South Korea should provide the necessary monetary channels for Iran to be able to use its assets in this country for purchasing essentials goods through third countries.

Southwestern Tombak export-service port goes operational

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) announced that the first wharf of the Tombak export-service port in southwestern Bushehr Province has gone operational, Shana reported.

According to Mohammad Meshkinfam, the mentioned wharf was officially put into operation by loading and exporting a 6,700-ton Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cargo from the port’s terminal.

Underlining the port’s complete readiness for loading and exporting of South Pars gas field’s products, the official noted that another 44,000-ton vessel is going to moor at this port to be loaded with LPG from the Pars II site.

In order to complete the remaining sections of the terminal, executive operations are underway simultaneously with the operation of the first wharf of the terminal, Meshkinfam stressed.

He pointed to the implementation and



construction of six LPG pipelines from the refineries of South Pars phases 13 and 22-24 to the Tombak port and said: “Currently, the liquefied gas produced in these two refineries is exported in the hot form; however, when these pipelines are completed, cold liquefied gas will be loaded and exported through Tombak export port.”

In late January, POGC also inaugurated two LPG storage tanks of phase 22-24 of

Iran’s South Pars gas field with a capacity of 80,000 cubic meters. The LPG stored in these storages will be transported to the mentioned port when the said pipelines are completed.

According to Meshkinfam, the total LPG loading capacity in this project will be increased to 160,000 cubic meters after another two tanks go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Tombak export-service terminal is located in the Pars II area, where eight refineries and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project are located.

In addition to exporting oil and gas products, this port is aimed at providing services to vessels navigating in the region.

Iranian Oil Ministry has been following a series of programs for boosting the exports of oil and gas products especially from the country’s southern Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ).

TEDPIX falls 2.7% in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 2.7 percent during the past Iranian calendar week.

The index stood at 1.205 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment Company, Tamin Cement Company, Amin Investment Bank, Mobarakeh Steel Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Tehran Oil Refining Company, and Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company were the most widely followed indices.

Last week, market analyst Amir-Ali Amir-Baqeri told IRNA that Iranian stock market is moving in the right direction and will reach stability in the near future.

“Market authorities are currently using asymmetric fluctuations to improve the market situation, but we must move in a direction where there is no volatility in the market,” Amir-Baqeri said.

Criticizing the government’s interference in the capital market, Baqeri said the more the market moves away from ordained pricing, and government-set rules and regulations, toward a free market in which the pricing is set through supply and demand, the more realistic and competitive the economy will become in the mid and long term.

The expert noted that political factors including the U.S. sanctions and their impact on the domestic markets which led to the increase of inflation in the country led people to bring their assets into the stock market, and that caused a significant surge in the mentioned market.

However, several external factors, including the disputes between the oil and economy ministries over



the offering of the second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), increase in interest rates, and the ambiguities in the next year’s national budget bill resulted in a recession in the stock market.

According to Amir-Baqeri, the changing political atmosphere in the United States and the world, and also Iran’s economic resilience against the U.S. sanctions also impacted the market.

Consequently, Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)’s main index (TEDPIX) which had surpassed two million points in early August 2020, suddenly started a downward trend in late August and has since slumped about 38 percent.

To support the market, the government has started passing new regulations and guidelines and has injected millions of dollars of resources into the market; however, these measures have been proven counterproductive, according to the expert.

The market is correcting itself and will reach stability

in near future if the government stops interfering in it, Amir-Baqeri stressed.

Back in January, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand had said that the stock market is on the right track and has reached a stage that can be trusted in terms of performance.

“Except for the peripheral variables that affect this market, we do not have a specific disturbance in the market”, the minister stated, adding: “sometimes the policies that are made in different sectors affect the market, which is natural.”

The vice-chairman of TSE’s board of directors had also said in December 2020 that the stock market is expected to spend the last months of the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20) calmly.

Mentioning investigation of the periodical (six-month and nine-month) reports of the companies’ performance, Javad Eshqi-Nejad said that given the foreign currency exchange rate situation and the appropriate sales volume, in this period, almost the expectations of listed companies have been met and positive results have been provided for the capital market.

Regarding the continuation of the stock market trend in the next three months, he said: “In this regard, the main issue is political relations and international behavior; we seem to be achieving good results in the international arena.”

While predicting that the stock market will be calm in the last months of this year, he said: “But for the next year, according to the budget, we may face new events whose analysis can have special effects on various industries; in a way that these effects may be associated with some industries for the next 2-3 years.”

Scholar says it’s not clear Biden can overcome polarization soon

1 → There will certainly be major changes in both domestic and foreign policy. The Democratic Party and the Trump-led Republican Party are ideologically polarized.

1. Domestic policy under Biden and the Democratic Congress will involve far greater spending and a focus on helping minorities and women.

2. Foreign policy will be far more oriented toward multilateral diplomacy.

3. The conduct of executive branch government will be led by people with experience and expertise, rather than amateurs whose major qualification is unquestioning support for the president. Trump was a remarkably unusual president in his personality and lack of any prior political experience. His election in 2016 should not be seen as representing any long-standing characteristics of the American people. It was an act of desperation amid rising inequality and hopelessness, and Hillary Clinton’s heavy-handed defeat of Bernie Sanders for the party’s nomination.

Some believe that the recent presidential election and its aftermath left a deep rift

in U.S. domestic political scene. What is your opinion?

Hard to deny that. Since the Civil War of 1861-65, the two parties have not been so polarized. That is a very unfortunate situation. It is not clear that President Biden can overcome the polarization any time soon, though the American people very much hope for that.

