



**Tehran urges Armenia to respect Azerbaijan's territorial integrity** **2**



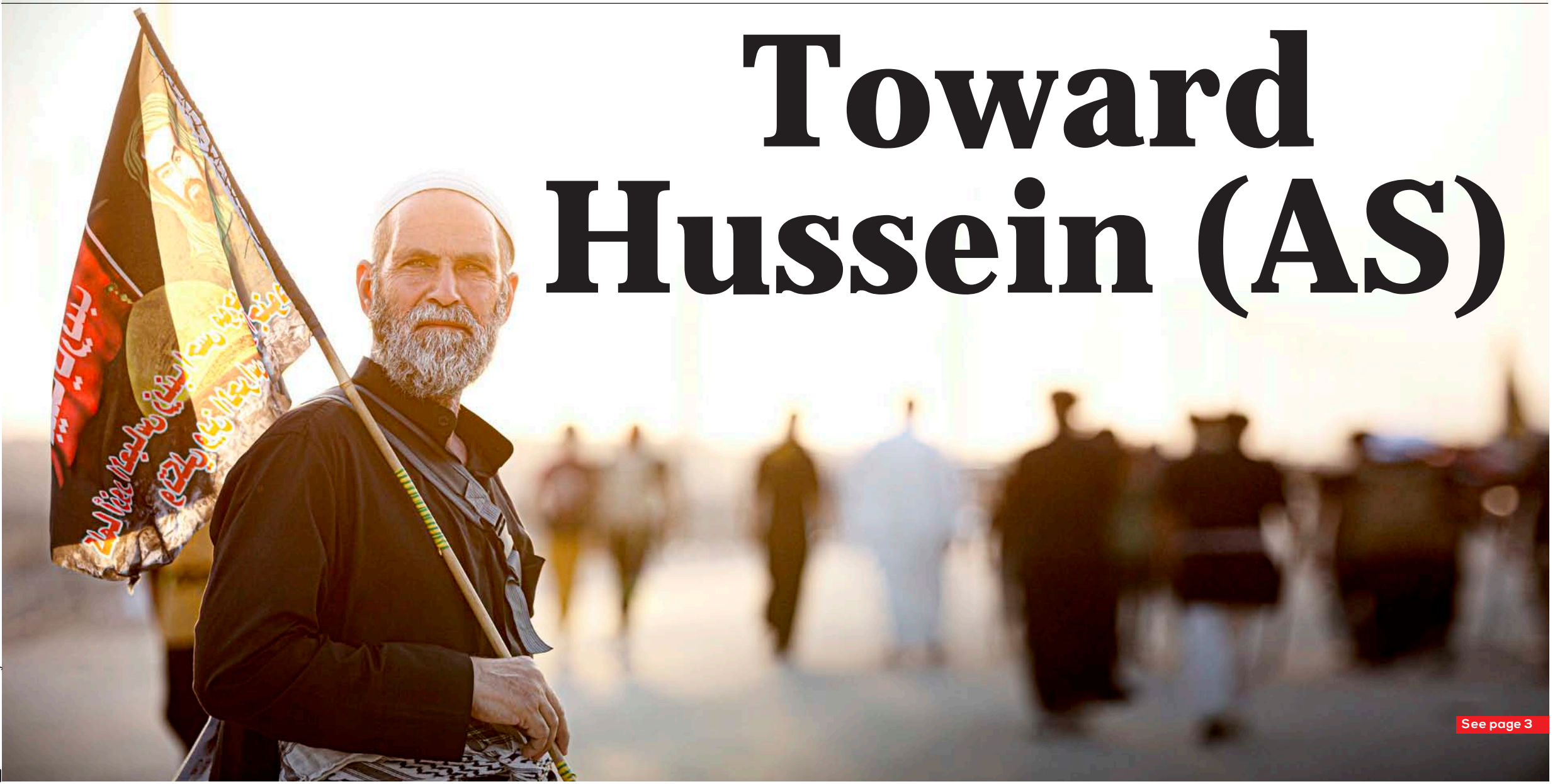
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# Toward Hussein (AS)

**By Mehdi Garshasbi**  
Tehran Times Journalist

## Time for a holistic approach to rural development

The basic objective of rural development is to organize, develop and utilize the available resources of land, water, and human resources in such a manner that an entire population is dependent upon these resources and have an equitable opportunity to fulfill basic needs.

Rural development takes into account, both economic development and a greater transformation of the individuals. With the purpose of enhancing the livelihoods of the rural individuals, there is a need to increase the participation of the individuals in rural development programs, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms, and larger access to credit.

Working on these aspects will abridge the gap between the rural and urban divide and upgrade the standards of living of rural communities.

Many efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration from rural areas to cities.

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism are alternatives or complementary economic activities that could further stimulate rural entrepreneurship while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, mining, or fishing activities).

The literacy rate is directly proportional to development; thus, full access of rural communities to educational services should be regarded as a starting point to achieve sustainable development goals.

### Significant measures taken

In Iran, October 6 is celebrated each year as the National Day of Villagers and Nomads.

Currently, 26 percent of the country's population lives in villages, Mohammad Omid, the vice president for rural development, has said. He added that around 39,000 villages have more than 20 households and 23,000 villages have less than 20 households.

Thus, more than 97 percent of the country's rural population lives in villages with over 20,000 households.

At present, 99.5 percent of the rural population is connected to the national electricity network, and 90 percent of the villages are supplied with fresh drinking water. **->7**

## New book gives youth food for thought on Commander Soleimani

**TEHRAN** — Madreseh Publications, a publisher of school books in Tehran, has published a biography of Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani to better familiarize the youth with the commander.

Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of IRGC, was martyred during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

Entitled "Martyr Soleimani", the book has been written by Majid Mollamohammadi and recounts the life story of the commander from his birth to his martyrdom, highlighting his main characteristics such as bravery, modesty, sacrifice and hospitality.

The book also includes an album of his photos from childhood until weeks before his martyrdom, his last will and testament, as well as the comments by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei about Soleimani.

After his assassination, books on Soleimani became bestsellers in the country and numerous

books have also arrived to the book market.

"The Motherland's Borderless Commander", a book that gives a deep insight into the life of Soleimani is one of the books.

Zehab Sohbatzadeh is the author of the book published by Bolur, a publishing house in the northern Iranian city of Rasht.

The book is composed of 13 chapters, one of which studies Soleimani's accounts of Operation Karbala-5 during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The Siege of Basra, code-named Operation Karbala-5, was an offensive operation carried out by Iran to capture the Iraqi port city of Basra in early 1987. Iran failed to reach the objective in the battle that is known for its extensive casualties and ferocious conditions.

The role of Soleimani as the commander of the Quds Force in the defeat of the ISIS terrorists in the region is also discussed in the book. **->8**

## U.S. protests: Portland protesters march, police make six arrests

*By staff & agencies*

A direct action march in the name of a Black man in Texas who was shot to death by police while reportedly trying to break up a fight at a gas station was organized in Portland Monday evening. Demonstrators marched through downtown, stopping at protest sites such as the Justice Center, new courthouse, and the Waterfront.

Jonathan Price was shot Saturday in Wolfe City, about 70 miles northeast of Dallas, the Dallas Morning News reported. The officer who shot him is on administrative leave.

Organizers in Portland urged people to bring candles to Director Park, where the demonstration started. Around 100 people congregated in the park for the vigil and the numbers grew as the march started.

Protesters walked and chanted through downtown to the Justice Center before continuing on

to other locations in the district. There did not appear to be a heavy police presence downtown as demonstrators marched.

### Police make six arrests

Meanwhile, police made six arrests after protesters marched Sunday night from Tom McCall Waterfront Park to the new Multnomah County Courthouse and then to the Central Precinct in downtown Portland.

Police said some protesters vandalized some buildings and officers made targeted arrests. The group left the area by 12:30 a.m.

Protests have been happening consistently in Portland since the killing of George Floyd on Memorial Day. Demonstrators have taken to Portland's streets for issues that include police brutality, racial inequity, the murder of people of color by police, the abolishment of police and prisons and the defunding of police.

## Trump tests positive: A win-win situation

**By Abir Bassam**

As if the American situation needed more complications! The country is frying over the fire of racism; it is going through a difficult phase as the clock strikes since there are only 32 days left before the elections; and finally, its President Donald Trump has been diagnosed positive with Coronavirus.

Accordingly, all the debates have been postponed, and he is going to the American elections unarmed.

Trump was diagnosed on Friday, Oct. 2nd.

That is 32 days before the elections on Nov. 3rd. The news of his illness must have confused his election team, which was clearly expressed in a statement made by Justin Clark, Trump's deputy campaign manager, because Bill Stepien, the campaign manager, who was diagnosed positive with COVID 19, will work remotely and will remain in control of the campaign.

Ironically, Stepien and Trump and other campaign team members were boarded on Air Force One together on Tuesday, Sep. 29th. This shows

real concerns about the rapidity of the virus spread among the election team. Trump is now infected. He has played down the seriousness of the virus as he was addressing his audience on Thursday night that "the end of a pandemic is in sight."

Hence, Trump's management of war against COVID 19 was a total failure. He endangered above all his friends, supporters, team, and his family. On the other hand, it seems that his supporters were comfortable with his decisions, although the virus is spreading, and the numbers are soaring. **->5**

## Iran is not what you think: how media image of a country differs from reality

**By Afshin Majlesi**

You can find, through the web or in person, countless travelers, who had developed mixed feelings about Iran prior to their arrivals. .... attitudes, stereotypes, and perceptions that totally being changed when excursions to the Islamic Republic starts.

You may possibly hear somewhat like: "Quite a different perspective!"; "Iran is not (at all) what I thought it'd be like!"; "I am impressed how the media shows a different picture"; "Contrary to popular belief, Iran is extremely safe, with the friendliest people I've ever met"; "When we think about Iran, we tend to only think of negative things"; or "I previously thought it was dangerous considering some of the Western news".

So far, limited tourism research has drawn attention to the impact of media on citizens' attitudes, which form positive, negative, and neutral stereotypes about a country. However, conducting a scientific survey using standard questionnaires and methods can be a big help in that regard.

Many travel experts believe that Iran is still somehow "unknown" for many potential travelers across the globe due to such a "media war". Others see better prospects for the tourism sector of the country if it can successfully implement strategies to counter U.S.-led propaganda and sanctions.

In this regard, the Tehran Times has put forward the issue with Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, who paid a visit to the daily on October 3. Below are edited excerpts from a conversation with the minister: **->6**



© Tehran Times / Samira Nazari

## Let's take a peek into old Tehran

Photo depicts an exterior view of the lavishly-decorated Imam Jomeh House, a historical monument in Tehran, concurrent with the Tehran Week which began on October 3, 2020.

As the name suggests, the house was used as the primary residence of Tehran's Friday prayer leader. It is comprised of numerous halls and chambers decked out with beautiful plaster moldings. A rectangular pond sandwiched between two columns gives the yard a classic Persian look.

More than 200 cultural programs and virtual seminars are scheduled to be held in the Iranian capital during the week that runs through October 9.



## International processes abused to wrongly accuse Syria of chemical weapons use: Iran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to the United Nations says based on unsubstantiated allegations, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN Security Council have been used in the past several years against the Syrian government.

"In the past several years, based on unsubstantiated allegations, the processes of the CWC, OPCW and the Security Council have been abused against the Syrian Government," Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in a statement addressing a UN Security Council meeting on the situation in West Asia.

"As a major victim of chemical weapons in the contemporary history, Iran continues to condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances," Takht-Ravanchi said.

He said Iran also reiterates its call for the balanced, full and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC and upholding the authority of the OPCW.

"The fact is that in 2014, the head of the Joint Mission to Eliminate Chemical Weapons in Syria, in her final report to this Council, confirmed that Syria has fulfilled all its commitments and that its entire chemical stockpiles have been destroyed," the ambassador pointed out.

"Later, the OPCW also confirmed the destruction of the entire chemical stockpile of Syria and all its 27 production facilities," he added.

According to Takht-Ravanchi, such facts as well as the Syrian government's significant cooperation with the OPCW and the UN, including its provision to the OPCW of over 80 monthly reports and large amount of information are being neglected.

Such unproductive policies have not contributed to the resolution of the outstanding questions, he stated.

Rather, the Iranian ambassador continued, it has divided this Council, eroded the OPCW's credibility and weakened professionalism and consensual decision-making process in that organization.

"Additionally, it has adversely affected the efforts for the full and effective realization of the very purpose of the CWC, namely the elimination of chemical weapons, which is yet to be realized due to blatant failure by the U.S. as the sole major Possessor State Party," he said.

