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## Iran to add 10GW to renewable energy capacity

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) on Sunday for cooperation in the construction of renewable power plants to generate 10,000 megawatts (10 gigawatts) of electricity across the country.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior energy officials including Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and Head of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) Mahmoud Kamani, IRIB reported.

The MOUs were signed following the Energy Ministry's public call for the contribution of private companies in a project for developing renewable power plants in the country.

According to SATBA, after the ministry's public call, so far 153 requests for the generation of 90,000 megawatts (MW) have been submitted to the ministry by private companies.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said: “When the private sector invests in this industry [the renewables], the government is obliged to return the equivalent of the investment plus its interests to the investor.”

Mehrabian noted that the government has allocated over 30 trillion rials (about \$101 million) for the development of renewables in the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21), saying that it is an unprecedented budget in this area.

Further in the ceremony, SATBA Head Kamani mentioned some of the Energy Ministry's plans for the development of the country's renewable energy industry, saying: “Export of renewable energy is a goal that has been targeted by the government.” ► **Page 4**

## IRGC's “Noora” vaccine begins third phase of human trial

TEHRAN – Noora coronavirus vaccine, developed and produced by Baqiyyatallah University of Medical Sciences, affiliated with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), entered the third phase of the human trial on Sunday.

The third phase was started by injecting into IRGC Commander-in-Chief Major General Hossein Salami, IRNA reported.

Hassan Abolqasemi, commander of Baqiyyatallah University of Medical Sciences, said that 5 million doses of the vaccine have been produced, which will be available to the people after the approval of the Ministry of Health and the Food and Drug Administration.

The clinical trial process starts with the injection of 10,000 doses, he added.

### Homegrown vaccines

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said five coronavirus vaccines have been so far produced domestically.

Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN BAREKAT was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14. ► **Page 7**



## The United States is trapped in Israel's overindulgence

### Op-ed



By Dr. Azam Molaei

TEHRAN – For decades, the primary concern of the United States, under both democratic and republican administrations, is to make sure that Israel is able and ready to defend itself. The American citizens pay for expansionist policies and influential lobbies of Israel in America's political power structure, under the justification of securing the country's interests. Such as maintaining peace and stability in one of the most strategic regions in the world.

## General Soleimani was a theorist: Quds Force chief

TEHRAN — Speaking at a commemoration ceremony held for martyrs of Resistance, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the Quds Force commander said on Saturday that Tehran is the peak of the resistance mountain in the region.

Brigadier General Esmaeil Qaani made the remarks while thanking Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian for holding the commemoration ceremony for General Soleimani.

General Soleimani was assassinated by the order of former U.S. President Donald Trump on January 3, 2020 while on a trip to Baghdad. His longtime comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), was also martyred in the U.S. drone strike. ► **Page 2**

The Islamic Republic of Iran has never recognized Israel as a legitimate state. So, it is only a matter of time for Israeli officials and the Zionist lobbies in Washington to direct their destabilizing activities toward the Islamic Republic and never miss an opportunity to turn the U.S. administrations against the Islamic Republic.

One of the many tipping moments when Israeli officials proved most influential in the U.S. foreign policy decision-making was the unlawful assassination of General Soleimani, which has been admitted to by Israeli intelligence officials. ► **Page 5**

## General Soleimani guarded religion on the ground: president

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has praised General Qassem Soleimani, equating him with a senior cleric renowned for his theological theorization.

Speaking before noon on Saturday at the International Congress in Honor of Allamah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi, Ayatollah Raisi stated, “Just as Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi protected the borders of religion in the field of thought, Martyr Qasem Soleimani, as a man in the field, showed his practical commitment to these ideas and thoughts and guarding the religion in the field and he became the symbol of adherence to the principle of Guardianship and the leader.” ► **Page 3**

## “The Hajji Qassem Whom I Know” comes to Turkish bookstores

TEHRAN – “The Hajji Qassem Whom I Know: Narratives about a 40-Year Friendship” written by Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani's comrade Hojjatoleslam Ali Shirazi has been published in Turkish in Istanbul.

Aykut Pazarbasi, a Turkish scholar of Persian literature, is the translator of the book released by Feta Publishing under the title “Benim Tanidigim Haci Kasim”.

It carries Shirazi's memories of a 40-year-long close friendship with General Soleimani who was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

Shirazi recounts numerous stories from the long friendship, which began in 1982 when Shirazi joined the volunteers in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in Hamidieh, a town located near Ahvaz. ► **Page 8**

## Campedelli named Iran's women's volleyball coach

TEHRAN – Italian coach Alessandra Campedelli was named as new head coach of Iran's women's volleyball team on Sunday.

She has penned a one-year contract with Iran volleyball federation with an option to extend for another year.

Campedelli will lead Iran's women's volleyball team at the 2021 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship.

Mohammadreza Davarzani, head of Iran volleyball federation, has already said they want to book a place in the Asian competition's top four.

The 2021 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship will be held in the Philippines in May 2022.

# Marching Through the Morning

TEHRAN – This year's January 3 marks the second martyrdom anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani, the legendary commander of the IRGC's Quds Force whose assassination by the Trump administration helped mobilize grassroots movements against U.S. military presence in the West Asia region.

Two years ago today the world woke up to the news that Iran's most popular general has been assassinated in an American drone strike ordered by then-President Donald Trump. The strike took place near Baghdad Airport in the early hours of January 3, 2020. That night, General Soleimani had just arrived at the ► **Page 3**

## They called him the ‘shadow commander’

### Report



Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was described as a very humble, polite and pious individual. He was admired in Iran and beyond. As more images slowly emerged from the battlefields in Iraq and Syria where he spent the latter years of his life as a military advisor in the fight against terror, the most striking thing was that he wore no body armor.

For someone who commanded the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps many had expected to see him in full

body armor, just like American generals when they ventured outside a military base. Yet here General Soleimani was seen only on the front lines unarmed, wearing a simple shirt or a jacket in the winter seasons.

He was fearless like a lion. A proverb says “when the hyenas are laughing, know that a lion has died”.

That is exactly what happened, when some hyenas staged the most cowardly of assassinations, some in the Pentagon, Tel Aviv along with all terror groups in West Asia laughed; for a lion had been martyred. ► **Page 2**

## Stone building probably belonging to ancient tribesmen discovered in western Iran

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have recently discovered the ruins of a stone structure estimated to have once belonged to the ancient nomadic tribespeople.

They also discovered pottery pieces of the first millennium BC as well as relics believed to date from the Parthian (247 BC – 224 CE) and Sassanid (224-651 CE) eras.

The excavation was held on the outskirts of Shahr-e Kord, the capital of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province.

Some 20 archaeological trenches were carved at the site which yielded bones, glassworks, and other cultural objects, CHTN quoted Ali-Asghar Noruzi, who led the excavation, as saying on Sunday.

The potteries are the same as ones previously discovered in Tall-e Bakun, a prehistoric site situated in the fertile Marvdasht plain of Fars province, near the UNESCO-designated Persepolis, the news agency reported.

Last year, a team of archaeologists led by Noruzi discovered a gigantic prehistoric site, estimated to cover some 10 ha in area, in the Iranian province. “An important archaeological site with an area of 10 hectares has been identified near Ardal city of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province,” Noruzi as said.

“This archaeological site has important archaeological values in terms of expansion in the area, which can be an important place to study the process of transition from Paleolithic to Neolithic and the process of creating the first human settlements in this part of the Zagros [mountain range],” the archaeologist explained. ► **Page 6**

## JCPOA experience shows Iran cannot trust U.S.: analysis



TEHRAN = In a commentary on Dec. 28, Middle East Eye said the main lesson that the Iranian people and their rulers have drawn from their JCPOA experience is that Iran can never trust the U.S.

The article says Iran wants a “sustainable” nuclear deal and this can be achieved only if U.S. sanctions against Iran are lifted permanently.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

The eighth round of negotiations between Iran and the five world powers that are trying to revive the tattered 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), resumed on December 27.

At the end of the previous round of talks, Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, said that “good progress” had been made.

“Initially, the European participants [France, Germany and the United Kingdom] rejected Iran's proposals, but they finally agreed to continue the talks based on the Iranian draft,” he stated.

For their part, negotiators stated that there had been some technical progress on the last day of negotiations, but that this only took them nearer to where the talks stood in June.

“It's not going well in the sense that we do not yet have a pathway back into the JCPOA. What is going well is unity with our European partners, greater alignment with China and Russia,” said U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

The reality is that the actions of the Donald Trump administration in 2018 – in leaving the JCPOA and making rejoining politically difficult for the U.S. – are the major source of the complications in the current efforts to revive the JCPOA. Moreover, the circumstances have changed significantly compared with 2015, when negotiations on the JCPOA concluded.

In 2015, the world powers achieved the most comprehensive nuclear non-proliferation agreement ever reached with Iran. When Trump withdrew while Iran was in full compliance with the deal, he also imposed on Iran the most ferocious economic sanctions.

Because these included secondary sanctions on any company doing business with Iran, the other parties to the agreement were also largely prevented from living up to their commitments under UN Security Council resolution 2231 to honor normal trade relations with Iran. Under the JCPOA, the EU and the U.S. were obliged to refrain from any policy specifically intended to directly and adversely affect the normalization of trade and economic relations with Iran.

The main lesson that the Iranian people and their rulers have drawn from their JCPOA experience is that Iran can never trust the U.S. Even if the U.S. signs an international accord reinforced by the UN Security Council, there is no guarantee that the U.S. would abide by its side of the bargain.

Seen from this perspective, and given the enormous losses to Iran's economy inflicted

by U.S. secondary sanctions – estimated at \$1tn – it is understandable that Iran is asking for assurances from the Western parties to the JCPOA that the Trump sanctions will be scrapped permanently, in return for Iran returning to compliance with the deal.

Despite Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018, Iran fully implemented its commitments under the deal until May 2019, hoping that the EU, Russia and China would create a mechanism to bypass the continuing U.S. secondary sanctions so that Iran would receive the economic benefits of the agreement.

When that didn't happen, Iran too began to break its JCPOA commitments by deploying advanced centrifuges and increasing, in steps, the enrichment level of its uranium from the JCPOA limit of 3.67 percent U-235 to 60 percent.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), stated: “We have more than 210kgs of uranium enriched to 20 percent, and we've produced 25kgs at 60 percent, a level that no country apart from those with nuclear arms are able to produce.”

If the JCPOA can be revived, this situation could be quickly reversed – perhaps within a month or two. Blending down or exporting the 60 percent and 20 percent enriched uranium stockpiles and uninstalling the advanced centrifuges could be done quickly.

Iran is reluctant to take these actions, however, fearing that the U.S. could impose the same sanctions again under the umbrella of terrorism, human rights, missiles or regional issues. If sanctions related to these issues were imposed, they could kill all the economic opportunities the JCPOA creates for Iran. That's why Iran wants a sustainable JCPOA.

Three scenarios can be envisioned going forward.

The first is what many Israeli officials are advocating: a U.S. military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities in case of a failure to restore the JCPOA. I believe that this is a bluff to put more pressure on Iran. The U.S. is in no mood to launch a new war in the Middle East.