There are ways that the Biden administration could attempt such reconciliation—like adopting some version of the policies that both Trump and social-democrat Bernie Sanders supported (abandonment of trade treaties promoting the interests of large global corporations, restraining illegal migration seen as costing American jobs, and abandoning regime-change wars backed by

previous Republican and Democratic governments). Some attempt to reform rather chaotic local vote-counting processes to increase public confidence in election outcomes would help, too.

The Democratic Party beginning with Bill Clinton had drastically changed the party’s orientation toward labor, and Biden seems inclined to remedy that, as well as to be somewhat more protective of American industrial jobs. However, his encouragement of large-scale immigration is a policy position increasingly controversial in most Western democracies, seen as a threat to both labor and cultural values (and more recently, to the spread of Covid19).

Democrats’ efforts to impeach Trump for the second time failed. What are the

There is, and will be increased local and national government attention to the dangers posed by extremist groups, and great social pressure by communities and families of the extremists who invaded Congress.

Resolution in the hands of Yemeni parties, says ex-U.S. ambassador to Sanaa

1 → The recent escalation in the Yemeni Ma’rib has led to the displacement of at least 8,000 people in recent weeks, bringing the total number of displacements in that part of the country to more than 116,000.

Humanitarian institutes estimate that as many as another 385,000 people may also be displaced if the conflict continues, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of more people in Ma’rib city proper who could be affected by the clashes. International bodies warn that such a development would worsen humanitarian situations far beyond what people in the area presently have the capacity for.

The new U.S. administration claims it plans to reverse Trump’s policies in West Asia, including Yemen, to end regional conflicts.

However, some Yemeni politicians believe that the American administration is not serious in stopping the aggression or lifting the siege on the Yemeni people.

“Biden would make the decision to end the war and lift the siege directly,” according to Hezam al-Assad, a senior member of the political office of the Yemeni Ansarullah.

But Feisterstein says “Biden is seeking a reset of the U.S. approach to ending the conflict in Yemen through diplomatic engagement and support for the UN-led effort to bring the Yemeni parties to the negotiating table.”

Following is the text of the interview:

Recent statements by the new American administration to halt arms sales to Saudi Arabia seem to be the first step to force Saudi Arabia to the stop the war on Yemen. Given the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen after big damages to the country’s infrastructure, do you think Biden’s move is just a superficial reform or we can expect a fundamental shift in U.S. approach?

President Biden has been clear that he is seeking a reset of the U.S. approach to ending the conflict in Yemen through diplomatic engagement and support for the UN-led effort to bring the Yemeni parties to the negotiating table to reach a political solution to the conflict. Ending U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition’s offensive operations in Yemen is meant to help promote the diplomatic process that the president is trying to achieve.

How could Saudi Arabia buy decisions of international institutes and even Americans despite its disastrous human rights record, especially when one thinks of dismemberment of Khashoggi and their war crimes in Yemen?

I’m not aware of the basis for claiming that Saudi Arabia is

“buying decisions” of international or U.S. institutes. There is global concern about human rights violations in many of the states of the Middle East (West Asia) including Saudi Arabia and there has been a strong push in the U.S. and elsewhere for accountability for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia is an important regional partner for the U.S. and there is a long and positive history of cooperation between private sector institutions in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Don’t you think that certain Arab states of the Persian Gulf region (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE) would put pressure on the Biden administration not to change policy toward Yemen in particular and West Asia in general?

Saudi Arabia has welcomed President Biden’s initiative to end the conflict in Yemen and, I believe, the Saudis would embrace a political resolution of the conflict as would the other Arab states in the (Persian) Gulf.

What is the role of regional powers in ending the war in Yemen?

The conflict in Yemen is primarily a civil war and the resolution is in the hands of the Yemeni parties. Nevertheless, regional powers, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran, must play a role in supporting the diplomatic negotiating process and encouraging the Yemeni parties to find peaceful

solutions to their differences. In a post-conflict situation, regional powers will need to assist Yemen in rebuilding and recovering from the effects of the conflict.

Some argue that Biden’s move in delisting Yemen’s Houthis as a terrorist organization is aimed at encouraging peace talks in Yemen. What do you think?

Primarily, the decision to reverse the Trump administration’s decision to list the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) was over concern that the listing would have negative consequences for millions of innocent Yemeni civilians, as it would interfere with humanitarian assistance operations as well as the private sector imports of food, fuel, and medicine. If, as a secondary outcome, the delisting also helps pave the way for a return to negotiations, that would be a positive development.

Regarding your experience as the last U.S. ambassador to Yemen, what do you think of the fate of this war?

I believe the war will end when the parties become convinced that they cannot achieve their objectives through a continuation of the fighting and can have a better outcome through negotiations.

While the new Houthi attack on Ma’rib is unhelpful, I hope that we are coming to the point where the parties will draw that conclusion.

INVITATION TO RENEWAL OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

Second Announcement

55/99/28549

27/02/2021



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below 20 items of formulated pesticides, through renewal of one step international tender.