"To avoid this situation, the current trend in this Council and the OPCW, which has been initiated solely based on politically-motivated objectives of certain countries, needs to discontinue," Takht-Ravanchi added.

He concluded his remarks by saying that Iran stands ready to do whatever in its power to restore the OPCW's authority and promote the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC.

## Judiciary to prosecute 45 Americans linked with U.S. sanctions on Iran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights, Ali Bagheri-Kani, has announced that 45 people linked to the U.S. sanctions on Iran will be prosecuted.

"We handed the names of 45 natural and legal Americans, who were somehow involved in the cruel and inhumane sanctions against the Iranian nation, to the Tehran prosecutor," Bagheri-Kani said on Monday, ISNA reported.

"With all legal and judicial tools that we have at our disposal at the domestic and international levels, we're standing up to such crimes with strong determination," he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history against Iran.

According to the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran was obliged to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Trump described the JCPOA "the worst deal in history".

Iranian officials have denounced the U.S. sanctions as "economic terrorism", with the aim of bringing about the collapse of the Iranian economy. President Hassan Rouhani has also said the U.S. sanctions were aimed at causing economic collapse in Iran but failed to do so.

"We have been under sanctions since 1980 but since 2017 an economic war began. Right now, it is not sanctions but an economic war. The U.S., with all its capacities such as dollar, banking ties, and its relations with multinational companies, has waged an economic war against us," Rouhani said on September 23.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Bagheri-Kani said Iran is a leading country in treating various diseases despite all restrictions, adding that this does not downplay the inhumane nature of the conduct of Iran's enemies, particularly the U.S.

He said the Iranian youths are doing their best to prevent any disruption to the country's health sector.

"As the judicial apparatus, we strive to not let the enemies' hostile acts go unanswered," he said, adding, "The Americans have been exerting maximum pressure [on Iran] and the European countries are cooperating with this effort and have even extended the sanctions to include the health sector."

He explained that many crimes have been committed with regard to the cruel sanctions. The European countries, he added, which have imposed sanctions on the supply of medicine to Iran, are not different from members of the Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group and other terrorists.

In remarks last month, Bagheri-Kani strongly protested against interferences by the European embassies in Iran's internal affairs.

"If you [the European embassies] do not know anything about righteousness, justice and fairness, at least respect diplomatic norms and avoid becoming a loudspeaker to spread lies like an opposition group," he said during a meeting of the Judiciary's high council on September 14.

His comments came after a number of European embassies and envoys to Iran, including the German ambassador, made comments in reaction to the execution of 27-year-old Navid Afkari who had been convicted of murder.

# Tehran urges Armenia to respect Azerbaijan's territorial integrity

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei on Tuesday called on Armenia to evacuate the occupied areas of Azerbaijan and respect the neighboring country's territorial integrity.

"Our principal stance on the dispute between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia has been stated unequivocally," Rabiei said at a press conference. "We underline the protection of the Republic of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and respect toward the United Nations Charter and international law."

He said Iran is seeking peace and dialogue in the region, warning against interference by other countries in the dispute between the two countries, IRNA reported.

The spokesman also expressed concern over a number of mortar shells that accidentally hit Iran, saying, "We are deeply concerned about the lives and properties of our citizens in the border areas."

"In case of recurrence of these incidents, we'll consider all available options and will not be indifferent to it," he added.

**■ Defense and interior ministers warn Azerbaijan, Armenia over mortar shells landing in Iran**

On Tuesday, Defense Minister Amir Hatami warned Azerbaijan and Armenia that the hitting of stray shell at Iran is "unacceptable".

"The lives of citizens and the security of the sacred territory of Islamic Iran is an important and crucial issue, and it is by no means acceptable that due to carelessness and inattention by the warring sides a bullet is fired at our territory," Hatami asserted.

A day earlier, Iranian Interior Minister



Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli warned neighbors Azerbaijan and Armenia, who are involved in deadly clashes, that Iran will not tolerate insecurity at its borders.

"We have advised and warned the neighboring states that we will not tolerate insecurity, interference, or any other measure damaging the security of our people in those regions," Rahmani-Fazli told reporters, according to Tasnim.

He expressed hope that the two warring countries would observe international law that includes respect to national sovereignty and rights of all countries, saying Iran is monitoring the border areas carefully.

Pointing to the mortar shells that hit Iran,

the minister said Tehran will give stronger warnings to the warring sides if such incidents occur again.

Clashes erupted between Azerbaijan and Armenia on September 27, which led to the killing and injury of dozens on both sides. The two countries are fighting over a breakaway that is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but controlled by local Armenian forces who are backed by Armenia.

The breakaway of Nagorno-Karabakh has long been a source of conflict between Baku and Yerevan since the early years of the 1990s when the two sides fought a years-long war over the disputed region that led to the Armenian forces declaring independence

## Leader's aide calls on Armenia to retreat from Azerbaijani territory

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has called on Armenia to return the occupied parts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including seven cities.

"The war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, two neighbors of Iran, and some developments such as the involvement of the Zionist regime, Turkey and Takfiri terrorist group in this war and the occasional firing of bullets and mortars toward Iran's soil are among concerning issues that must be immediately stopped," Mehr on Tuesday quoted Velayati as saying.

Velayati, who made the remarks in an interview with the Keyhan newspaper published on Tuesday, said Iran respects all countries' territorial integrity and the principles of the UN Charter, pointing out that the territory of one country is occupied by another country in this case.

Four UN resolutions have been adopted in this regard, all of which require the Armenians to leave and return to the international borders, said Velayati who was Iran's foreign minister from 1981-1997.

"All of us who are members of the United Nations must abide by those principles. Therefore, we want Armenia to

return these occupied parts to the Republic of Azerbaijan," Velayati stated.

"More than one million Azerbaijanis have been displaced by the occupation of these areas and must return to their homeland soon. Just as we oppose the occupation of Palestine by the Zionist regime, we have the same position here," he added.

Heavy clashes have been underway since late last month between Azerbaijani and Armenian military forces over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Both sides blame each other for initiating the fighting in the Caucasus Mountains.

Hundreds have been killed since the recent fighting erupted, making it the worst spate of fighting between the two former Soviet republics since the 1990s.

Azerbaijan and Armenia have been locked in a conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region for years. Although a ceasefire was agreed in 1994, Baku and Yerevan continue to accuse each other of shooting attacks around the enclave.

"The solution is by no means military, but must be resolved politically," Velayati said. "Therefore, we oppose any military action by anyone. Because the losers of this war are the people, especially since the residential areas have been bombed lately."

**Velayati says "the involvement of the Zionist regime, Turkey and the Takfiri terrorist group" in the Nagorno-Karabakh war "are among concerning issues that must be immediately stopped."**

## National Interest cites reasons why America won't win a sanctions showdown over Iran

**The United States now has neither the legal standing nor the political capital to coax Europe into doing what it wants.**

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 makes for dry reading. The resolution and its appendices are over a hundred pages long, laying out the provisions of the UN's acceptance of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) brokered between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany. At its core, the resolution accepts the JCPOA and reinforces it with international law. Iran, it states, will refrain from certain levels of nuclear enrichment. In exchange, the Security Council will gradually lift the sanctions it applied against the country from 2006 until 2010.

The resolution is relevant again today because the Trump administration's newest effort to sanction Iran relies heavily on a controversial reading of one of its provisions. On August 14, America introduced a resolution that would have extended the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Iran, which is scheduled to expire on October 18. Russia and China, who want to sell weapons to Iran, voted against the resolution, and eleven of the remaining twelve nations abstained, killing the measure and keeping the October expiration date intact. Faced with this outcome, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo invoked Resolution 2231 in an August 20 letter to UNSC President Dian Triansyah Djani of Indonesia, demanding a reimposition of all JCPOA sanctions and therefore blocking the arms embargo's sunset.

Could Pompeo actually do this? The key provision in Resolution 2231 lies in its eleventh paragraph, which decrees that:

*"Within 30 days of receiving a notification by a JCPOA participant State of an issue that the JCPOA participant State believes constitutes significant non-performance of commitments under the JCPOA, it shall vote*

*on a draft resolution to continue in effect the terminations in paragraph 7(a) of this resolution."*

This paragraph lays out the principle of "snapback sanctions." If any "participant state" in the JCPOA feels that Iran is in "significant non-performance of commitments," then it can file a complaint with the UN Security Council and request an end to sanctions relief. Once this complaint has been made, the other members of the Security Council can either accept it or pass a resolution saying that the complaint is invalid and sanctions relief should continue. Crucially, however, that resolution can then be vetoed by any of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Therefore, in effect, any of the P5 countries can force the others to reimpose sanctions on Iran by filing a complaint and vetoing any attempt to invalidate it. This is the mechanism Pompeo intended to use when he delivered his August 20 message.

However, there is a big problem with this: The United States is, by any conventional understanding, no longer a "participant state" in the JCPOA, so it lacks the standing to file a complaint. The Trump administration's response, explained in Foreign Policy by Richard Goldberg of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, is that America's status as a "JCPOA participant" is permanent, its actual commitment to the deal notwithstanding. If so, from a legal perspective, Pompeo's actions are valid, and the Security Council must snap back its sanctions. However, others have criticized this argument. In the same magazine, Iranian journalist Saheb Sadeghi calls this understanding of Paragraph 11 "shallow and legally tenuous," and also notes that if the United States was still a participant in the deal, it would be legally required to fulfill its own

share of the obligations—obligations which, of course, it stopped complying with in 2018.

Legal chicanery aside, the United States has made it clear that it is not currently participating in the JCPOA. Trump has been using this as a talking point for two years, and the rest of the UN Security Council has taken him at his word. Consequently, after Pompeo issued his letter on August 20, thirteen of the fifteen current members of the UN Security Council announced that they viewed Pompeo's proclamation as invalid. Rather than introduce a resolution to vote down Pompeo's complaint, the rest of the Security Council simply ignored the complaint altogether. This group included Russia and China, but it also included Britain, France, and Germany—our historic allies, and all the original signatories to the JCPOA—as well as Belgium, Indonesia, Vietnam, Niger, South Africa, Estonia, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (The Dominican Republic is still in America's corner.) Since there was no consensus on the legitimacy of the complaint, Djani declined to act on it.

Predictably, the Trump administration officials proclaimed indifference. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft said that the United States government did not "need a cheering section to validate our moral compass." Still, the UN setback was unquestionably embarrassing. It became a great deal more embarrassing when, on September 19, Pompeo issued a statement insisting that, since the UN Security Council's thirty-day period had elapsed, all economic sanctions on Iran were legally back in effect, and demanding that "all UN Member States [...] fully comply with their obligations to implement these measures." So far, all UN member states have ignored him.

from Azerbaijan and also occupying parts of Azerbaijani territories surrounding the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan has said the end of war is possible when Armenia retreats from the disputed region and apologizes to the Azerbaijani people. President Ilham Aliyev has said he has been receiving calls asking him what Azerbaijan's condition is to agree to a ceasefire.

Iran has called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to stop the war and start a dialogue to resolve the issue.

"There is no military solution for this decades-long conflict. While respecting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, we reiterate that a ceasefire must be declared to start massive political talks," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Katibzadeh said on Monday.

Over the past few days, a number of rockets and mortar shells landed inside Iran on the borders with the conflict zone, causing damage to village homes and injuring at least two people.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will by no means tolerate any violation against its borders and soil. To this end, Iran has prepared a plan and it hopes to move forward with it through making consultations with the two sides and with the help of other neighboring countries," Khatibzadeh said.

"Movements in the border areas of our country are being seriously and sensitively monitored..., and in this regard, while declaring any attack by any of the warring parties on our country is intolerable, we seriously warn all parties to seriously take care in this regard," he added.



He also described the war as against the interests of the people of the two countries and the security of the region. "Some outsiders are also increasing tensions, such as the Zionist regime and Turkey," he said.

"The Zionist regime itself is illegitimate and is based on the occupation of other territories, namely Palestine, and it has no right to comment on these matters at all," the adviser said. "This regime does nothing but inciting sedition in this region."

Velayati also underlined Iran's readiness to offer assistance for mediation and peace between the two neighboring countries.

"We firmly believe that peace will be established in the interests of both countries," the former chief diplomat added.

Tehran was unsurprisingly delighted by the impending expiration of its arms embargo and by the United States' evident miscalculation of its own influence on its allies. On September 21, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's most skilled defender, addressed the Council on Foreign Relations, saying, "The behavior of governments internationally indicates whether those governments are respected international actors. And today, as we stand, it is the United States which is considered by the international community as an irresponsible actor that violates international norms, that acts arbitrarily based on, basically, will to use force and power."

