I testify that Resurrection is truth, the Qur'an is truth, heaven and hell is truth. The Day of Reckoning, Day of Judgment, Justice, Imamate (leadership) and Prophethood are truth.

God! Thank you for all your Blessings and favor.

God! Thank you for transferring my soul and my existence from a century to another century and bringing me to life at such a critical and important time to be able to serve and understand one of the most prominent humans, Ruhollah Khomeini.

God! I have been grateful to you that after serving Khomeini, you showed me the right path and helped me to identify the right person who is oppressed and submissive, the person who is leading the Islamic nations, Ali Khamenei.

God! My head, mind, lips, ears, heart and every piece of me have faith in your forgiveness. Make me pure and have me at your heaven beside yourself whenever I deserve it.

God! My Lord! I’ve been separated from my comrades for years, those who sacrificed their lives for protecting their country and their belief. I
am losing more and more of them every day. You know that I cannot forget them and I will not forget them. They are alive in my heart and I cry every time that I recall the time I spent with them.

My God! My Lord! I adore you greatly! I have felt you and I have witnessed you! I can’t be apart anymore. Please take me back to yourself when I deserve it.

My brothers and sisters! The Islamic nation is in continuous need of leadership, someone who is well-informed on Islamic laws. We all know that the great Imam Khomeini revived the Islamic nations and shook the world. Therefore, apart from any diversity of being Sunni or Shia, we need to follow the same leader. This is Mohammad's religion.

Enemies are targeting the Islamic Republic of Iran, protect your religion and our country by keeping us united. I swear to God, I swear to God, I swear to God that should this belief and ideology be changed or tempered with, Madinah, Mecca, Mashhad, Samarra, Karbala, Najaf, and Kazmain will be destroyed and the Qur'an will be distorted.

My Iranian brothers and sisters, you are honorable people that I am willing to sacrifice my life for, thousands of times for all of you. You on the other hand have sacrificed your dearest lives for this country and for Islam. Keep protecting your beliefs and follow our wise leader, for he is knowledgeable in religion. Keep him in your heart and do not let anyone insult him.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is at its highest place ever. Always remember how our enemy treated our Prophet and his children! Make sure to stay united at all times.

One of the most important things that Imam Khomeini did was to bring help to Iran in a form of Islam, and the Islamic nation was born, therefore preserve Islam. It is for this reason that there has been many sacrifices throughout the history of Iran and Islam. That is why material powers cannot defeat us. My dearest, stay united on basics and do not disagree with the catechism.
Photos: Iranians hold great rallies celebrating the 22nd of Bahman throughout the country

Imam Khamenei: “This year, the 11th of February anniversary coincides with the forty-day anniversary of the martyrdom of our dear martyr Soleimani. It is the forty-day anniversary of Shahid Soleimani and the people are especially motivated. By Allah’s favor, the enemies will see, with their own eyes, the great participation of the people in different squares and streets. I cannot say much more about it. By Allah’s grace, our people will deliver a harsh blow to the enemy’s policies with their presence.”
Introduction:

Iran: A concise History

“Certain regions of the world are distinguishable as being associated with a particular human culture pattern, which is at once distinctive in character and also sufficiently strong to have survived as a readily identifiable entity over many centuries... Of these regions, Iran is certainly one”.

Cambridge History of Iran

Known as Persia until 1935, Iran is a country with a history of over 10000 years and home to one of the oldest known civilizations. Persia, or Iran, as the country is more appropriately called, presents a lexicon of human history matched only by a handful of other countries in the world. The name Persia is derived from the Persis, a province in southern Iran from which a southern Iranian tribe, known as the “Persians” created a world empire in the sixth century B.C. The name Iran, pronounced “Eran”, however, comes from the term “Aryan” meaning “the land of nobles”, a name first used about the first millennium B.C.

‘Iran’ as a territory has multiple meanings. Broadly and devoid of any sort of political or territorial claims, one can see it as three regions. First, there is modern Iran, within its international borders. Then there is ‘Greater Iran or / ‘Iran exterior comprising the additional areas that once formed part of the Iranian world at various times in history. Lastly, there are the areas, sometimes very remote from the center, including parts of Europe and India that exhibit Iranian influence.

In the seventh century A.D. the new faith, Islam, which was based on Monotheism, offered the Iranian population an excellent opportunity whence for several centuries Iranian arts and acumen crystallized and became paramount in the Islamic world. The following centuries witnessed the development of distinctive traditions in pottery and ceramics, tile work, stucco, brickwork, metalwork, glassware, carpets, textiles, jewelry, music and poetry.

In antiquity, and again during the Islamic period, Iran’s position between the West and China helped to transform this land into “a crossroad of civilizations” and one of the great sources of art and thought. Iran’s originality is such that it continuously invented new forms while maintaining its distinct character, as its influence extended over immense regions.
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Policy
Ayatollah Khamenei’s stance on ‘Deal of Century’; a reminder
January 29, 2020

TEHRAN – The Twitter account of the Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatollah Khamenei republished his views in Farsi towards the so-called Deal of the Century.

The tweets are the summarized remarks of the Leader in a meeting with Hajj officials on July 16, 2018, which follows as retrieved from the Leader’s official website:

“On the other hand, there is the issue of Palestine and the satanic and malicious policy that the US has adopted regarding Palestine. They have referred to it as ‘the deal of the century’. Of course, they should know that by Allah’s favor, this ‘deal of the century,’ which they [USA and allies] have come up with, will never materialize. Despite the foolish desires of American officials who are killing themselves to do something on the issue of Palestine, the issue of Palestine will not be consigned to oblivion, and the Holy City of Bait-ul Muqaddas will continue to be the capital of Palestine: it will remain the first qiblah for Muslims.”

“The delusions that they have – they think that they can usurp Bayt-ul Muqaddas, and they say that the top, the bottom, and the depth of the city, all its areas ranging from the east to the west, should be in the hands of the Jews – are a load of nonsense. Their desires will not happen, and the Palestinian nation will stand up against the enemies' goals, and all Muslim nations will stand behind the Palestinian nation. By Allah’s favor, they will not let the enemies' desires materialize.”
Trump unveiled the alleged peace plan on Tuesday repeating his highly controversial endorsement of occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel’s “undivided capital”. The Palestinians have already dismissed the plan, staging protests in different cities.

