

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Report **T** Racist U.S. asylum policy

There is no wealthy country in the history of the world that has banned people from entering their territory to claim asylum. It is against international law to do so, but the United States is the only exception.

Experts say Washington's foreign policy plays a central role in this illegal practice.

The asylum-seeking policy was first introduced during the administration of former President Donald Trump despite human rights groups describing the measure as not only illegal but racist.

Trump used emergency powers under the pretext of the Coronavirus pandemic to prohibit any asylum seekers from entering U.S. territory.

During the Biden era, all Coronavirus pandemic measures have been lifted, except for immigration and refugees seeking asylum in the U.S.

It is another example of how Biden has continued to inherit many policies from his predecessor despite pledging to do the opposite on the Presidential campaign trail.

Trump used the excuse of the Coronavirus to introduce "Title 42" in emergency powers that banned and expelled asylum seekers who were migrants already inside the country that were seeking asylum.

The sweeping border restriction enacted by Trump allowed federal officials to expel hundreds of thousands of migrants over two years. ▶ Page 5

## Russia proposed 'simple and understandable model' for reviving JCPOA: Lavrov

TEHRAN – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said Russia put forth an initiative for reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that is "simple" and "understandable."

Russia proposed a "simple and understandable model" for all sides to resume fulfilling their obligations, but the US and EU "abruptly slowed down" at the finish line and "switched to shaking up Iran's internal political situation," Lavrov said in remarks to Russian state-run news agency RIA, according to Anadolu Agency.

"It was all worked out to the smallest detail," he said, emphasizing that the plan can be implemented "if there is political will."

Time has proven that the 2015 nuclear agreement has no reasonable alternative, said Lavrov, denouncing "irresponsible" speculations about a "Plan B" and other "unacceptable options."

Any such deviation could lead to "escalation, an arms race, an open conflict with irreversible consequences," he warned. ▶ Page 3

## Pele escapes to victory

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Edson Arantes do Nascimento, known as Pele, died Thursday with cancer at a hospital in Sao Paulo at the age of 82. But death is not the end.

He was a legendary player who rose from barefoot poverty to become one of the greatest and best-known athletes in modern history.

How many times Pele was on target is a matter of debate, with most statisticians agreeing the number is between 1,281 and 1,283.

Pele traveled to Iran on May 5, 1972 and scored a hat-trick against Iran's B team at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, where Santos won the match 5-1.

Many Iranian football fans had fallen in love with the wizard, who had won FIFA World Cup three times in 1958, 1962, 1970.

As a child, I met Pele in the 80's at a cinema in Tehran. He became my hero after he found back of the net with an overhead kick in the 'Escape to Victory'. ▶ Page 3

# Large-Scale Drill in Southeast Coasts

▶ Page 2



© IRNA / Asghar Khamseh

## National steel festival, exhibition slated for mid-Jan.

TEHRAN- The 4th National Iranian Steel Festival and Exhibition (N.I.S.F) is scheduled to be held in Tehran during January 10-12, 2023, IRIB reported.

Focusing on the knowledge-based companies and startups and those production units expediting the process of indigenizing new technologies for the country's steel industry is a major feature of this year's exhibition and conference.

In this national event, domestic producers and suppliers of the country's iron and steel chain, in addition to offering cooperation opportunities to knowledge-based companies and domestic manufacturers, unveil their latest achievements and products.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles

created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA) shows that Iran's crude steel output has increased 8.5 percent in the first 11 months of 2022, while the world steel output has fallen 3.7 percent in the said period. ▶ Page 4

## White Bridge hosting flocks of migratory birds

TEHRAN – White Bridge, an arch bridge located in the southwestern city of Ahvaz, is hosting flocks of migratory birds, IRIB reported.

White Bridge was inaugurated on November 6, 1936. It remains a symbol of the city still today.

The old bridge, built on the Karun River, plays host to migratory birds every year at the beginning of the cold season.

The flying birds over the Karun River and the pleasant weather have created a fascinating view, which attracts many tourists and birdwatchers.

Every year, with the beginning of the cold season, more than one million birds from all over the world migrate to the rivers, wetlands, and reservoirs of Khuzestan to for wintering.

### Unique birdwatching sites in Iran

Iran is decorated with impressive wetlands that hold a great share of aquatic and bird species and wildlife. Anzali wetland, Qeshm Island, Urmia Lake, and Miankaleh Peninsula are among the most important locations for bird watching in Iran. ▶ Page 7



© ISNA / Alireza Masoumi

## Iranians Commemorate 9 Dey Demonstration

TEHRAN - Hundreds of thousands of Iranians took to the streets in the capital Tehran and other cities on Thursday and Friday to commemorate the occasion of 9 Dey, which marks the anniversary of a 2009 huge nationwide demonstration that put an end to unrest that broke out in the wake of the 2009 presidential elections.

## Rig-e Jenn: the bizarre land of elves!

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Whoever named it Rig-e Jenn, may have been deeply troubled by ghosts and the devil there in the heart of the Iranian plateau.

Also known as the Dune of the Jinn, it is a desolate and barren region, which is dominated by enormous dunes, challenging even

the most ardent and experienced travelers, adventurers, and drivers of 4WD vehicles.

According to legends, even caravans avoided passing through Rig-e Jenn because they thought it was inhabited by "jinn" and evil spirits. In Islamic culture, a "jinn" is a spirit, and Rig-e Jenn was once (and in some places still is) thought to house evil spirits!

Some people still hold this belief in the nearby towns and villages today. According to sources, Sven Hedin, a renowned Swedish desert explorer, avoided the region during his 1900s expeditions to Iran's deserts, and Alfons Gabriel, traveling from Ashin to Aroosan in the 1930s, was only able to cross the southern "tail" of the desert. ▶ Page 6

## From Inside **T**

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## Tehran Papers **T**

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Thursday's Iranian newspapers.

### Active diplomacy with Oman

Vatan-e Emrooz also put the spotlight on the Iranian foreign minister's visit to Oman and his meeting with Sultan Haitham, interpreting it as a path to revitalizing the JCPOA. ▶ Page 2

## CBI governor Saleh-Abadi resigns, Farzin replaces him

TEHRAN – Ali Saleh-Abadi left his job as the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) on Thursday and President Raisi's cabinet accepted his resignation and replaced him with Mohammadreza Farzin.

The governor of the Central Bank of Iran, resigned amid the recent volatility in the foreign currency market and depreciation of Iran's national currency the rial against other currencies, IRNA reported.

Farzin has served as the head of different Iranian banks including Bank Melli, and Bank Karafarin; he has also served as the deputy Finance and Economic Affairs Minister.

The government spokesman recently said that the president would make changes in his cabinet. A new road minister also assumed the position recently.

## Cultural events paying tribute to General Qassem Soleimani

TEHRAN – Iran has planned dozens of cultural events to commemorate Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani on the third anniversary of his assassination.

The Quds Force chief was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

A highlight of the program is the 4th edition of the Divine Commander Theater Festival, which will commence on January 4, 2023, at his grave in the Shohada Cemetery of Kerman, his hometown.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater and the Revayat Foundation launched the festival in 2020 to present General Soleimani's character, morale, and his method of management to provide a role model for the younger generations.

A poster of the fourth edition of the festival was unveiled during a special ceremony on Wednesday by the organizations.

Fajr International Theater Festival president Kurosh Zarei, who attended the ceremony, ▶ Page 8

## TEHRAN PAPERS

## Active diplomacy with Oman

*In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Thursday's Iranian newspapers.*

from page 1 ▶ It seems that Oman has taken an intermediary role on the suggestion of the U.S. to finalize the agreement, the publication claimed, quoting Amir Abdollahian who had said "Omani authorities have always played a positive and constructive role in bringing the views of the parties closer to reach the final step of the agreement."

The state-run Iran newspaper, however, believes that the Oman-Iran meeting centered on enhancing economic cooperation, trade, energy, tourism and transportation. It also emphasized that the Islamic Republic is now ready to negotiate, if the Americans and Westerners stop hypocrisy and act realistically, otherwise, the negotiation process will be halted and the JCPOA revival will face a refusal by Iran.

**Arman-e Melli: Officials unable to manage economy**

The economic situation, the unbridled inflation and the sharp devaluation of national currency against dollar show that some managers are incapable of managing the country's economy, an economic expert wrote in Arman-e Melli.

With the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, the country faced an uprising inflation, however, today the sanctions are not as hard as before, and we have found ways to bypass them over the past few years. So, it was expected the economic condition to experience improvement, Seyyed Hamid Hosseini argued.

Although it was clear from the very beginning that the country's governing system should be based on technocracy regardless of reformist or conservative affiliation of the sitting government, in some ministries it is clear that the officials do not have the necessary ability, which creates mistrust in the society.

When society becomes desperate, people withdraw their money from the bank and do not go towards long-term investment, do not invest in production sector. On the other hand, people immigrate, feeling they have no future in the country, which leads to capital flight and a weak economy.

**Etemad: Fire under ashes to ignite**

Seyed Mostafa Hashemitaba, in an interview with Etemad, said that a decrease in protests should not mean that the authorities deny the problems, because it only makes the "fire under the ashes" stronger.

The reality is that the form of protests in Iran in recent years has become "sinusoidal", the former presidential contender remarked.

"It subsides but does not end," he emphasized, noting, "In our country, many people have things to say, people who should be given priority and their words should be heard."

"I imagine that some officials have got involved in a kind of oblivion by the decrease in protests, while the fire under the ashes will rise again," he predicted.

Solving the economic problems, improving living conditions and reforming foreign policy were suggestions made by the former vice president as a solution to political problems.

**Jomhourī Eslami: Who is responsible?**

The steep rise in prices of the currency currencies, coins, cars, foodstuffs and household appliances has confused people, the Jomhourī Eslami publication said in its editorial, asking, "Who is responsible?"

Does the government, which campaigned on the slogan of improving the economic and living conditions of the people, consider itself responsible for these conditions, the newspaper asked.

It also slammed the government for rising unemployment and lack of a proper vision in the future among the youth.

The publication further recommended the officials to take a look at economic indicators when they took over the responsibility and compare them with the current condition, maybe, they find out the results of their performance.

The dissatisfaction has reached such an extent that grand ayatollahs also expressed concern about the situation in the meeting with the parliament speaker and said "People are unhappy with the situation." They clearly stated that the current government failed to decrease the cost of living and resolve problems.

**Kayhan: Currency market controllable**

The conservative Kayhan newspaper wrote in a report that the fluctuations in the currency market can be curbed by taking urgent and decisive decisions.

The newspaper, quoting former head of the central bank Ali Saleh-Abadi, addressed three reasons behind rising foreign currency price and the record-breaking decline in Iranian rial. The first reason was increase in interest rates in more than 90 countries of the world, even Japanese yen dropped against U.S. dollar.

The second reason also was seasonal fluctuations of dollar, which happens at the end on each season and the last reason was the unrest in the country, denying that the government itself raised the price of the dollar to compensate its budget deficit.

"To confront the enemies' conspiracies and measures to weaken Iran's economy, all three systems must join hands and work hard," Kayhan suggested at the end.

## Iran FM applauds Omani Sultan dedication to Vienna negotiations

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian stated on Thursday that the Sultan of Oman had given close attention to several aspects of the Vienna negotiations.

Amir Abdollahian stated in a tweet shortly after a trip to Oman, where he met with the Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, that in addition to working to advance a settlement in the Vienna negotiations.

Oman has been one of the key hubs for the repatriation of Iranian foreign assets from other institutions.

The foreign minister asserted that during his conversation with the sultan of Oman, they emphasized how admirable the bilateral ties between the two close neighbors are.

Additionally, the two parties have spoken about matters pertaining to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen, Egypt, and Ukraine, he said.

When questioned whether the visit to Muscat would have an impact on discussions between Iran and international powers to lift sanctions on Tehran, Amir Abdollahian replied

that the Iranian side's window for achieving a deal would not be open indefinitely.

