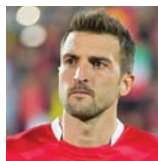




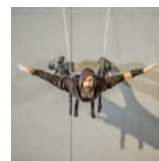
Iran ready to help Iraq, Leader's advisor tells UN envoy *Page 3*



Persepolis handed transfer ban by FIFA: report *Page 3*



China condemns the illegal economic sanctions on Syria *Page 5*



Crazy Body director Yasser Khaseb gives nod to national heroes in "Sky Wall" *Page 8*

Brothers in arms

See page 3

© File photo



Let's just say 'RAMSAR' wetlands convention

BY MEHDI GARSHASBI

On February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar, nestling between the Alborz mountains and the Caspian Sea coast, the representatives of 18 nations put their signatures to the text of a remarkable treaty.

The Ramsar Convention was the first of the modern instruments seeking to conserve natural resources on a global scale. It is still the only worldwide treaty that restrains the countries joining it from the unthinking, selfish exploitation of their sovereign natural patrimony.

It is concerned with the most threatened group of habitats, the wetlands. These are shallow open waters - lakes, ponds, rivers, and coastal fringes - and any land which is regularly or intermittently covered or saturated by water - marshes, bogs, swamps, flood plains, and the like.

Surprisingly, the word 'Ramsar' has been deleted from the logo designed on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the international treaty.

This decision, taken knowingly or unknowingly, is a major fault that could distort the history and undermine the identity of such an important agreement.

As the theme of the event for 2021 denotes "Inseparable Water, Wetlands, and Life", all elements of the convention, including the place in which it came to existence, are inseparable and should be safeguarded.

Iran currently has 25 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), covering a surface area of 1,488,624 hectares.

On the last Thursdays of the month, NGOs in the country hold cultural programs, dialogue, content production, and film with the theme of "Thursdays with Wetlands" aiming for introducing wetlands and their values and functions and promoting the wise use of wetlands.

Conserving wetlands brings us measurably closer to finding solutions to some of the world's greatest threats, including water pollution, flooding, sea-level rise, and biodiversity loss. Wetlands are important to all aspects of our life - they feed us, protect us, and provide us clean water. They are highly biodiverse and are dynamic systems that we can always learn more about. They are incredible!

Persian Gulf Regional Museum inaugurated in southern Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian tourism minister Ali-Asgar Mounesan on Monday inaugurated a vast museum of cultural heritage and anthropology in the port city of Bushehr, southern Iran.

Named "Persian Gulf Regional Museum", it is aimed to help preserve and promote arrays of regional cultural heritage, history, and rituals through heritage collections, exhibitions, workshops, and other public programs.

"300 historical relics, dating from prehistoric times to the contemporary era, have so far been put on show at the Persian Gulf Regional Museum, which has 15 galleries," Bushehr province's tourism chief Mohammad-Hossein Arastouzadeh said, addressing the opening ceremony.

"In addition to historical relics belonging to Bushehr province, the Persian Gulf Regional Museum exhibits the ones, which have been collected from the [neighboring]

provinces of Khuzestan and Hormozgan," the official said.

The Persian Gulf Regional Museum is a place to display [slices of] the history and nature of the Persian Gulf region. There are many different spaces within the museum to display historical objects, anthropology, and customs of the region, including music, clothing, and handicrafts, he explained.

The main building of the museum, which is one of the country's modern museums, was once a British Consulate, which was built in the Qajar era (1789–1925), according to the official.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr province is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Continued on page 6

Talks with Taliban done with knowledge of Afghan government: Tehran

TEHRAN – Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Monday that the talks Iran had with the Taliban were all coordinated with the Afghan government.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing on Monday, Khatibzadeh said, "All talks have taken place either at the request or with the knowledge of the government of Afghanistan."

He pointed out that Iran not only has formal

relations with the Afghan government but it also, unlike other countries, supports its achievements.

The spokesman said the Taliban is part of the reality in Afghanistan and they are talking to the Afghan government.

"As has been said many times, the Taliban are part of the reality of Afghanistan. The Taliban have political offices in Doha, Pakistan, and elsewhere."

Continued on page 3

Iran's petchem production up 6% in 10 months yr/yr

TEHRAN – Iranian petrochemical production has increased by six percent in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021) compared to the same period last year, an official with the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) announced.

"About three percent of this production growth is related to the increase in production of existing units, and the rest is due to the inauguration of new complexes,"

said Jalal Mirhashemi, NPC's production control manager.

Emphasizing the upward trend of production in the petrochemical industry, Mirhashemi added: "I hope the production in this industry will reach about 61 million tons this year; undoubtedly, if it wasn't for the coronavirus pandemic, we would have seen more growth in the industry's production."

Continued on page 4

Asiavision honors IRIB for timely coverage of news on Gen. Soleimani assassination

TEHRAN – Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has received the award for Outstanding Coverage of Breaking News for reporting of Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani's assassination at the Asiavision Annual Awards.

Soleimani was assassinated on a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. The Asiavision Annual Awards cel-

ebrating the best of Asiavision member contributions for 2019 and 2020 was streamed live last Wednesday.

Members were recognized in seven different categories, including two new awards – Climate Change and Pacific Reporting, along with the Coverage of the Year for COVID-19 reporting.

Continued on page 8

Myanmar military seizes power, detains Aung San Suu Kyi

Myanmar's military seized power on Monday in a coup against the democratically elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who was detained along with other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party in early morning raids.

The army said it had carried out the detentions in response to "election fraud", handing power to military chief General Min Aung Hlaing and imposing a state of emergency for one year, according to a statement on a military-owned television station, Reuters reported.

Suu Kyi's party said she had called on people to protest against the military takeover, quoting comments it said had been written in anticipation of a coup.

The coup derails years of Western-backed efforts to establish democracy in Myanmar, also known as Burma,

where neighboring China has a powerful influence.

The generals made their move hours before parliament had been due to sit for the first time since the NLD's landslide win in a Nov. 8 election viewed as a referendum on Suu Kyi's fledgling democratic rule.

Phone and internet connections in the capital, Naypyitaw, and the main commercial centre Yangon were disrupted and state television went off air after the NLD leaders were detained.

Summarizing a meeting of the new junta, the military said Min Aung Hlaing had pledged to practice a "genuine discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system".

He promised a free and fair election and a handover of power to the winning party, it said, without giving a timeframe.

Continued on page 5

Tehran to host national festival of creative, entrepreneur women

TEHRAN – The first national festival of creative and entrepreneur women opens today (on Tuesday) in Tehran both in person and virtually, according to the National Innovation Fund.

Coinciding with National Women's Day, the two-day event is held aiming to emphasize the successful presence of women in the development of a sustainable economy in recent years and honor those who are working toward a sustainable economy.

The festival also identifies and introduces the capacities and talents of women in Iran STI

eco-system, attracts attention to the role of women in the development of a sustainable economy, models successful and leading patterns in the STI eco-system, and provides platforms and infrastructures for the introduction of hi-tech products by women in creative firms.

Expert meetings and reviewing the experiences of success and failure of women CEOs in high-tech and creative firms, holding an exhibition of hi-tech products and services, and praising selected projects of entrepreneurs and creative women

are among the events held during the festival.

Given that women comprise more than half of Iran's university graduates, they can play a significant role in the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

Although the share of women in the country's employment is less than 20 percent, the CEOs of about 11 percent of knowledge-based companies are women. These statistics show the prominent role of women in the advanced fields of science, technology, and innovation.

Continued on page 7

U.S., Russia have lost wars though they have nuclear arms: Carnegie scholar

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – The vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace says that nuclear weapons can't be used necessarily as a deterrence strategy as the U.S. and the Soviet Union, despite possessing nuclear bombs, have been attacked and also lost wars.

"The U.S. and Russia have both suffered attacks and have even lost wars (Vietnam, Afghanistan) though they have nuclear weapons," George Perkovich tells the Tehran Times.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law on Friday ratifying the extension of New START, a key arms control treaty with the United States, a week before it was due to expire.

In fact, new U.S. President Joe Biden, by extending the New START Treaty with Moscow for another five years, signaled a measure of sanity.

But some observers say more must be done by the U.S. to reassure Americans and the world at large that rationality is returning to the United States' nuclear policies.

"First, Americans must recognize how disproportionate the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals are to the rest of the world and try to move with Russia to reduce them," says Perkovich, the author of Proportionate Deterrence: A Model Nuclear Posture Review, wrote in an article for Defense One.

Perkovich also refutes a claim by Donald Trump that the JCPOA was a catastrophe, calling his remarks "nonsense".

Continued on page 5

Intl. Festival of Tribes Culture wraps up in northern Iran

A nomad ensemble performs during the closing ceremony of the 14th International Festival of Tribes Culture in Gorgan, the capital of Iran's northern province of Golestan, on January 31, 2021.

Live performances, different exhibitions of regional arts, handicrafts, souvenirs, and culinary traditions constitute the core of the event held virtually due to the outbreak of coronavirus.

Golestan embraces hundreds of historical and natural sites with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous.



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Crisis Group recommends how to revive the JCPOA

By Azin Sahabi

TEHRAN — The International Crisis Group (ICG), also known as the Crisis Group, is a transnational think tank run by policymakers and academics. It conducts research and analysis on global crises. The ICG has described itself as “working to prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world.”

With regional programs covering all strategic regions including West Asia, the ICG has been characterized by right-wing organizations and publications as “liberal” and “a left-leaning advocacy organization.”

The Brussels-based think tank has several advocacy offices across the globe. Other legally registered offices are based in Bogota, Dakar, Istanbul, and Nairobi.

As of June 2018, the Crisis Group has been present in Abu Dhabi, Abuja, Bangkok, Beirut, Caracas, Gaza, Guatemala City, Hong Kong, Beit-ol-Moqaddas (Jerusalem), Johannesburg, Juba, Kabul, Kiev, Mexico City, Mogadishu, Rabat, Tbilisi, Toronto, Tunis and Yangon.

Robert Malley, the current U.S. envoy for Iran, who served at the National Security Council under Barack Obama’s administration, became president and CEO of the ICG in January 2018.

The think tank has a special page titled “Iran”, which publishes several reports, briefings and commentaries on Iran.

Ali Vaez, one of the most prominent figures in the ICG and director of the Iran Project and a senior adviser to the president, actively writes on Iran and regional issues. According to ICG’s website “He led Crisis Group’s efforts in helping to bridge the gaps between Iran and the P5+1 that led to the landmark 2015 nuclear deal.”

To reach a more precise analysis of the plausible future negotiations between Iran and other parties, it would be more realistic to conduct content analysis of the published materials by think tanks especially on West Asia, and obviously the International Crisis Group is no exception.

ICG’s latest annual reports on JCPOA

The think tanks published a report on January 15 titled “The Iran Nuclear Deal at Five: A Revival?” recommends that Biden’s administration and Tehran should act swiftly to revive the nuclear agreement on its existing terms.

The 38-page report argues that setting a staggered timetable to bring both sides back into full compliance is likely the best path toward nuclear and regional de-escalation and can open the possibility of broader talks with the next Iranian president.



Experts believe such an approach can prove effective in several aspects due to its likely potential to restore transatlantic cooperation, facilitate the financial dividends the JCPOA was meant to deliver to the Iranian civilians as well as providing a foundation for future negotiations on matters other than Iran’s nuclear portfolio.

