







## Rail Passenger Transport Down 67%

A total of 4.95 million passengers travelled via railroad during the first seven months of the current Iranian year (March 20-Sept. 21), which shows a 67.5% decline compared with the similar period of last year, according to data released by Rail Transportation Companies' Guild Union.

During the similar period of last year, more than 15.91 million passengers were transported by railroads. The decline is due to the coronavirus pandemic that has reduced travels.

As of May 21, rail travel agencies are only allowed to sell tickets to fill up 50% of train seats in compliance with health protocols set by the National Coronavirus Headquarters.

Presently, all coronavirus-related protocols as well as social distancing are being followed and trains are running as per the timetables.

According to Saeed Rasouli, the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, many passengers cancelled their tickets for the Iranian New Year holidays (started March 20), which is the peak season for tourism in Iran, due to the pandemic.

"Passenger rail companies gave full refunds for 1.2 million pre-purchased tickets worth 1.07 trillion rials [\$4 million]. However, rail passenger transport continued to decline after March causing a drastic decline in rail passenger companies' revenues, which were also financially burdened with the task of disinfecting wagons and facilities, and abiding by health protocols."

### Government Aid

Rasouli noted that the government promised to grant financial aid worth 9.4 trillion rials (\$37 million) to rail cargo and transportation companies.

According to Mehrdad Taqizadeh, secretary of Iran's Guild of Rail Transport Companies, the number of rail passengers fell by 94% during the Iranian New Year holidays compared with last year's similar period.

During the first seven months of the fiscal 2019-20, a total of 16.98 million passengers were carried by railroads across the country.

According to Mohsen Sadeqi, an official with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, out of 60 loan applications worth 8,750 billion rials (\$35 million), which have been submitted in Kara.mcls.gov.ir for government-backed coronavirus support package, a total of 1,580 billion rials (\$6.32 million) have been paid to 15 rail companies by Nov. 28, IRIB News reported.

### Rise in Ticket Prices

The Supreme Council of Transport, affiliated to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, approved a 20% rise in rail fares as of June 21, according to Taqizadeh.

"The decision was taken in line with the Health Ministry's social distancing guidelines due to the coronavirus pandemic and rise in inflation rate. Passenger trains are now operating at half their capacity, such that only two passengers are allowed in a four-seater booth," he added.

Noting that as per the directive of the council, supply and demand will determine the fares of five-star trains, he said rail companies had called for a 60% rise in ticket prices, in view of the social distancing rules and the inflation rate, but the council only approved a 20% increase.

In separate remarks, the deputy head of IRIR for passenger transportation, Mir Hassan Mousavi, said the 20% rise in ticket prices has nothing to do with social distancing and restrictions imposed on the number of passengers per train cars, explaining that the increase is in line with the inflation rate and the rising costs borne by rail companies.

► **License Owner & Managing director:** Reza Mahzunieh  
 ► **Editor-in-Chief:** Marzie Rabiei  
 ► **Assistant Editor-in-Chief of English Section:** Bahare Yousefi  
 ► **Isfahan Office:** Hoora Building, Shahid Mofateh Street, Ahmad Abad Square, Isfahan, Iran  
 ► **Tel:** 031-32274500  
 ► **Public Relations:** 031-32274754

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 ► **website:** esfahan-news.com  
 ► **SMS:** 30007232



## Calls for Reducing Gov't Role in Mining to Favor Private Sector

The private sector could help policymakers come up with most efficient measures to develop the high-potential mining sector, a member of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mining said, hoping that the new minister of industries will have a closer relationship with private sector players.



"The development of Iran's mining sector depends on the policymakers' willingness to accept the counsel

of private investors ...

The new minister could prevent the repetition of previous mistakes and attract more investment to the sector," TCCIM.ir also quoted Sajjad Ghorogi as saying.

Late September, the Iranian Parliament gave a vote of confidence to Alireza Razm-Hosseini who was nominated by President Hassan Rouhani to take the helm of the Industries, Mining and Trade Ministry after it was without a chief for about four months.

"The sector is facing major problems at present," Ghorogi said and referred to the government's decision to set a ceiling and a floor for steel prices.

"Such measures result in market imbalance, as they benefit some players more than the others. We at the chamber of commerce are against setting prices ... We need to minimize the difference in prices in local and international markets in the short term and gradually develop a market in which prices are in accordance with demand and supply," he said.