The foreign minister stated that his travel to the capital of Oman was primarily motivated by the pursuit of bilateral problems.

However, he recognized the Sultan of Oman's efforts to assist Iran and the other parties in reaching a consensus.

Amir Abdollahian also noted that Iran appreciates any move taken by the Sultan of Oman to contribute in the negotiation of a fair, solid, and long-lasting accord.

Oman has been the major mediator in the talks that led to an agreement in 2015, according to the foreign minister, who also stated that the Sultanate has made significant efforts in this respect in recent months and would continue to do so.

He said that he emphasized to the Sultan of Oman that Iran is not engaging in discussions only for the sake of being in negotiations; rather, Tehran is hoping to see the fruits of months of conversations.

TEHRAN - The Zulfaqar 1401 military exercises got underway early on Friday by the Iranian Army with a series of naval exercises in the Sea of Oman.

The large-scale joint military exercises span from the eastern part of the strategically important Strait of Hormuz to the northern tip of the Indian Ocean.

Preparation to defend Iran's coasts took up the most of the first several hours of the maneuver with the primary message of "self-confidence, power, and sustainable security".

Brigadier General Alireza Sheikh, the drill's spokesperson, stated on Friday morning that "the Navy's rangers used updated guns and equipment to carry out the operation and performed current tactics and defensive scenarios in the darkness of night."

"The operation lasted until daybreak, and the naval forces deployed Delhavih, TOW, and shoulder-fired Misagh missiles to counter the (mock) enemy's attack on coastal lines," he explained.

The spokesman said that the forces were successful in utilizing heavy artillery fire to attack the simulated enemy's positions and stop them from advancing.

In a news conference on Thursday, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Deputy Chief of the Army for Coordination, said the drills are aimed at enhancing planning abilities, conducting, directing, and analyzing joint operations, and synergizing the defense capability of the Army's four main branches.

## Army launches large-scale drill in southeast coasts



Strategic bombers of the Air Force are providing logistical support. Infantry and armored troops of the ground force, air defense systems, subsurface, surface, and flying vessels, and rangers of the Navy are taking part in the drills.

Sayyari asserted that another goal of the exercises is to improve the abilities of commanders and soldiers to use the Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base, drones, electronic, and cyber warfare equipment.

He added that the presence of extra-regional countries in the region and warmongers have always brought nothing except insecurity, war, and occupation to the West Asia region.

The rear admiral went on to say that the large-scale drills will serve as a reminder to the regional states of their existing capabilities and the fact that they do not need any outside powers to ensure regional security.

In November 2021, the Ira-

nian Army performed Zulfaqar 1400 drills in the same location, demonstrating its defensive capabilities based on locally manufactured equipment.

"Drills are warning to Israel and other extra-regional states"

The commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, Major General Gholam-Ali Rashid, warned adversaries against any mistake against Iran.

Speaking at a press conference on the sidelines of the exercises on Friday, General Rashid declared that the Zionist regime is a threat to Iran and all other nations in the region.

The commander warned the neighboring nations against partnering with Israel to jeopardize Iran's security by giving the regime bases or facilities.

In such a situation "those bases as well as the starting point of aggression against Iran, which is the occupying regime, will be the target of our armed forces' attacks," he cautioned.

He said that since the Armed Forces view exercises as "half war" or even a "war before war," they take them very seriously.

"By conducting drills, we want the adversaries to know that in the event of any miscalculation, they would undoubtedly pay greater expenses than successes," the general asserted.

He reaffirmed that "our armed forces will fight with a hybrid force which will have a devastating power" against any extra-regional enemies.

## Iran criticizes offensive clauses in U.S. NDAA

TEHRAN- The unfavorable provisions in the U.S. National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2023 have been condemned by Tehran, which maintains that this demonstrates Washington's "hostile, provocative and meddling policies" against the Islamic Republic and is consistent with efforts to foment "Iranophobia".

Nasser Kanaani, a spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said in a statement on Thursday that the erroneous accusations against Iran's regional actions show that Washington is still playing a harmful and unsettling role in the Persian Gulf and larger West Asia.

Pointing to Washington's unilateral pull-out from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018, Kanaani said, "The U.S. administration violated international norms and values. The erroneous claims against Iran's peaceful nuclear program are repeated in the Act."

Despite the fact that Iran has not ben-

efited from its own "full rights" under the terms of the agreement, the Islamic Republic has contributed to maintaining the JCPOA via diplomatic endeavors and flexibility, the Foreign Ministry official remarked.

As a signatory to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran is aware of its "rights and responsibilities," he noted.

He added, "Attempts to justify the United States' unlawful and unilateral measures and sanctions on the Islamic Republic by making unfounded claims about Iran's peaceful nuclear activities will undoubtedly fail. Iran has demonstrated that it would not yield to the justification of force."

The spokesman reiterated Tehran's long-held position that it opposes development of nuclear weapons, saying, "The Islamic Republic has repeatedly reaffirmed that the development of nuclear weapons has no place in its military policy."

## It was U.S. that put additional terms on JCPOA talks: nuclear chief

### IAEA chief Grossi has expressed willingness to visit Iran

TEHRAN - Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), stated on Thursday that the United States, not Iran, had imposed new terms on the JCPOA talks.

Eslami said that the U.S. is now signaling its desire for continuing negotiations in a variety of ways.

He asserted that it is unacceptable to conclude the negotiations while leaving fresh things open for putting pressure on the Iranian people and re-imposing sanctions on them.

The major difficulty in the JCPOA discussions is politi-



cal and based on "the engine of maximum pressure," such that Americans are occasionally duped and fall into the trap of Zionists and fanatics, and these ups and downs are always theirs, according to Eslami.

In order for the negotiations to continue, he suggested, the opposite side had to stop hatching schemes, wreaking havoc, and imposing sanctions.

Eslami highlighted that the IAEA inspectors visit Iran on a regular basis and monitor all of the country's nuclear activities.

An IAEA delegation visited Tehran on December 19 and held talks Iranian officials at the AEOI. The delegation was headed by Massimo Aparo, chief of Department of Safeguards and the IAEA deputy director.

The IAEA officials held talks with the chief of the Iranian Foreign Ministry Department for

International, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the director for the Foreign Ministry Department for Arms Control and International Security.

The IAEA team also held talks with AEOI chief Eslami.

During the negotiations the sides exchanged views on safeguards issues, areas for cooperation and future joint plans, the AEOI said in a press release.

In his Thursday remarks, Eslami said Raffaele Grossi, the IAEA director general, has also expressed willingness to visit Iran, which may be considered and organized after the January holidays.

## U.S. invaded Afghanistan in attempt to restrict regional neighbors: envoy

TEHRAN- Despite claiming to be fighting terrorism, an Iranian diplomat has asserted that Washington's primary motivation for invading Afghanistan was to restrain the neighbors of the Asian nation.

Speaking with Al-Alam TV on Friday, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, president's special envoy on Afghanistan affairs, said that "Americans came to Afghanistan on the pretext of battling terrorism, but their major purpose was to restrict and control the neighboring countries."

In addition, Kazemi Qomi was recently named Iran's acting ambassador to Kabul when Bahador Aminian's term in that position expired.

He said that the first justification for picking Afghanistan for the invasion was the presence of

Al-Qaeda, which had moved to the country following the 9/11 attacks.

The envoy said that Americans are carrying out their goals through occupation and military presence, with al-Qaeda acting as a proxy to complete its given tasks.

He warned that the U.S. is "seeking to promote its aims in Afghanistan through this proxy war," stating that "Americans imported Daesh to Afghanistan."

Despite the fact that no Afghan person was engaged in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. soil, the American officials decided to attack Afghanistan in October 2001. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans were killed in the wake of the U.S. incursion.

For over two decades, American soldiers had occupied Afghanistan under the guise of suppressing the Taliban. However, when U.S. forces departed Afghanistan, the Taliban, weakened by continuous foreign occupation, swept into Kabul in August of last year.

On August 8, 2021, the Taliban grabbed control of Kabul and announced the Afghan conflict to be over. After former President Ashraf Ghani departed the country, the militants stormed the presidential residence.

Hundreds of thousands of Afghans killed as a result of the U.S. war on the nation, and the country's imprudent exit is also causing a humanitarian catastrophe in the war-torn country.

# Foreign Ministry to hold specialized forum on General Soleimani

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has announced that it will organize a specialized forum on the role of General Qassem Soleimani in combating terrorism.

The first meeting of the scientific and research gatherings focused on delineating the activities of the great commander of Islam and Iran, martyr Qassem Soleimani, dubbed "The Specialized Forum on Fighting Terrorism and Extremism in the West Asia Region", will be held at the Center for Political and International Studies of the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday December 31, 2022 with the presence of guests and attendees from different Iranian institutions and bodies, according to the Public Relations of the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

During this meeting, the fight on terror and the key role of martyred general Soleimani in the fight on terror in the West Asia region will be discussed from different perspectives including its field, legal and international aspects.

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terror and the key role of martyred general Soleimani in the fight on terror in the West Asia region will be discussed from different perspectives including its field, legal and international aspects.

Iran is preparing for commemorating the third martyrdom anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani who was assassinated by the United States at the Baghdad airport in the early days of 2020.

Hamidreza Moqadamfar, who is in charge of the popular campaign for the third anniversary of the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, has said that Iran will hold a national commemorative ceremony on the occasion of the third anniversary of the assassination of the commander of the IRGC Quds Force.

The ceremony will be held at the Grand Mosalla Mosque of Tehran on January 3.

Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, Moqadamfar said the ceremony will include various programs including grassroots campaigns aimed at commemorating the assassination of General Soleimani.

The programs include recitation of the Holy Quran, reading of General Soleimani's will, book donation, performing religious prayers, and media activities, he explained.

Moqadamfar also said the word "soul-sacrificing" has been chosen as the motto for the ceremony.

"Haj Qassem Soleimani sought to elevate the Islamic revolution and considered Iran a shrine. He considered Iran to be the owner of the holy shrines and he believed that if Iran is damaged, many holy shrines will be damaged," Moqadamfar said, according to Mehr News.

He added, "He is always alive. He is a national hero and a hero of the Islamic Ummah and will remain a hero. He has forever become a role model for free-thinking people."

## Russia proposed 'simple and understandable model' for reviving JCPOA: Lavrov

From Page 1 ▶ The remarks come against a backdrop of tensions between Iran and the West which has put the Vienna talks over reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on ice.

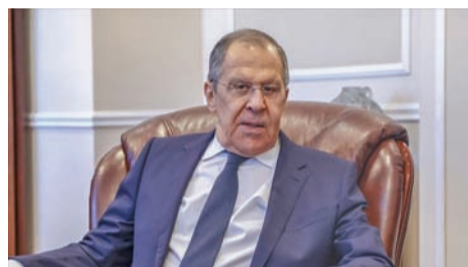
Germany said Wednesday that it sees no reason to resume the JCPOA talks. "From our point of view, there are currently no indications or reasons for a resumption of the Iran nuclear negotiations," German Foreign Ministry spokesman Christopher Burger said.

He pointed out that Germany has repeatedly made it clear that "these negotiations are not taking place at the moment."

The German spokesman said that the focus of Berlin is not on the JCPOA right now but on what he called protests in Iran.

Burger's remarks drew a response from Russian Ambassador to Vienna-based International Organizations Mikhail Ulyanov.

"The German MFA stated that Berlin saw no reason to resume the Vienna talks. Apparently, Germany underestimates the importance of nuclear non-proliferation as well as the risk of serious and even uncontrolled escalation if the talks on JCPOA remain inconclusive," Ulyanov said on Twitter.



Iran has reiterated its interest in the JCPOA. The spokesman for the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament stressed on Wednesday that the Islamic Republic will not pull back from its position and interests in the JCPOA talks.

In remarks to Mehr News, Abolfazl Amouei underlined that the U.S. is to blame for poor advancement in the JCPOA talks.

He added that "the conditions for the U.S. comeback have been the main topic of our conversations for the last 18 months. The American side left the JCPOA accord and then declared its willingness to rejoin the deal."

