

The Invisible Hand of UAE in Yemen

▶ Page 3

Report 

Ex-Iraqi PM on events leading to General Soleimani's assassination

TEHRAN - The following is a transcript of an interview by former Iraqi Prime Minister, Adil Abdul-Mehdi, about the events that led up to the assassination of Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and the deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis by American drone strikes at Baghdad International Airport on January 3rd 2020.

It is the only interview he gave following his resignation and gives a rare insight from a narrative that has not been highlighted enough in the media.

Abdul-Mehdi participated in the funeral procession for the two slain war heroes and was then forced to resign following riots that took place in southern Iraq, in what some analysts have described as a foreign backed conspiracy.

Adil Abdul-Mehdi (Former Iraqi PM):

"Of course, the developments were quick, overlapping from different angles, it was very complicated. There are many backlogs and a situation that turned into a crisis.

The events escalated from the summer, when there were bombings, targeting [of sites] and airstrikes of bases belonging to the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) etc... the language was all escalatory, during that time.

However, the most important incident was what took place at [the town of] Al-Qa'im. [Former U.S. Secretary of Defense, Mark] Esper called before the airstrikes [on the PMU] and said the 'K-1 Air Base in Kirkuk was targeted, one American was killed and another injured and we will respond by striking bases' of what [Esper] described as militias. ▶ Page 5

Op-ed 

Oppressed Bahrainis in the conscience of Martyr Qassem Soleimani

By Sondoss Al-Asaad

BEIRUT - No political movement with regional influence can be reckoned as a purely local affair; the situation is no different in Bahrain, noting that what is happening there is not an internal dispute (between the regime and its opponents), but rather has grave reflections: on all the Persian Gulf regimes; on the US military presence; and even on the global economy (given that the region is the main source of oil in world).

Talks about Bahrain's popular movement have increased, regionally and internationally, during the past decade with the intensification of the political crisis, since February, 2011.

The most serious aspect of the political crisis in the country was the regime's attempt to eliminate the indigenous population through political naturalization, and the fierce war against the Shiite presence. Legally speaking, this strategic threat requires an urgent national referendum so that those people determine their own destiny, a right that is internationally guaranteed. This demand has emerged particularly after the government has persisted in its transgression on their political rights by its illegitimate normalization with the Zionist occupation, ignoring the overwhelming popular rejection. ▶ Page 5

Resistance demands trial of assassins of Gen. Soleimani, al-Muhandis



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TEHRAN — Speaking at a commemoration gathering held in Tehran's Mosalla on Monday, Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi said that the assassins of the anti-terrorism commanders, martyrs General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis,

must be tried.

Raisi lamented the United States for violating Iraq's sovereignty, saying, "The United States violated Iraq's sovereignty by assassinating its Prime Minister's official guest."

He then added that former U.S. President

Donald Trump and his secretary of state Mike Pompeo must be tried for the crime of assassinating General Soleimani.

"If Trump and Pompeo did not face justice, Muslims will avenge General Soleimani," he emphasized. ▶ Page 2

Iran urges UN Security Council to hold U.S., Israel accountable for Gen. Soleimani assassination

TEHRAN - Iran has said the UN Security Council must hold the U.S. and Israel accountable for planning and assassinating Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

"Given the dire implications of this terrorist act on international peace and security, the Security Council must live up to its Charter-based responsibilities and hold the United States and the Israeli regime to ac-

count for planning, supporting and committing that terrorist act," Majid Takht Ravanchi, the Iranian ambassador to the UN, wrote in a letter to UN Security Council President Mona Juul on Sunday.

General Soleimani, Quds Force chief, was assassinated in a U.S. drone strike at Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020. The assassination was ordered by former U.S.

President Donald Trump.

Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) deputy chief Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who received General Soleimani at the airport, and their bodyguards were also martyred in the state terrorist attack.

Tamir Hey, who retired as the head of Israel's army intelligence in October, ▶ Page 2

Interview 

Liberal democracy has been eroded by populism and authoritarianism: Canadian historian

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - A distinguished professor of Russian and East European history at the University of Alberta says thirty years after Francis Fukuyama wrote the book "The End of History", liberal democracy has been on decline.

"Liberal democracy has struggled in recent years - Vladimir Putin is correct in this statement - and has been eroded most of all by Populism and authoritarian regimes," David R. Marples tells the Tehran Times.

"Thus, if one looks at the entire globe, we can see a decline of democracy in places like Brazil and India," he adds. ▶ Page 5



Iraqis remember anti-terrorism martyrs

TEHRAN — Tens of thousands of Iraqis held a commemoration ceremony for anti-terrorism martyrs Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in Baghdad airport on Sunday. As popular commanders, General Soleimani and al-Muhandis were impressively commemorated in the past days. There have been countless commemoration ceremonies to remember these two anti-terrorism heroes.

570 nanotech projects implemented to meet industrial needs

TEHRAN - Some 570 projects have been implemented in response to the country's industrial needs in the field of nanotechnology, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

The Iranian Nano Technology Transfer (INTT) network has so far identified 3,252 industrial needs in the field of nanotechnology and linked

some of them to a technological response.

Identifying industrial needs and connecting them to technologists is one of the most important chains in the development of the market of technological products, which have been realized by INTT.

Since 2015, the network has identified 3,252 industrial needs from 1,300 industrial

units and have connected some of them to a technological response by "holding technology exchange events", "participating in specialized exhibitions", "cooperation with expert consultants and technology exchange agents", "Identifying teams and potential individuals in the framework of the Innovation and Technology Challenge Program". ▶ Page 7

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Opinion 

Knowledge-based firms opening new horizons for Iran's oil industry

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN - Over the past two decades, the Iranian Oil Ministry has become more and more determined to collaborate with knowledge-based and research-based companies, universities, and research institutes to advance its development goals; this determination is now bearing fruit and the results of the ministry's endeavors in this regard can be seen in a variety of areas including oil, gas, petrochemicals, exploration, production, and distribution.

To pursue its new goals, the Oil Ministry has signed numerous memorandums and agreements with domestic knowledge-based firms and research institutions in recent years and such entities now play a significant role in making the country's oil and gas industry more and more self-reliant.

Although the plan for using the capacities of domestic innovative companies in the oil industry has been put atop agenda for so long, more serious measures have been taken to realize these goals since the new government administration has taken office.

"I guarantee that the Oil Ministry will fully support knowledge-based companies," Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji, said back in December 2021, on the sidelines of a ceremony for signing four memorandums of understanding (MOU) and contracts with knowledge-based companies. ▶ Page 4

International literati salute General Soleimani in Tehran poetry night

TEHRAN - Literati came together on Sunday in Tehran to remember Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani in an international poetry night.

The poetry night was organized at the Andisheh Hall of the Art Bureau to commemorate the second martyrdom anniversary of the former IRGC Quds Force chief who was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

Literati from Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq and several other countries in the region recited their compositions at the meeting.

The meeting opened with a speech made by Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the director of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature.

He pointed to the tragedy of Ashura as "a rational epic event" and said, "This event is so great that it can be assessed with logical reasoning; therefore, poetry and music have helped to express the tragedy of Ashura since it occurred."

He then added, "The character of Martyr Qassem Soleimani is so epic that it cannot be expressed through mere words, therefore we need the help of poetry and music; the truth of Soleimani will become eternal with the help of art." ▶ Page 8

Resistance demands trial of assassins of Gen. Soleimani, al-Muhandis

From page 1 ► Elsewhere in his remarks, President Raisi said that General Soleimani represented a school of thought and will not be eliminated by the assassination.

The president also the Iranian general feared nothing but the Lofty Lord.

Referring to his strong determination, Raisi said that “General Soleimani truly believed that ‘we can’ and he accepted no excuses for inaction.”

Referring to the general’s popularity among the people of the region and possibly the world, the president said that God has granted Soleimani with the gift of ability to conquer hearts.

“Soleimani was bestowed with a lofty heart,” he added.

Raisi also referred to General Soleimani’s different approaches in dealing with the oppressed and the enemies, saying that he was a tough man in facing enemies but very kind-hearted when dealing with the oppressed people.

“Soleimani was a revolutionary commander who acted beyond political factions,” the president said, referring to his nonpartisanship.

Pointing to General Soleimani’s efforts to create peace in the region, Raisi said that General Soleimani commanded operations to purge the region from terrorists and expel the enemies.

“General Soleimani detected capacities for Resistance across our region,” he added.

Pointing to his bravery, the president said that General Soleimani never feared dangers and perils.

He then said that Americans imagined that January 3, 2020 would be the end of General Soleimani but “it became his birthday.”

As Leader of the Islamic Revolution has said “martyr Soleimani” will be more dangerous for enemies than “General Soleimani”, Raisi remarked.

As popular figures, martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were impressively commemorated in the past days. There have been countless commemoration ceremonies to remember the anti-terrorism heroes.

On Sunday, tens of thousands of Iraqis gathered in Baghdad International Airport – the site where General Soleimani and al-Muhandis were assassinated on 3 January, 2020 – to commemorate the second anniversary of their

assassination.

Prominent figures, such as Faleh al-Fayyad, leader of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), as well as the families of martyrs Soleimani and al-Muhandis attended the ceremony.

Fayyad spoke at the gathering, saying that the Iraqis will remember the “leaders of victory, and we raise our generations on the noble values they carried, and the leaders of victory were ready for martyrdom every minute and every moment.”

Referring to a massive gathering on Saturday in Baghdad, Fayyad said that the people who came out on Saturday declared loyalty to those who sacrificed their life and their blood.

Local sources reported that over 2 million people attended the gathering on Saturday.

The PMF leader said that the Iraqi people hold the United States accountable for the “heinous crime” of assassinating the top Iranian and Iraqi commanders.