Accusing the Islamic Republic of “a series of worrying violations” of the nuclear deal, the International Crisis Group believes JCPOA critics’ insistence on the necessity of coercing Iran to reach a better deal was fruitless. They write: “The ‘maximum pressure’ era has produced the worst of all worlds: All they have achieved is hollowing out the existing one, economic stagnation for Iran, mounting international concern about its nuclear program, and simmering regional tensions.”

ICG: Why is nuclear deal still alive?

In fact, for more than half of its lifespan, the JCPOA has struggled to survive not only due to Americans’ violation of their commitments, but with their relentless efforts to completely kill the agreement. The ICG argues that the survival of the deal highlights “the strength of its core bargain: rolling back Iran’s nuclear activity for economic respite from sanctions enacted in response to those very activities.”

Insisting not only on the critical necessity of restoring that perception, the think tank also believes in its viability with the arrival of Joe Biden at the White House. They underline: “But it will require both Washington and Tehran, along with the deal’s other participants, to move quickly and in good faith toward reviving the agreement.”

ICG’s recommendations to revive the JCPOA

In parallel with think tanks signaling similar attitude towards Biden’s inclination to reenter the nuclear deal, the ICG offers some recommendations to revive the JCPOA. However, the experts emphasize that decades-long hostility between Iran and the U.S. is too deeply rooted to be terminated through the JCPOA.

Neither the deal can function as a silver bullet, nor was it intended to resolve every issue which have put Tehran’s relations with the West and its neighbors under the strain.

The suggestions put forward in the report are based on a fixed premise that Iran’s nuclear program is intended for military purposes. However, it makes no mention of the West’s noncompliance with their JCPOA commitments. The ICG views Iran’s remedial nuclear activities that are based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA and formally declared, as “breaches of the nuclear deal”. It says: “Tehran will need to dismantle excess centrifuges and blend down or ship out the enriched uranium stockpiles that go beyond what the deal allows.”

Against this backdrop, the think tank proposes some recommendations to revive the JCPOA. This is the list of their suggestions:

“Developing a timetable, in consultation with the JCPOA’s Joint Commission and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to completely reverse its breaches of the nuclear deal within two to three months.”

Establishing a regional dialogue supported by the U.S., UN and a core group of European states to terminate the lethal, bloody war in Yemen.

Approving a \$5 billion International Monetary Fund loan for Iran to counter the COVID-19 pandemic by the Oval Office. This, along with the Biden administration’s commitment to a reversal of Trump’s exit from the JCPOA, means “ensuring that humanitarian exemptions to U.S. sanctions are honored.”

The U.S declares readiness to rescind Trump’s era sanctions in accordance with IAEA confirmation of Iran’s nuclear activity in full compliance with its JCPOA obligations. These steps could be adjusted to start or take place in different times in parallel.

Iran says hopes to see changes in new U.S. administration

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said on Monday that Iran is waiting for the new U.S. government to practically lift all sanctions imposed by Donald Trump’s administration.

Iran has announced that a mere announcement by the new Biden administration that the U.S. plans to return to the 2015 nuclear agreement is not enough, insisting that actions and not words are important.

“A signature on paper is not sufficient, and response to it is just a signature on paper,” Khatibzadeh told a press conference on Monday

Khatibzadeh heavily criticized the U.S. for ignoring UN Security Resolution 2231 which has confirmed the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S. in fact violated international law by ignoring the Security Council resolution.

According to the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and



financial sanctions.

“Iran is not waiting for statement; Iran expects that its national capitals be accessible, Iranian oil can be easily exchanged, and Iran accesses its money, and insurance for Iranian (firms) is provided,” the spokesman

said when asked about possible strategy of the Biden administration towards the JCPOA.

Speaking to reporters about regional and international issues, he noted, “The U.S not only withdraw from the JCPOA but it violated United Nations Security Council

Resolution 2231. The U.S. cannot rejoin the JCPOA automatically. The revocation of sanctions is the most important part of the U.S. return to the JCPOA.”

“As far as the revocation of the sanctions doesn’t happen, the U.S. will be identified as a violator of the JCPOA. The U.S. commitments and Resolution 2231 are the criteria for Iran. Therefore, Iran expects that Biden’s administration will correct the wrong path of the former U.S. administration,” he remarked.

He asserted, “Iran only looks at the measures taken by the U.S., and Iran responds accordingly.”

Pointing to the relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, he said, “Iran always insists on regional cooperation without the intervention of foreign powers. Foreign countries are the causes of crisis in the region.”

On possible talks with Saudi Arabia, he said, “The course of negotiation is still open. Whenever Saudi Arabia corrects its path, ends the war in Yemen, the Islamic Republic is ready to talk.”

Iran to IAEA: All nuclear measures will be reversed if U.S. lifts all sanctions

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has explained the reasons of the approval of “Law on Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Interests of the Iranian Nation” by sending a letter to the IAEA.

During a press conference in Vienna on Sunday, he elucidated the key points of the letter and said, “Unilateral and illegal withdrawal of the U.S. from the JCPOA, new economic sanctions on Iran, inaction of the EU to guarantee Iran’s interest under the JCPOA, lack of balance between Iran’s and U.S. commitments and assassination of Iran’s scientists” caused the Islamic Republic of Iran to accelerate its nuclear activities.

Due to economic challenges Iran has faced in recent years, the Iranian authority has demanded the new U.S. administration

to “unconditionally” lift sanctions imposed by Donald Trump on the Islamic Republic to save the 2015 nuclear accord.

During Donald Trump’s administration the U.S. quit the JCPOA and returned previous sanctions and imposed new ones. After a year, Iran said its “strategic patience” is over and decided to restart its nuclear activities in several stages. In its new move, Iran started enriching uranium at its Fordow facility on January 4.

On January 4, the same day that Iran started the 20% uranium enrichment, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet, “We resumed 20% enrichment, as legislated by our Parliament. IAEA has been duly notified. Our remedial action conforms fully with Para 36 of JCPOA, after years of non-compliance by several other JCPOA participants. Our measures are fully reversible upon FULL compliance by ALL.”

To show its determination to defend the country’s nuclear rights, the Iranian parliament in December approved the “Law on Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Interests of the Iranian Nation”.

According to the law, the Rouhani administration is obliged to resume enriching uranium by %20 purity and to suspend voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT by February 21, 2021, if sanctions are not lifted.

“The letter states that the passage of the Strategic Action Law is in fact a strategic reaction adopted towards the actions of the Trump administration over the past few years and in the shadow of the inaction of some parties of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal against the Iranian nation, aiming to provide another opportunity to save the JCPOA through the lifting of sanctions to restore the lost balance in the nuclear deal”, Gharibabadi remarked.

Military chief says General Soleimani martyrdom has strengthened the resistance front’s resolve

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, says the assassination of senior commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani, has strengthened the resistance front’s resolve to destroy the Zionist regime.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the tomb of General Soleimani in the southeastern city of Kerman on Monday, the military chief said the blood of the revered martyr has given fresh impetus to the plans to pursue the aspirations of the Islamic Revolution and Imam Khomeini more vigorously, according

to Tasnim News Agency.

Noting that the path of war against the U.S. and Israeli regimes is being followed more enthusiastically, he underlined, “The resistance front is pressing on with the goal of destruction of the Zionist regime.”

After the martyrdom of Lt. General Soleimani a “remarkable progress” has been made in “the capabilities of the resistance front and the Iranian Armed Force” over the past year, he added.

“The Zionist regime is in confusion and on the path to downfall,” he pointed out.

Lt. General Soleimani, who was assassi-

nated in a U.S. airstrike ordered by former President Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport last year, was hailed as a hero in Iran and regional countries. The brave commander was a charismatic figure and beloved by all Iranians.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, once called General Soleimani a “living martyr of the revolution.”

During the war against ISIS, General Soleimani was often reported to be on the battlefields in Iraq, slipping in and out of the country to help Iraqi forces battle extremist terrorists.



Top general praises Iran’s self sufficiency

POLITICAL

d e s k

TEHRAN — Major General Hossein Salami, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), says that Iran has grown so self-sufficient and self-reliant in different fields that it can continue its path of progress without agreement with world powers, according to the Fars news agency.

Addressing a gathering of Basij forces in Tehran on Sunday, Salami noted, “Today, we have come to a point that we have really grown needless of the nuclear deal and we have understood that we have to make efforts to become needless of sanctions removal rather than staying in need of the removal of embargos.”

Emphasizing that the Iranian nation has always resolved problems, the top general said, “Our enemies had big dreams (against Iran) and they have forgotten all of them altogether.”

In response to the U.S. unilateral measures, Iran has so far rowed back on its nuclear commitments four times in compliance with Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, but stressed that its retaliatory measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to enter financial, oil and trade transactions with Iran.

Since May 2019, Iran has suspended its compliance with most of the limits set by the deal in response to Washington’s pullout of the JCPOA and imposition of nuclear and non-nuclear related sanctions on Iran coupled with Europe’s inaction to provide the Islamic Republic with the JCPOA’s economic benefits. It took such steps after waiting for full year that Europe, a party to the nuclear agreement, to shield Iran from sanctions.

Under the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, Iran had

agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Under his “maximum pressure” policy against Iran, Donald Trump, who left the White House on January 20, slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran. It introduced a total ban on Iran’s oil export, the main source of revenue for the Islamic Republic.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran’s foreign minister, has said the new U.S. President Joe Biden can revitalize the JCPOA if his administration shows “genuine political will”.

“The Biden administration can still salvage the nuclear agreement, but only if it can muster the genuine political will in Washington to demonstrate that the United States is ready to be a real partner in collective efforts,” Zarif wrote on U.S. foreign policy magazine Foreign Affairs two days after Biden’s inauguration.

America has not been helping itself ...

professor at Georgetown University, regarding the U.S. role in this tragedy: “I’d dump the Israelis yesterday, but I suppose tomorrow would be better than nothing. Israel is possibly the single worst thing to happen to the U.S. since its founding. The entire “War on Terror” since 9/11 and the loss of millions of lives, as well as any remaining moral authority America had; the resulting destruction of the Bill of Rights; the trillions of dollars in debt resulting from the endless wars; crappy relations the Muslim world; false flag attacks on the U.S. which someday may go nuclear; these are all the fault of the “special relationship” in which the U.S. bends over and takes it from the Israelis every time with only the occasional protest for public consumption.... American has been CURSED by its support of Israel, and the curse will lead to damnation.”

Strong words indeed, but true enough, except that no administration has had the courage to say these things even though one could wager that many in Congress who know anything of history since 1948 probably would agree...but only when they

are no longer in government. West Asia’s truths have gone unrewarded in Washington because those who speak it almost invariably suffer ostracism.

Now we have to witness a Biden appointment, Rob Malley (a West Asia expert who worked in previous administrations and now named the prime envoy focusing on Iran). He’s getting smeared by the Neocon Zionist establishment in DC because he has been said to be too “soft” on Iran and not enthused enough about Israel. One can say this again: “Israel” will be the death of the U.S. as any kind of respected nation worldwide. Malley is probably the best person for the job according to respected commentators outside the “exceptionalist” mob of fools.