In Ghorogi's point of view, improper local policies have been the main reason behind the poor mining sector development, "even more than external



sanctions".

"Imposing a ban on export is not the best solution for increasing supply in domestic market. The ban lowers the government's income from export tariffs," he said.

Instead, policymakers should promote further investments into mineral extraction, he added.

His comments were echoed by a member of Iran Chamber of Commerce Industries and Mining, Pedram Soltani, who recently said a wide range of factors have been hindering the growth of mining sector in Iran.

Dominance of the government and the small contribution of the private sector, lack of persistent policies as well as sanctions are among the most influential ones.

"The sector has been struggling with unstable policies, without taking the benefits of the private sector into account ... This is while our experience in the 1990s indicated that by relying on sectors highly dominated by the government, the economic would not make any progress," he said.

Soltani noted that the private sector has not

made a considerable contribution to the mining sector in the past two decades.

State-owned Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization, including its subsidiaries into account, has a 30% share in the country's mineral extraction. IMIDRO will have invested \$3 billion in Iran's mining sector by the end of the current Iranian year (March 2021).

Policymakers have also failed to promote the development of mining industries, which could help multiply the added value of mining products. Soltani believes that imposition of sanctions against Iran has significantly affected the mining sector, though "the impact was less severe compared to the other business sectors".

"The growth of the mining sector would definitely be positive, if it was not hit by the sanctions," he added. In Soltani's point of view, the sector could have attracted a considerable sum of foreign investments, which is vital for its development.

Iran's mineral reserves currently stand at 55 billion

tons, about 37 billion tons of which are proven. New explorations are expected to increase the figure by 30% to 60 billion tons by the end of the current fiscal year (March 2021).

A total of 15.69 million tons of mineral products worth \$2.17 billion were exported from Iran in the first five months of the current fiscal year (March 20-Aug. 21).

Steel topped the list of exports in terms of value with \$1.11 billion. It was followed by copper with \$334.12 million and cement with \$120.98 million. In terms of tonnage, cement had the lion's share with 5.7 million tons, followed by steel with 3 million tons.

Some 410 million tons of minerals were extracted from Iranian mines in the last Iranian year (ended March 19, 2020).

Iran is home to 68 types of minerals with more than 37 billion tons of proven reserves and 57 billion tons of potential reserves.

According to the United States Geological Survey, Iran holds the world's largest zinc, ninth largest copper, 10th largest iron ore, fifth largest gypsum and barite, and 10th largest uranium reserves.

Policymakers have also failed to promote the development of mining industries, which could help multiply the added value of mining products.

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Solution: NO 645

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News

### Iran, Turkey call for increased economic coop.

President's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi held a phone conversation on Thursday with Lutfi Elvan, newly-appointed treasury and finance minister of Turkey, on bilateral ties between the two countries.

Pointing to 'friendly' ties between the two neighboring states, Vaezi called for the expansion of bilateral economic ties. He congratulated Elvan on his new position, hoping that bilateral ties would further

expand during his term.

Referring to the new international conditions and taking into consideration the removal of obstacles on the way of trade, it is necessary that investment between the private sectors of the two countries be supported more than before, said Vaezi. The Iranian officials noted that the relations between Tehran and Ankara should turn into a role model for all regional states.

For his part, Elvan hailed friendly ties between the two countries, noting that he would spare no efforts to deepen and expand trade with Iran.

### Household gas-providing projects bring 14.5 billion dollars of revenues for Iran

Development of gas-providing projects which replaced liquid gas with natural gas in the households in Iran has generated 14.5 billion dollars of revenues for the country in the past seven years.

The development of South Pars provided the country the chance to extend its gas-providing projects the most remote places. At the outset, the projects were restricted to urban areas but later, with inauguration of President Rouhani government in August 3, 2013, such projects specially targeted rural areas as a way to materialize social justice in the country.

Upon the gradual completion of numerous projects in the past seven years which will continue to the last days of the President Rouhani government in 2021, the amount of the liquid gas in 3013, standing at 34.1 billion liters, ultimately dropped to only 13.8 billion liters this year.

The figure indicates a 43 percent decline in usage of oil products which could be replaced by gas during the period. This trend will continue in the next couple of years till the usage of liquid fuel to be replaced by gas reaches to zero percent. The implantation of these projects not only made fuel more easily accessible for rural people but significantly helped improve clean environment in Iran as well. It also earned the country a great amount of money given the fact that gas is considered a cheaper fuel which amounted to a total of 14.5 billion dollars in seven years.

