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## Macron's Islamophobic campaign stokes fear of political exploitation

**By Mahnaz Abdi**  
Head of Economy Desk

### Sarajeh UGS noticeably under development

Iran has two major natural gas storage facilities in Sarajeh and Shourijeh, in which every year the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) stores the gas received from gas refineries all over the country to be used in the colder months of the year.

As the first natural gas storage facility in Iran and West Asia, Sarajeh storage facility was officially inaugurated in January 2014 near Qom, 124 kilometers south of Tehran.

Sarajeh underground gas storage (UGS) is one of the strategic installations of Iran, given its role in supplying gas to Qom, Tehran, and northeastern provinces of the country during the cold season.

Following the development of the South Pars gas field and the increase in the country's gas production capacity, construction and development of the country's natural gas storage facilities has become a top priority.

As announced by the managing director of Iran Gas Transmission Company (IGTC), 1.25 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas has been injected into Sarajeh storage during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), which was a record high, with 16.8 percent increase compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana said the achievement has been due to boosting the efficiency of turbines in the plant and also the noticeable performance of the company's personnel.

IGTC has managed to increase the efficiency of Sarajeh underground gas storage through cooperation with local knowledge-based companies in the project to enhance the efficiency of turbines operating in the plant.

According to Jamshidi-Dana, the project was initially implemented as a pilot in one of the turbines. The turbine was in service for about 200 days and it experienced an efficiency increase of four to five megawatts.

He said that this project reduces the time of gas injection, in a way that if one billion cubic meters of gas were to be injected in six months, now it can be done in four months. ➔4

### Italian envoy highlights role of art in commemorating healthcare workers

**By Farnak Bakhtiari**

**TEHRAN** — Italian Ambassador to Tehran Giuseppe Perrone has said artisans can play a great part in commemorating the healthcare workers who were sacrificed during the battle against the coronavirus.

"We should initially recognize their efforts and inform the people of their critical role whether in terms of prevention or treatment."

He made the remarks at an unveiling ceremony held in Tehran on Thursday for the fourth episode of a joint video-theater series "8 1/2 Theater Clips: How the Pandemic Changed our Lives".

Starring Nicola Pianzola and Danial Kheirikhah, the episode "Don't Call me Hero" has been directed by Anna Dora Dorno in collaboration with Iranian director Ali Shams, and turns the spotlight on how the novel coronavirus imposes curbs on everyday life.

It is a powerful portrait of the sacrifice made by

healthcare personnel throughout the world at the height of the pandemics, which shows the human side of these workers in their daily fight against an invisible and insidious enemy. The most important thing that the pandemic taught us is increasing the resources devoted to healthcare because, in many of the countries around the world, we have forgotten that healthcare is a critical sector."

"So, the epidemic reminded us that it is of great importance to invest in this area because these events are unpredictable but if there is a system in place, it will be much easier to overcome," he said.

These are the two essential pieces of advice the nations can realize from the pandemic, he emphasized. Referring to the role of art in commemorating the health workers' sacrifice, he said that art is also severely impacted by the pandemic, as the theaters, cinemas, museums, and performances are closed so that the condition has been difficult for the artists to make a living. ➔7

### U.S. protests: More protests planned over police shooting of Black couple

The U.S. Department of Justice has agreed to assist an Illinois state investigation into a police shooting that killed an unarmed Black man and wounded his girlfriend and triggered protests in the city of Waukegan, an official said.

Lake County State's Attorney Michael Nerheim said he asked the Department of Justice for help reviewing the Oct. 20 shooting, which left 19-year-old Marcellis Stinnette dead and has been under investigation by state police, Reuters reported.

"I have been advised that they have agreed to do so," Nerheim said of the Justice Department, which oversees the FBI. "I am confident in the work being done by the Illinois State Police and welcome the assistance of the FBI."

More than a hundred people marched in Waukegan on Thursday and some 200 to 300 were expected for a second demonstration on

Saturday, according to Clyde McLemore, a local organizer. Waukegan is about an hour's drive north of Chicago.

That will be followed with a prayer vigil on Sunday near where Stinnette and his girlfriend, Tafarra Williams, were shot during a traffic stop late on Tuesday, McLemore said.

