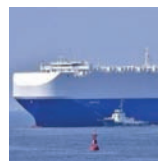




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**Iranian coach will lead volleyball team in next Olympics: Davarzani** *Page 3*



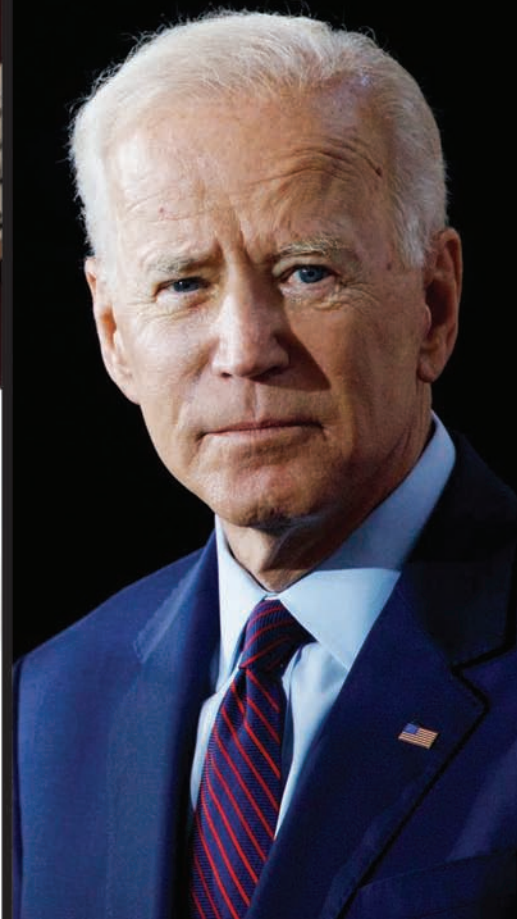
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**Violent modern world suffers from lack of common humane language: Majidi** *Page 8*

# Open season

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**Biden turns up the heat on MBS**

## National gas network covers over 95% of Iran's population

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, in a report addressed to President Hassan Rouhani, has stated that over 95 percent of the country's population is currently enjoying natural gas through the country's huge national network.

As reported by Shana, in the mentioned report on the development of the country's gas industry during the 11th and 12th governments, Zanganeh has stated that the gas production from the giant South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf has increased 2.5 times since the Iranian calendar year of 1392 (ended on March 20, 2014) when the 11th government took office.

According to the Oil Minister, the coverage of the national gas network in rural areas has also doubled over the mentioned period to reach 84 percent.

Based on the data presented in Zanganeh's report, from the Iranian calendar year 1392 up to the current calendar year's 11th month (started on January 20) over 20,000 rural areas with a total population of 1.76 million households have been supplied with natural gas through the national gas network.

Currently, more than 34,000 villages across the country are enjoying natural gas through this huge network, the report said.

Also during the mentioned period, over 193 cities with more than 641,000 households have also been connected to the national gas network.

Overall, about 98.4 percent of the country's urban population is currently enjoying natural gas through the gas network while the figure stands at 84 percent for the rural population, the report showed.

According to the said data, the gas network coverage has increased by 3.5 percent for the urban population and the figure has also increased by more than 30 percent for rural areas since the Iranian calendar year 1392.

In addition to the mentioned developments, the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has also managed to establish 31 pressure-boosting stations as well as 5,000 kilometers of new pipelines across the country.

*Continued on page 4*

## 57 nanotechnology projects inaugurated

TEHRAN – Vice President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari, inaugurated 40 industrial and 17 development projects in the field of nanotechnology during a ceremony on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The commercial products participating in the event are related to oil and gas, agriculture, composites, construction, health, rail transportation, and nanofluids.

One of the projects presented at the ceremony was in the field of nanofluids which worth over 200 billion rials (about \$4.7 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

Some 40 products have so far sold 10 trillion rials (around \$238 million) so far and it is predicted to reach a fourfold increase by the next two years and save foreign currency.

Selected projects in the field of agriculture and packaging also include the plan to increase the production of greenhouse products using

nanobubble technology, active packaging, anti-corrosion packaging of metal parts, improving the shelf life of wheat embryos.

**Technology development in Iran**

Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

Currently, over 5,700 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

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## Zarif calls attacks and events in Iraq suspicious

TEHRAN – The foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq held talks in Tehran on Saturday to discuss the different dimensions of political and economic cooperation as well as border exchanges between the two countries.

During his meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned the United States' dangerous move to attack

Iraqi forces in border areas of Iraq and Syria, dismissing the raids as a violation of the two countries' sovereignty, according to an Iranian Foreign Ministry statement.

Zarif described as "suspicious" the recent attacks and events in Iraq, saying they could be aimed at disrupting Tehran-Baghdad relations as well as security and stability in Iraq.

*Continued on page 3*

## Tehran to host 1st EAEU intl. expo in mid-May

TEHRAN - Tehran is planning to host an international exhibition for introducing the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU)'s trade potentials during May 17-20, IRIB reported.

Five major members of the Eurasian union are going to have exclusive pavilions in this four-day exhibition, the Exhibition Organizer Alireza Jafari said on Thursday.

According to Jafari, businessmen, traders, and powerful export companies from Iran are also going to participate in this

exhibition along with the Eurasian countries so that the two sides would be able to have positive negotiations and expand their mutual cooperation in the future.

"We also invited representatives from Oman, Qatar, Turkey, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, India, and Pakistan to visit this exhibition, to hopefully ink tripartite memorandums of understanding with Iranian companies as well as the EAEU member nations," he added.

*Continued on page 4*

## Baghdad billboard showing "Shias of Abu Turab"

TEHRAN – A huge copy of Iranian painter Hassan Ruholamin's "Shias of Abu Turab" has been set up on a billboard in the heart of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

A number of Persian websites announced the news on Saturday, but with no details about the exact location of the billboard and the identity of its installers.

Ruholamin unveiled the artwork depicting Commander Qassem Soleimani

and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis among the companions of Imam Ali (AS) on January 3 to commemorate the first anniversary of the martyrdom of the IRGC Quds Force chief and a commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units – Hashd al-Shaabi, who were assassinated in a U.S. attack in Baghdad in 2020.

*Continued on page 8*

## Khashoggi killing report: A test for Biden's human rights claim

Jamal Khashoggi was killed by a Saudi hit squad operating under the command of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), United States intelligence agencies have concluded.

An unclassified U.S. intelligence report released on Friday confirms for the first time what role top U.S. intelligence officials believe Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler played in the 2018 killing of the Saudi journalist.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration held back the long-awaited report despite a 2019 law passed by Congress requiring its release.

Khashoggi, a columnist for the Washington Post who had been critical of the Saudi government, was dismembered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

Saudi officials have denied MBS had any

role in the assassination.

**A test for U.S.-Saudi relations**

The long-delayed intelligence report by the United States into the gruesome killing of Khashoggi did not contain any major revelations, but did agree with the widespread assessment that the murder was ordered by bin Salman, the 35-year-old crown prince.

The release of the intelligence report will serve as the first big test of the Biden administration's promise to recalibrate relations with Riyadh.

The Biden administration's promised reset of relations with the Persian Gulf kingdom — whose leaders nurtured close ties with Donald Trump — could be complicated by the degree to which the unclassified version of the report implicates the crown prince in the Khashoggi murder.

*Continued on page 5*

## Explore naturally-gorgeous rock formations in southernmost tip of Iran

TEHRAN – Darreh-ye Tandis-ha ("Valley of Statues") is a picturesque sandstone rock formation rising on parts of Qeshm Island in the southernmost tip of Iran.

A heaven for eco-travelers, nature-lovers, and researchers, it is reminiscent of the perpetual thumping of the waves, storms, and raging winds in the Persian Gulf.

In some areas of the valley, numerous fossils may be found including fossils of bivalves, in some areas as colonies. Another interesting geological phenomenon in the valley is sedimentation

forming muddy mud cracks, which has created beautiful and interesting landscapes.

The valley is part of those areas which have been once underneath the water, and when pulled up, it has been heavily eroded by sea waves among other factors. This type of erosion gets reduced gradually while moving more towards the "roof" of Qeshm, which has remained intact.

Here, locals wear traditional dress, live in houses cooled by badgirs (wind towers), and work in boat-building yards turning out langes, the

large wooden cargo boats that have criss-crossed the Persian Gulf for centuries. Furthermore, the island has an abundance of wildlife, including birds, reptiles, dolphins, and turtles.

During and after the rainfall, it is important to pay attention to muddy areas where sometimes the mud is very sticky and dangerous to walk on at this geo-site. The Island also embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines.

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## Engaging Iran will serve America's interests in West Asia: ex-White House adviser

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – Pointing to the role of some regional actors in West Asia to hinder a revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, an American academic and former advisor to the White House on Russian affairs believes that engaging Iran will serve the interests of the United States in West Asia.

"Engaging with Iran is really addressing America's interest in the Greater Middle East (West Asia)," John Colarusso tells the Tehran Times.

But new U.S. President Joe Biden must also work with "a range of other actors, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel," according to Colarusso.

Saudi Arabia had said before that the Persian Gulf states must be consulted if the U.S. is seeking to revitalize the nuclear agreement with Iran, claiming it is the only path towards a sustainable agreement.

Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States has signaled he will return his country to the nuclear pact with Iran and that he still backed the deal negotiated under Barack Obama from which Donald Trump withdrew in 2018.

The nuclear pact, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed when Biden was serving as vice president in the Barack Obama administration.

Iran is mulling whether to participate in an informal diplomatic meeting planned by European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who is the chairman of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA.

*Continued on page 5*



## 'Martyrs of health' honored

TEHRAN – A ceremony was held in Tehran on Saturday to honor 100 healthcare workers who lost their lives in the fight against coronavirus.

According to officials, some 60 percent of the martyrs were physicians, 20 percent were nurses and the rest were other hospital staff.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised the Iranian nurses for playing an effective role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic during the 8th "Triad Meeting" of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), and the WHO which was held online on June 16-18, 2020.



## Foreign Policy advises Biden admin to include Iranian central bank in negotiations

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** — Removing sanctions will be central to reviving the nuclear deal, Foreign Policy magazine suggests.

If the Biden administration wants a lasting solution, it must involve Iran's central bank governor, the magazine said in a commentary on Feb. 25.

"If and when the United States and Iran sit across from one another again, there is a key figure who ought to be present—Abdolnaser Hemmati, the governor of Iran's central bank," the article argues.

The United States and Iran may soon be sitting at the negotiating table once again. In just the last week, the Biden administration has offered to restart negotiations, and Iran has concluded a deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to limit inspections of its nuclear program. A window of opportunity has emerged for the two sides to talk, likely in a format facilitated by the European Union.

In many respects, Iran's central bank was the primary target of former U.S. President Donald Trump's economic sanctions on Iran. Much of the economic hardship that Iran has experienced due to the reimposition of secondary sanctions can be attributed to the Trump administration's success in limiting the central bank's access to its foreign exchange reserves.

Foreign Policy pointed to the Iranian assets in foreign banks and writes, "Iran retains access to just \$8.8 billion of readily available foreign currency, roughly one-tenth of its total reserves. Without access to its reserves held in countries like Iraq, South Korea, Japan, and Germany, the central bank has struggled to forestall the weakening of Iran's currency, which is today worth less than one-fifth of its value prior to Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This deep depreciation made imported goods more expensive, contributing to annual inflation rates of nearly 50 percent."

The American magazine praised the skills of Hemmati and underlined, "He was appointed as central bank governor in July 2018. He has performed remarkably well in difficult circumstances. Iran's currency was regaining value for most of 2019, a trend disrupted by the COVID-19 crisis, which hit the country's economy hard, throwing trade into disarray."

Since reaching a historic low in October 2020 of just over 320,000 rials to the dollar on the free market, the currency has since stabilized at around 250,000 rials to the dollar—with this stability helping to undergird Iran's slow economic recovery. Along the way, Hemmati has proved an adept communicator, using his Instagram account, the central bank's website, and even select interviews with international media to outline his priorities and reassure the Iranian public about the bank's capacity to defend the rial from hyperinflation.

Foreign Policy acknowledges Iran has not faced a full-blown economic meltdown, despite the efforts of Trump's administration. "But the country finds itself in a painful period of economic stagnation, and sanctions relief will be needed should any government wish to deliver on promises of prosperity. However, Trump sought to make sanctions relief more difficult."