Obviously, the question now is whether the new Biden administration will ever challenge the Zionist hardliners. Don’t bet on it unless Israel attacks Iran unexpectedly...and drags the U.S. into a fresh war that neither can win unless carnage and destruction are the sole aims. Note how fast Netanyahu has turned his back on Trump, who kissed his rear end for four years. Netanyahu has been making

“Israel” will be the death of the U.S. as any kind of respected nation worldwide.

deals with the Chinese (another alleged U.S. “enemy” of sorts) but also cozying up to Biden’s administration and cabinet appointments where Zionists dominate.

For now anyway it appears that the Palestinians are being totally forgotten, heaved into oblivion, in part because many have simply become exhausted by over 70 years of their struggle for human rights and political voice. The Biden administration must understand that pushing U.S. hegemony and exceptionalism and not multilateralism necessarily involves tensions with Russia, Iran and China.

Yet, importantly, the U.S. is sharply divided and in horrible shape financially. One side is still glommed on to the immoral buffoon who is threatening to start a new political party, while the other side is lined up behind senile Biden who is surely taking his talking points and orders from Deep State others. Even billionaire Ray Dalio, the leader of the largest hedge fund in the U.S., Bridgewater, has said this month that a civil war could unfold inside the U.S.

The answer for those who truly care about justice and democracy and better foreign relations? More “samud”, more patience. America has been all about wrecking itself this century. And it’s showing like never before.

Brothers in arms

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In the latest sign of support for the Iraqi people and government, a top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran met with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert to discuss the latest developments in Iraq.

The advisor, Ali Akbar Velayati, told the UN official that Iran is ready to provide any kind of assistance to Iraq to help it cope with the challenges ahead.

The Sunday meeting comes against a backdrop of renewed efforts by the Iraqi government to hold a general election in October. The election was initially scheduled for June 6 but the government of Mustafa al-Kadhimi voted to postpone the election from June to October 10, a move that aimed to give the government more time to make preparations for a free and fair election.

Ever since he took office in May last year, Prime Minister al-Kadhimi has vowed to hold an early election in a bid to calm protestors who force his predecessor to resign. But Iraq is yet to implement the legal and logistical measures needed to hold free and fair elections. This has prompted the country's Independent High Election Commission (IHEC) to suggest delaying the election.

With the election delayed until October, Iraq and the UN special envoy try to secure support from various countries and international institutions to help the al-Kadhimi government hold the election smoothly. To this end, Iraq asked the United Nations Security Council to oversee the country's election.

"The foreign ministry sent a letter to the UNSCR requesting international observation of the elections and is in the process of writing a second letter on the same subject," Iraq's Foreign Ministry said, according to a statement from the Iraqi foreign ministry.

The letter was sent after press reports warned of voter fraud and foreign interference, which Iran and Iraq both oppose.

During his meeting with Hennis-Plass-



chaert, Velayati underlined the need to prevent foreign interference in Iraq's internal affairs, saying that "the great people and government of Iraq has a direct role in determining their destiny because the people of this country have a deep and profound culture."

Hennis-Plasschaert has said that Iraq has requested "the mildest form of international presence" in Iraq during the election. Speaking at a press conference held by IHEC three days before her visit to Iran, the special representative said the international community has been providing Iraq with technical assistance only. "It must be clear at all times that Iraqi elections are Iraqi-owned and Iraqi-led," she said, noting, "There is no such thing as the international community taking over."

She listed the three options that can be envisaged to protect the integrity of electoral processes: supervision, monitoring and observation. In its request to the Security Council, Iraq refers to the observation option, according to a statement issued by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

"Observation is the mildest form of

international presence in Iraq to see what is happening on election day. This is exactly what the Iraqi government asked the Security Council."

In an attempt to ensure Iran's support for Iraq's election, Hennis-Plasschaert traveled to Iran shortly after her visit to IHEC.

Iraq attaches high importance to the incoming Iraqi election, with Velayati describing the election as being very determining for Iraq.

"This election will be very determining for Iraq and the Iraqi people and government will have a very bright future," the Iranian official said while underlining that Iran stands beside the people and government of Iraq just as we did in the past.

And this stands in stark contrast to what some parties in the region say about the possible effect of the October election on the Iraq-Iran ties. These parties use everything in their power to undermine the brotherly ties between Tehran and Baghdad, which are deeply rooted in history. Iran and Iraq have much more things in common than any other two countries in the region. They share long borders, common religion, and people-to-people connections.

Velayati underscored these ties during his meeting with the UN special envoy, noting that Iran's "relations with Iraq are very massive, deep and brotherly."

Relations between Iran and Iraq were further strengthened when the two found themselves in the fight against a common enemy: the Daesh terrorist group. Iran was the first country to help Iraq in 2014 when Daesh occupied large swathes of Iraq territories and began its march toward the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

Iraqi politicians across the political spectrum have appreciated Iran's role in the fight against Daesh. Former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has praised Iran for opening its arms depots to the Iraqis during the war against Daesh, which occupied large territories of Iraq under al-Maliki.

"Daesh has come [to Iraq] because they [Americans] stopped all types of military support to Iraq and undercut the foundation of the Iraqi army," the former prime minister said. "Washington told the Iraqi delegation as long as al-Maliki is in power, they will not give weapons to Baghdad to fight Daesh. This is all while Iran and Russia have opened their arms depots to Baghdad in support of the Iraqi army and the Popular Mobilization Forces."

Velayati pointed to the fight against terrorism in Iraq, saying that Iran had played a very important role in the fight against Daesh.

According to the advisor, the top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in an American drone strike earlier last year, and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Mohandis, the deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization (PMF), were martyred in the cause of the fight against Daesh.

These strong relations will only be boosted in the future, Velayati remarked. "Undoubtedly, Iraq's election will be good. The people of Iraq can overcome problems using their valuable capacities and the role of the religious authority [of Najaf]. We are very optimistic about the future of Iraq and Iran-Iraq relations will be expanded even more than before," he noted.

Talks with Taliban done with knowledge of Afghan government: Tehran

1→ The group is in direct talks with the official government of Afghanistan. The visit of the Taliban political delegation to Tehran has been reported to the Afghan government and many exchanges have taken place around it. The visit was part of ongoing talks between the Afghan government and the group," Khatibzadeh noted.

According to the spokesman, there are a lot of controversies about the Taliban and Iran has not forgotten its martyrs who fell victim to the Taliban's atrocities.

However, Khatibzadeh reiterated that the group is part of intra-Afghan talks. "We have always supported and support inclusive intra-Afghan talks and the Taliban is one of these groups," he continued.

A Taliban delegation led by deputy head of the group's political bureau Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar met with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday in Tehran.

During the meeting, Zarif discussed the prospect of Afghan people forming an all-inclusive government, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The statement said Zarif welcomed the idea of the formation of an all-inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic and political groups in Afghanistan.



"Political decisions could not be made in a vacuum, and the formation of an all-inclusive government must take place in a participatory process and by taking into account the fundamental structures, institutions and laws, such as the Constitution," the statement quoted Zarif as saying in the meeting.

The Iranian foreign minister expressed Iran's readi-

ness to facilitate dialogue among the Taliban, the Afghan government and other Afghan groups, noting, "The noble people of Afghanistan have been wronged. The war and occupation of Afghanistan have dealt heavy blows to the Afghan people."

He expressed hope that the Taliban would focus efforts on an immediate end to the pains and problems of Afghan people so that the establishment of peace in Afghanistan would strip the outsiders of a pretext for occupation.

Following the meeting, some media outlets claimed that Zarif had said Iran supports the formation of an "all-inclusive Islamic government" in Afghanistan but the Foreign Ministry strongly dismissed the claim as "distorted" and even "wrong and misleading."

In a statement on Sunday, Saeed Khatibzadeh said the expression "all-inclusive Islamic government" was never used by the Iranian foreign minister.

"Proper news related to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is published merely by media approved by this ministry, and the publication of any story by media outlets other than what was just said are not valid," Khatibzadeh underlined.

Mossad chief criticizes top Israeli general for issuing threats against Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Head of Israel's spy agency Mossad, Yossi Cohen, has hit back at Chief of Staff of Israel's Armed Forces Aviv Kohavi who issued a stark threat against Iran last week.

In private conversations, Cohen castigated Kochavi for having come out publicly against the new U.S. administration and argued that the top military general should have waited to see how the new administration approaches the issue, according to The Times of Israel. The spy agency leader further noted that Kochavi's threats against Iran were "irresponsible" and a mistake and that Kohavi had acted of his own accord.

An unidentified Israeli military source responded to Cohen's criticism of Kochavi, calling his remarks "a shame." The source told Israel's Army Radio that it was a "shame" that there is someone in Israel's

military establishment who "chooses to publicly defame the chief of staff."

"The chief of staff relayed his position to the Israeli public and is not required to update the head of the Mossad before he speaks," the source said. "The Iranian issue doesn't belong to Yossi Cohen and even if there are differences of opinion it is better that they stay behind closed doors."

Kochavi issued on Tuesday stark threats against Iran and its allies in the region. He said that Israel is not welcoming the expected efforts by the U.S. and its European allies to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He claimed that he had ordered several plans to launch offensive operations against Iran while voicing Israel's opposition to any efforts to revive the JCPOA or even to improve it.

"I have instructed the IDF to prepare



several operational plans in addition to existing ones, which we will develop throughout the coming year. The power to initiate them lies with the political echelon. However, the offensive options need to be prepared, ready and on the table," Kochavi said in remarks delivered at the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies 14th Annual International Conference.

"I would like to clarify my position regarding the JCPOA: Even if an improved agreement is reached, it will be a bad agreement at the operational and strategic level. Therefore, such an agreement must not be enabled," he continued.

The remarks did not sit well with Cohen, who is planning a visit to Washington to influence the White House Iran policy. He is preparing to travel to Washington in the second half of February to meet with senior officials in the Biden administration on the 2015 Iran deal which Biden has vowed to rejoin. The Mossad chief is expected to meet with U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, CIA chief William Burns and possibly U.S. President Joe Biden, according to Israeli press reports.

Biden's promise to rejoin the JCPOA has irked the Israeli regime, though the U.S. has not yet presented any plan to return to the deal in the foreseeable future.

Iran ready to help Iraq, Leader's advisor tells UN envoy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on international affairs, has voiced Iran's readiness to provide any assistance to neighboring Iraq.

In a Sunday meeting with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Velayati said Iran stands ready to provide any kind of assistance to Iraq while stressing that the next parliamentary election in Iraq would be "very determining."

Underlining the need to prevent foreign interference in Iraq's internal affairs, Velayati said, "The great people and government of Iraq has a direct role in determining their destiny because the people of this country have a deep and profound culture. And our relations with Iraq are very massive, deep and brotherly."

Pointing to the importance of the incoming parliamentary election in Iraq, Velayati said, "This election

will be very determining for Iraq and the Iraqi people and government will have a very bright future. The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide any kind of assistance and cooperation to the friendly and brotherly state of Iraq. We stand beside the people and government of Iraq just as we did in the past."

The veteran politician pointed out that Iran had played a very important role in the fight against Daesh, adding that the top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in an American drone strike earlier last year, and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Mohandis, the deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization (PMF), were martyred in the cause of the fight against Daesh.

He called the U.S. move to assassinate the two commanders "the biggest mistake on part of America."