The second scenario, if the effort to restore the JCPOA fails, is a continuation of Trump's failed strategy of maximum pressure: namely, full-blown economic, political and cyber wars, with sabotage including continuing Israeli covert attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and assassinations of its nuclear scientists. In this scenario, the U.S. and Europe would likely push for an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors' resolution against Iran.

Iran would likely respond by withdrawing from the JCPOA. If the U.S. and Europe then referred Iran's case to the UN Security Council to revive the six resolutions imposed on Iran during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran would likely join North Korea in withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The third scenario, and the most rational, would be to revive the JCPOA through diplomacy. Here, an interesting distinction must be made. While the Trump administration tore down the JCPOA as Barack Obama's legacy, Iran's new president, Ebrahim Raisi – although an opponent of former President Hassan Rouhani, who presided over the negotiation of the deal – is seeking to revive it.

In summary, the only way out of this crisis is for the U.S. to lift the economic sanctions with which it has been strangling Iran and ensure sustainability of the deal. If it does, Iran, for its part will fully implement its commitments under the JCPOA permanently.

representatives of different countries are very heartbroken for Afghan children, which is very good and worthy, but not only do they not talk about Yemeni and Palestinian children, etc, they escape from discussing it. A child is a child, and humanity cares for all children,” Seyyed Rasoul Mousavi wrote in a tweet on Sunday.

From page 1 ▶ They could not reach nor keep track of General Soleimani in the region, which earned him the nickname the shadow commander; for decades he foiled American and Israeli plots in West Asia. Many around the world who focused on the region were fascinated by him, yet in lead up to the 2016 presidential election, former President Donald Trump, when asked about General Soleimani, had absolutely no idea who he was.

When Israel waged a war on Lebanon he was in southern Lebanon and helped the Lebanese Hezbollah turn the 2006 war into Israel's biggest military failure in history books. The resistance movement took Israel by surprise not once but multiple times. The regime's tanks went up in flames with Kornet missiles that nobody knew Hezbollah had in their possession. Israeli helicopters fell and their warship sank off the coast of Beirut.

According to now retired General David Petraeus who commanded U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and led the troop surge in Iraq in 2007, he received a letter saying “General Petraeus, you should know that I, Qassem Soleimani, control the policy for Iran when it comes to Iraq and also Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and Afghanistan”.

What General Soleimani did in those countries and beyond was to bring honor, pride, dignity, sovereignty and freedom back to the people. In Iraq and Syria, he spearheaded the fight against the most brutal, lethal and sophisticated of terror organizations to date, Daesh and Nusra Front, among others. Takfiri groups that officials in Iraq and Syria accuse America of supporting, arming and some in the Persian Gulf of funding with billions of dollars.

American military commanders predicted that it would take ten years for Iraq's armed forces to fully liberate its land from the terrorists, but General Soleimani who led a team of Iranian military advisors, at the invitation of the Iraqi government, had other plans.

After the fall of the northern city of Mosul and large swathes of the country to Daesh under the U.S. trained Iraqi army, Grand Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Sistani issued a Fatwa from the southern holy Iraqi city of Najaf in the summer of 2014 for volunteers who are capable of handling a weapon to take up arms and help halt the advance of Daesh terrorists further south towards Baghdad

# They called him the ‘shadow commander’



and the southern provinces.

The terrorists had reached the town of Jurf al-Sakhr, just dozens of kilometers away from Baghdad.

Had it not been for the timely involvement of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani who opened neighboring Iran's weapons' depot to the new recruits that would go on to form the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and provided them with training, experts say all of Iraq would have collapsed to Daesh.

This is while the United States delayed the delivery of much needed weaponry that Iraq had already paid for by many months.

One of the most popular battles that General Soleimani and his brother-in-arms Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis (who was assassinated alongside General Soleimani) spearheaded was breaking the difficult siege of Amerli. A town surrounded by Daesh terrorists, Amerli had around 20 thousand Shia Turkmen families inside who had put up an extremely brave armed resistance against the terrorists.

However, their ammunition was running low and so was their access to food and water. Daesh had cornered them and it was widely expected if Daesh had entered the town, the terror group would have slaughtered all the men and taken the women and girls captive.

Many Iraqi officials with the Popular Mobilization Units praised the residents of Amerli, comparing their plight and resistance to the battle of Karbala some 1400 years ago.

General Soleimani and the commander of Kataib Hezbollah (a PMU faction), Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis devised a plan that saw 50

armed Kataib Hezbollah fighters parachute down from a helicopter into the town. They chose a point where other fighters of the Kataib Hezbollah brigade ambushed a group of Daesh terrorists. Together, those from the inside and from the outside fought the terrorists and managed to break the siege. 20,000 residents who were about to be murdered and their women no doubt taken captive were saved.

Emotional footage immediately after breaking the siege of Amerli saw tears of joy by Kataib Hezbollah commanders, including Abu Fadek (who replaced Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis after the latter's martyrdom) being embraced by General Soleimani.

So many popular battles in Iraq involved the late General. In an interview, Lebanese Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said General Soleimani took a flight from Baghdad to Damascus then another to Beirut and reached Sayyed Nasrallah's residence at midnight. The Hezbollah leader says “in the 22 years that I knew General Soleimani, he or the Islamic Republic of Iran, never requested, something from us once”. However, in the middle of that night, General Soleimani told Sayyed Nasrallah “I need 120 military advisors to take back on a flight to Baghdad by sunrise after morning prayers”.

Sayyed Nasrallah, smiling as he recalls telling General Soleimani, “where am I going to get 120 military field commanders at this time of night?”. He says General Soleimani told him “we have no choice, if we want to save the Iraqi nation, its holy sites, its seminaries and the whole situation going on there right now, I don't want any fighters, just advisors to train the Iraqis”.

The martyr General stayed with Sayyed Nasrallah as they called the Hezbollah generals one by one until they got hold of about 50 to 60 of them. And Sayyed Nasrallah says General Soleimani “did not leave without an assurance from me that I would send the others within two or three days”.

Sayyed Nasrallah goes on to recall “that night I felt that the whole world for General Soleimani was Iraq and that battle against Daesh in Iraq, he considered that battle a decisive one and was ready to die in that battle”.

Sayyed Nasrallah also questioned General Soleimani about a trip he made to the northern Iraqi city of Samarah, saying “that was very dangerous”. And according to Sayyed Nasrallah, General Soleimani replied “there was no other option, I had to move north so the brothers could follow suit”.

“He was very affected by what was happening in Iraq... and he was ready to die in Iraq (in the battle against Daesh terrorists) a thousand times,” Sayyed Nasrallah says.

In a speech commemorating the martyrdom of General Soleimani, Sayyed Nasrallah says “he spent many nights crying when he remembered the martyrs [who died fighting former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's imposed war on Iran]; in many meeting with myself, he told me ‘My heart is tired with this world and I am eager to meet Allah and the martyrs who have passed away’”.

Against terrorists in Syria, footage showing security forces telling him not to advance forward, he responded saying “are we scared of a few bullets”, and proceeded to advance to the battle line.

Those who knew the war hero well say he had a special charisma. During meetings with high-ranking military commanders, he sat only listening and when he spoke the room fell into silence.

His eagerness to gain the status of martyrdom was fulfilled.

Congratulations to Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani for attaining this great martyrdom.

## General Soleimani was a theorist: Quds Force chief

### Qaani says Tehran is the ‘peak of the resistance mountain’

From page 1 ▶ Referring to the character of martyr Soleimani, Qaani said, “The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, summarized the school of martyr Soleimani in two important words that martyr Soleimani embodied. One was honesty and the other was sincerity. These words came from the Leader as a person who knows this man and understands the Quran well and had seen the behavior of martyr Soleimani.”

Qaani added that General Soleimani's most prominent characteristic was that he promoted ideas and theories and was a man of logic. “Gen. Soleimani created very good relations between battlefield and diplomacy”

Discussing the balance between “diplomacy and battlefield,” Qaani noted that General Soleimani established a very good connection between the battlefield and diplomacy and was one of the pioneers who defended this logic.

“In fairness, the Foreign Ministry accompanied martyr Soleimani in different periods,” the Quds Force chief asserted.

Qaani said the connection that General Soleimani established from Tehran deepened its roots in different countries, including Iraq.

“Tehran is the peak of Resistance, the Islamic Revolution and the convergence between different sections in Islam,” the commander highlighted, saying that Iran is the center of rapprochement, and people like martyr Soleimani were at the forefront of creating unity and convergence.”

Ayatollah Khamenei on Saturday described General Soleimani as a never-dying reality. “Martyr Soleimani is an eternal reality that will live on

forever. His assassins – including Trump and the like – will go down in history's garbage bin, but of course, after receiving retribution in this world for the crime they committed,” the Leader pointed out.

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## Diplomat criticizes inattention to Yemeni, Palestinian children

TEHRAN — Assistant to Iran's foreign minister and director general of the West Asia department at the Foreign Ministry has criticized other countries' indifference toward the agonies of Yemeni and Palestinian children.

“In various meetings I have had these days,

# Marching Through the Morning

From Page 1 ▶ airport from a trip to neighboring Syria. He was received by his longtime friend Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), which played a pivotal role in trouncing the Daesh terrorist group.

After brief greetings, the two men left the airport in their motorcade heading to the Iraqi capital for meetings as usual. When they moved out of the airport an American hovering in the vicinity of them fired a number of missiles that targeted General Soleimani and al-Muhandis as well as their companions.

Millions of Iranians and Muslims around the world were shocked to hear the martyrdom of a general they loved for his bravery against terrorist groups in the region, especially Daesh, which posed a great danger to global security.

An outpouring of grief combined with anger started to appear on social media platforms such as Instagram. Millions of users expressed their love for the slain commander by posting photos and videos commemorating the general. But Instagram, along with other social media companies, embarked, most likely at the direction of the U.S. government, on a crackdown against the commander, banning any kind of posts related to General Soleimani.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has



pointed to this fact by saying that the arrogant powers' efforts to eliminate any mention of Martyr Soleimani from the internet shows their fear of even the name of that martyr and their fear of this valuable role model being promoted and imitated. He went on to say, "In today's world, the internet is in the hands of the arrogant powers. This reality should cause the officials in charge of the internet inside the country to be aware so that they may do something to prevent the enemy from doing whatever he wants in the internet wherever he wants."

Many believe the crackdown was emblematic of the U.S. fear from the fallout from the martyrdom of Iran's most popular general. But the crackdown failed to prevent Iranians from taking part in huge numbers in the funeral of the general. This further

reinforced the belief that General Soleimani's martyrdom would result in dire consequences for the U.S.

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to this issue in his Saturday meeting with the family of the general and the officials in charge of the general's commemoration conference.

Referring to the presence of tens of millions of people in General Soleimani's burial ceremony, the Leader stated, "This reality shows that Haj Qassem was and still is the most popular person in the nation. Furthermore, the increasing influence his name and memory have in the world of Islam prove that dear Soleimani was and still is the most popular personality throughout the world of Islam."

"Today in our region, Soleimani is

a symbol of hope, self-confidence and bravery and a manifestation of resistance and victory. As some people have correctly pointed out, 'Martyr' Soleimani is more dangerous than 'General' Soleimani for his enemies," the Leader said.

