

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Interview

### A new deal will recognize current state of Iran's nuclear program: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - An American academic says a new deal will have to be crafted in Vienna in which the recent developments in Iran's nuclear program are "recognized".

"A new deal will have to be crafted, one that recognizes the current state of Iran's nuclear program," Paul Poast tells the Tehran Times.

The associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago believes that the progress in Vienna, though limited, is promising.

"But given that we are now almost a year into the U.S. President Biden's administration (and there is a good chance that the Republicans will gain back some control of Congress in the 2022 election), coupled with the progress that Iran has made in its nuclear program, it's unlikely that the parties can return to the terms of the previous deal."

Following is the text of the interview:

**What is your expectation about the Vienna talks? Do you predict any progress?**

A: The progress in Vienna, though limited, is promising. But given that we are now almost a year into U.S. President Biden's administration (and there is a good chance that the Republicans will gain back some control of Congress in the 2022 election), coupled with the progress that Iran has made in its nuclear program, it's unlikely that the parties can return to the terms of the previous deal. A new deal will have to be crafted, one that recognizes the current state of Iran's nuclear program.

There are two primary obstacles to reaching an agreement. First, from the perspective of the United States, Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon is just one of several challenges Iran presents in the region. Pressure from U.S. allies in the region, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, will make it difficult to reach a deal that only focuses on the nuclear program. Second, from Iran's perspective, the U.S. is not a trustworthy diplomatic partner. ▶ Page 5

## Opinion

### What it's like to meet 5000-year-old tree

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - At the age of almost five millennia, Sarv-e Abarkuh is a solid, tall tree still covering itself with glory, reaching 25 meters in height, 11.5 meters in width of its trunk, and 18 meters in circumference.

Although it doesn't have the height or size of record-setting redwoods and sequoias standing near California, this Persian cypress has long been a tourist destination in central Iran for those who love to visit one of the oldest living creatures on Earth. It is a real blessing that this being has lived all this time to become a source of enjoyment for modern humans.

The colossal cypress has unique features by which it is distinguished. The tree has worldwide popularity, a magnificent tree that surprises all the visitors with its glory. In addition to local travelers, the cypress has been visited by many scientists and researchers from across the globe as well.

Local legends state that this tree has a puzzling and mysterious soul that is living for thousands of years. In olden Iranian accounts, the origin of this cypress is credited to Japheth, the child of Noah, while others believe Zoroaster, the Iranian prophet, had planted Sarv-e Abarkuh.

From the scientific point of view, the majority of the experts believe that Sarv-e Abarkuh is between 4,000 and 5,000 years old though some others have estimated its existence to reach 8,000 years. ▶ Page 6

# Leader Sheds Light on U.S. Hostility Toward Iran



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▶ Page 3

## Tehran, Ashgabat explore avenues of transport, energy co-op

TEHRAN - Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi met with Deputy Chairman of Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers Serdar Berdimukhamedov in Tehran on Saturday to exchange views and discuss mutual cooperation in various transportation sectors.

Speaking in this meeting, Qasemi mentioned the agreements reached between the two sides during the two countries' Joint Economic Committee meeting, saying: "At the meeting of the Joint Committee, we reached agreements in the fields of transportation and transit between the two countries that

had good results; In this regard, in the field of rail transport, we agreed on the daily exchange of 400 freight wagons at Sarakhs border."

Qasemi stated that this agreement has made good progress, adding: "We can increase this exchange rate as well."

The official informed Berdimukhamedov about some problems in the border terminals of Iran and Turkmenistan and suggested: "A joint team of Iranian and Turkmen railway experts can be formed to examine the existing obstacles in the way of realizing the daily exchange of 400 to 500 wagons, and to

prepare a comprehensive report and resolve such problems."

He further suggested that the heads of the two countries' railways hold talks on issues related to Sarakhs and Incheh Boroun terminals, saying: "We are confident we can expand trade [at these borders]."

Mentioning Turkmenistan's transit of goods to India and southern countries through Iran, Qasemi said: "I think it will have very good economic effects for both countries." ▶ Page 4



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## Kazakhstan ambassador: We are defending our democracy

By Ali A. Jenabzadeh

TEHRAN— In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Kazakhstan's ambassador in Tehran Askhat Orazbay said on Sunday that the Kazakhstan government has immediately responded to the demands of the citizens, and the government has a "clear political will and a desire to resolve disputes through dialogue."

On January 2, demonstrations against the increase in retail prices for liquefied petroleum gas began in the Mangystau region in western Kazakhstan. The protesters demanded price reduction to the previous level and the solution of some other socio-economic issues. ▶ Page 3

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## Op-ed

### Leading prisoner of conscience facing slow death in Bahrain

By Sondoss Al Asaad

This week marks the 6th month of Bahraini prisoner of conscience Dr Abduljalil al-Singace's hunger-striking in protest of the treatment of the political prisoners at the notorious Central Jau Prison, where he is serving a life sentence over his peaceful role in Bahrain's 2011 pro-democracy uprising. Meanwhile, there is serious concern over his life; so what is Bahrain government waiting for to immediately release him?

Dr al-Singace is a prisoner of conscience, who has suffered arbitrary detention and severe torture on multiple times before his final arbitrary trial in June 2011, when a military court sentenced him to life imprisonment alongside other prominent protest leaders aka the 'Bahrain 13'. He rejected being labelled a criminal, as the government convicted him on grounds relating to his peaceful exercise of his freedoms of speech and assembly.

Dr al-Singace then waited 4 years to receive treatment for a nose injury he suffered due the inhumane torture, documented in the BICI famous report. He also suffered damage to his ear but has not received adequate medical attention.

Dr al-Singace is a 2007 Draper Hills Fellow at Stanford University's Center on Democracy Development, and the Rule of Law. He is also a former Professor of Engineering at the University of Bahrain, an academic and a blogger, who had long campaigned for an end human rights violations in Bahrain on his blog, Al-Faseela, which Bahrain's Internet Service Providers continue to ban access to. ▶ Page 5

### Iran leads the world in priority given to nano-sciences

TEHRAN - The ratio of nano-articles to the total number of articles published in Iran is the highest in the world, highlighting the amount of attention and priority given to nano-sciences in the country.

According to StatNano, in 2021, nearly 202,000 nano-articles were issued in JCR- (Journal Citation Reports) indexed journals, accounting for approximately 8.2 percent of the total articles indexed in WoS (Web of Science). Alternatively stated, about 8 percent of all scientific publications across the globe are in the field of nanotechnology.

In terms of the ratio of nano-articles to the total number of articles, Iran still possesses the highest share in this index with 18.7 percent of the total articles falling in the category of nanotechnology.

The country published a total of 11,196 nano-articles in 2021, according to the database.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and China followed Iran with 17.4 percent, 16 percent, and 14.1 percent shares of nano-articles to the total number of articles, respectively. ▶ Page 7

## TENDER INVITATION NO. 1400-1013

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Name of office: Managing Director Office, Iranian Aluminum Company. Fax: +98 21 88049028 Tel: +98 21 88049024

For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: [www.iralco.ir](http://www.iralco.ir)

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



## New chapter has opened in Iran-Turkmenistan ties: VP



TEHRAN — A new chapter has opened in the relations between Iran and Turkmenistan, Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber said in meeting on Sunday afternoon with Serdar Berdimukhamedov, the deputy prime minister of Turkmenistan.

Relations between the two countries in all dimensions, especially in the fields of oil, energy, rail, sea and land transport, export of engineering services, as well as facilitating exports and imports at border terminals will expand more than before, according to the vice president.

Mokhber emphasized the serious determination of Iran to identify the capacities for cooperation between the two countries, stating, “Despite the expansion of relations between the two countries, the current volume of exchanges is not satisfactory and should be expanded so that the two countries would

become a model for trade, economic and cultural relations for other countries in the region.”

Referring to the cultural and historical commonalities between the two nations, he said Iran and Turkmenistan can act as partners in the field of transit and regional transportation.

As the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has said the Iran-Turkmenistan relations are kinship, he said cooperation in various fields between the two countries should be strengthened.

Mokhber also noted that the good political relations between Iran and Turkmenistan should pave the way and guarantee the economic relations between the two countries.

For his part, Berdimukhamedov referred to historical relations between the two countries, saying after the visit of the Iranian president to Turkmenistan, a great step has been taken to strengthen relations between the two neighbors.

Berdimukhamedov emphasized that deepening relations with neighbors, including Iran, is a foreign policy priority by his country, stressing the need to develop economic, industrial, trade, transit and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

The deputy prime minister added, “There are many different areas of cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan, and we hope to see the flourishing of relations between the two countries with the new approach of the Iranian government.”

## Iran FM discusses Afghanistan with Indian counterpart

TEHRAN— Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Saturday exchanged views on the phone with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar over key issues, including the situation in Afghanistan.

Amir Abdollahian stressed the need to form an inclusive government in Afghanistan. He also referred to India's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, announcing measures and cooperation by Iran to transfer the aid in the form of wheat, medicine and Covid-19 vaccine to the country.

Jaishankar also referred to his country's assistance to Afghanistan, saying India's policy toward Afghanistan is the same as the past.

The talks between the two ministers took place after it was announced that the acting Taliban foreign minister was paying first visit to Iran.

Elsewhere in their phone conversations, the two chief diplomats discussed the latest situation in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

Amir Abdollahian said Iran has largely contained the virus due to the nationwide vaccination.

“We have been able to properly contain the virus, and so far 89% of people have been vaccinated and are receiving a third dose of vaccine,”

Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian stated.

However, the Indian foreign minister said the number of Covid-19 cases in India is rising, but due to the rapid vaccination “we can stop the process.”

The Iranian foreign minister also exchanged views with his Indian counterpart on the ongoing nuclear deal talks in Vienna. Amir Abdollahian said the talks are on the right track.

“We (Iran) have the necessary will to reach a good agreement in good faith, and if the Western side also has this goodwill and determination, we can reach a good agreement,” Amir Abdollahian pointed out.

Jaishankar also expressed pleasure with the forthcoming visit of Iran's top diplomat to India, saying it will provide a very good opportunity to develop bilateral cooperation.

Foreign Minister Jaishankar visited Iran in July to deliver a written congratulatory message from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

## Palestinian ambassador in Iran bids farewell after four decades

*Salam al-Zawawi is named as Palestine's new ambassador to Tehran*

TEHRAN - The Palestinian Ambassador to Tehran, Salah al-Zawawi, has bidden farewell to Iran, bringing to close four decades of his diplomatic mission in the Islamic Republic, according to Press TV.

On Thursday, he met Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian at the Foreign Ministry where he presented the top diplomat a Palestinian keffiyeh, a symbol of resistance, adorned with images of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Al-Zawawi, one of the founding members of the Fatah political party, was the second Palestinian ambassador to Tehran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

He had been holding the post in Iran since 1980. Before, he had severed as the Palestinian ambassador to Algeria, Brazil and Kenya.