Amouei went on to underscore, "It was the American side that, owing to internal circumstances, including (congressional) elections, withdrew from the process of advancing

the discussions more swiftly, and since then, the pace of the negotiations has been hampered due to their wrong political interpretation."

Amouei speculated that perhaps the Westerners believed the recent unrest in Iran would help them politically or degrade Iran's negotiating position.

Now that public security conditions have improved in Iran, the West can comprehend that Iran does not intend to compromise on its interests in the talks, he added.

He continued by saying that a deal would soon be reached if the U.S. shows genuine political will, observing Iran's redlines and legitimate demands.

Amouei stated that the agreement's conclusion is dependent on the U.S.'s political will, and that if the other side is willing to return to its former duties and successfully lift the sanctions, Iran is also willing to take compensatory steps.

"If the other side returns to its obligations and lift the sanctions we will also take compensatory measures," he remarked.

"The conversations have never been interrupted, and they have been monitored through mediation, conveying signals, and informal draft texts," the Iranian legislator remarked.

## Top general vows 'destructive' response to Israel allies

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian general has warned Israel's allies against any aggression against Iran, vowing a destructive response to such aggression.

The general, Gholamali Rashid, who is the commander of Khatam-al Anbiya Central Headquarters, said Israel is a top national security threat to Iran and warned its allies that they will receive a harsh response from Iran for cooperating with it.

"The Zionist regime, which is under comprehensive protection, is a destructive military-security threat to all countries of the region and Iran. The threatening actions of this regime against the

interests and national security of Iran are evaluated with the assumption of information, coordination and support of the United States and that the response of Iran's armed forces will be definitive," General Rasheed said, according to IRNA.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a military exercise by the Iranian Army dubbed "Zolfaghar 1401."

He added, "Any country that cooperates with the Zionist regime to threaten Iran's national security and provides bases and possibilities to the Zionist regime, those bases, points and origins of aggression and attack on Iran,



which is the occupying regime of Jerusalem, will be targeted by our armed forces."

The general said Iran's armed forces consider Israel a top-priority national security threat.

He said Iran's Armed forces will respond to any aggression with a combined power which will be

destructive to the enemies.

"Any enemy who, with a strategic miscalculation, wants to attack the waters, islands, coasts and facilities belonging to our nation, will not only face the power of the strategic navy of the army, but it will also face the entire defensive-offensive power of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army and all the defensive-offensive power of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. All our regional defensive-offensive power will beat the enemies in a unified and coordinated manner and in a common mission and in a very wide geographical area," he asserted.

## Iran summons Italian envoy over 'interventionist comments'

TEHRAN – The Iranian foreign ministry announced Thursday that Italian Ambassador to Iran Giuseppe Perrone was summoned over meddling remarks by Italian officials.

"During the meeting, the Islamic Republic of Iran conveyed its strong protest over a continuation by some Italian officials of interventionist comments and measures regarding Iran's domestic affairs," the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement.

The statement added, "It was also stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran views selective and dual approaches toward human rights as unacceptable and totally rejected, and that it is the opposite side that has violated the Iranian nation's rights and severely harmed its interests by imposing unlawful sanctions on the country."

It noted, "The Italian envoy was also told that the negative and irrational stances

taken by some Italian officials have nothing to do with the historical background of ties between the two countries."

According to the statement, the Italian ambassador said he would relay Iran's protest to his government in Rome.

The summoning came after Italy summoned the Iranian ambassador over Iran's internal developments and Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani made scathing remarks against Iran. He accused Iran of executing protestors for taking off their veil or participating in a protest, an allegation Iranian rejects.

"Taking off a veil or participating in a protest is not a crime that can lead to the death penalty anywhere in the world," he said.

Also, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has accused Iran of inappropriately dealing with its unrest.



"What is happening today in Iran is unacceptable for us, Italy can no longer tolerate it," Meloni said in an end-of-year press conference, according to a Reuters report.

The Italian prime minister also threatened Iran with more effective action if it does not change its stance.

Over the last three months, Iran has been grappling with a wave of unrest that erupted after the death of Mahsa Amini.

## SPORTS

### Pele escapes to victory

From Page 1 ▶ The plot involves prisoners of war preparing to face a German team in Paris amid their attempt to escape. Pele had the chance play with very different teammates - actors Sylvester Stallone and Michael Caine.

Pele will always remain in football fans' hearts.

### Esteghlal, Mes Rafsanjan share spoils in draw: IPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal and Mes Rafsanjan football teams shared spoils in a tightly-contested draw in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Friday.

The Blues provisionally moved top of the table with 27 points with the goalless draw.

Persepolis are second with 26 points and one game in hands.

In Isfahan, Zob Ahan battled back from a 2-0 deficit to draw 2-2 with Sanat Naft in Isfahan.

Rock-bottom Naft Masjed Soleyman lost to Aluminum 1-0 in their home match.

And Foolad were held to a goalless draw against Havadar.

On Saturday, Gol Gohar will meet Persepolis in Sirjan, Mes Kerman host Malavan, Paykan play Sepahan in Tehran and Nassaji Ghaemshahr face Tractor at home.

### Zob Ahan defeat Al-Ittihad Ahli at WASL West Asia

TEHRAN – Zob Ahan of Iran beat Syrian basketball team Al-Ittihad Ahli 75-54 in the WASL West Asia League Group A on Thursday.

Leading the way in scoring for Zob Ahan was Farid Aslani who had 15 points, but Mohammad Hossein Ahmadi (13 points), Arman Zangeneh (11 points), Sajjad Masheyekhi (11 points), and Arsalan Kazemi (10 points) were not too far behind.

Al-Ittihad Ahli had a bit more help for Ronald Delph (17 points, 13 rebounds) in Chris Darrington (19 points) but there's still a lot left to be desired from this Syrian squad who remain winless in WASL - West Asia play.

Aob Ahan had lost to Beirut Club in Lebanon last week.

Each Sub-Zone league consists of eight (8) teams divided into two (2) groups of four (4). Each team will play the other team at home and away. The top team from each group will advance to the Semi-Finals, while the second and third will face-off in qualification to Semi-Finals match-ups.

Eventually, the top three teams from WASL West Asia League and WASL Persian Gulf League will qualify for the WASL Final eight, where they will be joined by Champions of South Asia and Central Asia.

The WASL Final eight finalists will qualify for FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2023, on the road to FIBA Intercontinental Cup 2023, FIBA's highest club competition.

### Iran to participate at Grand Prix de France Henri Deglane

TEHRAN – Iran will send a six-man Greco-Roman wrestling team to the 2023 Grand Prix de France Henri Deglane.

The competition will be held in Nice, France from January 20 to 23.

Sajad Abbaspour (60kg), Shahin Boodaghi (72kg), Alireza Arghash (77kg), Saeid Karimizadeh (87kg), Vahid Dadkhah (97kg) and Morteza Alghousi (130kg) will represent Iran in the tournament.

The event is named after Deglane, who won Olympic gold for France in the heavyweight category at their home Paris Games in 1924.

### Persepolis forward Locadia breaks silence

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team striker Jurgen Locadia has broken his silence on leaving the Iranian club.

The Dutch striker canceled his contract with Persepolis a week ago, leaving Iran for his homeland due to his wife's illness and later announced that he would not return to Iran for family reasons.

Now, he has posted a text on his Instagram account.

"As we say goodbye and welcome the new Year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on all that has happened over the past 12 months. It's been a year filled with challenges and uncertainty, but it has also been a year of growth, learning and resilience.

"I'm grateful for the lessons learned, the moments of joy and laughter and for the opportunities that were presented.

"I'm not here to be liked, I'm not here to please everyone. If I wanted attention or outside validation...I would have talked to every news outlet about what happened in Iran. I choose not to. People close to me know what happened. I'm not here to apologize to anyone."

### Iran's women climb at ITTF World team ranking

TEHRAN – Iran's women table tennis team moved up 14 places at the ITTF World Team Ranking.

Team Melli Banovan moved up to 35 in the ranking.

China are first in the ranking, followed by Japan and Germany.

Iran's men team are 31st in the standing.

### Taremi scores hat-trick against Arouca

TEHRAN – Mehdi Taremi scored a hat-trick against Arouca in the Primeira Liga Wednesday night.

In the match, held at the Estadio do Dragao, Otavio opened the scoring just a minute into the match.

Taremi was on target in the 18th, 34th and 50th minutes.

Jerome Opoku scored an own goal in the 70th minute to make the scoreboard 5-0.

Bruno Marques scored a consolation goal in the 75th minute.

Porto are second with 32 points.

Benfica lead the table with 37 points with one game in hand.

### Karimi on target as Kayserispor lose to Alanyaspor

TEHRAN – Kayserispor midfielder Ali Karimi scored a goal against Alanyaspor.

Ahmed Mahgoub opened the scoring in the 21st minute.

Yusuf Ozdemir made it 2-0 in the 36th minute but Karimi pulled a goal back in the 59th minute.

Efecan Karaca scored Alanyaspor's third goal from the penalty spot in the 72nd minute.

Kayserispor sit 15th in the Super Lig table with 23 points, nine points adrift of leaders Fenerbahce.

## Intl. water, wastewater industry exhibition running in Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran's 18th International Water and Wastewater Exhibition kicked off on Friday at Tehran Permeant International Fairgrounds, IRNA reported.

As reported, 169 domestic companies along with six foreign exhibitors are participating in this year's exhibition which was opened by Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian.

The U.S., China, Italy, and Canada are among the countries whose representatives are showcasing their latest products and services in the four-day event.

A considerable number of the exhibitors taking part in the exhibition are knowledge-based and technological companies.

The event covers a variety of areas and commodity groups including metal pipes and fittings, industrial valves, pumps, and rotary machines, industrial water treatment, dams, and hydroelectric power plants, education, irrigation and drainage, water transmission lines, polymer pipes,



and fittings, chemical materials, paint and coatings, household water treatment, household faucets, leak detectors, blowers and vacuums and measuring systems.

Specialized meetings and news conferences, as well as educational workshops on various topics including water consumption management and examining the challenges of the water sector are among the programs scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the exhibition.

## Over 18,000 National Housing Movement units under construction in Fars

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 18,300 units of the National Housing Movement are under construction in Fars province, in the south of Iran.

Ataollah Zamani, the director-general of the province's Housing Foundation, also said that 3,400 units are planned to be inaugurated in the cities and villages of the province by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023).

In early November, a board member of the National Land and Housing Organization announced that about 57,000 hectares of land within the boundaries of the cities has been provided for the National Housing Movement plan.

Arsalan Maleki also said that the private sector owners in provinces with land shortages can participate in the National Housing Movement to provide land.

National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years

is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages, some of these units are currently being constructed after providing lands and preparing the necessary conditions.

In early November, Hadi Abbasi-Asl, the deputy minister of transport and urban development, announced that currently, at least one million units of the National Housing Movement are under construction with average progress of about 30 percent.

After National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in early February.

# National steel festival, exhibition slated for mid-Jan.

from page 1 ▶ Production of crude steel in Iran reached 27.9 million tons during the mentioned 11 months, as compared to 25.7 million tons in the first 11 months of 2021.

The WSA put the crude steel output by the world's top 64 producers at about 1.691 billion tons in the mentioned time span.

During the first 11 months of the current year, all of the world's top 10 steel producers except for Iran and India experienced a decline in their steel output, according to the WSA report.



Iran's monthly crude steel output stood at 2.9 million tons in November, registering a 3.9 percent rise compared to the figure for the same month in 2021.

The country climbed to seventh place among the world's top steel producers in the mentioned month.

Producing 74.5 million and 10.4 million tons of steel, China and India stood in first and second places in the said period, respectively, while Japan occupied third place producing 7.2 million tons of the mentioned product.

## Iran eyes \$180b of annual petchem revenue in 10 years

TEHRAN – The managing director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said over the next 10 years the country's annual petrochemical production capacity will reach 200 million tons which will bring the country \$180 billion in revenues every year, Shana reported on Thursday.