Item	General Name	Formulation	Quantity(MT)
1	2,4-D+MCPA	67.5% SL (W/V)	100
2	Bromoxynil octanoate+MCPA-2-ethyl ester	40% EC (W/V)	40
3	Bromoxynil+2,4-D	56% EC (W/V)	20
4	Pinoxaden+ safener	5% EC (W/V)	60
5	Pinoxaden+Clodinafop propargyl+Cloquintocet	5% EC (W/V)	100
6	Iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium +Mesosulfuron-methyl+Mefenpyr-diethyl	1.2% OD (W/V)	100
7	Mesosulfuron methyl +Iodosulfuron-methyl sodium+Diflofenican+mefenpyr-diethyl	6% OD (W/V)	50
8	Sethoxydim	12.5% OEC (W/V)	20
9	Clopyralid	30% SL (W/V)	60
10	Propiconazole	25% EC (W/W)	400
11	Epoxiconazole+Tiophanate-methyl	49.7% SC (W/V)	90
12	Cyproconazole+Propiconazole	33% EC (W/V)	40
13	Deltamethrin	2.5% EC (W/V)	600
14	Tebuconazole	2% DS (W/W)	300
15	Tebuconazole	6% FS(W/V)	200
16	Tebuconazole+Prothioconazole	40% FS(W/V)	10
17	Difenoconazole	3% DS(W/W)	150
18	Difenoconazole	3% FS(W/V)	100
19	Carboxin+Thiram	75% WP (W/W)	100
20	Carboxin+Thiram	40% FS(W/W)	80

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Wednesday dated 24/02/2021** until **Saturday dated 25/02/2021** (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran). The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000000.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Monday dated 05/04/2021** (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelops will be held on **Tuesday dated 06/04/2021** at 14:00 PM with the presence of bidder's representatives at our purchasing committee hall (9th floor , no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the bid bond amount should be in bank guarantee as follows:

- 1- € 15996 for 2,4-D + MCPA 67.5% SL equivalent to Iranian Rials 4603550000.
- 2- € 12559 for Bromoxynil octanoate+MCPA-2-ethyl ester 40%EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 3614461000.
- 3- € 7805 for Bromoxynil+2,4-D 56% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 2246189000.
- 4- € 27637 for Pinoxaden + safener 5% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 7953798000.
- 5- € 42382 for Pinoxaden + clodinafop propargyl+ chocoin toset 5% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 12197268000.
- 6- € 35574 for Iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium+ Mesosulfuron- methyl+ mefenpyr-diethyl 1.2% OD equivalent to Iranian Rials 10238058000.
- 7- € 19700 for + Mesosulfuron-methyl+ Iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium +Diflufenican+mefenpyr-diethyl 6% OD equivalent to Iranian Rials 5669538000.
- 8- € 7011 for Sethoxydim 12.5% OEC equivalent to Iranian Rials 2017763000.
- 9- € 19271 for Clopyralid 30% SL equivalent to Iranian Rials 5546188000.
- 10- € 52538 for Propiconazole 25% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 15120200000.
- 11- € 100697 for Epoxiconazole + Tiophanate-methyl 49.7% SC equivalent to Iranian Rials 28980000000.
- 12- € 42982 for Cyproconazole + Propiconazole 33% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 12370000000.
- 13- € 48222 for Deltamethrin 2.5% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 13878180000.
- 14- € 49067 for Tebuconazole 2% DS equivalent to Iranian Rials 14121300000.
- 15- € 28562 for Tebuconazole 6% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 8220000000.
- 16- € 11972 for Tebuconazole + Prothioconazole 40% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 3445425500.
- 17- € 21140 for Difenoconazole 3% DS equivalent to Iranian Rials 6084000000.
- 18- € 17868 for Difenoconazole 3% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 5652000000.
- 19- € 31341 for Carboxin+Thiram 75% WP equivalent to Iranian Rials 9019786000.
- 20- € 44940 for Carboxin+Thiram 40% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 12933485000.

The bid bond value will be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir. It should be noted that this site lists the currency transactions, executed in Integrated Currency Transactions System [Nima website] on **15/02/2021**.

For more information, you may refer to our website **www.assc.ir**, and **<http://iets.mporg.ir>** or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

I invite all travelers interested in culture to visit Iran: Venezuelan tourism minister

➔ **1** Isfahan, the capital of a province of the same name, is nicknamed "Nesf-e-Jahan" which is translated into "half the world", meaning it contains fully half of the world's wonders. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.



Venezuela's Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade Ali Padron Paredes visits the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan, February 25, 2021.

Big and sprawling Kerman is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, and ruins of ancient urban areas.

Old trees in Khorasan Razavi made national heritage

TOURISM TEHRAN — A total of eight old trees across the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

A juniper and four plane trees, which stand in the city of Neishabur, as well as an old plane and two cypress trees in Gonabad make up the entrees, IRNA reported on Friday.

Plane trees have always been symbols of fertility and greenery of nature in the ancient Iranian culture, which has the idea that such trees could prevent the spread of fever and infectious diseases.



They have been mostly planted in sacred areas such as churches and holy shrines. Juniper is a very valuable and long-lasting species that grows in mountainous and high areas and has a special place in the legends and myths of Iranian people.

It has long been a symbol of immortality in Iranian culture and it can be seen in historical Iranian miniatures.

The evergreen tree of cypress has been presented as an outstanding tree in the world. For being always green Zoroastrians believe that the tree has always had significant importance.

A selection of nine Iranian gardens, which bear important architectural, traditional, and cultural elements, have been collectively inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list under the title of "The Persian Garden."

The genuine concept of the Persian Garden that is deeply rooted in time interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

The UNESCO website asserts that the flawless design of the Persian Garden, along with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the result of an inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge, i.e. technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany, and agriculture.

Museum dedicated to handmade jewelry inaugurated in Kerman

TOURISM TEHRAN — A museum of gold and jewelry was inaugurated in Qeisarieh Ebrahim historical complex in southeastern Kerman province, IRNA reported on Thursday.



The inauguration ceremony was attended by Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan and Venezuelan Tourism Minister Ali Padron Paredes, who was making a one-day visit to the province, as well as a number of the cultural and tourism officials.

Established by the private sector, the museum is aimed to feature the process of making gold and silver jewelry in different historical eras, the provincial tourism chief, Fereyduun Fa'ali, said.