The martyrdom of General Soleimani set in motion a grassroots movement that aims to expel the U.S. troops from the region. Ayatollah Khamenei said thanks to the blessings from General Soleimani's blood the U.S. has fled from Afghanistan and is facing growing troubles elsewhere in Iraq and Syria.

Two years after the assassination of General Soleimani the Resistance movement in the region works at full force to expel the U.S. troops from the region. Many U.S. analysts imagined that with the martyrdom of General Soleimani the Resistance Axis will die away. But their assessment of the impact of the assassination of General Soleimani proved short-sighted.

"With that crime, the enemy was trying to extinguish the light of the Resistance. But the miracle that was brought about due to the blood of these glorious martyrs, caused the Resistance to advance and the enemy to be pushed back in all fronts of confrontation," General Hossein Salami, the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, said on Saturday.

## U.S. must leave Syria: ambassador

TEHRAN – Iran's Ambassador to Syria, Mehdi Sobhani, has called on the United States to leave Syria, adding that the game has changed in the war-ravaged Arab country.

In an interview with Al Ahed News, Sobhani said Iran rejects the presence of occupation and terrorism in Syria.

Sobhani spoke about the prospects for economic relations between Damascus and Tehran, stressing the importance of changing the prevailing "mindset" about the security situation in Syria, and underlining the rejection of the illegal presence of all occupying and terrorist forces in this country.

The Iranian ambassador said that economic and commercial cooperation between Iran and Syria and Iranian participation in the reconstruction in Syria is an important matter and a sensitive stage in which the two countries are going through while experiencing economic war and pressure due to massive sanctions.

"Therefore, we focus on the economic and commercial aspect. In this context, as a first step, priorities must be set, and then the obstacles that hinder economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries must be removed," Sobhani noted.

The second issue, which is of great importance, according to Sobhani, is the financing of reconstruction projects and the consolidation of stability in Syria, which encourages investors to go there. The enemy always promotes the idea that Syria lacks security in order to prevent the development of economic cooperation and investment, according to the ambassador.

With regard to trade, Sobhani emphasized the existence of two main pillars of trade: The first is the logistical aspect, and the second is the possibility of money transfers or banking work.

"From the logistical point of view, and since there is no common border between Iran and Syria, the distance between the two countries is somewhat far, and we are currently working on finding roads linking Iran with Syria and reducing the time required to transport goods between the two countries," Sobhani said, adding, "As for the second issue, it relates to banks and the possibility of money transfers to merchants, and work is currently underway to find different ways to accomplish money transfers, given that Syria is facing some



problems today as a result of sanction."

The Iranian ambassador to Syria indicated that during the past months, a number of exhibitions were held in Syria, in which about 120 Iranian companies participated. Through participation, Tehran sought several goals.

First, showing that Syria enjoys security and stability and preparing the ground for businessmen to come and see with their own eyes that the situation is safe in Syria. Second, putting emphasis on providing an opportunity for companies to learn about the needs of the Syrian market and its need to invest in it. Third, enabling Iranian companies to conclude contracts with their Syrian counterparts and holding meetings between officials of Iranian companies and Syrian officials in various commercial, economic and industrial fields.

"The first step for us was achieved and represented in the establishment of the Iranian Commodities Exhibition in Damascus, which was attended by the Iranian Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade and personally supervised the monitoring and directing of Iranian participation in various fields," Sobhani pointed out.

The Iranian ambassador pointed out that Tehran strongly condemns and denounces the occupation of Syria by any country or any force, whether this occupation is in the Golan or in the north-west or north-east.

"We condemn any presence of any non-foreign country or any terrorist forces," he said.

Regarding the US presence in Syria, Sobhani expressed his conviction that these forces will be forced to withdraw from Syrian territory, "and we cannot set a date for that, but this will happen and must happen."

Sobhani pointed out that during the Cold War, the great powers determined the fate of matters, but

today there are new powers that control them, so that the United States is no longer able to determine the fate of the region, but there are new powers, and one of these forces is the axis of resistance. "Today the game ground, the stadium and the type of game have changed," Sobhani noted.

The Iranian ambassador welcomed the opening-up in Syrian foreign relations, and said, "We welcome any opening that achieves the interests of the Syrian government and people, and our goal was and still is to establish security and stability in Syria and to achieve security and development in this country."

Sobhani hoped that this openness in foreign relations would contribute to enhancing stability, progress, security and economic development in Syria.

The Iranian ambassador stressed that the enemies of Syria must understand that their policies towards this country have failed and that they have only brought harm and loss to the peoples of the region.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that in Syria, the enemy has been bogged down with no hope for the future.

"On the whole, the Resistance and anti-imperial movement in the region is now more thriving, vibrant, and promising than two years ago," the Leader stated in a meeting on Saturday with the family of General Qassem Soleimani, the noted commander of the IRGC's Quds Force who was assassinated by the U.S. on January 3, 2020 while on a trip to Baghdad.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that after the martyrdom of General Soleimani the axis of resistance continued to function in a number of countries including Syria. "The enemies surmised that with the martyrdom of Soleimani, Abu Mahdi and their companions, everything will be over. But today due to the blessing of our dear General Soleimani's blood, the U.S has fled Afghanistan. In Iraq, it is forced to pretend to withdraw and announce an advisory role without a military presence, something that [our] Iraqi brothers should pursue vigilantly. In Yemen, the Resistance front is advancing. In Syria, the enemy has been bogged down with no hope for the future," the Leader stated. The Leader also pointed to the popularity General Soleimani gained after his martyrdom in Iran and the broader Muslim world.

region, and block the way for the Islamic Revolution and obstruct the path of its progress."

"Both the Zionist entity and America are under the illusion that they are able to destroy the wheels of progress of the Islamic Revolution, but in light of our belief and under the wise leadership of the Islamic Revolution, they will not be able to achieve any of their miserable plans," Fallahzadeh added. "We will continue on this path until the appearance of Imam Mahdi."

## General Soleimani guarded religion on the ground: president

From Page 1 ▶ Ayatollah Raisi also described the different rounds of Velayat Scheme as one of the most valuable and effective heritages of Allamah Mesbah Yazdi and said, "The Velayat Scheme is one of the achievements that should be well honored and continued," according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

The president said, "I ask God Almighty to grant us the opportunity and recognition of the path that Ayatollah Mesbah drew

in the field of opinion and though, which Haj Qasem Soleimani was a follower of in practice."

Ayatollah Raisi said Allamah Mesbah Yazdi "explained responsibility and duty in the implementation of Islamic laws without fear of others and in the best way."

In September last year, Ayatollah Raisi praised the role General Soleimani and his comrade Abu Mahdi Al-Mohandis played in the fight against the Daesh

terrorist group. "Were it not for the sacrifices of the two martyrs, Soleimani and al-Mohadis, Daesh would have been a neighbor of Europe," the president said.

The Deputy Commander of the Quds Force in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Fallahzadeh, has recently told Al-Ahed News that the "aim of assassinating martyr Soleimani was to extinguish the flame of the resistance, bring about geopolitical transformations in the

## IRAN IN FOCUS

JANUARY 3, 2022

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## SPORTS

### Iran unchanged in FIVB World Ranking

TEHRAN – Iran national volleyball team remained the best Asian team in the FIVB World Ranking released on Sunday.



Iran are 10th in the ranking, a place above Japan.

Brazil sit top of the table, followed by Poland, Russia, France, Italy and Argentina.

According to volleyball's world governing body FIVB, the new dynamic ranking system will respond in real time after each competition day.

The changes are based on results from the ongoing games.

### Zarei re-elected as Iran Mountaineering Federation president

TEHRAN – Reza Zarei has been re-elected as president of Iran Sport Climbing and Mountaineering Federation on Sunday for a four-year term till 2026.

In the elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Zarei secured 38 of 56 votes cast.

Kaveh Kashefi came second with 18 votes.

Zarei is president of Iran Sport Climbing and Mountaineering Federation since 2013.

Iran Mountaineering & Sport Climbing Federation (IMSCF) was established in 1947. IMSCF in one of the oldest federations and sport associations in Iran.

### Alireza Beiranvand on Persepolis' radar: report

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club has reportedly set its sight on signing Iran international goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.

Beiranvand signed for Portuguese Primeira Liga side Boavista FC on loan in July.

The 30-year-old custodian joined Boavista from Belgian club Antwerp on a season-long loan deal with the club having the option of making it a permanent transfer.

Beiranvand was a member of Persepolis football team from 2016 to 2020.

He helped Persepolis win four Iran league titles, one Hazfi Cup and two Super Cups.

### UAE forward Fabio Lima fit for Iran match

TEHRAN – Fabio Virginio de Lima will be fit for Iran match in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier.

The UAE are scheduled to meet Iran in Group A on Feb. 1 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Bert van Marwijk's side sit third in Group A, eight points off the two automatic qualification spots. Third place team offers a route to Qatar 2022 via a series of play-offs.

The Brazilian forward had missed 2021 FIFA Arab Cup due to injury.

### Taremi earns all 2021 titles of Portugal

TEHRAN – Mehdi Taremi of Porto FC managed to claim the best goal scorer and assist in Portugal in the year 2021.

The Iranian striker his last goal in 2021 in a critical Friday match against Benfica. He was running towards the Benfica box when Vitor Ferreira sent the ball in and the striker had to jump to take the ball in control. Taremi had less than one second to decide the best that he can do with the ball inside the box. Using his goal-scoring instinct, the striker converted the ball with a technical shot to end his 2021 year in a suitable form.

He had started the year in great shape and this last goal eased the pressures that he had tolerated in the past few weeks for failure to find the net. Now he can enjoy the Christmas holidays and return for a better year ahead, PLDC reported.

His Friday goal was also another milestone for the striker as it made him the top goal scorer of Portugal in 2021. The footballer scored 20 goals for Porto in the year, one goal more than what Haris Seferovic has achieved for Benfica.

The two strikers had a tight competition over the title but it was the Iranian who won it. The two were equal as of Friday night but the last goal against Benfica made all the difference.

Taremi scored 12 of his goals in the 2020-21 season and eight more in the current season.

Taremi's next title was standing top of goal assists list. According to official data, Taremi and Rafa Silva both stand top of this table with 16 assists. Although data provided by the Transfer Market shows that the Iranian has provided 17 assists in 2021. The first goal of Porto on Friday was scored thanks to a pass by Taremi but it did not count as an assist as it was deflected by a Benfica defender.

The striker was standing top of this table up until Friday night but Silva's assist against Porto made the two footballers equal in this category.

As far as the posts of the two players are concerned, Silva is a winger and midfielder while Taremi is a striker and the former is mainly tasked with feeding the strikers.

This shows that the Bushehri attacker is generous when it comes to providing others with goal-scoring opportunities.

Taremi's presence in the Portuguese team seems to be more of a positive point for fans and those who are into betting. There are many tips to consider while engaging in a betting process but knowing the players' capacities and powers is among the crucial sections that one needs to be aware of.

The 29-year-old striker has been under severe pressure for not scoring in 11 consecutive matches and his last goal helped him escape the criticisms. Taking a glimpse into the 2022 calendar of the Portugal will signal that better months can be ahead of the Iranian international striker.

Taremi had earlier attained a special title in 2021 as his astonishing bicycle kick against Chelsea was named UEFA.com Goal of the Season as well as the UEFA Champions League Goal of the Season.