Speaking in a TV program on the occasion of National Petrochemical Industry Day, Morteza Shahmirzaei said Iran is one of the world's richest countries in terms of hydrocarbon reserves and this is an advantage for the country's petrochemical industry.

"For the growth of an industry, in addition to expert human resources, feed is also one of the most important factors, and Iran benefits from huge oil and gas reserves," Shahmirzaei said.

"For many years, the petrochemical industry can use these oil and gas reserves as feed



and fuel, for which very good plans have been made, and I invite all experts, researchers, and investors to invest in Iran's oil and gas industry," the official added.

**Petchem projects worth \$70b to be implemented across Iran**

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has also said that

more than 100 petrochemical projects with a total investment of about \$70 billion have been defined and will be implemented across the country.

Oji noted that the country will also be completely self-sufficient in producing the catalysts used in the petrochemical industry by the end of the current government administration's incumbency (August 2025).

He put the country's current petrochemical production capacity at 90 to 95 million tons, saying that \$10.5 billion worth of petrochemical products have been exported in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21).

According to Oji, over \$12.5 billion was earned from the export of petrochemical products in the previous year.

## Tehran hosting exhibit of decorative lights



TEHRAN- The 28th Exhibition of Chandeliers and Decorative Lights of Iran kicked off on Friday at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRNA reported.

The opening ceremony of

the exhibition was attended by Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mehdi Niazi, Managing Director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) Houman Razdar, Head of Tehran Chandelier Manufacturers Union Hamidreza Manafi, and Head of the Tehran Chamber of Guilds Qasem Nodeh Farahani.

As reported, representatives of 83 companies are showcasing their latest products and services during this four-day event.

The exhibition is mainly aimed at introducing the manufacturing capabilities of

the exhibitors and promoting the export of the showcased products.

Eight workshops are planned to be held during the exhibition, among which, familiarization with the export markets of Afghanistan, Iraq, Russia, Africa, and Qatar, as well as global principles of branding in the lighting industry can be mentioned.

**Iran among world's top five chandelier producers**

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Manafi said Iranian chandeliers and decorative lights are

famous in the world due to their good quality, and the country is considered among the world's top five countries in this industry.

The official put the annual export of Iranian chandeliers and decorative lights at \$10 million, saying that a significant number of such products are also exported through third countries or by passengers.

According to Manafi, Russia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as, Eastern and Western European countries are the main importers of Iranian chandeliers and the major target markets of the mentioned products.

## Exclusive exhibit of Iranian products to be held in Karachi in mid-Jan.

TEHRAN- An exclusive exhibition of Iranian products will be held in Karachi during January 16-18, 2023, the deputy head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) for the international affairs announced.

Hesameddin Hallaj said the exhibit will be held in the fields of oil, gas and petrochemicals, water and electricity industry, mining, steel and related industries, constructional materials, agricultural industries, food, packaging machinery, transit, logistics and transportation, household appliances, carpets, chandeliers and furniture, etc. with the presence of various companies, especially knowledge-based ones.

Referring to the plans made to send a trade delegation to Pakistan and hold bilateral business negotiation sessions and several specialized panels on the sidelines of this exhibition, Hallaj called this event a suitable opportunity for networking of the entrepreneurs and business owners of the country in the Pakistani market and expanding trade with this country to increase Iran's share of about two percent of Pakistan's total trade of 80 billion dollars.

On October 29, TCCIMA and Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to pursue and develop free trade with Pakistan.

Signed by TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak and TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, the MOU is aimed at developing the exports of Iranian products to the Pakistani market.

Based on the MOU, TPO as a government body, and TCCIMA as a representative of the private sector are going to share their capabilities and development capacities to

provide the basis for better identification of the Pakistani market and increase the export of Iranian goods to this country.

Preparation and formulation of laws and guidelines related to exports to Pakistan with the consultation and cooperation of TCCIMA, sending trade delegations to this country, and also cooperation to create financial and banking channels between Iran and Pakistan are also among the areas of cooperation between the two sides.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Peyman-Pak mentioned Pakistan as one of TPO's priority markets for enhancing the country's business plans and emphasized that establishing direct transit as well as creating a financial and banking mechanism between Karachi and Tehran are two key axes in the development of business relations with this country.

Also, Khansari, in his speech, underlined the TCCIMA plans and actions in recent years to develop the economic relations of Iranian companies with neighboring countries and expressed the chamber's full readiness to cooperate with TPO in order to develop exports to Pakistan.

He mentioned the exchange of several business delegations between Iran and Pakistan and the government's efforts for signing a free trade agreement between the two countries as positive steps for the development of economic relations, saying: "Establishing a free trade agreement is a big step towards long-term economic cooperation, especially the growth of Iran's exports to Pakistan."

Meanwhile, during a meeting between Pakistan's Finance Minister Senator

Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Mohammad-Ali Hosseini in Islamabad on Friday, the two sides explored the ways to expand and strengthen trade ties between the two countries.

Emphasizing the high importance of his country's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Pakistani minister said that Islamabad is ready to remove the obstacles in the way of increasing the volume of bilateral trade with Tehran.

Pakistan always considers its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran very important. However, the volume of bilateral trade is not favorable and for this purpose Pakistan is ready to take any kind of measures to address the existing obstacles, the official stressed.

Senator Ishaq Dar emphasized that Pakistan is ready to take all possible measures to remove the bottlenecks in order to significantly increase the volume of bilateral trade between the two countries.

Appreciating the economic policies of the government of Pakistan, the Iranian ambassador for his part said, "The historical relations between the two neighbors and the strong cultural and political relations require that our commercial and economic cooperation be at better and stronger levels."

The two countries have great potential to expand cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and other areas, he emphasized.

After the mentioned meeting, the Ministry of Finance of Pakistan issued a statement and announced: "In this meeting, the opening of border markets, barter trade, free trade agreement and joint investment to increase the volume of trade between Iran and Pakistan were discussed."



Iran Alumina

IN HIS EXALTED NAME

Jajarm Power & Steam Co-generation Project, on EPCF Basis  
(Located in Northern Khorasan)

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION

**First Announcement**  
Tender No.: J/61

In respect to the implementation of Memorandum No. 172246/60 dated 11/10/2021 between the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and the Ministry of Energy, and in order to provide stable electricity for Jajarm alumina and aluminum factories, Iran Alumina Company intends to award engineering, procurements, construction and financing of the 1st phase of Jajarm Power & Steam Co-generation Plant (the "Project"), including all ancillaries, auxiliary equipment and common systems, with 90 MW (±5%) electrical capacity (at Site Conditions) and 72 Ton/hr steam capacity (at any conditions), at a site in Jajarm Alumina complex located next to Jajarm city, to a qualified and competent contractor through an international bid.

In this respect, Iran Alumina Company (the "Company") will prepare a short list of bidders possessing the necessary qualifications via this invitation to prequalification after the required process and evaluation. The Company will then select an eligible contractor (successful bidder) possessing the required financial and technical capabilities and will award the engineering, procurement, construction and financing of the Project to the aforementioned contractor (the "Contractor") based on a EPCF contract.

Lia Niroo Asia (LNA) company is the Project's consultant.

Applicants are hereby invited to upload letter of intent (including the list of shareholders, the gazette of the board and a deposit receipt of fifty (50) million Rials to NO IR170100004001054704019296 Shaba Bank in the name of income concentration account of state owned company 342054779294000600010860294339 -Iran Alumina Company- in the name of the sale tender document, up to three (3) calendar days after the second posting of this invitation notice, on the Iran Alumina Company website:

<https://www.iranalumina.ir>

After reviewing the applicants' documents, the instructions for prequalification questionnaire and other required documents will be provided to the applicants whose documents have been approved.

applicants must have a valid EPC certificate of qualification type 1 for industrial design and construction or combination of consulting certificate (Grade two) and construction certificate (Grade one) in field of energy generation, issued by Plan and Budget Organization. In addition, applicants must have at least one similar or higher capacity power plant project implemented on EPC basis in Iran as well as financing experience of at least one project with fifty (50) percent of project estimated price.

Deadline for submitting the completed prequalification documents is thirty (30) calendar days after the deadline of obtaining the Prequalification Questionnaire as indicated in second posting of this invitation notice.

From page 1 ▶ There are also vulnerable people who are unable to seek safety from authorities in their homeland. Among them are minors as young as twelve who are sent by people smugglers into the U.S. to be sexually abused.

In a failed attempt to prevent asylum seekers from traveling to the U.S., during the rule of President Trump, scenes emerged of children separated from their parents in Texas at the southern border and kept captive in small cages by U.S. border authorities that shocked the world.

"Title 42" and the emergency powers have expired but the courts have extended it. President Biden claims he wants to end the practice as well but has avoided the use of emergency powers to stop the policy (despite being able to do so).

Migrants who do travel to the U.S. tend to have certain skills that America needs and are welcomed.

It is the vulnerable and those that seek safety that the U.S. is preventing from entering to seek asylum.

Under U.S. law itself, migrants (especially from Latin America) have the right to seek asylum at a center inside the U.S., but it is the racist policy of U.S. politicians who seek the popularity of voters that are closing the border in the face of asylum seekers.

Experts say the racist elements in the U.S. congress want to make America white.

Under U.S. immigration law, a person granted asylum is legally allowed to remain in the country without fear of deportation. They qualify to work, travel abroad, and apply for their spouse or children under the age of 21 to join them.

The White supremacists in the U.S. welcome white migrants from the West but discriminate against people of other colors. If these were Canadian migrants arriving, it would not be an issue, the problem in the U.S. is with non-white and especially black African former U.S. slaves entering the country.

Asylum seekers already make a very dangerous journey to reach the U.S. where American



## Racist U.S. asylum policy

border and federal officers have reportedly assaulted them both physically and sexually.

There is little to no monitoring of how American border and federal officers are doing at the border.

Asylum Seekers who cross Mexico's southern border are essentially fleeing violence and persecution yet struggle to get any protection, face serious abuses and delays, and are often forced to wait for months in inhumane conditions near Mexico's southern border while struggling to find work or housing.

This is despite the fact that most people seeking asylum because of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America such as replacing democratically elected governments with puppet rulers. That is essentially why people are fleeing those countries.

But there is no real system to prevent human smugglers or monitoring groups along the U.S. southern border in line with international law.

Reports indicate U.S. immigration agents tried to dissuade asylum seekers from applying for refugee status and pressured them to agree

to voluntary return, even when they said they would be at risk of violence and persecution in their home countries.

Other reports have cited cases where asylum seekers said they were instructed to sign voluntary return documents without reading them. Others said agents used poor conditions in detention as a deterrent, saying they would spend months in detention if they sought refugee status.

In some Latin American countries, there is corruption when it comes to the smuggling of drugs and violence as a result of Washington's interference. This has deteriorated the economy of those nations as well which has made its people vulnerable enough to seek asylum in the first place.

At the same time, during the chaos and terror that Washington created in Afghanistan during its disastrous 20-year occupation, the Islamic Republic of Iran has accepted some three million Afghan asylum seekers and supported them with multiple services from humanitarian aid, to food, and medical assistance inside Iranian territory. No country has accepted more Afghan refugees than Iran.

And this is while the U.S.

preaches to other governments about human rights.

The other issue with Latin American countries, according to experts, is the drug cartels wreaking havoc in numerous countries. These drug cartels are being financed by drug factions in the United States. 50% of the drug cocaine is consumed in the U.S. and this gives power to Latin-based drug cartels to do more business abroad while waging violence with rival cartels at home. The U.S. has done very little to address this issue.

Venezuela was a very prosperous country 20 years ago before the U.S. interference attempts to overthrow the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro. Despite the failed coup attempt, massive waves of refugees fled to the U.S. because of the mess Washington caused in their homeland.

This is not just limited to the United States. Through Washington's wars, invasions, proxy wars, and other types of military interference in other countries, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers had to seek refuge in other countries, many of whom have traveled to Europe.