There are a few jewel museums across the country, of which Treasury of the National Jewels, commonly known as the 'Jewels Museum' is the most famous.

Located in Tehran and owned by the Central Bank of Iran, the museum is a collection of the most expensive jewels of the world, collected over centuries.

Big and sprawling Kerman province is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, and ruins of ancient urban areas.

Kerman province is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

Iran submits UNESCO dossier on collective caravanserais

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran has recently submitted an inclusive dossier on its caravanserais to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

The dossier comprises the obligatory data about a selection of 56 caravanserais, which are scattered across the ancient land. And the shortlist includes qualified caravanserais located in at least 24 provinces, the deputy tourism minister, Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, said on Thursday.

The concept of Iranian caravanserai, like Persian houses, gardens, qanat, and towers, has unique characteristics that carry high social, cultural, and architectural values, regardless of their special architectural characteristics, the official said.

It seems that the construction of caravanserais in Iran dates back to the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC) and since then until the early Pahlavi period (1925-1979) different types of caravanserais were built across the country, the official added.

Aside from building some caravanserais [as mere roadside inns], Iranians tried to preserve and pass down the historical and cultural elements as well as their ancestral architectural values of different eras, he explained.

Last year, the tourism ministry announced



that the country is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravansaries for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In this regard, cultural heritage experts started assessing the nominees to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

Caravansery (or caravansary) is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara". The first stand for a group of travelers and sara means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country. For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!

Iran ranks 10th in the world in terms of the number of historical monuments and sites registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Before the Islamic Revolution, Persepolis, Naghsh-e Jahan Square, and Chogha Zanbil were the only three UNESCO-listed monuments, but today the number has been increased this number to 24 historical sites.

"Arg-e Bam" (Bam Citadel) that represents an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement in Kerman province, "Bisotun" in western Kermanshah province, which is notable for its Achaemenid-era inscription carved on a limestone cliff, lavish "Golestan Palace" in downtown Tehran which is a masterpiece of the Qajar era (1789 to 1925), and millennium-old "Gonbad-e Qabus" which is a mudbrick tomb tower for Qabus ibn Wushmagir, are among the other UNESCO-designated sites in Iran.

Tehran, Caracas agree to launch reciprocal tours

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran and Venezuela have agreed to launch mutual tours as part of a memorandum of understanding the two inked days ago in Tehran.

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali Asghar Mounesan said that Iran and Venezuela would launch tours between the two countries to improve ties, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

In a meeting to sign the MoU, Mounesan, and Venezuela's Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade Ali Padron Paredes announced they would try to improve tourism among the two countries in line with strategic plans.

Mounesan said that the agreement was initially reached with former Venezuelan Tourism Minister, Felix Ramon Plasencia Gonzalez, and it was not implemented.

Pointing to the historical attractions in Iran and natural sites in Venezuela, Mounesan said he hoped the two countries would be good destinations for their travelers.

He also said that expansion of tourism relations between Iran and Venezuela would serve to improve trading ties between the two countries, as a direct flight has been launched between the two capitals.

Venezuelan Tourism Minister, for his part, said that his

country has the second and tenth biggest national parks in the world and the Angel Fall is the highest waterfall in the world.

Padron also pointed to other natural attractions in Venezuela and added that his country aims to work in unison with Iran to recover tourism industry hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

The official praised Iran's "brotherly assistance" to Venezuela to ease the pressure of sanctions from which Iran is also suffering.

Venezuela's Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade, heading an economic delegation and tourism industry players, was scheduled a four-day trip which started on Tuesday.

Back in October, Mounesan exchanged views with the former Venezuelan Tourism and Foreign Trade Minister Felix, Ramon Plasencia Gonzalez, in a video conference to deepen tourism relations, especially through simplifying visa rules, launching fam tours, and setting up exhibits. They also agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding in a bid to broaden bilateral ties.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bath-houses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and



mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. So it will undoubtedly try its best to achieve a relatively ambitious goal but when that happens the travel industry is likely to look more altered.

Coronavirus: Iran sets travel restrictions for four provinces

TOURISM TEHRAN — Restrictions aimed at slowing a surge in coronavirus cases have been set for four Iranian provinces, which have recently been designated as high-risk "red zones".

"Travel to and from Khuzestan province is completely restricted and it is not possible to travel to or leave Khuzestan," the deputy traffic police chief, Seyyed Teymour Hosseini, told ISNA on Thursday.

"Moreover, it is not possible to travel to the three northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan due to the corona situation [there] and the decisions taken to prevent the spread of the virus."

Furthermore, the senior police officer announced that travels to and from Mashhad, Shiraz, Isfahan, Bushehr, Bandar Abbas,



Kish, and Qeshm have been limited until further notice.

The restrictions, however, are at odds with the most recent announcement by the deputy tourism minister, Vali Teymouri, who said his ministry has gained permission for limited New Year travels, which begins on March 21.

"We have obtained permission for limited Noruz trips from the National Headquar-

ters for Coronavirus Control," Teymouri announced on February 23.

With less than a month to go till the start of the Iranian New Year, which has long been associated with millions of domestic travels, the ministry wants to find a way to partially revive the already-slumped travels in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The tourism ministry has held several meetings with the National Headquarters for the Coronavirus Control during with we discussed the issues in detail. Based on our strategies, we proposed two travel models that can be implemented following health protocols in the country," Teymouri said last week.

The first [working] model for travels in the Iranian New Year, proposes travels by

the means of package tours. "Throughout package tours, travelers benefit from services provided by the tour and they will stay in authorized accommodation centers [and destinations] which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts," the official explained.