Ayatollah Khamenei: Spirit of resistance must be path of future generations

January 15, 2020

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said that the “spirit of resistance and jihad” should be the path of future generations.

He made the remarks during a meeting on Monday with members of the congress of the martyrs of Bushehr Province.

“A country like Iran, which possesses energy, mines, various capacities, climate variations, sensitive geographical status and a population of 80 million, should be able to manage itself through efforts and jihad in order to protect its dignity,” the Leader stated.

He also noted that memory of martyrs must be kept alive.
The region's turbulent situation is due to the corruptive presence of the U.S. and its cohorts: Imam Khamenei

Jan 12, 2020

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khamenei, received Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and his entourage this afternoon, January 12, 2020.

In this meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that the turbulent situation in the region demands closer cooperation between the nations of West Asian region and asserted: The current situation of the region requires increased reinforcement of relations among the countries of the region and not being influenced by the foreigners’ inductions.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution reiterated Iran’s willingness to expand relations with other nations in West Asia, adding that: The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly announced, and the President has explicitly mentioned that Iran is willing to establish closer cooperation with the countries of the region.
Ayatollah Khamenei regarded the current situation of West Asia as unfavorable and went on to say: The region's unfavourable situation is due to the corruptive presence of the United States and its cohorts; and the only solution for countering that is to rely on cooperation among the countries of the region.

Referring to the friendly political relations between Iran and Qatar, His Eminence stated: The economic relation of the two countries is not as strong as the political relations; therefore the cooperation between Iran and Qatar should increasingly expand in common grounds.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized that: Of course, some countries—especially those who have come to our region from the other side of the planet—do not favour the expansion of cooperation among the countries in the region. However, they have nothing to do with this matter. The countries and nations of the region will no longer tolerate such intervention and domination.

In this meeting, with President Hassan Rouhani also in attendance, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, expressed that he was very pleased to meet with the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, confirming that the West Asia is in a very difficult situation, and further added: We completely agree with your remarks concerning the need for increasing cooperation within the region, and we believe talks should be organized among the countries of the region on a larger scale.

Referring to his negotiations in Tehran, the Emir of Qatar added: Based on our talks, a common commission of the two countries is going to be held in Iran within three months, and hopefully, our economic ties will also expand to the same level as our political relations.

Sheikh Hamad Al Thani further thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran’s assistance, support and stance in the face of sanctions imposed on Qatar.
Zarif denounces Trump’s threats against cultural sites as terrorism

January 27, 2020

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump’s threat to target cultural sites in Iran is “clear example of cultural terrorism”.

“The United States president’s threat to destroy Iran’s cultural and historical sites is a clear example of international cultural terrorism and is in continuation of the United States regime’s violation of law to break the Iranian people’s resistance,” he said during a speech at a cultural gathering at the National Library in Tehran.

In a tweet on January 4, Trump threatened to target 52 Iranian sites, including cultural and civilian ones.

Zarif said that respecting the cultural sites is respecting the “human dignity” and attacking historical and cultural sites is attacking humanity and history.

He noted that according to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, causing harm to a country’s cultural properties is like harming the whole humanity’s culture and is an unforgivable crime.
“This convention has banned targeting cultural sites and properties even in armed conflicts”, he added.

Elsewhere, Zarif said that Trump’s threat shows his hatred for not only the rich Iranian culture, but for “culture, civilization, and anything that expresses peace and stability”.

In a threat delivered over Twitter on Jan. 4, Trump said that he is prepared to “HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD” culturally important targets in Iran should the country retaliate for the American assassination of General Qassem Soleimani.

In a statement read by Iran’s envoy Majid Takht-Ravanchi to the United Nations Security Council on January 9, Zarif said that the U.S. is seeking to emulate the war crimes of Daesh by threatening to destroy the cultural heritage of Iran.

“It now even seeks to emulate the war crimes of DAESH, menacing the cultural heritage of the millennia-old civilization of Iran,” he said.

A U.S. Senator, Chris Murphy, said in a tweet on January 4 that targeting civilians and cultural sites is what terrorists do.

“Targeting civilians and cultural sites is what terrorists do. It’s a war crime,” he tweeted.

“As a historian who has written about the medieval Islamic roots of the Islamic State group (Daesh), I can tell you that by threatening Iran’s cultural heritage, Trump puts himself in the company of some repugnant characters,” David J. Wasserstein, a professor of history and Jewish studies at Vanderbilt University, wrote on January 7.

According to theconversation.com, Wasserstein said, “Nazi leader Adolf Hitler wanted to demolish the landmarks of Paris as World War II neared an end – a fate that was only avoided because his soldiers refused to carry out the orders.”

The professor also said, “More recently, the Taliban blew up Afghanistan’s famed Bamiyan Buddhas and the Islamic State group destroyed the ancient cities of Hatra and Palmyra, along with much of Mosul, including the 900-year-old Nuri mosque.”

‘Passive unilateralism encourages active unilateralism’

Zarif also said that “passive unilateralism encourages active unilateralism”, expressing regret over countries’ passive position on the U.S. unilateralism.
“The countries which have submitted to Trump’s unilateralism and violation of law in order to be safe from his aggression have provided the grounds for aggression against themselves,” he said.

**Trump ‘flat-out lied’ about Soleimani assassination: Biden**

January 15, 2020 - 19:49

TEHRAN — U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has said that Donald Trump “flat-out lied” when offering justification for the assassination of Iran’s top general, Qassem Soleimani.

“Quite frankly, I think he’s flat-out lied about saying, the reason he made the strike [on Soleimani] was because our embassies were about to be bombed,” Biden said while speaking at a Democratic debate in Des Moines, Iowa on Tuesday night.

Trump ordered the drone strikes that targeted Lieutenant General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC’s Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) as well as eight other companions on January 3.
Trump told Fox News Friday that “four embassies” would have been targeted had the U.S. not carried out the operation, but failed to provide any details to substantiate his claims.

American officials have made confusing remarks about what prompted Trump to order the assassination.

After the president claimed that the strikes were conducted to prevent an “imminent” attack, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the operation was part of a “bigger strategy of deterrence.”