This means that apart from all those 17 thousand villages that have got the benefit of gas for fuel in their households during the period, the implementation of the projects have created an unprecedented opportunity for boosting exports of oil products.

Presently, 82 percent of rural families in Iran have access to natural gas as fuel. Gas-providing projects have also helped establishment of infrastructures and conversion and complementary industries in rural areas, an achievement thoroughly made possible due to endeavors and high capabilities of Iranian experts and workforce.

**Khatibzadeh: All terrorist groups in region graduated from Saudi-Madrassas**

In reaction to the baseless remarks of Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said that every terrorist group in our region has graduated from Saudi-funded Madrassas.

In a tweet on Thursday, Saeed Khatibzadeh wrote, "For decades, Wahabism — nurtured by colonial powers — has been the source of bigotry, hatred & terrorism in our region — and beyond."

"Fact: Every terrorist group in our region has graduated from Saudi-funded Madrassas," he added. "No amount of Saudi obfuscation can hide this ugly reality," Khatibzadeh stressed.

Iranian diplomat went on to say, "Their atrocities in #Yemen, & the infamous Khashoggi case are just some of their other stunts."

"The latest: standing alongside the leading state-sponsor of terrorism against Palestinians," he added, saying, "Saudis must change course. The policy of inflaming tension is no longer tenable."

His tweet came as Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Aljubeir in recent tweets wrote, "Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif is desperate to blame the Kingdom for anything negative that happens in Iran. Will he blame us for the next earthquake or flood?"

"It is not the policy of Saudi Arabia to engage in assassinations; unlike Iran, which has done so since the Khomeini Revolution in 1979. Ask us, and ask many other countries who have lost many of their citizens due to Iran's criminal and illegal behavior!," he claimed.

**Zarif: Iran proved its bona fides in 15 IAEA reports**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message referred to Iran's good faith in IAEA reports, saying Iran will reverse its remedial actions under JCPOA if US abides by UNSCR2231.

"Iran proved its bona fides in 15 IAEA reports," Zarif wrote in his Twitter account on Thursday.

"The Biden admin must prove ITS by complying fully with UNSCR2231 & ceasing Trump's #EconomicWar against Iranians. At that time, Iran will reverse its remedial actions under #JCPOA," he added.

Earlier, addressing the online session the Mediterranean Dialogue, Zarif said: "The United States walked out the nuclear agreement but did

not walk out of the United Nations it has responsibilities, obligations as a UN member, as a Security Council member and there is a Security Council Resolution 2231 which the United States must observe as a permanent member of the Security Council, the United States is in grave breach of that resolution because the Trump administration has been a rouge regime."

"Now if the president elect Biden wants to continue to be a rouge regime then he can continue to be asking to implement its commitments," he added.

"The United States has commitments under the resolution which has to implement it is not in a position to set conditions for that," Zarif noted.

"We will not renegotiate a deal which we negotiated. The deal was about give and take it was not about one side asking and the other

side giving. The fact is that the United States and other European partners started with 20+10."

"They wanted 20+10 years of restrictions. This was the subject of negotiations for two years, it will never be negotiated because it is a clear sign of bad faith," he reiterated.

"The issue of missile and the issue of regional security were deliberately put aside by all sides not because they gave a concession to Iran but because the other sides were not prepared to end their malign behavior in this area," Zarif said.



**Minister: Sanctions targeting Iran's medicine, medical equipment sectors**

Iran's Minister of Health and Medical Education Saeed Namaki said unilateral sanctions have been targeting Iran's medicine and medical equipment needed by the nation.



In a statement delivered to the online session of the High-level Special Session of the United Nations General

Assembly, Response to COVID-19 Pandemic, held in New York 3-4 December 2020, he first appreciated "the United Nations to hold High-Level Special Session in response to COVID-19 Pandemic to share experience and to demonstrate the utmost high level commitment to curb the disease which strongly hit the globe during the last 11 months."

The Minister then noted that "Since the beginning of the outbreak in Iran, according to the 'Whole of Government, Whole of Society' approach, the National Committee to Manage COVID-19 was established under the chairmanship of president Rohani, fully supported by Supreme Leader, to utilize all capacities at national level, to monitor the disease, and to endorse strict public health measures to curb the disease.