He is one of the main hopes of Iran's National Football Team in the path to 2022 World Cup. The team has almost booked a place in the global tournament and has counted on Taremi's shining in Qatar.

Taremi started his career in local teams in Bushar, south Iran, and became known after playing for Tehran-based giants Persepolis in four seasons between 2014 and 2018. He had always dreamed of playing in Europe and departed for Rio Ave in 2019 before joining Porto in 2020.

## Iran to add 10GW to renewable energy capacity



From page 1 ► “Constructing renewable power plants for the cryptocurrency miners is also being seriously considered,” he added.

Back in December 2021, Kamani had announced plans to create 10,000 MW capacity of new renewable power plants across the country within the next four years.

He had put the current capacity of the country's renewable power plants at 905 MW, saying that such power plants account only for one percent of the country's total power generation capacity.

“Currently, 30 percent of the world's elec-

tricity needs are provided by renewable energy sources, and some countries have even declared 2030 as the final year of using fossil fuels,” he said.

“We are far behind the global standards in the development of renewable energy,” he regretted.

Referring to another program for the development of renewable energies in the domestic sector, Kamani noted that to encourage households for constructing such power plants the Energy Ministry has announced that it will buy their surplus generated electricity at a guaranteed price.

He further pointed to the indigenization of the knowledge for the construction of the equipment used in renewable power plants as another priority of the Energy Ministry and SATBA, saying: “Currently, the construction of solar panels and wind power plants is completely indigenized, and we must strengthen our producers to finally become able to build all the required equipment from start to finish, in this regard, of course, some enterprises have announced their readiness.”

## Average gas consumption by power plants up 10%

TEHRAN – Iranian power plants have consumed about 218 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) of natural gas on average since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021), registering a 10-percent rise compared to the average figure for the previous year's same time span, Mehr News Agency reported.

According to Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Majid Chegeni, the increase in gas consumption by the power plants comes in a condition when the gas consumption by the domestic sector has also increased significantly due to the increase in the number of households connected to the national gas network and the early temperature decline across the country.

Chegeni noted that the gas consumption by the domestic sector during the eighth Iranian calendar month of Aban (ended on November 21, 2021) increased 20 percent compared to the previous year's same month.

He put the average daily injection of gas into the national network since the beginning of the current year at 707 mcm, saying that this figure has also increased by four percent year on year.

“Despite the increase in consumption by the domestic sector, so far, over 340 million cubic meters per day of gas has been delivered to industries and power plants on average, which is more than the commitment of the National Iranian Gas Company in this regard,” the NIGC



head added.

Chegeni expressed concern about the increasing trend of gas consumption in the domestic sector and said: “Hopefully, people will have more control over their consumption so that we are not forced to limit gas supply to power plants and industries.”

The official noted that last year during the winter the domestic sector's daily gas consumption had reached 650 mcm which was drastically high and six times more than the average global standard.

Back in December 2021, NIGC Dispatching Director Mohammadreza Jolaei had said NIGC was supplying 175 mcm of natural gas to the country's power plants on a daily basis despite the surge in domestic consumption.

“Gas consumption in the domestic and commercial sectors has now reached 500 million cubic meters per day,” Jolaei had told IRNA on December 5.

## More than 16.6m tons of steel products produced in 8 months

TEHRAN- Iran produced 16.637 million tons of steel products in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21, 2021), according to the data released by Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

The country's eight-month steel products output indicates a 6.6-percent drop as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Meanwhile, as previously announced, Iran exported about \$4.5 billion worth of steel products including ingots, profiles, and sheets in the first eight months of this year, registering a 14-percent rise year on year.

According to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi, steel products accounted for 14.5 percent of the country's total non-oil exports during the mentioned eight months.

Latifi noted that some 11.067 million tons of various iron and steel products worth \$3.735 billion were exported in the previous year, of which 2.23 million tons were iron ore and other related raw materials.

The exports of steel products in the first eight months of the current year have ex-

ceeded the total figure for the previous year by \$800 million, the official noted.

The Iranian steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

The production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year (ended on March 20).

Based on the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran has maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during January-October, 2021.

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 22.4 million tons during the mentioned time span to register a 5.7-percent decline year on year, the report said.

# Synchronization of Iran-Russia electricity networks to begin in late April

TEHRAN – The project for synchronizing the electricity networks of Iran and Russia through Azerbaijan will start in the next Iranian calendar year's second month (begins on April 21), an official with the Iranian Energy Ministry announced.

According to Mohammad-Ali Farahnakian, the deputy energy minister for international affairs, half of the project's primary studies have been conducted and completed and the executive operation of the project is expected to begin in late April after all three countries send comprehensive reports to the Iranian consultant of the project.

“Russia and many other neighboring countries have winter peaks consumption periods, while about 40 percent of our electricity capacity is left unused in the

winter and our power plants go through an overhaul in the cold season, so we can use this capacity to supply the electricity needed by our neighbors in winter through connecting our power grid with those of such countries,” Farahnakian said regarding the benefits of the synchronization project.

In return, Iran can use the power generation capacity of its neighbors, like Russia, during the summer when the consumption in Iran increases drastically, he stated.

“Synchronizing the electricity network with neighboring countries has many other benefits as well, such as when the power grids are connected to each other, the stability of the network will be greatly increased,” the official added.

The official noted that there



are two possible routes for the synchronization of Iran and Russia's power grids, one of which is through Armenia and Georgia and the other is through Azerbaijan.

Back in December 2021, Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehriban had expressed the Islamic Republic's readiness for joining the country's electricity network to those of Azerbaijan and Russia.

Making the remarks in a meeting with Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Tehran Ali Alizadeh, Mehriban emphasized Iran's readiness for the development and continuation of electricity exchange between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, saying: “Studies have been conducted on electricity cooperation among Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia and Iran is ready to start synchronizing its electricity net-

work with these countries.”

As one of the major players in West Asia's energy market, Iran is now emerging as a major electricity hub in the region as the country is following a comprehensive plan for synchronizing its power grid with the neighboring countries.

Iraq was the first neighbor whose national electricity network was synchronized with the Islamic Republic's power grid back in November 2019, and now the Energy Ministry is following a plan to connect the electricity networks of Russia and Azerbaijan with the Iranian grid.

Earlier in September 2021, former Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian had announced that a research project for the synchronization of the electricity networks of Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia was underway by the ministry.

## Iran welcomes energy cooperation with Persian Gulf Arab nations

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Ahmad Asadzadeh has said his ministry is completely ready for cooperation with the countries in the region, especially the Persian Gulf Arab nations, IRIB reported on Sunday.

“At the Oil Ministry, we are fully prepared to cooperate with the countries in the region and the Arab nations of the Persian Gulf; some of these countries have recently shown a positive and constructive attitude which we welcome,” Asadzadeh said.

“Many of these countries need gas, and we have good gas resources in the Persian Gulf, so we can do a lot of good work with a constructive, forward-looking cooperation and using a win-win formula,” he said.

The deputy oil minister for international affairs and trade noted that his ministry is examining possible scenarios for cooperation with the mentioned countries and in this regard welcomes serious and honest collaboration.

Mentioning the recent development in the Islamic Republic's oil sales, the official said:



“Oil exports have fortunately gained serious momentum with the efforts of our colleagues at the ministry; hopefully this process will be strengthened by the efforts of the Oil Minister and the ministry's powerful sales team.”

He also pointed to the possibility of gas exports to Europe, the official said: “of course, our focus is on working with our neighbors, we have so many opportunities among our neighbors and Europe is our next priority, but if the Europeans are interested, we can negotiate to meet their needs. It requires that Europeans act independently and not follow the United

States.”

Regarding the extension of the gas export deal with Iraq, Asadzadeh stated that Iraq is in great need of natural gas and plans are being made to negotiate and extend this contract: “Iraq must try to pay for the exported gas on time, and on the other hand, the National Iranian Gas Company will do its best to export the gas to that country in the amount agreed in the contract with the Iraqi side.”

Asadzadeh further mentioned the issue of gas exports to Pakistan, saying: “Although Iran showed its determination to export gas to Pakistan by constructing 1100 kilometers of pipeline, the Pakistani side did not fulfill its side of the agreement under pressure from the United States and some regional competitors.”

“We are trying to reach a formula with Pakistan to revive this agreement. We can conclude an agreement on the export of Iranian gas to Pakistan by signing a multilateral agreement between Iran, Pakistan and third or fourth countries,” he added.

## TEDPIX gains 223 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 223 points to 1.379 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 3.449 billion securities worth 21.915 trillion rials (about \$75.568 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 756 points, and the second market's index gained 1,396 points.

TEDPIX rose 38,000 points (2.7 percent) to 1.397 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Mobarakeh Steel Company, Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, Saipa Company, Social Security Investment Company, National Copper Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed ones.

The government has applied several new changes in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2022) which according to experts and analysts will ensure the stock market's stability and growth in the coming years, IRNA reported.

Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market, strengthening the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations, and stabilizing the ownership interest of the mines are some of the measures con-



sidered in the budget bill to support the capital market.

Allocating a 20-percent tax on legal entities is considered in next year's budget bill which is less than the previous years. Reducing the taxes imposed on production units will make them more profitable and therefore their performance in the stock market will improve.

Also, the direct taxes collected from production units is expected to be injected into the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund in order to be used to improve and develop the market.

Based on the next year's budget bill, no subsidized foreign currency will be allocated to special entities to import certain goods. Experts and analysts believe that this decision is going to have a very positive impact on the stock market since it will prevent rent and unrealistic pricing.

The draft of the national budget bill also indicates that the government will be less reliant on the stock market to compensate deficits and fund various development projects, which is another positive aspect of the mentioned bill since the stock market will be less affected by the politics and will follow a normal trend created by supply and demand.

As stated by Market Analyst Peyman Hadadi, the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year indicates that the government has a more positive view of the market for the upcoming year.

According to Hadadi, the allocation of a separate budget for the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund shows that the government is taking the necessary measures to provide stronger support for the market and to ensure its growth in the future.

“The allocation of a budget line for the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund is considered one of the most important points of the [Iranian calendar year] 1401 budget bill,” Hadadi said.

The expert also pointed to the imposition of tax on rival markets including the housing market as another important and influential change in the next budget bill and said: “Taxation of luxury cars and expensive housing, along with taxation of bank deposits of legal entities, is also one of the important issues that should be appreciated about the budget bill.”

He also mentioned the elimination of subsidized foreign currency allocations and noted that this would create huge changes in the market and will be the starting point for some positive progress in some industries active in the market.

The elimination of subsidies on foreign currency is not only beneficial for the country's macro-economy but also has a positive effect on the capital market transactions, the analyst said.

He further pointed to the reduction of taxes on manufacturing companies and added: “The important action of the government in reducing the tax on production units from 25 percent to 20 percent will largely offset the increase in energy costs.”

# The United States is trapped in Israel's overindulgence

From page 1 ► In an interview with the Israel Channel 12, Tamir Hayman, a former Israeli intelligence chief, acknowledges that the Israeli intelligence services informed the U.S. officials that the Iranian Quds General had been planning on an extensive military operation, in the Persian Gulf, against the American forces. Accordingly, the U.S. forces were on alert for possible Iranian aggression.