Pentagon Chief Mark Esper, on the other hand, said there was “no intelligence forewarning of imminent attacks on embassies,” contradicting Trump.

On Monday, Trump in a tweet alleged any imminent threat Soleimani posed “doesn’t really matter because of his horrible past!”

Biden also criticized the president for pulling the U.S. out of a nuclear deal with Iran, a move which he said alienated Washington’s allies.

“We have lost our standing in the region, we have lost the support of our allies. The next president has to be able to pull those folks back together, reestablish our alliances and insist Iran go back into the agreement.”

During the debate, Biden and Senator Amy Klobuchar said they would leave U.S. troops in the Middle East, while other candidates suggested they would withdraw American forces from the region.

“We should stop asking our military to solve problems that cannot be solved militarily,” Sen. Elizabeth Warren said. “Our keeping combat troops there is not helping.”

The U.S. has nearly 5,000 U.S. troops in Iraq and about 800 in Syria in addition to 14,000 in Afghanistan. Also, around 14,000 more troops have been deployed throughout the Middle East since the summer.

Sen. Bernie Sanders insisted that Americans do not want “endless wars” anymore, noting the conflicts “have cost us trillions of dollars.”

“In America today, our infrastructure is crumbling, half of our people are living paycheck-to-paycheck, 87 million people have no health care or are underinsured, we have 500,000 people sleeping out on the streets tonight,” he said.

Meanwhile, former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg, suggested that the U.S. should remain engaged in the region “without having an endless commitment of ground troops.”
“The very president who said he was going to end endless war, who pretended to have been against the war in Iraq all along — though we know that’s not true — now has more troops going to the Middle East,” Buttigieg said of Trump.

Warren also said instead of U.S. military presence, Washington should rely on allies and economic tools there.

She also talked about U.S. troops present in Afghanistan, saying, “No one has a solution and an end point.”

“We need to get our combat troops out. They are not helping create more safety for the United States,” Warren added.

UN calls on all parties to keep nuclear deal in place
January 15, 2020

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric has called on all parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, to spare no effort to keep it in place.

“We’re, obviously, aware of what happened this morning, of the joint announcement made by the three and the confirmation made by the EU diplomatic
chief. We continue to call on parties to work together to do whatever they can to preserve the JCPOA,” TASS quoted Dujarric as saying on Tuesday.

France, Germany and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement on Tuesday announcing they have formally triggered the dispute mechanism in the nuclear deal.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday that Russia sees no grounds to trigger the dispute mechanism, Reuters reported.

The activation of this mechanism may make it impossible to return to implementation of the agreement, the ministry said.

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the nuclear deal in May 2018. So far Britain, France, Germany have failed to protect Iran’s interests in the deal.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran announced that its “strategic patience” is over and began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

Iran’s moves are based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which “allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.”

In the first stage, Iran announced that it will not limit its stockpile of the nuclear fuel to 300 kilograms allowed under the deal. On that date (May 8), Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially Europeans, devise a mechanism to protect Iran from the sanctions’ effect in the two-month deadline it will reverse its decision.

But since European parties missed the deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, thereby starting the second step.

Again, as Europe missed the second 60-day deadline, Iran moved to take the third step, removing a ban on nuclear research and development (R&D).

In the fourth step, which started on November 6, Iran began injecting uranium gas into 1,044 centrifuges at the Fordow nuclear site. It was done at the presence of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In its fifth and final step on January 5, Iran suspended all limits under the JCPOA.
Arts & Culture
Iran, Cradle of Civilization

The Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys a rich and lavish history and boasts one of the world’s oldest civilizations. Iran is located in southwest Asia, in the Middle East and is the 18th largest country by area in the world, spanning from as far north as Armenia or Turkmenistan to as far south as the Persian Gulf. The country’s size and position have historically made it a strategic bridge for east-west and north-south trade routes which indicates its potential to be a regional hub for commerce and an attractive tourist destination.

Iran is one of the rare countries in the world which enjoys four distinctive seasons. In the north, the evergreen forests draw a parallel line to the beautiful serene waters of the Caspian Sea which makes the country’s climate most pleasant. In the south, Iran borders the Persian Gulf with gorgeous and appealing palm trees and a hot and humid climate. To the east of Iran, one can find hot desserts with running sand and starry nights. On west, this vast land is endowed with mountains high in the sky catching the eye of every visitor.

Iran has an abundance of various tourist attractions, from the ski slopes within a short car ride of Tehran to the 2,500-year-old ruins of the Achaemenid Empire at Persepolis and the harmonious gardens of the Bagh-e-Eram Palace in Shiraz, just to name a few. Iran is home to 19 UNESCO World Heritage sites -more than Greece- plus a rugged coastline on the Caspian Sea that makes it one of the best countries for hiking, 20 mountain resorts for winter sports, beaches on the Persian Gulf, and the holy shrine (Imam Reza) in Mashhad.

Iran’s economy in 2017, with GDP of nearly $439.5 billion, was the second largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It also has the second largest population of the region with an estimated 80.277 million people in 2016. Persian is the official language and Islam is the official religion of the country.
The country has a wealth of natural resources, including the first and fourth natural gas reserves and oil reserves, respectively, with the least economic dependence on oil incomes among oil-rich countries in the MENA. Iran is well-positioned to exercise a significant influence in basic materials sectors; especially cement, stone, and steel. The country is already the top cement exporter in the world and the largest cement producer in the Middle East. Iran is a net exporter of electricity to its neighbors and has an ample mineral wealth, including large cooper, lead, and zinc reserves. Iran’s pistachios, saffron and of course caviar have brought great fame for its agriculture. It also produces a wide range of crops and is among the top five producers of eggplant, onions, and a range of fruits including quince, figs, and watermelons.

A glance at a lavishly decorated house in central Iran

January 22, 2020

TEHRAN – Photos depict scenes of the extravagantly decorated Mollabashi (Motamedi) house in Isfahan, central Iran, on January 20, 2020.

The centuries-old house has been recently brought back to its former glory after months of restoration work. It is a superb example of traditional Iranian architecture in terms of lavish interior design as it features richly colored tiles, stucco decoration, mirrored walls, extravagantly embellished ceilings and stained glass windows throughout.
Visitors to the house recommend others to tour it in the middle of the day if interested to witness the dancing colors of the light.