"An irresponsible actor that violates international norms?"

Because of the Trump administration's no-holds-barred, utterly transactional approach to foreign policy in general, the United States now has neither the legal standing nor the political capital to coax Europe into doing what it wants.

After the arms embargo's expiration in two weeks, the Islamic Republic will promptly begin buying conventional arms from Russia and China, notably including modern fighter aircraft to replace its aging fleet. The Trump administration will be put in the difficult position of what to do next. Either it can allow the sale, or it can double down and try to discourage Russia and China from selling to Iran by threatening reprisals. But if Russia and China call America's bluff and go ahead with the sale, and if Europe continues to refuse to follow the Trump administration's lead, its next steps are much less clear. No matter his decision, if the president is re-elected in November, the escalating conflict with Iran is likely to dominate his second term.



# 26 countries criticize sanctions amid Covid-19

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Speaking on behalf 26 countries, Zhang Jun, the Chinese permanent representative to the United Nations, issued a joint statement on Monday at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, calling for an immediate lifting of unilateral sanctions, criticizing Western countries for violating human rights, and voicing concern on racial discrimination.

The joint statement said “unilateral coercive measures” violate the UN Charter and international law.

“We continue to witness the application of unilateral coercive measures, which are contrary to the purpose and principles of the UN Charter and international law, multilateralism and the basic norms of international relations,” the Chinese envoy said, noting that these measures violate the human rights by hindering the well-being of the population in the affected countries, in particular women, children, including adolescents, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Chinese ambassador to the UN made the statement on behalf of Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, Laos, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe, according to a Xinhua report.

Zhang added that the coercive measures undermine the right to health because they impede access to medicines and medical technologies,



equipment, and supplies. “This is particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Senior UN officials and the international community have recognized the heavy, negative impact of these measures,” he said.

The U.S. and other Western sanctions have severely affected countries grappling with the coronavirus by impeding the supply of medical goods. Iran is one of these countries that is simultaneously grappling with Covid-19 and sanctions. Iranian officials have said many times that U.S. sanctions on the country have impeded Iran's ability to fight the coronavirus

pandemic.

“Donald Trump is maliciously tightening U.S. illegal sanctions with aim of draining Iran's resources needed in the fight against COVID19—while our citizens are dying from it. The world can no longer be silent as U.S. economic terrorism is supplanted by its medical terrorism,” tweeted Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on March 7, 2020.

The foreign minister recently said U.S. officials are lying that their sanctions don't affect purchase of humanitarian goods by Iran. “Whatever the Americans are saying about

their sanctions not affecting humanitarian items, it's just a lie... It's basically medical terrorism,” Zarif said in an interview with Russia Today in September, adding that due to U.S. sanctions, Iran could not use its “own money” to ensure access to coronavirus vaccines under development.

In March, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on the Group of 20 nations to lift sanctions against other countries in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

“I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity, not exclusion,” he wrote in a letter to the G20 leaders.

The joint statement has welcomed the UN secretary-general's appeal of March 26, 2020, on the lifting of sanctions. It also highlighted the work of the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on human rights.

“We take note of the work on this issue of the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, other special procedures of the Human Rights Council and relevant human rights treaty bodies. We look forward to their further elaboration of this subject,” said Zhang. “We seize this opportunity to call for the complete and immediate lifting of unilateral coercive measures, in order to ensure the full, effective and efficient response of all members of the international community to COVID-19.”

## Toward Hussein (AS)

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Despite the travel restrictions imposed following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in Iran and Iraq, the Iranian people made preparations to commemorate the Day of Arbaeen alongside their Iraqi coreligionists through online campaigns, a move that highlighted the deep impacts past years' Arbaeen had on the people across the border.

During the past years, Iranian and Iraqi people from all walks of life have managed to take part in processions held in the run-up to the Day of Arbaeen, which arrives 40 days after the Day of Ashura, which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala on October 10, 680 (Muharram 10, 61 AH), nearly 14 centuries ago.

But this year, the Iranians are unable to participate in the Great Walk of Arbaeen due to coronavirus-related travel restrictions in Iraq and Iran. Each year, millions of Iranians flock to western and southwestern Iranian provinces bordering Iraq and then travel to the Iraqi city of Karbala on foot from there. This year, a few numbers of Iranians headed to the border crossings with Iraq in an effort to travel to Karbala. But the borders were closed due to coronavirus restrictions. This happened despite the fact that Iranian officials have warned the pilgrims against heading to the borders.

In late September, the Iranian police chief asked pilgrims not to go to border crossings because the police will prevent them from crossing the borders due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in neighboring Iraq.

Iraq and Iran both are facing a new wave of Covid-19 infections. On Tuesday, the Iranian Health Ministry announced 227 new Covid-19 deaths, raising the fatalities to 27,419. It also reported a record high number of 4151 new daily infections over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number to 497,825.

Iraq with a population half of Iran has reported similar

numbers. On Tuesday, the Iraqi Health Ministry announced 4,172 new daily Covid-19 infections, raising the total number to 387,191. According to the ministry, 9,531 Iraqis have lost their lives due to the novel coronavirus so far.

In light of these numbers, Iran and Iraq have closed their borders, effectively banning the Arbaeen ceremony, which is considered as a special day in the calendars of both Iran and Iraq. Of course, Iraqis, unlike the Iranians, are allowed to take part in the Great Walk of Arbaeen given that the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located in their country.

But the Iranian people, who used to stage stately Arbaeen processions, are not going to travel to Iraq. They are not giving up. They have launched online campaigns to honor the memory of Imam Hussein (AS), whose martyrdom played a tremendous role in turning the animosity between Iran and Iraq into amity over the past years, especially after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq in 2003.

The two countries fought a deadly war in the 1980s after the Saddam regime invaded Iran. The Iran-Iraq war was the longest conventional war and the second-longest war of the twentieth century, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of people from both sides losing their lives.

But the Arbaeen ceremony created unprecedented amity between the Iranian and the Iraqi people as millions of Iranian pilgrims each year – with the exception of this year- visit Iraq and socialize with their Iraqi coreligionists. Most of these pilgrims have been accommodated in Iraqis' own houses, creating a unique opportunity for both sides to closely know each other.

Thanks to the Arbaeen ceremony, Iraqis and Iranians broke away from the past, creating the largest religious gathering in the world during each Arbaeen. These strong bonds have been further strengthened over the past few

years, especially after the emergence of the Daesh terrorist group when Iran rushed to help Iraqis thwart the attack of the group, which was marching toward Baghdad after occupying large swaths of the Iraqi territories. Iran gave weapons and logistic support to Iraq to help defeat Daesh.

Nouri al-Maliki, the former Iraqi prime minister, during whose tenure Daesh occupied large territories of Iraq, has praised Iran for opening its arms depots to the Iraqis during the war against Daesh.

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

In return, Iraq is helping Iran get through the economic pressure that the U.S. put on it. Trade between Iran and Iraq now stands at \$12 billion a year. During a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in June in Tehran, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran and Iraq are willing to increase bilateral trade to \$20 billion up from the current \$12 billion.

During his visit, al-Kadhimi also praised the security cooperation between Iran and Iraq and their economic ties.

“We fought against terrorism and Takfiri groups, and Iran was the first country to stand by Iraq in this fight. We will not forget this. That's why Iraq is standing by Iran so that it tackles its economic challenges. Iraq has become a market for Iranian goods,” he said.

As they commemorate the Day of Arbaeen, Iran and Iraq stand ready to protect the strong relationship they built since 2003 and keep alive the memory of Imam Hussein (AS), who became a symbol of their friendship.

## Rouhani calls on countries to ignore U.S. sanctions

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – President Hassan Rouhani has called on the global community to disregard U.S. sanctions and to avoid being complicit in “U.S. inhumane measures” against Iran, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

“This nation does not expect countries unknowingly complying with the sanctions to be complicit in U.S. inhumane measures,” the president said at a meeting of the government's Economic Coordination Headquarters on Tuesday.

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – on May 8, 2018, reimposing sweeping economic sanctions on Iran, restrictions that American officials described

as the “the strongest sanctions in history.”

In September, the U.S. sought to reimpose all UN sanctions on Iran but all JCPOA parties along with almost all UN Security Council members, with the exception of the Dominican Republic, opposed the U.S. push to restore the international sanctions.

Rouhani compared the impact of the U.S. sanctions on Iran with the economic implications of Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s, saying the impact of the U.S. “economic war” will become obvious at later times just like the impact of the eight-year war.

“The scope of the economic war imposed on the country will become clearer to the people in the future, just like the precise dimensions of the imposed war, which became clear only after the war was over,” the president said.

He also called on the Foreign Ministry

and other legal institutions to make efforts to unblock Iranian assets in frozen bank accounts abroad.

Earlier, Rouhani said the Americans seek to topple the Iranian government through sanctions and economic pressures.

“When Saddam [Hussein] attacked Iran, he told reporters that, within few days, he will be making an interview with them in Ahwaz. In 2018, the Americans, while imposing an economic war [on Iran], also said they would be entering Tehran in few months and that these guys will not be able to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Revolution,” said the president, adding, “The U.S. asked the Europeans to give it only a three-month time span. Two European leaders told me that the U.S. told them that ‘if you refrain from helping them [Iran], the job will be

done in three months given the economic pressures we have put on them.”

He went further to say, “Saddam's goal was to topple the establishment, hurt the country or at least rip an agreement. The Americans wanted the same thing. They wanted to overthrow the establishment, create unrest, or destroy an agreement. But they failed to achieve their goals and their calculations were wrong.”

First Vice-President Ishaq Jahangiri also echoed the same remarks, saying the main goal of the U.S. sanctions is to bring Iran's economy to collapse.

“Their goal was to bring about the collapse of Iran's economy but the government, through planning, did not allow them to achieve their goal. Fortunately, the country's economy is still kept afloat,” Jahangiri said.

## Deployment of U.S. aircraft carriers to Persian Gulf reduces risk of war: IRGC general

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – A top Iranian general has said the deployment of U.S. aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf region decreases the chance of war between Iran and the U.S.

“Over the past years, the Americans have never won any wars. And today they do not see themselves in a position to go to war with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian nation. And when they deploy a certain aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf with great fanfare, this means that they are losers,” said General Yadollah Javani, the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for political affairs, according to a Fars news agency report.

The general added, “Conversely, we believe that whenever the Americans deploy their carriers to the Persian Gulf, the chance of war decreases because they know well that

their arrival in the Persian Gulf amounts to their definite death and inevitable destruction. Because it's impossible for the Americans to leave the region safe and sound if a war breaks out in the region.”

General Javani made the remarks in an interview with Iraq's Alatejah TV.

He also warned the U.S. against targeting the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), saying if the Americans attack the forces, the result will be different.

“The Americans threaten to attack the units and bases of the PMF but I think the PMF has acted gallantly and exercised restraint so far. If one day it's decided that the Iraqi popular forces would go to war with the Americans, the result will be different,” the top general cautioned.

According to General Javani, the Americans gave their

troops diapers to protect themselves.

“Americans should not forget how they gave their soldiers diapers to protect themselves and get into less trouble,” the IRGC general noted.

He said the Americans have fled Iraq by signing a security agreement with Iraq, which led to the U.S. withdrawing some of its forces from the country.

The U.S. also threatened to close its embassy in Iraq in recent weeks. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has held a telephone conversation with Iraqi President Barham Salih to warn about the consequences of the embassy closure. The U.S. has repositioned some of its troops in Iraq, closing a number of its military bases in Iraq. However, it still has troops stationed in Western and Northern Iraq.

## SPORTS

### I have full trust in my team: Dragan Skocic

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** – Iran national football team coach Dragan Skocic says that he has full faith in his players.

Iran football delegation left Tehran on Tuesday for Tashkent to meet Uzbekistan in a friendly match slated for Thursday.



The warm-up will be Skocic's first match since taking charge of Iran football team.

“We are well aware of the fans' expectation and fight to make it happen,” Skocic said in a message.

“First of all, we want to spread positive energy and fresh spirit to the players. Then, we will inform them about our expectations,” he added.

“We strongly believe that the current team have great potentials and we must meet the expectations,” the Croat added.

The ‘Persian Leopards’ are also scheduled to face Mali five days after Uzbekistan's match as part of preparation for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

The 2022 World Cup qualifiers scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Iran sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

### Allahyar Sayyadmanesh joins Zorya Luhansk: official

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** – Iranian forward Allahyar Sayyadmanesh has officially joined Ukrainian football club Zorya Luhansk.

The 20-year-old striker has penned an 18-month contract with Zorya for an undisclosed fee.