In September 2019, the Trump administration designated Iran's central bank under a terrorism authority, a move that jeopardized long-standing exemptions permitting the bank to play a crucial role in facilitating the purchase of humanitarian goods such as food and medicine.

The Biden administration is willing to remove this designation to bring the bank back to its original status under the JCPOA — but removing a designation tied to Iran's purported support for terrorism may have a political risk, Foreign Policy argues.

Pointing to the fact that "lifting sanctions was difficult even before the Trump administration's cynical moves," Foreign Policy says, "Iran's experience of sanctions relief following the implementation of the JCPOA was disappointing. International banks remained hesitant to process Iran-related transactions, citing unclear guidance on how to conduct business in a compliant manner and the risks of punitive fines if the remaining sanctions were inadvertently violated."

Maintaining maximum pressure to inflict more pain won't bring Tehran back to the negotiating table or halt Iran's nuclear ambitions, the magazine acknowledges.

This limited the rebound in trade and, particularly, investment in Iran, it says.

While there had been some technical exchanges on banking during the JCPOA negotiations, including working-level exchanges with Iran's central bank, these were largely focused on the unfreezing of Iran's assets—the challenges Tehran faced in mundane banking blindsided the JCPOA parties, the Foreign Policy writes.

Foreign Policy argues, "The JCPOA parties cannot rely on diplomats to untangle the complex knots that have constricted Iran's banking ties for so long," adding, "To ensure sanctions relief succeeds, Hemmati ought to be in the room as part of a high-level technical dialogue, which could eventually include top officials such as U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire."

Understandably, Iranian leaders are keen to get sanctions relief right this time around. In a recent speech, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, insisted that any sanctions relief offered by the United States must take place "in practice" and not just "on paper." Moreover, the efficacy of that sanctions relief will need to be "verified."

There are a few reasons why a dialogue on sanctions relief, which would be similar in structure to the pre-JCPOA exchanges on nuclear issues between then-U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, ought to center on Hemmati.

Foreign Policy explains why Hemmati has to participate in the talks between Iran and 5+1 group and writes, "First, Hemmati is a key figure of Iran's economic diplomacy. In the last two years, he has made trips to Iraq, Oman, South Korea, and China to ensure Iran retained financial channels with key trade partners. Second, Hemmati's stewardship will be critical for the implementation of sanctions relief measures. Whether it is the easing of access to foreign reserves or the granting of Iran's COVID-19 IMF loan or the consideration of new economic incentives such as reauthorization of the 'dollar U-turn,' an exemption revoked in 2008 that allowed U.S. banks to process Iran-related transactions in cases where a payment is being made between two non-Iranian foreign banks, effective implementation depends on Iran's central bank."

"Finally, Hemmati would bring some technocratic continuity to the economic implementation of a restored JCPOA. There is considerable concern that the possible arrival of a new Iranian president in August could leave any diplomatic agreement vulnerable to changing politics in Tehran," the American magazine concludes.

# Ex-Kyrgyz PM hopes Iran will join the EAEU soon

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** — Writing an article in China Global Television Network (CGTN) on Friday, former Kyrgyz Prime Minister Djomart Otorbaev expresses hope that Iran will join the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as soon as possible.

"There is no reason not to believe the speaker of the Iranian Parliament. However, still, his latest statement on Iran's official request to become a full member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) sounded like 'a bolt from the blue'," Otorbaev said.

Qalibaf paid a three-day visit to Moscow in early February to hold talks with Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin.

"Upon arrival in Tehran after a 3-day trip to Moscow, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that preliminary works for Iran's full membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) unites Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia," he noted.

"Many still do not believe that this statement will develop into a real process. Some experts even question whether this statement contains elements of political maneuvering. Despite existing doubts, it would be essential to analyze the possible consequences of such an unexpected step," he remarked.

As a distinguished professor of the Belt and Road School of Beijing Normal University, Otorbaev explained, "Iran obtaining the status of a full member of the EAEU can fundamentally change the political landscape in Eurasia, especially in the South Caucasus and the Middle East (West Asia). As a member of the EAEU, Iran would cooperate with its members at the highest strategic partnership level. Membership in the organization will give the country serious trump cards in the implementation of its foreign policy."

In his article, he highlighted the economic dimension of the EAEU and noted, "Iran believes it is the military-political component that can provide a severe security belt for the Islamic Republic. Expanding trade and economic opportunities are also of significant interest, especially amid a stagnant economy, intense U.S. pressure and gloomy predictions about the future of the nuclear deal that former U.S. President Donald Trump canceled."

"Economic cooperation should also lead to closer political interaction. Taking such a step, Iran is finally emerging from



strategic loneliness," he stressed, saying, "By acquiring a new security umbrella, Tehran will be much more confident in negotiating with the U.S. on nuclear issues. Perhaps in the future, people will remember that the Americans themselves pushed Iran to join the post-Soviet 'club' in which Moscow is the leading player."

As a member of Nizami Ganjavi International Center, Otorbaev said, "Despite all difficulties, the EAEU is getting on its feet and is enjoying increasing interest from many countries. By the end of last year, Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Cuba joined the union as observers."

He added, "Vietnam, Iran, Singapore, and Serbia are already in an alliance under a free trade zone treaty. About 50 states have expressed their interest in cooperation with the bloc at

## Iran can retool its economy under sanctions: Washington Post

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a recent commentary the Washington Post said "President Biden is walking a geopolitical tightrope on Iran."

For weeks after his inauguration, the White House and the Iranians seemed to be locked in a staring contest, waiting for the other party to make the first move to restart diplomacy after the turbulence of the past few years, according to the Post.

Although Joe Biden is keen to salvage the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers, he is already facing pushback from regional allies in West Asia and Republicans at home over making possible concessions to Tehran.

Pointing to Iran's measures to put an end to the economic sanctions, the American newspaper writes, "Iranian officials have demanded an end to the economic sanctions levied on their country by former president Donald Trump. His move was widely considered a breach of the terms of a deal UN inspectors say was working in maintaining limits on the Iranian nuclear program. Chafing under sanctions, Iran began enriching uranium at levels higher than what's permitted by the deal."

The Post stressed that the principlists view new diplomacy with the United States as a dead end.

"On (last) Tuesday, a law barring UN inspectors from Iranian nuclear sites was supposed to go into effect — a move certain to escalate tensions further with the West. But a weekend of shuttle diplomacy carried out by the head of the UN's atomic agency appears to have created some breathing room," the paper stated.

"Under vague terms of the deal announced Sunday (Feb. 21), Iran would still end implementation of what is known as the Additional Protocol, which enforces monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but would continue to allow what Rafael Grossi, the agency's head, called 'necessary monitoring and verification' of Iran's nuclear program," the newspaper says.

"The hope of the IAEA has been to be able to stabilize a situation which was very unstable and I think this technical understanding does it, so that other political consultations at other levels can take place," Grossi told reporters in Vienna.

Regarding diplomatic efforts made by Biden's administration, the Washington Post argues, "Those consultations are now getting underway. Last week, the Biden administration effectively pulled the plug on the Trump administration's 'maximum pressure' campaign by signaling its willingness to engage in informal talks on Iran with European allies. That would be the start of a delicate diplomatic dance that would choreograph Iran scaling back some of its nuclear activities alongside sanctions relief. There's no clear timeline for any of this, but a pathway toward an entente has now opened."

The Post pointed that the Biden administration has taken several steps to persuade Iran to negotiate over its nuclear programs, writing, "The Biden administration has already made small technical moves at the United Nations to help reset the table. They lifted restrictions placed on Iranian diplomats in New York and rescinded the Trump administration's 2020 assertion — rejected even

then by the U.S.'s European allies — that all UN-mandated sanctions on Iran were in place. Glimmers of a broader thaw could be seen in South Korea's decision Monday to unfreeze a significant sum of Iranian money blocked in its banks because of U.S. financial sanctions."

In both Washington and Tehran, though, there's plenty of opposition. On Monday, after Grossi's departure, Iran's parliament condemned the new agreement with the IAEA.

Biden's domestic opponents see the current course as a misguided abandonment of leverage over the Iranian government. For instance, Mike Pompeo, the former secretary of state, told the far-right Washington Free Beacon on Thursday, "I led a response to the Iranian threat that protected the American people from its terror and supported the Jewish state of Israel," claiming, "Adopting the European Union model of accommodation will guarantee Iran a path to a nuclear arsenal." During a Monday press call hosted by the European Leadership Network, Ali Vaez, Iran project director of the International Crisis Group, noted, "The irony of the situation is that we almost have a mirror image in Tehran and Washington."

"You have two governments who would have loved to restore the [nuclear deal] status quo ante with a push of a button if they could but they have to deal with parliamentary opposition which reflects broader political resistance to the deal," he added.

The Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign may have exacted a deep economic toll. But the reimposition of U.S. sanctions failed to achieve many of Pompeo and Trump's stated goals; the United States



and its partners look no closer to extracting greater concessions from the Iranian government than what was achieved in 2015; and Iran is theoretically closer to pushing toward a nuclear weapon than before Trump took office.

Also, Ellie Geranmayeh of the European Council on Foreign Relations told Today's WorldView, "Leverage only makes sense if you use it at the right time and for Washington right now, the leverage card is somewhat exhausted."

The Iranian government has been able to "retool" its economy under sanctions and "immunize itself from an economic collapse as proponents of maximum pressure had hoped for," he added.

The leverage Biden has is "not in the form of Trump sanctions," Vaez told Today's WorldView, but rather the "now proven ability of the United States to turn the switch on and off on its own to great effect on the Iranian economy. And this leverage would exist a year from now or two years from now, whenever needed."

## Shamkhani says U.S. airstrikes intended to revive 'organized terrorism'

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, on Saturday condemned the recent "brutal" U.S. airstrikes on the Iraqi resistance forces in in eastern Syria as part of attempts to revive "a new round of organized terrorism."

However, Shamkhani asserted, Iran will not allow a "resurgence of the Takfiri terrorism" in the region.

Iran's top security official made the remarks during a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein who visited Tehran on Saturday.

"Iran and other countries fighting against terrorism will not allow the affiliated Takfiri terrorism to recover in the region again," he remarked.

He also warned that a delay in implementing a law passed by the Iraqi Parliament in expelling foreign forces from Iraq would escalate tensions in the region.

Emphasizing the need for cooperation and collective action to



reduce regional tensions, the security official said, "Iraq owes its current security and calm to the religious leadership, statesmen, and the military forces, including the popular resistance groups."

Popular resistance groups, officially known as Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) proved as the most capable force in defeating

## Iran to delete IAEA cameras' data if U.S. sanctions not lifted: Salehi

**TEHRAN** — The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) says recordings from monitoring equipment that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) installed at the country's nuclear sites will be deleted if the United States does not lift its unilateral sanctions within the next three months.

Ali-Akbar Salehi said, "Now, the IAEA does not have the right to access surveillance cameras for up to 3 months, and if the sanctions are not

lifted, the information recorded by the cameras will be deleted and cameras will be uninstalled. The agency issues a report every three months, so we gave it a chance."

Salehi made the remarks on Friday, four days after Iran stopped the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Safeguards Treaty, which stipulates enhanced international access to nuclear sites and snap inspections by the IAEA.

The halt came under the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, a law passed last December by the Iranian Parliament, and adds to Iran's previous steps away from the 2015 nuclear deal in response to the U.S.'s unilateral withdrawal in 2018 and the other parties' failure to fulfill their commitments.

Last week, the IAEA and the AEOI reached a temporary bilateral technical understanding, under which the latter would continue to use

cameras to record information at its nuclear sites for three months, but it would retain the information exclusively. If the U.S. sanctions are lifted completely within that period, Iran will provide the footage information to the UN nuclear watchdog, otherwise it will be deleted forever.

Salehi also noted that the Iranian Parliament had consulted the AEOI regarding the anti-sanctions legislation.

(Source: Press TV)



POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** – The new U.S. administration has turned up the heat on Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman in a bid to reign in his worst instincts.

The crown prince, also known as MBS, has been anxious about Joe Biden right from the start, waiting to see how the new U.S. president would treat him after weeks of harsh criticism of Saudi Arabia's track record in violating human rights, most notably the 2018 killing of Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Biden assumed office in January with one major promise to reset U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia while calling out the kingdom for human rights violations.

The Biden administration released an intelligence report on Friday incriminating MBS for the Khashoggi murder.