Accordingly, our strong PHC Network was not only the core of three rounds of screening through Electronic Health Records, but we managed to sustain Essential Health Services to ensure maternal and child care, immunization, Tuberculosis and HIV case management are provided, and, as a pioneer in NCDs management, to



continue health services for chronic patients and mitigating risk factors.

The Government, despite all restrictions due to unlawful and unilateral sanctions, has provided special financial packages for the poor and marginalized population; has done economic support measures especially for small businesses; and implemented testing and treatment coverage programs for 3.5 million legal and illegal Afghan immigrants. We have taken additional environmental health measures at our borders with neighboring countries according to IHR-2005, which requires substantial support by Member States to maintain normal trade." He also said that "Covid-19 pandemic swept the world severely, providing many lessons to be learned nationally, regionally and globally, which demonstrated unpreparedness of the Global Community to deal with a Pandemic. Global preparedness and emergency response must be at the forefront of the

agenda of governments and international agencies for decades to come. Leadership, solidarity, inter-sectoral collaboration, evidence-based interventions and coordination between countries are the tools needed to manage Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, we need to strengthen the IT infrastructure to provide more reliable data, tele-medicine and tele-education in the new era. I would like to emphasize the vital importance of global solidarity and international cooperation, with full support to the WHO, as the unique platform for Global Health activities, to overcome this pandemic. Timely, cost-effective and equitable access of all nations to diagnostic, medical equipment, medicines and vaccines are crucial, with no discrimination, sanction or unjustifiable prioritization, as the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out." Namaki added: "The unilateral coercive measures imposed by the Government of United States have negatively

affected the process of combating the Pandemic in my country. Unilateral illegal measures, hamper easy access of the people to basic medical items and requirements and thus endanger health of the Iranian citizens. Medicines supply and health commodities have been targeted through tight restrictions of foreign exchange resources even for these humanitarian issues.

This Pandemic reminds us how much we need integrity, solidarity and collaboration, at local, regional, and global levels. While we are committed to the UNGA resolutions and political declarations on UHC, NCDs and communicable diseases such as TB, there is a need to re-visit the targets, financing and approaches as a response to the pandemic, which hit the health infra-structures, health workforce and the economies. I call upon international financial organizations to provide substantial financial supports to Member States regardless political impediments."

NEWS

**Iran warns about suspicious moves by ill-wishers of Tehran-Kabul ties**

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Thursday that while the Khaf-Herat railway is to be inaugurated in the coming days as a symbol of great cooperation between the two countries, it is inevitable to take care of the suspicious actions of the ill-wishers of relations between Tehran and Kabul. Following the release of a video in cyberspace in which a number of people were beaten by several people and attributed to Afghan brothers, the police announced in a statement that technical investigations indicate that the video released in cyberspace did not happen in Iran, and Iran's police strongly denies that such treatment of Afghan Muslim brothers took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Regretting the occurrence of the incident anywhere in the world, Khatibzadeh called on the Afghan friendly and brotherly officials to be more careful in publishing the news and not to rush in issuing official statements.

**SCO Denounces Killing of Top Iranian Physicist**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) strongly condemned the assassination of top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. In a statement on Thursday, the SCO condemned the terror act and "all destabilizing acts in the region, as well as terrorism, in any form".

According to the organization, such actions are not only against all norms of intergovernmental relations and international law but also threaten peace and stability in a fragile region. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization expressed hope that the perpetrators of this cowardly attack would be identified and brought to justice.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an intergovernmental organization founded for multilateral, political, economic, and security cooperation.

China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and India are its main members, and Iran, Mongolia, Afghanistan and Belarus are observers.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear and defense scientist, was assassinated in a small city east of Tehran on November 27.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani says it has become clear to Tehran that Munafeqin (Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization terrorists), the Zionist regime, and its spy service Mossad have been behind the assassination attack.

News

**Iran demands condemnation of Fakhrizadeh assassination by IAEA**

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna Kazem Gharibabadi in a letter to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi called for clear and unconditional condemnation of the assassination of Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a prominent Iranian nuclear and defense industry scientist.