Mollabashi house, which has been inscribed on the National Cultural Heritage list, according to its owner, has passed three historical periods of Safavids, Zand and Qajar dynasties.
The house is divided into two parts: the living spaces and service spaces. In living spaces, you may be faced with warm and intimate, high energy and high lighting, and in the service spaces, there are rooms for rest and business, in which space is more closed, more serious and less decorated.

The gorgeous interior design of entrance with mogharnas tiles, a polygonal room with a water pond in the middle for use in the summer, a rectangular big room with a mirrored and fresco walls designed to host, celebrate & reception of special guests are only a few of the unique attractions of this beautiful historic house.
When you step in the exterior courtyard, which is, in fact, a cozy little garden with well-manicured trees, there is also a staircase leading you to the upper floor where the porch is located. A beautiful room is located at the end of the courtyard, with windows facing the street, which is beautifully decorated, it gives you the first picture from Mollabashi’s house. In this room, all the objects and tools will smell the past, and if you look at it in the evening, sunlight shines through the glass on the entire room.
Marble Palace set to open as art museum after four decades
January 27, 2020

TEHRAN – The Marble Palace, a historical royal residence in Tehran, is set to open to the public as an art museum after 41 years.

Originally called “Kakh-e Marmar”, the palace is scheduled to open to the public by the next month, ISNA reported on Sunday.

The palace served as a museum for a year before the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Now, after four decades, it will be a venue for showcasing Persian arts and cultural heritage handcrafted since the first millennium BC onwards, the report added.

Construction of the palace started in 1934 by French engineer Joseph Leon and Iranian architect Fat’hollah Ferdows on the orders of Reza Shah for the purpose of official functions and receptions.

The palace and its premises is currently under ownership of the Mostazafan Foundation of the Islamic Revolution.

Iran embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.
Kish Island to host photo exhibit on Martyr Soleimani
January 19, 2020

TEHRAN – Iran’s Young Photographers Club plans to hold a photo exhibition in memory of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani on Kish Island during February.

Entitled “Farewell to Commander”, the exhibit aims to highlight national solidarity and put a spotlight on the lofty status of the commander, director of the exhibit Reza Ardalan said in a press conference held in Tehran on Saturday.

Quds Force chief Soleimani was martyred in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Only professional photographers are allowed to participate in the exhibition and no photos taken with cellphones are accepted.

The exhibit will be organized in three categories. One of the categories is dedicated to photos representing the bravery of Martyr Soleimani.

Another section focuses on photos depicting people’s presence at Soleimani’s funeral. The other category is dedicated to photographs representing photographers’ efforts to cover the funeral.

The exhibit will open on February 12 and will be running for two weeks.
The submissions will be judged by veteran photojournalists Heidar Rezai, Babak Borzuyeh and Hamid Forutan.

The exhibit will next move to Tehran and several other cities. There are also plans to hold the exhibit in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan and India.

Photo: People attend the funeral procession of Martyr Qassem Soleimani in Tehran on January 6, 2020. (Mehr/Hamid Vakili)

**Big Sky festival picks three Iranian docs**
January 20, 2020

TEHRAN – Three Iranian documentaries “Asak”, “Asho” and “Sunless Shadows” will be competing in the 17th Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, which will be held in the U.S. city of Missoula, Montana from February 14 to 23, the organizers have announced.

Directed by Mehdi Zamanpur, “Asak”, which means a small hand-mill in the local language of southern Iran, is about the life of a blind 80-year-old man who lives in that area.

He earns money by making handicrafts and utensils from stone. He chooses stones he needs from the mountains by touching and tasting them.

“Asho” by director Jafar Najafi is about a shepherd boy who is obsessed with Hollywood movies and wants to become an actor.
In “Sunless Shadows”, director Mehrdad Oskui builds a remarkable relationship with a group of adolescent girls that serve their sentence for the grave crime of murdering their father, their husband or another male family member in an Iranian juvenile detention center.

Photo: A scene from “Asho” by director Jafar Najafi.

Iran's Farhad Hassanzadeh shortlisted for Hans Christian Andersen Award
January 21, 2020

TEHRAN – Iranian writer Farhad Hassanzadeh has received a nomination for the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

He will be competing for world’s most prestigious award for the creators of children’s and youth literature with Maria Cristina Ramos from Argentina, Bart Moeyaert from Belgium, Marie-Aude Murail from France, Peter Svetina from Slovenia and Jacqueline Woodson from the U.S., the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) announced on Monday.

Illustrators Isabelle Arsenault from Canada, Seizo Tashima from Japan, Sylvia Weve from the Netherlands, Iwona Chmielewska from Poland, Elena Odriozola from Spain and Albertine from Switzerland were also shortlisted for the award.

Iranian illustrator Farshid Shafiei was nominated for the award by the Children’s Book Council of Iran, but he did not make the shortlist.
Hassanzadeh has authored over 80 books, including “The Backyard”, “The 7th Bench by the Lake”, “Bambak’s Scorpions”, “Watermelon with Love” and “Call Me Ziba”.

He has been nominated and awarded in several Iranian and international events and his books have been rendered into different languages.

IBBY presents the Andersen award to a living author and illustrator whose complete works have made a lasting contribution to children’s literature.

The IBBY will announce one winner for each category during a press conference at the Bologna International Children’s Book Fair on March 30.

The medals and diplomas will be presented to the winners during the 37th IBBY Congress in Moscow, Russia on September 6.

Photo: Iranian children’s writer Farhad Hassanzadeh in an undated photo.

“Better than Neil Armstrong” director best at Pune film festival

January 21, 2020

TEHRAN – Iranian filmmaker Alireza Qasemi has won the Best Live Action Short Film Director’s Award at the 18th Pune International Film Festival for his sci-fi “Better than Neil Armstrong”.
He received the award “For a very touching story that unravels with assured command over the medium in many respects,” the jury said in their statement during the closing ceremony of the festival in Pune, India on January 16.

The film is about four kids who start their journey to the Moon with the mission of finding a mysterious place called “Redland”, but the gates of the place are being guarded by a mischievous snake.