On January 2, Zawawi delivered a speech during a ceremony at Iran's Foreign Ministry

marking the second anniversary of the U.S. assassination of legendary anti-terror commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Along with his Syrian and Iraqi counterparts, he praised Gen. Soleimani for his tireless efforts to strengthen the resistance front as well as his courage in the fight against Daesh.

According to the Beirut-based al-Mayadeen TV, Salam al-Zawawi has been named as Palestine's new ambassador to Iran. She is the daughter of the outgoing ambassador.

She was sworn in before Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the president's residence in the Jordanian capital, Amman, on Saturday, the television said.

The Palestinian president's adviser for diplomatic affairs Majdi al-Khalidi and Ramzi Khoury, director general of the Palestinian National Fund, were present at the swearing-in event.

# Ambassador: Iran has compensated Ukrainian plane victims in goodwill

*“Undoubtedly, one of the factors that contributed to the occurrence of this bitter event was the terrorist attack against Gen. Soleimani”*

Part 1

TEHRAN — In an interview with the Ukrainian UNN news agency, Manuchehr Moradi, Tehran's ambassador to Ukraine, has said that Iran has shown its goodwill and paid 150,000 dollars as a compensation to each family who lost a loved one in the Ukrainian plane incident.

The following is the text of the interview.

**In a few days, there will be the anniversary of the PS752 tragedy. The question is, how is the memory of this catastrophe in Iran honored? More than 80 passengers on the plane were Iranians. Several memorial signs have been installed in Ukraine. Are there memorial signs in Iran to honor the victims of the disaster? Perhaps a day has been set for the memory of the victims of the tragedy?**

First of all, let me, on the eve of the second anniversary of this tragedy - the fall of the Ukrainian plane - express my deep condolences to all the relatives of those killed in this disaster, living in Iran, Ukraine and other countries, whose citizens were the victims. Truly, it was a bitter event that happened on the days when New Year's holidays were celebrated in Ukraine. The bitterness of this disaster for the people of Iran was even greater, since the vast majority of those killed - 147 people - were Iranian citizens. Undoubtedly, this disaster is a painful event for the relatives of the victims in other countries, and each of them experienced great pain and suffering.

You asked about the measures being taken in my country in connection with this disaster. Of course, the entire top Iranian leadership expressed a sense of deep pity and sorrow over the disaster. In the first hours after the tragedy, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the president and the chief of the Judiciary issued relevant decrees in order to investigate this issue, clarify its aspects, and also in order to alleviate the pain of the families of the victims. In addition, during the two years that have passed, in accordance with the norms of international law and the national legislation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, numerous measures have been taken in relation to the technical, legal, judicial aspects, as well as payments, the necessary reports have been prepared on the technical aspects of the disaster, in accordance with the norms of the International Civil Aviation Organization, taking into account the views of other states. The report was sent to ICAO as well as to the states involved in the incident. For two years, the competent authorities of Iran have been investigating the cases



of the perpetrators and the accused, and in relation to these persons, the appropriate investigative procedures have been carefully carried out and are being carried out.

Also, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with international standards guided by the principle of goodwill, considered the issue of payments and officially announced that each of the families of the victims, despite their citizenship, was paid 150,000 dollars. By this time, a significant number of families of the victims of the crash had completed the appropriate procedures in this case and received this amount.

Regarding memorial signs: in order to remember the victims, a memorial sign was erected at the site of the plane's crash, and recently the father of one of the perished Ukrainian citizens visited this place. In addition, in Iran, usually during religious services in mosques, the memory of the dead is honored.

In Ukraine, for two years, a memorial sign was erected in a park on the banks of the Dnieper, and last year I attended a ceremony that was held at that place on the first anniversary of this disaster.

**As you know, the Ukrainian side made many statements on the technical and other aspects of the disaster. Has Iran already completed its investigation of all aspects of this disaster?**

Do you mean a technical investigation?

**I mean the investigation of the case and the corresponding inquiries.**

In my answer to the previous question, I said that the case of a crash - the fall of an airplane - has several aspects - technical, legal, judicial, and also the issue of payments. Regarding the technical aspect, according to ICAO standards, Iran had to submit a technical report at a certain period, and this was done. With regard to legal issues and judicial investigation, the court is investigating the charges brought against the perpetrators of this disaster. Two court sessions were held, and according to the appeal of

some of the plaintiffs and their lawyers, the judge demanded a reconsideration and elimination of the shortcomings in the case. The next court hearings will be announced later.

There are two questions regarding payments. The first concerns payments to the families of the victims, and the second concerns payments for the Ukraine International Airlines aircraft. Regarding the first question, I have already explained, and on the second issue, negotiations are continuing between UIA and its proxies, on the one hand, and the Iranian side, on the other.

In any case, the issue has been reviewed, and some aspects of its investigation have already been completed, and some are still pending.

**Last year, Mr. Danilov (Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine) said that this disaster was connected with a terrorist attack that assassinated General Soleimani. As you know, he was quite an influential person in Iran, and his assassination had a great impact on the situation inside Iran. Do you think this disaster is related to the assassination of Soleimani?**

Undoubtedly, one of the factors that contributed to the occurrence of this bitter event was the terrorist attack, as a result of which Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was martyred. The technical reports submitted by Iran also point to existing documented evidence that, despite the coordination between the military and civilian sectors, the plane crash was caused by human error, as well as a mistake in the perception of a passenger plane as a U.S. missile. This bitter event occurred after the emergence of a military situation and threats from the United States against Iran after the terrorist attack that assassinated General Soleimani. That is, if we were not in military conditions and there were no threats from the United States, perhaps this bitter incident would not have happened.

General Soleimani was very popular among the Iranians, as he devoted his entire life to defending the fatherland

and fighting terrorism in the region. The peoples of Iran and the region, taking part in millions to mourn in different cities of Iran and Iraq, demonstrated their anger at this act on the part of the United States.

General Soleimani's popularity is not limited to Iran, and he had many supporters among peoples living in geographic areas from the Indian subcontinent to the Mediterranean Sea. An important point also concerns the contradiction of the act by the United States to many norms of international law, as Ms. Agnes Callamard, the UN Special Rapporteur, characterized the terrorist attack against General Soleimani as a violation of international law.

In any case, in response to your question, we can say that, of course, the terrorist attack committed by the United States, which led to the martyrdom of General Soleimani, contributed to the aggravation of the situation in the region and is one of the factors of the bitter event - the fall of the Ukrainian plane.

**Let's move on to the legal and judicial aspects of the consideration of the plane crash case. As you said, we are aware of the case of the first court hearing. The question is exactly which persons are presented as suspects and who appeared in court. Were representatives of Ukraine present at the trial?**

Until that time, two court sessions were held on November 21 and 28, 2021 with the participation of the persons accused in the case, the plaintiffs and their lawyers, and this process was covered by the media, and it seems to us that a significant part of these court sessions was published. According to the Military Prosecutor of Tehran, so far 103 people have filed a lawsuit with the prosecutor's office directly from the family members of the victims and their lawyers.

During the first court session, some of the relatives of those killed in the crash expressed their views on the process of the judicial investigation, as well as their comments. With this in mind, the judge applied for a re-examination of the case and returned it to the prosecutor's office.

During the second court session, which lasted less than the first session, procedural and formal issues in relation to the investigation were mainly considered, and taking into account the new demands of the relatives of the victims and their lawyers, it was decided that the case would be considered in more detail. Also, the court will be notified of the time of the next hearing.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Blind Hatred

**Hate crimes against Muslims spiked 500 percent from 2000 to 2009.**

**Surveillance programs like the Bush administration's registry of people from Muslim-majority countries led to the illegal detention of thousands.**



# Kazakhstan ambassador: We are defending our democracy

From Page 1 ▶ Orazbay told Tehran Times that upon the instruction of the Kazakh President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the government promptly responded to the demands of citizens and took measures to reduce gas prices, as well as imposed a moratorium on price increases for socially important food products, fuels and utilities.

He stressed that all persons previously detained during unauthorized actions were released.

After meeting the demands of the protesters in the Mangystau region, demonstrations with similar demands began in all major cities of the country.

“On January 4, 2022, President Tokayev urged citizens not to succumb to provocations against the background of rallies against the increase in gas prices, to strive for mutual trust and dialogue. The president instructed the government and local authorities to find peaceful solutions to problems through dialogue with all interested parties based on respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens,” the diplomat noted.

He added that these actions demonstrated a clear political will and a desire to resolve disputes through dialogue, confirming the commitment of the authorities to the concept of a “Listening State.”

“Unfortunately, the protests in a number of major cities were used by terrorist, extremist and criminal groups to escalate the situation and violent actions. In this regard, the President ordered to take urgent measures to prevent riots and introduced a state of emergency throughout the country,” the ambassador noted.

Orazbay added that despite the undertaken measures, further escalation of violence was caused by “massive armed attacks on administrative institutions, police stations, military bases, civilians, including medical workers, firefighters and journalists.”

“The most difficult situation has developed in the city of Almaty, where terrorists seized the Mayor’s office, the local residence of the President of Kazakhstan, city police departments, the National Security Committee and the Prosecutor’s Offices, some TV and radio stations,” he noted.

Terrorists have also seized the Almaty International Airport with local and

foreign aircraft with passengers on board, the diplomat asserted.

“The analysis of the situation showed that Kazakhstan was subjected to armed aggression by well-coordinated terrorist groups trained abroad. According to preliminary data, there are persons among the attackers who have experience of combat participation in ‘hot spots’ on the side of radical Islamist groups. Terrorist groups appeared due to the activation of the so-called ‘sleeping cells’. Unfortunately, the law enforcement agencies of Kazakhstan were not ready for such massive and coordinated attacks in the different regions of the country simultaneously,” Orazbay told Tehran Times.

The diplomat noted that while the initial rallies in Western Kazakhstan were peaceful and accompanied by demands of a socio-economic nature, the participants in the subsequent mass riots did not put forward any specific economic or even political demands.

“They had no intention to negotiate with the authorities, but were aimed at violent overthrow of the constitutional order,” he reiterated.

According to the diplomat, due to the sharp aggravation of the situation in the country, President Tokayev assumed the post of Chairman of the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

“On January 6, he ordered the launch of a counter-terrorism operation in the country aimed at eliminating threats to national security and protecting the lives and property of citizens of Kazakhstan,” he added.

Orazbay noted that objectively assessing the situation, the president had to appeal to the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) with a request to send peacekeeping forces to help stabilize the country.

“The legal basis for the deployment of Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the CSTO in Kazakhstan are Articles 2 and 4 of the Collective Security Treaty, the Agreement on Peacekeeping Activities and the request of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the provision of necessary assistance.

The mandate of the peacekeeping forces includes protection of strategic facilities and helping Kazakhstan law enforcement services. The main actions against terrorist groups are carried



out by law enforcement agencies and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan,” he added.

Currently, peacekeepers from all CSTO member states, totaling about 2,500 people, are arriving in Kazakhstan.

According to the diplomat, the collective peacekeeping forces of the CSTO remain on the territory of Kazakhstan temporarily and will leave the country after the stabilization of the situation at the first request of the Kazakh side.

“President Tokayev instructed law enforcement agencies to form an investigative group to conduct a large-scale investigation and bring all those responsible to justice. The results of the investigation upon its completion will be presented to the international community,” he added.