In the letter a copy of which was sent to IRNA office in London, he said that the assassination of Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh comes as continuation of the terrorist acts that began a decade ago with the assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

He said all these acts of terrorism require proper attention from the international community and related international organizations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran frankly expects the

International Atomic Energy Agency to condemn this terrorist act in a transparent and unconditional manner. Immediately after the first instance of assassination of an Iranian nuclear scientist in 2010, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a letter to the then IAEA director-general, strongly protested the publication of the names of its scientists and experts in the IAEA reports that had been made available to it through related safeguards activities, Gharibabadi said. The IAEA is strongly expected to end the process of unnecessarily publishing detailed information about Iran's nuclear program in its reports, the Iranian official stressed. There is clear evidence that the Israeli regime was involved in the terrorist attack, especially since Israeli officials had repeatedly named Dr. Fakhrizadeh and planned to assassinate him several times, he said, noting that such a brutal act of terrorism, like any other act of international terrorism, poses a threat to international peace and security and is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as well as fundamental human rights.



Iran believes that adopting a dual standard approach towards countries in the fight against terrorism will not only be unconstructive, but will lead to the failure of the global fight against terrorism, the letter said. He also demanded the letter be circulated as an IAEA official document.

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## New Parl. bill on nuclear power to create 'big' opportunities

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the newly-ratified bill of the Iranian Parliament will create 'big opportunities'. "Diplomacy knows language of power. Iran's Parl bill on 'sanctions removal' creates big opportunities," the Iranian Parliament Speaker's Special Aide for International Affairs tweeted on Thursday. "US/E3 have discredited JCPOA not to let #Iran sell oil & get revenues. Russian, Chinese will be set for cooperation & acts agnst US sanctions," he added, highlighting that the "weapon of sanctions" must be broken down. The remarks come as the Iranian Parliament has ratified an action plan so as to counter US sanctions. The bill has also been endorsed by the Guardian Council. The new motion has called for an increase in Iran's nuclear capabilities in response to US sanctions and other JCPOA signatories' failure to safeguard Iran's economic interests.



### Headlines

**Zarif: Iran proved its bona fides in 15 IAEA reports**

**Household gas-providing projects bring 14.5b dollars of revenues for Iran**

**Calls for Reducing Gov't Role in Mining to Favor Private Sector**

CALL TO PRAYER TIME IN ISFAHAN

**Morning call to prayer:**

05:25:12

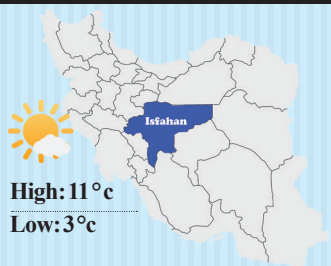
**Noon call to prayer:**

11:54:08

**Evening call to prayer:**

17:16:22

### WEATHER



### SCO condemns Fakhrizadeh assassination

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in a statement on Thursday denounced assassination of the Iranian defense industry scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, describing it a heinous act. In this statement, the Organization offered condolences to the Iranian government and the family of Martyr Fakhrizadeh. The SCO strongly condemns all attempts to destabilize peace in the region, as well as terrorism in any form, the statement said, noting that such actions are not only against all norms of intergovernmental relations and international law, but also threaten peace and stability in the volatile region.



## Minister: Sanctions targeting Iran's medicine, medical equipment sectors

## Rouhani: Assassination of scientist sign of helplessness of enemies

Referring to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Iranian President said that this terrorist act shows the helplessness of the sworn enemies of the Iranian nation against the scientific and research movements.

In a telephone conversation with the President of Turkey on Thursday, Hassan Rouhani expressed his gratitude for Turkey's sympathy with the Iranian people and also the condemnation of this assassination by Ankara, saying, "It is completely clear to us who did the assassination with the method used in it."

Rouhani stated that in the last months of his life, this Iranian scientist had spent most of his time finding ways to combat coronavirus and completing research to make diagnostic kits for the disease, adding, "The assassination of this scientist was a great crime and inhumane act."

"Undoubtedly, this terrorist act shows the helplessness and inability of the sworn enemies of the Iranian nation against the scientific and research movements of our scientists and it is the right of the Iranian government to take revenge on the blood of this martyr from the perpetrators at the right time," he said.

Referring to the US President-elect's remarks on the return of the United States to the JCPOA, the President said, "We have repeatedly emphasized that if the other parties to this agreement fulfil their obligations, we will fulfil our obligations as well."

Referring to the process of cooperation between Iran and Turkey, Rouhani said, "Both countries' will was to develop economic and trade relations, but unfortunately the US sanctions prevented us from easily entering into trade and economic and banking cooperation between us."

President Rouhani also emphasised the development and deepening of relations with Turkey in all fields and the implementation

of the agreements of the sixth meeting of the Supreme Council for Strategic Cooperation and the Joint Economic Commissions of the two countries.