For the second model, people do not go on tours, but when traveling to their destination city, they must stay in authorized accommodation centers, which are under the supervision of the ministry, to comply with all health protocols and maintain public health, Teymouri stated.

Iranians traditionally make hundreds of thousands of domestic trips during the New Year holidays, when most businesses and workplaces are closed, as are schools.

Caracas's tourism minister visits National Museum of Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Venezuela's Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade Ali Padron Paredes toured the National Museum of Iran on Friday.

Iran's deputy minister of cultural heritage and tourism, Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, and Jebrael Nokandeh who presides over the gigantic museum accompanied the Venezuelan minister during the visit.



"On my next trip to Iran, I will visit this museum again," Padron Paredes said during his fourth day of visiting the Islamic Republic.

The National Museum of Iran embraces priceless relics that represent various eras of the country's rich history. Its structure was completed in 1928 based on the design by French architect André Godard who was also an archaeologist and historian of French and Middle Eastern Art.

First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9680036

National Iranian south oilfields company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
6	P/F"ROLLS-ROYCE" INDUSTRIAL AVON GAS GENERATOR AVON MK . 1533-34-76G/101G REF.ROLLS-ROYCE/STD	582

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no.2, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 22.028 EURO or 6.245.200.962 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN, PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran Tel. No.: 061 34 12 34 55 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437
Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir

تهران تایمز: نوبت اول ۹۹/۱۲/۹ نوبت دوم ۹۹/۱۲/۱۲

1399.7150

Role of village administrations in rural development

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Established in 2003, Iran's Municipalities and Village Administrations Organization has so far implemented about 130,000 small and medium-scale development projects across the country's rural areas.

The organization has been set up with the aim of improving the environmental situation of villages, recognizing the deficiencies and social, economic, health, cultural, and educational needs, preparing practical plans in the mentioned fields and presenting them to the relevant officials for necessary action, as well as encouraging the villagers not to migrate to the cities.

Village administrators are elected by the members of the Council of the village, who are elected by the people and are tasked with local management.

Out of a total of 39,465 villages in the country, which comprise about 26 percent of the national population (20.1 million), 37,118 villages have been received permits to establish rural administrations (called Dehyari).

Thus, more than 97 percent of the country's rural population lives in villages with over 20,000 households.

Since the establishment of the Municipalities and Village Administrations Organization until the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020), more than 250 trillion rials (nearly \$6 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) have been



allocated to rural development.

According to Mehdi Jamalinejad, the head of the Municipalities and Village Administrations Organization, about 130,000 small and medium-scale development projects have been implemented in the country's villages.

Over 900 fire stations have been built and equipped in the country's villages.

Jamalinejad also said that 80 percent of rural areas are equipped with waste collection systems.

Earlier this month, some 5,811 development projects were inaugurated

in rural areas, with a total of 11.6 trillion rials (nearly \$278 million) spent on these projects, Ali Ghorbani, deputy head of the organization, said.

The projects included road maintenance, fire stations, green spaces, sport, and cultural places.

Mohammad Omid, the vice president for rural development, said in November 2020 that for the first time in the country, the migration of people from rural areas to cities has reached zero.

A total of 220 trillion rials (nearly \$5.6 billion) has been approved for the develop-

ment of villages in the current year (March 2020-March 2021), Omid said.

Some 140 trillion rials (about \$3.3 billion) have so far been spent, he noted, adding, the unemployment rate in rural areas has reached 7.4 percent, which has decreased by over one percent compared to last year.

In October 2020, Omid stated that the rural development projects worth 130 trillion rials (nearly \$3 billion) inaugurated on the occasion of the National Day of Villagers and Nomads.

"In the Sixth National Development Plan (2016-2021), we were tasked to connect 80 percent of the villages with 20 households or more to the national information network. So far, over 95 percent of the country's villages are connected."

Based on statistics, 18,000 villages (each week 50 villages on average) have been connected to the national gas network over the past seven years, and now about 4.8 million families in 32,000 villages enjoy natural gas in the country. It means that 82 percent of the villages are connected to the gas network.

Many other efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration from rural areas to cities while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining), including rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism.

The elderly, war-disabled getting COVID-19 vaccine

1 → Also, the second dose of the vaccine will be injected into the target population three weeks after receiving the first dose, he added.

"Efforts are being made to fully vaccinate the target groups of phase one before the Iranian new year (March 21), with the next shipments of vaccines, which will gradually enter the country in the coming days," he explained.

According to the national vaccination document, vaccination against coronavirus started with priority given to health workers, vulnerable and high-risk groups, and then ordinary people will receive the vaccine.

22% of the elderly infected with COVID-19

One year after the outbreak of the coronavirus, 22 percent of the elderly in nursing homes have been infected with the virus, Vahid Qobadi Dana the head of the Welfare Organization said.

Some 14,000 elderly people cared for in the daycare centers, 3,176, or 22 percent of whom were infected, 2,295 recovered, 506 are under treatment, and unfortunately, 375, or 2.6 percent, died, he stated.

In total, taking the disabled into account, a total of 51,000 people are kept in these daycare centers, of whom 7,000 have been diagnosed with COVID-19, 6,000 of whom have recovered, and unfortunately, 452 people died, he said.

Qobadi Dana went on to say that in October 2020, influenza vaccines have been provided free of charge to some 80,000 people under the Organization's coverage.

Mass vaccination

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

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

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

On January 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.

New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 8,103 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,615,184. She added that 1,379,922 patients have so far recovered, but 3,720 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 69 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 59,899, she added.

So far, 10,734,375 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 11 cities are at high-risk "red" zones, 31 cities in medium-risk "orange" zones, 252 cities in low-risk "yellow" zones.



Be kind to me!