At the end of the day, the problem stems from Congress which has failed for decades now to address this matter by first ending any form of U.S. interference in Latin America and secondly passing bills to help assist the problems facing Latin American countries that were created by the U.S. itself.

Biden tried to end "title 22" in his first year in office as the Pandemic began to end but he has failed to do so.

Now he faces a challenge in a different Congress following the mid-terms so there is very little Biden can do anymore even if he even wanted to.

The fact that Washington can pass some \$850 billion dollars on a military budget but cannot allocate proper resources to the southern border to have a humane and just immigration system speaks volumes.

## U.S. victims of gun violence in 2022 include 6032 children under 17

The number of children shot and killed in the United States in 2022 exceeded 6000. The Gun Violence Archive found that at least 6032 children, 17 years of age and younger, had been the victims of America's deadly gun epidemic.

That was the highest fatality rate since the GVA started keeping a record of gun violence casualties in 2014. The figure reflected a notable increase since last year when arbitrary deployment of firearms by civilians was found to be responsible for around 5700 casualties across the country.

At least 306 Children, 11 years old or younger, have been killed by gunfire with 668 being injured. Additionally, 1325 teenagers aged 12 to 17 died by gunfire with 3732 being injured.

Last month, the GVA said there had been a total of 609 mass shootings in 2022 in the United States so far, it is projected to reach around 675 by the end of the year.

The grim statistics come after a three-year-old girl in Kansas City, Missouri, was killed on Christmas Eve in what police suspect was an accidental shooting.

The child shooting deaths in 2022 also include 19 students, all 11 years old or younger, killed in a mass shooting on May 24 at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. One of the youngest victims killed by gunfire this year was a five-month-old who was shot in the head while sitting in a car in Chicago during a June 24 drive by shooting.



The United States has been suffering from an expanding trend of gun violence and episodes of mass shootings.

In July, U.S. President Joe Biden said that a flood of guns was turning American communities into killing fields.

In October the CDC released data on U.S. firearm deaths last year counting over 47,000 which is the most in at least 40 years.

The U.S. population is growing but researchers say the rate of gun deaths has been getting worse, too. America's gun related homicide and suicide rates both rose 8% last year, hitting unprecedented levels since the early 1990s.

In a new study, researchers examined trends in firearm deaths since 1990. They found gun deaths began to steadily increase in 2005. But the rise accelerated recently with a 20% jump from 2019 to 2021. The researchers counted more than 1.1 million gun deaths over those 32 years.

The U.S. is saturated with guns and has become a lot more so over the past couple of decades, as deaths mount from gun related violence in the US, so do the sales of firearms. Data from 2020 shows how gun production has increased nearly threefold over the past 20 years, rising from the manufacturer of 3.9 million guns in 2000 to more than 11 point 3 million in 2020.

In addition, powerful lobbying groups, including the National Rifle Association, The NRA, spent nearly \$5 million last year to expand gun rights while limiting curbs on who can have firearms and how they can be carried.

Also, gun owners have become less likely to cite hunting or sport as a reason for their ownership, instead, pointing to personal security. And despite widespread and vocal public outrage, American support for stricter gun laws in 2020 fell to the lowest level since 2014.

According to polling by Gallup, only 52% of Americans surveyed said they wanted stricter gun laws while 35% said they should remain the same. Over the last two decades, there has been a jump in the sale of high caliber handguns and semi-automatic rifles.

Figures from a Swiss based research project, the Small Arms Survey, estimate that there were 390 million guns in circulation in 2018 in the US, plus the US ratio of 120.5 firearms per 100 residents far surpasses that of other countries around the world.

(Source: Press TV)

## Attack in eastern Syria kills 10 oil workers

An attack in eastern Syria has killed 10 oil field workers, state news agency SANA has reported, a day after Syrian Kurdish-led forces announced an offensive against ISIL (ISIS).

"Two others have been wounded in a terrorist attack that targeted three buses transporting workers from al-Taim oil field in Deir Az Zor province," the report said on Friday.

SANA did not provide any information on the nature of the attack or who may be behind it, but a British-based war monitor, in reference to ISIL, accused "cells of

the Islamic State group" of carrying out the assault near the oil field.

"The attack began with explosive devices that went off as the buses drove by, and then the group's militants shot at them," Rami Abdurrahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP.

On Thursday, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said they had begun an offensive against ISIL fighters, following an earlier assault on a prison in Raqqa, northwest of the attack on the bus.

The SDF said the offensive, dubbed "Operation al-Jazeera Thunderbolt", aimed to "eliminate" ISIL fighters from areas that had been "the source of the recent terrorist attacks."

The operation is being carried out alongside the U.S.-backed coalition, although there was no immediate confirmation from the international force that they were taking part.

The SDF statement said that in addition to the thwarted Raqqa attack, ISIL fighters had recently carried out eight assaults in the

Deir Az Zor area, Hasakah, and the al-Hol camp for displaced people, which houses predominantly family members of ISIL members.

Last Monday, six Kurdish fighters were killed when ISIL fighters attacked the complex in Raqqa, the group's former de facto capital in Syria, in a bid to free fellow fighters imprisoned there.

After a meteoric rise in Iraq and Syria in 2014, ISIL lost the vast swaths of territory under its control, but fighters remain and the group continues to claim attacks in the two countries.

## WORLD HEADLINES

### China appoints US envoy Qin Gang as new foreign minister

China has appointed Qin Gang as its new foreign minister, state radio reported.

Qin, 56, and currently China's ambassador to the United States, replaces Wang Yi, who has been foreign minister for the past decade.

Following his appointment on Friday, Qin will return to Beijing from Washington after 17 months as China's 11th ambassador to the United States.

### U.S. says Chinese intercept could have caused air collision

The U.S. military says a Chinese fighter jet flew dangerously close to an Air Force plane over the South China Sea, forcing the American pilot to maneuver to avoid a collision.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement Thursday that the incident occurred on Dec. 21 when the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy J-11 flew in front of and within 6 meters (20 feet) of the nose of an RC-135, a type of large reconnaissance plane operated by the U.S. Air Force.

The U.S. plane was "lawfully conducting routine operations over the South China Sea in international airspace," the statement said. Its pilot was forced to "take evasive maneuvers to avoid a collision."

China frequently challenges military aircraft from the U.S. and its allies, especially over the strategically vital South China Sea, which China claims in its entirety. Such behavior led to a 2001 in-air collision in which a Chinese plane was lost and the pilot was killed.

"The U.S. Indo-Pacific Joint Force is dedicated to a free and open Indo-Pacific region and will continue to fly, sail and operate at sea and in international airspace with due regard for the safety of all vessels and aircraft under international law," the statement said. "We expect all countries in the Indo-Pacific region to use international airspace safely and in accordance with international law," it said.

### Cyprus, India sign MoU on defense cooperation

Cyprus and India on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defense and military cooperation and stressed their close ties for over 60 years, the two countries said in an official statement.

The document was signed during the working visit to Cyprus of India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. The statement said that Jaishankar and his Cypriot counterpart, Ioannis Kasoulides, also signed an MoU on Cyprus' accession to the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

The ISA aims to promote cooperation in the efficient production and consumption of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

With Cyprus' Interior Minister Nicos Nouris, Jaishankar also signed a Letter of Intent to launch negotiations for an agreement on migration and movement with the aim of managing irregular immigration.

### Myanmar court finds Aung San Suu Kyi guilty, adds 7 years in jail

A court in military-ruled Myanmar has found the country's toppled leader Aung San Suu Kyi guilty of corruption charges, sentencing her to seven years in prison in the last of a string of criminal cases in an 18-month-long trial process, a legal official said.

A prisoner of the military since a 2021 coup, Aung San Suu Kyi, 77, has now been convicted on every charge leveled against her, ranging from corruption to illegally possessing walkie-talkies and flouting COVID-19 restrictions.

The court's ruling on Friday leaves the deposed leader with a total of 33 years to serve in prison following the series of politically motivated prosecutions in the wake of the military seizing power in February 2021.

"All her cases were finished and there are no more charges against her," a legal source, who requested anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media, told AFP news agency.

In the case that concluded on Friday, Aung San Suu Kyi was alleged to have abused her position and caused a loss of state funds by neglecting to follow financial regulations in granting permission to Win Myat Aye, a cabinet member in her former government, to hire, buy and maintain a helicopter.

Aung San Suu Kyi was the de facto head of the government, holding the title of state counselor. Win Myint, who was president of her government, was a co-defendant in the same case.

Aung San Suu Kyi's previous convictions had already landed her a total of 26 years imprisonment.

"The question now will be what to do with Aung San Suu Kyi," said Richard Horsey of the International Crisis Group.

"Whether to allow her to serve out her sentence under some form of house arrest, or grant foreign envoys limited access to her," he said. "But the regime is unlikely to be in any rush to make such decisions."

### Erdogan seeking a meeting with Assad and Putin

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday that his country was seeking three-way meetings between Ankara, Moscow and Damascus, a fresh addition to Turkey's efforts to restore its ties with the Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad, ten years after relations broke off between them.

"We want to take a tripartite step as Syria-Turkey-Russia," Erdogan told reporters during his return from Turkmenistan, adding that the three countries' defense and foreign ministers could come together first.

"Following their meetings, let us get together as the leaders. I offered this to Mr. Putin and he received it positively. Thus, a series of contacts would be launched," he said, referring to a Dec. 11 phone call between the two leaders.



Patients with Covid-19 lie in beds at Tangshan Gongren hospital, Tangshan, China

## Rig-e Jenn: the bizarre land of elves!

From Page 1 ▶ Also referred to as the Desert of Spirits, the scenic landscape also embraces vast swamps, which could present a serious challenge even to ardent trekkers due to difficult hikes and a lack of water.

Those who have been there saying it is almost like walking on a dry seabed. There, enormous swaths of sand that can almost appear unreal and "too" smooth are whipped into eye-catching structures and shapes only by the constant winds that blow across them.

When the sun goes down, those who make a camp are well-rewarded. It's the perfect time for the desert's crystal-clear sky to display a very bright moon and incredibly vivid stars.

After hours, it is possible to travel first on asphalt roads and then through uninhabited terrain for a few hours to reach the bizarre desert. In fact, years ago, adventurers discovered routes to the heart of Rig-e Jenn using modern tools like 4WDs, maps, aerial photos, laptops, GPS devices, and aids through trial and error.

The remote land may not be a top destination for a novice trekker due to fading roads and



possibly struggling with a poor cell phone signal.

Remember that sometimes ferocious winds howl through Rig-e Jenn, expressing fears to onlookers if you intend to visit.

Rig-Jenn is sandwiched between the two provinces of Semnan and Isfahan. The strange desert can be reached via hours of riding first on an asphalt road and then through uninhabited terrain. The vast deserts of eastern Iran are characterized by arid, sun-baked landscapes that are particularly alluring to thrill-seekers.

## Tourism minister visits Malayer, admires its Mini World for skilled craftsmanship

TEHRAN – On Thursday, Iranian tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami toured Malayer's Mini World, calling it an exemplary theme park on a world scale.

"This theme park, entertainment, and tourism complex, which is well implemented in the city of Malayer, can undoubtedly be a very good model for other countries."

The minister visited miniature replicas of the Eiffel Tower, Taj Mahal, and Egyptian pyramids,

among several others, CHTN reported.

"Apart from being a travel destination, this complex is significant as it shapes a recreational, joyful and educational environment," Zarghami stated.

Models of Si-o-Se Pol (Bridge of Thirty-Three Arches), the Hafez mausoleum, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and Persian Achaemenian-era sites are amongst other monuments standing in the park.

TEHRAN – An archaeological team is to conduct a follow-up excavation on a site in the UNESCO-registered Burnt City, where an Elamite clay tablet was unearthed last year.

"We have scheduled to start a fresh excavation season on Shahr-e Sukhteh in the month of Bahman (Jan. 21, 2023 –Feb. 19)," senior Iranian archaeologist Seyyed-Mansour Seyyed-Sajjadi said on Thursday.