"We assess that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman approved an operation in Istanbul, Turkey to capture or kill Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. We base this assessment on the Crown Prince's control of decisionmaking in the Kingdom since 2017, the direct involvement of a key advisor and members of Mohammad bin Salman's protective detail in the operation, and the Crown Prince's support for using violent measures to silence dissidents abroad, including Khashoggi," the report, issued by Office of the Director of National Intelligence, said.

This report was the latest in a series of punitive measures adopted by the Biden administrations against Riyadh. The new U.S. administration began by suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia and ceasing military support for the country's ongoing war in Yemen. It also removed Yemen's Ansarullah movement from the U.S. government's list of foreign terrorist organizations.

"This war has to end. And to underscore our commitment, we're ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arm sales," President Biden said in a speech at the State Department while underling the



# Open Season

## Biden turns up the heat on MBS

U.S. commitment to ensuring Saudi Arabia's security and territorial integrity.

The Biden administration's steps against the Saudi crown prince sit well with the liberals and progressives who have long criticized the Trump administration for embracing MBS and refusing to punish him for his wrongdoings in Yemen and at home.

Trump and his officials strongly refused to blame bin Salman for killing Khashoggi. Instead, they provided political and military support to him.

This "blind alliance" seems to have come to an end, with Biden vowing to review the U.S.-Saudi relationship. But this review should not be seen as a break from the U.S. traditional alliance with Saudi Arabia. Biden is believed to put pressure on bin Salman to prevent him from pursuing destructive policies such as the

Yemen War and undercutting any prospect for a renewed talks between Iran and the West over the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Ever since 2017, MBS has made a range of unmeasured moves that brought him into disrepute all over the world. He arrested his rival princes and tortured them, detained Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri and forced him to resign, cracked down on dissidents and human rights activists, and most notably ordered the killing and dismembering Khashoggi. His long list of malfeasance provided Washington with enormous leverage to reign in him when needed.

The Biden administration simply started using this leverage to get more concessions from the Saudis. Some pundits believe that the

Biden administration, by releasing the secret report incriminating MBS, seeks to set the stage for ousting him and replacing him with a more favorable and more balanced prince.

But others, particularly those in the region, hold that the Biden White House is simply using his leverage to reign in him and ensure that he will not undermine the administration's upcoming diplomatic overtures in the region.

The Lebanese Al-Akhbar newspaper said Washington is putting pressure on MBS with the purpose of ensuring bin Salman's obedience. "Bin Salman is guilty until his obedience is proven," the newspaper said in an article penned by Malak Hamoud.

In a separate article, the newspaper said the U.S. does not want to punish MBS, rather it wants to "humiliate" and "weaken" him.

The New York Times said the U.S. won't punish bin Salman because doing so will inflict too high costs on the U.S.

"President Biden has decided that the diplomatic cost of directly penalizing Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, is too high, according to senior administration officials, despite a detailed American intelligence finding that he directly approved the killing of Jamal Khashoggi," The New York Times wrote, adding that Biden's newly formed national security team advised him that there was no way to formally bar the heir to the Saudi crown from entering the United States, or to weigh criminal charges against him, without breaching the relationship with one of America's key Arab allies.

Media outlets close to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates say that the Biden administration aims to prevent Saudi Arabia from throwing a monkey wrench into the U.S. efforts to revive the JCPOA.

"The Khashoggi report is the new administration's card to push Riyadh to amend its rhetoric toward the Iranian nuclear program," the UAE-owned London based Al-Arab newspaper wrote, adding that the Khashoggi report is aimed to distance Saudi Arabia from any kind of arrangements related to Iran's nuclear issue.

## Zarif calls attacks and events in Iraq suspicious

Iranian, Iraqi foreign ministers hold talks in Tehran

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — The foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq held talks in Tehran on Saturday to discuss the different dimensions of political and economic cooperation as well as border exchanges between the two countries.

During his meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned the United States' dangerous move to attack Iraqi forces in border areas of Iraq and Syria, dismissing the raids as a violation of the two countries' sovereignty, according to an Iranian Foreign Ministry statement.

Zarif described as "suspicious" the recent attacks and events in Iraq, saying they could be aimed at disrupting Tehran-Baghdad relations as well as security and stability in Iraq.

"We insist that the Iraqi government identify those behind these incidents," said the top Iranian diplomat.



Zarif also touched upon the problems facing Iranian fuel takers at the Tamarchin border area between Iran and Iraq, expressing hope that the travel restrictions facing the tankers will be resolved through the good offices of Iraqi officials. He further said making arrangements to begin work to build

and complete the Shalamcheh-Basra railway will contribute to the enhancement of trade ties between the two countries.

Zarif called on relevant authorities to expedite work to break ground for the railway project as soon as possible.

The Iraqi foreign minister, in turn, urged both sides to work together closely to further boost mutual relations, and said Baghdad stands ready to expand its relations with Iran.

He referred to the headway made with negotiations over Iran gaining access to its financial resources in Iraq, and expressed Baghdad's readiness to facilitate Tehran's access to its financial assets in the Arab country.

He gave assurances that the Iraqi government will not allow the recent incidents in Iraq to affect the very good relations between the two sides.

In this meeting, the two sides also exchanged views on regional developments.

## Qatari FM meets E3 ambassadors to discuss JCPOA

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani met with the ambassadors of the three European countries that are signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

During the meeting, the chief Qatari diplomat discussed with the European ambassadors how to implement the nuclear deal by

all parties, according to a statement issued by the Qatari Foreign Ministry.

"HE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani met Friday at his office with HE Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the State of Qatar Dr. Claudius Fischbach, HE Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the State of Qatar Jonathan Wilks, and HE Ambassador of the

French Republic to the State of Qatar Franck Gellet, which are the European countries party to the nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," the statement said.

"During the meeting, they discussed the latest developments in restoring the diplomatic track and activating dialogue, in addition to the implementation by all parties of their

obligations stipulated in the agreement between the P5+1 and Iran," it added.

According to the statement, Al-Thani affirmed the State of Qatar's tireless work in this direction, its firm stance on encouraging diplomacy and dialogue, and its permanent readiness for constructive work and support for all efforts in the interest of regional stability and international security and peace.

## Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman holds talks in Damascus

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh held talks on Friday with high-ranking Syrian officials including Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and Bouthaina Shaaban, the senior advisor to the Syrian president.

He also attended meetings of think tanks, media outlets and elites in the Arab country. The meetings were held in Damascus in line with Iran-Syria cooperation in public diplomacy, media and cultural arenas.

Khatibzadeh and Mekdad discussed the latest situation of bilateral ties as well as cultural and media cooperation, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry. "In the meeting, the top Syrian diplomat underlined the importance of boosting mutual cooperation in cultural and media arenas," the statement said, adding, "Khatibzadeh also held talks with the Syrian minister of information and culture, minister of science and Bouthaina Shaaban, the senior advisor to the Syrian president. In the meetings, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed the need to further expand cultural and media cooperation between the two sides."

He also expressed pleasure with the Syrian people's resistance against terrorism and underlined Iran, like in the past, will stand by the Syrian government and nation in helping with the economic reconstruction of Syria and boosting cultural cooperation with that country.

In the meetings, the Syrian authorities also underscored that the Syrian nation will never forget Iran's support for the Syrian people.

Khatibzadeh also delivered a speech at the Syrian Diplomatic Academy and took part in a meeting of the country's Institute for Strategic Studies.

He also attended a meeting with Syria media and answered journalists' questions.

The spokesman also met Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Bashar Jaafari.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry also issued a statement about the meeting between Khatibzadeh and Mekdad.

"During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to enhance and develop them, especially with regard to political, media, scientific and cultural aspects. They also discussed developments in the region and the importance of strengthening commu-

nication and consultation between the two countries at all levels to push bilateral relations forward in a manner consistent with the interests of the two friendly countries," the Syrian statement said.

Mekdad talked about the importance of taking the initiative to explain the use of national and international media to clarify the reality of the situation in the face of the methods by the Western media outlets and their clients' disinformation, the statement noted.

The Syrian foreign minister explained to Khatibzadeh the developments in Syria and the region, stressing the need for concerted efforts between the Syrian and Iranian sides to confront the common challenges that threaten the security and peace in the region.

Mekdad pointed to the inhuman consequences of the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on the Syrian people, underlining the need to develop the existing cooperation between the two countries to enhance the ability and capabilities of the two nations to confront the illegal U.S. and Western measures, which have become a cheap tool in the hands of some countries with the aim of imposing their political will and projects on independent sovereign states, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said.

Mekdad reiterated the position of the Syrian Arab Republic in support of the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and its refusal to distort the image of the Iranian position and hold Tehran responsible for the United States' withdrawal from the agreement.

Khatibzadeh, for his part, expressed his great happiness for his visit to Damascus, and reviewed the latest developments related to bilateral relations in various fields, stressing the importance that the leadership and the Iranian people attach to relations with Syria, in line with the level of strategic relations between the two countries, the Syrian Foreign Ministry statement said.

Khatibzadeh reiterated his country's position in support of Syria to reach a solution that would restore security and stability to all Syrian territories, in a way that preserves Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The spokesman issued a statement denouncing a recent American attack on Syria ahead of his meeting with the

top Syrian diplomat.

**'Violation of international law'**

Khatibzadeh strongly condemned the illegal and aggressive attacks by U.S. forces on areas in eastern Syria, calling the attacks a clear violation of human rights and a violation of international law.

"The attacks, which are a continuation of the Zionist regime's continuous aggression on Syrian soil, have taken place in a context in which U.S. forces have illegally entered Syrian territory in recent years, occupying areas of its territory and stealing natural resources, including oil, which is the natural right of the Syrian people," Khatibzadeh said.

He added, "Illegal American bases on Syrian soil also train terrorist forces and use them as tools."

The spokesman described the new U.S. administration's move as a clear violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a violation of international law, which would exacerbate military conflicts and further destabilize the region.

On Thursday, U.S. President Joe Biden ordered military attacks on resistance groups in Syria.

Syria condemned the attack as a "bad sign" from the new U.S. administration. Syria said the air raids were a cowardly act and urged Biden not to follow "the law of the jungle".

"Syria condemns in the strongest terms the cowardly U.S. attack on areas in Deir al-Zor near the Syrian-Iraqi border," the Syrian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

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.

## SPORTS

### Iranian coach will lead volleyball team in next Olympics: Davarzani

S P O R T S

**TEHRAN** - Head of Iran volleyball federation Mohammadreza Davarzani said that their team at the 2024 Olympic Games will be headed by an Iranian coach.

The Iranian federation has reached an agreement with Russian coach Vladimir Alekno for the upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo but the team will be headed by an Iranian coach at the next Games, Davarzani said.

Iran national volleyball team have been drawn in Pool A along with Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela.

"First of all, we are going to be among the top four teams in Tokyo. Based on our potential, we hope to reach our goal. We have a generation of experienced players who have worked together for more than 10 years," he said.

"We started to grow in term of quantity in 2006 and had a good performance at the 2013 FIVB Volleyball World League and finished in ninth place," Davarzani added.

Alekno will lead Iran at the 2021 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) and Tokyo Olympic Games.

"Alekno will coach Iran volleyball team until the end of Olympic Games. If the Games postpone, our plans will be completely changed," Davarzani stated.

Iranian coaches have great potential to lead the team but the federation could not take a risk, Davarzani said.

"Our teams have claimed titles at the age groups competitions under leadership of the Iranian coaches. But we believe that it was soon for them to lead the senior team. However, the national Team will be surely headed by Iranian coaches in the next Olympics in Paris," Davarzani went on to say.

Iran captain Saeid Marouf is a member of Beijing BAIC Motor in the Chinese Volleyball Super League but he has not played since the coronavirus outbreak started. Davarzani believes that Marouf will keep his fitness levels up for the Olympic Games.

"Marouf is a professional player and I am sure he keeps his fitness with training. He can return to form for the Olympics by participating at the 2021 VNL," he said.

Davarzani also said they are going to be among the top four teams in Asian women's volleyball.

"We're looking for a foreign coach for our women volleyball team since we plan to be among the top four teams within the next four years," Davarzani concluded.

## Beiranvand decides to stay and fight for his place at Antwerp

S P O R T S

**TEHRAN** — Iranian international goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand wants to fight for his place at Antwerp.

The Iranian goalkeeper suffered a foot injury in the match against St. Truiden last week in the Belgian league.

Antwerp No.1 Jean Butez, who is recovering from ankle injury, will be fit soon and the Belgian club are ready to make Ortwin De Wolf's loan move from Eupen permanent.