“What happened after [the assassination of Soleimani and al-Muhandis] created a new situation, and Iraq will no longer accept the presence of U.S. forces,” Fayyad said.

Manar al-Muhandis and Zeinab Soleimani, the daughters of al-Muhandis and Soleimani also spoke at the airport gathering.

Manar al-Muhandis said that Iraqis will not remain silent about “the Americans and their cowardice,” and that “we will avenge every drop of blood shed in Iraq, Yemen and Syria.”

For her part, Zeinab Soleimani spoke of her father’s deep fondness for Iraq, saying that martyr Soleimani knew that a resilient Iraq would become a “thorn in the eyes of the enemy.”

Zeinab Soleimani also spoke of an awaiting “harsh revenge” against those murderers “whose hands were stained with blood.”

She also said that Iranians and Iraqis will never forget the assassinations and the blood spilled at the Baghdad airport.

On Saturday afternoon, scores of Iraqis gathered in Baghdad to commemorate General Soleimani and al-Muhandis.

Hadi Al-Ameri, head of the Fatah Alliance; al-Fayyad, head of the PMF also known as Hashd al-Shaabi; and Qais Khazali, head of the Asaeb Ahl-Al-Haq; and Sayyid Ammar Hakim, leader of the National Hikma Movement, participated in the gathering along with other prominent leaders of the Shia factions.

Iran also is complaining that Saudi Arabia acted too late to allow the transfer of the Iranian ambassador from Yemen to Tehran for medical treatment.

Sanaa airport is under the siege of Saudi Arabia.

The ambassador, Hassan Irlou, who had contracted the Covid-19 pandemic, died one day after his arrival in Tehran.

Qalibaf said for the sake of the unity of the Islamic world and cooperation among Muslim nations Iran does not raise certain issues despite certain unkind behaviors by the Saudi Kingdom.

“Of course, we have held four rounds of talks (with Saudi Arabia) so far and they will continue.”

The senior lawmaker went on to say that it is the desire of the Islamic Republic that the Islamic countries get united.

He added, “We believe that today we need empathy and cooperation between Muslim countries.”

Iran wants all Muslim and regional countries “join hands” for progress and security, he suggested.

The parliament speaker reiterated Tehran’s long-held policy that Iran does not pose any security threat to any Muslim or neighboring countries. Instead, he said, Iran is standing on the side of Arab states in the face of real threats by the Zionist regime.

“Neighboring and Muslim nations should know that there is no threat on the part of the Islamic Republic and we are on their side and the main danger that is exorbitant demands by the Zionist regime.”

Human rights chief: Trump is the main convict for Gen. Soleimani assassination

TEHRAN — Speaking at a talk show on state TV on Sunday night, Kazem Gharibabadi, deputy Judiciary chief for international affairs and the director of the Human Rights Headquarters said that Iran has identified the main perpetrator of the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani.

“The main perpetrator of the assassination of Martyr Soleimani is known. Of the approximately 125 suspects and convicts identified, most were United States government officials. In addition, some other countries provided logistical support, and some companies were involved in this criminal terrorist act,” he said.

Gharibabadi added that the goal of Iran is to cooperate with the Iraqi government as a country where the crime took place, to identify all the perpetrators of this terrorist crime and bring them to justice.

He noted that most of the convicts and suspects are U.S. government officials.

The human rights chief stated that at the top of the 125 suspects and convicts in this case is Donald Trump, the former president of the United States.

“A president who admits violation of all international laws and proudly says that he committed and carried out this terrorist operation is very clear evidence that identifies who is the main culprit. This action is completely contrary to international law, human rights and other obligations of the U.S. government,” he noted.

Gharibabadi continued by saying that in prosecution and judicial proceedings, the confession of the former U.S. president is a very important legal document.

And of course, he said, since other people were involved in this action, documents and investigations must be done in full, as the assassination is now designated as a criminal case.

“It is in the process of being reviewed and will be completed soon,” he noted.

On a question why the court was established in Iran and not in the same country where the crime took place, Gharibabadi said, “There is no doubt that the Iraqi government has the authority to investigate this crime as a scene of the crime, and this is not only the demand of the Iranian government and the people, but also the demand of the Iraqi people and the world’s public opinion.”

Joint cooperation with Iraq will not preclude legal action by Iran

The official pointed out that the Iraqi government has filed a case in this regard and a joint cooperation is underway between Iran and Iraq in this criminal investigation, but martyr Haj Qassem Soleimani, as the flag bearer of the fight against terrorism, is a citizen of Iran. Therefore, he noted, Iran is authorized to take legal action against the perpetrators.

“We are competent under the



Islamic Penal Code to be able to deal with the crimes committed against our citizens by any country, and this has a legal basis. Also, the law passed by the parliament allows Iran to take reciprocal measures as well as legal and judicial proceedings, so there is a completely legal and judicial basis in this regard,” he elaborated.

Emphasizing that joint pursuits with the Iraqi government and judiciary do not prevent the Islamic Republic from pursuing legal action, he said that this case is a serious criminal case. The U.S. government has admitted that this terrorist act violates international law and its treaty obligations, Gharibabadi remarked.

“Of course, it has made some claims to justify its action, none of which are credible. Therefore, even in our plans, we should not limit ourselves to the judicial and legal prosecution of this crime in the courts of Iran and Iraq,” he asserted, hinting that Iran will take action in international courts as well.

Gharibabadi went on to say that Iran must use other capacities as well, because this is not a simple murder and it is a terrorist act that has very complex and wide dimensions.

“If we want to examine its effects from a legal point of view, there are many other capacities that we must use them,” he noted.

Legitimate defense or preemptive action by U.S. is rejected

Regarding the rights that were violated with the assassination of General Soleimani and the criminal act of the United States and other governments in the assassination, the human rights chief said that the argument for legitimate self-defense or preemptive action by the Americans is baseless and rejected as the Article 51 of the United Nations Charter states that armed attack or armed aggression must take place in order to justify legitimate self-defense.

Giving an example, Gharibabadi noted that in 1986, the International Court of Justice in the Nicaraguan case ruled that even the possibility of an armed attack could not be used as an excuse for legitimate defense.

“Legally, Iran and the United States were not in a state of armed conflict, so the United States can in no way rely on legitimate defense or preemptive action,” said

Gharibabadi, pointing that the 1973 Convention is a very important convention because crimes against internationally protected persons can be prosecuted and criminal liability of states is raised.

Gharibabadi, Iran’s former ambassador to international organizations, including The Hague-based OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, added it should be noted that General Soleimani was on a civilian mission and was carrying the message of Iran to the Iraqi government officials to resolve regional disputes.

“This assassination could be an example of a crime against humanity, because armed action was taken against a group of people who were carrying out a civilian mission. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also refer to the right to life, and the implication is that the right to life cannot be taken away arbitrarily,” he elaborated.

Countries and individuals involved in the assassination are all responsible

Noting that countries, companies or individuals that supported or involved in the assassination are all responsible, the human rights chief said that the judiciary representatives have been sent to 9 countries, including the U.S., regarding the role of individuals and companies in the assassination of the top general.

“Entities and individuals involved in the assassination were investigated so that we could increase our pressure to hold these countries responsible through political and diplomatic channels so that we can get the necessary answers to the questions of the judiciary,” he noted.

Gharibabadi added that the U.S. government and officials are at the top of the list of convicts in this case.

Judicial decisions have been issued against these countries, and no country, individual or company involved in this case should be immune from questioning, he remarked.

On why some countries and international organizations reacted passively to this criminal act, Gharibabadi said, “We are a nation that was exposed to all kinds of

pressures and threats after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, because the Islamic Republic of Iran will stand on its own two feet and stand against the system of domination and arrogance, which is the basis of all the threats, sanctions and pressures that we face.”

Governing international bodies exercise double standards

The human rights chief stressed that unfortunately the system governing international organizations is an unjust one.

“We have more than 17,000 victims of assassination, but the terrorists who committed such crimes live comfortably in European countries! In the case of the assassination of martyr Soleimani, hundreds or thousands of correspondences and meetings of our diplomatic community with officials of various countries and international organizations in New York, Geneva and Vienna in connection with this case have been recorded and numerous meetings have been held,” he explained.

He said except for some countries that have denounced or condemned this terrorist act, unfortunately Iran has not yet seen a clear condemnation by international organizations and this is because double standard is dominant in the world.

Joint investigative committee formed between Iran and Iraq

The judiciary official stated that a joint investigation committee has been formed between the two Iranian and Iraqi judicial bodies.

“So far, this committee has held two rounds of talks. The third round is scheduled to take place in Baghdad in about a month.”

Gharibabadi noted that the two judicial bodies of Iran and Iraq issued two joint statements. “The focal point of the statements is that both sides considered this action a war crime, and the exchange of proof is also on the agenda of these two bodies.”

He elaborated that in the Iranian judicial system, accusations have been leveled against suspects, including acts of premeditated murder, terrorist acts, and acts against national security.

In conclusion, Gharibabadi said that General Soleimani has done great services not only to Iran but also to the countries of the region and the international community by creating peace and stability and getting rid of terrorists.

“Now we are talking about damages for this action. No amount can be determined to compensate for this criminal act because it is not materially measurable. One of the points that we must consider in legal, judicial and political pursuits is not only the assassination of martyr Soleimani by United States, but also America must be held responsible for the actions of terrorist groups after the martyrdom of Soleimani and his companions in the region.”

Iran urges UN Security Council to hold U.S., Israel accountable for Gen. Soleimani assassination

From page 1 ► has acknowledged Israel’s involvement in the assassination of the top Iranian general, who was as a legendary commander in the fight against terrorist groups including Daesh.

Takht Ravanchi said “this criminal act also entails the criminal responsibility of all those who” who were “directly or indirectly” involved in the “terrorist act”.