He also noted that Kazakhstan ensures the security and protection of foreign diplomatic missions in the country, as well as personnel and property of foreign companies and investors.

“The situation will soon be stabilized and there will be no changes in the economic policy and investment climate of the country, all our obligations remain in full,” Orazbay remarked.

According to the diplomat, the temporary restriction of Internet access in the country is caused by a counter-terrorist operation to block communication between members of

terrorist groups.

“On January 7, 2022, in his address to the people of Kazakhstan, President Tokayev stated that a counter-terrorism operation was continuing in the country. The police, the National Guard and the Armed Forces are carrying out large-scale and coordinated actions to neutralize terrorist and criminal groups. It is important to note that peaceful protesters are not subjected to any persecution,” he reiterated.

He also said that it is important to emphasize the unity of the people of Kazakhstan at this difficult time.

“Citizens support the measures taken by President Tokayev to restore peaceful life and initiate creation of people’s squads to protect social facilities,” he remarked.

“We are defending our democracy and Constitution from Islamist radicals and terrorists,” the diplomat emphasized.

He also noted that unfortunately, there are human casualties, both among law enforcement officers and military personnel, as well as the civilian population.

“This is a huge tragedy for us, the relatives of the victims and the entire Kazakh people,” he added.

“Due to a large number of casualties and losses of lives as a result of tragic events in a number of the regions of the country, President Tokayev declared January 10, 2022 a day of national mourning,” the diplomat concluded.

the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

This may be the reason why the Leader underlined the need to fortify religious zeal in the country because it, as he said, turns threats into opportunities.

“Religious zeal based on reason turns threats into opportunities. An example of this is the war imposed by [Iraqi dictator] Saddam [Hosseini] on Iran. The U.S., USSR, NATO, etc. united in this international war to defeat Iran, but the people’s zeal, that is based on faith, defeated all of them,” the Leader said, according to a readout of his speech published by the Khamenei.ir.

Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to the U.S. system of calculation in its dealing with Iran, describing it as defective that leads to miscalculation.

“The U.S. system of calculation is defective. It cannot fathom the truths about Iran. When their calculation of the existing situation is wrong, their decisions are wrong too. This is why they have been unsuccessful so far and they will continue to be unsuccessful, God willing,” he said.

According to the Leader, another case of U.S. miscalculation was the assassination of Iran’s top general Qassem Soleimani. “Enormous, amazing funerals were held for Martyr Soleimani in various cities of Iran and Iraq, and God blessed these. If they were to hold funerals for him in Syria, Lebanon and Pakistan, they would have been just as enormous,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He pointed out, “n the enemy’s thinking, the martyrdom of General Soleimani was supposed to be a threat to us. However, the Muslim Iranian nation turned this threat into an opportunity. Not only was the Resistance Movement not extinguished, it has also increased as you can see.”

## Iran’s Alvani nominated for best women’s club futsal coach in world

TEHRAN – Palayesh Naft Abadan coach Narges Alvani was nominated for the best women’s club coach in the world in 2021.

Palayesh Naft Abadan were also shortlisted for the best club in the world.

On Saturday, Gelareh Nazemi was nominated for the best referee and Iran goalkeeper Farzaneh Tavasoli has to vie to become the best women’s goalkeeper in the world.

Alvani’s rivals are Alexander Cherkasov (RUS), Cristiane de Souza (BRA), Anderson Machado De Menezes “Esquerda” (BRA), José Luis Gonzalo Santangelo (ARG), Julio Delgado González (ESP), Márcio Bica Coelho (BRA), Massimiliano Neri (ITA), Pedro Alexandre de Jesus Henriques (POR) and Vasyi Sukhomlinov (UKR).

The Futsal Planet website, which introduces the nominees for receiving the best awards in the futsal world at the end of each year, has put her name among the top 10 nominees to receive the best club coach in the year 2021.

## Norouzinejad optimistic on Iran’s performance at Asian Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran handball team center back Pouya Norouzinejad says that they can win a medal in the 2022 Asian Men’s Handball Championship.

The Iranian team are drawn with Saudi Arabia, India and Australia in Group B.

Iran, headed by Spaniard Montoya Montoya, have recently participated in a tournament in Spain, where the team suffered two defeats against Spain and Poland.

The Persians took part in the event as part of preparation for the 2022 Asian Handball Championship.

“I think the tournaments like this could be helpful because we faced with the big teams. The matches against Spain and Poland helped the coaching staff to evaluate our weaknesses and strength points,” Norouzinejad said.

“The Asian Handball Championship serves as a qualification tournament for the 2023 World Men’s Handball Championship. We are determined to book our berth in the world championship which will be jointly hosted by Poland and Sweden. I think we can also win a medal in Saudi Arabia,” the VfL Eintracht Hagen added.

“At the moment, there is a friendly atmosphere in our team and the relationships between players and coaches are very good. We will do our best to make our people happy in the competition,” Norouzinejad concluded.

## Hull City eye Sayyadmanesh: report

TEHRAN – Hull City are being linked with a move for Fenerbahce striker Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, the72.co.uk reported.

Hull City are believed to be interested in luring the striker to England in this transfer window and have apparently made contact.

However, Sayyadmanesh is also said to have interest from Anderlecht as well meaning the Tigers face strong competition.

Sayyadmanesh has most recently played at Ukraine’s Zorya Luhansk on loan from Fenerbache.

He scored 12 goals in 35 matches for the team.

## Iran futsal and Nazemasharieh nominees for 2021 world’s best

TEHRAN – Iran national futsal team and Mohammad Nazemasharieh have been nominated for the best team and the best coach in the world in 2021 by futsalplanet.com.

Iran will compete with Argentina, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Japan, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Portugal, Slovakia, Uzbekistan and Venezuela for the accolade.

Nazemasharieh failed to lead Iran to final four of the 2021 FIFA Futsal Cup in Lithuania.

Bakhodir Akhmedov (UZB – Uzbekistan), Marián Berky (SVK- Slovakia), Bruno Garcia Formoso (ESP- Japan), Hicham Dguig (MOR – Morocco), Freddy Miguel González Barrera (VEN – Venezuela), Jorge Gomes Braz (POR – Portugal), Paulo Ricardo Figueiroa Silva “Kaka” (BRA – Kazakhstan), Ivo Krezo (BIH – Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Matias Raúl Lucuix (ARG – Argentina) are also nominated for the best coach.

## Iraqi iconic midfielder Qasim doubtful for Iran match

TEHRAN – Iraq national football team midfielder Mohammed Qasim Majid will likely miss the match against Iran in the 2022 World Cup qualifier.

Iraq are scheduled to play Iran on Jan. 27 in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

The 25-year-old midfielder has reportedly suffered a foot injury and will not be fit for match against Iran.

It is a must-win match for the Iraqi team since the team sit two points behind Group A third-place team the UAE.

The third-place team will qualify for the play-off match.

## Australian Ambassador to Iran Sachs visits to IRIVF

TEHRAN – The Australian Ambassador to Iran Ms Lyndall Sachs accompanied by Mr Denis Cairney, Deputy Head of Mission of the Australian Embassy in Tehran, met with Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) President Mohammad Reza Davarzani at the federation headquarters on Saturday.

Also in attendance were Shahram Azimi, Head of International Relations of the Ministry of Sports and Youth and Vahid Moradi, Senior Advisor to the IRIVF President.

During the Sachs’ visit, Davarzani shared his experience, presenting a report on the growth and sustainable development of volleyball in Iran and explaining about the facilities of Iranian volleyball in the men and women’s sections and the international activities of Iranian volleyball in recent years.

Ms Sachs along with the IRIVF officials visited the Women’s Volleyball Academy at the Azadi Sports Complex in Tehran and expressed her surprise and satisfaction with the extensive facilities provided by the federation in the field of women’s volleyball. She had a short talk with the players of the Iran Girl’s U-17 team and met with Fariba Mohammadian, the IRIVF Vice President at the Women’s Academy.

Before leaving, Lindall Sachs asked Davarzani to provide conditions so that she could watch the Iran’s Premier League matches closely on site, thus showing her interest in the sport of volleyball. Additionally, she hoped Iranian volleyball as a professional group would achieve its ideals in both men’s and women’s categories.

## Leader sheds light on U.S. hostility toward Iran

TEHRAN – In his televised speech on Sunday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei delved into the raison d’être of the U.S. hostile, aggressive stance toward the Islamic Republic of Iran, offering a clear-eyed glimpse of the current state of play between Tehran and Washington.

Since the speech was delivered on a historical event, it was an opportunity to draw on recent history to ponder over present-day issues that are deeply rooted in the collective memory of ordinary Iranians who journeyed – through time- from a Western-allied oppressive regime to an independent-minded Islamic political system which draws its legitimacy and power from its own people.

For all its ups and downs, this journey had its own accomplishments and achievements. But the achievements of the Islamic Revolution have been inexorably downplayed, and in many cases distorted, by the West in a bid to foster an atmosphere of despair among the Iranian people, especially the youth. Ayatollah brought to notice this fact during this speech, underlining the utmost importance of explaining the “important breakthroughs” of the Islamic Republic in many spheres.

Aside from the achievements which deserve deeper disquisition, another point stood out in the Leader’s speech which is quite relevant at this moment of talks between Iran and the West in the Austrian capital Vienna.

The talks manifest the extent to which the United States and its European allies use bullying and illegitimate sanctions to pocket more concessions from Iran all while refusing to honor the very commitments they made a few years ago.

The talks resumed in late November and since the early days of 2022, negotiators from Iran and the P4+1

group of countries have been in Vienna to discuss how to repair what has been damaged due to the U.S. illegal behaviors. American negotiators are also present in Vienna but in separate hotels.

Despite being the first party to withdraw from the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan and Action (JCPOA), Washington has refused to make up for its withdrawal and keeps insisting on getting more and giving less. This has surprised many observers who used to think that the Biden administration, and Democrats in general, are different from Republicans.

The reality, however, indicates that when it comes to Iran, Democrats and Republicans are all cut from the same cloth. And this is not Iran’s fault, according to the strategic assessment of Ayatollah Khamenei.

The U.S. enmity toward Iran, the Leader indicated, is not because some Iranians chant the well-known slogan of “Death to America.” Instead, the U.S. everlasting hostility toward Iran stems from a much deeper reason that has something to do with the nature of the Islamic Republic.

“America is a sworn enemy of the Islamic system [of Iran] because this system is based on religion and epitome of the nation’s religious belief,” the Leader pointed out.

The Leader made the remarks in a live, televised speech on the anniversary of the people of Qom’s uprising against the oppressive Pahlavi regime, which took place on January 9, 1978.

He added, “The U.S.’s deep hostility and spite toward Iran stem from the Iranian people’s revolutionary, religious viewpoint on the current issues of the world. That is why the U.S., the leading arrogant power, opposes

## Tehran, Ashgabat explore avenues of transport, energy co-op

From page 1 ► According to Qasemi, the connection of the two countries' railways and rail transit can bring billions of dollars a year to Iran and Turkmenistan and have many benefits.