Voetbalkrant has recently reported that Beiranvand will leave the club to find new team at the end of the season since he cannot tolerate sitting on the bench.

However, the goalie has said he wants to fight for his place. "I'm not going to leave Antwerp. I will stay here and fight for my place," Beiranvand, who has been sidelined at least for two weeks, said.

## Iran Hazfi Cup's Round of 16 dates announced

S P O R T S

**TEHRAN** — Iran League Football Organization has announced the dates of the Iran Hazfi Cup's Round of 32.

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

Below, are the fixtures of the draw:

**March 11:**

\*Zob Ahan — Shahr Khodro, Isfahan (Fooladshahr Stadium)  
\*Gol Gohar Sirjan — Mes Kerman, Sirjan (Shahid Soleymani Stadium)

\*Machine Sazi — Foolad, Tabriz (Shahid Soleymani Stadium)  
\*Nassaji — Saipa, Ghaemshahr (Vatani Stadium)  
\*Paykan — Esteghlal, Tehran (Shohada Stadium)

**March 12:**

\*Shahrdari Bardaskan — Khooshe Talaei Saveh — To be announced later

\*Esteghlal Mollasani — Shahin Bandar Ameri, Ahvaz (Takhti Stadium)

\*Mes Novin Kerman — Persepolis, Kerman (Emam Ali Stadium)  
\*Etehad Kamyaran — Qashqai Shiraz, Kamyaran (Azadi Stadium)  
\*Aluminum Arak — Havadar Tehran, Arak (Emam Khomeini Stadium)

\*Malavan Anzali — Vista Turbine Tehran, Bandar Anzali (Takhti Stadium)

\*Sepahan — Mes Rafsanjan, Isfahan (Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium)  
\*Naft Masjed Soleyman — Kheybar Khorramabad  
\*Tractor — Shahrdari Mahshahr, Tabriz (Yadegar-e Emam Stadium)

\*Pars Jonoubi Jam — Pas Hamedan, Jam (Takhti Stadium)

**March 13:**

\*Sanat Naft — Damash Parseh, Abadan (Takhti Stadium)  
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.

## Persepolis close to signing Moghanlou

S P O R T S

**TEHRAN** — Iranian football club Persepolis are close to wrapping up a deal to sign Shahriyar Moghanlou.

The 26-year-old forward joined Portuguese club Santa Clara from Iranian club Paykan at the summer but he has failed to meet expectations in the team.

Persepolis are reportedly going to sign the forward for the rest of the season. Local media reports suggest that Persepolis have reached with Santa Clara to sign Moghanlou.

Persepolis are without Issa Alekasir after the forward received the ban for making a slant-eyed gesture to television cameras after scoring against Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the quarter-finals of the 2020 AFC Champions League (West) in early October.



## National gas network covers over 95% of Iran’s population

**1 →** Currently, over 2,205 kilometers of new gas pipelines are also under construction by NIGC subsidiaries all over the country.

Overall, more than 700 trillion rials (about \$16.6 billion) has been invested in the mentioned development projects.



Also, the Iranian oil and gas industry has managed to produce more than 58 billion liters of liquid products valued at over \$25 billion since the beginning of the Iranian calendar year 1393 (March 2014), leading to an increase of 300-percent in the exports of oil products.

The increase in the country’s gas production has also resulted in a 23-percent decrease in the liquid fuel consumption by the country’s power plants, leading to less air pollution and more environmental protection.

## TEDPIX drops 11,000 points on Saturday

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 11,855 points on Saturday (first day of Iranian calendar week).

Over 3.235 billion securities worth 38.633 trillion rials (about \$919.83 million) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market’s index fell 10,800 points, and the second market’s index dropped 16,648 points.

TEDPIX 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.

## Financial issues discussed between Iran, Iraq

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** —During a meeting between the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the managing director of the Commercial Bank of Iraq, the two sides discussed the ways for the transfer of Iran’s funds in Iraq.

In the meeting, which was held at the place of the CBI on Saturday, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati stressed the necessity for the transfer of these funds as soon as possible.

Iran and Iraq have several times discussed the issue of releasing Iran’s financial resources in Iraq over the past months, based on which Iran was supposed to have access to its funds which are related to the gas export to Iraq.

**Iranian goods, services highly welcomed in Iraq**  
The chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee stated that Iranian products and services are highly welcomed in the Iraqi market.

Saying that Iraq has many social, cultural, religious, political, and economic commonalities with Iran, Mohammad-Vali Alaeddini expressed hope that the process of boosting export to the neighboring countries, especially Iraq, will be stable and will continue and increase due to Iran’s very desirable capacities.

In mid-January, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, who is the head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee, said that the two countries’ annual trade is going to be increased to \$20 billion.

Ardakanian made the remarks in the opening ceremony of the two countries’ fourth Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran, which he co-chaired with the Iraqi Trade Minister Alla Ahmed Al-Jubouri.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to support the export of Iranian engineering and technical services to Iraq by establishing a joint investment fund,” he said, adding that new agreements are going to be signed between the two countries in the fields of water and energy.

He also underlined the development of transportation lines between the two countries as an important factor in the development of trade relations between the two countries and added: “We are ready to implement the previous agreements in the fields of electricity, gas, and water, and to formulate new agreements in this field in order to develop cooperation between the two countries.”

The official further called for signing agreements for cooperation in other fields including double taxation, investment, preferential tariffs, and customs.

Ardakanian also mentioned the positive political relations between the two countries as a base for boosting economic relations.

He expressed hope that with the efforts of the two countries’ governments and businessmen, the development of trade and economic relations between the two sides will become smoother and the talks in the Joint Economic Committee meeting will lead to the signing of documents to develop bilateral cooperation.

Further in the meeting, Al-Jubouri emphasized the significance of modern technologies in the development of economic relations between the countries, and said: “In today’s world, the digital economy is very important and the existing obstacles and problems in the way of the development of economic relations between the two countries can be overcome accordingly.”

# Non-oil exports to neighbors stand at \$16.6b in 10 months

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran’s non-oil exports to its 15 neighbors stood at \$16.6 billion during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021).

The exported commodities weighed nearly 55 million tons.

The country has imported 14.4 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$14 billion from the neighboring countries in the mentioned 10-month period.

As stated by the head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the country is capable of doubling non-oil exports to its neighbors in two years.

Hamid Zadboum has said that considering the future capacities, the TPO has planned increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries to about \$100 billion in a two-year time span, in a way that Iran’s share of the regional markets will significantly go up.

The official has previously said: “Pakistan and Turkey have the highest capacity to import Iranian goods, which is good news for Iranian businessmen and exporters.”

Pointing to the Persian Gulf states as good markets for some Iranian-made commodities, Zadboum said that large markets such as Russia and China should also be considered by exporters.

Iran shares borders with fifteen countries,



namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia whose total value of annual imports exceed \$1000 billion.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government is pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year.

First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri has

called for developing non-oil exports as the only way for realizing the motto of the surge in production.

“The Foreign Affairs Ministry should provide the necessary bases for the development of [non-oil] exports by expanding and strengthening economic diplomacy,” he said in a meeting on reviewing ways of boosting economic relations with the neighboring countries and supporting non-oil exporters. Emphasizing that 15 neighboring countries

## Tehran to host 1st EAEU intl. expo in mid-May

**1 →** Jafari further noted that although only 862 commodity items are subject to the preferential trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU, the exhibition will not be limited to these commodity group, and in all areas where Iranian traders have export potentials, they can showcase their products and services in the exhibition.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a preferential trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and 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 free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

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.

Earlier, Behrouz Hosn-Olfat the director-general of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)’s office of European and American countries, said that the value of trade between Iran and the EAEU members can reach \$27 billion - \$30 billion, as there are ample capacities in this regard.

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 showed 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.

## Iran to dispatch 5 new commercial attachés to target markets by late Mar.

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran plans to send five new commercial attachés to different target markets by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), an official with the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

According to Mojtaba Mousavian, the TPO’s deputy head for export markets development, the organization has made the necessary preparations to dispatch commercial envoys to Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and China.

The official noted that the TPO also plans to dispatch commercial attachés to Turkey, India, and Pakistan in the first half of the next Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

“The attaché for Turkey has been selected and we are waiting for the confirmation of his security clearance; for Pakistan and India, we have also considered candidates whose validation process will be completed by August,” Mousavian explained.

The number of Iranian commercial attachés will reach 10 in the first half of the next Iranian calendar year, he stressed.



He further noted that some markets like the neighboring countries plus China and India are the top priorities for dispatching commercial attachés.

Syria, Kazakhstan, and Lebanon are also the next countries to which TPO plans to send commercial attachés, the official said.

According to Mousavian, TPO has sent 69 commercial attachés to various countries over the past 25 years, and at best, even in one year, 25 commercial attachés were present at their mission.

The number, however, has now decreased,

he said adding: “Considering the needs of the country’s business community and the private sector and in order to develop and facilitate non-oil trade, the organization has been implementing new programs for increasing the number of commercial attachés, at least in the country’s top trade partners.”

Earlier in January, TPO Head Hamid Zadboum said that the organization plans to send 20 commercial attachés to new target markets in the upcoming Iranian calendar year 1400.

“We have considered the budget required for [dispatching] 20 commercial attachés to new target markets in our budget for [the year] 1400,” Zadboum said in an interview with local media.

Underlining the significant role of commercial attachés in accelerating trade with other countries, Zadboum said: “Commercial attachés are the business arms of our ambassadors in destination markets and the task of commercial attachés is to strengthen trade diplomacy.”

The official stressed the need for diversifying the country’s export basket in order to be

able to diversify export destinations, noting: “naturally, the diversity of the export basket depends to a large extent on the production of diverse export products, so we must move in a direction that our products are tailored to the needs of target markets.”

Two years ago about 54 percent of our exports were made to 15 neighboring countries, and now the figure has increased to over 62 percent in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19-November 20, 2020), Zadboum said.

Following the government’s policies for increasing the country’s trade with the neighbors over the past few years, the TPO, as the foreign trade representative of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, has been trying to send new commercial attachés to target markets every year.

In early December 2020, the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie had called on the government to choose the country’s commercial attachés from among the private sector representatives.

## Iran’s oil exports to rise 6.8% in 2021 if U.S. rejoins nuclear deal: report

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Fitch Solutions Incorporation, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings, which is one of the U.S.’s big three credit rating agencies, has forecasted a 6.8-percent growth for Iranian oil exports in 2021 if the U.S comes back to the 2015 nuclear deal.

In one of its latest reports dubbed “Iran Oil and Gas Report”, Fitch also sees the Islamic Republic’s crude oil exports double in 2022 compared to 2020.

“The prospects for the Iranian oil sector have brightened significantly following Joe Biden’s victory in the U.S. presidential election on November 3. President Biden has indicated that he will seek to re-enter the U.S. into the Iranian nuclear deal, paving the way for a roll-back of secondary sanctions and recovery of around 2.0 million barrels per day (bpd) in oil production,” the report said.

The corporation also stated that Iranian gas production is also expected to rise in the coming years considering the new developments in the country’s giant South Pars gas field (the country shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf).

“However, Iran needs to find new export markets in neighboring countries to maximize the productivity of the new output capacities,” the report reads.

The analytical body further mentioned the development of the Iranian oil and gas industry’s downstream sectors, saying: “The outlook on the downstream is relatively robust,



with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) making continued investments to expand and upgrade its refined fuels production, and with a robust demand outlook for both oil and gas as the market recovers from the combined effects of Covid-19 and U.S. nuclear-related sanctions.”

Also, the study of the risk index of the upstream sectors of the country’s oil and gas industry in this report shows that, given the huge oil and gas resources, these sectors are

reasonable options for investment in the country.

According to the report, Iran ranks fourth among 12 countries in the region in terms of the oil and gas industry’s risk-return index, while the country occupies 20th place among the world’s top 72 oil-producing countries.

Iranian oil production and exports have been both increasing over the past few months despite the U.S. sanctions and the Iranian Oil Ministry has announced its readiness for boosting the country’s crude oil output to the pre-sanction levels in case of the U.S. rejoining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Back in January, the data from SVB International and two other firms indicated that Iranian oil exports were climbing in January after a boost in the fourth quarter despite U.S. sanctions.

Iran’s Deputy Oil Minister Amir Hossein Zamaninia had said earlier that the country started boosting its oil production and would be able to reach pre-sanction levels within two months.