Velayati expressed optimism about the outcome of Iraq's election, saying this election will be good.

SPORTS

Iran to send 50 Para athletes to Tokyo: Chef de Mission

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's chef de mission for the Tokyo Paralympic Games Hadi Rezaei says that a total of 50 Para athletes have earned their quota places for the Games so far but it's not the final list.



Iran sent a record 110 athletes to Rio 2016, returning eight golds, nine silvers and seven bronzes to finish 15th in the medals table.

Speaking during a webinar ran by Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC), Rezaei, who won gold medals in sitting volleyball at Seoul 1988, Barcelona 1992 and Atlanta 1996 as a player, said that they are going to send nine sports to the prestigious competition.

Iran will compete in athletics, archery, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, taekwondo, rowing, judo, shooting and powerlifting at next year's Paralympics.

"We are preparing for the Paralympic Games and will participate in the warm-up tournaments but we would rather take part in the high-level events," Rezaei said.

"Two male taekwondo practitioners have so far won their place in the Games but there is a chance we send a female to Tokyo. In shooting, three female shooters have booked their place so far. We will also send a female rower to the Games," he added.

"In archery, four male and one female will partake at the competition and in Judo we are going to send two practitioners to Tokyo but it could be increased to three," the Iran sitting volleyball head coach went on to say.

"Six powerlifters as well as nine Para athletes will be sent to Tokyo. Two sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball teams consisting of 24 athletes will partake in the Games," Rezaei concluded.

About 4,400 competitors from more than 160 countries were due to head to the Japanese capital for the Games this summer before it was postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Organizers are working on a series of coronavirus countermeasures to protect athletes and spectators during their stay in Tokyo, with IPC President Andrew Parsons insisting "no stone is being left unturned".

A decision has yet to be made on whether fans will be permitted at the Games but Tokyo 2020 chief executive Toshio Muto revealed he hoped to draw up a plan for spectators by "next spring".

Persepolis handed transfer ban by FIFA: report

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team have been reportedly banned by world governing body FIFA from signing players in the transfer window.

The Iranian club were banned by FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber (DRC) after failed to meet Mario Budimir's financial commitment.

The club's ban will be lifted once the debt — a total of 500,000 euros — is paid off.

Persepolis have been banned several times over the past years despite advancing to the AFC Champions League twice in three years.



Shahrdari Varamin crowned champions of Iran's sitting volleyball league

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Shahrdari Varamin lifted the trophy of Iran's sitting volleyball league on Monday.

In the final round of the competition which was held with participation of four teams, Shahrdari Varamin lost to Mes Shahr Babak 3-2 in Tehran's Niroo Havaei's Hall but won the title.

Mes Shahr babak finished in second place and Zob Ahn came third.

Shahrdari Gonbad finished in fourth place.

The competition played in round-robin format.

Sardar Azmoun absent at UAE training camp

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian international striker Sardar Azmoun has missed his team's second stage of preparation in the UAE.

Azmoun, who participated in the first stage of preparation, is recovering from an ankle injury.

Zenit Saint Petersburg started the second preparatory camp at the Nad Al-Sheba complex in Dubai, the UAE on January 31.

The Russian team held their first training camp in Dubai two weeks ago.

Zenit sit to pf the 2021 Russian Premier League with 41 points followed by CSKA Moscow.

TEDPIX loses 17,000 points on Monday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 17,482 points on Monday.

Over 8.849 billion securities worth 99.255 trillion rials (about \$2.363 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index fell 17,580 points and the second market's index dropped 18,658 points.

After several weeks of drop, TEDPIX could finally register growth in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index rose two percent to stand at 1.207 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

Over \$11.5m allocated to build fishing ports on southern coasts

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran has allocated 490 billion rials (about \$11.66 million) for the construction of new fishing ports at the country's southern coasts, an official with Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) announced.

According to Parviz Mohebi, of the mentioned allocation, so far 270 billion rials (about \$4.62 million) has been paid, IRNA reported on Monday.



Mohebi put the total number of fishing ports along the southern coast of the country at 70, saying that 15 such ports are currently under construction along the mentioned coastline.

"Unfortunately, due to the delay in allocation of funds, the construction process of these ports is slow and the physical progress of the mentioned projects varies between 30 percent and 70 percent," he said.

According to the official, the total length of the country's southern coastline including the island coasts is estimated to be 5,800 kilometers (km), along which there are 120 fishery unloading centers.

He further noted that so far, the management of 42 fishing ports in the south of the country has been entrusted to fishing cooperatives.

Mohebi stated that the purpose of handing over the management of fishing ports to fishing cooperatives is to encourage the cooperatives and the fishermen themselves to participate in some activities, such as providing the required manpower and infrastructure.

According to official statistics, the country's fishery production has increased by more than 40 times in the years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution (1979), which shows an accelerating trend in the country's aquaculture industry.

According to Iran Fishery Organization (IFO) Head Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei, the country's fishery export stood at 146,000 tons worth \$538.9 million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), while the import was 29,000 tons valued at \$98.9 million, so Iran's fishery trade balance was \$440 million positive in the previous year.

Car manufacturing expected to rise 50% in H2

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini has said that the country's automobile production is going to increase by 50 percent in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22, 2020-March 20, 2021) and the prices of this product will decrease.

Speaking in a meeting with the members of the parliament's Industries and Mines Committee, the official said: "Immediately after I took office in the Industry Ministry, we started implementing a program to increase car production, and despite the problems that the country's industries are facing, this program is well underway."



"Recently, also a good financial package has been provided to support automakers in collaboration with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)," Razm Hosseini was quoted by IRIB.

He further noted that the car prices are following a downward trend and the Industry Ministry's policy is to make the car market competitive and eliminate intermediaries between producers and consumers.

Pointing to the 23-percent increase in the country's car production in the first half of the current year (March 20-September 21, 2020), Razm Hosseini said hopefully by the yearend a growth of 50 percent will be achieved.

According to the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, car manufacturing in Iran rose 23.4 percent during the first six months of the current year compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Based on the mentioned data, 468,699 vehicles were manufactured during the mentioned six months.

Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 863,263 vehicles during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

Iran's petchem production up 6% in 10 months yr/yr

1 → He pointed to the full observance of safety and health protocols during the outbreak of coronavirus in the country's petrochemical complexes and noted that petrochemical units have also had very good cooperation in producing sanitary products and equipment."

The official pointed to the implementation of the overhaul program for petrochemical units in the last quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (December 21, 2020-March 20, 2021) and specified: "Considering the increasing gas consumption in the cold season, beginning of this program minimized the impact of gas shortages in the petrochemical industry."

The petrochemical industry is playing a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, so that based on official data, petrochemical



exports constitute the second-largest hard currency earner in Iran after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already make up nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Iran has been highly developing this sector over the recent years as the development of the giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units; the country is currently producing nearly 70 million tons of petrochemical products annually.

According to the NPC Head Behzad Mohammadi, Iran is going to become the top petrochemical producer in the region after the realization of the industry's third leap in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025).

122m tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Iran's ports in 10 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Highlighting the good performance of the country's ports in the current year, Iran's First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said that 122 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at the ports during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021).

Making the remarks when visiting a port in the southwest of the country, Jahangiri said that during the last three years and in the most severe and unprecedented sanctions against the country, the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has been able to perform very well in unloading and loading goods, and this is commendable.

PMO Head Mohammad Rastad has recently said that the country's trade gateways were not closed even a moment despite the sanctions and pandemic, adding that loading and unloading of goods, especially the essential goods, are continuously conducted at the ports.

As announced by the PMO head, loading and unloading of commodities are being conducted continuously at the ports of Iran while the health requirements are

completely met.

Rastad has reiterated that all port operations are done observing healthcare protocols and the principles set by the Coronavirus Containment Headquarters.

In a statement in mid-October last year, PMO declared that loading and unloading of commodities are underway continuously at the country's ports.

While the enemy is trying to halt Iran's exports and imports through imposing sanctions, operation at Iranian ports are underway without interruption as the result of the all-out efforts of the organization's personnel, the statement reads.

Meanwhile, as the PMO head has announced, 11 new development projects with 59 trillion rials (over \$1.4 billion) of investment are currently underway at the Iranian ports.

Not only the sanctions could not stop development activities at the ports of Iran, some new development projects have been also defined, Rastad has underscored.

The third phase of the development plan of Shahid Rajaee Port is one of the major projects which is going to go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).



While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play some significant role in this battle, and the ongoing operation at the ports indicates that they are playing their part perfectly.

As reported, loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

India to accelerate equipping operations in Chabahar port

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Director-general of political office of India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said his ministry has received the Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO)'s request for accelerating the importing and installation of equipment for the Chabahar port and India is seriously pursuing the matter.

Iranian and Indian officials held a meeting in Chabahar on Sunday to review the state of mutual cooperation in the development of Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti Port in southeastern Iran.

During the meeting, Jitender Singh stated that Central Asian countries are very interested in using Chabahar port as a transit base, adding: "Chabahar is



a transit port and nowadays, maritime trade is the economic preference of many countries."

He further stated that Iran and India are both doing their best to develop the

port of Chabahar, adding that in addition to providing equipment and logistical support, it is necessary to communicate with the companies and contractors that are active in the port.

"Therefore, I guarantee the Indian government's complete cooperation with the government of Iran for the prosperity and success of the port of Chabahar," he stressed.

"The success of Chabahar port is the success of the two friendly countries, Iran and India," the official added.

The first consignment of Indian equipment for the development of port activities at Iran's Chabahar port worth \$8.5 million arrived in the port on January 17. The arrival of the consignment marked

the activation of the contract between Iran's PMO and the Indian side.

India is the only foreign country that is currently participating in a major development project in Iran despite the U.S. sanctions.

The Chabahar Port development project is the anchor for the expansion of economic relations between the two nations.

India is going to install and operate modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

The strategic port in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country's economic affairs.

Private sector calls on Majlis to supervise implementation of regulations

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie has called on the parliament (Majlis) to supervise the proper implementation of existing regulations rather than passing on new rules, the ICCIMA portal reported on Monday.

Speaking at a gathering between the board members of Mashhad Chamber of Commerce with the members of the parliament's economic committee, Shafeie mentioned the increasing number of new regulations passed in the parliament, saying: "If this trend continues, we will again face the accumulation of new laws and regulations in the country; Therefore, supervising the proper implementation of the existing regulations should take precedence over the adoption of new laws."

"In one of his TV interviews, the speaker of the parliament stated that the priority of the MPs should be monitoring the implementation of the law, so we



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (2nd R) at a meeting with members of parliament's economic committee

consider this issue to be a priority for the parliament as well," Shafeie stressed.

Noting that the problems in the country's economy

are fundamental, the ICCIMA head said: "The tree of the country's economy has been infected with a root-eating pest but we are pruning its branches (by adapting new regulations); this means we are only concerned about the appearance of the economy while its problems are deeply rooted."

Criticizing policies that do not look at the long-term benefits of the country's economy, the head of the Iran Chamber noted: "Exceptions and regulations are currently misplaced in the government and exceptions have become rules, which are very dangerous, and we see the manifestation of this situation in the multiplicity of decisions or the performance of the executive bodies."

He further emphasized the need to reform the banking system in the country and pointed to the operational problems of banks, saying: "MPs in three terms of parliament urged the government to submit a bill to reform the banking system, but this was not done and finally the parliament itself presented a plan in this regard."