Over 20 other movies were screened in the Live Action Students Short Film competition. The Best Live Action Short Film award was presented to “A Piece of Hope” directed by Syahreza Fahlevi from Indonesia.

Iranian actress Vishka Asayesh was a member of the jury of the festival, which also featured several other movies from Iran, including “Kömür” by Esmaeil Monsef, “Diapason” by Hamed Tehrani and “Just 6.5” by Saeid Rustai.

Tunisian director Mehdi M. Barsaoui’s drama “A Son” produced by Marc Irmer and Habib Attia was selected as best film in the World Cinema Competition.

Bartosz Kruhlik from Poland was named best director in the category for “Supernova”.

The special jury award went to the screenwriter Michael Idov for “The Humorist”, a co-production of Russia, Latvia, and Czech.

Photo: “Better than Neil Armstrong” by director Alireza Qasemi.
Berlinale to screen “Yalda”, “Selfie with Democracy”

January 22, 2020

TEHRAN – The Iranian films “Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness” and “Selfie with Democracy” will be screened during the 70th Berlin International Film Festival.

“Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness” by Masud Bakhshi will compete in the Generation 14plus Section of the festival, Iran’s Farabi Cinema Foundation announced on Wednesday.

The film is about a young woman, Maryam, who has been sentenced to death for murdering her husband, Nasser. Iranian law allows for the victim’s family to forgive her and spare her life, so Maryam’s fate will be decided by Nasser’s daughter, Mona, on the country’s most popular televised reality show.

In front of millions of viewers during Yalda, the winter solstice celebration, Maryam and Mona discover that forgiveness can be difficult as they relive the past.

Directed by Ali Atshani, “Selfie with Democracy” will be showcased during the European Film Market (EFM), which will be held on the sidelines of the festival, American Brightlight Film Productions, the international distributor of the film, has announced.

Starring Pulad Kimiai and Pejman Bazeghi, the film’s story is about the 1980s Iran-Iraq war. It is a sequel to Atshani’s 2010 movie “Democracy in the Daylight”.

The 70th Berlin International Film Festival will be held from February 20 to March 1.

Photo: A scene from “Selfie with Democracy” by Iranian director Ali Atshani.
Art Bureau to make doc on Martyr Soleimani’s affection for children

January 26, 2020

TEHRAN – The Art Bureau for Children and Young Adults plans to portray Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani’s affection for children in a documentary film.

“Martyr Soleimani and his kind behavior toward children will be the main topic of the documentary,” Art Bureau Deputy Director for Cultural Affairs Hamid Hosseinzadeh said in a press release on Sunday.

“His affection towards children especially the children of those Iranian soldiers who were martyred by ISIS terrorists in Syria was very special and was one of the lasting aspects of his character,” he added.
“Any image that narrates specific aspects and bravery of the martyr needs to be recorded and preserved for future generations to show how this national and international hero achieved such a high position and won the hearts,” he added.

He gave no information about the director and crew members of the documentary, which will be filmed on locations in Tehran and Kerman, Soleimani’s hometown.

The documentary is scheduled to be screened during the Week of Islamic Revolution Arts in April.

Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Photo: Commander Qassem Soleimani greets several children of Iranian soldiers martyred by the ISIS terrorists in Syria in an undated photo.
Society
Masibambisane Day Care Centre

The Cultural Consulate of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted 100 children from Masibambisane Day Care Centre from Eldorado Park at the Iranian house in Johannesburg. The children were served lunch, entertained with games, face painting, jumping castles, and showered with gifts. Among the main activities was the coloring competition, coloring the South African and Iranian flags with the correct colors.

The coloring competition helped the children to know the colors of the South African and the Iranian flags. There was also an exhibition of Iranian art which was meant to expose the children, their teachers and other guests to Iranian art and culture. Everyone in attendance experienced Iranian hospitality and the beautiful arts and culture.
Nine Iranian projects nominated for WSIS Prize 2020

January 20, 2020

TEHRAN – Nine Iranian projects have been nominated for the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Prize 2020, IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.
If Iranian users vote for the nominees, they can move on to the next stage of evaluations in a group consisting of the top five projects.

The list of nominated projects will be publicly announced and WSIS multi-stakeholder community will be invited to participate and cast their vote for one project in each of 18 categories.

Of the 806 projects that were submitted, 353 were approved in 18 groups, and the top nine Iranian projects were nominated for WSIS Prize 2020.

Asa mobile services application was nominated in the E-Business category, as well as the Open Sesame project (a cloud banking system for startups).

The product of Abr Aravan company in the category of building confidence and security in the use of ICTs and the Kind Comrade project in the category of E-learning has been nominated in the competition.

DADVAR system in the enabling environment category, SAAM system in the E-government category and the YAAVAR in the category of access to information and knowledge. All three are the state-run projects by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Also, the application of Augmented Reality (AR) educational apps in the E-learning category, Robotic Remote Surgery in E-Health and Ganj system in E-science are also part of the projects of the country's academic and research sector.

WSIS is a United Nations-sponsored summit on information, communication and the information society, which has been taking place since 2003.

The WSIS Prize contest was developed to evaluate projects and activities that leverage the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to advance sustainable development. Since its inception, the contest of the WSIS Prize has attracted more than 300,000 stakeholders.
TEHRAN – Iranian ambassador to Athens Ahmad Naderi and Greek Tourism Minister Haris Theoharis discussed ways to broaden collaboration in tourism sector, IRNA reported.

In a meeting held in the Greece capital on Thursday, Theoharis welcomed the Iranian envoy’s proposal for boosting tourism relations between the two countries, citing the two nations have many cultural commonalities.

“Athens welcomes the development of tourism cooperation with Iran whose rich civilization and culture go thousands of years in time.”

Greece is ready to deepen tourism cooperation with Iran within the framework of existing capacities, the minister noted.

He added the tourism is regarded as an interdisciplinary industry so that its promotion requires extensive cooperation between political, cultural and economic sectors.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Theoharis voiced hope that he would travel to Iran in the near future to pay a visit to the country’s cultural and historical monuments as well as handicrafts, the report said.
The Greek minister explained that his country’s officials are aware of the magnificence of Iran and its pivotal role in the world, adding both Iran and Greece are cradles of civilization.