Poaching drops thanks to coronavirus lockdown: DOE official



SOCIETY TEHRAN – The number of animals killed by poachers has decreased by 15

percent over the past 11 months compared to the same period last year, helped by the nationwide coronavirus lockdown and a halt in wildlife tourism, Jamshid Mohabbat-Khani, commander of the protection unit of the Department of Environment (DOE) said.

During this period, bird hunting decreased by 14 percent, aquatic fishing by 17 percent, live capture of birds by 39 percent, and live capture of mammals by 32 percent compared to the same period last year, he further explained.

Living conditions and economic situation affect people's tendency to hunt animals in nature, another reason for poaching is the taste for shooting, he further lamented, IRNA reported on Thursday.

Currently, 3,600 rangers are in charge of defending the protected areas, which should reach at least up to 8,000, he said, adding, there are over 600 stations

in the country, 100 of which are inactive due to lack of manpower.

According to the international standard, there should be one ranger per thousand hectares, but in Iran, there is one ranger per 12,000 hectares, which means that the number of rangers in Iran is one-twelfth of the world standard, while the rangers protect 11 percent of the country's natural areas, Mohabbat-Khani, stated.

To compensate for part of this shortage, we obtained a license to hire rangers for 10 consecutive years, through which 250 ranchers were employed each year, he said, adding, this year, 300 rangers are to be recruited, 50 of whom are sea rangers.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that about seven percent of wildfires were intentional and man-made, but violators have been reported to the judiciary.

Atlantic Ocean current at weakest state in 'over a millennium'

The Atlantic Ocean current that plays a major role in the world's weather is at its weakest state in "over a millennium", researchers have found.

The research combines various lines of evidence to create a "consistent picture" of how the ocean current system, which is known as the "Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation" (AMOC), has changed over the past 1,600 years.

Sometimes called the Atlantic's "conveyor belt", the AMOC is a vast ocean current system that moves warm, salty water from the tropics to regions further north, such as the UK. The gulf stream is part of the AMOC.

As the AMOC carries warm water northward, it releases heat into the atmosphere. The release of ocean heat keeps countries warm – and without it, winters in the UK could be close to 5°C colder, the Independent reported.

Scientists have previously raised concerns that the AMOC could be "slowing

down", with the climate crisis likely playing a role. In 2018, a study found that the AMOC had weakened by around 15 percent since the mid 20th century.

The new study, which is by the same research team, combines a range of different data to better understand how the AMOC has behaved over the past 1,600 years.

"For the first time, we have combined a range of previous studies and found they provide a consistent picture of the AMOC evolution over the past 1,600 years," said Dr Stefan Rahmstorf, a climate scientist from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and an author of the study, which is published in the journal Nature Geoscience.

"The study results suggest that it has been relatively stable until the late 19th century. With the end of the little ice age in about 1850, the ocean currents began to decline with a second, more drastic decline following since the mid-20th century."

The research's main advance is that it combines several different types of climate "proxy data" to study changes to the AMOC, explains study lead author Dr Levke Caesar, an ocean and climate researcher from Maynooth University in Ireland.

"Proxy data" is a term given to natural records that can be used to study past changes to the world's climate. Examples of proxy datasets include ice cores, tree rings and ocean sediments.

"The major difference is that we didn't look at just one or two proxies – we compiled a total of 11 proxies and found that they tell a consistent story of how the AMOC evolved over the last 1600 years," she told The Independent.

The likely causes of AMOC weakening were not specifically investigated in the study.

However, previous research has found that the climate crisis could be contributing to a weakening of the AMOC by causing

land and sea ice in high northern regions to melt at an increasingly fast rate. The fast melting of ice is adding more freshwater to the ocean, which could be interfering with the normal functioning of the AMOC, scientists have suggested.

A recent report on oceans from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's leading climate science authority, concluded that it was "very likely" that the AMOC will weaken further over the 21st century.

Some researchers have raised concerns that the AMOC could eventually hit a "tipping point" and shut down – with potentially disastrous consequences for the world's climate. However, current evidence suggests that an AMOC shutdown is very unlikely to occur this century.

Nonetheless, the findings reinforce the need to urgently take action to address the climate crisis, said Dr Caesar.

First Announcement



1399.7148

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9680033

National Iranian south oilfields company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
16	P/F"ROLLS-ROYCE" INDUSTRIAL AVON GAS GENERATOR AVON MK . 1533-34-76G/101G REF.ROLLS-ROYCELT	627

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no.2, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 33.539 EURO or 9.508.878.897 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN, PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran Tel. No.: 061 34 12 34 55 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437
Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۹/۱۲/۹ نوبت دوم ۹۹/۱۲/۹

First Announcement



1399.7147

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9680031

National Iranian south oilfields company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
10	P/F"ROLLS-ROYCE" INDUSTRIAL AVON GAS GENERATOR AVON MK . 1533-34-76G/101G REF.ROLLS-ROYCELT	136

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no.2, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 29.140EURO or 8.261.718.509 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN, PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

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تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۹/۱۲/۹ نوبت دوم ۹۹/۱۲/۹

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Kindness is a mark of faith and whoever
is not kind has no faith.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Calligraphy

■ Eineddin Sadeqzadeh and Hossein Gholami are displaying their latest calligraphy works in an exhibition at Farmanfarma Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Time of Love" will continue until March 7 at the gallery located at 2nd Araabi St., North Kheradmand St. off Karim Khan Ave.