Commodities valued at \$743m exported from Hamedan Province

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Commodities worth \$743 million have been exported from Hamedan Province, in west-central Iran, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), according to a provincial official.

Zaher Pour-Mojahed, the deputy governor-general of Hamedan for the economic affairs coordination, said that \$103 million of this amount of exports have been exported from Hamadan Customs and the rest from other regions to other countries.

Iran has traded 122.8 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$58.7 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Customs Administration (IRICA).

Of the total volume of the country's non-oil trade in the mentioned period, 94.541 million tons worth \$28.63 billion was the share of exports and about 28.249 million tons valued at \$30.639 were the imported goods, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said.

According to the official, the exports of non-oil goods in this period decreased by 17.7 percent and 20 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

The figures, however, grew significantly compared to the previous calendar month (December 21, 2020-January 19, 2021), the official added, noting that the upward trend is expected to continue in the coming months.

In comparison to the previous year's

same time span, the imports of the mentioned commodities also declined by two percent and 15.5 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, according to the IRICA head.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$7.2 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$6.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$3.7 billion, Turkey with \$2 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.9 billion.

The mentioned countries imported a total of 69.5 million tons of goods worth \$21.3 billion from Iran in the said 10 months, accounting for 73.5 percent and 76 percent of the total exports in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during this period



were China with \$7.9 billion, the UAE with \$7.4 billion, Turkey with \$3.4 billion, India with \$1.8 billion, and Germany with \$1.4 billion worth of imports.

U.S., Russia have lost wars though they have nuclear arms: Carnegie scholar

1 → The following is the text of the interview:

Given the examples of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, do you think possessing nuclear weapons is a successful deterrence strategy to prevent war?

The U.S. and Russia have both suffered attacks and have even lost wars (Vietnam, Afghanistan) though they have nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan, too, have had conflict since they tested nuclear weapons in 1998. Nuclear weapons may deter massive-scale war, but because of that, they may encourage lower-level conflict. Leaders or militants may feel they can get away with lower-levels of violence or subversion because the victim will not want to fight back intensely for fear of leading to nuclear war.

Other than the United Kingdom, the seven other nuclear-armed countries do not bother to say whether international law applies to their nuclear conduct. What is the practical solution to make other countries accountable?

A beginning is for states that are party to the NPT to ask France, Russia and China about this. India and Pakistan and Israel are not part of the NPT, but they could be asked in UN General Assembly forums. It is difficult



for civil society organizations to work on these issues in these countries - especially in Russia, China, Israel, and Pakistan - but social media and other forms of communication could be used to ask their officials questions about this.

Is it acceptable that only a few countries have nuclear weapons and prevent others from possessing such arms?

It is certainly problematic, and this is why the NPT calls for movement toward nuclear

disarmament. This is why more must be done to motivate the states that rely on nuclear weapons to reduce and eliminate them. But it is difficult to see how it would be saner and just if more countries acquired nuclear weapons.

Is there any international mechanism to establish a nuclear-free world or zones, or the world must rely on agreements between nuclear-armed countries?

There are several nuclear-weapon free zones around the world - for example in Latin America, Africa, the South Pacific, ASEAN, Central Asia, Antarctica, and Outer Space. For the regions in which nuclear weapons are deployed, I believe the states involved will have to negotiate step-by-step arrangements to disarm and to verify and enforce these arrangements.

Who determines the strategy of armed conflict in the United States? The president or Congress or the deep state? Who has control over the nuclear bomb button?

Thus far, the president has the sole authority to order the use of nuclear weapons. There is some debate in Congress about changing that, and requiring at least one other senior official to concur. But there is much that is involved in making nuclear policy that is decided by several departments of government and Congress.

Do you agree with former American president Donald Trump who described the JCPOA as a catastrophe? Did the deal undermine peace in West Asia?

No. This statement was nonsense. The JCPOA reduced the risk of conflict over Iran's nuclear activities.

Biden and the sweet legacy of Trump

By Abir Bassam

Many have written about the heavy legacy that Donald Trump has left for his successor Joe Biden. However, if we read well about the role the deep system plays in the U.S., it will be difficult to actually believe that. Trump, the clown, came for the purpose of rewriting the international agreements, which America had signed during Barak Obama's presidency (2008-2016).

Obama's era is marked as the worst years of the modern history of the Arab region. His administration was able to implement a roadmap for applying Bernard Luis's views and recommendations in re-dividing West Asia and North Africa, in order to regain power over the region. The plan did not only include Syria and Libya; it was supposed to extend to reach Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan. The plan also included reconstructing other countries like Jordan, which will be expanded in the Saudi territories, and creating a Kurdish state, not within historical Kurdistan, but rather

extends from northern Iraq through northern Syria to reach the Mediterranean Sea.

Secondly, in order to reach the desired result, Obama's administration resorted to employ the policy of creative chaos, which was born from womb of the Arab Spring that toppled many Arab leaders and altered policies and ruling systems in countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, and Tunisia. In addition, it declared the Saudi war on Yemen.

When Trump reached the White House, it was clear that the economy of Arab countries was deteriorating, especially after five years of internal conflicts and economic blockade that were imposed on different states around the world. The international banking system for monetary exchange SWIFT permitted the ultimate control of the U.S. over dollar transaction around the world. Hence, the value of national currencies deteriorated against the dollar.

The second achievement of Obama's administration was the deteriorating role of the Arab League, especially after suspending the Syrian membership and the diminishing

of the Egyptian role. Accordingly, the Arab Persian Gulf countries solely controlled the Arab decision and enabled them to proceed with normalization agreements with the "Israelis", without worrying about any reaction by the public or officials on the part of Arabs.

The Trump administration benefited the most from the new conditions to implement the Abraham Accords in many Arab countries. The normalization agreements enabled the Israeli in the region and opened a new horizon of power. Israel was labeled as the protector of the Persian Gulf Arab countries. In addition, the agreements signed with Sudan and the Kingdom of Morocco empowered the Israeli presence on the major water paths from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.

America needed the presence of a ridiculous arrogant man like Trump to push around the world in his own bold way to make these achievements. The redistribution of agreements during Trump's presidential term constitutes a powerful card for the new American administration to play, i.e. once negotiations with Iran restarts.

Actually, Trump gave the coming administration an opportunity to filter the agreements and laws signed during Obama's administration. First, it was basically to the best interests of both U.S. international corporations and "Israel", especially when it comes to revising the nuclear agreement with Iran, the commerce agreements with China and Europe, in particular the world trade agreements.

Secondly, Trump withdrew from several United Nations bodies and stopped paying its dues. He demanded Europe to pay its share of NATO costs, and the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region to pay the expenses of the U.S. army's protection, which alleviated additional financial burdens on the U.S. Treasury. Most importantly, Trump reviewed tax laws and reduced tax on the rich. These corporations form an important factor in the U.S. deep state's decision-making.

Basically, Trump paved the way for Biden to be very specific in making decisions, and sifting through international agreements. He crippled the Europeans' agreements with China and Iran, and almost destroyed their economy. He literally pushed towards revising agreements with Iran and China, especially after Iran's progresses in missile technology over the last five years and discovery of oil in the South China Sea.

Finally, declaring Ansar Allah as a terrorist organization after more than five years of war on Yemen. With such a declaration, Trump was not proving his loyalty to the millions of dollars paid by the Saudis and the Emirates. The decision was made to stall the agreements around ceasing war in Yemen and giving the allies a considerable period of time to rearrange their priorities, especially "Israel".

Definitely, the main aim behind Trump's decision was not giving Biden, his democratic successor, the opportunity to benefit from his achievements. Trump was preparing for his second presidential term. He never doubted his ability to win the elections, and to make America great again. However, he lost.

In reviewing Trump's achievements, it is clear that the man has facilitated the work of Biden's task on the international level. Biden now is able to make decisions with a wide range of political choices. By rejoining many agreements, such as the Paris climate agreement, and pushing for safe environmental technology, Biden is only pushing the U.S. towards the technological competition again so that it would achieve more scientific advancement in the world. The second goal is to win back America's historical allies in Europe that lost to the Chinese through the global trade agreements, which were signed during the Obama era.

However, Trump's cruel legacy was basically the domestic one. He burdened his successor with inner troubles that requires hard work. America today is burdened with the three hardships: deterioration of the health sector, economic sluggishness, and security problems. The first two are the main drivers of the first 100 workdays that Biden has announced. However, the third one is yet to be anticipated. It is the core of the American troubles today because it is closely attached to the rising racist sentiments in the United States. It is the worst, since it is in reverse: the WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) are losing their slots to the colored and minorities.

China condemns the illegal economic sanctions on Syria

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi condemned the coercive economic measures imposed on the Syrian people illegally, stressing his country's position in support of a political solution in Syria.

In a call with his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Al-Miqdad, Wang stressed the firmness of his country's position in support of a political solution led by Syria and in line with the will and interests of the Syrian people, calling on the international community to unite efforts to combat terrorism, SANNA reported.

He expressed his country's appreciation for the positions of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in support of China's efforts to confront the Corona epidemic, and his country's constant readiness to provide support and assistance to the Syrian people in facing the repercussions of the epidemic by continuing to send medical and preventive aid, as well as food and other aid according to the needs of the Syrian people, and expressed readiness. His country to supply Syria with the Chinese vaccine.

Myanmar military seizes power, detains Aung San Suu Kyi

1 → Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other NLD leaders were "taken" in the early hours of the morning. NLD spokesman Myo Nyunt told Reuters by phone. Reuters was subsequently unable to contact him.

A video posted to Facebook by one MP appeared to show the arrest of regional lawmaker Pa Pa Han. In the video, her husband pleads with men in military garb standing outside the gate. A young child can be seen clinging to his chest and wailing.

Troops and riot police stood by in Yangon where residents rushed to markets to stock up on supplies and others lined up at ATMs to withdraw cash. Banks then suspended services due to poor internet connections but said they would reopen from Tuesday.

Hezbollah shot downs Israeli drone in southern Lebanon

The Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says it has intercepted and shot down an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle as it crossed into Lebanon's airspace near the border village of Blida in the south of the Arab country.

Hezbollah said in a brief statement that the drone was struck on Monday morning, adding that it was now in the control of the drone. It did not provide any further details.

The Israeli military, however, asserted that the drone had fallen in Lebanese territory during an operation, alleging that "there is no risk of breach of information."

The development came a day after Palestinian resistance fighters brought down an Israeli quadcopter conducting an espionage mission against the besieged Gaza Strip.

The drone was shot down on Sunday while taking images over Beit Hanoun Crossing, which is located on the enclave's northern border with the occupied territories, the Arabic-language Palestine al-Yawm news agency reported.

Israel frequently violates Lebanon's airspace. Lebanon's government, Hezbollah and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have repeatedly condemned Israel's overflights, saying they are in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the country's sovereignty.

The resolution, which brokered a ceasefire in the war Israel launched against Lebanon in 2006, calls on the Tel Aviv regime to respect Beirut's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On August 23 last year, Hezbollah resistance movement said it had downed and seized an Israeli drone as it flew over the Lebanese border.