The Iranian envoy for his part said the two nations should make the best use of such commonalities to expand mutual relations in various arenas, including tourism.

Naderi also emphasized the need to boost historical, traditional and friendly relations between the two nations.

Iran welcomed some 7.8 million foreign nationals last year, achieving 52.5 percent increase year on year. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, Iraq was the main source of tourism for Iran in 2018, constituting 24% of all inbound visitors. Azerbaijan with (17%), Turkey (8%), Pakistan (4%) and Bahrain (2%) constituted other major sources while the remaining 46% came from the rest of the world.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots, including 22 ones that have been placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

**Sistan-Baluchestan: A must-see destination in southeast Iran**

January 20, 2020

TEHRAN – UNESCO sites both historical and natural, varied landscape, cozy guesthouses, rugged sea coasts, mouth-watering local dishes, reasonable prices,
and above all, hospitable and welcoming people well contribute to make the lesser-known Sistan-Baluchestan a must-visit destination for any traveler to Iran.

The collective Sistan-Baluchestan Province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossword of the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

The province possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters.

For mainstream Iranians, the name of Sistan-Baluchestan conjures up stories of drought, desiccated wetlands, and dust storms. On the international scale, foreigners may consider it a reminiscent of the big red blot on the Iran safety map.

The vast province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

Some of the most notable historical and natural tourist attractions of the province are as follows:

**Seb castle**

The historical Seb castle stands tall in a village of the same name, the castle was extensively used during the Qajar era (1789–1925) as a borderline surveillance base. However, narratives say that its heyday dates back to the time of the Safavids (1501–1736).

The castle is constructed of clay and mortar blend with loads of sticky plant seeds. In some parts wooden slabs cut from palm trees have been used to strengthen the overall layout, enabling it to withstand the natural disasters in particular mellow seismic vibrations.
Mud fountains

Mud fountains are one of the most amazing phenomena and tourist attractions of the province. There are three Mud fountains in this area that are located in Kahir, Konarak, and Khash, two of them are in the form of a hill and the other is a volcano.

Darak beach

It is in fact an amazing place where intersection a thirsty desert meets the sea. Darak beach and a nearby village are a destination for avid nature lovers. The beach and the amazing village of Zarabad, along with the Oman Sea, are where sand dunes, palm trees and blue sea in a frame together create picturesque sceneries.

Darren Negaran

Darren Negaran (literally meaning illustration of the valley) is home to tens of carved pictures of different animals such as wild cows, camels, and antelopes with a large horn in a variety of styles that are drawn in most of the scenes. Some say it’s the largest stone gallery of the country. Hunters’ motifs, men’s conflicts with each other and the images of moon and sun are other subjects of these ten thousand years old stones illustrations.

Chabahar beach

Chabahar is the only oceanic port of Iran and it is attached to the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean. In the southern part of the Chabahar city, there are large rocks
with the advent of seawater and erosion of sedimentary rocks that have created a beautiful landscape. Sunset and sunrise on this beach are one of the most spectacular views that you may have in your life. Do not miss these beautiful beaches during your Iran tour.

**Martian mountains**

About 40 to 50 kilometers away from Chabahar, lies one of the wonders of Iran’s nature known as the Martian mountains or miniature. Also, it is called Kalani or Aria in the local language. Along the roadside, you can see another planet in front of you that can be easily touched.

Colors of the Martian mountains varies from gray to white and displays different colors during the day due intensity of the daylight. This 4-5 million years old mountainous area features hills from 5-meter-high to the ones rising over 100 meters.
Iran capable of manufacturing any medicine in two years

January 21, 2020

TEHRAN – Iranian pharmaceutical industry and scientists are capable of producing any kind of medicine over a two-year period, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, head of Food and Drug Administration, has said.

Some medicines are not currently manufactured domestically as their production is not economically justifiable because of low consumption, he added, IRNA reported.

In some cases, medicines are new pharmaceutical molecules that have recently been produced worldwide, he noted.

“The U.S. has sanctioned medicine as far as possible, but we have been able to provide patients with the required medicine, and currently there is no shortages,” he explained.

Although food and medicine are claimed to be exempted from the U.S. sanctions, financial and banking sanctions have limited the life-saving medicine trade which harshly targeted the patients suffering from rare diseases.

Exemptions for humanitarian trade (such as food, medicine, and medical equipment) have not been effective in protecting Iranian patients from access to imported medicine, such as the bandages used for patients suffering Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), a rare genetic disease that causes painful blistering of the skin.
With the return of sanctions, over a year (May 2018-May 2019), 15 patients covered by EB Health House lost their lives, including Ava, a two-year-old girl in Ahvaz city, who died of infection and lack of skincare.

Companies exclusively producing medicine for Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) patients, such as BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc. of the U.S. and a South Korean company, have refused to export these drugs to Iran, threatening the lives of 335 patients in Iran.

Moreover, medicine needed for patients with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and certain rare diseases that are only made by American pharmaceutical companies, are not imported to the country.

On November 17, 2019, Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki in separate letters to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore, and WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom, urged the international community to break the silence on inhumane sanctions imposed by the United States against the country.

But so far no action has been taken by the international community and it has remained silent on this cruel act of the U.S.

**E-motorbikes come to curb air pollution in metropolises**

January 24, 2020
TEHRAN – The first phase of electric motorcycles development project will be implemented aiming at reducing air pollution in Tehran and other metropolises, IRNA news agency reported.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Tuesday that electric motorcycles will be promoted in big cities in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Through the first phase of the project, electric motorcycles will replace the regular ones used by the Ministry of Energy and state-run companies, he explained.

Ardakanian went on to say that, in addition to electric motorcycles being manufactured and marketed from now on, existing motorcycles will also change to use electricity sources.

Of all 32.9 million vehicles in the country, motorcycles amount to 11.6 million, accounting for 35 percent of the total vehicles moving in the country, 56 percent of motorcycles are plying the roads in only 5 provinces of Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Isfahan, Fars and Khuzestan, Ali Mohammadi, a senior traffic police official told IRNA in July 2019.

According to a report by the World Bank, motorcycles are the second largest contributor to particulate matter (PM) in Tehran, even before cars which greatly outnumber them.