The full text of Takht Ravanchi’s letter is as follows:

Excellency,

Concurrent with the second anniversary of the horrific assassination of Martyr Major General Qassem Soleimani, the Commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – an official branch of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran – and his companions, on 3 January 2020 at Baghdad International Airport, at the direct order of the then President of the United States, I would like to bring to your attention the recent information concerning the involvement of the Israeli regime in this heinous terrorist act.

In a recent interview, the former military intelligence

chief of the Israeli regime admitted the involvement of the Israeli regime in the premeditated assassination of Martyr Soleimani, stating that the “Israeli intelligence played a part” in that assassination, and described it as “an achievement” and one of the two significant and important assassinations during his term.

As I have on numerous occasions underlined, including in my letters dated 3 January 2020 (S/2020/13), 7 January 2020 (S/2020/16) and 29 January 2020 (S/2020/81) addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, this internationally wrongful criminal act was a grave breach of the obligations of the United States under international law, thus entails its international responsibility.

This criminal act also entails the criminal responsibility of all those who had aided, abetted or otherwise assisted and supported, by any means, directly or indirectly, the planning or perpetration of this terrorist act, the clear example of which is the supportive role and the involvement of the Israeli regime in it.

Martyr Soleimani played a significant role in combatting international terrorism and accordingly was rightfully given the title of the Hero of the Fight against Terrorism and the General of Peace, and therefore his cowardly assassination was a big gift and service to Daesh and other Security Council designated terrorist groups in the region who welcomed his assassination, calling it “an act of divine intervention that benefitted” them.

Given the dire implications of this terrorist act on international peace and security, the Security Council must live up to its Charter-based responsibilities and hold the United States and the Israeli regime to account for planning, supporting and committing that terrorist act.

In line with our rights and obligations under international law, the Iranian armed forces are determined to vigorously continue Martyr Soleimani’s path in actively assisting regional nations and governments, upon their requests, to combat foreign-backed terrorist groups in the region until they are uprooted completely.

The invisible hand of UAE in Yemen

TEHRAN – In the latest major development in the Yemen war, the Yemeni Armed Forces announced on Monday that they had seized an Emirati-operated cargo ship for committing “hostile acts” in the territorial waters of Yemen.

Brigadier General Yahya Sare’e, spokesperson for Yemen’s Armed Forces, issued a brief statement saying that the ship, named RWABEE, was under Yemeni control.

“With God’s help, an Emirati military cargo ship, which was carrying military equipment, was seized,” he said, adding, “The Emirati ship entered Yemeni waters without any license.”

The spokesperson underlined that the ship was detained after engaging in hostile acts targeting the security and stability of the Yemeni people. Sare’e did not give much information about the seizure but said further details would be presented later on the day.

Mohammed Abdulsalam, spokesman for the Ansarullah movement, said the images expected to be broadcast will muzzle the aggression and its “fake media.”

“The qualitative and unprecedented operation of the Yemeni naval forces plunged the countries of aggression into a state of confusion by issuing successive and contradictory statements. The images that will be broadcast later on the military ship will restrain the countries of aggression and silence its fake media,” Abdulsalam said.

He also confirmed that the seizure was a successful and unprecedented operation. “The successful and unprecedented operation comes as



part of confronting the aggression and the siege,” he pointed out.

It is the first time that a transgressive ship has been seized while carrying out hostile acts in Yemeni waters since the beginning of the U.S.-Saudi aggression, according to Al-Masirah, a Yemeni news television.

The news channel said the Yemeni navy had previously destroyed several ships and frigates operated by the U.S.-Saudi aggression while carrying out hostile acts against the Yemeni people.

The Saudi-led coalition confirmed the seizure by demanding that Yemeni forces release the Emirati-flagged ship. In a statement on Monday, the coalition described the seizure as a “criminal act of piracy,” ignoring the fact that Yemen is in war and that it has every right to defend itself and protect its sovereignty.

Coalition spokesperson Brigadier General Turki Al-Maliki said the Yemeni forces “must promptly release the ship, or the Coalition Forces will undertake all necessary

measures and procedures to handle this violation, including the use of force if necessary.”

On the other hand, the Armed Forces of Yemen warned Saudi Arabia against targeting the seized ship as it would put the lives of the crew in danger.

The seizure came against a backdrop of renewed Saudi push to escalate its aerial bombardment of Yemen. Since December, Saudi Arabia, together with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has ratcheted up its attacks against Yemen in a strategy shift as represented by the replacement of the governor of Shabwa and the deployment of UAE-allied forces of the western coast of Yemen to the governorate of Shabwa.

In a bid to reverse the gains of the Yemeni forces on the ground, Saudi Arabia forced the Mansur Hadi government to fire the governor of Shabwa who was seen as close to the Muslim Brotherhood, a group detested by the UAE. The Saudi-backed government of Hadi acquiesced to the Saudi pressure and replaced the former governor,

Muhammad Salih bin Udayo, with a prominent tribal figure close to the UAE.

In addition, Saudi Arabia deployed a UAE-backed militia called the Giants Brigades from Yemen’s western coast to the Shabwa governorate. The militia started an offensive against the Yemeni forces in the governorate as soon as it set foot in Shabwa. They now plan to further advance in the governorate with direct aerial support from Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The UAE, although pretending to be out of the Yemen war, keeps playing a pivotal role in support of Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen. The recent developments in Shabwa were the latest indicator of the Emirati involvement. In that context, the Yemeni forces’ seizure of the transgressive Emirati ship may correlate with the UAE’s renewed interest in Shabwa.

The Minister of Information in the Sana’a government, Dhaif Allah Al-Shami, hinted at this, noting that “the UAE has started a new strategy against the Yemeni people.”

He said, “The seized Emirati ship was carrying armored vehicles and transport vehicles for soldiers.”

“After the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister to the UAE, a new strategy began against the Yemeni people, which was manifested in the air, land and sea escalation,” the Yemeni minister said on Twitter.

He added, “But the balance of power, thanks to God and his support, will change the course of the battle, and the detention of the Emirati military ship RWABEE is only a prelude to something greater.”

Campedelli satisfied with Iranian women players

TEHRAN –Alessandra Campedelli is satisfied with the quality of the Iranian women volleyball players.

The Italian coach 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.

“I’ve worked in several Italian women teams. I have also worked as assistant coach of Italy boys’ junior team in an international tournament,” Campedelli said in a news conference held on Monday.

“I had the chance to work with many of the world’s top coaches in my coaching career. I have worked with well-known coaches such as Julio Velasco and Nikola Grbic. Moreover, I am also a teacher and teach in middle schools and universities in Italy,” she stated.

“I have two sons namely, Nicola and Ricardo who are 20 and 23-year-old, respectively. Nicola plays in Serie A and Ricardo, who is also deaf, plays in Serie B. I was motivated by Ricardo to work in Italy’s deaf team,” the Italian coach went on to say.

“I have two goals in Iran’s women’s team. The first one is to improve the level of the volleyball in Asia and the second is to maintain the level. We have to find the talented players and progress volleyball across Iran,” Campedelli added.

“I am satisfied with the quality of Iranian players and I have to say the Iranian women are determined. I have not seen the foreign-based players including Mona Mahmoudi, Mahtab Rahmani, Negin Shirtari, Mina Roosta and Maedeh Borhani and must meet them in person,” she said.

“Iran is a beautiful country and I am excited to see the country’s infrastructure. I’m thrilled to see the large number of girls who play volleyball in Iran,” Campedelli concluded.

IPL leaders Esteghlal held by Aluminum, Persepolis beat Tractor

TEHRAN – Iran Professional League (IPL) leaders Esteghlal were held to a 1-1 draw by Aluminum on Monday.

In the match held in Arak, Kevin Yamga gave the visiting team a lead in the 18th minute from the penalty spot. Arak forward Meysam Majidi leveled the score with three minutes into the added time.

In Mashhad, Sepahan defeated Padideh 2-0 thanks to second half goals from Farshad Ahmadzadeh and Shahriar Moghanlou.

In Tehran’s Azadi Stadium, Persepolis defeated Tractor 2-1 to narrow the gap on Esteghlal.

Furthermore, Foolad were held to a 1-1 draw by Paykan in Ahvaz, Zob Ahan defeated Fajr Sepasi 2-0 in Isfahan, Havadar and Nassaji played out a goalless draw, Naft Masjed Soleyman suffered a 2-0 home loss against Gol Gohar and Mes defeated Sanat Naft 3-0 in Rafsanjan.

Esteghlal lead the table with 29 points, one point above Persepolis. Sepahan remain third with 25 points.

U.S. violated human rights by assassinating General Soleimani: Iran

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has said that the United States has committed a serious violation of the right to life by assassinating Iran’s top General Qassem Soleimani.

“With the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, the US committed a serious violation of the right to life and the principle of non-use of force,” the ministry said on Twitter as Iran commemorated the second anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani.

The ministry added that all those involved in the assassination of the Iranian general bear “criminal responsibility.”

“All perpetrators and orchestrators of this crime have ‘criminal responsibility,’” it said.

It also said that the assassination reinvigorated the resistance front: “The disgraceful assassination of Qassem Soleimani activated the resistance front, and forced the US to flee from Afghanistan & Iraq: A déjà vu of the US escape from Vietnam. This situation is nothing short of the strategic disarray of the US,” the ministry tweeted.

Earlier in late December, the ministry said the assassination of General Soleimani was an act of state terrorism.

“Assassination of Iranian General Qassem

Soleimani by direct order of the president of the United States, is a clear example of state terrorism. The Islamic republic of Iran will bring its orchestrators and perpetrators to justice,” it tweeted.

Iranian officials have said that the assassination of General Soleimani have injected fresh blood into the resistance movement.

“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.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has recently pointed to the impact the assassination of General Soleimani had on the resistance front.