Contrary to what the Israeli officials claimed, General Soleimani and his associates flew to the neighboring country on a civilian airplane to carry a message about "the Baghdad Initiative" to reduce regional tensions, according to Adil Abdul-Mahdi, the former Iraq Prime Minister.

Therefore, it is clear that the Israeli regime manipulated the American government to achieve its most wanted objective and interest of taking a strike on Iran by removing its key player. Sadly, the Trump administration succumbed to Israel's demand to make an unlawful killing, leaving Iran with no retaliatory option other than firing a barrage of rockets at Ain Al-Assad Base housing the American troops.

The attack, unprecedented as it was, led to several wounded



American soldiers, and, above all, it discredited and humiliated the American government in regional and global arenas.

Israel's opposition to the U.S. returning to the Iran deal is another classic example of the Zionists' attempt to turn its concerns with removing Iran sanctions into a global one. They Argue to the European and American governments that the deal is flawed and that Plan B, i.e., military option, is inevitable. According to U.S. strategic national security documents, it is in its best interest to establish peace and stability in West Asia and the

Persian Gulf. So it would be able to compete with its emerging rivals,

## The Israeli regime manipulated the U.S. to achieve its most wanted objective on Iran by removing its key player.

China and Russia.

It is emphasized in The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy by John Mearsheimer with Stephen Walt, unequivocal and unwavering support for Israel not only does the United States interests disservice, but it also runs counter to it. It further angers the Muslim nations and encourages masses to oppose and actively target American interests in the region. The truth is, contrary to what U.S. officials constantly claim, unilateral and unconditional support for Israel always has the opposite effect. Not only has it not resolved the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it also has made the United States ousting from the region a uniting objective for Western Asian populations, giving rise to terrorism and extremism.

Perhaps it is time for the Americans, the members of Congress, and the Federal government to pay closer attention to Israel playing the victim card and manipulatively globalizing its interests. Thus, wasting the American tax-paying dollars and putting the lives of American soldiers in harm, to only secure its national security and interests.

*Dr. Azam Molaei is an expert on "Iran and West Asia"*

## Extrajudicial assassination of General Soleimani



TEHRAN - General Soleimani was assassinated on Friday, January 3, 2020, around 1:00 a.m. local time by a United States drone strike near Baghdad International Airport. Donald Trump, the U.S. ex-president, said they had expected an imminent attack by Iran. The then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Iran was planning actions that threatened U.S. citizens. But it was a huge lie. Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use of force except under two circumstances; When the U.N. Security Council authorizes the strike and when a country acts in self-defense. If a strike is anticipated but has not yet occurred, self-defense is called anticipatory self-defense, which should be distinguished from preventive self-defense. It seeks to halt a future threat, often in the absence of precise information.

As a doctrine, anticipatory self-defense is still in flux. It should be noted that in any case, the occurrence of a military attack is the first condition of legitimate self-defense. A preventive attack, in this case, has no legal value and is not considered a defense, said Eliav Lieblich, associate professor of law at Tel Aviv University. Preventive self-defense is quite unlawful. Kevin Jon Heller, professor of law at the University of Amsterdam, told Al Jazeera that Trump referring to an imminent attack is proof that the United States still needs to offer some legal justification for the attack.

Additionally, it violated the U.N. Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings 1997, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents 1973, also Article 21 Convention on Special Missions 1969 with the title Status of the Head of State and persons of high rank, and Article 31 with the title Immunity from jurisdiction. It also Breached the sovereignty of a third State. The two aspects are debatable. These arguments are based on the unproven claims of self-defense and imminent attack and violation of necessity and proportionality. Furthermore, the United States committed limited state terrorism based on its behavior characteristics in this case. The assassination of General Soleimani is

a watershed for the rule of law.

One aspect of the legal debate concerned the United States' longstanding targeting ban through Executive Order 12,333 issued in 1981. People employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government are banned from engaging, or conspiring to engage in, assassination. The only available judicial option is, according to the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), the establishment of a Hybrid Court, which is an international court between Iran and Iraq, and the establishment of a fact-finding committee in this regard. Recalling the agreement between Iraq and the United States in 2008, SOFA (U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement), the reason for the two-year delay in the formation of such a tribunal is quite understandable.

This agreement (Article 4, paragraph 5, and Article 27, paragraph 1) explicitly prohibits the U.S. from using Iraq territory to attack third countries. Therefore, Iraq can consider this action of the United States as a clear example of aggression and violation of the SOFA agreement. It is clear that the United States is violating the jus cogens in international law, the principle of non-use of force, the non-intervention principle, and the right to life. Given the mentioned restrictions and the United States' permanent membership in the Security Council, its presence in the region poses a threat to regional and international peace and security. The Islamic Republic of Iran will always have the right to respond appropriately and take harsh legal retaliation in this systematic and governmental assassination.

Despite accepting the responsibility for the assassination, violating the basic principles and rules of international law, as well as violating its every obligation, The United States has always declared itself a defender of human rights, a guardian of international peace and security. It also justifies all its illegal actions under this gigantic lie. Therefore, the United States withdrawal from the region is a condition for the return of peace and security.

## The United States withdrawal from the region is a condition for the return of peace and security.

## U.S. and West Asia, two years after Gen. Soleimani

By Mohsen Hayat

TEHRAN - January 3, 2022, marks the second anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani by a U.S. drone attack on the perimeter of Baghdad international airport.

Immediately after the incident, Iranian officials published statements calling for global condemnation of the United States military aggression. They also promised reciprocal actions. Five days later, Iran launched 13 missiles into the occupied Ain-al-Assad base, showcasing Iranian Missile capabilities and developments. They also claimed that the true vengeance for the assassination of Gen. Soleimani would be the end of the U.S. military presence in the region. Two years later, it seems that the Iranians have kept their word and are closer than ever to their goal.

### Afghanistan

In 2001, the then-United States president, George W. Bush, launched an all-out offensive on Afghanistan with a coalition of allied nations to hunt down the world-famous terrorist Osama Bin Laden and his group, Al-Qaida, responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Another goal of the invasion was to overthrow the Taliban regime, accused of sheltering Al-Qaida, promising to establish a strong democratic government in Afghanistan. The former goal was eventually achieved in 2013, with an operation near Pakistan. But after 20 years of military presence and huge expenditures provided by American taxpayers, the U.S.-backed government of Afghanistan fell in just a few days, following the departure of American troops in



the August of 2021. The Taliban took the control of Afghanistan, and now there are no American soldiers to cause them any trouble. The final result of this unjustified military adventure was 241000 deaths, followed by more serious concerns for the future of Afghanistan.

### Iraq

As a result of a much-debated accusation of possessing weapons of mass destruction by the former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussain, the republican administration of George W. Bush launched a massive operation on Iraq in March 2003. This was the most significant unilateral action of the U.S. in the post-soviet era, undermining the U.N. security council by not delaying operations until its permission for military intervention in Iraq. The United States deployed over 170000 troops to Iraq.

After a short period of absence in the country, the United States redeployed ground forces again, claiming to cooperate with Iraqi forces in the battle against the newly established terrorist group, ISIL. Even though the U.S. managed to overthrow the Iraqi dictator in a matter of

months, no weapons of mass destruction were discovered in the country, questioning the fundamental reason behind the invasion of Iraq. As for the ISIL military quest, there have been many pieces of evidence that the U.S. presence in the country generally led to the favor of the terrorist group by intervening in Iranian-Iraqi cooperative efforts to fight back against ISIL.

Following the drone operation targeting Major General Soleimani on Iraq soil on January 5, 2020, the Iraqi council of representatives determined the action as an explicit violation of the country's sovereignty. They called for the immediate dismissal of the U.S. military personnel from Iraq. The Trump administration complained against the vote. He threatened to impose sanctions on the country to cause reluctance on the Iraqi government to take any serious actions. Following the continuance of pressures and resistance from the Iraqi resistance movements, the gradual transfer of the U.S. military bases in Iraq to the Iraqi military gained pace.

By September 29, 2021, the number of troops decreased to 3500. Finally, following a strategic dialogue between the Iraqi prime minister Al-Kadhemi and the U.S. president Joe Biden, all combat operations came to halt on December 9, 2021. Currently, only 2500 personnel remain in Iraq for an advisory role, as stated by the U.S. officials.

Leaving Iraq has caused concerns amongst the U.S. military elites, most notably McKenzie calling the procedure a major political success for Iran. Seemingly, the post-Soleimani Middle East (West Asia) is a much more dangerous place for Americans, and Iran is much closer to its goal of forcing the Americans out of the region.

*Mohsen Hayat is an international relations expert*

## Leaving Iraq has caused concerns amongst the U.S. military elites, most notably McKenzie calling the procedure a major political success for Iran.

## A legal assessment of the assassination of Gen. Soleimani

By Javeed Montazeran

TEHRAN - On January 3, 2020, the Iranian Quds Force Commander, Major General Qassim Soleimani, with his entourage were subject to targeted killing by an American drone missile. On his second anniversary, we want to assess the legality of the assassination from the perspective of international law. Considering, it was an extraordinary and unprecedented assassination of a senior commander of a State on the territory of a third State carried out by another State.

After the targeted killing of the Islamic Republic of Iran Quds Force commander, Gen. Qassim Soleimani, the US Department of Defense (DoD), and then-US President Donald Trump justified the act as the right to self-defense and within the framework of International law. They Accused the general of involvement in earlier attacks on U.S. headquarters and embassy. On December 27, 2019, the DoD alleged that Gen. Soleimani was plotting imminent attacks on American diplomats and personnel in Iraq, implicitly suggesting that his

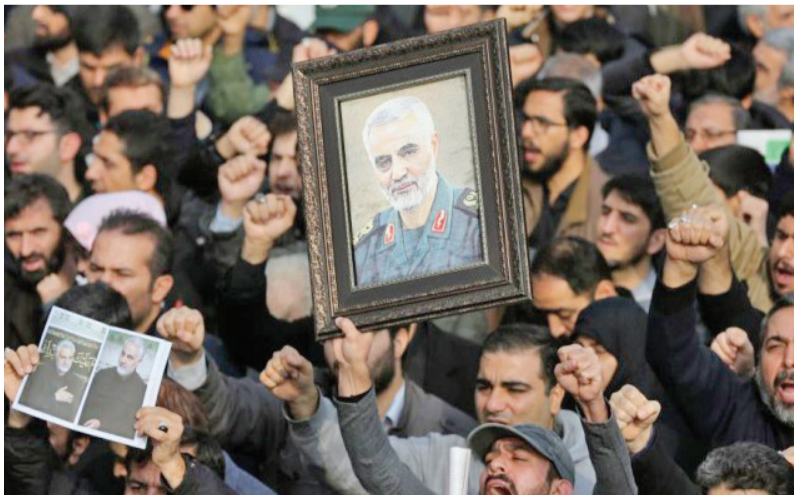
killing was necessary as preemptive self-defense.

The truth of the matter is that under international law, the killing of Gen. Qassim Soleimani violated the conditions for the lawful exercise of the right of self-defense within the laws of armed conflict, hence lacking legal value and not considered self-defense.