He said that Iran and Turkmenistan can expand their cooperation far beyond the current level, adding: "Strengthening the rail transportation system in Iran and Turkmenistan as a safe and cheap route, can have great benefits for the two countries."

Further in the meeting, Berdymukhamedov referred to the good relations between Iran and Turkmenistan in various fields and noted that these relations have been strengthened based on various documents signed at the governmental level and between the ministries of the two countries.

He underlined the determination of the two countries' authorities for the expansion of ties in various areas, saying: "Despite the problems in 2021, we saw an 84-percent increase in the volume of trade between Iran and Turkmenistan compared to 2020."

### Iran ready to swap 40 mcm/d of Turkmenistan's gas

During his visit to Tehran, Berdymukhamedov also met with Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji to discuss the expansion of energy cooperation between the two neighbors.

In this meeting, Oji noted that Iran is ready to swap 40 million cubic meters of gas per day (mcm/d) or 10 to 15 billion cubic meters per year.



Transport Minister Rostam Qasemi (R) hands a welcome gift to Deputy Chairman of Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers Serdar Berdymukhamedov in Tehran on Saturday.

He mentioned the implementation of a gas swap deal with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan as of this month, saying: "Our colleagues at the Sarakhs metering station in Turkmenistan border are monitoring the implementation of the swap deal which is begun with four to five million cubic meters per day, or 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters per year."

The tripartite gas swap agreement was signed on November 28, 2021 in Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat on the sidelines of the 15th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Under the agreement, natural gas will be transported from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan through Iran.

## Iran oil revenues have increased significantly in recent months: NIOC head

TEHRAN – Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr has said the country's oil revenues have increased significantly over the past few months and the country has received the payment for all its crude oil sales since the new government administration, Shana reported on Sunday.

"In the thirteenth government, part of the country's lost oil markets has been revived and we have received the payment for all the oil we have sold so far," Khojasteh-Mehr said.

According to the official, the private sector is also contributing greatly to the country's current oil sales.

## Industry Ministry to develop business, industry sectors equally



Industry Minister Reza Fatemi Amin (C) in a meeting with the Iran Chamber of Guilds board members on Sunday

TEHRAN – Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin has said his ministry is focusing on the equal development of both industry and business at the same time, the ministry's news portal Shata reported.

Fatemi Amin made the remarks in a meeting with the board members of Iran Chamber of Guilds on Sunday.

"With the establishment of the Industry Ministry's new organizational structure, the real integration of the ministries of industry, mines and commerce has taken place, and the methods of governance have changed and been updated," the minister said.

## TEDPIX down 25,000 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 25,679 points to 1.336 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 4.833 billion securities worth 28.049 trillion rials (about \$96.72 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dopped 20,428 points, and the second market's index fell 46,682 points.

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

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

# IRISL ranks 14th among world's top 100 shipping lines



TEHRAN – Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) is ranked 14th in Alphaliner's latest list of the world's top 100 ship-ping lines published on January 7.

Based on the provided data, IRISL has climbed one place from 15th in the entity's list for the previous year. The IRISL's capacity now takes up 0.6 percent of the world's total shipping capacity.

The Alphaliner Top 100 is the ranking of the largest container or liner operators in terms of global capacity, taking into account the fleets of virtually all of the container operators worldwide.

In 2018, IRISL stood at the 19th place in Alphaliner's Top 100 ranking, while the company held 22nd place in its preceding year.

According to IRISL Head Mohammadreza Modares Khiabani, IRISL currently has 150 active vessels, of which 32 are bulk carriers, 30 are container vessels,

22 are cargo carriers of general goods, 18 are service and passenger vessels, two are roll-on/roll-off, and three barges.

This year, the world's largest container shipping company, the Danish Maersk has slid to the second place in the list of the world's top 100 container/liner operators giving the first place to Swiss-Italian Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

Geneva-based MSC held second place in the previous year's ranking. Based on Alphaliner's latest data, the company now owns 645 ships with a total container capacity of 4,284,728 TEU.

French container transportation and shipping company CMA CGM S.A. is ranked third with a total capacity of 3,182,157 TEU.

With 479 vessels and a total capacity of 2,932,779 TEU, the Chinese state-owned China Ocean Shipping Company, known as CO-

SCO or COSCO Group is ranked as the world's fourth-biggest shipping company.

Back in October 2021, Modares Khiabani had said that maritime transportation conducted by the IRISL fleet in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22, 2021) increased by 43 percent compared to the previous year's same period.

"During the first five months of the current year, the revenue from foreign maritime transportation reached about \$431 million to register a 100-percent growth compared to the same period of the previous year," he said at the IRISL's annual general assembly on October 10, 2021.

The official stated that sanctions restrictions along with the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic had a negative impact on the country's shipping performance

during the previous Iranian calendar year.

He described the sanctions as a debilitating factor in the way of IRISL activities, saying that "sanctions have made it difficult for us to supply parts for the vessels and also have significantly increased insurance costs."

"IRISL has conducted 21 percent of the country's total maritime transport this year, and fortunately, during these five months, not only the shipping performance of the IRISL has improved compared to the previous year, but also the situation of the group (IRISL) has improved much compared to [the Iranian calendar year] 1398 (ended in March 2020)," he said.

According to the official, the share of IRISL in the country's total maritime transportation was 18 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year.

## Govt. gets Parliament's approval for eliminating subsidized forex rate

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament on Sunday approved the general outlines of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21), allowing the government to eliminate the subsidized foreign currency exchange rate.

The bill was approved during the open session of the parliament with 174 votes in favor, 76 votes against, and six abstentions, IRNA reported.

Prior to the voting, President Ebrahim Raisi how attended the parliament session to defend his administration's proposed budget bill said the government plans to continue providing subsidized foreign currency (at 42,000 rials per US dollar) for the imports of basic goods in the next few months, saying the condition should be right for eliminating subsidized exchange rate.

"Subsidized exchange rate is the main concern of the government and [we] will continue [providing] it in the next few months until the conditions are ready," Raisi said.



Iran currently uses three different exchange rates: the official subsidized rate, the market rate, and a rate controlled by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) available to importers and exporters of essential goods. The latter is known as the NIMA rate.

In February 2021, while Iran's parliament was debating the government's budget bill for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21, 2021), lawmakers proposed the elimination of the subsidized exchange rate, however, the government of President Hassan Rouhani rejected the proposal and insisted on using the subsidized rate,

arguing that its discontinuation would lead to major inflationary impulses in the economy.

Speaking at the parliament Raisi noted that the government has decided to continue the allocation of subsidized foreign currency for the import of basic goods despite the fact that all the resources considered for the allocation of such currency in the current year's budget bill have been already spent.

The government had allocated \$8 billion for subsidized foreign currency in the current year budget bill and the parliament had authorized the government to provide this subsidy either directly to people or allocate it for the imports of basic goods.

Raisi stated that since all the budget for the subsidized foreign currency in the current fiscal year has already been paid, according to the national law the government is not obliged to continue its allocation in the current year, however, "The government decided to continue to do so because people's livelihood is the red line."

## Over 175,000 tons of alumina powder produced in 9 months

TEHRAN- Iran has produced 175,284 tons of alumina powder during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021).

As reported, the figure shows one percent decline as compared to the output in the nine-month period of the previous year, which was 177,239 tons.

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

Alumina is an important ceramic material for industrial applications. The numerous fields of application range from construction materials, to filling materials, as well as abrasives and catalysts.



In plants and mechanical engineering, alumina ceramics are mainly used for wear and corrosion protection.

The particle size distribution largely determines the application range and the quality of an alumina powder. Reliably identifying the differences in particle size is therefore an essential requirement of the measuring instrument.

## Monthly non-oil trade value up 25% yr/yr

TEHRAN – The value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 25 percent during the ninth month of the current Iranian calendar year (November 22-December 21, 2021), as compared to the same month in the past year, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that 13.172 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$8.951 billion were traded in the ninth month, indicating also three percent growth in weight.

The official put the non-oil export at 9.593 million tons valued at \$4.041 billion in the ninth month, with 23 percent growth in value and 0.5 percent rise in weight year on year.

He further put the monthly non-oil import at 3.579 million tons worth \$4.91 billion, indicating 27 percent rise in value and 19 percent growth in weight.

As previously announced by the acting

head of IRICA, the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent during the first nine months of the current year (March 21-December 21, 2021), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Alireza Moghadasi said that Iran has traded over 122.5 million tons of non-oil products worth \$72.1 billion with other countries in the mentioned period, IRNA reported.

According to Moghadasi, the weight of trade in the mentioned period also grew by 11 percent in comparison to the figure for the previous fiscal year.

The official put the nine-month non-oil exports at 92.3 million tons valued at \$35.1 billion, with a 40-percent rise in value and eight percent growth in weight.

He noted that the value of the country's non-oil exports in the first nine months of the current year has exceeded the total value of exports in the previous year and the



figure is expected to reach \$47 billion by the end of the current calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Moghadasi said the value of Iran's non-oil trade with foreign partners is expected to reach \$98 billion by the yearend.

According to the official, petrochemical products accounted for 42 percent of the total value of the exports in the said time span, with 42.4 million tons worth \$14.7 billion of the said products being exported to

foreign markets.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Afghanistan.

Moghadasi further announced that the Islamic Republic imported 30.1 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$37 billion in the first nine months of the present year, with a 37-percent growth in value and a 20-percent rise in weight year on year.

The United Arab Emirates was the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China, Turkey, Germany, and Switzerland, he stated.

According to the IRICA acting head, out of the total non-oil goods imported into the country in the first nine months of this year, 23.1 million tons worth \$12.4 billion were basic goods, which indicate an increase of 32 percent in weight and 61 percent in value, year on year.

# A new deal will recognize current state of Iran’s nuclear program: professor

“Progress in Vienna talks, though limited, is promising”

From page 1 ▶ The concern is that even if a new deal is reached with the Biden Administration, a Republican administration after the 2024 election could, again, pull out of the deal.

Even when a government reaches an agreement with the U.S. and abides by it, there is no guarantee that the U.S. won’t abandon it. The 2015 nuclear agreement – JCPOA – is a case in point. In view of this bitter fact, how can governments trust the U.S.?

As I suggested above, there is great concern about the ability of the U.S. to stay committed to a non-ratified agreement. But a treaty is simply not possible, as there is no way that a U.S. Senate would ratify it. This is why I think that an agreement will not be possible to reach and, ultimately, Iran might possibly achieve nuclear “breakout capability” rather than sign a deal that delays the program.



Many American political leaders are talking about world leadership. What are the main requirements of such a leadership?

I’ve actually tweeted about this. The key for American leadership is a willingness to build a broad coalition of support, especially among U.S. allies. That doesn’t mean the U.S. compromises its

core interests. But it does mean that the U.S. finds an approach that brings on board as many countries as possible (though not everyone). To me, that is really the key issue. The U.S. will never be able to be fully onboard with rejoining the JCPOA if it cannot find a way for Israel and Saudi Arabia to support a deal.

Do you consider Trump a

serious rival to Biden in 2024?