“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 conversation came after Iran and Oman held strategic consultations during a visit by senior Omani diplomat to Tehran.

The senior diplomats from Iran and Oman held the eighth round of strategic consultations in the framework of a joint committee between the two countries in Tehran in late December.

The committee, formally known as the Joint Committee for Strategic Consultations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman, was formed to facilitate diplomatic dialogue and consultation between Tehran and Muscat.

The eighth meeting of the joint committee was co-chaired by Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani and his Omani counterpart Sheikh Khalifa al-Harthi.

Referring to the 50th anniversary of the establishment of relations between the two countries, the two sides expressed satisfaction with the level of relations and efforts to develop it on the basis of mutual trust.

Emphasizing the need to resolve regional issues by the countries

On the eve of the second anniversary of the martyrdom of General Soleimani, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commemorated his martyrdom by issuing a statement.

“Martyr General Soleimani invariably played a role in line with the principled policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran to help establish peace and stability at the regional and international levels, and adopted various measures and devoted a great deal of efforts to combat international terrorism and growing terrorist outfits across the region,” the statement said. “For this reason, he has rightly and proudly been titled the Hero of the Fight against Terrorism and the General of Peace. Despite this role and position, the U.S. government, through applying double standards and false claims like that of countering terrorism, in a criminal act that violates the rules and principles of international law, planned and carried out a terrorist attack against Martyr General Soleimani as one of the highest-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the territory of Iraq as the host country.”

It added, “The move by then U.S. officials to publicly assassinate the International Counter Terrorism Hero is in itself a message of support for terrorist groups that explicitly expose the lies of counter-terrorism claimants.”

of the region, Bagheri expressed hope that the existing problems would be resolved through dialogue between the countries of the region, according to ISNA.

Al-Harthi, referring to Iran’s pivotal role in the region, said that his country, as in the past, is interested in developing bilateral and regional relations and considers peaceful paths necessary for peace and tranquility in the region.

In addition to bilateral issues, the two sides discussed various regional and international issues, including the Vienna talks, the need for a political solution to the crisis in Yemen, and the region’s need for dialogue.

Al-Harthi said, “Iran-Oman relations had regional and trans-regional influences and will continue.”

At the end of the meeting, the minutes of the eighth meeting of the Strategic Consultation Committee of Iran and Oman were signed by the deputy foreign ministers of the two countries.

The Omani Foreign Ministry said

AFC Futsal Asian Cup 2022 qualifiers draw to be held on Thursday

TEHRAN – Asia’s futsal stars will discover their path to the Continent’s biggest futsal prize when the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Kuwait 2022 Qualifiers virtual draw ceremony is held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday.

The road to the Finals will become clear for the qualifiers, who will compete to be among the 16 teams, including host Kuwait, at the Continent’s flagship futsal event.

Thursday’s draw marks the return of elite level Asian futsal, which follows outstanding performances at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Lithuania 2021, where history was made as all five Asian teams – Iran, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Japan – reached the Knockout Stage.

With the host nation Kuwait already assured of a place in the tournament, the participating 31 Member Associations (MAs) will be divided into East and West Zones while the Central and South Zones will be combined.

The Qualifiers will be played in centralized venues between April 1 to 15 with the United Arab Emirates hosting the West Zones where teams will contend for five tickets to the Finals while four teams will qualify from the Central and South Zones staged in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The host from the East Zone will be announced soon as teams contend for three tickets to the Finals.

An additional three successful qualifiers from the ASEAN Zone will be determined by results at the AFF Futsal Championship, where a separate draw will be conducted by the ASEAN Football Federation.

Azmoun and Taremi come second and third in Asian Best Footballer

TEHRAN – Tottenham ace Son Heung-min has been rewarded for another fine year by winning a fifth consecutive Best Footballer in Asia award -- and 7th overall in the prize’s nine-year history.

The 29-year-old, who scored 17 goals in all competition at club level in 2021, was particularly influential for Spurs in the earlier stages of the ongoing campaign in the absence of Harry Kane, who was initially out of the squad having failed to force a move to fellow Premier League outfit Manchester City.

Son also continued to play a pivotal role for South Korea with four goals in eight matches, helping the Taeguk Warriors make an unbeaten start after six games of the third and final round of Asian qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup as they remain on course to qualify for the tournament for a 10th consecutive time, global.espn.com reported.

The Best Footballer in Asia award, which was first introduced in 2013 and devised as the continent’s equivalent to the Ballon d’Or, sees experts from 37 of the Asian Football Confederation’s 47 member associations and an additional 13 guest judges cast votes for their top five players of the calendar year, who are accordingly awarded six, four, three, two and one points respectively.

With 31 first-place votes and a total of 242 points, Son was the clear winner in 2021 ahead of Iran’s Sardar Azmoun (111 points) and Mehdi Taremi (90 points) of Zenit and Porto respectively.

Saudi Arabia international Salem Al-Dawsari, who helped Al Hilal claim a record fourth AFC Champions League title, finished fourth on 74 points, while the top five was rounded out by Japan’s Takehiro Tomiyasu (50 points), who has made an immediate impact since joining Premier League giants Arsenal from Bologna.

Copper cathode output increases 6% in 8 months on year



TEHRAN- Production of copper cathode in Iran rose 6.2 percent in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21, 2021), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As reported, the country produced 202,000 tons of copper cathode in the eight-month period of this year.

The periodical reports and statistics indicate that Iran's metals sector is progressing both in terms of production and export despite the limitations imposed by the U.S. sanctions.

The country's copper industry is moving forward noticeably, as some outstanding projects are implemented.

Iran has posted outstanding figures in terms of copper cathode production and export.

Copper cathode is the primary raw material input for the production of copper rod for the wire and cable industry.

Back in April, 2021, the managing director of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICIC) announced the discovery of one billion tons of new copper reserves in the country.

NICIC carried out 101,000 meters of deep drilling to identify new copper reserves across the country in the previous Iranian calendar year, which resulted

ed in the discovery of one billion tons of new reserves, Ardeshir Sa'd-Mohammadi said in a press conference.

Sa'd-Mohammadi put the value of the discovered reserves at 350 trillion rials (about \$1.206 billion).

According to the official, NICIC had also discovered 523 million tons of copper reserves across the country during the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019- March 2020).

Considering the new discoveries, NICIC's total copper reserves across the country have currently surpassed eight billion tons.

The official put the country's total copper reserves at 40 billion tons, saying that Iran currently has the world's seventh-largest copper reserves, and hopefully the country will climb to sixth place in the current Iranian calendar year.

Sa'd-Mohammadi further mentioned the new record achieved in the country's copper cathode production and noted that over 280,000 tons of the mentioned product were produced in the country during the previous year, which was 12 percent more than the preceding year.

According to the official, NICIC has defined more than €2.4 billion plus 300 trillion rials (about \$1.034 billion) worth of projects to be implemented over the next four years, which will increase the company's total copper concentrate capacity to 2.3 million tons.

He further noted that the country's copper exports increased in the previous year despite the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions.

Iran has posted outstanding figures in copper cathode production and export.

Commodities worth \$393m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 1.582 million tons of commodities worth 114 trillion rials (about \$393 million) were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange experienced trade of 1.264 million tons of commodities valued at more than 64.51 trillion rials (about \$222.4 million) on its metals and mineral trading floor.

Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 310,566 tons of commodities worth nearly 48 trillion rials (about \$165.5 million).

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 7,013 tons of commodities traded on it.

As previously reported, during the past Iranian calendar month (ended on November 21), 8.961 million tons of commodities worth \$2.357 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile



Exchange, indicating 18 percent rise in the value and 24 percent growth in the weight of trades as compared to its preceding month.

The exchange sold on its metals and minerals trading floor 7.387 million tons of commodities valued at more than \$1.42 billion.

Items traded on this floor included 5.176 million tons of cement, 1.452 million tons of steel, 521,000 tons of iron ore, 172,000 tons of sponge iron (DRI), 31,445 tons of aluminum, 30,535 of zinc, 29,100 tons of copper, 560 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 200 tons of

metallurgical coke, 81 tons of precious metals concentrate and 63 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the exchange saw trade of more than 1.53 million tons of commodities worth almost \$907 million on its oil and petrochemical trading floor.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 447,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 441,510 tons of bitumen, 324,851 tons of polymeric products, 150,081 tons of chemicals, 135,000 tons of lube cut, 15,682 tons of oil, 13,850 tons of sulfur, 546 tons of insulation and 50 tons of argon.

It's worth noting that the

trillion rials (about \$69.248 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index lost 2,171 points, and the second market's index dropped 6,000 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

TEDPIX falls 2,900 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 2,971 points to 1.376 million on Monday.

Over 3.477 billion securities worth 20.082

Knowledge-based firms opening new horizons for Iran's oil industry

From page 1 ► In the mentioned ceremony, Iranian Oil Industry Innovation and Technology Park signed the mentioned MOUs with the country's knowledge-based companies to cooperate in a variety of areas.

The MOUs covered cooperation in areas like providing capital for innovative companies and market development, using the infrastructure of Iran's National Tech Market network in creating and developing the oil industry technology market, supporting and empowering businesses to meet the needs of the petrochemical industry, and artificial intelligence, as well as Internet of Things (IoT).

The mentioned MOUs were signed with Iran National Innovation Fund (INIF), Pardis Technology Park, Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGSIC), and Parsian Data Processing Group Company.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony which was held on the occasion of the National Research Day, Oji mentioned the new plan of the Oil Ministry for the development of oil and gas fields and noted that this new program will be focused



on the improvement of the recovery factor of oil and gas wells.

According to the official, using the capacities of small-scale knowledge-based companies and startups is the main characteristic of the Oil Ministry's new program.