Iranian oil won’t create any surplus in the oil market and the market will be able to accommodate the country’s maximum oil output of around 3.9 million to four million barrels a day, Bloomberg quoted Zamaninia as saying on the sidelines of the Iran Oil Show in Tehran in late January.



# Engaging Iran will serve America's interests in West Asia: ex-White House adviser

**I →** Iran is mulling whether to participate in an informal diplomatic meeting planned by European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who is the chairman of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA.

Colarusso, the professor of languages and linguistics and anthropology at department of anthropology in McMaster University, argues that Biden is dealing with a series of serious issues, including domestic problems that are hindering his efforts to engage Iran.

"These hidden multilateral aspects complicate such engagement, but at the same time makes it worthwhile," the American professor emphasizes.

The following is the text of the interview:

**It was the U.S. that withdrew from the nuclear deal and imposed sanctions on Iran. In view of this fact, why is Biden moving too slowly to revive the JCPOA?**

I think that there are three main issues delaying President Biden's engagement with Iran.

The first is the array of domestic crises that he must address.

The second is the condition that the Trump administration left the State Department in. Staffing issues must be addressed by the new Secretary, Anthony Blinken.



The third is the issue of the co-signatory nations. These will want assurances of some sort that the U.S. will not withdraw in the future. Such future matters are difficult to insure, falling as they eventually will under the umbrella of a succeeding administration. I would imagine that such preliminary talks are delicate.

**How could Biden repair the U.S. reputation damaged by Trump?**

The President must re-engage in multilateral forums, including the JCPOA. Some engagement elsewhere has already begun,

as with the Paris accord and the WHO.

He might also consider making some moral gestures toward crucial nations, such as those associated with the JCPOA. The simplest and most pressing would be lifting those sanctions that adversely affect how Iran can cope with Covid-19. A moral level of engagement can act as a moderating force on parallel strategic and political discourse - if handled properly. A moral gesture can also provide a backdrop of trust on a small, initial scale against which further talks may unfold.

**What are the main challenges fac-**

**ing Biden?**

Domestically he is faced with the pandemic, a damaged economy, difficult and changeable climate conditions, a potentially uncooperative opposition, and a lack of trust on the international stage.

In addition, there are layers of Trump appointees, many of whom are incompetent or grossly biased, that have to be removed from office so that the U.S. government can function properly. With Iran, he must pursue matters directly linked to nuclear technology and inspection but also do so with a range of other actors, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, among others.

Engaging with Iran is really addressing America's interest in the Greater Middle East (West Asia). These hidden multilateral aspects complicate such engagement, but at the same time make it worthwhile.

**Why have the European countries failed to confront U.S. unilateral sanctions on Iran?**

They will surely raise this issue but in a manner that will not attract media attention. Such discretion will allow the U.S. to correct the errors of the Trump presidency. The JCPOA nations must reach unanimity. This may take some months. Iran's participation in this renewed process may carry more weight after its elections.

## Iran has an integral role to play in Russian-South Asian connectivity

By Andrew Korybko

Iran is geostrategically positioned to play an integral role in Russian-South Asian connectivity. President Putin told the Valdai Club during its annual meeting in October 2019 that "there is one more prospective route, the Arctic - Siberia - Asia. The idea is to connect ports along the Northern Sea Route with ports of the Pacific and Indian oceans via roads in East Siberia and central Eurasia." This vision, which forms a crucial part of his country's "Greater Eurasian Partnership", can be achieved through the official North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC) and tentative W-CPEC+ projects that transit through the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The first one refers to the creation of a new trade route from Russia to India through Azerbaijan and Iran, while the second concerns the likely expansion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRII) westward through Iran and largely parallel to the NSTC. W-CPEC+ can also continue towards Turkey and onward to the EU, but that branch is beyond the scope of the present analysis. The NSTC's terminal port is the Indian-backed Chabahar, but delays in fully developing its infrastructure might lead to Bandar Abbas being used as a backup in the interim.

CPEC's Chinese-backed terminal port of Gwadar is in close proximity to Chabahar, thus presenting the opportunity of eventually pairing the two as sister cities, especially in the event that rumored negotiations between China and Iran result in upwards of several hundred billion dollars worth of investments like some have previously reported. The combination of Russian, Indian, and Chinese infrastructure investments in Iran would greatly improve the country's regional economic competitiveness and enable it to fulfill its geostrategic destiny of facilitating connectivity

between Russia and South Asia.

What's most intriguing about this ambitious vision is that Iran is proving to the rest of the world that it isn't "isolated" like the U.S. and its closest allies thought that it would be as a result of their policy of so-called "maximum pressure" against it in recent years. While it's true that India has somewhat stepped away from its previously strategic cooperation with Iran out of fear that it'll be punished by "secondary sanctions" if it continued its pragmatic partnership with the Islamic Republic, it's worthwhile mentioning that Chabahar curiously secured a U.S. sanctions waiver.

While the American intent behind that decision is unclear, it might have been predicated on the belief that the Iranian-facilitated expansion of Indian influence into Central Asia via Chabahar might help to "balance" Chinese influence in the region. It could also have simply been a small but symbolic "concession" to India in order not to scare it away from supporting the U.S. anti-Chinese containment strategy. It's difficult to tell what the real motive was since American-Indian relations are currently complicated by Washington's latest sanctions threats against New Delhi in response to its decision to purchase Russia's S-400 air defense systems.

Nevertheless, even in the worst-case scenario that Indian investment and infrastructural support for Iran can't be taken for granted in the coming future, that still doesn't offset the country's geostrategic plans. Russia could still use the NSTC to connect with W-CPEC and ultimately the over 200+ million Pakistani marketplaces. In theory, Russian companies in Pakistan could also re-export their home country's NSTC-imported goods to neighboring India, thereby representing a pragmatic workaround to New Delhi's potential self-interested distancing from that project which could also provide additional much-needed tax revenue for Islamabad.



Iran must therefore do its utmost to ensure Russia's continued interest in the NSTC regardless of India's approach to the project. Reconceptualizing the NSTC from its original Russian-Indian connectivity purpose to the much broader one of Russian-South Asian connectivity could help guarantee Moscow's support. In parallel with that, Tehran would do well to court Beijing's investments along W-CPEC+'s two branch corridors to Azerbaijan/Russia and Turkey/EU. Any success on any of these fronts, let alone three of them, would advance Iran's regional interests by solidifying its integral geo-economic role in 21st-century Eurasia.

Andrew Korybko is a political analyst, journalist and regular contributor to several online journals, as well as a member of the expert council for the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People's Friendship University of Russia. He has published various works in the field of Hybrid Wars, including "Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach to Regime Change" and "The Law of Hybrid War: Eastern Hemisphere".

## 'Bad sign from Biden admin.': Syria slams fatal U.S. raid on Iraq border

Damascus has censured the U.S. air raid against positions of Iraqi counter-terrorism forces on the Iraqi-Syrian border, which killed one and wounded four others, describing it as a "bad sign" from the administration of new U.S. President Joe Biden.

In a statement carried by the official SANA news agency on Friday, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said the Arab country "strongly condemns the American act of

aggression" in the early hours of the day on facilities used by forces of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) — better known as Hashd al-Sha'abi — at a border point in Syria's eastern Day al-Zawr Province.

"In a flagrant violation of the rules of international law and Charter of the United Nations, the U.S. warplanes on Thursday, February 25, 2021, launched a coward [act of] aggression by bombing some areas in

Day al-Zawr Province near the Syrian-Iraqi borders," it said.

"It is a bad sign regarding the policies of the new U.S. administration which should adhere to international" norms, the statement added.

The military action, the first of its kind under U.S. President Joe Biden, has been met with a negative reaction, with many observers likening Biden's approach to that

of his hawkish predecessor, Donald Trump.

Iraqi resistance forces have been fighting remnants of the Takfiri Daesh terror group across border regions of Iraq and Syria in coordination with the governments in both Arab countries.

An informed source told Press TV that one person had lost his life and four others had been injured in the U.S. military's act of aggression.

## Israeli ship, whose owner has links with Mossad chief, damaged in Oman Sea

Reports have disclosed that the owner of a ship hit by an explosion in the Sea of Oman is Israeli businessman Abraham Ungar, who has close relationship with the head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, Yossi Cohen.

Maritime security firm Dryad Global and a United Nations ship database identified owners of the Bahamas-flagged ship, the MV Helios Ray, as a Tel Aviv-based firm called Ray Shipping Ltd., which registered in the Isle of Man.

On Saturday, Hebrew-language



media outlets reported that Ungar, 74, who goes by "Rami," is the founder of Ray Shipping Ltd., and is known as

one of the richest men in Israel.

The outlets further highlighted that Ungar is close to the Israeli regime's spymaster.

According to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), the MV Helios Ray was carrying vehicles. It was apparently en route to Singapore from Dammam in Saudi Arabia.

The UKMTO, which is run by the British navy, said on Friday an explosion struck the vessel near the strategic mouth of the Persian Gulf.

## Bangladesh under "no obligation" to accept stranded Rohingya refugees-minister

Bangladesh is under "no obligation" to shelter 81 Rohingya Muslim refugees adrift for almost two weeks on the Andaman Sea and being assisted by neighboring India, said Bangladesh foreign minister A.K. Abdul Momen.

India's coast guard found the survivors and eight dead crammed on a fishing boat and were trying to arrange for Bangladesh to take them, Indian officials said on Friday. While feeding the refugees

and giving them water, India was not planning to take them ashore, Reuters reported.

But Momen told Reuters late on Friday that Bangladesh expects India, the closest country, or Myanmar, the Rohingyas' country or origin, to accept them.

"They are not Bangladesh nationals and in fact, they are Myanmar nationals. They were found 1,700 km (1,100 miles) away from the Bangladesh mari-

time territory and therefore, we have no obligation to take them," said Momen, who is in the United States.

"They were located 147 km (91 miles) away from Indian territory, 324 km (201 miles) away from Myanmar," he said by phone, adding that other countries and organizations should take care of the refugees.

Indian foreign ministry officials were not immediately available for comment.

## Khashoggi killing report: A test for Biden's human rights claim

**I →** UN officials had previously concluded that there was "credible evidence" that the kingdom's de facto leader was responsible for the killing at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, and several U.S. lawmakers have said there is "zero doubt" the crown prince was involved. Prince Mohammed has taken "full responsibility" for the murder but has denied ordering the killing, which he has described as a "heinous crime".

According to Financial Times, while Biden has pledged to make Saudi Arabia a "pariah" and put human rights at the forefront of his foreign policy, some senior aides have also warned against imposing sanctions personally on Prince Mohammed over his link to the killing. They have argued doing so would rupture a relationship the U.S. still sees as crucial to its regional priorities, including ending the war in Yemen and re-engaging with Iran.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters earlier on Thursday that "a range of actions that are on the table".

Two people in touch with administration officials said Washington's response could include a combination of actions from both the Treasury and state departments, including sanctions and visa restrictions on other individuals named in the report.

How exactly the U.S. will respond is "the \$64,000 question", said Gerald Feierstein, a former senior State Department official during the Obama administration who worked on West Asia.

Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer specialized in Saudi Arabia, said he sensed "considerable division" within the Biden administration over the response it should take.

"Assuming [the report] states clearly that MBS is a murderer then how do you not sanction him?" said Riedel.

Chris Murphy, Democratic senator from Connecticut, told news channel MSNBC that he wanted "a much broader set of accountability measures" for anyone involved in the murder, identifying financial sanctions and visa withdrawals. He is among a number of members of Congress who have called for the U.S. to take tougher action against the kingdom.

There was "no way" Khashoggi's murder was carried out without either the knowledge or direction of Prince Mohammed, who also serves as the kingdom's defense minister, Murphy said.

The White House has already said Biden will not speak directly to Prince Mohammed, whose direct counterpart is U.S. defense secretary Lloyd Austin, but is keen to preserve the countries' relationship. According to a White House readout of his conversation with King Salman, Biden said he wanted to "make the bilateral relationship as strong and transparent as possible".

If the Biden team judges that targeting Prince Mohammed could backfire, it could instead "try to snub him or limit his role in the bilateral relationship", said Yasmine Farouk at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Tamara Wittes, a senior fellow expert at the Brookings Institution, suggested the U.S. could expel Saudi diplomats because the killing took place in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, in violation of the Vienna Convention. But she added that Riyadh could still avoid the toughest sanctions by taking more responsibility for the crime.