Yes, Trump is a serious contender. But there are others in his own party who are interested in running in 2024. To me, it seems that “Trumpism”, but not Trump himself, will be the key for Biden to overcome in 2024.

To what extent does the American public care about U.S. foreign policy?

Most Americans don’t care about U.S. foreign policy. They care about trade and immigration to the extent that either is perceived as a threat to American jobs. So long as Americans have jobs, they are largely indifferent to what the U.S. does in foreign policy. This is why the U.S. was able to stay in Iraq and Afghanistan for so long: the American public largely lost interest.

(The views expressed in this interview do not necessarily reflect those of Tehran Times.)

## UK first European country to pass 150,000 covid deaths

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, more than 150,000 people have died in the UK; that according to government figures.

But experts say the true figure is much higher and that separate figures published by the Office for National Statistics show there have been at least 174,000 deaths registered in the UK where coronavirus was mentioned on the death certificate.

The handling of the pandemic in the UK has been a matter of major discussion. Especially when certain factors are taken into consideration; for instance the wealth of the country or that there are no sanctions imposed depriving Britain from receiving vital medical supplies such as the case in other places.

Yet at the start of the pandemic the UK was finding it extremely difficult to even get its hands on personal protective equipment (PPE) for medics treating COVID-19 patients. This posed a major risk to doctors and other front line medical personnel working in the most riskiest hospitals.

National Health Service staff died as a result of this government mishandling. The UK was the only European country to have suffered this problem. At one point the British Royal College of Physicians condemned the worsening availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) as “truly terrible”. The college conducted a survey and concluded “we’re living through the darkest times the National Health Service has ever faced and this survey shows the reality of the situation facing hospital doctors at the moment”

The consensus in Britain of the government’s handling of the pandemic can be summed up by the word pathetic.

Amid dire warnings about shortages in PPE and acting in desperation, the government pressured Turkey into delivering the medical kits and sent a number of military Royal Air Force planes to Ankara to bring the shipment.

It later emerged that all of the 400,000 protective gowns that eventually arrived had been seized by UK customs because they believed the gowns did not fit UK standards.

A year-long public inquiry by members of parliament found Downing Street’s response to the pandemic was “one of the most important public health failures the United Kingdom has ever experienced.”

The reports documents dozens of failures by the British government that “led to many thousands of deaths which could have been avoided”

This included simple issues that could have been taken early on. Measures such as advising on social distancing or implementing lockdowns earlier on. This only exacerbated the crisis.

The report highlights the social care sector, including for the elderly in nursing homes and those in child care, as an especially desperate situation where government mismanagement led to avoidable deaths and suffering. Tens of thousands of vulnerable people, many of them the elderly in nursing homes have died because of a lack of government care.

The lawmakers also said a lack of information, “coupled with staff shortages, a lack of sufficient testing and [personal protective equipment], and the design of care settings to enable communal living hampered isolation and infection control, meant that some care providers were unable to respond to risks as effectively as they should” and this “had devastating and preventable repercussions for people receiving care and their



families and put staff providing social care at risk’.

According to the 151-page investigation the UK was among the first countries to develop a test for Covid, but London “squandered” its lead and “converted it into one of permanent crisis”. The report notes that the consequences were profound saying “for a country with a world-class expertise in data analysis, to face the biggest health crisis in 100 years with virtually no data to analyse was an almost unimaginable setback”

Until today, Coronavirus deaths are only registered as such (by government data) if the patient dies of the disease within 28 days of having been infected with the virus.

So if a patient had contracted COVID-19 29 days ago, they are not registered as having died of the virus despite the fact they may well have done so.

In October last year, a key study by members of parliament highlighted multiple incompetencies in the way the government and its scientific advisors handled the pandemic.

Among the key findings, the MPs report said:

The UK was not prepared for the Covid pandemic as plans were too “narrowly and inflexibly based on a flu model” that failed to learn the lessons from Sars, Mers and Ebola.

Covid cases in the UK surged at the beginning of March, but it wasn’t until March 23 that Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a lockdown.

There was a false belief that the public would not accept lockdown, or would only do so for a short period of time.

The report said government and scientists took “gradual and incremental approach” to introducing measures such as social distancing, isolation and lockdowns, but this was “wrong” and led to a higher death toll.

If social distancing and lockdown was brought in early, it “would have bought much-needed time” for vaccine research to begin, for Covid treatments to be developed.

Then comes the issue of herd immunity, an idea which the government seriously considered and only scrapped following a public backlash and once university professors warned it would kill the elder generation and those with underlying health issues. In essence, government scientist advisors did not treat Covid seriously in the early months.

While herd immunity was not official government strategy, MPs said, the government adopted a “policy approach of fatalism”, seeking to “only moderate the speed of infection” through the population, rather than seeking to stop its spread altogether.

The MPs said it was only in the days leading up to the March 23 lockdown that people within government and advisers “experienced

simultaneous epiphanies that the course the UK was following was wrong, possibly catastrophically so”.

MPs said “deficiencies in both scientific advice and government action” meant there was no real information about how far the virus had spread and authorities did not fully understand the role of asymptomatic transmission.

Little was done to halt the transmission of the virus from abroad. The border controls in the first few months of 2020 were described as “light-touch” and were implemented only on countries with high Covid rates, even though 33% of cases during the first wave were introduced from Spain and 29% from France.

MPs said more could have been done to reduce the spread of Covid before the second lockdown on November 5. More stringent social distancing measures in autumn could have “reduced the seeding of the Alpha variant across the country, slowed its spread and therefore have saved lives”.

The “regional tier system” that began in mid-October as confusing for the public, MPs said. Furthermore, it was not “watertight” enough to prevent infection spreading.

The report noted that minorities were hit the hardest. There were “unacceptably high death rates among people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and those with learning disabilities. The government has yet to properly address this.

Further criticism from different groups has been levelled at poor government protection for the vulnerable and the elderly living care homes.

Government failures led to thousands of elderly people dying in care homes. Meanwhile, the government did not focus enough on social care, the report says “social care had a less prominent voice in government during the early stages of the pandemic than did the NHS”.

Those are some of the findings of the latest key inquiry into the government’s mishandling of the Pandemic. Yet It also celebrates some aspects of the government’s covid response, such as the vaccine rollout.

However, any praise for the government handling has been met with widespread anger, especially by the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group, who say if a report finds the deaths of 150,000 people being “redeemed” by a vaccine rollout, then “the report... is laughable and more interested in political arguments about whether you can bring laptops to Cobra meetings than it is in the experiences of those who tragically lost parents, partners or children to Covid-19. This is an attempt to ignore and gaslight bereaved families, who will see it as a slap in the face”.

## Leading prisoner of conscience facing Slow death in Bahrain

From page 1 ▶ Dr. al Singace’s current hunger-striking began in July 8th, in response to arbitrarily confiscating his academic research, on which he worked for 4 consecutive years.

He is also not receiving the expected medical care as he is suffering from severe intermittent headaches, a prostate problem, arthritis in his shoulder joint, tremors, diminished eyesight and low immunity due to a low white blood cell count.

Since November 2021, he has lost 20 kilograms in weight. Dr Al-Singace has escalated his hunger strike by refusing to take IVs, supplementary vitamins and oral medication in protest at Bahrain prison authorities punitively suspending his video calls. He survives on nutritional drinks, oral rehydration salts, glucose, water and an IV drip. He waited more than two months to receive a CT scan as requested by his specialist, and he is not receiving daily medical check-ups except in rare emergency situations. Besides, his frequent requests for painkillers and a hot water bottle to relieve his pain were refused.

This is not Dr Al-Singace’s first hunger-striking. In March 2015, he protested against the violent response of Bahrain Ministry of Interior to a riot that took place in Jaw Prison. Though only a minority of inmates

participated in the riot, police collectively punished all detainees, subjecting them to beatings and other humiliating and degrading acts; depriving them of sleep and food; and denying them access to sanitation facilities.

For over 6 months, Dr Al-Singace subsisted on water, fluids and IV injections for sustenance. According to his family, Dr al-Singace was not transferred to hospital for he refused to wear a prisoner’s uniform on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience and not a criminal.

Since then, the prison’s authorities lifted a ban on Dr al-Singace receiving writing and reading materials, and denied him permission to receive magazines sent to him in an English PEN-led campaign. He has no access to television, radio or print media too.

Amid the blatant silence of the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union member states, the United States and the United, various rights groups and activists have demanded Dr Abduljalil al-Singace’s urgent and unconditional release, and the release of all political prisoners detained in Bahrain. Yet the Manama regime continues to turn a deaf ears to these calls, and apparently slowly killing Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace.

## Carter: America teeters on the brink of a widening abyss

Former President Jimmy Carter warned Wednesday that democracy is being threatened throughout the country, cautioning that “our great nation now teeters on the brink of a widening abyss.”

Carter, writing in a New York Times op-ed published on the eve of the anniversary of the January 6 insurrection, charged that “without immediate action, we are at genuine risk of civil conflict and losing our precious democracy,” CNN reported.

“Americans,” the 97-year-old former

President said, “must set aside differences and work together before it is too late.”

A year ago, the Democrat had joined the three other living former Presidents -- Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton -- in deriding the violent rioters who stormed the Capitol as Congress met to certify the results of the 2020 presidential election for President Joe Biden. On Wednesday, Carter wrote that “promoters of the lie that the election was stolen have taken over one political party and stoked distrust in our electoral systems.”

## Saudi Arabia may run out of interceptor missiles in months



Saudi Arabia could run out of interceptor missiles for its US-made Patriot air-defence system in “months”, according to a senior U.S. official cited by the Financial Times (FT) newspaper, prompting Riyadh to appeal to regional allies for help to replenish the stock.

“It’s an urgent situation,” the American official said, adding Washington supports the moves to source missiles from Gulf countries as Yemen’s Houthi rebels ramp up their cross-border attacks on the kingdom, Al Jazeera reported.

“There are other places in the Gulf they can get them from, and we are trying work on that. It may be the faster alternative [to US arms sales],” the official was quoted as saying.

Two people briefed on talks between Saudi Arabia and its neighbours confirmed to FT that Riyadh had made such requests.

A second person told FT that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman hinted at the issue during a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Riyadh in December and the kingdom subsequently contacted nations in the region directly.

It is not clear if Saudi Arabia’s neighbours have been able to supply it with munitions yet, the report said.

A third US official said the Houthi rebels, who are aligned to Iran and control northern Yemen, ramped up their assaults on the kingdom last year, launching 375 cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia, many of which were aimed at oil infrastructure, airports and cities.

“Responding to those attacks using those kind of interceptors means that they’re going to have a burn rate that is faster than they may have anticipated before,” the official told FT.

“That is something that we have to deal with and the answer to that is not only more interceptors, but the answer to that is ultimately a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Yemen.”

The situation represents the latest test for U.S.-Saudi relations, which President Joe Biden’s administration has sought to reshape in light of the October 2018 murder of Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi operatives in Istanbul.

In February last year, Biden said he would end U.S. support for Saudi Arabia’s “offensive operations” in Yemen, including “relevant arms sales”.