Referring to a recent visit to some of the country's knowledge-based companies he said: "There are knowledge-based companies that are able to increase the production capacity of [oil and gas] wells with advanced initiatives and new methods."

Oji noted that, soon, the Oil Ministry is going to announce the needs of the oil industry in a pub-

lic call which is going to include the technological demands of the upstream and downstream sectors.

Low-efficiency oil and gas wells, which Oji says are a major concern for the Oil Ministry, could be a platform for launching a new level of interaction and collaboration between the oil industry and the country's research institutions.

According to the oil minister, out of a total of 5,500 wells in the country's oil and gas fields, more than 700 are inefficient, which has led to a decline in production in the country.

"Now, with the convergence of

industry and academia, we can hope to return to the glorious era of production," Oji said on December 20, 2021.

In yet another supportive step, the Oil Ministry has also announced plans for providing all its research facilities to the startups and knowledge-based companies active in the oil industry to help them in pursuing their goals.

According to Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh Mehr, the entire research and technology capacities of the Oil Ministry, from the Iranian Oil Industry Innovation and Technology Park to the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry and the University of Petroleum Industry, will soon be available for the innovative and technology companies.

All these new measures are indications of the Oil Ministry's determination for integrating science with industry to meet the ever-growing technological needs of the oil industry.

Although this process still requires many major steps to reach maturity, the ministry has shown that it is fully pledged to its goals.

Food, agriculture share of budget bill discussed at TCCIMA meeting

TEHRAN – The Agricultural Committee of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) in its 11th meeting discussed the share of the food and agriculture sectors in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21).

As reported by the TCCIMA portal, in this meeting an expert report was presented on the next year's budget bill which put the budget allocated for various agricultural sectors in the next fiscal year at 185.63 trillion rials (about \$625 million).

Of the mentioned figure, 11 billion rials (about \$37,000) is allocated for Agricultural



Research Education and Extension Organization, three trillion rials (about \$10.1 million) is considered for guaranteed purchase of tea, 1.62 trillion rials (about \$5.45 million) to support the development of oilseeds and

finally 40 trillion rials (about \$134.6 million) for importing agricultural inputs and regulation of basic goods market.

President Ebrahim Raisi submitted the administration's draft of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1401 to the Majlis on December 12, 2021.

The president mentioned the reform of the budget structure as one of the specifications of the 1401 budget and said, "In next year's budget bill, production and employment are the pivots".

The proposed budget amounted to about 36.31 quadrillion rials (about \$864.523 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

Cellphone imports up 117% in 9 months

TEHRAN – The value of Iran's import of mobile phones increased 117 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021) as compared to the last year's corresponding period, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

According to Arezu Ghaniyoun, the deputy head of the IRICA Bureau of Customs Statistics and Information Processing, 13.061 million cellphones worth \$2.942 billion were imported into the country in the mentioned period, which was also 42 percent higher than the previous year's same period in terms of number.

As reported, cellphone importers had shipped in 9.165 million devices worth \$1.353 billion in the previous year's first nine months, which means the number of imported cellphones in the said period increased by 3.896 million.

Ghaniyoun noted that smartphone was Iran's top imported commodity in the current fiscal year's first nine months.

She mentioned, the coronavirus pandemic and consequently home officing and home education as the main reasons for the increase in the import of the mentioned product.

Iranian mobile phone traders imported 15.8 million smartphones over the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2021),

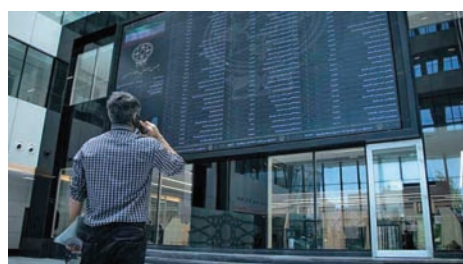


according to the Iranian Association of Cellphones, Tablet, and Accessories Importers.

With the implementation of Iran's National Mobile Registry Plan back in October 2017, Iranians now must register all new mobile phones to be eligible for use in the country. This law is to fight smuggling phones to Iran. As a result, all people who want to use their phones for more than one month in the Islamic Republic will need to register their phones as a way to pay the customs fees.

In April 2021, the Iranian Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) had announced the launch of a five-year plan for the domestic production of 14 million cellphones and tablets.

According to the ministry, the mentioned program is going to create job opportunities for over 43,000 people and save the country over \$1 billion during the said five years.



Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed ones.

As stated by Market Analyst Peyman Hada-

di, 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."

Liberal democracy has been eroded by populism and authoritarianism: Canadian historian

From page 1 ► On Christmas Day in 1991, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev shocked the world by announcing the dissolution of the Soviet Union and his resignation from his top post.

After more than 30 years since the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States ended, the world still seems to teeter on the brink of a nuclear war.

Some political observers think that the collapse of the USSR was due to its ideological contradictions, considering it a triumph for liberal democracy. Fukuyama was one of them.

“But thirty years on, that judgment is no longer so clear. Liberal democracy has struggled in recent years,” Marples remarks.

Following is the text of the interview:

What are the main reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union? Was it economic failure or an ideological crisis?

In my view, neither of these reasons fully explains the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was a combination of many factors, including economic decline--recall that in 1998, the Russian Federation experienced a worse economic crisis but survived - Mikhail Gorbachev's failure to replace the authority of the Communist Party with a credible alternative, the rise of the national republics, and the personal feud between Gorbachev and the new Russian president, Boris Yeltsin. The failed putsch in August 1991 by the leaders of the police, KGB, and the deputy president resulted first of all in the emergence of Russia as an alternative to the USSR. Once the president of Russia asserted control of military and economic forces on the territory of the Russian republic, the power of the center collapsed.

There is a quote that “history is always written by the winners.” Do you think the collapse of the Soviet Union means the success of liberal democracy as Fukuyama has said in his book The End of History?

It seemed that way in 1991. But thirty years on, that judgment is no longer so clear. Liberal democracy has struggled in recent years -Vladimir Putin is correct in this statement - and has been eroded most of all by Populism and authoritarian regimes. Thus, if one looks at the entire globe, we can see a decline of democracy in places like Brazil and India, and the consolidation of authoritarian leaderships in China, Myanmar, and even within the European Union in Hungary. There are correspondingly few democratic “successes.”

Despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union, leftist and socialist ideas are going ahead all around the world, from Europe to the U.S. This indicates some problem with liberalism or neoliberalism that rely on capitalism. Do you predict the same fate for the United States? I



mean a collapse of state like what happened to the Soviet Union.

It's a relevant question. The fact that 70 million people voted for Donald Trump in 2020, and that 70% of them still believe the presidential election was “stolen” by subterfuge and mailed ballots suggests some serious problems in the world's largest democracy (I exempt Modi's India from that description). Under the Trump presidency, we saw some disturbing phenomena: militant far-right groups, racist actions, and acts of violence encouraged by the president, culminating with the rabble who tried to take over the government in January 2020. Trump undermined NATO, practically ignored the G-7 meetings, and was obviously more interested in visits to dictators and authoritarian leaders like Kim Jong-Un than with European allies. He made an exception of Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom only insofar as he (Johnson) backed Brexit. Most disturbing is the apparent lack of faith in the government, the stacking of the Supreme Court with rightist lawyers, and the failure of the Republican Party to move beyond Trump or seek a replacement. If Trump runs again in 2024, I do foresee serious problems. It would not mean a collapsed state as much as a failed democracy.

Western powers accuse certain states of domestic suppression. Don't you think these powers are suppressing weaker countries and their people through sanctions?

There are different aspects to this question. After the Second World War, the biggest changes were on the one hand the end of colonialism and the decline of the European colonial empires and on the other, the emergence of two great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. They had a chance to reach some positive solutions. The creation of the United Nations and the American decision to allow the economic revival of Germany and Japan, for example, were surely positive achievements. The failure of the earlier League of Nations was one reason why the Nazi regime could dominate Europe.

Imperial Japan was a dangerous and expanding power that began the Second World War with its invasion of China. As the Cold War developed, the rivalry was less about ideology than competition, with some Detente interspersed. As a result, small or medium countries were targets for each alliance. There was no selfless interest in their welfare. By the 1960s, Communist regimes in Africa and the Far East were divided between the USSR and China. No doubt, the new world order was based on inequality, but ironically the world was also more stable, life was much simpler than today because the two powers could not openly confront each other given the danger of nuclear warfare.

How could military expenditures affect the lives of people in the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War? Apparently, the Cold War is not over and players have changed. What is your comment?

Military budgets greatly weakened the Soviet Union in that about a quarter of the total budget was taken up by the arms race. Moreover, it divided society between the military-industrial segment and the general population. In the United States, there were deep divisions between the various elements of the military, but overall technological advances in weapons development contributed to economic progress. The United States was the one power to emerge stronger from the Second World War and after 1991; it was the only super power. Today, I don't see the situation as a new Cold War; it is not a battle for world control, or between economic systems and ideologies. Russia wants control in its own sphere - as it perceives it. That means control over the political and economic systems in neighboring states such as Ukraine and Belarus. There are minor ventures into Central Africa and Latin America by mercenary groups, but they are mainly seeking resources or influence.

The major issue for Russia is the expansion of NATO and the desire of Ukraine (and perhaps Georgia) to join it. But there is no quest for a world ideological system or a dictatorship of the proletariat. Russia is capitalist, it is a part of the global world, but no power today is strong enough to exert global dominance. The intentions of China are less clear-cut, but its growing power is obvious, despite some caveats. Xi Jinping is the most entrenched and powerful Chinese leader since Mao. As for the players, the revealing fact is that all of them will be replaced within a decade or so: Putin is 68, Xi Jinping is 68, Trump is 75, and President Joe Biden turns 80 this year. Their future is limited because they are all mortal. Stalin was 45 when Lenin died in January 1924 and he began to take over the USSR. John F. Kennedy was 45 when he had the task of defusing the Cuban missile crisis. We need to look beyond the early postwar generation leaders in assessing these very serious questions.