Sayyadmanesh played on loan in Istanbulspor for half a season last year but failed to score a goal.

He penned a five-year deal with Fenerbahce however didn't live up to the expectations.

The forward was a member of Iran football team who qualified for the 2017 FIFA U 17 World Cup quarter-final in India.

He made his Iran national football team debut on June 6, 2019 against Syria and scored a goal.

### Persepolis move up at Soccer Clubs Ranking

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** – Iranian football club Persepolis have moved up 29 places at the Soccer Clubs Ranking.

The Reds are 94th in the world and fourth in Asia behind Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal, Japanese team Kawasaki Frontal and Korean Jeonbuk.

On Saturday, the Iranian giants have qualified for the 2020 AFC Champions League final for the second time in three years.

Persepolis archrivals Esteghlal have moved nine places down to 220th in the ranking.

Sepahan of Iran have also climbed 151 places to 363rd in the ranking.

Bayern Munich lead the ranking, followed by Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain.

### Shoja Khalilzadeh chosen ACL Player of the Week

Persepolis' Shojae Khalilzadeh has been voted by the fans as the 2020 AFC Champions League Semi-final (WEST) Player of the Week.

Using data provided by Stats Perform, the AFC's official data provider, Persepolis defender Khalilzadeh scored highest in the ratings, with the ever-dependable center-back earning a 6.9 score after another assured performance at the back.

The 31-year-old gained possession 16 times for his team, made five clearances and three interceptions while he also held his nerve to score Persepolis' fourth penalty in the shootout to help his team advance to a second final in three years.

Khalilzadeh's teammate Ahmad Noorollahi came next in Stats Perform's ratings with the midfielder gaining a 6.8 score following an excellent all-round display.

(Source: the-afc)

### I promise I can score simple goals: Jahanbakhsh

Alireza Jahanbakhsh has scored with two sumptuous strikes already this season but believes he can provide his fair share of tap-ins as well.

The Iran international found the back of the net in the Carabao Cup ties against Portsmouth and Preston and was named man of the match in the 4-0 win over Pompey.

“A lot of people ask me why I only score great goals! I can score simple ones as well but it depends on the situation or the position that I play. Sometimes you can turn and have the opportunity to take the shot, but then there are times where you're not quite where the ball lands.

“Last season, I tried to be important to the team and score goals and I could have scored a few more.

“I don't necessarily try to score good goals, sometimes it just falls for me and I think ‘I will give it a try’ and it goes in the right direction. We practice in training dealing with difficult balls, sometimes they go in and sometimes I get them wrong.”

(Source: Brighton&HoveAlbion.com)



## EGFI ranks 1st among region’s Islamic funds for 2nd time

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) has been ranked first in terms of performance among the region’s Islamic funds for the second time, IRNA reported on Tuesday, quoting the EGFI head.

According to Afrouz Bahrami, the rate of EGFI’s services has grown significantly this year due to the development of activities and diversification of services in lines with the standards of developed countries.

The fund was ranked first among the countries of Aman Union due to a 200-percent growth in performance in 2019 and for the first time, the EGFI head was appointed as the chairwoman of the Aman Union, which is one of the world’s largest export credit insurance organizations, Bahrami said.

The EGFI successes have been achieved while strong competitors such as Turkey with a capital of \$2 billion and Saudi Arabia with a capital of \$4 billion are among Islamic countries, the official stressed.

Iran has exported over \$10.87 billion of non-oil commodities during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), of which about \$1.3 billion were done through the Export Guarantee Fund and by its supports, according to Bahrami.

Affiliated to the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran has been established in order to expand and promote exports, to protect exporters against non-commercial risks, which are normally not covered by the insurance companies, and to guarantee credits used for export of such goods and services.

## Furniture exports less than \$10m in first half of year

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran’s furniture exports was less than \$10 million during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), the chairman of Iranian Furniture Producers and Exporters announced.



Hassan Ahmadian said the low amount of export has been due to the global spread of coronavirus and some problems in supply of the raw materials, adding it is while the country had exported \$80 million of furniture in the past Iranian year, ISNA reported.

He said if the problems due to providing the required raw materials continue, the exports will reduce even more, and given the eight-percent shares of furniture industry in the country’s employment, it will worsen the jobless status.

Ahmadian further said that the domestic need for furniture has been fully supplied by the domestic producers in the past year, while the furniture import has been up to \$500 million in some years.

Over 80,000 units are currently active in Iran’s furniture industry.

Iraq and Afghanistan are Iran’s major importers of Iranian furniture.

## Modern irrigation being established in 10,000 hectares of South Khorasan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Modern irrigation systems are being established in 10,000 hectares of farmlands in South Khorasan Province, east of Iran, in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), Ali-Morad Akbari, the deputy agriculture minister for water and soil affairs, stated.

Following the Iranian Agriculture Ministry’s new irrigation systems development plan, 174,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems in the current year, the ministry’s project manager for the mentioned development plan said in mid-September.



According to Abbas Zare, the purpose of implementing the plan of modern irrigation systems is to increase the productivity and sustainability of water and soil resources in the country to ensure the sustainable production of agricultural products.

“Following the support of the government and the Leader for this project, of 8.7 million hectares of the country’s total irrigated lands, so far about 2.4 million hectares have been equipped with modern systems,” Zare said.

The official noted that in the current Iranian calendar year, nearly 16 trillion rials (about \$380.9 million) has been allocated from the annual budget and the National Development Fund (NDF) for the development of various irrigation methods.

With the mentioned funding, so far the irrigation systems are under construction for 130,000 hectares, while for 44,000 hectares the systems have been put into operation, he explained.

According to the official, the implementation of this plan is going to increase the irrigation efficiency of the mentioned farmlands to 44 percent which will increase the production capacity of agricultural products by 30 percent.

Back in May, Zare had said that the plan for developing new irrigation systems has witnessed a significant leap in the past three years, as it is most effective in increasing the efficiency of water and soil resources and strengthening the country’s food security.

Over the past three years, each year, an average of 150,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems, and we have witnessed a 300 percent jump, he stated.

The official expressed hope that considering the budget allocation for the provinces at the beginning of the current Iranian year, the ministry would be able to develop the project in terms of both quantity and quality.MA

# Iran’s major plans for developing its mining industry

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** — In the past few years with new resilient economy strategies coming into play, the mining sector has become a major point of focus for the Iranian government and various organizations and bodies active in this sector have been tasked to implement new programs for boosting this sector.

As a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in the country, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has been playing a significant part in the mentioned planning.

The organization has been implementing several new programs in all the main fields of the mining industry including exploration, machinery development, extraction and also reviving the country’s idle mines.

According to the IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour, IMIDRO has put the development of mines and mining industries on the agenda with three main strategies: increasing exploration operations, developing infrastructure, and reviving the country’s idle small-scale mines.

According to the official, following these major axes, the organization so far has managed to expand the country’s mining exploration operations up to 650,000 square kilometers,



while increasing the budget for the development of the mining infrastructure in 31 provinces.

As for achieving new technologies, the organization has put applying modern technology a top agenda of its activity, and cooperation with the country’s renowned universities has become one of the organization’s main approaches to this end.

Gharibpour has stated that his organization supports the research projects required in the industry, saying that paying attention to

the scientific subjects and modern technology through cooperation with the universities is seriously followed up by IMIDRO.

The plan to revive, activate, and develop small-scale mines, which is at the forefront of IMIDRO’s missions, is also being pursued in several provinces. In this regard, various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite and dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for re-

solving the issues.

Following the implementation of the program for reviving idle small mines across Iran, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has revived 42 such mines in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21).

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step toward materializing “Surge in Production”, which is the motto of the current Iranian calendar year it also plays a significant role in job creation throughout the country, according to Gharibpour.

As reported, reviving the small mines has created 300 job opportunities in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

Based on the data released by Iran Minerals Production and Supply Company (IMPASCO), during the mentioned period, 510 mines across the country have been identified and prioritized under the framework of the small-scale mining reviving activation and development program.

Holding more than 10 joint technical committee meetings with investors were reported as other measures taken in this program in the current calendar year.

Gharibpour has mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of “Resistance Economy”, saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

## Over \$5b supplied for import of basic goods in 6 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has managed to supply \$5.267 billion for importing basic commodities in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), IRIB reported.

According to the CBI office of public relations, collaborating with the ministries of industry, agriculture, and health, the bank has supplied foreign currency with an official rate to the importers of basic goods to support their activities and also to meet the country’s needs.

As reported, of the mentioned figure, about \$4 billion has been allocated for the imports of goods and \$1 billion was used to import medicine.

Based on CBI data, the bank plans to supply a total of \$8 billion for the imports of basic goods in the current Iranian



calendar year, of which \$5.5 billion is going to be allocated for major consumable goods like corn, oilseeds, crude oil, meal, barley and wheat, over \$1.5 billion will be supplied

for the imports of medicine, and about \$1 billion is going to go to the imports of medical equipment.

Back in May, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had said that the bank supplied over \$3 billion foreign currency for importing basic goods in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-April 19).

According to Hemmati, despite the U.S. sanctions and the pressures imposed on the Iranian economy, the country managed to supply over \$35 billion for the imports of basic commodities in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

The official said that of the mentioned figure, about \$14 billion was allocated for importing essential goods such as medicine, medical equipment, and livestock feed, and the rest was used for supplying raw materials and machinery.

## Expansion of co-op between RAI, ports atop agenda

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — In a meeting with the members of the Iranian Private Ports Association, Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Saeed Rasouli has stressed the expansion of cooperation between his organization and the country’s ports, IRIB reported on Monday.

In this meeting, which was aimed at the expansion of cooperation and investment in the logistics and rail transportation industry of the country, Rasouli referred to RAI’s new approach for accelerating the development of the rail transportation industry and emphasized his company’s readiness to attract investment in the field of logistics and railway development.

“Now the company has the best land, equipment and up-to-date technology, as well as specialized and committed manpower at its service and according to the new approach of the company, RAI is ready to cooperate and attract private sector investments,” the official said.

Further in the meeting, Mohammad Sadegh Kaveh, head of the Iranian Private Ports Association, welcomed the opportunity for cooperation with the railway company and called for an operational plan for implementation of agreements

in this regard.

It was also decided in the meeting that a joint committee would be formed with the presence of representatives of RAI and the Iranian Private Ports Association to develop a roadmap for mutual cooperation.

This committee is going to hold periodic meetings during which cooperation programs will be approved to be implemented more quickly.

Earlier this year, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami stated that connecting the production centers and cargo hubs to the national railway network is one of the main programs of the government.

The minister mentioned the government’s efforts for the expansion of railway network and said, “We have currently 14,000 kilometers of railway throughout the country, 14,000 kilometers are under study and construction, and it is expected that the length of the national railway network will reach 28,000 kilometers by the next five years.”

As previously reported, the transit of basic goods to the ports via railway network has increased significantly in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) compared to the previous year.

## West Azarbaijan Province exports commodities worth \$1b in H1

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of commodities exported from Iran’s northwestern province of West Azarbaijan stood at \$1 billion during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), according to a local customs official.

Tohid Azarbad put the weight of exported goods at 571,817 tons, IRNA reported.

Agricultural products, including watermelon and apple, as well as plastic products were the main items exported from West Azarbaijan during the said period, he stated.

The official also said that 151,868 tons of commodities valued at \$264 million were imported to the country via West Azarbaijan Province during the six-month period.

West Azarbaijan Province has some 967 kilometers of joint border with Turkey, Iraq, and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

As reported by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran’s non-oil trade during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year has reached \$30.349 billion.

The volume of traded goods was estimated at about 62.842 million tons, of which over 46.318 million tons were related to exports and about 16.524 million tons were imported goods.

Iran’s top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with over \$3.709 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$2.971 billion, the United Arab Emirates with over \$1.933 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.103 billion as well as Turkey with \$731 million.

China accounted for over 27 percent of Iran’s total exports, followed by Iraq, UAE, Afghanistan, and Turkey with 21.9 percent, 14.2 percent, 8.1 percent, and 45.3 percent respectively.

Polyethylene, natural gas, liquefied propane, and other light oils and products were Iran’s major exported items.

More than 70 percent of the imported goods were basic goods and the rest were mainly raw materials, machinery and spare parts for production units.

The top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$4.295 billion, the UAE with \$3.961 billion, Turkey with \$1.814 billion, India with \$1.097 billion, and Germany with \$835 million worth of imports.

China accounted for nearly 26 percent of Iran’s total imports, followed by UAE, Turkey, India, and Germany with 23 percent, 10.8 percent, 6.5 percent, and five percent, respectively.