"I don't think realistically it's a question of blacklisting the crown prince of Saudi Arabia," she said. "The ball is in the Saudi court to take full responsibility."

## Resistance News

### UN: Israel should halt demolition of Palestinian homes and property

**INTERNATIONAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, Lynn Hastings, has called on Israel to immediately stop the demolition of Palestinian homes and possessions.

In a press release on Wednesday, Lynn asked Israel to allow the humanitarian community to provide shelter, food and water to the vulnerable Palestinian communities living in Area C of the occupied West Bank, which is under its military control.

"I visited the community of Humsa - Al Baqai'a which is situated some hundreds of meters into a firing zone in the northern West Bank... The homes and belongings of the families living there were demolished or confiscated five times by the Israeli authorities since the beginning of February," the UN official said.

"Tents, food, water tanks and fodder for their livestock have all been confiscated despite repeated calls by the international community for these actions to stop in accordance with international law," she added.

"As we have noted previously, situations where communities are put under pressure to move raises a real risk of forcible transfer," she underscored.



## Vacancy Notice

**The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to recruit an Assistant Representative at NOC level for its office in Tehran, Iran.**

Details of the vacancy can be found on UNFPA website on the following link:

<https://iran.unfpa.org/en/vacancies/national-post-assistant-representative-0>

**Please apply online by 12 March 2021, 5 PM Tehran Time. This vacancy is open only for Iranian Nationals.**

Notice:

- "There is no application, processing or other fee at any stage of the application process".
- "UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV/AIDS or disabilities and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status and disabilities".



## Explore naturally-gorgeous rock formations in southernmost tip of Iran

➔ **1** With an area of 1,200 square km, it has an irregular outline and a generally rocky coast except for sandy bays and mudflats fringing the northwest. Irregular table-topped hills almost cover Qeshm; several are over 270 meters high and one, Kish Kuh, reaches 406 meters.



Such scenic landscapes can also be found in other parts of Iran, for instance in Shahdad, which is a major part of the UNESCO-registered Lut desert in southeastern Kerman province. Shahdad is home to massive sand pyramids created by wind and water.

## Prehistorical gate leading to modern World Heritage undergoes restoration

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — One of the gates of the UNESCO-registered Tchogha Zanbil, a ruined prehistoric ziggurat and a top tourist destination in southwest Iran, is being restored and preserved to maintain its originality, the director of the World Heritage site has announced.

Situated southwest of the ziggurat, the mud-brick monument, which is named Darvazeh Shush (“Gate of Susu”), has been damaged severely due to the seasonal rains, Atefeh Rashnoei said, CHTN reported on Friday.

The preservation and restoration project is being carried out under the supervision of the archeologists and experienced restorers based on traditional architectural methods of the time, the official added.



As with mud-built structures in this area, the Shush gate is fragile and vulnerable, and it’s for this reason that its restoration is so important, she added.

She continued by saying that one of the primary priorities of restoration work on various structures of cultural heritage sites is to maintain the originality and use ecological materials.

UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil is widely known as the world’s best surviving example of Elamite architecture. The ruined ziggurat stands in Khuzestan province, southwest Iran. It was made a UNESCO site in 1979.

According to UNESCO, Tchogha Zanbil is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument. Lonely Planet says that even if you’re not a fan of ancient ruins, the great bulk and splendid semi-desert isolation of the site can’t fail to impress. Try to catch it in the soft, golden light of late afternoon rather than the harsh midday sun.

The ziggurat is located approximately 30 km southeast of Shush and 80 km north of Ahvaz. Reaching a total height of some 25m, the gigantic monument was used to be surmounted by a temple and estimated to hit 52m during its heyday. Tchogha Zanbil was excavated in six seasons between 1951 and 1961 by Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archeologist who was specialized in ancient Iran.

Ziggurats, in general, are pyramidal stepped temple towers that bear architectural and religious characteristics of the major cities of Mesopotamia from approximately 2200 until 500 BC. They were usually built with a core of mud brick and an exterior covered with baked brick. Approximately 25 ziggurats are known, being equally divided among Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

## Persian handicrafts: Khos Duzi of Hormozgan

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Khos Duzi, a kind of traditional embroidery, is popular among rural areas of Hormozgan province, southern Iran.

Khos Duzi consists of sewing thin strips of Khos or Naqdeh on fine and delicate lace fabrics. The strips are arranged to make geometric, cursive, arabesque, “Danehee” and “Kheshti Payeh Boland” motifs and patterns. In addition to lace fabrics, Khos Duzi is applied on velvet, too.



Khos Duzi is mostly used to decorate lace drapes, lace scarves (Jalbil) and lace Chadors (usually in black), bridal gown, scarves, cover of Holy Quran, trousers, beddings, covers for cushions, headwear, dresses, and many more.

# Iran’s tourism still alive, minister says

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Despite all the obstacles and issues and the outbreak of the coronavirus, the country’s tourism sector is still alive and dynamic, the tourism minister has said.

He made the remarks during his visit to Tehran’s international tourism and handicrafts fair, which came to an end on Friday evening.

“A tourism event of this magnitude is a good example of the dynamism and development of tourism,” Ali-Asghar Mounesan said.

“While the fair is being held under strict coronavirus restrictions and health protocols, the outcome is still very satisfying,” he explained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he expressed hope that limited Noruz trips would be possible during the Iranian New Year vacations, which begins on March 21.

Noruz ceremonies and trips, if practiced under health protocols, could be beneficial for the revival of the tourism industry and handicrafts, which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic in many provinces, the minister explained.

Last week, the deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri announced that the tourism ministry has gained official permission for organizing limited intercity travels during the



Tourism minister, Ali-Asghar Mounesan, in an undated photo

Iran New Year vacations from the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

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, he noted.

The tourism minister also publicized in November that mass, unplanned travels are not approved. “The outbreak of the coronavirus has caused damage to the tourism industry

in Iran and [other parts of] the world in such a way that according to statistics, 50 million people are directly and indirectly exposed to unemployment due to the virus spread in the global scene.... yet, mass or unplanned and irresponsible travels are not approved to take place during the coronavirus era.”

Smart and responsible traveling should replace “do not travel” recommendations, the minister stressed, adding: “In our country, Corona has caused problems in the tourism industry and the worrying point is the continuation of this trend.”

“We are well aware of what the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control proclaims [the health protocols], hence as a proposal, we have formulated some smart, responsible travel packages by the implementation of which we could have secure travels,” the minister said.

He has repeatedly announced that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitably centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that “people’s health is our priority.”

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

## A peek into core elements of traditional Iranian architecture

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — The history of Iranian architecture is very complex and time-stretched. The Elamite, Achaemenian, Hellenistic, and other pre-Islamic dynasties left striking stone testaments to their greatness, such as Chogha Zanbil and Persepolis—both designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1979.

From the Islamic period the architectural achievements of the Seljuk, Il-Khanid, and Safavid dynasties are particularly noteworthy. During that time Iranian cities such as Neyshabur, Isfahan, and Shiraz came to be among the great cities of the Islamic world, and their many mosques, madrasahs, shrines, and palaces formed an architectural tradition that was distinctly Iranian within the larger Islamic milieu.

Some core elements that are common among most of the monuments constructed upon Persian architecture are given below:

### Extensive use of arches

The two famous monuments, the Taj Mahal for the Mughal architecture and the Great Mosque of Isfahan for the Persian architecture displays the example of this fact. It is built for aesthetic reasons, as well as to place windows and to lessen the extent of sunlight pouring into the building.

### Gardens, fountains, and pools

Water plays a particularly central role in Iranian design: millennia before the invention of the first water pump, Persian agricultural experts created the qanat (subterranean aqueduct) based on their hydraulic laws.

Spacious gardens and pools with fountains have always been a main feature of Persian architecture over time. In a traditional mosque, madrasa, house, it is used for ablutions, aesthetics, or both.

### Domes

The Persian tradition of dome-building dates back to the

earliest Mesopotamian architecture when domes became an integral part of buildings due to the scarcity of wood in many areas of the Iranian plateau.

In Ancient Persia, domes were associated with the divine side of life, as their circular shape represented perfection, eternity, and the heavens, according to Press TV.

Domes moved to the forefront of Persian architecture during the Sasanian period (224 to 651 CE) and they evolved through different eras until the Safavid dynasty (1501–1732) when the last generation of Persian domes were characterized by a distinctive bulbous profile and astonishing tilework.

In the Persian urban design, domes in places of worship and public places, including traditional bazaars, caravansaries, schools, and baths, are designed in such a way that can be seen from different parts of urban or rural area.

The domes are normally double-shelled. While the interior shell is designed to carry the weight of the structure, the exterior shell serves as both a decorative element and as insulation against the elements. The aerodynamic shape of the domes also makes the structures more sustainable.

### Porticos

An iwan is a vaulted space that opens on one side to a courtyard. The idea of iwan developed in pre-Islamic Iran where it was used in monumental and imperial architecture.

### Symmetry

Iranian architecture makes use of abundant symbolic geometry, using pure forms such as the circle and square, and plans are based on often symmetrical layouts featuring rectangular courtyards and halls.

Sassanid architecture is decorated with carved stone or stucco reliefs and makes use of colorful stone mosaics. Beautiful gold and silver dishes, bowls, and ewers, often



Massive hypostyle hall is seen inside the Vakil Mosque in Shiraz, southern Iran.

decorated with hunting scenes or animals in high relief, and textiles with symmetrical heraldic designs also remain.

### Calligraphy

Iranians’ passion for using the script as an artistic impression goes back to pre-Islamic times but it is the work of Islamic era calligraphers and illuminators that elevated its use into the high art we appreciate today. Encouraged by the Islamic preference for the art of calligraphy over representational arts, it developed from epoch to epoch and from style to style.

### Usage of muqarnas

Muqarnas is typically applied to the undersides of domes, pendentives, cornices, squinches, arches, and vaults and is often seen in the mihrab of a mosque. They can be entirely ornamental, or serve as load-bearing structures. The earliest forms of muqarnas domes, found in the Mesopotamian region, were primarily structural.

## Ancient qanat in central Iran brought back to life

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A restoration project has been completed on the historical qanat of Shahneh in the central province of Yazd, a local official has announced.

The project, which took almost two years to complete, aimed at reviving the centuries-old qanat, which is one of the agricultural water resources of the region, Abbas Besharati said on Saturday.

A budget of three billion rials (\$71,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, the official added.

For thousands of years, qanat systems have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements in arid regions of Iran, tapping alluvial aquifers at the heads of valleys and conducting the water along underground tunnels by gravity, often over many kilometers.



The concept of “Persian Qanat” was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016, representing a selection of eleven aqueducts across Iran.

According to UNESCO, qanats provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

The qanat system relies on snow-fed streams, which flow down the foothills of surrounding mountains channeling through sloping aqueducts, often over far distances to discharge into the city’s underground reservoirs or ab-anbars.

Such constructions are still in practice, many of which were made from the 13th century onwards. Yazd is among ancient cities which have applied this concept to make urban settlements possible in central Iran.

The earliest water supply constructions in Yazd are believed to date from the Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE) while many others have been continually repaired and used over time, most surviving ab-anbars can be today traced to the late Safavid and Qajar periods.

When it comes to landscape architecture, ab-anbars and wind towers play a

pivotal role in enriching the Yazd skyline.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

With its winding lanes, forest of bad-girs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region.

Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

## Tourism projects worth \$23.8m underway in Tus

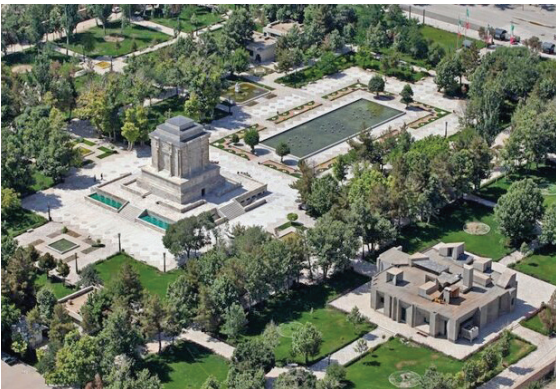
**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Several tourism-related projects worth one trillion rials (\$23.8 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) are currently underway in the historical city of Tus, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province.

The projects are expected to help revive and promote the region as a top tourist destination, the provincial tourism chief has said.