Oppressed Bahrainis in the conscience of Martyr Qassem Soleimani

From page 1 ► After the illegal arrest of Sheikh Ali Salman, the dissolution of the Al-Wefaq (top opposition society) and the implantation of political isolation, Ayatollah Qassem was convicted on fabricated charges of inciting to overthrow the regime by force. The revocation of Ayatollah Qassem's citizenship, along with other religious scholars and hundreds of citizens, proved the ongoing systematic war against the Shiites of Bahrain.

Thus the Iranian comments, like many governments, came to support the historical Shiite presence in the country. Iran, basically, bears the responsibly of protecting the Shiites of the region and the world. After the establishment of the Islamic regime, taking care of the conditions of Shiites in general has become an essential part of its foreign policy, as it considers itself before a legitimate and moral obligation that cannot be abandoned, whatsoever.

What is remarkable about the fight against Ayatollah Qassem and Sheikh Ali Salman is the official and systematic exclusion of one of the most prominent advocates of peaceful action and guarantors of not pushing the movement towards the violent option, in Bahrain. Indeed, various international and rights orgs denounced the revocation of Ayatollah Qassem's citizenship,

upright nation so that you may be witnesses over humanity and that the Messenger may be a witness over you

[Surah Al-Baqarah – 143]

Ayatollah Qassem underscores that upright nation is the one who attentively revive against America, which opposes every righteous renaissance, and wants the absolute rule of its diabolical policy. The U.S. is hostile to every movement that stalks for its arrogance, Al-Faqih asserts, and stresses that “if the earth were devoid of resistance to American policy, corruption would spread, and when corruption prevails, humanity and dignity vanishes”. Ayatollah Qassem describes the American discourse to our peoples and governments as a discourse of murder; individual and collective liquidations; and assassination, adding: “America says to our nation, there is no resistance, and do not think about pride, neither dignity, nor independence”.

This is, according to Ayatollah Qassem, the reason behind the U.S. puppet regimes' hostility against Islam and the Islamic nation, especially its resistance; its scholars; its figures. Ayatollah Qassem affirms that the murder of the two martyrs was because they worshiped God alone, not the American administration, and were loyal to Islam, and were ferocious advocates, not only



on the grounds that this is in violation of all the international conventions.

One of the most prominent positions in solidarity with Ayatollah Qassem was the historical position of the martyr Hajj Qassem Soleimani, who asserted that insulting Ayatollah Qassem would deviate the uprising into a bloody one.

Speaking to Union News Agency, in 2016, Hajj Qassem stressed that the Bahraini people, who had endured for many years the regime's injustice, discrimination and violence, and despite the regime's racist treatment, and the arrest of political and religious leaders, seek to peacefully obtain their just rights, adding that tightening the pressure on them failed to push them to change their peaceful approach.

Hajj Qassem saw that what he called the “arrogance of the Al Khalifa” had reached such an extent that increased their criminality, taking advantage of the people's nobility and peacefulness, and of the silence of the United Nations, the United States and Western countries, which encourage Al Khalifa to threaten the sanctity of Ayatollah Qasim. Hajj Qassem stressed that undoubtedly [Al Khalifa] know very well that Ayatollah Qassem is a red line for the people, and attacking his sanctity will ignite a war in Bahrain and the entire region, and would eventually lead to the demise of this tyrannical regime.

Now, the heinous crime that shook the consciences of the free people of the world, in the 3rd of January 3, 2020, was described by Ayatollah Qassem as a wicked aggression that afflicted the nation. Ayatollah Qassem adds that whenever Hajj Qassem is mentioned, one would directly remember: the arenas of resistance, jihad and redemption; the Palestinian cause and its centrality; the duty of jihad and the love of martyrdom.

The Faqih believes that martyr Soleimani is present after his martyrdom, just as he was present before it, if not more, in all the arenas of jihad. We remember his effective sacrifices for the sake of God; his determination and enthusiasm for the righteous causes; and his sincere yearning for martyrdom. Ayatollah Qassem explains that both martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis read the Quranic verses on jihad, deeply reflected on them, and took them as an approach to better the status-quo of the whole humanity.

In the course of his interpretation of the verse:

And so We have made you ?believers? an

of their nation, but of the entire humanity. He relates them to Imam Al-Hussain, who said:

“By God, I will never surrender to my enemies like a humiliated person and never pledge allegiance to them like slaves” (Bihar-al- Anwar, Vol. 45, P.7).

Martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis did not surrender nor do they flee the flight, according to the Fakih. They perceived the religious duty of defending the truth, the humanity, and the Ummah, and standing for the oppressed and the vulnerable, so that everyone enjoys honor and dignity. Ayatollah Qassem stresses that the US heinous crimes against the leaders of the Islamic movement aims at eradicating the brilliant history of all the outstanding heroes of this nation.

The Faqih maintains that the jihad of Martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis has exposed the hypocrisy of the current regimes, who forgot the duty of jihad and sacred defense, until they blatantly shake the hand of the Zionist enemy, in a bid to confront everyone who defends the authentic Mohamedian Islam and the pride and independence of the nation. Al-Faqih affirms that Martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis' distinguished leadership role, their faith and their jealousy have greatly influenced the youth as they have shown their sincerity in what they covenanted to God, i.e. to be upright on the path of sacrifices, until they have become a noble role model for this generation and the upcoming generations.

Ayatollah Qassem adds that the two martyrs performed the true jihad, which the authentic Muhammadan Islam affirms, and which refuses that his nation accept humiliation, or to be overwhelmed by weakness. A sturdy nation can secure its interests, and thus pave the way to move humanity from the darkness of slavery to the light of freedom and dignity. The two revered martyrs, according to Ayatollah Qassem, were distinguished by an unprecedented wisdom, insight, honesty, devotion, faith, sacrificial spirit, and amazing bravery. Their heroism, their firm stances, and their love of martyrdom threatened the enemies.

Finally, al-Faqih stresses that the political behavior of the ruling regime in Bahrain disregard the people, their religious and national stances, and their sanctities. He affirms that the choice of the people of Bahrain is to resist the Zionist aggression, to reject normalization, and not to surrender to the American and Zionist will, which aims to distort the nation's positions.

Ex-Iraqi PM on events leading to General Soleimani's assassination

From page 1 ► I repeated what he said, I told him, 'Did I hear you correctly? that you are going to strike bases? These are all Iraqi bases and this will cause a ricochet, this will lead us to the unknown and very dangerous things.

He said 'we must respond and I have been instructed to inform you officially that we will undertake this action in a matter of hours.'

I said, 'please do not take this action allow us to meet, let us discuss this, give us some time, because this will lead to huge ramifications.'

He insisted on his message and said 'I will transfer your reply to [former] President [Donald] Trump, but we are determined to take this action.'

As soon as I put the phone down, I contacted the Iraqi military leadership [operations room] to inform them air strikes will take place and I called the martyr brother [Abu Mehdi] al-Muhandis. When I spoke to [Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis], the conversation took place around 06:30 - 06:45 on 29 December.

When I spoke to the brother martyr [Abu Mehdi] al-Muhandis, he said 'the airstrikes have begun'. It means [the U.S. administration] did not give us hours but around 10 to 15 minutes [before striking].

The airstrikes took place, a large number of people were martyred and injured.

Interviewer interrupts: “Sorry to interrupt, what was the evidence that was in the possession of the [former] U.S. administration that the attack on K-1 Air Base [in Kirkuk] was... [does not finish sentence.]

Adil Abdul-Mehdi:

“We said to them, we are undergoing an investigation, nothing has been proven yet, this investigation is still ongoing, this area [K-1 Air Base] is not a region where the PMU has a presence. We must continue with our investigations and a coordinated approach [to the probe] so we can prevent this from happening again, this was mentioned in the phone conversation [with Esper]. During the conversation i focused on the series of events that could happen later.

Because after the martyrdom, after the martyrs and injuries [at Al-Qa'im], the next day there was demonstrations or the funeral processions to put it more precisely and correctly.

During the funeral processions, the bodies were

at the PMU bases in the Green Zone, some of the mourners, who came from the Jadriya neighborhood, entered the Green Zone. And some of the mourners who entered the Green Zone headed to the [U.S.] embassy. This was on the 30th of December.

That's when the protests occurred [outside the U.S. embassy], this was a large protest and a major event. The American side [purportedly] thought something big will occur similar to what happened at the U.S. embassy in Tehran at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution. [the sit-in] continued from the 30th December until evening of 31st December.

Interviewer: What action did you take during the protests?

Adil Abdul-Mehdi:

We performed our duty as a government to protect the [American] embassy. We did a lot, more than we should have done to be frank with you. But the Americans said 'you fell short and did not fulfill your duty. These [protesters] have no right to be here'.

We sent a massive number of security forces to protect the embassy. [at the same time] we were in touch with the embassy itself and with Washington.

Interviewer: Do you think the Americans did not trust your efforts at that moment?

Adil Abdul-Mehdi:

“Ask the Americans about this, I cannot judge them. In their letters they say the Iraqis did not do what they should have. Despite that myself on the night of the 31st December, I held a telephone conversation with [Former] President [Donald] Trump. After the crowd withdrew from the embassy and he thanked me [for the protection we provided the embassy].

He asked 'were they Iranian?'; I said 'No, these are Iraqis that are protesting against what happened at Al-Qa'im. And we warned the American Defense Secretary [Mark Esper] that there would be dangerous reactions. [Trump] said 'we don't know the Iraqis well; you know them better than us'. I told him 'The Iraqis don't want war and you say you don't want war; there are no other options but for direct talks and if no direct talks are possible, then some form of agreements that were sort of made in 2003 regarding red lines. He said 'you are good mediators in this, whatever you can do in this

regard, we are ready'.