But several months later, his administration approved a \$650m sale of air-to-air missiles to the kingdom.



## Historical castles, mansions in Isfahan made national heritage



TEHRAN –A total of 10 aging structures and historical properties, which are scattered across Isfahan province, have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Saturday in separate letters to the governor-general of the central province, CHTN reported.

A selection of six historical mansions as well as Sardarb and Iraaj fortifications are among the properties added to the prestigious list.

Kuhpayeh Caravanseraï and the historical texture of the ancient village of Iraaj were also added to the list.

From very early history to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortifications in antiquity were designed primarily to defeat attempts at the escalade, and to the defense of territories in warfare, and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Uruk in ancient Sumer (Mesopotamia) is one of the world's oldest known walled cities. The Ancient Egyptians also built fortresses on the frontiers of the Nile Valley to protect against invaders from neighboring

territories.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as Nesfe-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan. Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

## Tourism projects worth \$4.1m inaugurated in Ardabil

TEHRAN –A total of 10 tourism-related projects, worth 1.2 trillion rials (\$4.1 million) have been implemented across the northwestern Ardabil province during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), the provincial tourism chief has announced.

These projects have contributed to the creation of over 100 jobs, Nader Fallahi said, CHTN reported on Sunday.

For the prosperity of the tourism industry in the province, supporting investors has been of primary importance, the official added.

Last January, the official announced that more than 150 tourism-related projects are underway across the northwestern province.

The mentioned projects will prepare the province's tourism sector for the post-coronavirus era when the number of tourists and travelers is expected to rise magnificently, the official added.

In July, a local tourism official announced that some 835 jobs are expected to be created in Ardabil by several investments in tourism-related projects, which are estimated to get off the ground by the end of the current Iranian year 1400 (ends in March 2022).

In April, tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

# What it's like to meet 5000-year-old tree



From page 1 ► When it comes to conservation and protection, it is obvious that naturally, all ancient and historical landmarks need care and protection, just like the case with Sarv-e Abarkuh, and several activities have been done to protect the straight and heavy Cypress.

It is worth mentioning that the tree's environment has changed these days. For instance, there were loads of pomegranates trees surrounding it in the past. Nowadays, with the expansion of cities and tourist and vehicle traffics, the tree's territory seems to be in a greater need to be secured.

The cypress enjoys encircling fences. This way, visitors shouldn't approach or touch it as when the soil hardened due to their footsteps, it won't have a chance to absorb water, and it will also alter micro-organisms.

Cypresses usually have been the first preferred tree for Iranian gardens. In all the

famous Persian gardens, this kind of tree plays a significant role in their design. In ancient Iran, planting a tree had great importance, as it shows in old paintings and monuments such as Achaemenian carvings in Persepolis. Cypress is noticed in many related symbols and old Persian poetry. It can also be seen as a symbol of life and beauty in some Achaemenian sculptures.

Sarv-e Abarkuh is protected by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ministry of Iran as a national natural monument. The ministry has long taken some steps, like killing insects, to guarantee that the tree keeps on living for the upcoming years. Some other moves have also been made to protect the tree, including keeping it away

from pests and insects harm, checking the issues related to visiting and tourism necessities, natural enclosures around the tree under current conditions to decrease tree's damage, utilizing a trained workforce to protect this national monument, and providing lightning protection.

**Local legends state that this tree has a puzzling and mysterious soul that is living for thousands of years.**

The giant Persian cypress is named after its ancient location, the town of Abarkuh in Yazd province. Abarkuh itself is a delightful place to stay located on the once crossroads of the Silk Road and has many excellent houses and antiquity of over 4000 years.

While in Abarkuh, one finds countless tourist attractions and peaceful natural sites, by visiting them, travelers may collect much more memories from their adventures.

## Centuries-old inscription discovered near Istakhr ancient city

TEHRAN –A Sassanid-era (224–651) rock-carved inscription has recently been discovered near the ancient city of Istakhr, in Marvdasht plain, which is home to the UNESCO-registered sites of Persepolis and Pasargadae as well as tens of other magnificent structures, in southern Fars province.

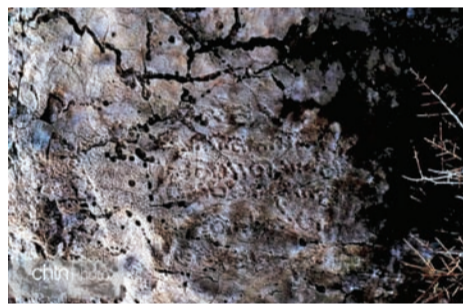
The inscription bears Middle Persian (or Pahlavi) script in six lines, Said Hamid Fadaï who presides over Persepolis World Heritage site.

Because of erosion of the inscription, specialized archaeologists and historians have read and translated it carefully, the official added.

The name of Zarathustra is engraved on this inscription that measures 40 by 35 centimeters, he noted.

The name Zarathustra has appeared in historical paper documents, but this is the first time it has been identified on an inscription, he explained.

Persian language, also called Farsi, is a member of the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian language family. Old Persian, spoken until approximately the 3rd century BC, is attested by numerous inscriptions written in cuneiform, most notable of which is the great monument of Darius I at Bisotun, western Iran. Middle Persian, spoken from the 3rd century BC to the 9th century CE, is represented by numerous epigraphic texts of Sasanian kings, written in Aramaic script; there is also varied literature in Middle Persian embracing both the Zoroastrian and the Manichaean religious traditions. Pahlavi



was the name of the official Middle Persian language of the Sassanian empire, according to Britannica.

The ancient city of Istakhr was the seat of local governments and a royal residence of Persian kings during the Sassanid era. Moreover, it acquired importance as a center of priestly wisdom and orthodoxy.

Istakhr rose to fame when Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire, chose it as his residence in 224 CE when the Persian nobleman dethroned a lawful ruler in Persia, Artabanus IV, king of the Parthian Empire.

The builders of Istakhr often reused architectural elements from the monuments of Persepolis. The Achaemenid royal tombs of Naqsh-e Rostam are not far from Istakhr too.

Istakhr remained popular after the fall of Sassanids by Arab innovators. According to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, the geographer Istakhri wrote that in the tenth century, its houses were built of clay, stone, or gypsum according to the wealth of their owners.

Furthermore, Istakhr has yielded many magnificent relics so far. An ancient trash

pit at Istakhr proved to be a very valuable source of finds. According to archaeological sources, the entire site is perforated by several sewage or storage wellholes. The holes are often "locked" by caps of brick or stone, and therefore an approximately contemporaneous mixture of broken and discarded pots, personal ornaments, stone and bronze objects, and a large number of coins was preserved in them.

Today, Istakhr is nothing but a plain full of shreds, scattered architectural remains, and a few ruins. The walled-in area measured 1,400 by 650 meters and was surrounded by a ditch that was connected to a nearby river.

The ancient region, known as Pars (Fars), or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenian army at Arbela in 331 and burned Persepolis apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

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

# Police seize Iron Age, Islamic-era jugs from smuggler

TEHRAN – Iranian police have recently confiscated four earthenware jugs from a smuggler in the city of Miandoab, northwestern West Azarbaijan province, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has said.

The relics, which are estimated to date back to the Iron Age and Islamic times, have been discovered from an antique dealer in the historical village of Yarijan following reports from locals and cultural heritage aficionados, CHTN quoted Behzad Hejabi as saying on Sunday.

The culprit was surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

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

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

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

As mentioned by Encyclopedia Iranica, Iron artifacts were unknown in Iran until the 9th century BC (the cultural period labeled Iron Age II), centuries after the phase designated as Iron Age I came into existence.

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



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

sites in western Iran.

Written sources are rare at Iranian Iron Age sites, and locally written texts are non-existent. Indirect historical reference to the region begins in the 9th century BC when Assyrian royal texts first refer to

various polities in northwestern and western Iran; these references continued into the 7th century.

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

The term Islamic art not only describes the art created specifically in the service of the Muslim faith (for example, a mosque and its furnishings) but also characterizes the art and architecture historically produced in the lands ruled by Muslims, produced for Muslim patrons, or created by Muslim artists. As it is not only a religion but a way of life, Islam fostered the development of a distinctive

culture with its own unique artistic language that is reflected in art and architecture throughout the Muslim world.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery). Tepe Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region was home to several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

# Iran leads the world in priority given to nano-sciences

From page 1 ► The number of scientific articles is deemed a significant parameter for measuring and comparing the scientific development of individuals, universities, and countries and indicates their scientific efficiency.

More than 42 percent of the world's nanotechnology publications by 2021 have been written and published by Chinese researchers. The United States, India, and Iran come next with 11.5 percent, 9.4 percent, and 5.5 percent, respectively.

China tops the list with more than 85,700 nano-articles, with around 14 percent of all the Chinese scientific articles falling into this category. Following China, the United States is in second place, having published about 23,200 articles (11.5 percent), while India and Iran would be in the next places with 9.4 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively.

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 ar-



tificial intelligence.

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

As of the start of a national plan to develop the nanotechnology sector 15 years ago, more than 5,283 billion rials (about \$19 million) have been allocated to nanotechnology projects.

Iran's nanotechnology products are generally classified into three groups of goods, services, and equipment, and the service sector has grown by nearly 130 percent over the past year (March 2020-March 2021).

Reports show that the largest share of the Iranian nano market, equivalent to 96 percent, belongs to goods. The service sector has grown by about 130 percent last year, from 443 billion rials (nearly \$16 million) to 1 trillion rials.

## Scientific progress

Studies show that Iran enters the year 2022 with the 15th rank in science production worldwide and it is expected to make progress over the next years as the coronavirus pandemic is going to ease.

According to the latest information on science production, Iran is ranked 15th in the world in the international system of Web of Science in 2021, with an

h-index of 383, which indicates the quality of Iranian articles registered.

Iran's scientific position in the Web of Science over the last 5 years shows that the production of conference papers has been on a downward trend during 2020 and 2021 due to the outbreak.

The share of Iranian science production from conference papers has dropped from 7.38 percent in 2017 to 1.26 percent in 2021.

Scientific studies and analyses extracted from the Scopus International Citation Database showed that the rate of scientific contributions of Iranian researchers to the world increased from 22.24 percent in 2017 to 35.6 percent in 2021.

Moreover, the SCImago ranking system deals separately with the ranking of countries in science production, ranking Iran as 40th in 2021 in terms of h-index. Also, in terms of the number of articles, Iran's index is 376.

The SCImago rankings show that between 1996 and 2020, the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan are in the top five. Iran also ranked 21st in the world and second in West Asia.

NATURE INDEX also shows that in 2021, considering that the latest update of this international system for science production reports has not been completed yet, Iran's overall ranking is 35th, which was 33 in 2020.

## Omicron could peak in Iran in coming weeks, expert warns

TEHRAN – The secretary of the National Scientific Committee of Coronavirus has warned that the Omicron-fueled surge in COVID-19 cases is likely to peak in the country in the coming weeks.

“Considering the outbreak of Omicron in the world, especially in our neighboring countries, including Bahrain and Kuwait, it seems that a peak of the variant could be seen in the coming weeks,” ISNA quoted Hamidreza Jama’ati as saying on Sunday.