Saudis, allies dropped over 3,000 cluster bombs on Yemen since 2015

The director-general of the Yemen Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) has said the Saudi-led coalition has dropped 3,179 cluster bombs on Yemen since the beginning of its aggression against the defenseless Yemeni people in 2015.

Ali Sofra said the civilian casualties of the bombardments, mostly women and children, have exceeded 1,000, and most of them were in agricultural and grazing areas, Iraq's al-Maloume news website reported on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia, accompanied by its allies including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been leading a war against Yemen since March 2015 with the aim of bringing the former pro-Riyadh government back to power.

The war has also been accompanied by an all-out siege of the impoverished country. It has killed tens of thousands of Yemenis and turned Yemen into the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Back in June 2020, Yemen's Ministry of Human Rights warned that cluster munitions pose a serious danger to the lives of civilians, especially women and children, if they come in close contact with them.

The ministry added that the Saudi-led coalition has used thousands of cluster bombs on residential areas, leaving many civilians dead or injured.

Israel racing to wrest full control over Jerusalem al-Quds: Al-Aqsa preacher

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**—Former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem al-Quds, Sheikh Ekrima Sa'id Sabri, has warned that the Israeli occupying regime is escalating efforts to wrest full control over the occupied holy city and the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

The cleric, who is currently heading the Higher Islamic Council in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds, lambasted the Israeli regime for its provocative digging and construction works at the al-Aqsa Mosque's Western Wall in the Old City.

"The occupying regime has always sought to find antiquities related to their ancient history and these excavations started in the 18th century through British archaeologist groups that were pretending to search for antiquities, but their real intents were to prove any Jewish connection to Jerusalem," he said in a press release on Sunday.

According to Press TV, Sabri described the ongoing Israeli excavations in al-Buraq Square as "new but part of old efforts attempting to find signs of Hebrew history in the holy city."

"The Tel Aviv regime is focusing its excavations nowadays in al-Buraq Square - which is originally al-Maghariba quarter and its land is Islamic mortmain property - with the aim of obliterating Islamic remains," he said.

Sabri called on Israel to immediately halt all digging activities on the site. "The regime has not found a single stone related to the ancient Hebrew history despite the huge excavations and the millions which it has spent to falsify history," the senior cleric added.

"Things have not stopped at this point. The occupying regime has kept destroying, hiding or obliterating any Islamic antiquities it finds in an attempt to avenge the failure of its efforts to obtain any evidence proving its entitlement to the holy city."

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No:99/108-59/10

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender :
Purchasing MV& LV SWITCHGEAR , Dry transformer with enclosure , MV & LV voltage power cable, UPS & Battery , Isolated trans , Duct Split, Industrial laptop ... plus Installation and Commissioning in accordance with the technical specifications and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
from **2th Feb 2021 (1399/11/14)** by **14 p.m.** untill on **Saturday 8th Feb 2021 (1399/11/20)** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex ,Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave,Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account No.4101029171204273 (IBAN: IR310100004101029171204273) with CENTRAL BANK OF IRAN in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD24800 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 6/200/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering priced bid:
The sealed evaluation qualitative envelop in addition A, B&C packages/envelopes should be submitted no later than **9 a.m.** on **13th Mar 2021 (1399/12/23)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening evaluation qualitative envelopes:
The date of opening the evaluation qualitative envelopes is on **13rd Mar.2021 (1399/12/23)** at **10 a.m.** in the office of purchasing manager .

Time and place of opening envelopes:
The date of opening the envelopes A&B is on **14th Mar.2021 (1399/12/24)** at **3 p.m.** in the office of Financial Vice President. The bidders must have independent auditor's report and also qualification documents from related authorities for acting in the Field of the Tender Subject in obligatory
Fore more information please see : www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir/>

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Caravanserai to host travelers once again following decades of being prison

TOURISM TEHRAN — A Safavid era (1501-1736) caravanserai in the north-central city of Semnan was finally handed over to the city's municipality after being used as a prison for over 40 years.

The Shah-Abbasi caravanserai, which was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1973, is planned to be repurposed to a cultural center after being fully restored, IRNA reported on Monday.



The monument was set free after the demolition of the surrounding fences and high walls, which was took place after obtaining the necessary permits and transferring inmates to a new prison, the official explained.

The mud-brick structure is named after Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 – 1629), who ordered the construction of such roadside inns across the country.

Extensions of the last few years and the parts that damage the original building are first removed under the supervision of cultural heritage experts, then the parts in need of restoration will undergo some rehabilitation works, IRNA quoted Semnan's mayor Mohammad Nazem-Razavi as saying.

However, the interior of the caravanserai is expected to be ready for people to visit in the New Year's holidays (starts on March 20), he added.

Last August Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced that Semnan Municipality is ready to purchase the historical monument and turn it into a tourist complex. He also noted that using a historical structure as a prison is not that interesting and turning it into a cultural center could boost tourism in the region and attract more travelers.

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

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a wide experience as they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age.

Illegal construction tore down in ancient Neyshabur

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iranian authorities have recently demolished a brick construction that was illegally developing within the legitimate boundaries of ancient Neyshabur in northeast Iran.

The police unit for protecting cultural heritage smashed a walling and land-use change in an immediate action upon the order of the judicial authority and in collaborations with Neyshabur's municipality, IRNA reported on Monday.

"Any [unauthorized] change of use of agricultural lands, masonry, and construction in historical sites and their properties are prohibited," the news agency quoted a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage as saying.



Situated some 70 km west of Mashhad, Neyshabur (Nishapur) was founded around the third century CE. Experts say, that "Nishapur" derived its name from its alleged founder, the Sasanian king Shapur I (d. 272).

It was once one of the four great cities of the region of Khorasan and was important in the 5th century as the residence of the Sasanian king Yazdegerd II (reigned 438–457).

By the time the Arabs came to Khorasan in the mid-7th century, however, it had become insignificant. Under the Tahirid dynasty (821–873), the city flourished again, and it rose to importance under the Samanid dynasty (ended 999). Toghril Beg, the first Seljuq ruler, made Neyshabur his residence in 1037, but it declined in the 12th century and the 13th twice suffered earthquakes as well as the Mongol invasion.

The evidence from the various seasons of excavations in Neyshabur has revealed much about the development of architectural decoration in northeastern Iran. Walls in residences and public buildings throughout Neyshabur were decorated in many different ways, from frescoes to carved and painted stucco, terracotta panels to glazed ceramic tiles.

Neyshabur has been an important hub for turquoise as well as the manufacture of glass, metal, stone vessels, and textiles. The surrounding area produces cereals and cotton, and the town's industries include agricultural marketing and the manufacture of carpets and pottery. Neyshabur is linked by road and railway with Tehran and Mashhad.

Archaeologists probe Tol-e Qaleh near Persepolis

TOURISM TEHRAN — A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts have commenced a new round of investigation into Tol-e Qaleh, a prehistoric site situated adjacent to the UNESCO-registered Persepolis in southern Iran.

With an area of six hectares, Tol-e Qaleh is one of the most significant [archaeological] sites, which is situated near Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam in the Marvdasht region of Fars province, the director of the World Heritage site announced on Monday.

Tol-e Qaleh bears a sequence of [consecutive] historical eras; from the 5th and 4th millennium BC to the Islamic epoch. And the present study is expected to provide a complete model of the plain chronology, Hamid Fadaei explained.

The historical complex of Persepolis is encircled by several ancient sites such as Tol-e Bakun, Tol-e Mushaki, Tol-e Jari and Tol Qaleh, Hamid Fadaei in a plain, which became a cradle of civilization several thousand years ago, the official added.

The project also aims at documenting, identifying the physical and structural features of the site, and reviewing its different historical eras as well as its cultural distribution and density, the head of the archaeological survey Fazlollah Habibi said.

The historical site was first identified by Belgian archaeologist Louis Vandenberg in the 1970s and was studied and excavated



for a short time, he added.

He also noted that in this new round of the archeological project satellite and aerial images, multi-frequency GPS devices, geographic information system (GIS) and statistical analysis will be used.

Back in December, Fadaei announced that the entire Marvdasht plain, which was once the seat of power of the Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC), is scheduled to undergo an archeological

investigation.

The archeological surveys and excavations, which have been previously commenced across the Persepolis, is scheduled to be extended to the entire Marvdasht plain in a purposeful and methodical approach by the researchers who have conducted related researches, he explained.

Conducting such archaeological surveys in historical sites and hills could

lead to important historical results and information at a low cost and without the need for extensive excavations, which is necessary in recognizing the cultural sequence of Marvdasht plain, he added.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars province.

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 a 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 Isthr. 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.

Post-Islamic Revolution stamps to go on show in Tehran museum

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Collections of postage stamps, which have been issued since the 1979 Islamic Revolution onwards, will be put on show at the Post and Communications Museum in downtown Tehran.

The exhibition named "42 Years of [Islamic] Revolution Stamps" will be opening to the public on Tuesday, according to Hassan Amidi, the CEO of the museum.

Visiting Post and Communications Museum takes you back through history and gets you acquainted with ways of exchanging information and thoughts. Before social networks and transmission tools took Iran by storm, communication was very different.

The museum displays numerous items from horse-

drawn carts, scales, stamps, and post boxes to the oldest stationery, the first telephones, and radios.

It presents the progress of communication and information technology tools throughout the history. The building of the museum is also as important as the museum collections, because of the architecture of the building and its background history.

The structure was initially constructed in 1928 and the architect, Nikolai Markov was a prominent Iranian- Georgian architect. The architecture style of both Achaemenes and Islamic eras are visible in different parts of the building. The columns of outer corners with two heads of cows and brick dome-shape facades all around the courtyard respectively prove this fact.



An interior view of the Post and Communications Museum in downtown Tehran. An statue of an Iranian postman is also seen in the foreground.

Persian Gulf Regional Museum inaugurated in southern Iran



➔ 1 Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves

make it an attractive destination for world travelers. The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been

inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Traveling to the Persian Gulf region would be an experience that you probably haven't even considered. While you've been planning your Iranian sojourn around the jewels of the country's rich history (Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd), to the southeast the Persian Gulf is equally deserving.

Explore the magnetic islands of Kish, Qeshm and Hormuz, which are absurdly

easy to combine and are altogether different. While Kish is unashamedly glam and glitzy, Qeshm and Hormoz are refreshingly void of large-scale development and offer a chance to glimpse a more traditional way of life – not to mention an array of geological wonders.

Along the coast, soak up the vibes of lively Bandar Abbas and make a beeline for the delightful town of Kong, whose historical centre is peppered with charming old houses and monuments. Thus, you'll have the full monty.

East Azarbaijan to boost tourism infrastructure

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A total of 16 tourism-related projects are scheduled to be inaugurated soon across East Azarbaijan province on the occasion of Ten-Day Dawn (Jan. 31- Feb. 10, marking the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution).

The projects include tourist complexes, a boutique hotel, a hotel, and a tourist camp, which are expected to develop the tourist infrastructure of the northwestern province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Two private museums and some restored historical sites will also come on stream within the next few days, Ahmad Hamzezadeh said on Monday.

The provincial capital Tabriz embraces several historical and religious sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in



1392. Some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmens made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

Tabriz retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548 when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin. During

Three individuals arrested for illegal excavations

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iranian police have arrested three people while committing illegal excavations at an ancient site in Choram county of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The culprits have been surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, Heshmatollah Baqeri said on Monday.