## Rouhani inaugurates projects worth over \$3b in rural, nomadic areas

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani inaugurates 33,262 development and employment projects worth 131.22 trillion rials (about \$3.124 billion) in some rural areas and nomadic regions via video conference on Monday, IRNA reported.

The projects, which were inaugurated in the 27th week of inaugurating major national projects by the president, will create stable jobs for 86,894 persons.

Among the inaugurated projects, 625 projects were for the stable supply of drinking water to the nomadic areas.

Valued at 3.42 trillion rials (about \$81.4 million), the mentioned projects will supply drinking water to 21,000 nomadic families in Fars, Kerman, Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, Hormozgan, Alborz, Bushehr, Tehran, Hamedan, Ilam, Khuzestan, North Khorasan, and Ardebil provinces

The president also inaugurated projects for supplying electricity to 150 villages in 24 provinces in a ceremony attended by Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

These projects were inaugurated in the 23rd week of the

Energy Ministry’s A-B-Iran program, based on which every week several projects go operational in various provinces across the country.

In the inaugural ceremony of the rural, nomadic areas projects, which was also attended by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, Rouhani inaugurated 2,500 kilometers of rural road maintenance and improvement projects.

The president also inaugurated 6,941 residential units for the deprived people on Monday.

## INTA supports businesses during coronavirus outbreak

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran’s National Tax Administration (INTA) said since the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran, INTA has been supporting the country’s businesses by easing or extending their tax dues.

“From the very beginning of the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran, ITNA considered new tax deferral for the affected businesses, in coordination with the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters,” Omid-Ali Parsa told IRNA on Tuesday.

According to Parsa, the mentioned supports were offered to all the businesses since it was

difficult for the administration to differentiate between the ones that were affected by the outbreak and the ones that weren’t.

Back in May, the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) had called on the government for further easing of the tax rules on the private sector businesses affected by the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Extension of the tax deferrals offered by the government, returning of at least 50 percent of the value-added tax that exporters paid in the previous year, granting tax exemption or tax reduction of at least 5 percent for the previous year, and extension or renewal of all business



Iran’s National Tax Administration’s Head Omid-Ali Parsa

licenses without the need to obtain a tax certificate subject to Article 186 of the Law on direct taxes, were some of the supportive measures suggested

by the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie.

In late July, Parsa had announced the average tax rate in the country to be 28 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to the official, the figure will be less in the deprived provinces such as Lorestan and Ilam which will have an average tax rate of 15 percent.

Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand said in early June that the government considers tax as the main source of income for managing the country’s economy in the absence of oil revenues.



## News

## Assad calls Erdogan 'main instigator and initiator' of renewed Nagorno-Karabakh tensions

Syrian President Bashar Assad has called Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "the main instigator and initiator" of the ongoing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Let's be blunt and clear; Erdogan has supported terrorists in Syria, and he's been supporting terrorists in Libya, and he was the main instigator and initiator of the recent conflict that has been going on in Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia. So, I would sum up his behavior as dangerous, for different reasons", Assad stressed in an interview with Sputnik.

According to him, Damascus can confirm that Turkey is sending jihadists from Syria to Karabakh.

Explaining the reasons, the Syrian president claimed that Erdogan's manner "reflects the behavior of the Muslim Brotherhood".

"Second, because he's creating war in different areas to distract his own public opinion in Turkey from focusing on his behavior inside Turkey, especially after his scandalous relations with Daesh (ISIL) in Syria", Assad added, claiming that Daesh "used to sell Syrian oil through Turkey under the umbrella of the American Air Force".

We definitely can confirm it, not because we have evidence, but sometimes if you don't have evidence you have indicators. Turkey used terrorists coming from different countries in Syria. They used the same method in Libya; they used Syrian terrorists in Libya, maybe with other nationalities. So, it's self-evident and very probable that they are using that method in Nagorno-Karabakh because as I said earlier, they are the ones who started this problem, this conflict; they encouraged this conflict. They want to achieve something and they're going to use the same method", the Syrian president added.

## Bin Salman has made several trips to Tel Aviv: Former Israeli official

A former Israeli security official says the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, has paid several visits to Tel Aviv so far.

"Foreign reports indicate that Mohammed bin Salman has enjoyed the Tel Aviv sunshine several times," said the former Shin Bet official, who spoke to Lebanon's Al Mayadeen TV on condition of anonymity.

According to Press TV, this is not the first time that Bin Salman's trips to Israel are being disclosed. In October 2017, an Israeli official confirmed that Bin Salman had traveled to Israel and held consultations with senior officials there.

The visits come as Saudi Arabia and Israel do not have formal diplomatic relations. And while there had already been reports that the Israeli and Saudi regimes have been tilting toward one another in recent years, a confirmed visit by an official as high-ranking as bin Salman takes the matter to a completely new and potentially explosive level as anti-Israeli sentiments continue to be high on the Arab street.

## COVID-19 vaccine may be ready by year-end: WHO's Tedros

A vaccine against COVID-19 may be ready by year-end, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday, without elaborating.

According to Reuters, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, addressing the end of a two-day meeting of its Executive Board on the pandemic, said: "We will need vaccines and there is hope that by the end of this year we may have a vaccine. There is hope."

Nine experimental vaccines are in the pipeline of the WHO-led COVAX global vaccine facility that aims to distribute 2 billion doses by the end of 2021.

## UAE, Israel foreign ministers meet in Berlin

The foreign ministers of UAE and Israel visited the Holocaust Memorial in central Berlin during their "historic" first meeting in the German capital on Tuesday.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Israel's Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi bumped elbows in line with measures to halt the spread of the coronavirus, as they met face-to-face for the first time after their countries signed a US-brokered deal in mid-September to normalize relations.

## Resistance News

## SA rep to UN blasts Security Council over inaction on Israel

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — The South African government continues to raise the issue of Israel's occupation of Palestine at the United Nations.

In a powerful statement, Pretoria's representative to the UN, Ambassador Jerry Matjila, last week reminded UN members that Palestine and its people remain under illegal occupation and continue to be deprived of peace, justice, equality and dignity.

Speaking at the Security Council Meeting on the situation in the West Asia, including the question of Palestine, Matjila lambasted the UN over its inaction against Israel to end the occupation. "All resolutions adopted by the Council, be they unanimous or not, must be uniformly implemented. We cannot pick and choose which Security Council resolutions should be implemented."

Matjila also highlighted Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes and destruction of critical infrastructure, such as water, hygiene and sanitation facilities during the Covid-19 pandemic where regular hand-washing and social distancing is critical. "Where are these Palestinians, deprived of their rightful homes, meant to go," Matjila asked.

Referring to the stalled peace process and recent normalization agreements between Israel and Persian Gulf Arab states, Matjila reiterated South Africa's position that any solution to the Israeli occupation must include Palestinians as equal stake-holders and take into account the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Matjila's comments at the UN are in lock-step with the South African government's statement on the UAE-Israel agreement in August that it was "regrettable that yet another agreement related to the fate of the Palestinian people was reached without engaging the Palestinians."

## U.S. role in the world is shrinking: American academic

"Trump's infection means that his handling of the pandemic will remain a central issue of the campaign and he gets bad reviews for it."

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — A professor from Hamline University says that the role of the U.S. in the world is losing color as its economy is no longer dominant in the world.

"America's role in the world is shrinking because its economy is no longer as dominant as it used to be," David Schultz tells the Tehran Times.

However, Schultz says if Joe Biden wins the November elections he may present "a different version of U.S. economic nationalism that is not as rough as Trump's."

Following is the text of the interview with Schultz:

■ Can Trump's infection with the coronavirus affect the fate of the elections?

A: It has definitely changed the election where I think Biden is probably favored to win. Trump is a good campaigner and will not be able to do that for a couple of weeks and even after that it is not clear he can do political rallies which have been very successful for him.

The president's illness also means it will be his health and not Biden's that will be the topic of speculation. Finally, Trump's infection means that his handling of the pandemic will remain a central issue of the campaign and he gets bad reviews for it. Finally, On October

**"I do not see the basic support for Israel changing and I doubt the U.S. will pull out of Afghanistan."**



2, the latest employment news was not good for America and Trump cannot count on a recovering economy to help him.

■ The New York Times has revealed Trump had hidden tax information from public view that for a decade. Do you think such issues affect the results of upcoming elections?

A: Trump's taxes should have been the story of the week but it was eclipsed by the first debate and then by the president getting sick. I doubt his political supporters care about the tax issue very much and they will ignore it, thinking that Trump is a smart business person to have avoided taxes.

■ Do you predict a civil war if one of the nominees refuses to accept the election results?

No. Basically, the U.S. is a strong country and for the most part law abiding. People will accept the results. There will be some protests

but no civil war.

■ Can Trump resort to Insurrection Act to send active-duty troops onto streets to quell possible protests over the election results?

A: This would be very difficult to do. It is difficult to invoke this Act and bring out federal troops and I doubt that there will be much political support to do this.

■ Would sexual assault allegation against two or one of the nominees change the result of elections?

A: No. the president has faced many allegations and they have not hurt him with his base. For the most part the allegations against Biden have been ignored.

■ Regardless of who will be in the White House, do you expect a meaningful change in U.S. policies, including endless wars and intervention in other countries' domestic issues?

## Trump tests positive: A win-win situation

➔ However, given these facts, it seems that Trump's situation is concerning. He is now sick. He has ignored all the instructions given to him to protect himself. And he is under treatment with the experimental drug "Regeneron." The virus has hit several members of his consultants and three senators who interact with him. And Trump is an old and obese man, which will put him at great risk. In other words, his foolishness in dealing with the epidemic has got the best of him.

Although it might seem to be devious accusations, there are concerns that Trump might have resorted to claiming sickness as a way to escape the debates. This last accusation was falsely established. However, even to suggest, that is a cruel action. But in all case scenarios, whether Trump was sick or not, he is going to be considered as a hero among his partisans, whether he won the elections or not. Consequently, we should not be surprised if his unfortunate journey with the Coronavirus adds to his benefits in case he got well and won the elections.

Trump's democratic competitor Joe Biden went against its own declaration that he would not attack the president on Oct. 4th as he and his wife are infected with the virus. However, he continued to blame the president's policy in confronting the epidemic. Actually, Biden began to promote his status by benefiting from the situation which Trump's carelessness has created.

Biden might have thought that he won around. But this turned out to be a mistake. Before Trump's diagnosis as a Corona patient, polls showed that Biden's points in polls have dropped from 12 to 10. This clarifies that Trump's illness raised him 2 points without any troubles. Consequently, Trump has won public sympathy that might eventually lead

him to win the elections easily if he survived his illness.

Trump promised his partisans that he is going to be well soon. However, according to /npr.org/ on Oct. 5th, reports on Trump's medical condition are more on confusion than clarity. Nonetheless, Trump left the medical center on Oct. 5th at midnight for a spin. He went for a ride, saluted his partisans, and returned to the medical center. It seems that the situation is working very well for his benefit.

Currently, demonstrations are already filling the American streets against racism. The violence practiced by the American police forces is provoking hundreds of thousands in marching against the system. According to eyewitnesses, Trump's partisans are roaming the streets fully armed. Trump's administration has failed to grant social, financial, peace, security, and safety to the diversified American community. Finally, many professional and academic studies and articles across the web point out that America will be facing its own division as a united states into becoming a series of separate states.

If Trump became seriously ill, the country would be uncharted territory. Great America will be out of leadership as long as he is alive. This is what the American press has been discussing, and there are two examples in American history: President Roosevelt and President Woodward's cases. Hence, as long as Trump is alive, even if incompetent, no one can take his place, not even the vice president Mike Pence. Add to that the inability of Congress to conceive since many of its members has been diagnosed with COVID 19.

The other concerning issue is that Trump has refused to accept the elections' outcome and peacefully leave the White House if he loses the elections. He clearly stated that he does not trust the outcome of voting by mail, his main concern



that might be easily manipulated.

The third concerning issue is if Trump was seriously ill, it is expected that many voices will rise in favor of delaying the elections or they would fall into invalidating it. However, the delay will need the approval of the House of Representatives, which is led by the Democrats, and would be almost impossible to get. As a result, the Democrats might be accused of illegitimately stealing the elections. This narrative might lead to demonstrations and even violence among Trump's partisans.

Trump obviously is getting more sympathy among the Americans today. Luck would not have worked in his favor as it did today, or in the favor of "Regeneron" and its manufacturer, if Trump passed this phase with the least complications.

## China in talks with WHO over global use of local COVID19- vaccines

China is in talks to have its locally-produced COVID-19 vaccines assessed by the World Health Organization, as a step toward making them available for international use, a WHO official said on Tuesday.