I had no idea that at that time they were already planning an operation of assassination. An operation to assassinate cannot be done in two or three days. There is no doubt that this operation was thought out in a matter that does not include a short time frame.

And in reality, the martyr [Abu Mehdi] al-Muhandis played a big role in withdrawing those crowds [from the American embassy].

(The protestors withdrew from the American embassy before the end of the year 2019). The crowd was furious, they even brought tents and other facilities to continue with the sit-in.

And then it escalated in a dangerous manner.

At around one o'clock [on 3rd January] some news began coming in about an attack on an airplane that had Iranian passengers. The person that woke me up was brother [former head of intelligence] al-Khadhimi himself, the current Prime Minister, in a phone call.

There was some doubt. We knew that martyr [General Qassem] Soleimani would be coming to Iraq, because the next day at 08:30 we had a meeting together. We were scheduled to have breakfast together.

So, at around 01:00, al-Khadhimi called saying an incident has occurred, it was still not clear that the martyr [General Soleimani] was the one present on the plane. I began receiving images on my mobile phone, photos started to circulate about a vehicle incident.

I contacted the Iranian embassy to get some information. They did not have any answers. As more pictures began to be sent, one of the photos had a ring. Straight away i recognized that this ring is the ring of the martyr [General Qassem] Soleimani.

End of transcript.

This interview was published by Iraqi media on the first anniversary [January 2021] of the U.S. act of state terrorism in the Iraqi capital that led to the martyrdom of Iran's Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Deputy Leader of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis. An act of terror that a United Nations investigation found to be “unlawful” and against the “UN charter.”

Tehran's Golestan Palace to improve electronic protection systems

TEHRAN – Electronic protection systems of the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in Tehran are planned to be improved in the near future.

A budget of 25 billion rials (about \$84,000) has been set aside for the development of the palace's electronic protection systems including digital video surveillance systems, Afarin Emami, the director of the World Heritage site, announced on Monday.

The funding will be used to strengthen the infrastructure and improve the security system, the official added.

Several CCTV cameras were installed at the complex last year, and this project will continue this year, she noted.

She also noted that the place is open to visitors following strict health protocols and social distancing rules.

A destination for domestic and international travelers, Golestan Palace is located in the heart and historic core of Tehran. The palace complex is one of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) in the historic walled city.

Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family (1789-1925). At present, the Golestan Palace complex consists of



eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

The palace contains numerous ornaments dating from the 19th century, which are one of its distinguishing features. Palace visitors are impressed by the palace's lavish decoration: painting, mural, fresco, marble carvings, mirror mosaic, and stained glass.

Talar-e Salam, or the reception room, is perhaps the most famous hall in the palace and is where the kings welcomed foreign guests arriving in Iran. Beautiful mirrorwork by Iranian masters decorates the ceilings and walls of this hall, and marble mosaics cover the floors.

UNESCO has it that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Iraqi travel agents to explore Qom on fam tour



TEHRAN –The central province of Qom is ready to host Iraqi tour operators and travel insiders on a familiarization tour, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

In order to promote tourism between Iraq and Iran, and introduce Iraqi travel insiders to Qom as a travel destination, the tour has been designed to encourage the exchange of tourists between the two neighboring countries, Alireza Arjmandi said on Monday.

Implementing such fam tours would be helpful for the development of tourism in the province, the official added.

Qom is a preferred destination for Iraqi Shiites, so it is vital the province's tourism potential be introduced, he noted.

Participants of the tour will be shown all the province has to offer in terms of natural, cultural, historical attractions, handicrafts, food, and health tourism, he mentioned.

In December 2021, a group of Iraqi tour operators and tourism activists along

with their Iranian fellows visited several Iranian provinces on fam tours.

Moreover, several Iraqi travel insiders have requested Iran to waive visa requirements for Iraqi nationals who want to enter the Islamic Republic via land borders.

Last year the two neighbors agreed to abolish visa requirements for air travelers.

The announcement came after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi met in Tehran, discussing various issues including visa waiver, a joint railway project, and increasing the level of trade.

Situated adjacent to salt-covered deserts, golden dunes, running sands, and jagged mountains, Qom is home to the shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage, it is also a top destination for Shia scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

One of the most visited natural spots of Qom is Hoz-e Soltan, an eye-catching salt lake is in the middle of the desert. The visitors could easily walk in the shallow parts and enjoy the shapes created by the salt, however, the center of the lake could be dangerous, as it is muddy and could easily trap people.

Handicraft sector creates over 400 jobs in North Khorasan

TEHRAN –The handicraft sector has generated a total of 418 job opportunities in the northeastern North Khorasan province during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Creating these jobs has been achieved by providing facilities to artisans and craftspeople throughout the region, Ali Mostofian said on Monday.

He also noted that the National Seal of Excellence has been awarded to 64 high-quality works handcrafted by

artisans of the province so far, while four fields of handicraft have gained UNESCO Seal of Excellence.

Currently, over 16,000 crafters are practicing 61 handicraft fields across the ancient province, he added.

In October 2021, the official announced that a sum of 70 billion rials (about \$235,600) has been invested in the handicrafts sector of the province during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year.

Handicraft products worth over 50 billion rials (some



\$168,000) have been exported from the province during the mentioned time, he added.

He also noted that during the mentioned period the province's artisans and crafters received 78 billion rials (around \$262,600) in loans to support their businesses.

Gilan province's tourist arrivals rise 58%

TEHRAN –Gilan province attracted about 22 million tourists during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), up 58 percent from a year earlier, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Over 8,000 foreign tourists have also visited the northern province during the mentioned time, which depicts a 32 percent rise compared to the same period of time in the past year, Hamidreza Azarpur announced on Monday, IRNA reported.

In 2019, Gilan was selected as the first province to start the country's comprehensive tourism plan, which is being developed under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The comprehensive plan is aimed to serve as a roadmap to guide tourists from all over the globe to achieve a sustainable and competitive tourism market.

However, last year, the official announced that the tourism industry of the northern province has taken over 14 trillion rials (over \$47 million) hit from the coronavirus outbreak.

Efforts are being made to help the tourism sector flourish again with continuous support and injecting a government-provided supportive package, which includes low-interest loans, into the damaged sector, he added.

Gilan is well-known for its rich Iron Age cemeteries such as Marlik that have been excavated over the past century. It was once within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Iran's tourism

Iran's tourism industry has suffered a loss of some 320 trillion rials (\$1.1 million) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, ISNA reported in July 2021.

The pandemic has also ruined more than 44,000 jobs in the once budding travel sector of the country, the report added.

As a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran and the subsequent unemployment and financial losses, accommodation centers suffered the most. These statistics cover the period



between February 2020 and the spring of 2021.

Only months into the outbreak, Zarghami's predecessor, Ali Asghar Mounesan, lamented that the number of foreign travelers to Iran was drastically plunged due to the pandemic.

"Tourism of the country was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent," Mounesan said.

He added 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the [Iranian] year (1398), adding that Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization.

So far, panels of travel experts have mapped out new marketing strategies hoping the sector would get back on its feet once again. Earlier this year, the Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ebrahim Pourfaraj asked the government to issue tourist visas for the international applicants who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. "The Ministry of Health and the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control can at least agree that the international tourists who have received the [second dose of] coronavirus

vaccine would be allowed to enter Iran."

The expert lamented that the continuation of such a trend would result in losing international tourist markets more than before. "Or at least they should make it clear so that we can respond appropriately to foreign companies and tourists to not to miss the international tourist markets more than before."

Iran is potentially a booming destination for travelers seeking cultural attractions, breathtaking sceneries, and numerous UNESCO-registered sites. 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.

Even before the pandemic, Iran's tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western "media propaganda" aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic. Some experts believe Iran is still somehow "unknown" for many potential travelers due to such a "media war".

They, however, consider bright prospects for the tourism sector of the country if it vigorously pursues comprehensive strategies to counter U.S.-led propaganda and strict sanctions, yet does its best to loosen tough travel regulations.

Four Iranian cities join national handicraft hubs

TEHRAN –Four Iranian cities have been designated as national handicraft hubs, the deputy tourism minister has announced.

Shushtar, Andika, and Rofayyeh, all in the southwestern Khuzestan province, as well as Khoy in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, were named the national cities of handicrafts, IRNA quoted Pouya Mahmoudian as saying on Sunday.

This selection of cities is a key step toward introducing their capacities and resources and can help improve their status as well as increase their production and sales of handicrafts, the official added.

In June 2021, 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 Qasemabad 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 Qasemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador 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 stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Illegal digger arrested in Rey

TEHRAN – A person illegally searching antiquities in the city of Rey, southern Tehran, has been arrested by the local police.

The culprit was detained in a quick and surprising action while he was digging into a private house in search of antiquities, CHTN quoted Mojtaba Nuri, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, as saying on Monday.

The accused person, who was traced following reports by local people and cultural heritage aficionados, was surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire (3rd century BC–3rd century CE) and it was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim

caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivaled in western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Islamic writers described it as a city of extraordinary beauty, built largely of fired brick and brilliantly ornamented with blue faience (glazed earthenware). It continued to be an important city and was briefly a capital under the rule of the Seljuks, but in the 12th century, it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects. In 1220 the city was almost entirely destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

570 nanotech projects implemented to meet industrial needs

From page 1 ► Accordingly, over 280 projects have been solved and more than 570 projects have been implemented. From the total number of applications registered in the INTT system during the past year, 170 projects are being implemented.

Based on the statistics provided by the Nanotechnology Innovation Council, "equipment", "polymer", "nanocomposite", "paint and resin", "water, wastewater and environment", "textile" and "nanofibers", "metal industries" and "nanomaterials" have the highest demand.