On the other hand, the United States killing came at a time when Gen. Qassim Soleimani was the only commander dealing heavy blows to ISIS terrorists over the years, and the US-Iran relations, despite suffering crises, never came close to a direct armed conflict.

Had the strike occurred within the setting of an armed conflict, under international humanitarian law, General Soleimani and his companions could have constituted legitimate military targets as combatants. Accordingly, the killing would still infringe the laws of armed conflict and constitute an act of aggression and support for Takfiri terrorists.

Ms. Agnes Callamard, the special



rapporteur on extrajudicial, rapid, or arbitrary executions at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), presented her report to the 44th session of the Human Rights Council on July 10. It was entitled the Targeted Killings through Armed Drones and the Case of Assassination of Major General Qas-

sim Soleimani. It says that the targeted killing of General Soleimani is the first known incident in which a State invoked self-defense as a justification for an attack against a state-actor, in the territory of another state, thus implicating the prohibition on the use of force in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. Callamard views the use of drones and

other equipment for the assassination as illegal.

As far as international law is concerned, the use of intentional or potentially deadly force is permissible only when the target or targets present an imminent or even actual threat to life. Therefore, the United States action lacks legal justification as there is no evidence suggesting that the commander and his nine companions presented an ongoing

## America's arbitrary act of striking General Soleimani's convoy violates the principle of respect for human rights and the right to life.

or imminent threat to the American forces and personnel.

Therefore, America's arbitrary act of striking General Soleimani's convoy violates the principle of respect for human rights and the right to life, which deprived General Soleimani and his associates of the right to life as a peremptory norm in international law.

As enshrined in the UN Charter, this action also violates the most obvious principles and peremptory norms of international law, including the interference principles, territorial integrity, inviolability, and prohibition of the use of force.

In conclusion, the justification provided by the United States authorities is remarkably vague and inconsequential. In other words, based on international law and human rights principles, the United States targeted killing of Gen. Qassim Soleimani with his associates was unacceptable and illegal.

*Javeed Montazeran is an international law expert*

## Stone building probably belonging to ancient tribesmen discovered in western Iran



From page 1 ► The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or

Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

From the Caspian in the northwest to Baluchistan in the south-east, the Iranian Plateau extends for close to 2,000 km. It encompasses the greater part of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan west of the Indus River containing some 3,700,000 square kilometers. Despite being called a “plateau”, it is far from flat but contains several mountain ranges, the highest peak being Damavand in the Alborz mountain range at 5610 m, and the Dasht-e Loot east of Kerman in Central Iran falling below 300 m.

## Fitur 2022: Iran to set up pavilion next to Europeans

TEHRAN – For the first time, Iran’s pavilion at Fitur will be installed in a hall dedicated to the European countries, an Iranian tourism official said on Saturday.

“Due to the limited number of halls for the upcoming Fitur exhibition, Iran’s 120-square-meter pavilion has been moved from Hall II, which was previously dedicated to West Asian participants, to the Hall IV that is devoted to European countries,” Hadi Sajjadifar said.

Moreover, 14 private exhibitors have been scheduled to attend the pavilion turning the spotlight on the Iranian culture, arts, handicrafts, architecture, and travel destinations, he explained.

According to its organizers, this annual event represents an economic impact of 330 million euros, with the consequent direct impact on the recovery of tourism and the invigoration of sectors linked to tourism in Madrid.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

## Another Iranian village named national crafts hub

TEHRAN – Andaj, a village in the northwestern province of Qazvin, has been designated as the national village of kilim, a kind of handwoven floor covering, the deputy tourism minister has announced.

When a city, town, or village is recognized as a national handicraft hub, an important step is taken to help it in the arenas of local branding, marketing, tourism, sustained economy, and cultural prosperity, Pouya Mahmoudian said on Saturday.

“This national registration will help identify and encourage women, entrepreneurs, and artists in these areas and bring a wave of happiness and hope to the people and artisans of the region,” the official added.

Back in June, the official announced that the development of cities and villages of handicrafts has boosted related businesses by attracting tourists to the regions.

National and global registration allows these cities and villages to be brought to light and their capacities to be promoted, she explained.

As soon as a city or village is registered on an international scale or at a national level in the field of handicrafts, the development of its infrastructure becomes a public demand by anyone living there, she mentioned.

The world cities of handicrafts can become tourist destinations, as well as centers for students, entrepreneurs, and visitors interested in handicraft art, she added.

She also noted that one of the biggest goals of the tourism ministry is to elevate



the status of these cities and villages.

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran’s number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”. Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a “world city of filigree”. And Qassemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chadur Shab, a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

The value of Iran’s handicrafts exports

TEHRAN – Iran pavilion is set to add extra charm to the prestigious Expo 2020 Dubai by widening its outline such as an enormous celebration of Noruz, the Persian New Year, which will begin on March 21.

The decision was reached during a meeting between the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ezatollah Zarghami, Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili and Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin, Mehr reported on Sunday.

During the meeting, the financial support needed to implement the ideas for improving the condition of Iran’s pavilion during the remaining 100 days of the expo was also discussed.

Noruz, which usually falls on March 21st every year, marks the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area. The feast was initially registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009, as a common tradition for Iran, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. However, the five other countries put in requests officially to be added to the list during a meeting held in Tehran in January 2014.

In December 2016, Iran and 11 other countries registered Noruz as a common tradition during the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Noruz, according to UNESCO, promotes the

# Iran pavilion to bring extra charm to Expo 2020



values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families, as well as reconciliation and neighborliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and various communities.

Noruz traditions, however, vary from place to place, ranging from leaping over fires and streams in Iran to tightrope walking, lighting candles at house doors, traditional games such as horse racing, or

the traditional wrestling practiced in Kyrgyzstan.

### Dubai Expo

Expo 2020 originally was scheduled for October 20, 2020 –April 10, 2021, but due to the outbreaks of the coronavirus, the event has been postponed. However, the organizers keep the name Expo 2020 for marketing and branding purposes.

Throughout the years, World Expos have been global events dedicated to sharing top-notch innovation, showcasing ground-breaking inventions,

## Uramanat home to over 700 ancient sites, estimates suggest

TEHRAN – Preliminary archaeological assessments suggest the UNESCO-registered Uramanat region is composed of over 700 ancient sites, the director of the world Heritage said on Sunday.

Up to the moment, 120 sites of significant historical values have been discovered within the vast Uramanat cultural landscape.... However, the number is estimated to reach over 700 in future archaeological expeditions, Pouya Talebnia said.

“So far, 120 historical sites have been identified in the Uramanat region of Kermanshah province, and to further identify more sites, more detailed studies should be carried out.”

“We are planning to conduct additional archaeological studies on [the Paleolithic] Ravansar hill and the cultural landscape of Uramanat, using the expertise of local archaeologists and in collaboration with the University of Heidelberg,” Talebnia noted.

Last month, a team of archaeologists from Iran and Germany finished a field survey to shed new light on the history of Uramanat by unearthing remnants of historical monuments and relics. It yielded the discovery of “several” archaeological sites and objects yet it resulted in a change in the chronological sequence of several previously-found ancient sites, according to Talebnia.

Moreover, several historical fortresses and their legal properties were demarcated during the survey, which was co-directed by Talebnia and Shelif Amelirad from Heidelberg University.

Stretched on the slopes of Sarvabad county, and shared between the provinces of Kordestan and Kermanshah, the rural area embraces dense and step-like rows of houses in a way that the roof of each house forms the yard of the upper one, a feature that adds to its charm and attractiveness.

Last September, Hessam Mahdi, the representative of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) said that he was “impressed” by the status of the rural landscape during his visit. He made the remarks on the sidelines of a visit to the western province of Kermanshah. “I am proud of being chosen to assess the case and traveling to Iran as I could visit the local people in the region.”

Local officials and travel insiders believe that inscription of the property on the prestigious list of the UN body could jumpstart tourism in the region and also look at it as a tool for better conservation of its natural landscapes and unique cultural scenes for the next generations, saying its unique rural texture, architecture, lifestyle, and agriculture is a prominent example of the integration of man into nature.

## Prehistorical relics meticulously restored in the hands of experts

TEHRAN – Cultural heritage experts in Zanjan province have restored a selection of 25 prehistorical relics to their closest possible original states during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

Twenty-four of these objects, which were discovered during excavations in Tarom, date back to the Iron Age, and the other one, discovered in Khorramdareh date from an undefined prehistoric time, Mohammadreza Mohammadpur said on Sunday.

Documentation, cleaning, and stabilizing processes took place during the restoration projects, which was carried out with meticulous attention to their material and antiquity, the official added.

A major goal of these restoration projects was to protect and preserve them for future generations, he noted.

Iron Age is the final technological and cultural stage in the Stone–Bronze–Iron Age sequence. The date of the full Iron Age, in which this metal, for the most part, replaced bronze in implements and weapons, varied

geographically, beginning in the Middle East and southeastern Europe about 1200 BC but in China not until about 600 BC, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

In Iran, the term Iron Age is employed to identify a cultural change that occurred centuries earlier than the time accorded its use elsewhere in the Near East, and not to acknowledge the introduction of new metal technology

As mentioned by Encyclopedia Iranica, Iron artifacts were unknown in Iran until the 9th century BC (the cultural period labeled Iron Age II), centuries



after the phase designated as Iron Age I came into existence.

Iranian sites with levels identified as dating to the Iron Age were first excavated in western Iran at Sialk, and later

in northwestern Iran around the west, east, and south shores of Lake Urmia, close to the Zagros mountains bordering Mesopotamia and Anatolia. These sites remain to date the best-documented full-range Iron Age sites in western Iran.

Written sources are rare at Iranian Iron Age sites, and locally written texts are non-existent. Indirect historical reference to the region begins in the 9th century BC when Assyrian royal texts first refer to various polities in northwestern and western Iran; these references continued into the 7th century. However,

relating the Assyrian-named polities with on-the-ground sites is difficult; in fact, not one excavated Iranian Iron Age site has been conclusively identified by its ancient name—although suggested identifications have been brought forth.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

# Iranian researchers develop 120 agriculture technology products

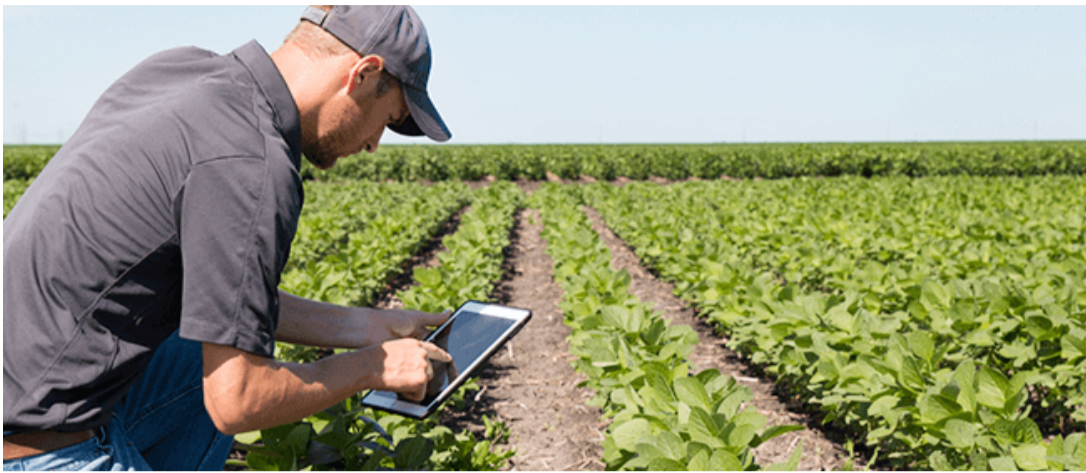
TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies have so far produced 120 technological products in the field of agriculture, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Some 30 knowledge-based companies are working to integrate the agricultural industry with innovation and creativity by producing 120 technological products so that the new generation of agriculture will be realized in the country.