Hundreds of thousands of essential workers and other groups considered at high risk in China have been given locally-developed vaccines even as clinical trials had not been fully completed, raising safety concerns among experts.

Socorro Escalante, WHO's coordinator for essential medicines and health technologies in the Western Pacific region, told a news conference conducted online that China had



held preliminary discussions with WHO to have its vaccines included in a list for emergency use.

The WHO's emergency use listing pro-

cedure allows unlicensed vaccines and treatments to be assessed to expedite their availability in public health emergencies. This helps WHO member states and UN procurement agencies to determine the acceptability of the vaccines.

"Potentially through this emergency use listing, the quality and safety of these vaccines and efficacy could be assessed... and then this could be made available for our licensees," Escalante said.

China has at least four experimental vaccines in the final stage of clinical trials — two are developed by state-backed China National Biotech Group (CNBG), and the remaining two

are from Sinovac Biotech SVA.O and CanSino Biologics 6185.HK688185.SS respectively.

They are tested in countries like Pakistan, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Last month, the UAE authorized the emergency use of a CNBG vaccine, the first international emergency clearance for one of China's vaccines, just six weeks after human trials began in the [Persian] Gulf Arab state.

The Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte said last month it would prioritize China and Russia in his country's global shopping for a vaccine.

(Source: Reuters)

## Is Trump's COVID19- contraction some kind of political stunt?

By Kevin Barrett

So the big news is that Donald Trump has allegedly been diagnosed with COVID-19. He tested positive. And, of course, the media is not asking questions about what precisely does that mean.

The New York Times reported several weeks ago that a recent study shows that up to 90% of the PCR tests, the viral tests, are in fact false positives, that is it, of the positives, nine out of 10 indicate people who don't have a viable infection that could hurt them or infect anyone else.

So, we would like to know precisely what kind of test the president had. And precisely what the results were, how many cycles did it take to show that he had the virus, assuming they're using that viral test. And then we would like to know also what kind of treatment he'll be getting.

The thing is, we have a hard time here in the United States believing anything the media tell us about this or anything else since they lied so atrociously about the political assassinations of the 1960s and then 9/11. The establishment here has no more credibility.

And so when they tell us that Trump has tested positive, we don't know whether this is some kind of political stunt by either camp. It could be the Trump camp, trying to get sympathy. Psychopaths often do use the pity ploy, as Martha Stout, the expert on psychopathy, calls it, where they pretend to have some kind of condition that causes them to suffer so that people feel sorry for them. That would not be something I would put past Trump. Or could it be coming from the other side? Somebody wants to discredit Trump by laughing at him for spurning masks and social distancing and playing down the virus's problem. And so now he's got

it. Maybe they gave it to him secretly. You just don't know.

In today's climate, the lies that we've been told, the outrageous stunts, the political stunts ranging from assassinations to false flag events, have gotten so out of control that nobody trusts the government anymore, which is why Trump was elected in the first place. People who voted for Trump were essentially voting to blow up the system.

And so this news is very hard to interpret. But I guess the upshot of it here is that it will have a big political effect in the coming days, and we'll see how Trump reacts to it. And if he does not have a bad case and appears to be weathering it quite well and shrugging it off, it might actually end up being a big political plus for him.

He'll look like a heroic survivor. People will admire him, and his base, in particular, will think that he was right to not take it too seriously.

(Source: Press TV)



## Rudkhan Castle: a blend of nature, history and culture

By Afshin Majlesi

**TEHRAN** — Iran is home to hundreds of prehistorical, ancient, and medieval castles, fortresses, and strongholds each boasting their own eye-catching architecture.

One of the largest military ones, Rudkhan Castle occupies an area of about 50,000 square meters.

Made of brick and stone, this medieval structure is located 25 km southwest of Foman in Gilan Province. The castle has been built on two sides of a jagged rocky region so its architecture benefits from natural mountainous features.



A view of Rudkhan Castle in northern Iran

Preliminary evidence, uncovered by digging, indicates the foundation of the structure was built in the Sasanian era (224–651) and rebuilt in the Seljuks reign (ca. 1040–1157).

To this day, there is no precise information regarding the date of its construction. However, what's known is the castle was continually in use until the Zand Dynasty in the 18th century.

To access the castle one has go through a hilly winding route in a dense forest. Upon the arrival a big entrance gate flanked by relatively tall towers welcomes visitors.

Stepping inside, there are residential quarters, a bathhouse and a running spring passing through. This spring was the main water source for the fort but following an earthquake it ran dry.

However, with the tireless efforts of Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization the spring is flowing again.

The east side of the fort is a bit smaller and has more military characteristics. It consists of two towers, another entrance, a prison and an emergency exit. Above the north and south walls are a number of octagonal areas and the deliberate cracks in their walls are assumed to have been for monitoring the adjacent area and shooting arrows at approaching enemies.

Above the front entrance was once an inscribed plaque (which is currently on display in a museum in Rasht) stating that the fort had been renovated for the first time between the years 1539 and 1542 for Sultan Hesamoddin. Historians say that during that time the castle was known as the Hesami Fort.

Though being threatened and even partly eroded by excessive humidity and vegetations rooting in the chinks of its old but lofty walls, Rudkhan Castle is still standing tall in very good condition as compared to other castles of the same time.

## Mekhray Kari: a branch of stone crafts

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — There are many gemstone mines in Mashhad, the center of Razavi Khorasan province and its surrounding cities. That is why one of the prospering handicrafts of this province is jewelry made of gemstones also known as “Mekhray Kari”.

Some of the most important gems are aquamarine, Agates, kinds of Quartz, Japer, Turquoise, Garnet and Zeolite amongst which Turquoise and Agate are the most popular. The specialists believe that no two pieces of Turquois are similar and, just like fingerprints, they are unique and do not match to each other.



An interesting matter about Turquoise is that until a few decades before, they were used as seals. It is mentioned in a poem by Hafiz: “If, with the color of red cornelian, my tear be, what wonder / for like red cornelian, is the seal of the seal-ring of my eye.”

Today the most important stone cutting workshops of Iran are located in Mashhad where tons of Agate and Turquoise stones are cut annually. Mashhad workshops are working by using both traditional and modern methods.

In the process of jewelry making from gemstones, all the steps including designing, manufacturing and other need both experience and skill but the most of making a piece from metal and gemstone is attaching the stone to the base. This part of the craft is called “Mekhray Kari”, “Morasa’e Kari” or incrustation.

Mekhray Kari is the most important and sensitive part of the jewelry making that includes gemstones. In Mekhray Kari, the stones are attached by different methods. Some of them are “Reili”, “Ghalamzani”, “Kaseh’e” and “Changi” for small gems and “Nabshi”, “Changi” and “Divareh’e” for large gems.

In this craft, to keep the beauty and natural streaks of the gems no glue is used. To attach the gemstones, the base is designed so that it does not damage the gems. A bit of pressure can cause fraction, scratch or breaking of the gems.

Mekhray is applied on pieces of jewelry such as earrings, necklace, rings, brooches and etc. In 2018 Mashhad was registered as the global city of precious and semi-precious stones by the World Council of Handicrafts.

# Iran is not what you think: how media image of a country differs from reality

➔ 1 ■ Many Western tourists, I talked to, or read their travelogues on various blogs and sites, say before they entered the country, they had a far different view of Iran and its people. Some of whom had received strong advice from relatives or friends saying not to go to Iran.... Now the question is how your ministry uses such a capacity to present the true face of the country to draw more potential travelers.

“This is absolutely true because one of the functions of tourism is to convey cultural messages and introduce a country and a nation... Our country is facing this problem due to the huge volume of negative propaganda campaign from arrogant powers,” Mounesan answered.

“These tarnished mental images are generally cultivated and influenced by some Western media with the roots of anti-Islamism and anti-Iran.”

“Some tourists had developed arrays of negative mindset, perception and stereotypes prior to their arrivals in the country, and many of whom leave the country with a completely positive attitude. Therefore, this is a very good capacity for our country, which the tourism industry plays well.... Any tourist who has a good experience of traveling to the country can encourage several others to visit the country. And this is a natural occurrence that exists everywhere in the world.”

“Specifically, in order to deal with the phenomenon of Iranophobia, it is needed to widely represent the real face of the country, and to realize that we need a sufficient advertising budget, which unfortunately we do not have due to the sanctions and budget deficit. However, we have not stopped and one of the things we have done is to identify famous social media figures or influencers... We have [already] brought many of whom to Iran on various tours.”

Mounesan added that his ministry sees influencers and popular figures as a source



Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan attends a press conference during his visit to the Tehran Times, and Mehr news agency in downtown Tehran, October 3, 2020.

that could help modify the tarnished international image.

“We invited people who have a lot of followers in cyberspace because it is very difficult for us to communicate with all the

tourists who have visited Iran.... And some of these tours have been organized by us, some by the private sector and sometimes through partnerships.”

Citing an example, he said after Iran

**You may possibly hear somewhat like: “Quite a different perspective!”, “Iran is not (at all) what I thought it’d be like!”, “I am impressed how the media shows a different picture”, “Contrary to popular belief, Iran is extremely safe, with the friendliest people I’ve ever met”, “When we think about Iran, we tend to only think of negative things”, or “I previously thought it was dangerous considering some of the Western news”.**

## South Africa lifts visa for Iranian travelers

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — South Africa’s government has announced that it waived visa requirement for passport holders from Iran and ten other countries.

In a bid to boost tourism to the country, South Africa’s home affairs minister Aaron Motsoaledi has announced visa-free travel for 11 countries. In a media briefing, the minister said the visa-free status of citizens of some countries and territories was temporarily suspended at the start of the lockdown period, Travel Daily Media announced on Tuesday.

“In line with the commitment of the government to take urgent steps to address the economic and tourism stagnation brought about by the outbreak of Covid-19, the visa-free status of citizens from a number of countries and territories has been reinstated,” Motsoaledi said.

The countries include South Korea, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore, U.S., UK, France, Portugal, and Iran. However, the minister said that visa-free status does not alter the current Covid-19 regulations.

The minister also said he has instructed officials to com-



municate this decision to the aviation industry, embassies, and other stakeholders as a matter of urgency. “The port managers have been instructed to adhere to the Southern

African Development Community (SADC) protocol and guidelines regulating the movement of essential goods under Covid-19 regulations. “The guidelines regulating truck drivers traveling across the border will continue to apply as has been the case for the past seven months,” he said.

The minister said that immigration officers will be required to assess the movement and place of origin of the traveler and not the country of origin of the airline concerned.

“Transit travelers through South Africa by air will be allowed to connect to their destinations, subject to them complying with applicable health protocols but need not produce the 72 hours negative certificate.”

Motsoaledi said that any person from a country listed as having a high Covid-19 infection and transmission rate, who wish to undertake business travel into South Africa, may, in writing, apply to the Department of Home Affairs and demonstrate reasons for their request to enter the country for business purposes during the period of the national state of disaster.

## Tehran, Muscat discuss ways to deepen tourism relations

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Oman explored avenues of cooperation and ways to develop bilateral ties in the field of tourism, particularly to share experience for dealing with the coronavirus predicament.

Iran’s deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri and his Omani counterpart Maitha al Mahrooqi exchanged views about implementing the previously-signed agreements during a webinar held on Tuesday.

“In the present time and despite various restrictions being imposed due to the coronavirus spread, more than two thousand tourism projects are being developed across the Islamic Republic. Therefore, in the current situation, we welcome cooperation in various fields, including investment,” Teymouri said.

“It is necessary to enforce the agreements which could be productive in the coronavirus era. So, a joint working group can be set up to open up a new chapter in tourism relations.”

He also presented a report on the latest measures practiced by Iran’s tourism industry in the face of coronavirus pandemic, saying: “Formulating rules and compliance with health protocols during the whole travel chain (before the time when a traveler arrives in the country until they depart) have been the most important steps taken in close cooperation with the headquarters for coronavirus control, and cross-sectoral bodies and the determination of the protocols for the entry of foreign tourists to Iran will be implemented as a complementary measure when borders reopen.”

Al Mahrooqi, for her part, expressed hope that regular flights would soon be reestablished with the Islamic Republic, sating “(Rounds of) necessary measures (so far) been taken to determine health protocols needed to start regular flights and tourism relations with some countries, and we hope that to be established with the Islamic Republic of Iran soon.”

According to the order of the Minister of Heritage and Tourism, there is a demand for expanding cooperation with Iran in various areas including investment, education, cultural heritage, and handicrafts, which is expected to strengthen tourism cooperation, Al Mahrooqi explained.