Nanotechnology development in Iran

Iran has been introduced as the 4th leading country in the world in the field of nanotechnology, publishing 11,546 scientific articles in 2020.

The country held a 6 percent share of the world's total nanotechnology articles, according to StatNano's monthly evaluation accomplished in WoS databases.



Iran ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 report.

The country experienced a three-level improvement compared to 2019.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, has said that Iran is playing the leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Iran has created centers in six Asian countries for exporting nanotechnology products, including China, India, Indonesia, Syria, Tur-

key, and Iraq.

Nanotechnology's trend of development is growing in Iran, as the number of nanoproducts and equipment developed in the previous [Iranian calendar] year (ended March 20, 2021) increased to 750, compared with 647 a year before.

Some 223 product manufacturing companies and 59 equipment manufacturing companies are active in the field of nanotechnology and by the end of last year, which developed a total of 750 products and equipment.

Iran has been introduced as the 4th leading country in the world in the field of nanotechnology.

Iran produces novel COVID treatment pill



TEHRAN – Iranian pharmaceutical companies have managed to produce a novel COVID-19 oral antiviral candidate, Paxlovid.

Performing molecular synthesis, the pharmaceutical companies could finally produce the medicine, Hamidreza Jama'ati, Secretary of the Coronavirus Scientific Committee, said on Monday, Mehr reported.

"Based on studies by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as well as clinical evidence from around the world about this drug, the Committee has suggested that the Food and Drug Administration add this drug to the list of pharmaceutical items in the country.

The reason for adding Paxlovid to the list of medicinal items in the country is not only the use of medicine, but even if we want to con-

duct clinical trials based on our country's conditions, it needs to be part of the list of medicines to receive code of ethics," he explained.

The medicine reduces the risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization or death by up to 90 percent, he stated, adding, studies have shown that patients who have used this drug were unvaccinated and had an underlying disease or immune system disorder and used it for the first five days of illness.

If domestic pharmaceutical companies mass-produce this drug, it will save a considerable amount of currency, and it may even be possible to export the medicine, he noted.

The Drug List's development council will decide to add the medicine to the listed drug this week, he concluded.

Pharmaceutical import drops by 91%

The import of pharmaceuticals has declined in Iran by 91 percent, which shows the capability of the country's pharmaceutical industry, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said on October 11.

Today, all medicine used in the treatment of coronavirus are produced by domestic manufacturers, and if we wanted to import all the items, there would be a high exchange rate, he further stated, emphasizing that COVID-19 vaccine development indicates the pharmaceutical industry's capability.

With the support of the domestic pharmaceutical industry, we were able to reduce the total of preferred currencies and other currencies used in the country from \$4.2 billion to \$2.84 billion from 2017 to 2020, he emphasized.

Shanehsaz went on to say that the consumption of foreign exchange in raw materials increased by 2 percent, while medicine import decreased by 31 percent in value.

In 2018, 67 percent of the active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) were made locally.

A total of 227 knowledge-based firms are supplying medical equipment for health centers across the country, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

The medicine reduces the risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization or death by up to 90 percent.

98% of people aged over 80 get COVID-19 vaccine

TEHRAN – Some 98 percent of people aged over 80 in the country have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, Farshid Rezaei, a health ministry official, has said.

About 65 percent of the country's population has been vaccinated with the second dose, while, a booster dose of the vaccine has been well received nationwide, he said.

Expressing satisfaction with the process of vaccination of students over 12 years old in the country, he said that some 85 to 90 percent of students aged 12 and above have been inoculated.

With the injection of the third dose of a vaccine, people are safe against this strain and it becomes difficult for Omicron to infect them, he concluded.

In November 2021, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of the diseases management center of the Ministry of Health, said that the national average for the first dose vaccination of people over the age of 12 was 82 percent in Iran, while it was 64 percent in Europe.

The national average of the second dose of COVID-19 vaccination for the people aged 12 years and above was 65 percent

About 65 percent of the country's population has been vaccinated with the second dose.

in Iran, while the national average of the first dose of vaccination for the 12-18-year age group was 83 percent.

He went on to note that the national average of the second jab for children aged 12-18 years was 54 percent.

According to the latest statistics, so far, 59,909,150 people have received the first dose, 52,140,405 people the second dose, while 8,373,467 people are inoculated with the third dose, so that, the total number of jabs in the country surpassed 120,423,022 doses.

In the way to the vaccination of the whole population, many obstacles have shown up caused by U.S. sanctions, financial transactions, countries' reluctance to provide Iran with the vaccine, or even competition among the na-



tions to vaccinate their own population sooner.

However, Iran could make it and inoculate the population, being among the first sixty countries with the highest number of vaccinated people.

Iran is one of the countries affected by the pandemic that has been able to widely implement vaccination programs in recent months and vaccinate refugees living in the country at the same time as Iranian nationals.

SOCIETY

JANUARY 4, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

7

200 species of animals released in wildlife

TEHRAN – Some 200 wildlife species have been returned to nature since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21, 2021) through the wildlife treatment center of Pardisan Park in Tehran.

Pardisan Park's wildlife clinic has been established with the aim of treating, rehabilitating, and returning to nature the injured and sick species, ISNA reported.

Last week, 25 wild animals were released into their natural habitat, including a fox and 24 golden eagles, steppe eagles, black kites, common buzzards, Eurasian eagle-owls, barn owls, and little owls.

Observance of specialized environmental considerations, including proper nutrition of animals, especially in the days before release, choosing the right time and location to free the species, topography and natural features of the area, as well as suitable weather conditions on the day of the program, marking animals and transporting them in a proper way are among the necessities of wildlife release in nature.

Wildlife species in danger of extinction

There are 1,300 species of animals in the country, 130 of which are endangered and threatened, Hassan Akbari, deputy head of natural environment and biodiversity of the Department of Environment (DOE), said in December 2021.

Asiatic cheetahs, great bustards, Siberian cranes, Persian onagers, and some reptiles and amphibians are among the endangered and threatened species, he said.

Significant smuggling and habitat destruction



are the main threats to the species, and promoting a culture of kindness to the environment and strengthening social participation is one of the most important and effective strategies in protecting the environment, he explained.

The availability of large quantities of weapons and ammunition to the poachers is another risk factor for wildlife populations, Akbari added.

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 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.

Opportunities and threats facing Earth's biodiversity

(Part 4)

Mangrove revival

The mangrove forests that coat coastlines in the tropics and subtropics harbour abundant plant and animal species that thrive at the intersection of land and sea. Development has decimated many in recent decades, destroying the biodiversity-nurturing and carbon-sequestering services they provide. In recent years, however, the tide has turned. Conservationists' efforts to restore and preserve these rich habitats have helped reduce loss, and they have also the accidental beneficiaries of other ecosystem changes. As inland forests are cut, erosion moves soil toward the coast where it can nurture new mangroves, and climate change is creating more of the warm habitat they need. Together, these changes have reduced mangrove loss to near zero, though local areas of depletion continue.

Tidal zone tribulations

Intertidal zones, the areas of coast across which water advances and recedes with the tides, experience daily fluctuations in temperature, water level, salinity, physical disruption and predation. Now they have another variable to cope with: heatwaves. Record temperatures in the US Pacific north-west

in June 2021 left mussels, clams, oysters, barnacles, sea stars, rockweed and more dead along thousands of miles of coastline. And that's not all. Climate change threatens to change the salinity of these complex and fragile ecosystems as precipitation patterns change and polar ice melts. If this keeps up, we'll have more than a stinky mess. The complex ecosystems and the services they provide – stabilising coasts, providing food, providing habitat, protecting water quality – will be fried, too.

Treasure – and trouble? – beneath the seas

The seabed beneath Earth's oceans harbors abundant bounties of precious metals and other mineable materials. New technologies have made it possible to extract such materials, and one country, Nauru, recently announced plans to permit deep-sea mining. This announcement means that the International Seabed Authority must either set up specific ocean mining regulations or commit to reviewing applications under established, more general UN conventions. Ocean mining may reduce pressure to disrupt land habitat, but it also opens the door to new assaults on unique deep-sea ecosystems and the living things they harbor.

Concluded

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 3

New cases	1,677
New deaths	22
Total cases	6,198,590
Total deaths	131,702
New hospitalized patients	334
Patients in critical condition	2,624
Total recovered patients	6,042,589
Diagnostic tests conducted	42,281,617
Doses of vaccine injected	120,423,022

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran gets ready for two-week coronavirus closure

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control will implement a plan, according to which all occupations, except for emergency services and basic food suppliers, will be closed for two weeks in more than 100 cities in an attempt to curb the coronavirus.

Alireza Reisi, a spokesman for the Headquarters, said that "the plan will go into effect on November 21."

The plan divides cities into three levels of alert, according to which, if a city is in a state of high alert, all other occupations will be closed, except for the most essential jobs, which are related to the provision of basic necessities, security, and health.

اجرای طرح تعطیلی دو هفته ای سراسری برای مقابله با کرونا هفته آینده

ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا در ایران طرحی را اجرا خواهد کرد که بر مبنای آن بیش از ۱۰۰ شهر از جمله تهران با وضعیت هشدار بالای کرونا به مدت دو هفته تعطیل خواهند بود. به گزارش ایسنا، علیرضا ریسی سخنگوی ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا گفت: این طرح از اول آذرماه آغاز می شود.

این طرح شهرها را به سه سطح هشدار تقسیم بندی می کند که بر اساس آن، اگر شهری در وضعیت سطح هشدار بالا قرار گیرد به جز مشاغل خیلی ضروری که مربوط به تهیه مایحتاج ضروری مردم، امنیت و سلامت می شوند، بقیه مشاغل همه تعطیل هستند.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Barry Stocker's book "Philosophy of the Novel".