Drawing

■ Hossein Shirahmadi is hanging his latest collection of drawings in an exhibition at Inja Gallery. The exhibit named "Notes" will run until March 12 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



Painting

■ Saleh Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Isa Jabbari. The showcase will be running until March 16 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



■ Paintings by Sanaz Afshari are currently on view in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery. The exhibition will run until March 3 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Alireza Chamak is currently underway at Negar Gallery. The exhibit named "Wane" will run until March 1 at the gallery that can be found at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.



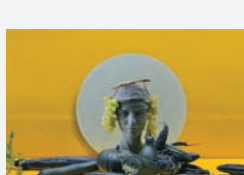
■ Paintings by Samira Eskandarfar and Hamed Sahihi are on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Outside" will run until March 9 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.



■ Ehsan Gallery is showcasing paintings by Ali-Asghar Bisotuni in an exhibition titled "Unfinished Ending". The exhibit will run until March 3 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Maryam Moqaddam, Tania Esmaeilian, Alireza Bidari, Ali Khaleq, Nilufar Qaderinejad and several other artists is currently underway at Idea Gallery. The exhibition will continue until March 3 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



Installation

■ Sets of installation by Maziar Mokhtari are on view in an exhibition at O Gallery 1. A collection of paintings by Saeid Khaleqi is also on display in an exhibition at O Gallery 2. The exhibitions will run until March 9 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



Multimedia

■ Sculptures and paintings by a group of artists, including Manuchehr Niazi, Amin Nurai, Shahram Karimi, Reza Derakhshani, Kurosh Shishegar, and Shahriar Ahmadi are on display in an exhibition named "Trends and Approaches 3" at Shirin Gallery 1.

An exhibition of sculptures by Hanieh Vaziratabar, Majid Vahedi, Sadaf Naderi, Kimia Moayyedi, Farhad Kuhbor, Fardad Alavi and several other artists is underway at Shirin Gallery 2. The exhibitions will run until March 12 at the galleries located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

“Sun Children” star Ruhollah Zamani cast in war drama “The Bakeri Martyrs”

A R T **TEHRAN** — Ruhollah Zamani, the lead actor of Majid Majidi's acclaimed drama “Sun Children”, has been cast in the war docudrama series “The Bakeri Martyrs”.

This news was released by Variety last Tuesday with an image depicting Zamani in a scene from the series about the life story of Mehdi Bakeri, the chief of IRGC 31st Shura Division, and his brothers Ali and Hamid.

Mehdi commanded IRGC 31st Shura Division in several major operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and was martyred along with Hamid in the war. Ali, their older brother, was earlier killed by the SAVAK intelligence services in 1972.

Hadi Hejazifar is the director of the series, which is being made at Sima Films, a film production studio affiliated with IRIB. Majidi selected Zamani and other child actors for his movie from over 3,000 auditions held over a four-month period at a school for child workers in Tehran.

Ruhollah won the Marcello Mastroianni Award for best young actor at the Venice



Ruhollah Zamani (C) acts in a scene from “The Bakeri Martyrs” by director/actor Hadi Hejazifar. (Ali Nikraftar)

Film Festival in 2020 for his role in “Sun Children”, which has been shortlisted for the 2021 Oscars.

“It's so gratifying for me to see Ruhollah continue as an actor,” Majidi told Variety.

“He's a lot like the boy in ‘Sun Children’ — resourceful, brave and full of initiative. I know he will thrive because he now has the opportunity,” he added.

Like other child stars of “Sun Children”, including Shamila Shirzad and her brother Abolfazl, Ruhollah had never acted before.

“He was pure, filled with raw energy, determined to give more than expected,” Majidi said about Ruhollah.

“Casting the main character was the hardest task. But Ruhollah surpassed all the others because he had such an intensity, such a desire to get the lead — much like the character in the movie, so determined to find the treasure and save his mother,” he added.

With the “Sun Children” team's assistance, Ruhollah has enrolled in an acting school, which he will attend once the pandemic is over.

“Book of Defense” studying Imam Khomeini's leadership role in Iran-Iraq war released

→1 “The great affinity between the Iranian people and Imam Khomeini was a key factor to advance in the war,” Qazi said and added, “We were able to achieve much progress, and limits, restrictions and sanctions led us toward growth, which frequently has been mentioned by Imam Khomeini in the discourses.”

“War against all the world powers and resistance in this war, Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization's companionship of Saddam and the real face of the terrorist group, the scandal of human rights supporters, revealing Saddam's crime and the real faces of the East and West are the most important topics discussed in Imam Khomeini's discourses,” he noted.

Qazi praised the late scholar, Hossein Ardestani, for the research he did ten years ago on Imam Khomeini's leadership role during the war, and said a major part of the research was published by the center during his lifetime.

He also said that the centers had previously published Imam Khomeini's views on various topics such as peace, philosophy of war, West Asia and Muslim Countries, Ba'ath Party and Saddam, and the world system.

He also announced the center's plan to publish a book on the leadership role of Imam Khomeini in military operations during the Iran-Iraq war in the near future.



A poster for “Book of Defense” published by the Sacred Defense Research and Archives Center.

Fajr Festival of Visual Arts honors winners

A R T **TEHRAN** — Winners of the 13th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts were honored during the closing ceremony of the event at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Thursday.

The ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini and a limited number of artists.

The participants were competing in the different sections of painting, photo, sculpture, calligraphy, miniature, illustration, cartoon, graphic design and new media.

Farzaneh Neyshaburi from Yazd received the Golden Tooba for best illustrator, and no winner was announced in the calligraphy section.

In the new media section, the Golden Tooba was given to Ehsan Mahdavi.

In the ceramic section, no winner was announced, and in the graphic design section, Mehrdad Musavi received the Golden Tooba. Abdollah Hiedari also received the Golden



Mehrdad Musavi accepts the Golden Tooba as best graphic designer at the 13th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on February 25, 2021. (Honaronline/Moein Baqeri)

Tooba for best photographer.