Recent reports say around 500 persons have been identified with Omicron across the country, he said, adding that some 27 percent of the total tests conducted over the past week have been related to Omicron.

The rapid outbreak of the Omicron strain requires restrictions and preventive measures, or the country will face another peak in the next three to four weeks, Jama’ati stressed.

The first case of the Omicron COVID-19 variant was identified in Iran on December 19, 2021.

“Given that more than 89 countries around the world have confirmed Omicron cases and the World Health Organization has also announced this issue, we must also consider two points, the first one being the observance of health protocols and the other one imposing restrictions and quarantines.

Another important point is the issue of vaccination. Given that we have no other weapon against the virus, and even the children aged 7-11 must be inoculated,” he also said.

Therefore, quarantines are carried out on schools, universities, concerts, stadiums, restaurants, and clubs with more than 10 people, and other restric-



tions must be enforced, he suggested.

Iran's National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control on November 27 banned arrivals from the African countries of Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Eswatini reacting to the new variant.

There are no direct flights from Iran to South Africa and travelers are not allowed to enter Iran, Iranians who want to travel must also be quarantined at the border to have two negative PCR tests.

Foreign tourists must buy coronavirus insurance from authorized companies when entering the country, and if they suffer from the pandemic in Iran, they will be provided with a place and treatment for 14 days.

Inbound passengers must have coronavirus insurance, which differs from the routine insurance coverage purchased by all tourists before the coronavirus era.

From the beginning of the prevalence of coronavirus in Iran (March 2020), the country has so far experienced fifth waves of the pandemic. The fifth wave began at the beginning of July.

## Even bleached coral reefs can provide nutritious seafood, scientists find

The wide-scale bleaching of the planet's coral reefs is one of the most visually arresting symbols of climate change. Previously colourful and diverse tropical reef systems have turned ghostly white due to rising sea temperatures caused by global warming.

But now a new study has provided hope for coastal communities that rely on these reefs for food. Scientists have discovered that fish living in bleached coral reefs can remain rich sources of micronutrients, and in some cases, they can even increase in nutritional value.

What is coral bleaching?

Microscopic algae called zooxanthellae give coral reefs their vibrant colours. Reefs and algae enjoy a symbiotic relationship, helping each other to thrive. When sea temperatures rise, however, corals are put under stress, which drives the algae away, resulting in the corals looking like they have been bleached.

While corals can recover if water temperatures lower again, if they don't, the algae can't return and the corals will die. Corals can also be bleached as a result of pollution or too much sunlight as well.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Associ-

ation estimates that between 2014 and 2017, 75 per cent of the planet's tropical reefs were put under heat stress, which triggered bleaching.

Coral bleaching can have a devastating impact on wildlife. Reef systems provide shelter, protection and spawning grounds for a huge number of marine species, including crabs, jellyfish and turtles. Without these vital support networks, many species will face extinction.

Scientists from Lancaster University, along with an international team from Seychelles, Australia, Canada and Mozambique used 20 years of monitoring data in their study. They focused on a mass bleaching event in Seychelles in order to collect information on the nutritional value of fish species found in the surrounding reefs.

The reefs in the Indian Ocean archipelago were damaged by a large bleaching event in 1998, which killed an estimated 90 per cent of the corals.

Around 60 per cent of the coral systems recovered, but 40 per cent were transformed into reefs dominated by seaweed. This provided the scientists with a natural way to compare and contrast nutrient levels in the fish in both of these climate-shaped systems.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 9

New cases	1,480
New deaths	31
Total cases	6,206,405
Total deaths	131,639
New hospitalized patients	226
Patients in critical condition	1,775
Total recovered patients	6,051,812
Diagnostic tests conducted	42,826,837
Doses of vaccine injected	122,998,520

## Six innovation centers to promote medicinal plants



TEHRAN – The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has created six innovation centers to develop the supply chain of medicinal plants in the country.

The innovation centers have been created in the cities of Tehran, Kermanshah, Ardebil, Hamedan, Yasouj, and Gonabad, aiming to pave the way for industries to have easier access to ideas and products in the field of medicinal plants, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Fifteen other requests [for creating innovation centers] are also waiting to be approved, the report added.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has taken technological steps to flourish this ancient industry in the country. Among these measures, we can mention the development of a promotional package to develop the production and use of these products.

“Using the capacity of national media and supporting national and international exhibitions and festivals in the field of medicinal plants” and “Using the capacity of education to promote the importance of medicinal plants in primary to secondary education” are among other actions.

Also, “culture promotion and reform of society's attitude towards traditional medicine and promotion of healthy lifestyle” and “establishment of a database of available traditional medicines” and “establishment of a system for registering traditional and herbal medicines and providing pharmaceutical information” have also been implemented.

Iranian traditional medicine is one of the most ancient forms of traditional medicine. It is grounded in the concept of four senses of humor: phlegm (Balgham), blood (Dam), yellow bile (Safra), and black bile (Saouda). The concept of four senses of humor is based on the teachings of Rhazes and Avicenna into an elaborate medical system.

Iranian traditional medicine strongly focuses on prioritizing health maintenance and disease prevention over treatment.

Iran has ranked fourth for publication of articles in the field of traditional medicine and medicinal plants in the world, ISNA quoted Nafiseh Hosseini, a Health Ministry offi-

cial, as saying.

Iran also gained fifth place for knowledge production in traditional medicine and medicinal plants in the world in 2020, however this year, the country improved and placed fourth after India, China, and the United States, Hosseini added.

The progress has been made over the past 10 years, she noted.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has so far registered 120 national standards for medicinal herbs and traditional medicine to support the industry.

So far, about 30,000 plant species are identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species that its plant diversity is more than the whole of Europe.

Currently, about 2,300 species of medicinal plants have been identified in the country, accounting for one-third of the medicines used in human societies, the share of world trade in these products is about \$124 billion and Iran's share is \$570 million, which is only 0.5 percent of the total.

The per capita consumption of medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants. In other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 1.2 trillion rials (around \$4.5 million) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilograms.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Army to set up five field hospitals nationwide

TEHRAN – The Iranian Army will set up five field hospitals in the country to offer services to COVID-19 patients, IRIB reported on Thursday.

A 120-bed field hospital built by the Army, equipped with advanced medical devices to provide services to the people and medical staff, was inaugurated on April 24 in Isfahan province.

This field hospital is equipped with an ICU ward, ventilators, cardiac monitoring systems, oxygen generators, and resuscitation rooms, which offer services to coronavirus patients.

The Army, as it is present in various fields, can provide significant services to those infected with the pandemic with all its might, Abdolrahim Mousavi, Commander-in-Chief of the Army said.

## اعلام ساخت پنج بیمارستان صحرایی ارتش در کشور

فرمانده کل ارتش جمهوری اسلامی ایران دستور ساخت پنج بیمارستان صحرایی ارتش در کشور را صادر کرد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما، امیر سرلشکر عبدالرحیم موسوی تأکید کرد: ارتش همان گونه که در زمینه‌های مختلف حضور داشته می‌تواند با تمام توان خود خدمات قابل توجهی به بیماران کرونایی ارائه دهد.

بیمارستان صحرایی ۱۲۰ تختخوابی ارتش مجهز به دستگاه‌های پیشرفته پزشکی برای ارائه خدمات به مردم و کادر پزشکی، چهارم اردیبهشت در اصفهان راه‌اندازی شد. این بیمارستان صحرایی با تمام نیازمندی‌ها از جمله «آی. سی. یو»، ونتیلاتور، مونیتورینگ قلبی، دستگاه اکسیژن ساز، و اتاق احیا به بیماران کرونایی خدمات ارائه می‌دهد.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:12    Evening: 17:29    Dawn: 5:46 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

## Hafez, most popular of Persian poets

Part 5  
**Hafez's life and times**  
Khajeh Shams ad-Din Mohammad Shirazi (b. Shiraz ca. 1315, d. Shiraz ca. 1390) is one of the greatest poets of Persia with perhaps a more profound effect on Persian life and culture in general than any other, not excepting such great figures as Ferdowsi, Sadi, and Rumi.

But in spite of this enormous popularity and influence on Persian culture, details of his life are extremely sketchy, and the brief references in tazkeras (anthologies with biographical sketches of the poets cited) are often unreliable or even purely fictitious.

This dearth of information has induced some later scholars to use Hafez's own poetry as a quarry for factual details about his own life and times, sometimes to an unwarranted degree, as will be discussed later.

The earliest document to have survived is a preface to his Divan written by a contemporary of his, who may have been called Mohammad Golandam (text in Divan-e Khajeh Shams ad-Din Mohammad Hafez Shirazi, ed. Mohammad Qazvini and Qasem Ghani). But even here, scholars differ on the identity of the author and the veracity of the text.

The sources are, however, unanimous on his name, Shams ad-Din Mohammad, and his pen-name, "Hafez," is generally taken to refer to his knowing the Quran by heart, an intimate familiarity reflected in the frequent echoes and reverberations of Quranic phrases and allusions in his poems.

In his poetry, he refers to some of the notables whom he addresses or praises as khajeh, and in one bayt he himself is referred to by the same title. Among other titles given to him later, the most frequent is lesan al-ghayb (the Tongue of the Unseen), although in some early references, this epithet is used to describe the divan rather than the poet himself.

Abu Bakr Tehrani, for example, in his Ketab-e Diarbakriya, written between 1469 and 1478 mentions that those Sufis blessed with wit and discrimination ("darvishan-e ba zawq") call the divan "lesan al-ghayb."

Other writers use the epithet for both the poet and his work. Jami in his Nafahat al-ons (written in 1476-78) refers to the poet as both lesan al-ghayb and tarjoman al-asrar (Interpreter of Mysteries), another frequently used epithet.

However, as the variations in some manuscripts of Nafahat al-ons indicate, soon after the death of Hafez, the poet and his Divan assumed an almost metonymical relationship, and were used interchangeably in descriptions and arguments.

This symbiosis was further consolidated by the general traditional approach to literary history and biography which has survived to the present and which ignores the distinction between the historical identity of a poet and the image of the poet as depicted and projected by himself in his poetry, the so-called "I" or persona of the poet in modern literary terms. This point, as we shall see, is of constant relevance in any study of the biography of a medieval poet.

Opinions differ on his date of birth and details of his immediate family and predecessors. Among modern scholars, Qasem Ghani has argued for 1317 as the probable date of birth while Mohammad Mo'in prefers a slightly earlier date, 1315.

Some sources, including Atar-e Ajam (For-sat Shirazi) and Tazkera-ye meykhana mention 1389 as the date of his death, but most modern scholars, including Mohammad Qazvini follow such earlier sources as Jami and Khafi in preferring 1390.

Information about his immediate family comes either from late and unreliable sources or is based on conjectures derived from an often overly literal reading of his poetry.

Some sources refer to his father as a certain Baha ad-Din from Isfahan while others maintain that he was called Kamal ad-Din and came from Tuyserkan.