He also stressed the need for cooperation and unanimity between Iran and Turkey on international issues and said, "To prevent the infiltration of the enemies of Islam, repairing the gap in the World of Islam is an urgent need and Iran and Turkey can consult and work together to reduce the discords in the World of Islam and invite the Islamic Ummah to unity."

Referring to the continuing global crisis of coronavirus, Rouhani emphasised the participation and cooperation of the two countries in meeting the needs of medicine and medical equipment, as well as the exchange of experiences.

Referring to the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the President stressed the need to prevent the infiltration of terrorists in the region and the problems arising from it.

In this telephone conversation, the President of Turkey expressed his condolences to the government, the people of Iran and the family of the Iranian scientist Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, and strongly condemned this terrorist act, saying, "There is no doubt that this terrorist act is aiming for peace in the region." "I hope that the perpetrators of this crime will be identified and brought to justice as soon as possible," said Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Referring to the new international situation and the beginning of a new era in the US government, the Turkish President said, "I hope that in the new US administration, the mentality of threats and sanctions will give way to dialogue, cooperation and interaction with countries."

Erdoğan further stressed the need to further develop and deepen Iran-Turkey relations and stressed that the rapid implementation and operation of the resolutions and agreements of the Supreme Council for Strategic Cooperation will be closely followed.

## Trump Running Out of Time to Solidify Immigration Agenda after US Election Loss

US President Donald Trump's administration is pushing to finalize new immigration restrictions before his term ends in January, according to three senior homeland security officials, a last-gasp effort in a policy area that was a central focus during his four years in office.

The moves come even as Democratic President-elect Joe Biden has pledged to rescind many of Trump's immigration policies. By finalizing rules that have just been proposed, or issuing last-minute orders, the administration could slow down Biden's efforts to undo many of Trump's signature measures that have made it harder for immigrants to enter and settle in the United States. A central goal for Trump's last few weeks in office is replacing a lottery system used to award H-1B visas to skilled foreign workers, according to officials with the US Department of Homeland Security, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss government operations. Instead, a new selection process would favor visa applicants with higher-paying jobs.

The Trump administration argued in a proposed version of the regulation released in October that the change is needed to better protect US workers. White House senior adviser Stephen Miller - considered the architect of Trump's hard-line immigration agenda - told Reuters over the summer that the regulations meant to drive up wages in the H-1B program would be politically unpopular to reverse. Other measures that could be hurried to the finish line include new rules to restrict access to asylum and a regulation that would allow federal immigration officials to collect DNA from family-based visa applicants and the US citizens or permanent residents who sponsor them.

Another measure would tighten visa rules for international students, cultural exchange visitors and foreign journalists.

The changes would take the form of regulatory actions that are crafted by agencies and do not require congressional approval but need to follow legal processes outlined in federal law.

News reports have also surfaced about a possible Trump executive order to weaken the

constitutional right to citizenship for all people born in the United States. A senior homeland security official told Reuters, however, the effort did not appear to be a priority for the White House. Acting DHS Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli is spearheading the last-ditch immigration effort, one official told Reuters, as the president continues to promote unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud and has not conceded his Nov. 3 election defeat. The White House and DHS declined to comment.

Trump is not the first president to engage in a last-minute policy push, according to Republican strategist Alex Conant.

"Every outgoing administration tries to do as much as they can before the clock runs out," he said. "There are a lot of true believers in this White House who think immigration is bad for the country and are spending their last hours in power trying to cement their policies."

Most of Trump's immigration plans are unlikely to be finished, however, before he leaves office and the ones that are hastily pushed through will be vulnerable to court challenges.

A federal judge on Tuesday blocked two different fast-tracked Trump rules targeting the H-1B program. The judge said the administration failed to show "good cause" to skip regulatory steps that typically take months or longer.

Rules that have not taken effect by the time Biden takes office on Jan. 20 could be delayed and eventually rescinded, according to three experts in government regulations.

Any work in Trump's final month in office will also likely be slowed down by the Christmas and New Year's holidays and possible departures of Trump appointees, which is typical for outgoing administrations. One closely watched policy area will be any final Trump actions related to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which was instituted by President Barack Obama, whom Biden served as vice president. The Supreme Court in June thwarted Trump's attempt to end DACA, which offers deportation relief and work permits to some 646,000 "Dreamer" immigrants brought to the United States as children but who lack legal status.

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