In the cartoon section, the Golden Tooba award went to Mohammad Aflak, and Mostafa Mohseni received the Golden Tooba award in the sculpture section.

Mohsen Taqizadeh received the Golden

Tooba for best painter, and the Golden Tooba for best miniaturist was given to Zahra Doosti.

Speaking at the ceremony, Salehi expressed thanks to the organizers who have done their best to hold the festival amid the coronavirus pandemic, and added that the visual arts of Iran have made good progress in recent years.

In addition, nine veteran Iranian artists were next honored with lifetime achievement awards.

The honorees who received the Golden Tooba awards were master of sculpture and ceramics Jafar Najibi, cartoonist Ahmad Abdollahinia, illustrator Saeid Razzaqi, painter Garnic Derhakupian, miniaturist Khashayar Qazizadeh, graphic designer Ahmad Aqaqolizadeh, art researcher Yaqub Ajand, photographer Mohammad-Hossein Heidari and calligrapher Mohammad Salahshur.

The 13th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts opened at the Saba Art and Cultural Institute with more female artists

participating this year.

According to Visual Arts Office director Hadi Mozaffari the coronavirus restrictions and the pandemic gave the artists more opportunities to create artworks.

Over 700 artworks by 511 artists went on display. A collection of prints by a number of Iranian and international artists was also showcased in a special section.

Lieve Cosyns, Alwin Vaeine, Barbara Lambert, Jan Vermandere, Kara Van Reusel, Mieke De Maeyer, Evan Rosato, Stef Bossuyt, Arielle Amir, Bernadette Colburn, Rebecca Giles, Lisa Hamilton, Rachel Hoffman, Emma Kellerdori Miller, Hayley Murphy, Christine Petty and Katrina Simonsen were among the international artists whose artworks went on view at the exhibit.

The Iranian artists included Farahnaz Rahmati, Nazanin Enayat, Donya Gorji, Kimia Kazemi, Khatereh Lotfi, Aanaali Vakili, Mojdeh Suri and Maryam Yasliani.

Veteran artist Ahmad Vakili was the curator of the exhibition.

Iranian association sets up Khorshid Medal to honor doc producers

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Association of Iranian Documentary Producers (AIDP) has established an award named the Khorshid Medal to honor a producer in the documentary cinema every year.

In a ceremony held at the Film Museum of Iran on Wednesday, the first edition of the medal was presented to Morteza Razzaq-Karimi.

Speaking at the ceremony, the director of the association, Ramin Heidari Farqui, said that the point of knowing who is a good producer is someone who can be both good for Iranian cinema and that the directors would like him, too.

“The Khorshid Medal tries to find a good producer, a producer who can be reliable and productive. We are happy we selected an individual of whom we can be proud,” he added.

“We are happy that the medal was started with his name. I express thanks to the Film Museum of Iran and the association that have always been a big supporter of documentary cinema and have encouraged others to see documentaries,” he added.

The former director of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Mohammad Beheshti, next said that he believes enlightenment is gathered in documentary cinema.

“If someone seeks enlightenment, they should watch



Producer Morteza Razzaq-Karimi (R) holds the first edition of the Khorshid Medal established by the Association of Iranian Documentary Producers.

documentary cinema of Iran, because the documentary cinema of today can easily act as the representative of Iranian cinema, and that is why the documentaries need to know their own values as well,” he said.

“We should pay due attention to these values. As far as knowledge and enlightenment are deepened, documentaries can fly over higher hills,” he noted.

He added that the medal can help documentary cinema be seen, however, those who receive the medal must

really be deserving of the medal.

“Those who receive the medal should not feel they have gained it easily,” he said.

Iranian House of Cinema director Manuchehr Shahsavari next made a brief speech saying that he has never made a documentary, but regards documentary cinema as a serious ground for the development of Iranian cinema.

“I believe documentarians enjoy great knowledge that makes one happy,” he said.

“I am happy, I can see my dear friend Razzaq-Karimi tonight. He is a dear friend of us in cinema and I have seen nothing but patience, knowledge and peace from him,” he said.

Upon receiving his medal, Razzaq-Karimi said, “This is a blessed event for me to have received this medal. This is quite different from other awards I have received, and the philosophy behind this medal can act as a light for the future of my career,” he said.

“This medal is a big event, however, we must know that our documentary cinema lacks a strategy, and it should move forward industriously,” he said.

“Documentary cinema should have a strategy, and it should find ways into the international arena. We have big cultural assets and documentary cinema can gain success, more so than fiction in the international arena,” he concluded.

Tehran Conservatory celebrates birthday of Imam Ali (AS) with release of “Son of Kaaba”

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Tehran Conservatory of Music celebrated the birthday anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), the first Imam of the Shia, with the release of a piece named “Son of Kaaba”.

Behzad Moafi is the vocalist in the piece composed by Ali-Akbar Rajabzadeh with lyrics by Mohammad-Ali Deljui.

In a press release published on

Thursday, Moafi, who is also the director of the conservatory, said, “I sang this melody for my love of Imam, and I am happy this song was released on his birthday anniversary.”

“I believe this is the direct responsibility of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting to support such compositions. It took six months to produce this composition,” he said.

For his part, Rajabzadeh said, “The love of Imam Ali (AS) needs no special motivation, and it is something rooted in everybody's heart.”

He added that they have made use of Iranian musical instruments including tar, ney and tombak in the arrangement.

He also noted that people of different ages would like the composition.



Singer Behzad Moafi (R) performs “Son of Kaaba” to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Imam Ali (AS).