In 2019, Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan with his Omani counterpart Ahmed bin



Nasser al-Mahrizi, met in Muscat, discussing ways to promote bilateral ties particularly in the arena of health and medical tourism.

In September 2019, the Iranian cabinet of ministers approved to maintain a visa waiver program for Omani nationals for a one-year period.

## Northwest Iran: a verdant realm of ancient churches & monasteries

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — To the untrained eye, Iran’s earliest churches may seem modest structures to some but they bear testimony to a vast panorama of architectural and decorative scenes associated with Armenian culture blended with other regional cultures: Byzantine, Orthodox, Assyrian, Persian and Muslim.

St. Thaddeus, St. Stepanos and the Chapel of Dzordzor are three photogenic ancient churches that constitute the Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, which were collectively inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage in 2008. They are dotted in fresh and green lands of northwest Iran and are important pilgrimage sites for Armenian-Iranians and others from across the globe.

Also known as the Qareh Klise (“the Black Church”), St. Thaddeus, as one of the oldest surviving Christian monuments in the country, is situated in Chaldoran county some 20 kilometers form Maku, adjacent to the



borders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The ancient Church shows off elaborate bas-reliefs of flowers, animals and human figures on its façade and exterior walls. It bears verses of Old and New Testament in Armenian calligraphy as well.

The Chapel of Dzordzor stands tall on the outskirts of Maku. The name narratively

originates from a famous painter Hovans Yez, known as Dzordzortzi, who supervised the chapel’s restoration for a while.

What is present now is a remnant of the large monastery that once existed there, as the entire chapel has been shifted to a new location 600 meters away due to submergence resulting from a dam that was built on the river. Before the building was dismantled, detailed plans were made and the dismantled elements numbered so that they could be reassembled to the same design at the new site. The reconstruction was carried out in the late 1980s.

St. Thaddeus Monastery plays host an annual religious ritual every summer. Last July, it hosted to over 3,000 Christian worshippers coming together from Iran, Armenia, Syria, Lebanon, the Netherlands, France, Austria, Germany, Canada and some other countries.

Baptism of children and youngsters along with performances of traditional songs and

dances are amongst highlights of the pilgrimage.

The festivity is of high importance for Iranian-Armenians who mostly come from the cities of Tabriz, Urmia, Tehran, Isfahan and Qazvin, to stage the reunion in groups and families. It also provides them an opportunity to go on holiday and visit distant relatives.

Attendees commemorate the martyrdom of St. Thaddeus, one of the twelve disciples killed while he was preaching the Gospel. The legend says, a church dedicated to him was first built in 68 CE where Qareh Klise is standing.

Thaddeus was an apostle of Christ and the ceremony is rooted in the last supper with Jesus Christ on the night of his arrest and execution by the Roman soldiers.

Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the most significant religious minorities in Iran with Christians constituting the bulk.



# Time for a holistic approach to rural development

➔ Moreover, 90 percent of the country's villages have schools, although some of them do not have proper structures.

Also, in the field of gas supply, more than 88 percent of the country's villages are connected to the gas supply network.

## Rural population declining

Over 53 percent of Iran's population was living in rural areas some four decades ago, but urbanization has influenced rural demographic trends, decreasing the rural population to 20 million, representing 25 percent of the country's population.

Currently, some 21 million people, equaling 25 percent of the total population, are now living in rural areas.

About 24 percent of Iran's population is less than 15 years old, and some 6 percent is above 65 years old, while 70 percent of the population is 15-65 years old.

According to statistics, rural areas are holding a higher population of younger people, because fertility is still slightly higher



than urban areas and migration from rural to urban areas generally occurs by the working

population, in fact, about 27 percent of the rural population is aging less than 5 years old.

Abolfazl Razavi, deputy vice-president for rural development and deprived areas, has said that some 60 percent of migrations from rural to urban areas are caused by the lack of appropriate jobs and sufficient income for educated people.

To achieve all range of rural development goals, proper attention must be paid to rural development perspectives such as quality of life improvement, sustainable agriculture, rural resilience, and reduced inequalities.

Rural areas should receive the same attention and opportunities from decision-makers, academics, and professionals regarding sustainable development policies and investments in infrastructure projects. Sustainable development requires a holistic approach where the daily basic needs of rural populations must be covered by reliable public utilities combined with technical, socioeconomic, and environmental conditions.

## More than 14m tons of plastic believed to be at the bottom of the ocean

At least 14m tons of plastic pieces less than 5mm wide are likely sitting at the bottom of the world's oceans, according to an estimate based on new research.

Analysis of ocean sediments from as deep as 3km suggests there could be more than 30 times as much plastic at the bottom of the world's ocean than there is floating at the surface, The Guardian reported.

Australia's government science agency, CSIRO, gathered and analyzed cores of the ocean floor taken at six remote sites about 300km off the country's southern coast in the Great Australian Bight.

Researchers looked at 51 samples and found that after excluding the weight of the water, each gram of sediment contained an average of 1.26 microplastic pieces.

Microplastics are 5mm or less in diameter and are mostly the result of larger plastic items breaking apart into ever smaller pieces.

Stemming the tide of plastic entering the world's waterways and ocean has emerged as a major international challenge.

Dr Denise Hardesty, a principal research scientist at CSIRO and a co-author of the research published in the journal Frontiers in Marine Science, told the Guardian that finding microplastic in such a remote location and at such depths "points to the ubiquity of plastics, no matter where you are in the world".

"This means it's throughout the water column. This gives us pause for thought about the world we live in and the impact of our consumer habits on what's considered a most pristine place," she said.

"We need to make sure the big blue is not a big trash pit. This is more evidence that we need to stop this at the source."

The cores were drilled in March and April 2017 between 288km and 349km from the coast, at depths of between 1,655 meters and 3,016 meters.

Hardesty said it wasn't possible to know how old the pieces of plastic were, or what sort of object they had once been part of.

But she said the shape of the pieces under a microscope suggested they were once consumer items.

For the study, the researchers extrapolated the amount of plastic found in their core samples and from research from other organizations to conclude as much as 14.4m tons of microplastic was now on the ocean floor globally.

While this may seem a large figure, Hardesty said it was small compared to the amount of plastics likely entering the ocean each year.

In September, a study estimated that in 2016 between 19m and 23m tons of plastic found its way into both rivers and ocean.

A previous study in the journal Science has estimated about 8.5m tons of plastic ends up in the oceans every year.



Another study has estimated there is 250,000 tons of plastic floating on the ocean surface.

In the latest paper, the authors note their estimate of the weight of microplastics on the ocean floor is between 34 and 57 times what may be at the surface.

Hardesty said there were imperfections in the estimates, but they were based on the best available information.

"It is useful to give people a sense of the scope and scale that we are talking about," she said.

## Ozone hole over Antarctic 'largest and deepest' in recent years, scientists warn

The ozone hole over the Antarctic has reached its maximum annual size and is one of the largest and deepest in recent years, scientists monitoring the protective shield have warned.

The ozone layer, in the upper part of the Earth's atmosphere, absorbs most of the incoming ultraviolet radiation from the sun that would otherwise be damaging to life on our planet.

Concentrations of ozone, also known as trioxxygen, fell to "near zero values" over Antarctica at around 20 - 25km altitude, according to scientists at the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (Cams).

The large hole comes after an "unusually small and short-lived" ozone hole in 2019, due to particular atmospheric conditions, Cams said, and highlighted the need to enforce bans on human-made chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are

known to contribute to ozone depletion.

The scientists said this year's large hole in the layer was being driven by a "strong, stable and cold polar vortex" - a persistent region of low pressure, usually found over the edge of the enormous Ross ice shelf, where temperatures can plunge to almost -80C.

"There is much variability in how far ozone hole events develop each year. The 2020 ozone hole resembles the one from 2018, which also was a quite large hole, and is definitely in the upper part of the pack of the last fifteen years or so", said Vincent-Henri Peuch, director of Cams.

"With the sunlight returning to the South Pole in the last weeks, we saw continued ozone depletion over the area.

"After the unusually small and short-lived ozone hole in 2019, which was driven by special meteorological conditions, we



are registering a rather large one again this year, which confirms that we need to continue enforcing the Montreal Protocol banning emissions of ozone depleting chemicals."

The scientists explained that the hole in the ozone layer is formed as chlorine and bromine-containing substances accumulate

within the freezing polar vortex, where they remain inactive in darkness.

But when the sun rises over the pole following the winter darkness, the energy it releases causes the temporarily inert bromine and chlorine atoms to become chemically active, and they rapidly destroy ozone molecules, depleting the layer.

At ground level, ozone - a pungent gas which smells similar to chlorine - is considered a pollutant as it is a powerful oxidant, which causes damage to mucous and respiratory tissues in animals, and can also impact plants.

However, its presence in the stratosphere is beneficial due to its ability to absorb medium-frequency ultraviolet light. The ozone layer absorbs around 97-99 per cent of all UV light, preventing skin cancer and other conditions.

## FAO supports Iran to strengthen capacity on climate finance

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN – To provide an inclusive platform

to address climate-related issues in Iran, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Department of Environment (DOE), as the National Designated Authority (NDA) of Green Climate Fund (GCF), partnered to bring together and build capacity of around 100 local, national and international stakeholders to discuss climate finance.



The engaged stakeholders in this consultative meeting and training workshop, which was held on October 1, shared their views on the country's institutional and technical capacities, existing challenges and steps forward to address climate-related issues.

The stakeholders, from the public sector, academia, international organizations, private sector and civil society, have been identified previously through a mapping exercise conducted jointly by FAO and DOE under the stakeholder engagement component of the project "Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Thanks to an opportunity provided by FAO to connect different parties from Tehran, and many provincial capitals across the country virtually, the participants in this meeting shared their views on the country's institutional and technical capacities, existing challenges and steps forward to address climate-related issues.

The partakers also discussed the pooled recommendations on how to enhance the NDA's institutional capacity, amend the applicable rules and regulations, and formulate new policy priorities to both access and effectively utilise international funding resources to finance climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in the country.

"FAO is committed to developing inclusive mechanisms to ensure stakeholder's engagement. Consultative sessions like this as well as providing learning opportunities will increase the capacity of partners in order to secure the country's ownership to invest in climate change mitigation and adaptation measures," said Mr Gerold Bödeker, FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Highlighting the joint efforts put in action by FAO and DOE, Mr Bödeker asserted that the "country's ownership is a continuous process, and the role of the Department of Environment is key in driving institutional capacity development and stakeholder's engagement for strong ownership in addressing the climate challenges Iran is facing."

FAO, being the lead UN agency driving global efforts on sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and rural development, offers technical expertise to member countries in supporting their efforts to plan, access to finance, implement and report on climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in agriculture and natural resources management.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 31)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

easy.....	/ā'sān/ آسان	
but.....	/āmā'dan/ آمَدَن – آ ۾ زَفْتَن	
with.....	/bā/ با	
together.....	/bā 'ham/ با هَم	چای
cheese.....	/pa'nir/ پَنیر	
sleep; asleep.....	n, adj /xāb/ خواب	
dormitory.....	/xāb'gāh/ خوابگاه	
to eat; to drink.....	خورَدَن – خُور	قهوه
to have.....	/dār – /dā'stan/ دار داشتن	
to like, to love.....	/dust...../ دوست داشتن	
object marker.....	/rā/ را	
milk.....	/sir/ شیر	کَرِه
morning.....	/sobh/ صُبْح	
breakfast.....	/sobhā'ne/ صُبْحَانِه	
zero.....	/sefr/ صَفَر	مَرْتَا
for example.....	/masa'lan/ مَثَلًا	
usually.....	/ma?'mu'lan/ معمولًا	
.....	/noh/ نُه	
each, every.....	/har/ هَر	نان

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## All-Iranian COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released within month

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qane'ei as saying on Monday.

Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted.

Patients suspected to coronavirus are currently being identified by diagnostic kits that have entered Iran in the form of assistance and purchases by the World Health Organization, China and UNICEF, he said.

So, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology decided to manufacture the kits domestically, he noted.

Existing imported kits are sufficient for the next two months but after this period we will be faced with shortages of kits, however, the domestic ones will enter the market, he concluded.

## کیت‌های ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ ماه آینده روانه بازار می‌شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیت‌های تشخیصی کووید ۱۹، فروردین ماه وارد بازار می‌شوند.

مصطفی قانع، دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیت‌های آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانش‌بنیان برای ساخت این کیت‌ها قرارداد منعقد شده است.

تشخیص، مهم‌ترین راه ورود به درمان بیماری کرونا است.