With the growing population, declining food and agricultural resources, and declining food security around the world, countries need to move toward using modern agriculture to help speed up crop production.

This work covers everything from the cultivation to the harvest and sale of crops and can play an effective role in the development of the new generation of agriculture and the promotion of productivity and sustainability of crops.

According to the latest statistics, 265 companies are active in the field



of agriculture, biotechnology, and the food industry and have produced knowledge-based products.

Agriculture is one of the fields in which nanotechnology has been able to develop, as over 50 widely used nanoproducts have been launched in the agricultural sector of Iran.

Although the use and effectiveness of nanotechnology are often associated with future advances in medical and chemical technology, its usage is far subtler and wide.

The potential of nanotechnology in agriculture is high, but there are still a few things to consider, such as increasing the scale of production processes and reducing costs, as well as assessing production risk. Nanotechnology use in consumer products has also raised some ethical and social concerns in some countries, from environmental health and safety to consumer perceptions and intellectual property rights.

Currently, over 7,000 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.

## \$448m of smuggled goods seized within 9 months



TEHRAN – Smuggled goods worth 123 trillion rials (nearly \$448 million) have been confiscated across the country over the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2021), Jalal Amini, a police official, said on Sunday.

In order to help domestic production, the fight against smuggling is underway continuously through monitoring of goods (origin and destination), implementation of plans, periodic and intermittent inspections of roads, etc. are on the agenda by the anti-trafficking police throughout the country, he explained.

The smuggled goods include basic goods, home appliances, electronic and medical equipment, car, and mobile phone accessories, cosmetics, clothes, coins, and currencies along with all kinds of smuggled fuels and petroleum products, IRNA reported.

He went on to say that goods worth 123 trillion rials (nearly \$448 million) have been discovered, in addition to 9,000 vehicles.

### \$20-25 billion of smuggled goods annually

Every year, \$20-25 billion worth of goods are smuggled in and out of the country, which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, Hassan Norouzi, a member of the Parliament, said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), \$12 billion was smuggled into Iran and \$900 million out of the country, according to the Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange.

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a

daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On December 19, 2018, a government spokesman said every day 11.5 million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee has quoted various sources as putting the figure at 10, 15, and even 20 million liters a day.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, another member of the committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per liter profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the same as the country's annual development budget.

In addition to gasoline smuggling, other fuels such as kerosene and diesel are also smuggled; not in lesser quantities.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan was implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.

## 5 new species of reptiles identified in Iran

TEHRAN – Five new species of lizards were introduced to the world for the first time from Iran's fauna, ISNA reported on Sunday.

A research team from Hakim Sabzevari University of Sabzevari city located in Khorasan Razavi province identified 5 new species of lizards for the fauna of Iran by conducting several research trips to Hormozgan, Fars, and Isfahan provinces, and introduced them to the world for the first time.

These species belong to the family Lacertidae and Gekkonidae and are named as Eremias, Isfahanica, Tropicolotes hormozganensis, Microgecko varaviensis.

### Biological diversity in Iran

Iran has a high diversity of species due to geographical conditions, climatic diversity, huge water resources of the Caspian

Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf, and the Sea of Oman in the south.

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic fish, about 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in the country.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades, human activities

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates identified in the country.

have led to alarming degradation of ecosystems, deletion of genes, species, and biological capabilities; Human threats to biodiversity have accelerated the most over the past 50 years over the entire history of human life.

According to the United Nations, three-quarters of the Earth's environment and about 66 percent of the marine environment have been altered by human activities, and the latest report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) states that more than one million species of animals and plants are in danger of extinction.

Therefore, any planning and action in the direction of optimal and principled management of biodiversity protection in the country, interaction and contin-



uous cooperation of responsible bodies, and benefiting from international opportunities and their financial and professional resources can play a very important and key role in maintaining biological diversity alongside sustainable development.

With the common determination of officials and policymakers, the people, the media, and environmental activists, this valuable asset will preserve and protect for future generations.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## COVID-19 takes lowest toll on foreign nationals in Iran

Iran had the lowest coronavirus cases and mortality among refugees and foreign nationals compared to the population it is hosting, Mehdi Mahmoudi, Director of Citizens and Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of Interior has said.

Referring to the measures taken for non-Iranian citizens during the pandemic, he said that since the very beginning, when the country became infected with the disease, the community of foreign nationals in our country was no exception to this issue, and prevention programs and necessary measures have been taken for this group.

"We identified foreign nationals in need and tried to provide them with livelihood assistance, as well as health packages and self-protective items needed to prevent the infection," he explained.

## ایران کمترین تلفات کرونا اتباع خارجی را داشته است

مهدی محمودی مدیرکل امور اتباع و مهاجرین وزارت کشور گفت در خصوص ابتلا به بیماری کرونا در بین اتباع خارجی ایران کمترین ابتلا و کمترین تلفات را نسبت به جمعیت داشته است.

او در گفتگو با ایلنا درباره اقدامات صورت گرفته برای اتباع غیرایرانی در ایام کرونا گفت: از همان ابتدا که کشور درگیر این بیماری شد، جامعه اتباع خارجی هم در کشور ماستثنی از این موضوع نبود و برنامه‌های پیشگیری و تمهیدات لازم نیز برای این گروه نیز در نظر گرفته شده است.

اتباع غیرایرانی که نیازمند بودند را شناسایی کرده و تلاش کردیم از نظر معیشتی به این گروه نیز کمک‌هایی صورت بگیرد و همچنین بسته‌های بهداشتی و اقلام مورد نیاز پیشگیری از بیماری کرونا در چندین نوبت به آنها ارائه شده است.

## SOCIETY

JANUARY 3, 2022

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

## IRGC's "Noora" vaccine begins third phase of human trial

From page 1 ► It proved effective against Indian strain, according to Hojjat Niki-Maleki, head of the information center of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam.

Developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, Razi Cov Pars is the second Iranian-made vaccine that started the clinical trial on February 27.

Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically-developed COVID-19 vaccine, was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

Lately, the Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use license for two other domestic vaccines of Razi Cov Pars and Fakhra.

Moreover, the Iranian-Australian Spikogen vaccine and Pastu Covac, developed jointly by the Pasteur Institute of Iran and Cuba's Finlay Vaccine Institute, are other vaccines, which have received the emergency use license.



Iran is one of the few countries that has all vaccine production platforms, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said in June 2021.

Meanwhile, World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain said in September 2021 that the Organization was collecting the necessary information for the registration and certification of Iranian-made coronavirus vaccines.

## Opportunities and threats facing Earth's biodiversity

(Part 3)

### Volcanoes, meet cement

Production of clinker, a key ingredient of cement, is bad for the climate and bad for biodiversity. It requires mining limestone, harming habitats. The process of turning limestone into clinker also releases huge amounts of planet-warming carbon dioxide, from the energy required to heat it up and the gas limestone releases in the process. Cement production is already responsible for about 8% of global carbon dioxide emissions, and demand is expected to grow. Using volcanic material in place of limestone could reduce greenhouse gas impact and would have the possible additional benefit making cement less prone to cracking. The researchers write, however, that we need to weigh the environmental costs of mining and transporting volcanic material against the benefits of reducing limestone use.

### Insecticide whack-a-mole

Neonicotinoids are a class of chemicals that kill insects by disabling their nervous systems. Used to control pests in agriculture, they have come under fire in recent years for threatening populations of bees and other desirable insects. As they have been banned in the EU and elsewhere, other similar-acting insecticides have emerged. These substitutes, including sulfoxaflor and flupyradifurone, appear also to harm bees and some other desirable insect species, potentially posing new threats to insect biodiversity.

### Plant-forward food

Animal agriculture is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, and "plant-forward" diets are gaining increased attention as a way not only to be healthier ourselves but also to help our planet be healthier as well. China, for one, is taking it a step further. Rather than simply touting meals heavy on fruits and veg, it has committed to cut its citizens' meat consumption in half by 2030. Media campaigns

and bans in some settings have already contributed to a decline in meat consumption, and the initiative has boosted synthetic meat innovation. The country's plant-based meat industry is expected to grow by 20 to 25% a year in the foreseeable future.

### All together now

Volunteer groups, non-profit organisations, small-town governments and other local entities can be a valuable source of support for people living in rural areas. It turns out they can be a valuable source of support for other living things too. The number of social institutions globally has grown from 500,000 in 2000 to 8.5m in 2020, providing support for the sustainable management of about 300m hectares (700m acres) of forests, farmland and waterways. If the trend continues, it bodes well for biodiversity conservation as more lands managed in ways that keep it, and the plants and animals that inhabit it, thriving.

### Wetland attitude adjustment

The East Asian-Australasian flyway, which extends along the eastern coast of Asia and Australia through New Zealand, is one of the world's top hotspots for diversity and sheer numbers of waterfowl and other water-loving birds, including critically endangered species. With huge development under way in China, one of the countries with the most wetlands in the world, it's also among the most threatened. Many areas have been transformed into farmland and cities in the past decade. Recently, however, several changes are starting to shine an optimistic light. The UN has provided a new level of protection to highly significant wetlands in Korea and China by adding them to its roster of world heritage sites, and China has begun to invest in protecting key wetlands. If this trend continues and other countries follow suit, it could spell welcome relief for waterbirds throughout much of eastern Asia and the western Pacific.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 2

New cases	1,510
New deaths	41
Total cases	6,196,913
Total deaths	131,680
New hospitalized patients	394
Patients in critical condition	2,658
Total recovered patients	6,040,897
Diagnostic tests conducted	42,180,249
Doses of vaccine injected	120,003,437

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JANUARY 3, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Overlook and forgive the weaknesses of the generous people because if they fall down, Allah will help them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:09    Evening: 17:23    Dawn: 5:45 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 7:15 (tomorrow)

## Hafez, most popular of Persian poets

**An overview**  
Part 1  
Hafez is the most popular of Persian poets. If a book of poetry is to be found in a Persian home, it is likely to be the Divan (collected poems) of Hafez.

Many of his lines have become proverbial sayings, and there are few who cannot recite some of his lyrics, partially or totally, by heart. His Divan is widely used in bibliomancy; stories abound about his inspired predictions, justified by his popular sobriquet, lesan-al-ghayb, the Tongue of the Unseen.

And yet he is also a poet's poet. No other Persian poet has been the subject of so much analysis, commentary, and interpretation. Nor has any poet influenced the course of post-fourteenth century Persian lyrics as much as he has.

He falls short of the epic poet Ferdowsi (10th century) in terms of panoramic scope and socio-political significance, and Sadi (13th century) in terms of versatility, verve, and vivacity, and Rumi in rhythmic musicality, but by common consent he represents the zenith of Persian lyric poetry.