An important project of the effort is to set up a tourism route to the ancient Kohan-Dezh citadel, one of the greatest tourist attractions of the city, Abolfazl Mokarramifar announced on Saturday.

He also noted that in close collaboration with the private sector, historical monuments and aging buildings across the province are planned to be revived and restored in a bid to boost tourism in the region.

The ancient city of Tus is popular for the Mausoleum of Ferdowsi, the illustrious Persian poet. Many



Iranians regard Ferdowsi as the greatest of their poets. Down through the centuries they have continued to

read and to listen to recitations from his masterwork, the Shahnameh.

Located near the provincial capital of Mashhad, which is one of the top tourist attractions of the country, Tus has been the birthplace of some important cultural and scientific Iranian figures since the past centuries.

The city was captured by Alexander the Great in c. 330 BC and it was destroyed once during the Mongol invasion, and again by the Timurids, and many of its people were killed.

Besides Ferdowsi, the most famous person who has emerged from that area was the theologian, jurist, philosopher, and mystic al-Ghazali. Other notable residents of Tus include the early polymath Jaber ibn Hayyan, poet Asadi Tusi; polymath Nasser al-Din Tusi, and the prominent Islamic scholar Abu Jafar Tusi.

Tus and its historical gates, citadel, and ramparts were registered on the National Heritage list in 1996.



# Conservation plan for Gorgan Bay approved

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — A seven-year plan to revive Gorgan Bay in the Caspian Sea has been approved by the government at the suggestion of the Department of Environment (DOE), First Vice-President Is'haq Jahangiri announced on Saturday.

Covering an area of about 400 square kilometers, the Gulf of Gorgan also known as Gorgan Bay is the largest gulf in the Caspian Sea. It is located at the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea near the cities of Behshahr, Gorgan, and Sari and is separated from the main water body by the Miankaleh peninsula and extends until the Ashuradeh peninsula.

Experts on climate change and global warming believe that uncontrolled water withdrawal of aquifers, reduced rainfall, and increased evaporation are the most important reasons for the drying up of Gorgan Bay.

According to the latest scientific data presented by the National Cartographic Center, the drying rate of Gorgan Bay is worrisome.

For each centimeter decrease of the water level of the Caspian Sea, about one square kilometer of the area of Gorgan Bay has



shrunk; so that with the increasing trend of global warming and climate change, sea level reduction, the need for continuous monitoring of the Caspian Sea and Gorgan Bay is more important.

## Valuable ecological complex

Gorgan Bay was designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological

functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value) along with Miankaleh Wetland.

The bay and its surrounding area are recognized as a valuable ecological complex in the world which had a direct impact on the livelihood of local communities in addition to conserving the marine life cycle.

Ashuradeh Island, which hosts a variety of native and migratory birds throughout the year, was also introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

## \$2m earmarked to revive Gulf of Gorgan

However, in July, a budget of 9 trillion rials (nearly \$2.1 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) was earmarked to revive the Gulf of Gorgan.

The Ports and Maritime Organization, the Department of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Energy are tasked with taking executive measures to save Gorgan Bay within 5 years.

According to the oceanographic studies, the most important solution to save Gorgan Bay is dredging canals, dredging the rivers leading to the Gulf of Gorgan, and providing water rights of the rivers will be other executive strategies to save the Gulf.

## Pfizer, a vaccine with endless problems and controversy

The Pfizer vaccine has caused a great deal of controversy and problem since its distribution, and the side effects of injecting this vaccine have caused fear and panic in different cases.

Many people who have been vaccinated have been struggling with a variety of problems, including hospitalization and even death.

So far, various media outlets have reported deaths due to the Pfizer vaccine, even in the United States.

Two months ago, the media revealed that White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows had threatened the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to approve the Pfizer vaccine or he would be ready to resign.

According to a U.S. poll, 60 percent of Ohio nursing home staff, about half of California health care workers and 40 percent of Los Angeles nurses refused to receive the corona vaccine.

Participants in the survey said they are concerned about the dangerous side effects of receiving the vaccine and do not want to be treated like mice.

The federal system, the Vaccine Side Effects Reporting System (VAERS), is a federal database that receives reports of these cases. This system is passive, meaning that it does not automatically collect reports, and reports are uploaded to it. Everyone, including health care workers, patients, or their families, can file reports of vaccine side effects.

According to the media, reports on the system about the side effects of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which have been licensed in the United States to prevent coronary injections, are only part of this, although most unreported cases are thought to be very serious. In some cases, patients reportedly died within days of receiving the injection. In one case, a 66-year-old man living in a Colorado nursing home reported a day after receiving the injection. The next morning, on Christmas Day, the man was seen standing still with his eyes half open and his mouth foamed. He was no longer breathing and had no pulse.

## Opposition to Pfizer worldwide

These events have provoked a reaction of concern and astonishment in some countries of the world. Following the deaths of several people who had been injected with the Pfizer vaccine in Norway, Australia requested information from Pfizer and Norwegian authorities.

Australian officials say they should get more information about the vaccine and its consequences before deciding whether to use the Pfizer vaccine in the country, and Scandinavian countries have said they will be much more careful about injecting their citizens with the Pfizer vaccine. Australia has already placed an order for 10 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine and now appears to be wary of injecting the vaccine.

## Opposition by Iran

In this situation, it is possible to understand why the Islamic Republic of Iran has opposed the import of the American Pfizer vaccine. According to Hamid Reza Jamshidi, Secretary of the National Headquarters for Coronavi-

rus Control and a professor at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, COVAX has two pre-sale plans. In the first plan, countries are given the right to choose a vaccine at a cheaper price, and in the second plan, countries are given the option to choose a vaccine, but it is necessary to pay more, and Iran has chosen the second one. COVAX has recommended countries to prioritize vaccine imports, and that's why which is why we did not choose to buy Pfizer from the beginning.

Jamshidi pointed to the start of vaccination in some countries in the region and neighboring countries and said: "Vaccine-producing countries such as China, India, Britain, the United States, and... have long suggested to other countries that if a country commits to voluntarily perform human testing, the priority will be given to selling the vaccine.

Countries such as Turkey, the UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are being vaccinated because they allowed human testing, but Iran did not allow any human testing to be performed to protect the health of the people.

Jamshidi went on to say that the United States had blocked the import of medicine to be used by Iranian patients for three years, so trusting to buy a vaccine from the American company Pfizer is just optimism, because mRNA vaccines are new. It takes at least four years for their effects to be identified, he said.

## False promises

Jamshidi pointed out that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution had understood from the very beginning that the promises of vaccine delivery were false.

Currently, Iranians living in the United States are not allowed to send even one acetaminophen to Iran due to sanctions.

If Iran wants to import drugs from the American company Pfizer right now, the U.S. government sanctions will prevent it. The U.S. Treasury Department has forced all countries to obtain a license from the United States before exporting any pharmaceutical items or raw materials to Iran.

"We will use all the science of the day to make the domestic vaccine, so at least three knowledge-based companies are currently researching mRNA technology," he said. But because this technology is the first to be used in the world, its long-term effects are unknown.

He added that Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will lose their properties because the mRNA formula focuses on only one gene of the virus.

All senior officials of the Islamic Republic, especially the Leader, due to their extreme sensitivity to maintaining public health, have serious doubts about the effectiveness and safety of the Pfizer vaccine and distrust of the enemy, so based on previous experiences have banned the import of the Pfizer vaccine.

## Health concerns

News and information that have been published about the dangers of the Pfizer vaccine has raised serious concerns about the health and future of the leaders of the countries

that have got the Pfizer vaccine to fight the coronavirus.

Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and his son and Saudi Crown Prince bin Salman were among those who received the American Pfizer vaccine in mid-January to survive the coronavirus.

Saudi Arabia also announced in a hasty decision in late December that it had approved the Pfizer vaccine and started the vaccination process against the coronavirus by injecting the vaccine into the Saudi minister of health.

This was at a time when most countries in the world were still undergoing scientific and research processes in this field and had not made a definite decision.

It seems that while the Pfizer vaccine injection has caused serious problems for many people in different countries of the world, Saudi Arabia has not escaped the side effects of using this vaccine.

In recent weeks, the Saudi media have been silent on the process of public vaccination against Corona in the country, and it is not clear how many Saudi citizens have suffered or died from side effects due to the injection of the Pfizer vaccine in Saudi Arabia.

Therefore, it is possible that Saudi Arabia has quietly slowed down or stopped the process of injecting the Pfizer vaccine into its citizens.

Interestingly, the Saudi citizens continue to be infected with the coronavirus, which shows that the Pfizer vaccine has not improved the situation of the people of this country. According to the official Saudi state news agency, on February 6, 386 new cases of coronary heart disease occurred in the country. The total number of cases of the virus so far has reached 369,961, of which 2,327 are still being treated, and 401 of them are in critical condition.

Also, with the registration of 283 new cases of recovery, the total number of cases of recovery has reached 361,237 people, and with the registration of 4 new cases of death due to coronavirus, the total number of victims of this crisis has reached 6397 people, and 45674 new tests have been performed.

On the other hand, some Arabic-speaking users on social media report that the Saudi king is sick after receiving the Pfizer vaccine.

Bin Salman, the 85-year-old Saudi king, has been the subject of numerous media reports, including rumors of his death, due to gallbladder inflammation, Alzheimer's disease, and difficulty speaking for a long time.

Bin Salman has not had a significant media presence since the outbreak of the coronavirus, and the Saudi media have only occasionally reported on the holding of government meetings in the form of videoconferences, which have not been confirmed by independent news sources.

Due to the severe censorship of the Saudi government, it is not clear whether Salman bin Abdulaziz, who is also very old, is in a good mood after receiving the Pfizer vaccine, or whether he is struggling with the side effects and problems caused by the use of the vaccine.

## 57 nanotechnology projects inaugurated

**1 →** In recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology has been supporting knowledge-based companies active in the production of sanctioned items.



Sattari told the Tehran Times in October 2020 that "U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2021).

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year."

To date, 42 knowledge-based companies with a total value of 2.8 quadrillion rials (nearly \$66.6 billion) have been listed on the stock exchange and they will soon turn into the biggest businesses in the county, Sattari said.

## Carbon emission promises 'put Earth on red alert'

The world will heat by more than 1.5C unless nations produce tougher policies, a global stocktake has confirmed.

Governments must halve emissions by 2030 if they intend the Earth to stay within the 1.5C "safe" threshold.

But the latest set of national policies submitted to the UN shows emissions will merely be stabilised by 2030.

The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, called it a red alert for our planet.



He said: "It shows governments are nowhere close to the level of ambition needed to limit climate change to 1.5 degrees and meet the goals of the Paris (Climate) Agreement.

"The major emitters must step up with much more ambitious emissions reductions targets."

Dr Niklas Hohne from the New Climate Institute told BBC News: "There is a huge gap to fill if we are serious about 1.5C (the threshold nations have agreed not to pass).

"Global emissions have to be halved – but with current proposals they will only be stable. That's really not good enough."

Some nations have not even submitted a climate plan, and some – such as Australia – are judged to have offered no substantial improvement on previous proposals.

Emissions from those countries doing little or nothing extra comprise 10-15% of global emissions. Mexico and Brazil have attracted criticism for not doing more.

There are some positive signs, though. The EU, for instance, made the biggest jump from a target of a 40% cut to a 55% cut, based on 1990 levels.

"The target could have been more, but it's a good step in the right direction," Dr Hohne said.

He also applauded Nepal, Argentina and the UK, which aims to reduce emissions by 68% by the target date of 2030, based on 1990 levels.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 135)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

● تمرین ۱. به جمله‌ای با صفت برتر تبدیل کنید:	
این لباس گران	این لباس از آن لباس گران‌تر است.
۱. این گل. قشنگ	.....
۲. این پیراهن. کوتاه	.....
۳. این دامن. بلند	.....
۴. این فرش. کوچک	.....
۵. این شلوار. خوب	.....
۶. این کفش. ارزان	.....

■ صِفَتِ بَرْتَرین	■ Superlative Adjective
صفت برترین = صفت مطلق + ترین: بزرگ‌ترین	biggest
صفت برترین قبل از اسم می‌آید: بهترین زن، بدترین شوهر، بزرگ‌ترین اتاق، کوچک‌ترین بچه	
صفتِ برترین "خوب" و "زیاد"، می‌شود "بهترین" و "بیشترین"	
● تمرین ۲. هر عبارت را به صفت برترین تبدیل کنید:	
دوست نادان ما	.....نارادان‌ترین دوست ما
۱. درخت قشنگ پارک	.....
۲. خواهر زیبای او	.....
۳. لباس‌های ارزان بازار	.....
۴. قیمت پایین طلا	.....
۵. کاروان‌سرای معروف این شهر	.....
۶. تجارت مهم بازار تهران	.....