One of the main reasons behind their high contribution to emissions is that a large part of the fuel consumed in motorcycles burns incompletely. The Tehran motorcycle fleet consists mostly of carburetor-equipped motorcycles which are typically less fuel efficient and emit more emissions compared to newer, fuel injection technology.

Carburetors on motorcycles produce 15.5 grams of emissions per kilometer, which is six times higher than a Euro 2 car, he regretted.

According to studies, 5 carburetor equipped motorcycles generates particulate matter as much as an extremely old diesel bus, while replacing carburetors with fuel injection can reduce particulate matter by 90 percent.
Iranian company acquires solar desalination technology

January 25, 2020

TEHRAN – An Iranian knowledge-based company has acquired the technical knowledge to produce new generation of solar desalination systems (MED/MVC-ZLD), IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

Desalination is a process that takes away mineral components from saline water. More generally, desalination refers to the removal of salts and minerals from a target substance, as in soil desalination, which is an issue for agriculture.

Current water desalinating systems are highly energy-consuming; systems using solar energy are one of the low-cost ways to produce fresh water.

Tropical areas and those affected by water scarcity usually have high solar energy potential, which makes it more efficient to use solar energy for the treatment of saline water.

There is no domestic producer of solar desalination systems in the country and there are no other manufacturers in the world except for a few companies in Germany and the United States.

Iran is an arid and semiarid country with scarce and sensitive water resources and the increasing demand for water has led to an alarming decrease in annual per capita renewable water resources. Due to the fact that available water resources are unevenly distributed in terms of both time and space, water resources in many areas are under pressure.
The reasons behind the present shortage of water for urban and domestic uses are the uneven distribution of water across the country, the expansion of population centers as well as developments in unsustainable agricultural and industrial activities.

Iran has an average annual precipitation of about 250 mm; less than one-third of the world average.

Mohammad Reza Goldansaz, a researcher in the field of water resources, said in June 2019 that an annual amount of 50 billion cubic meters of groundwater resources are withdrawn to supply agricultural, industrial as well as drinking water in Iran.

In the past few years, water transfer projects have been proposed by the government to ensure water supplies for the provinces of Semnan and Sistan-Baluchestan suffering from severe water shortages, which needs efficient water desalination systems.
Sport
Iran crowned CAFA U19 Girl’s Futsal champions

January 30, 2020

TEHRAN – Iran claimed the title of the CAFA U19 Girl’s Futsal Championship 2020 on Wednesday.

The Iranian team defeated Kyrgyz Republic 2-0 in their last match.

The Persian maintained their 100 percent record in the five matches.

Nilloofar Ardalan’s girls defeated Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyz Republic in the tournament.

Roghaye Someye won the best goalscorer award with 18 goals and Maral Torkaman was named as the tournament’s Most Valuable Player.

The round-robin tournament was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from Jan. 24 to 29.

The Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) is an association of the football playing nations in Central Asia.
Iran earn third successive win at CAFA U19 Girl’s Futsal Championship
January 26, 2020

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Turkmenistan 12-0 at the CAFA U19 Girl’s Futsal Championship 2020 on Sunday.

Roghayeh Sume’eh scored six goals for Iran and Maral Torkman and Fahimeh Arzani each added two. Nasrin Ghomi and Negar Yaghoubi also scored once each.

Iran, who have defeated Tajikistan and Afghanistan, will meet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyz Republic on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively.

The round-robin tournament has brought Tajikistan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan together in Dushanbe from Jan. 24 to 29.

The Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) is an association of the football playing nations in Central Asia.
Iran rout New Zealand at Asian Handball C’ship
January 17, 2020

TEHRAN – Iran eased past New Zealand 53-21 in their 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship opener on Friday.

Team Melli will play Bahrain in Group A at the Shaikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Hall Complex in Kuwait City on Saturday.

Group B consists of Qatar, Japan and China.

South Korea, Australia and Saudi Arabia are in Group C and Kuwait, Iraq, the UAE and Hong Kong are drawn in Group D.

The 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship will be the 19th edition of the championship held under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation at Kuwait City, Kuwait from Jan. 16 to 27.

It acts as the Asian qualifying tournament for the 2021 World Men's Handball Championship in Egypt.
Iran volleyball learn opponents at Tokyo 2020

January 14, 2020

TEHRAN – Iran national volleyball team have learned their opponents at the 2020 Olympic Games.

Team Melli have been drawn along with Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela in Pool A.

Pool B features Brazil, the U.S., Russia, Argentina, France, and Tunisia.

Iran earned the right to represent the home continent, alongside hosts Japan, in the men’s volleyball tournament at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. The team of coach Igor Kolakovic celebrated victorious after Sunday’s final of the AVC qualifier in Jiangmen as they mastered a 3-0 (25-14, 25-22, 25-14) win over China to stamp their visa for the Games.

It’s for the second time Iran qualify for the Olympics. The Persians made their debut in the previous edition in Rio, where they finished in fifth place.

The 2020 Summer Olympics will begin on July 24 and run until Aug. 9, with the opening ceremony on July 24 and the closing ceremony on Aug. 9.

The volleyball tournaments at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo will be played between 25 July and 9 Aug. 24 volleyball teams and 48 beach volleyball teams will participate in the tournament.

The indoor volleyball competition will take place at Ariake Arena in Ariake, and the beach volleyball tournament will be held at Shiokaze Park, in the temporary Shiokaze Park Stadium.
Iran win two gold medals at Karate 1-Premier League Paris

January 26, 2020

TEHRAN – Iranian karate fighters claimed two gold medals and one bronze at the Karate 1-Premier League Paris on Sunday.

Bahman Asgari seized a gold medal after beating Frenchman Logan Da Costa 4-0 in the final match of the Male Kumite -75 Kg.

He had defeated Azerbaijan’s Rafaei Aghayev, Japan’s Ken Nishimura, Luigi Busa from Italy and Ukraine’s Stanislav Horuna en route to the final match.

Hamideh Abbasali also took a gold medal, beating her Turkish opponent Meltem Hocaoglu Akyol in the Female Kumite +68kg final 6-3.

She had earlier defeated Sofie Abild from Denmark, Slovakian Dominika Tatarova, France’s Laure Anne Florentin and Bulgarian Aleksandra Stubleva.