"Last year, one of our most important discoveries was an accounting [clay] tablet, which was found in an eastern residential neighborhood," Seyyed-Sajjadi said.

It was the second tablet (an accounting document) found in Shahr-e Sukhteh over the past fifty years. So, due to its significance, the site will undergo a new excavation."

Founded around 3200 BC, Burnt City was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC. Previous rounds of excavations showed that its residents had great skills in weaving, and creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting.



## Burnt City: archaeologists to re-excavate site Elamite tablet unearthed last year

According to Seyyed-Sajjadi, the rare discovery has provided subtle clues about the interaction between the eastern and western sides of the Iranian plateau during prehistorical times.

The discovery of such [clay] tablets is not bizarre in the western regions of Iran, but the point is that archaeologists have never made such a unique discovery in the easternmost point of the Lut Plain and southeastern Iran.

Measuring 11 by seven centimeters, the tablet was found by archaeologist Hossein Moradi some four meters below the surface in the Room 27th of a once-residential area. "The clay tablet bears some signs, some of which depict the types and quantity of shipped goods... it also has signs that are still unfamiliar to us."

Situated in a region inside the modern-day provinces of Ilam and Khuzestan, Elam was one of the most impressive civilizations of the ancient world. It was never a cohesive ethnic kingdom or polity but rather a federation of different tribes governed at various times by cities such as Susa, Anshan, and Shimashki until it was united during the Middle Elamite Period, briefly, as an empire.

Elamite language is an extinct language spoken by the Elamites in the ancient country of Elam, which included the region from the Mesopotamian plain to the Iranian Plateau. According to Britannica, Elamite documents from three historical periods have been found. The earliest Elamite writings are in a figurative or pictographic script and date from the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.

## Minister inaugurates ancient underground city as new destination

TEHRAN – Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami, on Thursday, inaugurated the first phase of the Samen underground city during his visit to the west-central Iranian province of Hamedan.

A budget of 25 billion rials (\$62,500) has been spent so far on the excavation, restoration, protection, and preparation of the ancient troglodytic settlement, which dates back to the Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE), the deputy provincial tourism chief said during the inauguration ceremony, IRNA reported on Friday.

A unique complex with human skeletons and granite stone structures, the underground city of Samen has been prepared for a public visit in this phase with two workshops and 30 rooms, Ali Khaksar added.

Since 2007, the excavations of Samen have been going on continuously, and until 2015, six seasons of archaeological surveys have been conducted, he

mentioned.

To date, the necessary restorations and protection plans have been completed on this valuable structure, he noted.

Since the human skeletons discovered in this underground city were severely eroded, with the help of cultural heritage experts and restorers, a study and documentation of the skeletons and bones were carried out in their place, he explained.

The skeletons then were moved to the province's cultural heritage department and will be returned to the underground city after preparation and full restoration, he said.

Samen subterranean settlement has 25 rock-carved rooms, interlinked tunnels, and corridors.

The subterranean complex appears to have been first used for religious purposes, then as a cemetery, and finally as a shelter during emergencies.

Excavations at the site began in 2005 and were still going on. So far, tens of well-preserved skeletons have been retrieved from its interconnected chambers.

Iran is a haven for ancient troglodytic architecture which is somewhat forgotten, though they are filled with life and creativity. The northwest Kandovan village is one of the most famous examples of troglodytic architecture in the country; its ice-cream cone-shaped homes resemble that of Turkey's Cappadocia.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

## Passenger ship to dock in Mazandaran

TEHRAN --A passenger ship is scheduled to dock in Ramsar port in the northern province of Mazandaran, the province's governor-general has said.

Mazandaran had no passenger ships for years, but the southern coasts of the Caspian Sea will receive its first ship and sea bus next week, ISNA quoted Seyyed Mahmoud Hosseini said on Thursday.

Mazandaran receives 200,000 foreign tourists every year, which could be increased due to its unique tourism potential, he added.

Back in November, a cruise ship docked in the province's Noshahr port for the first time.

The provincial tourism

chief announced that the privately owned two-deck ship will be made available to tourists for the upcoming Iranian new year holiday (starting in March 2023) after Mazandaran province's coastal area is equipped.

The docking of cruise ships in these coastal areas could boost maritime tourism and develop tourism infrastructure, he mentioned.

Back in August, the tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami announced that there would be an acceleration in the development of maritime tourism.

Fuel subsidies will be allocated to cruise ships, which will lead to a reduction in sea travel costs and a rise in maritime tourism, the

minister said.

With this subsidy, fuel consumption for a cruise with 1,000 passengers will be reduced from 600 billion rials (\$2 million) to 500 million rials (\$1,700), he explained.

**Coastal and maritime tourism**

Over the past couple of years, the Islamic Republic has made various efforts to exploit maritime tourism potential by developing hospitality infrastructures, diversifying sea routes, and drawing private sector investors along its vast southern coasts.

Prosperous maritime tourism could help the country to meet its ambitious target of attracting 20 million annual tourists by 2025. It

also keeps an eye on tourism developments in the Caspian Sea in the north.

Back in February, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop maritime tourism and make the best use of its potential on the southern and northern coasts of the country.

Promoting the culture of using the sea as a tool to increase social vitality, developing coastal activities in the form of environmentally friendly plans and programs, and creating the necessary grounds for cooperation and exchange of knowledge and information were also among the topics of the agreement.

## Rural craftswomen revive forgotten textile

TEHRAN – Toebafi (traditional hand-woven fabrics), which had fallen into disuse, has been revived by female crafters in the eastern village of Khorashad in South Khorasan province.

It was the great efforts of the women of the village that made this traditional art not be forgotten, but rather to create employment and economic prosperity for the region, said an official with the provincial government on Thursday.

Women from Khorashad village are vivid examples of the province's

capable women, Fereshteh Asadzadeh added.

The village of Khorashad was designated in 2018 by the World Crafts Council - Asia-Pacific Region (WCC-APR) as the world hub for 'Toebafi', which was a turning point in the development of traditional textiles across the province.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next. In January 2020, the

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

Located in eastern Iran, South Khorasan is home to many historical and natural attractions, such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Polond Desert.

The province is also known for its famous rugs as well as its saffron and barberry, which are produced in almost all parts of the province.

## Cultural heritage plays key role in Qom's tourism development, official says

TEHRAN – Tourism development in the central province of Qom is largely dependent on the cultural heritage sector, an official with the provincial government has said.

As tourism is dependent on both cultural heritage, effective measures in this

sector are also important for the development of tourism, Abolqasem Moqimi explained on Thursday.

Despite the expansion of various topics in this province in the last few years, tourism has been neglected, which needs

more attention, the official added.

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

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

Second Announcement



Khouzestan Steel Company

### EXTENSION OF INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER IN TWO STEPS

No. :460138

**KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE  
10,000 MT UHP Grade Graphite Electrode 600 mm with respective nipples**

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

**Description: UHP Grade Graphite Electrode with respective nipples as per following specification**

Bulk Density:	1.65 – 1.75 g/cm <sup>3</sup>
Real Density:	2.22 – 2.25 g/cm <sup>3</sup>
Porosity:	21 – 27 %
Ash Content:	0.2 % Max.
Specific Resistance:	4.5– 6.5 Ωcm
Bending Strength:	110 -140 Kgf/Cm <sup>2</sup>
Young's Modules:	7.8 – 11.8 GPa
Co-efficient Of Thermal expansion:	0.3 – 1 10 <sup>-6</sup> /°C

**Graphite Electrode Dimensions:**

Electrode Diameter:	600 mm
Electrode Length:	2400 mm

**Nipple Specification:**

Nipple Diameter:	317.50 mm
Nipple Length:	457.20 mm
Socket Depth:	234.60 mm
Number of Thread:	4 Thread per Inch
Thread Type:	Tapered Thread

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF:

**EUR 20 "TWENTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:**

- ACCOUNT No.0100013543943 AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ CENTRAL BRANCH" OR
- ACCOUNT No.1902-750-4019644-1 AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ SHARIATI BRANCH" OR

**Rials 6,000,000, "SIX MILLION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:**

- ACCOUNT No.0102513186002 AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"
- ACCOUNT No.0100304453001 AT "SADERAT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"

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KM 10 AHVAZ – BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI ROAD  
P.O.BOX: 1378  
POST CODE: 61397-31398  
AHVAZ – IRAN

**Note1:** BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK , IN THE AMOUNT OF **240000,000,000 Rial OR 800,000 EUR FOR 10,000 MT GRAPHITE ELECTRODE Dia.600mm** AND MAY REDUCED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.

**Note2:** ALL BIDS MUST BE INFORMED US WHICH PARTICIPATE IN OUR TENDER UP TO **29<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2022**. WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS CONFIRMED AND THE TENDER DOCUMENT IS SENT TO YOU, YOU MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE **5<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2023**. THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 10 AM ON THE **7<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2023** IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHVAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.

**Note 3:** FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Tel No. : +98 61 3213 6195 / 3213 6190 Fax No. : +98 61 32908130  
Mr.Hasan Faramarzi EMAIL: [Ha.Faramarzi@ksc.ir](mailto:Ha.Faramarzi@ksc.ir) OR VISIT: <http://WWW.KSC.IR>

# White Bridge hosting flocks of migratory birds

From page 1 ▶ Iran is host to over 600 species of birds, the number of which is increasing year by year.

Miankaleh International Wetland in Mazandaran, called the birdwatching paradise of Iran, stretches to a total area of 68,000 hectares, which is home to at least 130 species of migratory species with a population of 1.5 million.

Being an impressive bird-watching destination, the wetland displays a variety of bird species such as otters, all kinds of fish-eating ducks (common goldeneye and Mergus), pelicans, flamingos, cormorants, common pheasants, partridges, mute swan, tundra swan, and coots. Ashuradeh was introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

Gomishan wetland in Golestan province is home to over 20,000 water birds, and more than 20 species of birds, which supports three IUCN Red List vulnerable species of waterbirds, i.e., Pelecanus Crispus, Aythya nyroca, and Vanellus gregarius, as well as the vulnerable mammal Phoca (Pusa) caspica; it is also an important staging area for the fish subspecies Rutilus rutilus



caspicas.

Located at the foot of the Zagros mountains in north-western Iran, Zarivar is a freshwater wetland hosting over 74 bird

species, which is designated as a Ramsar Site.

The site provides a suitable breeding and resting place for birds and other wetland animals,

and due to the relatively extensive reed beds, it is an important overwintering site for northern migratory birds.

Located in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, Choghakhor Wetland is flowing over 1687 hectares; designated as a hunting restricted area. It supports more than 47 bird species, with breeding populations of migratory birds such as the Northern Pintail (Anas acuta).

The old bridge, built on the Karun River, plays host to migratory birds every year at the beginning of the cold season.

It supports more than 1 percent of the population of Gadwall (Anas strepera) and harbors threatened species such as the endangered White-headed Duck (Oxyura leucocephala) and the vulnerable Eastern Imperial Eagle (Aquila heliaca).

## RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

### Part 29

There are also pelicans, geese, terns, and birds of prey (seven different species). The bird Passer moabiticus is a scarce resident, breeding in the tamarisk scrub.

A more detailed list of bird with some counting results is attached.

Mammals include golden jackal (Canis aureus), red fox (Vulpes vulpes), striped hyaena (Hyaena hyaena) and wild boar (Sus scrofa).

### Social and cultural values

The reedbeds of the Hamoun-e-Puzak play a significant role in the economy of the local inhabitants who live in villages along the shoreline.

These Baluchi-people use reeds for a number of purposes: as forage for domestic animals, for constructing boats ("tutans"), for fabricating wind-breaks for houses and gardens, and as a source for fuel for cooking and heating.

### Factors affecting ecology

Some illegal hunting has been reported in 1980, and at the moment extensive reed-cutting and overgrazing because of increased livestock may cause permanent damage to the marsh vegetation.

Irrigation schemes among the Helmand River in Afghanistan threaten the marshlands in years of low rainfall, as they divert water away from the wetland.