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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
info@tehrantimes.com  
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
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Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard  
seed of pride shall not enter paradise.  
*Prophet Muhammad (S)*

Baghdad billboard showing  
“Shias of Abu Turab”

→1 Abu Turab is a title attributed to Imam Ali (AS). The painting shows the Imam walking as Soleimani, Al-Muhandis and a number of his companions follow him.

Ruholamin, whose works usually illustrate stories from the history of Islam, criticized inept artworks created about Soleimani, and said that artists should raise their knowledge of an issue in order to create an appropriate artwork about it.



A combination photo features a Baghdad billboard showing Iranian painter Hassan Ruholamin's "Shias of Abu Turab" and the original artwork.

He noted that artists should improve the quality of their artworks about Soleimani.

He also criticized Instagram for removing posts about Soleimani and added, "Now, artists are fearful about making a post about Martyr Soleimani, the minimum outcome of which would be the removal of their post by Instagram."

"Shias of Abu Torab" is not Ruholamin's sole artwork about Soleimani.

Just one day after the assassination of Soleimani, Ruholamin unveiled his painting "The Apocalyptic Companion of Aba Abdillah" that depicts Soleimani's remains embraced by Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shias.

An image of the artwork was published for the first time on khamenei.ir, the official website of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

In 2017, he also created a painting of Mohsen Hojaji, an Iranian soldier who was martyred by ISIS terrorists in Syria.

Ruholamin's paintings usually call to mind the ambience of Renaissance paintings. In his works, he regards stories from the history of Islam and contemporary events.

Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center showcased a collection of Ruholamin's paintings in an exhibition entitled "Family of Ali (AS)" in January.

“Artists in Times of War”  
by Howard Zinn comes to  
Iranian bookstores

A R T TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Howard d e s k Zinn's "Artists in Times of War" has recently been published by Logos Publications in Qom.

The book has been translated into Persian by Sohrab Khalili.

Political power, says Zinn, "is controlled by the corporate elite, and the arts are the locale for a kind of guerilla warfare in the sense that guerillas look for apertures and opportunities where they can have an effect."

In "Artists in Times of War", Zinn looks at the possibilities to create such apertures through art, film, activism, publishing and through everyday lives.

In this collection of four essays, the author of "A People's History of the United States" writes about why "To criticize the government is the highest act of patriotism."

Filled with quotes and examples from the likes of Bob Dylan, Mark Twain, E. E. Cummings, Thomas Paine, Joseph Heller and Emma Goldman, Zinn's essays discuss America's rich cultural counter narratives to war, so needed in these days of unchallenged U.S. militarism.

Zinn's great subject isn't war, but peace. After his experience as a bombardier in World War II, he became convinced that there could be no such thing as a "just war," as the vast majority of modern warfare's victims are made up of innocent civilians.

In his books, including "A People's History of the United States" and its companion volume, "Voices of a People's History of the United States", Zinn affirms the power of the masses to influence major events.

Through a lifetime of pointed scholarship and principled civil disobedience, he has led and continues to lead generations in the ways of peace.

Violent modern world suffers from lack of  
common humane language: filmmaker Majidi

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k filmmaker Majid Majidi said that the violent modern world is suffering from a dearth of a common humane language and a disregard of human nature more than ever.

He made the remarks during an international webinar on Iranian cinema with a focus on his three films held at the Complutense University of Madrid last week.

"Human nature is an everlasting and common characteristic of all mankind. All the prophets and Imams believe that the purpose of their message is to remind man and awaken him to his own nature," Majid said at the webinar.

"It is quite understandable for everyone to use words like love, kindness, sacrifice and solidarity, things that can be associated with human nature. The language of today, which has become filled with violence, conflict and crisis, is void of human nature," he added.

"Moreover, the cinema can play a very important and fundamental role in bringing people closer together because of its universal language," Majidi noted.

He also talked about his visit along with a group of visually-impaired children to the



Majid Majidi attends a press conference during the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Mellat Cineplex on February 10, 2020. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

forest area in northern Iran, and how his crew was impressed by the deep and inner encounter of the children with the world and nature, and this effect was so deep that it led to making his film, "Color of Paradise". Last week, several Iranian and Spanish

scholars attended the webinar, which was organized by Iran's Cultural Office in Madrid in collaboration with the Farabi Cinema Foundation and Casa Asia, a Barcelona-based center promoting Spain's relations with Asian countries.

Farabi Cinema Foundation director Alireza Tabesh and Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami spoke at the webinar.

Majidi's "Color of Paradise" was screened on the first day and reviewed by Bernardo Herrera, a scholar from Venezuela, as well as Francisco Garcia and Iranian scholars Zahra Razi and Damun Afkari.

"The Color of Paradise" is a fable of a blind child's innocence and a complex look at faith and humanity.

The second day was followed by screening and reviewing Majidi's "The Willow Tree", while "Baran" was screened and reviewed on the third day.

"The Willow Tree" is about Yusef, a blind middle-aged university professor who regains his vision after surgery.

"Baran" is set during recent times in which there are many Afghan refugees living on the outskirts of Tehran.

Busts of Khayyam, Nikola Tesla to be set up in  
Belgrade, Tehran

Hanachi and Belgrade Mayor Zoran Radojicic also agreed to set up busts of more Iranian and Serbian luminaries in the cities, Tehran Municipality has announced.

During the meeting, Hanachi said the coronavirus outbreak showed the world what has been learned is nothing compared to what is yet to learn, showing that more solidarity is needed to solve the world's problems.

"Tehran and Belgrade have collaborated in different fields and we need to develop this collaboration. Based on the agreement between the two cities, the busts of Iranian and Serbian luminaires are scheduled to be built and set up in the cities," Hanachi said.

"We are still experiencing the pandemic and we still have to deal with the coronavirus restrictions. Many cultural activities like movie theaters are closed, and our municipality is unable to offer its many services while under the sanctions," he added.

"However, Tehran Municipality has provided assistance to those who suffered from the economic recession. And we

hope to sign the Tehran-Belgrade sister cities agreement in person," he added.

Radojicic said that Belgrade has been through a very hard year, like the rest of the world, and they're concerned about the public's health and the health care workers in particular.

Also, he spoke of the hospitality of the Iranian people and expressed his hope to be a good host in the future.

He said that the Belgrade Municipality also is continuing to work on its projects, as there have been significant changes in the city compared to the past.

Persian poet and mathematician Omar Khayyam is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through the translation by the English writer Edward Fitzgerald of a collection of his quatrains in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

Serbian engineer and physicist Nikola Tesla (1856-1943) made dozens of breakthroughs in the production, transmission and application of electric power.

He invented the first alternating current (AC) motor and developed AC generation and transmission technology.

Narges Abyar calls for more cooperation between Iranian, Turkish cineastes

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k filmmaker Narges Abyar has called for more collaboration between Iran and Turkey on the film industry.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Turkey's state-run news agency, on Wednesday she said, "There are a lot of opportunities for cooperation between Turkey and Iran in the field of cinema. I think joint projects will be successful as our cultural nuances are similar."

She noted that there are very few Turkish-Iranian co-productions in the market and said the collaborations should increase.

"We have a lot of common experiences on refugees. There are Syrian refugees in Turkey and Afghan refugees in Iran. Drug trafficking and human-interest stories can also be covered in the joint projects," said



Iranian filmmaker Narges Abyar. (Anadolu Agency)

Abyar, whose latest movie, "The Piebald", won the best audience film award at the 39th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in early February.

She praised Turkish filmmaker Nuri

Bilge Ceylan, whose movies have been acclaimed in numerous international events, including the Cannes Film Festival, and noted people's regard for Turkish TV series in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other neighboring countries.

Abyar pointed to "Drunk on Love", directed by Iranian filmmaker Hassan Fathi about the story of the Persian mystic and poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi and his spiritual mentor Shams-i Tabrizi, calling the movie a good example of a co-production between Iran and Turkey.

Abyar, the director of acclaimed movies such as "Track 143", "Breath" and "When the Moon Was Full", received the HUM Women Leaders Award in the Pakistani city of Karachi in February 2020.

The award is presented to female

achievers from Pakistan and abroad by the HUM Network Limited, a global entertainment and news network and one of the largest broadcasting brands with a strong following among South Asia diaspora around the world.

She was a jury member for the International Narrative Feature Films Competition at the 6th Herat International Women's Film Festival organized in the Afghan city during last November.

Her 2019 drama "When the Moon Was Full" was screened at many international festivals and won awards, including the grand prize of the 2nd Carcassonne International Political Film Festival in France and the audience award at the 23rd Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in Estonia.

Adaptation of Macbeth to go on stage at Tehran theater

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director and writer d e s k Shadi Asadpur plans to stage an adaptation of William Shakespeare's masterpiece Macbeth at Tehran's Divare Chaharom Theater on March 7.

The play entitled "Nightmares" centers on Macbeth's incubi after killing King Duncan to accede to the throne. Lady Macbeth and Duncan are now his bad dreams, which do not leave him alone.

Actor Farzin Mohaddes will be collaborating in this production as a casting director.

Shaqayeq Zalpur, Mahsa Mirkazemi, Kimia Moradi-Rafiq, Mohammad-Saeid Ahangar, Helia Atai, Ali Anisi and ten other actors will be performing in the production.

The actors have been selected from a group of students attending acting workshops recently organized by Asadpur and Mohaddes in the city of Borujerd.

Macbeth is a Scottish general who has been fighting for



Actor Farzin Mohaddes and director Shadi Asadpur are scheduled to collaborate on "Nightmares", an adaptation of William Shakespeare's masterpiece Macbeth.

King Duncan. Three witches tell Macbeth that he will become king of Scotland. Macbeth is spurred by his ambition and his wife, and he murders Duncan and accedes to the throne. His reign is bloody and tyrannical and ended by the combined forces of Scotland and England.

Iranian directors have previously staged adaptations of Macbeth in several performances.

The Titowak Theater Group led by Iranian director Ebrahim Poshtkuhi performed "Hey Macbeth. Only the First Dog Knows Why It Is Barking" based on the tragedy in 2009.

Members of the troupe Mise en Scene led by director Masud Tayyebi also performed "When Hamlet Was Killed by Macbeth's Witches" based on Macbeth and Shakespeare's other popular play Hamlet at the Iranian Artists Forum in 2017.

He also directed the play again in Tehran in November 2020.

Image of the Year Celebration kicks off at IAF

A R T TEHRAN — The 18th d e s k edition of the Image of the Year Celebration was inaugurated on Thursday at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) featuring photos, posters and cartoons in addition to screening a number of films.

Tassvir Film Festival, a new section of the celebration, screening all the films that have received awards in different Iranian festivals, was also inaugurated with a screening of the short film, "Bread and Alley, 50 Years Later", made by Maziar Cheshmeh Alai.

Cheshmeh Alai made his short based on "Bread and Alley," a film directed and written by Abbas Kiarostami based on a story by his brother Taqi in 1970.

The 10-minute film was Kiarostami's first

directorial effort and was shot in black and white. It centered around a young boy on his way home from school who ran into a hungry dog while carrying his own loaf of bread.

In a ceremony attended by a limited number of participants, the director of the celebration, Seifollah Samadian, called a 57-year-old man on stage with his loaf of bread.

He was Seyyed Reza Hashemi, the little boy of Kiarostami's short film.

Kiarostami spotted Reza Hashemi playing with his friends in the alley and asked his parents to let him play in his film. When they moved to another neighborhood, he found him and asked him to play in another film, "A Wedding Suit".

Director Cheshmeh Alai said that he

tried to make use of the special elements of the films by Kiarostami, like working with non-actors.

The previous edition of the celebration was also inaugurated with a screening of "Sohanak", a film that depicts Abbas Kiarostami playing the role of the leading character of his movie "Taste of Cherry" on a pilot project.

"When my father was working on the main idea of the film, he made a video maquette of the film instead of writing a screenplay and played the role of Mr. Badiel in a car traveling in Sohanak, a village near Tehran," Kiarostami's son, Bahman, had written in a statement about the film.

The event will be running until March 13 at the forum.



A poster for the 18th edition of the Image of the Year Celebration.