در حال حاضر بیماران مبتلا به کرونا به وسیله کیت‌های تشخیصی که در قالب مساعدت و خرید از طریق سازمان بهداشت جهانی، کشور چین و یونیسف وارد ایران شده‌اند شناسایی می‌شوند؛ اما ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری با انتشار فراخوانی از دانش‌بنیان‌های توانمند دعوت کرد تا به حوزه ساخت این کیت‌ها ورود کنند.

وی افزود: کیت‌های وارد شده تا دو ماه آینده کافی هستند اما بعد از این مدت با کمبود کیت‌های تشخیص کرونا مواجه خواهیم شد. به همین دلیل با کمک توانمندی‌های داخلی این نیاز را مرتفع می‌کنیم.



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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

I do not see death except prosperity and life along with the oppressors except anguish. O Allah! You know that all there was from us was not in competition to seek power, nor to gain refuse of the world [i.e. wealth], but it was nothing other than to present the signs and essence of Your religion, and to promote reform in Your land, [so that] oppressed members of your servants find safety and security, and Your laws, orders and obligations are acted upon.

Imam Hussein (AS)

## “Castle of Dreams” perches on Religion Today filmfest

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iranian award-winning drama “Castle of Dreams” has won the award for best feature film at the 23rd Religion Today Film Festival in Italy.

Last Wednesday, Trento as the greenest Italian city hosted the closing ceremony of the festival, which selected the motto “Earth I Care”.

Directed by Reza Mirkarimi, the film is about two young children whose mother has just died, and their father, Jalal, after long years of absence, returns to sort things out, but he does not want to take the children with him.



“Castle of Dreams” by Reza Mirkarimi.

In addition, “Ojagh” by Iranian filmmaker Ali Bolandnazar also won the award for best short documentary. It is a study of the rituals of the Qashqai Turkic tribe regarding fire.

In the documentary competition, Iranian filmmaker Hamid Jafari’s “The Wind” received a special mention, while “Mother Fortress” by Italian director Maria Luisa Forenza was named best. “The Wind” is about the Zar traditional ceremony in southern Iran. Spirits ride the wind of the seas and spread illness into the bodies of human beings. Zar is synonymous with the wind which carries illness. The Zar ceremony can free the body from evil spirits with the assistance of music and song.

The Grand Prize in the Spirit of Faith went to “Order and Soul” by Hungarian director Suzsanna Bak.

Founded in 1997, the Religion Today Film Festival is organized every year by Associazione BiancoNero. The event has been the foremost international and itinerant film festival dedicated to cinema and religions for a culture of peace and dialogue between faiths, cultures, peoples and individuals.

## “Mina” star Nika Shahbazzadeh crowned best at Festival of Nations

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Nika Shahbazzadeh has won the best actress award for her role in the film “Mina” competing in the Festival of Nations in Austria, the organizers have announced.



Nika Shahbazzadeh acts in a scene from “Mina” directed by Avazeh Shahnnavaz.

Directed by Avazeh Shahnnavaz, the film was screened in the short competition of the festival, which took place in the small town of Lenzing from September 24 to 29.

A lineup of fiction, animations and documentaries from 1 to 30 minutes were screened at the festival with open discussions between jury members, filmmakers and the audience right after each film.

“My Planet” by Valery Carnoy from Belgium was selected as best film of the festival.

The jury award was given to “Das Gemalde” by Jan Baca and Horst Hubbauer from Austria, and “The Call” by Kadim Tarasov from Ukraine was named the best comedy.

# Owj releases package of docs on Arbæen pilgrimage

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The Owj Arts and Media Organization, a major institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema, has released a package of its documentaries on the annual pilgrimage of Arbæen in Iraq. Iranians and Shia Muslims from other countries embark on a journey to the Iraqi city of Karbala to observe the day of Arbæen at the holy shrines of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia, and his brother, Hazrat Abbas (AS).

However, the borders are closed this year due to the spike in coronavirus, and the Arbæen ritual will be held only with Iraqi nationals at home.

Arbæen marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions on Ashura.

The package includes “Guest”, “Iranian Gift”, “Glass of Bain ul-Harman”, “Fortieth Day”, “From Caracas to Karbala” and “A Heidari Yell”.

“Guest” by Masud Dehnnavi poetically narrates the arrival of the Iranian pilgrims to the city of Mehran on the western Iranian border in Ilam Province and how they prepare to their marching towards the city of Karbala in Iraq where the holy shrines of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia, and his brother, Hazrat



This combination photo shows the package of documentaries produced by the Owj on the annual Arbæen pilgrimage.

Abbas (AS), are located.

Director Mojtaba Rezvani depicts the group of Khariolabbab in his documentary “Iranian Gift” where the group sings Arabic songs throughout the way from Najaf to Karbala for the Iraqi pilgrims.

The documentary “Glass of Bain ul-Harman” by Faraj Salehi narrates the story of a glass, which likes to be used by the pilgrims for drinking water, but one day it is broken, and then several events happen to the glass.

“Fortieth Day” by Ruhollah Asadi narrates the memoirs of those from Latin America who have returned from the annual pilgrimage to Iraq.

Also directed by Asadi, “From Caracas to Karbala” narrates the story of a Venezuelan diplomat who attends the pilgrimage in Iraq and talks about his experiences.

“A Heidari Yell” by Ali Momeni shows a group of Pakistani pilgrims who go through hardship to arrive at the Iran-Iraq border in Mirjaveh, Sistan Baluchestan Province, and then walk towards Karbala. It depicts the love of the pilgrims and the efforts made by the Iranians who serve these pilgrims at the borders.

Iraq will not allow foreign pilgrims to visit the country for the Arbæen ceremony due to the coronavirus pandemic. This year Arbæen falls on October 8.

## New book gives youth food for thought on Commander Soleimani

**→1** Another highlight of the book is a chapter that scrutinizes the legal aspect of the assassination of Commander Soleimani during a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Based on the information collected for this chapter, the writer argues that the U.S. operation to assassinate Soleimani is in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and many other world conventions on peace.

The Sebte Akbar Publications also published a book recounting Soleimani’s memories of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war after the end of the holy month of Ramadan this year.

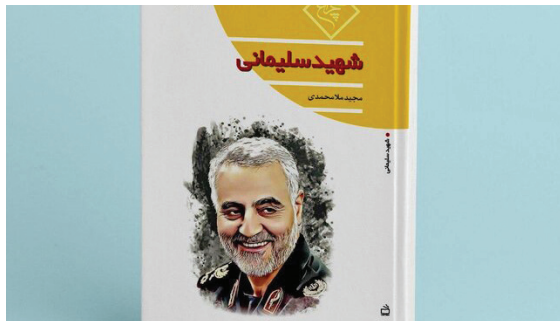
The book named “Our Blessed Comrade” has been compiled by Asadollah Mohammadinia and Mohammad Mohammadinia.

Earlier in 2016, scholar Ali-Akbar Mozdabadi published

“Hajji Qassem”, which contains Soleimani’s memories of the Iran-Iraq war and some other topics and articles published about the commander by several international studies centers.

“The Soldiers of the Commander” authored by Morteza Keramati was also published the same year. In this book, the writer gives an account of Soleimani’s leadership as the Quds Force commander. In addition, it also carries the memories of his soldiers in the fight against the ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

A Turkish translation of the book by Aykut Pazarbasi was published by Feta Publishing in Istanbul under the title “Haci Kasim Suleymani ve Harem Savunucuları” (“Hajji Qassem Soleimani and Sacred Shrine Defenders”) in March 2020.



Front cover of “Martyr Soleimani” published by Madreseh Publications.

## Barcelona Casa Asia reviewing movies by new generations of Iranian filmmakers

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The Casa Asia in Barcelona is reviewing six movies by new generations of Iranian filmmakers during a program that has been in progress since October 3.

The films represent various aspects of the daily life in contemporary Iranian society and the characters interpret figures from domestic, urban or rural landscapes.

“Yeva”, a co-production between Iran and Armenia directed by Anahid Abad, is currently on screen at the Spanish center.

The film tells the story of Yeva, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband’s tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages in the Karabakh region. She is a complete stranger in this ballgame and is obliged to live her daily life in disguise.

“Yeva” was Armenia’s submission to the 90th Academy Awards, but it did not make the shortlist.



“Orduckly” directed by Behruz Gharibpur.

“Wild Jonquils” by Rahbar Qanbari is scheduled to be screened on October 10.

The film is about a rural school that receives a warrant from the Ministry of Education, stating that if the capacity is not utilized as required, the school will be shut down. The teacher decides to go to the neighboring villages to convince all the parents that education is a must. When he falls ill, things get complicated.

Mazdak Mirabedini’s “Footwork” is another film selected for the program. The film, which will go on screen on October 17, revolves around Mohammad Ali, an actor and filmmaker who returns to his country Iran to begin a new life with his painter wife Mitra. Finding a home seems impossible, however, and a baby is on the way.

The lineup also includes the drama “Orduckly”. Directed by Behruz Gharibpur, the film tells the story of Ordakli’s father who is a technician at the Tabriz Railway Station. He is forced to move to Tehran to treat his wife who is suffering from a terminal illness. Once in Tehran, he registers his clever son at a renowned school without thinking about the tragic consequences he will be facing.

The next film is Ali Zhakan’s drama “First Autograph for Rana”, which will be screened on November 14. It is about Jahangir, a writer whose three books have

been published but he doesn’t have any income.

Jahangir and his wife Rana and their 6-year-old son Nima live in one of Jahangir’s friends’ home but his friend needs his home and they have to move out while they don’t have any money to rent a house.

Director Soheil Movaffaq’s comedy “Pastarioni” has also spiced up the program. The film will be on screen on November 21. It tells the story of an intense rivalry between a luxury Italian restaurant and a small family restaurant in Tehran, which leads them to unite.

The program is being organized in collaboration with the Asian Film Festival Barcelona, which screened the movies during its previous edition in 2019.

This year, the festival also plans to screen 12 movies from Iranian filmmakers, including “African Violet”, “Castle of Dreams” and “Dance with Me”.

## ZagrebDox picks “Anticlockwise”, “Sunless Shadows”

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iranian documentaries “Anticlockwise” and “Sunless Shadows” have been selected to compete in ZagrebDox, the Croatian international documentary festival.

In “Anticlockwise”, filmmaker Jalal Vafai tells the story of his family from 2011 to 2019, showing how their world has radically changed.

He focuses on his father, a devoted watchmaker in the Iranian city of Hamadan, who was on the side of the Islamic Revolution in his younger years. He has now become a democratic reformist, and is obsessed with the political news and injustice he sees around him. From his shop, he tries to find a way to deal with his disappointment in politics. At the same time, holding such democratic opinions isn’t without risk.

“Sunless Shadows”, director Mehrdad Oskui’s acclaimed film, is a co-production between Iran and Norway and is also competing in the international section



“Anticlockwise” by Jalal Vafai.

of the festival, which opened on Monday.

The story of the documentary is set in an Iranian

juvenile detention center, in which a group of adolescent girls are serving time for having murdered their father, husband or another male family member.

Oskui managed to build up a remarkable relationship with these inmates, whose frank conversations he observes, and who gradually open up about the consequences of, and sometimes the reasons for, their terrible act. He occasionally leaves them alone with the camera, allowing it to become a means for them to address both their victims and their accomplices, three of the girls having killed their fathers with the help of their mothers. The mothers await execution elsewhere.

The film was named best documentary at the 8th edition of CinéDOC-Tbilisi, a Georgian international documentary festival, last week.

ZagrebDox will end on October 11 with the announcement of winners.

## Laurent Binet’s “HHhH” published in Persian

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – “HHhH” (Himmlers Hirn heisst Heydrich) or (Himmler’s Brain Is Called Heydrich) by French author Laurent Binet has been published in Persian by Maahi Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Ahmad Parhizi.

Reinhard Heydrich is the most lethal man in Hitler’s cabinet and seemed indestructible, until two exiled operatives, a Slovak and a Czech, killed him and changed

the course of history.

In Laurent Binet’s mesmerizing debut, the readers follow Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubis from their dramatic escape from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia to their fatal attack on Heydrich and their own brutal deaths in the basement of a Prague church.

A seamless blend of memory, actuality and Binet’s own remarkable imagination, “HHhH” is at once thrilling and intellectually engrossing, a fast-paced novel of the

Second World War that is also a profound meditation on the debt to history.

Binet was born in Paris, France, in 1972. He is the author of “La Vie professionnelle de Laurent B.”, a memoir of his experience teaching in secondary schools in Paris.

In March 2010, his debut novel, “HHhH”, won the Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman. Binet is a professor at the University of Paris III, where he lectures on French literature.



Front cover of the Persian translation of French writer Laurent Binet’s “HHhH”.