Drought in this area has been exacerbated by dam construction on the Helmand River in Afghanistan.

The dam has been destroyed by floods in 1991, but may have been rebuilt.

### Conservation measures taken

The site is just outside the national Protected Area (329,000 ha) of Hamoun-e-Saberi and Hamoun-e-Hirmand.

It is not legally protected, although personnel of the Department of Environment endeavor to maintain some control in the region, and have a small office at Gorgori near the wetland.

The wetland has been placed on the Montreux Record.

### Conservation measures proposed

In the mid-170s, the Division of Research and Development in the Department of the Environment recommended that the Hamoun Protected Area be extended to the east to include Hamoun-e-Puzak, but this has never been implemented.

A Ramsar Monitoring Mission confirmed the desirability of extending the Hamoun Protected Area in January 1992.

The Mission also recommended that the boundaries of the Ramsar site should be clearly demarcated on the ground, and that an integrated management plan should be developed for all wetland and water resources in the Sistan Basin.

### Current scientific research

Waterfowl census work has been carried out and several special studies by the Technical Division of the Department of the Environment.

A major ecological study of the wetlands of the Sistan Basin was carried out during the mid-1980s.

More recently, the Department of the Environment has embarked upon a study of the wetlands, as a part of its nation-wide inventory of wetlands.

A Government Committee has been established to coordinate studies and centralise the collection of information.

Accommodation is available for visiting researchers.

### Hamoun-e-Saberi & Hamoun-e-Helmand

Hamoun-e-Saberi & Hamoun-e-Helmand is located in Sistan & Baluchestan, measuring 50,000 ha. It was added to the Montreux Record, 4 July 1990.

Bordering Afghanistan and forming a single wetland complex with Hamoun-e-Puzak, it is located in a closed drainage basin and consists of two shallow, predominantly freshwater lakes and associated wetlands.

The area is important for wintering waterbirds. Bird populations may have declined due to drought and river control structures (dams).

There is increasing pressure from urbanization and agricultural irrigation. Listed on the Montreux Record in 1990 because wetland water levels were critically affected by drought problems due to dam construction and water diversion schemes on the Helmand River in Afghanistan.

### Overview

Two large, semi-permanent, fresh to brackish lakes with extensive marshes at the inland delta of the Helmand (Hirmand) River, in an internal drainage basin on the border between Iran and Afghanistan.

The site is extremely important for passage and wintering waterfowl, and also, in years of highwater levels, for breeding waterfowl.

Parts of the two lakes are protected in the Hamoun Protected Area, which covers 37,000 ha of the Ramsar Site.

### Justification of the criteria

Hamoun-e-Saberi and Hamoun-e-Helmand are outstanding examples of semi-permanent and seasonal wetlands characteristic of the desert regions of southwest Asia.

Spanning the international border between Iran and Afghanistan, the wetlands play a substantial hydrological and ecological role in the natural functioning of a major river basin shared between two countries.

The wetlands are important for three species of globally threatened birds, supporting wintering populations of Pelecanus crispus and a breeding population of Aythya nyroca.

The wetlands support an extremely diverse wetland flora and fauna, and thus maintain the genetic and ecological diversity of the region.

The lakes regularly hold well in excess of 20,000 waterfowl during the migration seasons and in winter.

The wetland supports over 1% of the regional populations of the waterbirds Pelecanus onocrotalus, Egretta alba, at least nine species of Anatidae, Fulica atra and Himantopus himantopus.

When conditions are suitable for breeding, the wetland can support over 1% of the regional breeding population of Platalea leucorodia.

### General location

Hamoun-e-Saberi and Hamoun-e-Helmand are situated in the Province of Sistan-Baluchestan, in the Sistan Basin, northwest, west and southwest of Zabol.

Only half of Hamoun-e-Saberi lies in Iran, the other half is situated in Afghanistan.

There are several small settlements in the area.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued

## Some \$1.1m contraband discovered

TEHRAN – Smuggled goods worth 252 billion rials (nearly \$1.1 million) have been seized over the past 72 hours in the country, the head of Tehran Economic Security Police, has said.

A plan was implemented to patrol fuel tankers and stations, as well as control the passing vehicles, IRNA quoted Hedayat Abbasi as saying on Wednesday.

During 72 hours, 14 fuel vehicles were confiscated and 37 people were arrested, he stated.

Referring to the discovery of 255,900 liters of fuel as one of the achievements of this plan, he said that since the implementation, 1,802,425 items of contraband without a bill of lading and customs licenses were also discovered.

On July, 2 trillion rials (nearly \$4.5 million) were confiscated across the country through the third stage of the plan to combat the smuggling of goods and currency, Jalal Amini, head of the anti-trafficking police, said.

In order to help domestic production, the fight against smuggling is underway continuously through monitoring of goods (origin and destination) and implementing period-

ic and intermittent inspecting of roads are on the agenda by the anti-trafficking police throughout the country, he explained.

The smuggled goods include basic goods, home appliances, electronic and medical equipment, car, cosmetics, clothes, and currencies, IRIB reported.

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

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

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

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On December 19, 2018, a government spokesman said every day, 11.5 million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee, has quoted various sources



as putting the figure at 10, 15, and even 20 million liters a day.

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

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

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

## 16 provinces affected by weather hazards

TEHRAN – Weather hazards have haunted 16 provinces out of the total 31 provinces across the country, Mehdi Valipour, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Relief and Rescue Organization, has said.

Snow, blizzard, and flooding affected 26 cities and 45 regions of the country over the past five days, he announced.

The IRCS forces provided relief and rescue aid to over 6,000 people, Valipour noted.

During the past five days, 258 people were provided with emergency accommodation, 18 people

were transferred to safe areas and one was transferred to medical centers, he said.

Twenty percent of areas across Iran are highly prone to flooding, Khosro Shahbazi, former head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization, said in January 2020.

Hooshang Jazi, deputy head of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, said in December that 60 million people in Iran are residing in flood-prone cities and villages.

According to him, each flood brings the country a loss of 4.4



trillion rials (nearly \$12.2 million).

According to UN surveys this year, the main natural disasters listed for Iran are drought, floods, and earthquakes. Subsidence is also a phenomenon that has emerged as one of the consequences of drought along with the aforementioned three challenges.

The main causes of flood in the country include rainfall fluctuations, climate change, uncontrolled water withdrawal from the aquifers, and improper infrastructure.

According to UN surveys, the main natural disasters listed for Iran are drought, floods, and earthquakes.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Bikes to hold 3.5% share in Tehran transportation

Bikes will carry out 3.5 percent of the capital's total transportation, as the national document on bike transport development has proposed, deputy mayor for traffic and transport affairs at Tehran Municipality has stated.

A five-year plan to develop biking in the capital has been proposed aiming to promote biking, develop bike lanes and curb air pollution.

Currently, the document is under review by the traffic council to be approved, ISNA quoted Mohsen Pourseyed Aqaei as saying on Saturday.

As per the document, some 120 kilometers of the roads will be accessible for the bicycle riders each year, he added.

The reason behind the failure of bicycle schemes in past recent years was that the technology was overlooked in the schemes so that the cyclists had to return to the bike renting stations and give back the bikes, while today, using the new technologies, bicycle use has been facilitated for the citizen, he explained.

## انجام ۳.۵ درصد از سفرهای تهران با دوچرخه

معاون حمل و نقل ترافیک شهرداری تهران از تدوین سند دوچرخه پایتخت خبر داد، براساس این سند، می بایست ۳.۵ درصد از سفرهای تهران با دوچرخه انجام شود.

محسن پورسیدآقایی در گفت و گو با ایسنا، با بیان اینکه سند توسعه دوچرخه در دستور کار قرار دارد گفت: در حال حاضر این سند سند سه ساله در شورای ترافیک پایتخت در حال بررسی است که در صورت تصویب دوچرخه سواری ترویج و توسعه می یابد. وی با بیان اینکه سالانه ۱۲۰ کیلومتر به مسیر دوچرخه اضافه می شود، در پاسخ به سوالی در مورد سرنوشت دوچرخه های قبلی شهرداری گفت: دلیل شکست طرح های دوچرخه در گذشته این بود که به تکنولوژی های روز دنیا توجه نشده بود بگونه ای که راکبان باید به مبداء سفر برگشته و دوچرخه را تحویل می دادند اما امروز با اتکاء به تکنولوژیهای جدید، استفاده از دوچرخه برای شهروندان تسهیل شده است.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 30

New cases	60
New deaths	0
Total cases	7,561,058
Total deaths	144,682
New hospitalized patients	31
Patients in critical condition	87
Total recovered patients	7,336,105
Diagnostic tests conducted	54,758,474
Doses of vaccine injected	155,116,902



DECEMBER 31, 2022

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Each fruit of the tree you have planted will be appreciated by a reward from Allah.  
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:07 Evening: 17:21 Dawn: 5:44 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

## Architecture: Safavid to Qajar periods

### Part 4

Pools, ayvans, niches, domes, talars, and open spaces are manipulated with remarkable confidence (tomb of Mohammad Mahruq, Nishapur; Hasht Behesht; mosques adjoining the Isfahan maydan).

Increased scale fostered a new inventiveness in exploring spatial values. When existing buildings were enlarged, whether by courtyards (e.g., Ardebil shrine), galleries or other features, they were opened up or given stronger axiality; alternatively their several parts were made interdependent.

New vistas were created. Sudden contrasts of scale or of lighting created novel interactions of large and small, open and closed spaces (Aali Qapu and Chehel Sotun palaces, Isfahan).

The visitor to the Masjid-e Shah (completed 1638) enters a low, shadowy vestibule and his eyes have barely adjusted themselves to this dimness before he suddenly finds himself once more bathed in bright light in the mosque's resplendent inner courtyard. In the Shaykh Lotfollah mosque (completed 1618) these harsh contrasts of lighting are rejected but the contrast of scale between the vestibule and the mosque proper remains.

Tilework is perhaps the key to Safavid architecture. At its best, this tilework almost rivaled earlier achievements, and it was certainly used on a larger scale than hitherto and for new purposes (e.g., dome exteriors). Some combinations of brick and tile were also new (dome of Shaykh Lotfollah Mosque).

But in general its technique was inferior in that large square underglaze painted tiles of dulled colors replaced the laborious tile mosaic of earlier times, in which each color had been fired at optimum temperature.

This permitted huge areas to be covered with tilework quickly and cheaply. Buildings came to be clad in tiles from top to bottom, to the detriment of structural values. As a result Safavid buildings are sometimes dismissed as facade architecture.

Seen as a whole, Safavid architecture seems safe rather than daring; it prefers to simplify rather than to explore complexities. In this sense it is less original than earlier schools of Islamic architecture in Iran.

It lacks the internal development of Ottoman and Mughal architecture, being too firmly rooted in the past to encourage innovation.

Nevertheless a hybrid Perso Armenian style was fashioned at Julfa, the Armenian suburb of Isfahan, in the 17th century. Here forms derived from Persian mosques and mausolea are translated into an Armenian idiom.

Architecturally the most novel feature of the period was the confident marshaling of huge spaces. Thus the southern approach to Isfahan was via the bridge of Allahverdi Khan, some 300 meters long, and the mile long Chahar BAgH, an avenue lined with trees, streams, and buildings, while the center of the new city was marked by a great maydan or square, whose area of twenty acres far outstrips European plazas.

In the field of polychrome decoration, the continued emphasis on tilework brought a new status to the specialist in its various techniques. The names of craftsmen and calligraphers now proliferate. But the primacy accorded to ornament implied a waning interest in architecture per se.

It is often said that the Madrasa ye Madar-e Shah (completed 1714) was the last great

building to be erected in Persia. Certainly Safavid architects had wrung the best out of traditional forms; understandably their successors used these forms with somewhat less conviction and gradually introduced new elements of European origin.