Perhaps the elegiac verses grieving the loss of a child provide the clearest allusions to his having had children. These include the famous ghazal remembering the loss of the "light of his eyes" and the short qet'a lamenting the passing away of an offspring and referring to the gravestone.

The latter example is perhaps more significant since the contents of a qet'a, the usual form for topical or occasional verse, could be considered more of a versified reportage of a real event than the more opaque and timeless allusions made in a ghazal.

Hafez was born in Shiraz and died there. His proverbial attachment to his beloved city is a recurrent theme in his poetry and he refers to the town and its cherished sites and promenades like Golgasht-e Mosalla and Ab-e Roknabad in many of his poems, including the famous ghazals beginning with Agar an tork-e shirazi be-dast arad del-e ma-ra and Khosha Shiraz o waz-e bi-mesal-ash.

Of his early life and schooling there, a few facts and names emerge from the account given in the Golandam preface as well as from the occasional references to names and books in the Divan itself.

He attended the traditional curriculum of the time, Quranic sciences and Arabic perhaps under the influence, if not the direct teaching, of such masters as Qewam ad-Din Abdollah Shirazi, Mir Sayyed Sharif Jorjani, and Qazi Azod ad-Din Iji (d. 1355).

In a famous qet'a beginning with be ahd-e saltanat-e Shah Shaykh Abu Es'haq / be panj shakhs ajab molk-e Fars bud abad, praising five notables whose achievements brought prosperity to the land of Fars, the poet refers to Qazi Azod ad-Din Iji and his famous manual of theology, Ketab al-mawaqef fi elm al-kalam.

**Hafez's contemporaries and patrons**

Hafez lived in the turbulent intermezzo between Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. The sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258, a great milestone in Islamic history, had occurred just over half a century before his birth.

The whole period was one of perennial instability with the rise and fall of petty dynasties creating social havoc and political uncertainty.

But it was, at the same time, an era of great cultural and literary achievements, producing masterpieces in different disciplines, exemplified not only in the magnificence of Hafez's poetry but also in the historical discernment of his contemporary, Ebn Khaldun and his Moqaddema.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

# Book on Iranian carpet washing ritual published in Japanese in Tokyo

TEHRAN – A book on Qalishuyan, the ritual of washing a carpet in the Iranian town of Mashhad-e Ardahal, has been published in Japanese in Tokyo.

The renowned Iranian scholar Ali Bolukbashi is the author of the book entitled "Qalishuyan", which has been translated into Japanese by Yumiko Honda, an Iranian studies scholar, the Iranian Cultural Center in Tokyo announced in a press release published on Saturday.

PAO Compound, a Tokyo-based nomadic culture center established by Takuji Yasunaka, has published the book in collaboration with the center.

The Qalishuyan ritual symbolizes a funeral held for Imamzadeh Soltan Ali (AS), a descendant of Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS), whose shrine is located in the town of Mashhad Ardehal near the central Iranian city of Kashan.

The ritual is held annually on the second Friday of fall by the young men of the town of Fin and the village of Khaveh, located near the shrine of the imamzadeh.

Some heralds are sent to Fin, Khaveh and several other nearby villages a week before to call on people to attend the Qalishuyan ritual.

A large carpet, which is kept at the shrine, is wrapped in green textile and delivered to the young men whirling sticks in the air. The sticks symbolize the clubs the people of the region used as weapons centuries ago.

Reciting religious poems, they take the carpet to wash it in the Shazdeh Hossein Spring near the shrine. Afterwards, it is delivered back to the guardians of the shrine.

Thousands of people annually travel to Mashhad Ardehal to watch the ceremony, which has been

## Story of love lost represents collapse of European solidarity on stage in Tehran



Mahnaz Rudsaz and Mansur Sufi perform "Lilith" at the Sayeh Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex on December 22, 2021. (Tiwall)

TEHRAN – A play on stage in Tehran about a story of love lost represents the collapse of integration within Europe.

Entitled "Lilith", the story of the play is set in the former Yugoslavia, which is burning in the flames of ethnic conflicts taking place in the Balkans.

Bora and Lindita, who are in love with each other,

have been living in Yugoslavia, but now, the ethnic conflicts have placed them in a dilemma.

"Lilith is the first mythical female figure of the universe from the Europeans' point of view," director and writer Mohammadreza Shahmardi told the Persian service of MNA.

"European people believe that the mythical beautiful woman existed before Adam and Eve. In this play, due to his love for Lindita, Bora calls her 'Lilith,'" he added.

"Lilith was an element of solidarity in Europe, however, we see that Yugoslavia, which was so strongly unified, falls, and we also see that there is no longer any element of the union, even Christianity, that can keep people in Europe united," he stated.

"Despite its solidarity, Yugoslavia became engulfed in the flames of ethnic wars and collapsed, just like the female character of our play who no longer wants to be called 'Lilith' by her lover, and we see that even such a great love is lost," he added.

## "The Weight of Words" appears in Persian

TEHRAN – Swiss writer Pascal Mercier's novel "The Weight of Words" has been published in Persian by the Iranian publisher Ofoq.

Mahshid Mirmoazzezi is the translator of the book, which has also been sold to publishers from Finland, Italy, Korea, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Turkey.

"The Weight of Words" is about the freedom that literature gives us and explores the question of how free we are in the choices we make in our lives.

Since his childhood, Simon Leyland has been fascinated by languages. In defiance of his parents, he becomes a translator and single-mindedly pursues his goal of learning all the languages spoken around the



Front cover of the Persian edition of Pascal Mercier's novel "The Weight of Words."

Mediterranean.

From London, he follows his wife Livia to Trieste, where she has inherited a publishing house. In this city of important literary figures, he believes he has found the ideal place for his work – until a medical error throws him off course.

However, this apparent catastrophe turns out to be a turning point and an opportunity to once again completely reinvent his life.

Yet again, Pascal Mercier has succeeded in writing a philosophical novel as haunting as "The Night Train to Lisbon".

## "Chomskyan Linguistics" comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – "Chomskyan Linguistics and Its Competitors" by Pius ten Hacken of the University of Innsbruck has been published in Persian.

The Tehran-based Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities – SAMT is the publisher of the book translated by Parsa Bamshadi.

The book explains Chomskyan linguistics in an accessible and balanced way. It takes objections that have been made to the assumptions in the research program seriously and explains why these assumptions can and should be made.

The study also explains the differences between Chomskyan linguistics and its main competitors without bias. This will help the reader to understand research articles in different frameworks.

The book shows how areas of linguistics that are not central to Chomskyan linguistics can be incorporated within this framework.

Noam Chomsky is not only one of the most

influential, but also one of the most controversial figures in 20th-century linguistics.

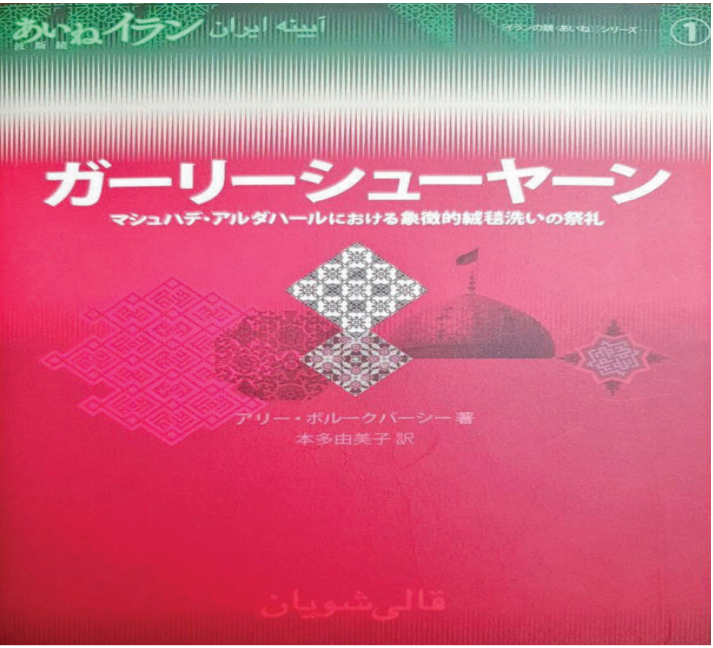
In view of the polarization of opinions on Chomsky, giving a balanced account of Chomskyan linguistics is an ambitious venture.

The approach chosen here is to describe both Chomskyan linguistics and the positions defended by its opponents in terms of research programs.

A research program consists of a number of assumptions on what language is and how it should be studied. Only by assuming that research programs adopted by a large number of scholars for a prolonged period have to be rational, coherent systems can we hope to fully understand the nature of the conflicts among them.

After a general discussion of the concept of a research program, the book shows how the various stages of Chomskyan theory can be analyzed as belonging to a single, coherent research program.

This research program is then compared to



Front cover of the Japanese edition of "Qalishuyan" written by Ali Bolukbashi.

inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Hossein Divsalar, the Iranian cultural attaché in Tokyo, said that based on an agreement signed with the PAO Compound, the book "Immigrant from the Land of the Sun" containing memories of Koniko Yamamura, the mother of soldier Mohammad Babai who was martyred in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, will be published in Japanese in the near future.

The Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo has also recently published a book on Iranian bazaars, stores and caravanserais dating back to the Qajar period (1789-1925).

The book entitled "Bazaars, Stores and Caravanserais in the Documents from Qajar Iran" has been authored by Tokyo-based Iranian scholar Hashem Rajabzadeh with contributions from the Japanese expert of Iranian studies, Kinji Eura.

Shahmardi said that theatergoers have warmly welcomed the play, which was performed during the 17th Resistance Theater Festival in Tehran in December 2020.

Mahnaz Rudsaz and Ali Farahnak, the stars of the play, were honored with the awards for best actress and actor, while Shahmardi received the award for best playwright for the play.

Mansur Sufi has replaced Farahnak in the new cast.

This is the first time Shahmardi has focused on a story whose origin is from outside of his native country.

"Contemporary political and social issues have always been my major concerns, and I study about these issues every day, but the wars and problems underway in our region inspired me to write and stage the play," Shahmardi said.

The play is currently on stage at the Sayeh Hall of the City Theater Complex, and Shahmardi's troupe will give their last performance on Monday night.

Mercier was born in Bern in 1944 and lives in Berlin. After "Perlmans Schweigen" and "Der Klavierstimmer", his 2004 novel "The Night Train to Lisbon" became one of the biggest bestsellers of recent years and was translated into many languages.

It was followed by the novella "Lea" in 2007. "Das Handwerk der Freiheit" and "Eine Art zu Leben" were also published by Hanser under his real name, Peter Bieri.

Mercier was awarded the Marie Luise Kaschnitz Prize in 2006 and the Premio Grinzane Cavour for best foreign novel in Italy in 2007. In 2007, he also received the Lichtenberg Medal of the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.



Cover of the Persian edition of "Chomskyan Linguistics and Its Competitors" by Pius ten Hacken.

the ones for Post-Bloomfieldian linguistics, Lexical-Functional Grammar, Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar and Montague Grammar, and Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar.

Finally, the relevance of the research program of Chomskyan linguistics for the practical study of the acquisition, change and use of language is addressed.