In no other Persian poet can be found such a combination of fertile imagination, polished diction, apt choice of words, and silken melodious expressions.

These are all wedded to a broad humanity, philosophical musings, moral precepts, and reflections about the unfathomable nature of destiny, the transience of life, and the wisdom of making the most of the moment—all expressed with a lyrical exuberance that lifts his poetry above all other Persian lyrics.

Hafez is almost exclusively known for his ghazals, lyric poems of generally about 7-9 lines. His poems in other genres are not very significant and have hardly any place in the popular consciousness, except perhaps his Saqi-nama, a poem in couplet form about wine and drinking, often sung in a particular mode of traditional Persian music.

His ghazals consist of generally self-contained lines, bound together by a single meter, a single rhyme, and sometimes a radif, that is, a word or phrase repeated at the end of each line.

The first line more often than not sets the mood of each ghazal, but this is hardly followed through in all the lines; the thought or sentiment in other lines is determined by several factors: the general mood or motivation involved in composing the ghazal, the requirements of the rhyme and the radif, the poet's fluttering fancy, and possibly a consideration of the musical mode or melody intended for each line, as the ghazals of Hafez seem to have been written to be sung as well as read.

Disparate and randomly chosen as the contents of Hafezian ghazals appear, nevertheless they all belong to a grand thematic scheme, gradually established, from which the poet may pick the themes of his choice and offer his own variations on them.

Among the conventional motifs largely contributed or confirmed by Hafez himself are, for instance, a number of figures who inhabit Persian lyrics, including "the beloved," "the poet-lover," "the dispenser

of advice against love," "the chaperon of the beloved turned rival," "the saqi, or youth who serves wine in drinking sessions," and such themes as "the worshipful craving of the lover," "the indifference of the beloved," "the symbolic love of the nightingale for the rose" and "the devotion of the moth to the candle flame."

A ghazal, by definition, has love as its main subject. The ghazals of Hafez are no exception. He sings with paramount passion of the ecstasy of love, the incomparable beauty of the beloved, the pains of separation, the rare pleasure of union, and the grievous disdain of the beloved.

There are also a number of themes common to Persian lyric poetry that essentially derive from the beloved's being generally a reluctant young male figure, the love for whom—even though accepted in poetry—is not condoned by the Law; hence the indifference or acerbity of the beloved, the scandal of revealed love (rosvai), the advice of naysayers and dispensers of wisdom against such love, the oppressive hindrance of the beloved's warden or chaperon (raqib), and the lover-poet's burning envy of the other admirers and lovers of the beloved.

Odd as some of these sentiments may appear to a Western or Far Eastern mind, a Persian reader is used to them, familiar as s/he is with the thematic repertory of Persian lyrics and their conventions, as well as with the independent content of each line.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that love and its ramifications is the only major theme of the ghazals of Hafez—applicable as this may be to some other ghazal writers such as Attar, Sadi, and Rumi.

Driven by an inner urge, Hafez includes in his ghazals a theme which is totally unlyrical and alien to love poetry; but he is so passionately consumed by it that he cannot help broaching it—incongruous and ill-placed as it first may seem: he is out to expose the hypocrisy of all those who have set themselves up as guardians, judges, and examples of moral rectitude.

To Hafez, they pose as moral and spiritual leaders while they secretly practice the sins they exhort others not to commit. Unless we realize the intensity of Hafez's deep-rooted and passionate animosity towards the hypocrisy and perfidy of these figures, we will fail to appreciate much of his poetry.

Those that he persists in decrying include the zahed (literally "ascetic," but to Hafez, a practitioner of sham piety), the waez (preacher), the shaikh (religious elder), the mofti (a cleric who issues religious rulings), the qazi (judge, a religious figure in Islam), the faqih (scholar of religious law or shriah), the hafez (a memorizer and reciter of the Quran), the mohtaseb (official charged with policing public morals), and emam-e jama'at (leader of public prayer).

His railing is no less intense against the Sufis or Islamic mystics, whom he describes as dishonest and deceitful and whose cloaks of poverty are stained by the secretly consumed forbidden wine.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
To be continued

# “The Hajji Qassem Whom I Know” comes to Turkish bookstores

From Page 1 ► He met Soleimani, the then commander of the Sarallah Brigade, when he was delivering a speech for his soldiers. Suddenly, he felt a deep affection for Soleimani.

In 1986, Soleimani assigned him the task of disseminating Islamic teachings in his division. As the friendship continued, Shirazi was appointed as the representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in the Quds Force, the overseas arm of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), which was commanded by Soleimani until his martyrdom.

Shirazi accompanied Soleimani on many of the military operations he carried out in his mission to fight

against the ISIS terrorist group.

In one of the chapters, Shirazi writes about one of their joint meetings with the Leader.

“When we were leaving the Leader's house, I told him [Soleimani] ‘Put yourself forward as a candidate in the presidential election.’”

“He said, ‘Tell people what I say to you; I'm a candidate for martyrdom; a candidate for a bullet, not a presidential candidate.’”

The Persian edition has been published by Khate Moqaddam, a publishing house that released Shirazi's previous book “Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani” in November 2020.



Front cover of the Turkish translation of Ali Shirazi's book “The Hajji Qassem Whom I Know”.

Feta Publishing has previously published Turkish translations of several other books about Soleimani.

“Haci Kasim Suleymani ve Harem Savunuculari” (“Hajji Qassem Soleimani and Sacred Shrine

Defenders”) written by Morteza Keramati is one of the books published in March 2020.

“Suleymani'yi Tanimak” and “Sehit Haci Kasim Suleymani Mektebi”, both written by Ali Shirazi, have also been published by Feta.

## “My Fair Lady” mesmerizing theatergoers in Tehran



Director Golab Adineh's troupe performs Alan Jay Lerner's musical “My Fair Lady” at Tehran's City Theater Complex on November 11, 2021.

TEHRAN – Actress and director Golab Adineh has finally been able to stage Alan Jay Lerner's musical “My Fair Lady”, which is now mesmerizing theatergoers at the main hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex every night.

Her troupe, which is composed of over 100 people, was scheduled to perform the

play in spring 2020, however, the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to cancel all their performances.

The troupe gave its first performance on November 11 after actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya unveiled a poster for the play.

In her short speech made before the performance, she said that one of her reasons to accept Adineh's invitation to attend the opening performance was her collaboration with Adineh in “The Caucasian Chalk Circle”, which was staged in 1980 at the same hall.

She also added, “The pandemic has caused a split among us over the past two years, therefore it is a blessing that such great play brings us together again at this theater.”

Sparkling with wit, wisdom and wonderful songs, the musical play is based on Bernard Shaw's “Pygmalion”, which has been delighting audiences since it was first

performed in the 1950s.

When overbearing Professor Higgins stumbles on a flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, in Covent Garden, he recognizes that her hideous vowels and forgotten consonants are all that separate her from the upper classes. Higgins wagers that he can pass her off as a Duchess in a matter of weeks. But what will become of Eliza when the bet is over?

The musical's 1956 Broadway production was a notable critical and popular success, winning six Tony Awards, including best musical.

It set a record for the longest run of any musical on Broadway up to that time and was followed by a hit London production.

Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews starred in both productions. A popular film version premiered in 1964, and many revivals have followed.

## Iranian films score big win at LIFFT India Awards

TEHRAN – Iranian films have been among the big winners at the Literature Illusion Film Frames Television and Theatre (LIFFT) India Awards by garnering fourteen prizes.

The LIFFT India Awards, which was held online for the second consecutive year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, announced the winners on December 25.

Yaser Ahmadi was selected as best director for his movie “Saralish” in the feature film awards category.

Cinematographer Ali Hosseinzadeh was given the VK Murthy Award for his collaboration in the film.

Nazanin Karimi was crowned best actress for her role in “Zaferanieh near Sunset”, a dark drug drama directed by Mohammad Astim.

Nasim Adabi, another star of the film, also won the best supporting actress award.

The Mangesh Desai Award



Nazanin Karimi and Nasim Adabi were selected as best actress and best supporting actress for their roles in “Zaferanieh near Sunset” at the LIFFT India Awards.

for best sound designer went to Arash Qasemi for his collaboration in “Hot Scent” directed by Ali Ebrahimi.

Iranian filmmakers also won several awards in the LIFFT India Short Film Awards category.

“Holler”, also known as “Havar”, was named best children's short film.

Directed by Musa Hajinejad, the film is about a little girl in a village near Halabja, who stands by a tree near a high valley and plays with her scarf. A boy who is the

girl's playmate approaches her. The girl notices the presence of the boy. They look at each other and laugh. Then they run after one another away from the valley. They pass through the back alleys of the village and happily reach a house and enter its yard. The girl sits next to him and draws on the ground with the stick in her hand. A voice can be heard from inside the house. The girl goes home and looks inside the room. Inside the house is a marriage proposal party. We do not see anyone, but we hear from the voices that the

bride's father has agreed to the marriage.

The award for best director went to Milad Nasib-Sobhan for his drama “She is Similar to Me”.

The film also brought Soroush Emtiaz and Setareh Rezai the award for best production designer. Rezai and Emtiaz, who have also worked as costume designers in this film, won the award in this category.

Mehri Ale Aqa was named best actress for her role in “In Expectation of Light”, while Kamyar Daryakenari was picked as best actor for his role in “Nicki”.

The award for best child actor was given to Roza Ramezaninejad for “Running”.

“Bloody Cloth” directed by Vahid Biglari won the award for best film on women's rights in the non-fiction film awards section.

In the student film awards category, Hashem Jahromi was named best director for “Sixteenth Week”.

## Carlo Rovelli’s “Helgoland” published in Persian

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Italian theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli's book “Helgoland: Making Sense of the Quantum Revolution” has come to the Iranian bookstores.

Chatrang, a major Tehran-based company is the publisher of the book rendered into Persian by Samaneh Noruzi.

One of the world's most renowned theoretical physicists, Rovelli has entranced millions of readers with his singular perspective on the cosmos.

In “Helgoland”, he examines the enduring enigma of quantum theory. The quantum world Rovelli describes is as beautiful as it is unnerving.

Helgoland is a treeless island in the North Sea where the 23-year-old Werner Heisenberg made the crucial breakthrough for the creation of quantum mechanics,

setting off a century of scientific revolution.

Full of alarming ideas (ghost waves, distant objects that seem to be magically connected, cats that appear both dead and alive), quantum physics has led to countless discoveries and technological advancements.

Today our understanding of the world is based on this theory, yet it is still profoundly mysterious.

As scientists and philosophers continue to fiercely debate the meaning of the theory, Rovelli argues that its most unsettling contradictions can be explained by seeing the world as fundamentally made of relationships rather than substances.

We and everything around us exist only in our interactions with one another. This bold idea suggests new directions for thinking about the structure of reality and even the nature of consciousness.



This combination photo shows Carlo Rovelli and the front cover of the Persian edition of his book “Helgoland: Making Sense of the Quantum Revolution”.

Rovelli makes learning about quantum mechanics an almost psychedelic experience. Shifting our perspective once again, he takes us on a riveting journey through the universe so we can better comprehend our place in it.