Of Nader Shah's reign little survives apart from his mausoleum (at Kalat-e Naderi), a gigantic pastiche of a Seljuk polygonal tomb tower with engaged columns and carved stone orthostats of appropriately Mughal style. Contemporary mosques at Kerman, Rasht, and Qom survive and Nader added a gilded dome and minaret to the Mashhad shrine.

Zand architecture in later 18th century Shiraz was fundamentally eclectic. The city plan apes Safavid Isfahan, the arg has bastions with decorative brickwork of Seljuk type, tiles and bas reliefs revive Sassanid iconography, turrets on ayvans reflect Indian models and floral compositions on tilework display a distracting realism perhaps borrowed from Europe.

The next major patron of architecture, Fath Ali Shah Qajar, founded numerous spacious four ayvan mosques—at Qazvin, Borujerd, Zanjan, Tehran, and Semnan—impartially named Masjid-e Shah.

Their size naturally recalls Safavid work; indeed, the Qajars expanded Safavid buildings (e.g., Qom and Mahan) or imitated their decoration, sometimes quite shamelessly (e.g., golden ayvans or domes at Mashhad, Ray, and Qom).

Safavid precedents underlie the remodeled bazaars of Qazvin and Kerman, with their numerous caravanserais, or multiple foundations like the Ebrahim Khan complex at Kerman.

In the sphere of town planning, the Chahar Bagh-e Khaju in Isfahan depends on Safavid inspiration, as do numerous palaces at Isfahan and around Tehran.

The scale is often colossal: the Golestan palace in Tehran is a city within a city and the Niavaran palace, also in Tehran, had some fifty isolated pavilions, while only 18th century India can match the eight superposed terraces of massed tiny arcades in the Bagh-e Takht, Shiraz.

Immemorially ancient forms were preferred, notably the talar or columned portico (Divan Khaneh in the Golestan; Sarhangabad) and the open-plan domed kiosk (Doshan Tappeh).

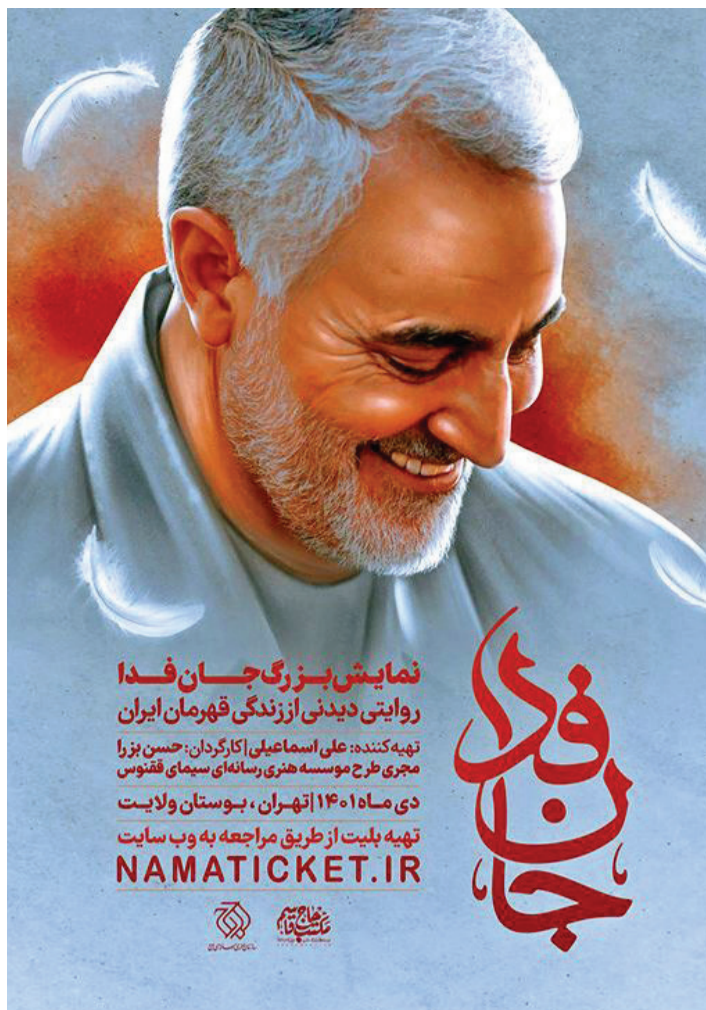
Garden settings remain standard for these palaces. Easily the finest surviving combination of gardens and architecture, where buildings are embowered in greenery and reflected in pools and canals, is the originally Safavid Bagh-e Fin near Kashan.

If palace architecture was traditional, other forms were new. They included the ingenious split level Masjid-e Agha Bozorg in Kashan, with its deep sunken courtyard and the exaggeratedly bulbous shape of certain Shirazi domes (Shah-e Cheragh and Sayyed Mir Mohammad shrines).

Religious architecture languished about 1850, producing little beyond the huge and derivative Sepahsalar mosque madrasa in Tehran, built towards the end of the 19th century.

Flamboyantly original, however, and quintessentially Qajar are the decorative gateways used as entrances to bazaars (Yazd), military installations (Semnan), and cities.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
To be continued.



A poster for the theatrical performance "Jan-Fada" underway a Tehran's Velayat Park.

From Page 1 ▶ said that January 2023. He said that several other plays on General Soleimani will be presented during the Fajr festival, which will be held in late The entries to the Divine

## "The Winner" awarded Golden Kite at Ahmedabad children's filmfest

TEHRAN – Iranian short drama "The Winner" has won the Golden Kite Award at the 4th Ahmedabad International Children's Film Festival.

Directed by Ali Keivan, the film tells the story of Vahid, whose new bicycle, which his father prepared for the race, is very similar to his friend Alireza's stolen bicycle.

The winners of the Indian festival were announced last Sunday as "Loupetoo" by Iranian director Abbas Asgari was picked as best animated film.

In the film, Mr. Kamali, the owner of a sanitarium treats the patients by teaching them to make toys. The toys are creative, so they are very attractive to children. But the toy studio is closed down because of sabotage, which causes a critical mental status in the patients. Mr. Kamali becomes terribly disappointed and sad in his vain attempts to solve the problem, but finally, an angel of hope appears.

"The Monument" by Andrej Kolencik from

Slovakia won the Silver Kite for best feature film.

During a school trip to the Stefanik Memorial Monument in Brezova pod Bradlom, three classmates Tablet, Anika and Danny find themselves transported into the memories of Milan Rastislav Stefanik. They discover a fascinating, infinite world where travel through time and space is a matter of course. Stefanik's memories come alive, and the children are in for the adventure of their lives. They visit the snow-clad Janssen Observatory on Mont Blanc, wander around Paris and Tahiti, and experience the perils and horrors of the First World War. Will they manage to get back home, or will they be forever lost in Oblivion?

The Bronze Kite Award went to "Bicycle Days" by Indian director Devyani Anant.

The film follows Aashish, an 11-year-old village boy and Shekhar, a 22-year-old graduate from the city who has to involuntarily spend a year of his life teaching in a small village.

## "Oil Crisis in Iran" appears in Persian

TEHRAN – "Oil Crisis in Iran: From Nationalism to Coup d'Etat" by the Iranian-American historian of the Middle East Ervand Abrahamian has been published in Persian by the Ney publishing house.

Originally published by Cambridge University Press in 2021, the book has been translated by Mohammad-Ebrahim Fattahi.

Focusing on the turbulent twenty-eight months between April 1951 and August 1953, this book, based on recently declassified CIA and U.S. State Department documents from the Mossadeq administration tells



Front cover of the Persian edition of Ervand Abrahamian's book "Oil Crisis in Iran".

the story of the Iranian oil crisis, which would culminate in the coup of August 1953.

Throwing fresh light on U.S. involvement in Iran, Ervand Abrahamian reveals exactly how immersed the U.S. was in internal Iranian politics long before the 1953 coup, in parliamentary politics and even in saving the monarchy in 1952.

By weighing rival explanations for the coup, from internal discontent to a fear of communism and oil nationalization, Abrahamian shows how the Truman and Eisenhower administrations did not differ

significantly in their policies towards Mossadeq, and how the surprising main obstacle to an earlier coup was the shah himself.

In tracing the key involvement of the U.S. and CIA in Iran, this study shows how the 1953 coup would eventually pave the way to the 1979 Iranian revolution, two of the most significant and widely studied episodes of modern Iranian history.

A Persian translation of Abrahamian's book "Iran Between Two Revolutions" by Fattahi was published by Ney in February.

# Cultural events paying tribute to General Qassem Soleimani

Commander Theater Festival, which will run until January 10, will be performed in the provincial capitals across the country.

The Iran Book and Literature House also plans to hold a review session for the book "The Hajji Qassem Whom I Know: Narratives about a 40-Year Friendship" by General Soleimani's comrade Hojjatoleslam Ali Shirazi.

Writers Saied Allamian and Javad Kalateh-Arabi will attend the session, which will take place this evening at the house.

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

The Rudaki Foundation will also pay tribute to General Soleimani by organizing the Soldier Narrative Anthem Festival on January 1.

Seven groups have been selected to perform during the one-day festival. A jury comprising Hassan Riahi, Hadi Arazm and Mohammad Mirzamini will pick a top group during the event's closing ceremony.

The Owj Arts and Media Organization is organizing a theatrical performance entitled "Jan-Fada" (The Dedicated) at Tehran's Velayat Park in memory of General Soleimani.

The performance, which focuses on the life story of General Soleimani, will run until January 15.

The Maktab-e Hajji Qassem Publications is holding a reading competition for the poetry book "Sarbaznameh" ("Book of Soldiers").

The book carries a long poem composed by Afshin Ala in memory of General Soleimani in 2021.



"The Winner" by Iranian director Ali Keivan.

He becomes Aashish's teacher. Aashish wants a bicycle of his own desperately but fails to fulfill his aspiration. On the other hand, Shekhar, struggling with his situation, sees the boy in difficulty and decides to help him out, mentor him and show him the right path. In this exercise, he manages to find out his own identity and the reason why his father sent him to a village before sending him abroad for higher studies.

## Standing Lovers Die



### An interview with the author of a book on the life of a Pakistani martyr who defended the holy shrine

The book "Standing Lovers Die" by Zohre Shariati, is about Seyyed Muhammad Khushbo, also known as Adil, one of the soldiers of the Zainebiyoun Brigade from Pakistan fighting in Syria composed.

### \* How did you start your writing career and why did you choose the holy defense field?

In school, I wrote good essays and read a variety of books, according to my teachers. The first article I ever wrote was published in the Kayhan newspaper

in 1996. Then, when I was in high school, I attended a writing course with very good teachers, and to receive the course certificate, I wrote my first story in the field of war and the holy defense.

However, I started writing stories seriously in 1997, and during these 22 years, I have written mainly about the holy defense.

### \* What made you write about this subject?

To be honest, I was not the one who chose this subject, the subject was suggested to me by a friend. Then, I started reading about him and the interviews with his family. After reading and analyzing his life through his family's narratives, writing about non-Iranian martyrs became one of my priorities. Also, Adil's young age and personality really caught my attention.

### \* What's special about this book that distinguished it from your other books or other writers' books about martyrs?

"Standing Lovers Die" is a combination of fiction and documentary. This means that the fictional portion is completely separate from the documentary portion, and the documentary hasn't incorporated any fiction.

Writing about martyrs in fiction and using

imagination should be avoided until there are sufficient and necessary documents about them, according to my personal experience.

### \* What documents were given to you to write this book?

The documents for this book were interviews, manuscripts, and photos that were given to me by Zainebiyoun and his family, who live in Iran. I don't know exactly how many hours were spent on the interviews, but it took three years to conduct them.

### \* To your mind, what message does the book have to convey to its readership?

Honestly, this question should be asked to the audience. As I wrote both fiction and documentary sections, I emphasized the intimate and warm relationship between the mother and her son, because it is one of the most extraordinary romantic relationships ever.

### \* What part of Adil's life did you find most interesting?

The whole story of Adil's life was new and interesting for me in some ways. One of his most appealing qualities was his desire to improve his character, spirit, and even physical health in order to be a better person and assist others.