Saleh Abazari also won a bronze medal in the Male Kumite +84kg after defeating Saudi Arabian fighter Tareg Hamedi 3-0 in the bronze medal match.

The competition also served as qualification event of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

More than 700 competitors from 92 countries competed at the event from Jan. 24 to 26 in Paris, France.
Economy
Self-sufficiency in auto parts manufacturing at 80%

January 26, 2020

TEHRAN- Iran has achieved 80 percent self-sufficiency in manufacturing of auto parts, Iranian Auto Parts Makers Association Maziar Beyglou said in a TV program on Saturday.

The official expressed hope that self-reliance in this sector reaches 90 percent through domestic production of required raw materials, Mehr news agency reported.

He also said that through setting up three desks on self-reliance the auto part industry has already managed to indigenize manufacturing of 99 auto parts.

Domestic parts manufacturers are able to play a key role in creating a boom in the country’s manufacturing and employment sectors, in addition to playing their leading role as the auto industry’s intermediates, Beyglou said two weeks ago, while announcing that 40,000 workers who were dismissed by the country’s auto parts makers have been re-employed following a boom in the auto industry.

He noted that if the current production trend continues, “we will expect an increase in the automotive industry’s production next year.”

Mentioning the industry ministry’s strategies for promoting domestic production, the official said: “Following the current policies, we will see the production of a number of new vehicles from domestic automakers in the coming years.”
Last month, the Specialized Manufactures of Auto Parts Association announced that Iranian carmakers have prepared some incentive packages to encourage investment making by the auto parts manufacturers.

Also during the TV program on Saturday regrading domestic production of auto parts, Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, the acting director of the industry department of Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, said, “The policies of government and Industry Ministry are all in line with supporting domestic production and all necessary laws and regulations including those on tariffs are to strengthen domestic production to achieve more self-sufficiency”.

In last May, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani issued a directive on “strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts”.

Addressing two of his deputies, Farshad Moqimi, deputy for industrial affairs, and Mohammad-Baqer Ali, the board chairman of Iran’s Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO), the minister put emphasis on using the highest potential of human resources for strengthening domestic manufacturing of auto parts which are currently imported to the country.

Highlighting the orders of the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on supporting production in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2019), which is named the year of “Pickup in Production” by the supreme leader, Rahmani stressed that cooperation among all car makers, auto part manufacturers, knowledge-based companies and enterprises is vital for strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts.

This movement should be all-out promoted to combat sanctions and also prevent from exit of foreign currency from the country, the minister noted.
Iran’s steel production hits record of 30% growth in 2019: WSA

January 26, 2020

TEHRAN- Iran’s crude steel production increased by 30 percent in 2019 while the average global growth in this sector stood at 3.5 percent, according to a report released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

Based on the report, Iran produced 31.9 million tons of the mentioned commodity during 2019 compared to the last year’s nearly 24 million tons. WSA says that crude steel production in the world has risen 3.5 percent to reach 1.848 billion tons in 2019.

According to the WSA report, China was the world’s top steel producer in 2019, with 996.3 million tons of production.

In its previous report, WSA had put Iran’s steel production at 23.648 million tons in the eleven-month period of 2019, rising 5.3 percent from 22.452 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Iran produced 2.13 million tons of crude steel in November 2019, which was 2.6 percent lower than 2.187 million tons of the product produced in November 2018, the same report confirmed.

According to the World Steel Association, Iran became the world’s tenth-largest steel producer in 2018.
Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017 could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

In early May 2019, Washington imposed new sanctions on Iran's metals and minerals sectors in an attempt to [as the U.S. president Trump put it] “choke off the country’s largest non-petroleum related sources of export revenue”.

While at the first glance [considering Trump’s comments], this might seem to be a heavy hit to Iran’s economy in the near future but a close look into the country’s export data could reveal Trump’s great miscalculations. In fact, this could even be considered a “blessing in disguise” for the country’s minerals and metal industry.

In a press conference last June, Iranian Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Jafar Sarqini said the ministry has taken necessary measures to maintain the country’s metal exports despite U.S. sanctions.

According to the official, Iran’s annual steel production is planned to reach 45 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

**Non-oil trade at over $72b in 10 months**

January 26, 2020

TEHRAN- The value of Iran’s non-oil trade hit $72.3 billion during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019-January 20, 2020), the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced in a press conference on Sunday.
Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi put the value of non-oil exports at $35.5 billion and that of the non-oil imports at $36.8 billion during the ten-month period, IRNA reported.

He said the non-oil exports rose 20 percent in terms of weight while dropped three percent in terms of value, and non-oil imports increased eight percent in weight with no change in terms of value.

Last week, Finance and Economic Minister Farhad Dejpasand said the decrease in the value of the non-oil export during the first ten months of this year has been mostly due to a 30-percent decrease which the government has applied on the value of the exported items, since the reported prices were believed to be more than the real value of the goods.

“The three-percent fall in terms of value is because exporters believed that the value assigned to the exported goods was more than their real value considering their base prices,” the minister said.

Iran’s non-oil trade with other countries registered a $100-million positive balance in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – December 21, 2019).

The country’s non-oil exports reached $31.9 billion in the first nine months of the current year, while the imports stood at $31.8 billion.

The value of Iran’s non-oil exports stood at $44.3 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year while $42.6 billion worth of commodities were shipped into the country.

An official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry announced last week that Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran is tasked to establish specialized export terminals in certain provinces to facilitate the exports of some commodities.

Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Hossein Modares Khiabani said Trade Promotion Organization is expected to pay particular attention to providing the necessary infrastructure for the expansion of the country’s non-oil exports.
TEHRAN - Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro (IKCO), SAIPA Group and Pars Khodro, manufactured 103,677 vehicles during the tenth Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22, 2019-January 20, 2020), IRNA reported citing the data released by Codal website.

According to the data, during the mentioned period IKCO manufactured 51,923 vehicles, Saipa Group produced 39,863 cars, and Pars Khodro’s output reached 11,891.

As reported, the mentioned carmakers, manufactured a total of 706,823 vehicles during the first ten months of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2019-January 20, 2020).

The country’s major car makers manufactured 604,806 vehicles during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 22), according to Codal website.