Choram is famous for its historical fortress, which dates back to the Islamic era and was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 2002.

The southwestern province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sight-seers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

The province attracted over four million people, mostly domestic travelers, during the Iranian year 1397 (ended March 2019), according to data announced by the provincial tourism department.

Some 41 tourism-related projects

are currently underway across the lesser-known province, the provincial tourism chief said last week. He also noted that with the inauguration of the mentioned projects, more job opportunities will be created in the tourism sector, which will lead to better income for the locals.

Last September, a provincial tourism official announced that over one trillion rials (some \$24 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to nine tourism projects across the province.

He also mentioned that developing



tourism infrastructure in the province is one of the province's tourism department priorities and is being pursued seriously.

Iran among three countries with highest ICT growth: minister

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Iran is among the three countries with the highest growth rate in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the world, Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi, the minister of information and communications technology, has said.

According to the World Telecommunication Organization, Iran is among the first three countries with the highest growth rate in information technology in the world over three consecutive evaluation periods, he stated.

Referring to the ICT development, he said that 4.6 percent of the GDP is related to ICT, which is significant. The figure was about 2.7 percent in 2018 but experienced significant growth with the efforts of the Iranian youth.

In terms of ICT infrastructure development in the mobile network, Iran is one of the countries with the most access, while the United States, with a larger population than Iran, does not have 100 percent broadband coverage in the rural areas, he stated.

Thanks to the good investments made



for broadband development, today, about 98 percent of the Iranians have access to broadband, and on the other hand, a large part of our country's roads are connected to this system, he explained.

In terms of quality and price indices,

Iran has one of the cheapest broadband in the world, he further noted, adding, Iran is ranked second in the region in terms of cost-effectiveness of broadband, which is also appropriate in terms of the ratio of broadband prices to people's incomes.

"In the Sixth Development Plan (2016-2021), we were tasked to connect 80 percent of the villages with 20 households or more to the national information network," he stated, adding, "so far, over 95 percent of the country's villages are connected, but we are trying to reach full coverage."

He also highlighted that Iran is the leading country in the region in terms of the number of internet subscribers.

Azari-Jahromi also said that the pandemic changed the education system, making it dependent on the internet network, and despite various challenges, we could make it, however, some students in deprived areas still do not have access to the internet and electronic devices.

"We intend to solve this issue, but it requires a high amount of budget, even more than the total annual budget of the Ministry of Communications, so establishing justice might take more time," he also noted.

"Currently, 76,000 schools are connected to the national information network, and more than 95 percent of them are receiving service free of charge," Azari-Jahromi concluded.

Tehran subway expands free COVID-19 testing program



SOCIETY
d e s k

TEHRAN — Five metro stations are offering coronavirus tests free of charge to the Tehran citizens, Farnoush Nobakht, director of Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operations Company, said.

On January 9, free coronavirus tests started at two metro stations. Now, the service has been expanded to three other stations and will continue until February 11, he explained.

He went on to say that the service is done in collaboration with the University of Medical Sciences and Tehran Municipality with the aim of identifying patients and controlling the transmission chain, IRIB reported on Monday.

"The clients will receive the test result after 20 minutes, and if it confirms positive, the person's information will be

announced to the health department to undergo treatment measures," he stated.

COVID-19 daily new cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Monday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,597 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,424,596. She added that 1,216,305 patients have so far recovered, but 3,896 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 79 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 58,038, she added.

So far, 9,340,259 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 18 cities are in medium-risk "orange" zones, and 124 in low-risk "yellow" zones.

Blue whales threatened by ship collisions in busy Patagonia waters

The largest mammal ever to live on the Earth, the blue whale, is under threat from boat collisions as one of its main feeding grounds in Chilean Patagonia is overrun with vessels, a new study has revealed.

The endangered whales must contend with up to 1,000 boats moving daily through an important feeding area in the eastern South Pacific, according to research published in the scientific journal Nature.

Scientists researching the feeding patterns of the largest cetacean found that 83% of daily operating vessels belonged to the extensive salmon farming industry in the area of northern Chilean Patagonia.

The blue whale – which can weigh 150 tonnes and measure as much as 30 metres in length – has made a dramatic comeback in numbers in Antarctic waters but remains endangered and was on the brink of extinction due to industrial whaling in the last century.

Satellite tracking of blue whales and vessel traffic data released by the Chilean fisheries service Sernapesca has made it possible to pinpoint where ship strikes are more likely to occur for the species, the Guardian reported.

Luis Bedriñana-Romano, lead author of the paper, said the recently published data on vessel traffic is alarming. "We know where the whales are, but we also know that their total population is very low in this area. In fact, according to our research, they could reach between 200 and 700 individuals," he said.

"Any incident of collision [resulting in] death of these animals represents a real threat to their conservation," he said.



When a blue whale feeds, it invests a large amount of energy to find and consume its main food, krill, said Rodrigo Hucke-Gaete, the project leader and co-author of the study.

"Field observations that we have carried out indicate that when blue whales feed, they practically only pay attention to this activity," he said. "This makes them more

prone to being hit by boats and particularly at night, when, according to other investigations, whales are on average closer to the surface as a result of their food also rising to the surface."

The scientists are calling on the fishing industry to work with them to put in place protective measures to avoid fatal collisions for blue whales, which have already occurred in 2009, 2014 and 2017, as well as deaths from entanglement in salmon farms in 2007 and 2020.

The feeding conditions for whales can occur in several places in Chilean Patagonia, famous for its fjords and inner seas, such as the Gulf of Ancud and Reloncavi Sound, at the mouth of the Moraleda Channel, and on the western coast of Chiloé Island, an area renowned for its spectacular marine biodiversity.

Tehran to host national festival of creative, entrepreneur women

1 → Women's participation above global average

The participation of Iranian women in research and development fields is higher than the global average, according to the UNESCO 2020 report on Women

in Science.

Iranian women's participation in research and development has increased from 27.7 percent in 2019 to 31.2 percent in 2020, which is above the global average of 30 percent.

The increase in the share of women in research and development is mostly due to their increasing share in knowledge-based companies, Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, said in August 2020.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ج

ICRC praises Iran's effort against coronavirus

Daniel Munoz-Rojas, deputy representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Tehran, said he was impressed by the domestically manufacturing of oxygen concentrators for COVID-19 patients in Iran.

"This capacity does not exist in other countries in the region. Given that we are still in crisis, Iran should use this capacity to meet its domestic needs, but perhaps in the future it can help countries like Syria and Yemen," he highlighted.

He made the remarks on Sunday at a ceremony for providing 400 portable oxygen concentrators manufactured with the financial assistance of the ICRC.

ICRC allocated a total of 60 billion rials (around \$1.4 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to help produce this equipment.

"This is the second phase of the ICRC assistance to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Rojas said, expressing pleasure that the third phase of financial aid and other personal protection equipment is also on the way.

تمجید کمیته بین المللی صلیب سرخ از پیشرفت ایران در مقابله با کرونا

دانیل مونیوس روخاس معاون دفتر نمایندگی کمیته بین المللی صلیب سرخ در تهران گفت ساخت قطعات برای دستگاه‌های اکسیژن‌ساز درمان کرونا به شکل کاملاً بومی و محلی در ایران او را تحت تاثیر قرار داده است.

او افزود این ظرفیت در سایر کشورهای منطقه وجود ندارد. با توجه به اینکه الان هم در بحران هستیم ایران از این ظرفیت برای رفع نیازهای داخلی خودش باید استفاده کند اما شاید در آینده بتوان با استفاده از این ظرفیت بومی به کشورهایی همچون سوریه و یمن که در جنگ هستند هم کمک کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، او این مطالب را روز یکشنبه در آئین واگذاری ۴۰۰ دستگاه اکسیژن ساز خانگی پرتابل که با کمک ۶ میلیارد تومانی کمیته بین المللی صلیب سرخ تهیه شده اند بیان کرد.

روخاس توضیح داد: این دومین مرحله از کمک های صلیب سرخ به هلال احمر ایران است و خوشحالم بگویم که سومین مرحله از اهدای کمک‌های مالی و سایر تجهیزات حفاظت شخصی صلیب سرخ به ایران هم در راه است.

Over 778 tons of narcotics seized by Iran in 10 months

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — More than 778 tons of narcotics were seized by Iran in the first 10 months of 2020, Kazem Gharibabadi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Vienna, has said.

The largest amount of these seizures is Opium with 621,388 kg, followed by 76,626 kg of Hashish, 25,336 kg of other narcotics, 22,815 kg of Heroin, 17,500 kg of Morphine, and 14,458 kg of Methamphetamine, Gharibabadi wrote in a letter to the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).



It was also mentioned that during this period, 9 Iranian officers were martyred.

Meanwhile, about 110,020 kg of various narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances were seized throughout Iran from 14 November to 27 December 2020.

The highest seized type was Opium with 85,227 kg, followed by 9,400 kg of Hashish, 6,470 kg of other substances including precursors and psychotropic pills, 2,760 kg of Crystal, 2,518 kg of Heroin, 2,287 kg of Morphine, and 1,366 kg of Grass.

Iran's leading role in drug-control campaigns

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

The country seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2020), putting the country in first place in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the secretary-general of Iran's drug control headquarters, said in July 2020.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking, Momeni announced.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Iranian sailors detained in India back home

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — India has released 15 Iranian sailors who were detained some 1.5 years ago by authorities after sailing into Indian territorial waters.

The sailors, native to the southeastern Sistan-Baluchistan province bordering the Gulf of Oman, were arrested by the coast guards of India after their launch broke down and entered the Indian waters, IRNA quoted Hamidreza Toosi, an Iranian foreign ministry official, as saying on Monday.

Over the past one and a half years, the Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy in New Delhi and the consulate general's office in the city of Hyderabad made many efforts for releasing the detained sailors and held numerous meetings with the Indian government and judiciary officials in this regard, he explained.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 121)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

یَک‌اَرَش

● تمرین ۱. جواب سؤال‌های زیر را کامل بنویسید:

- نام بزرگ‌ترین میدان تهران چیست؟
- فاصله‌ی آن تا فرودگاه چقدر است؟
- مساحت میدان به چند متر می‌رسد؟
- برج آزادی در کجا قرار دارد؟
- برج دارای چه قسمت‌هایی است؟
- برج آزادی نشان چیست؟

خط فارسی

آن نان داون زبان زون این توان دیدن

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| sky | آسمان | |
| garden | باغ (جمع: باغ‌ها، باغات) | |
| in the opinion of | به نظر / na'zare | |
| full | پر | |
| little garden | باغچه | دَخت |
| cool | خنک | |
| | رُبع: یک قسمت از چهار قسمت هر چیز | |
| yellow | زرد | |
| red | سُرخ | دَریا |

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best among you is the one who doesn't harm others with his tongue and hands.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Asiavision honors IRIB for timely coverage of news on Gen. Soleimani assassination

→1 The award for the Outstanding Reporting of a News Story was shared by Hong Kong's TVB for reporting on Legislative Council vandalism in July 2019 and Vietnam's VTV for coverage of the Hanoi night hero in May 2020.

TVB also received the award for the Outstanding Visuals for a News Story for the reporting of the Polytechnic University clashes in November 2019.



A poster for the Asiavision Annual Awards 2020.

The award for the Outstanding Reporting on Climate Change and Adaptation also went to VTV for covering news on shopping bags from waste in September 2019.

The SBC of Samoa was honored with the award for the Outstanding Reporting from the Pacific for its report on the deadly measles outbreak in November and December 2019.

Japan's NHK received the award for the Outstanding Coverage of a News Event for the reporting of the Royal Enthronement in October 2019.

The CCTV of China won the award for the Coverage of the Year 2020 for COVID-19 reporting.

The Asiavision Annual Awards is organized by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), which is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The ABU has over 260 members in over 70 countries, including Australia, Japan, China, India, South Korea, Egypt, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Turkey.

It is a member of the World Broadcasters' Union and works closely with other regional broadcasting unions on matters of common concern such as reserving frequencies for broadcasters, harmonization of operating and technical broadcasting standards and systems, and finalizing the Broadcasting Treaty.

“Philosopher of the Heart” published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — “Philosopher of the Heart: The Restless Life of Soren Kierkegaard” by Clare Carlisle has recently been published in Persian.

Arastu Mirani is the translator of the book published by Parseh in Tehran.

“Philosopher of the Heart” is the groundbreaking biography of renowned existentialist Soren Kierkegaard and a searching exploration of how to be a human being in the world.

Kierkegaard, one of the most passionate and challenging of modern philosophers, is now celebrated as the father of existentialism - yet his contemporaries described him as a philosopher of the heart.

Over about a decade in the 1840s and 1850s, writings poured from his pen analyzing love and suffering, courage and anxiety, religious longing and defiance, and forging a new philosophical style rooted in the inward drama of being human.

As Christianity seemed to sleepwalk through a changing world, Kierkegaard dazzlingly revealed its spiritual power while exposing the poverty of official religion. His restless creativity was spurred on by his own failures: his relationship with the young woman whom he promised to marry, then left to devote himself to writing, haunted him throughout his life.

Though tormented by the pressures of celebrity, he deliberately lived amidst the crowds in Copenhagen, known by everyone but, he felt, understood by no one. When he collapsed exhausted at the age of 42, he was still pursuing the question of existence: how to be a human being in this world?

Clare Carlisle's innovative and moving biography writes Kierkegaard's remarkable life as far as possible from his own perspective, conveying what it was like to be this Socrates of Christendom - as he put it, living life forwards yet only understanding it backwards.

The original book was published by Allen Lane in April 2019.

Crazy Body director Yasser Khaseb gives nod to national heroes in “Sky Wall”

A R T TEHRAN — Yasser Khaseb, director of the Iranian theater troupe Crazy Body, plans to acknowledge national heroes and those people who sacrificed themselves for the country in a performance entitled “Sky Wall”.

The physical theater performance will be staged at Tehran's Azadi Tower on Thursday at 6 pm.

The actions have been designed by stuntman Amir Badri and Khaseb is the sole actor of the performance.

Crazy Body is best known for its performance “Mud”, which has been staged in numerous countries.

The latest performance was the 2nd edition of the BotTala Rangamela, a local theater festival in Dhaka, Bangladesh in December 2016.

In the play Khaseb's co-performer Hamid Etemedi, in the role of a sculptor, forms Khaseb out of mud. Caked in dirt, Khaseb is poured from a barrel and shaped, and ultimately asserts himself before the artist.

The troupe has also produced “Mysterious Gift”, which was performed at several international events, including the 1st International Monodrama Festival, which was organized in Paphos, Cyprus in October



Yasser Khaseb rehearses for “Sky Wall” in an undated photo.



A photo from Maryam Zandi's series “The 1979 Islamic Revolution” shows demonstrators celebrating after the Shah left Iran on January 16, 1979.

A R T TEHRAN — The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) plans to introduce five Iranian photographers famous for their photos of the early days of the Islamic Revolution to children.

Abbas Attar, Kaveh Golestan, Maryam Zandi, Bahman Jalali and Hossein Partovi are the photographers whose selection of photos will go on display on the Instagram page of the institute.

IIDCYA to introduce Islamic Revolution photographers to children

Attar was a member of Sipa Press, a French photo agency based in Paris, from 1971 to 1973. He also worked for Gamma, another French photo agency, from 1974 to 1980.

In 1981, Attar also collaborated with the Magnum Agency, an international photography cooperative owned by its photographer-members with offices in New York, Paris, London and Tokyo.

Attar lived in Paris and for years he was constantly traveling, documenting the political and social life of societies in conflict. One of his collections is dedicated to photos from the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. He died in Paris in 2018.

Photojournalist Golestan was famous for his various photos on the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and working-class Iranian people.

As a freelance photographer, Golestan also documented scenes of Iraq's chemical attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja in 1988.

Golestan was killed by a landmine in Iraq at the age of 51 while working for the BBC. He was 52.

Zandi's series “The 1979 Islamic Revolution” is

praiseworthy. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has purchased a collection of her photos.

The collection went on display during an exhibition at the museum in May 2018.

“The collection mostly reflects the happiness of people when the Shah left Iran,” Zandi had said in a statement.

The collection shows photos that depict the reactions of people to the pictures of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi during demonstrations against his regime, as well as photos portraying people on Enqelab Street near the University of Tehran, where major demonstrations took place.

The photo collection of Bahman Jalali (1945-2010) includes “war”, “Islamic Revolution”, “Bushehr” and “Daily Life”.

Jalali was posthumously honored by the Sprengel Museum in Hannover with the Stiftung Niedersachsen's Spectrum International Award for Photography in 2011.

Veteran photographer Hossein Partovi, famous for his pictures taken during the first days of the Islamic Revolution, died in May 2014, after years of suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, (ALS).

Fajr visual arts festival to celebrate birthday of Hazrat Fatima (SA) with “Shadow of Tooba”

CULTURE TEHRAN — A selection of artworks by top female artists of all the previous editions of the Fajr Festival of Visual Arts will be shown in the virtual exhibit “Shadow of Tooba” to celebrate the birthday of Hazrat Fatima (SA), the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (S).

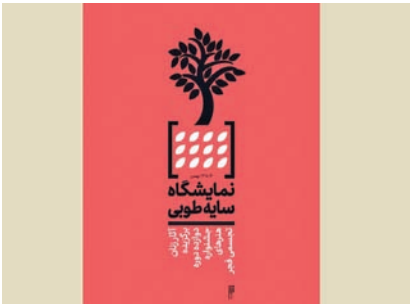
The selection will be available on the website and Instagram page of Iran's Institute for Development of Contemporary Visual Arts.

A total of 103 artworks by 92 female artists who have been the recipients of Golden Tooba awards of the festival will be displayed in the exhibit, which opens Tuesday.

The artists include sculptor Atena Akhavan, illustrator Ameneh Arbabun, ceramist Nikoo Esmaeili, painter Sarvenaz Emtiyazi and miniaturist Nasrin Aqamiri.

Also included are graphic designer Atefeh Sheid Moaddab, illustrator Nushin Safaju, miniaturist Zahra Sanatgar and sculptor Elham Shokri.

The 13th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts will be held in the Saba Art and Cultural Institute during February.



A poster for “Shadow of Tooba” virtual exhibit.

Nine veteran Iranian artists will be honored with lifetime achievement awards this year.

The honorees are master of sculpture and ceramics Jafar Najibi, cartoonist Ahmad Abdollahinia, illustrator Saeid Razzaqi, painter Garnic Derhakupian, miniaturist Khashayr Qazizadeh, graphic designer Ahmad Aqaqolizadeh, art researcher Yaqub Ajand, photographer Mohammad-Hossein Heidari and

calligrapher Mohammad Salahshur.

A collection of 93 calligraphy works has been selected to compete in the festival this year.

“The works have been selected out of 511 works submitted by 239 calligraphers,” a member of the jury, Mojtaba Malekzadeh, said in a press release published last week.

He noted that most of the works are in the nastaliq style of calligraphy.

He also noted that what will make the final judgment difficult is that all styles of calligraphy must be judged together this year while in previous editions each style was judged in its own category.

“We understand current conditions in the country, and I think in the calligraphy section it would be better if we have more than one honoree,” he remarked.

Member of the cartoon section of the festival Masud Ziai also announced that 49 cartoons will be competing in the cartoon section of the festival this year.

The collection has been selected out of 266 submissions by 100 artists.

In a press release published in late December, the organizers had called on Iranian artists who have been honored at international events to participate in the festival.

“Interested artists who have received international awards at the biennials and festivals in 2019 and 2020 will be attending the new section named ‘World Stars of Iranian Art,’” director of the festival Ali-Ashraf Sandoqabadi had said.

He mentioned that the submitted works will be published in the book of the festival.

He also said that an exhibition of lithographs by curator Ahmad Vakili will also be held on the margins of the festival.

“The winners of the Visual Arts Festival for Youth over the past three years as well as the winners from the two previous editions of the Fajr Festival of Visual Arts, the fifth Iranian International Calligraphy Biennial and the 11th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art are also attending this year and their works will also be judged for the final awards,” he concluded.

Three Iranian shorts to compete in Italy's Cefalu festival

CULTURE TEHRAN — Three Iranian short films with the central themes of immigration will be competing in the Cefalu Film Festival, which will be running from May 1 to August 31, producer Peyman Shahmohammadi announced Monday.

The movies are “The Blackout”, “Mostafa” and “My Father”. “The Blackout” by Mojtaba Mirshekari centers on a wealthy man who visits an art gallery, and following some mysterious events, he suddenly becomes the subject of one of the paintings.



This combination photo shows posters for “The Black Out”, “My Father” and “Mostafa”.

“About Average” by Andrew Clements at Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Andrew Clements’ “About Average” has recently been published by Afarinegan Publications.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Amir Heidari Bateni.

Jordan Johnston is average. Not short, not tall. Not plump, not slim. Not blond, not brunette. Not gifted, not flunking out. Even her shoe size is average. She's ordinary for her school, for her town, for even the whole wide world, it seems.

But everyone else? They're remarkable. She sees evidence everywhere - on TV, in movies and magazines, and even in the email blasts that fill her inbox. Tremendously talented. Stunningly beautiful. Wildly gifted. And some

of them are practically her age!

Jordan feels doomed to a life of wallowing in the vast, soggy middle. So she makes a goal: By the end of the year, she will discover her great talent. By the end of the year, she will no longer be average. She will find a way to become extraordinary, and everyone will know about it!

Can average be amazing? The bestselling author of “Frindle” shows that with a little kindness, it can.

Then Marlea Harkins, one of the most popular girls in school, and most definitely the meanest, does something unthinkable, and suddenly nice, average Jordan isn't thinking average thoughts anymore. She wants to get back at Marlea! But what's the best way to

beat a bully? Could it be with kindness?

Called “a genius of gentle, high concept tales set in suburban middle school” by The New York Times, bestselling author Andrew Clements presents a compelling story of the greatest achievement possible—self-acceptance.

Clements (1949–2019) was the author of the enormously popular “Frindle”. More than 10 million copies of his books have been sold, and he was nominated for a multitude of state awards, including two Christopher Awards and an Edgar Award.

His popular works also include “Troublemaker”, “Extra Credit”, “Lost and Found”, “No Talking”, “Room One”, “Lunch Money” and more. He was also the author



Front cover of the Persian translation of Andrew Clements’ “About Average”.

of the “Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School” series.