McLemore, founder of the Lake County chapter of Black Lives Matter, said he had been calling for the DOJ to take over the probe to make it more objective. He said he had spoken with Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham about that demand.

The Waukegan Police Department has said a Hispanic male officer shot into the couple's car because it went into reverse when he approached it and he feared for his safety. No firearm was found in the vehicle, the police said.



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### Leader: 'Firm sovereign decisions' needed to fight Coronavirus

**TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei said on Saturday that it is necessary to adopt a proper management and take "firm sovereign decisions" to control the rapidly increasing Coronavirus.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said "convincing the public opinion" to observe health protocols and also winning "the cooperation of all institutions and people" to deal with the global pandemic is essential. ➔2

### Persian carpet: a crossroads of intricate designs, lavish colors, and peerless artistry

For millennia, Iran's eminent carpets, which are adored for their intricate designs, lavish colors, and matchless craftsmanship, have been produced by hand along the nomad trail across the foothills and high plains of the ancient land.

Weavers, almost all of them women, spend several months in front of a loom, stringing and knotting thousands of threads. Some practice established patterns, some make their own.

It is a scene that seems as ageless, a procedure that can take as long as a year, these efforts have long put Iran's carpets among the most complex and labor-intensive handicrafts in the world. When the weaving is finally done, the carpet is cut, washed, and put out in the sun to dry. Over the long course of history, invaders, politicians, and even Iran's enemies have left their impact on Iran's carpets. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, little is known about Persian carpet making before the 15th century, when the art was already approaching a peak.

The Mongol invasion of the 13th century had depressed Persia's artistic life, only partially restored by the renaissance under the Mongol Il-Khan dynasty (1256-1353). Although the conquests of Timur (died 1405) were in most respects disastrous to Persia, he favored artisans and spared them to work on his great palaces in Samarkand.

Under Timur's successor, Shah Rokh (died 1447), art flourished, including, almost certainly, carpets. Their production exclusively by palace workshops and court-subsidized looms gave them unity of style; and a sensitive clientele and lavish royal support guaranteed perfect materials and the highest skill. ➔6

#### TENDER INVITATION NO.99-1015

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For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: [www.iralco.ir](http://www.iralco.ir)

**Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company**





## Tehran marks UN Day, calls for action against unilateralism

**POLITICAL** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iran has marked the 75th anniversary of the formation of the United Nations, saying the UN Day is a reminder that the world has to reject unilateralism and coercion.

The United Nations officially came into existence on October 24, 1945.

In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly declared October 24 the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, as which “shall be devoted to making known to the people of the world the aims and achievements of the United Nations and to gaining their support for” its work.

In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a further resolution (United Nations Resolution 2782) declaring that United Nations Day shall be an international observance or international holiday and recommended that it should be observed as a public holiday by United Nations member states.

“75yrs ago the UN was born w/ a shared vision of building a better world based on multilateralism & cooperation,” Iran’s Foreign Ministry said in a tweet on Saturday.

“#Iran as a founding member has a proven record of commitment to the goals of the Charter. #UNDay is a reminder that the world has to reject unilateralism & coercion,” the ministry added.

Since U.S. President Donald Trump came to power almost four years ago, he has pushed the United States toward unilateralism. The Trump administration has withdrew from a number of key international treaties, including the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S. then tried to force Iran to renegotiate a new deal through imposing illegal sanctions on Tehran.

## Iran rejects allegations of meddling in U.S. election

**POLITICAL** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Guardian Council spokesman Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei has ruled out the allegations of interference in U.S. presidential election, saying the Islamic Republic does not meddle in the internal affairs of other countries.

“Iran has announced numerous times that it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and more importantly, it does not see any need to interfere,” Kadkhodaei said via Twitter on Saturday.

“The U.S. election is also a matter in which Iran is not interested nor it sees any reason to interfere,” he said, adding, “Of course, Trump should also know that the era of meddling in other countries’ internal affairs is over.”

Washington has sanctioned five Iranian groups that it claims attempted to interfere in the upcoming presidential election between President Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Joe Biden.

In a statement on Thursday, U.S. Treasury announced it designated Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the IRGC’s Quds Force, and the Bayan Rasanah Gostar Institute “for having directly or indirectly engaged in, sponsored, concealed, or otherwise been complicit in foreign interference” in the upcoming election.

It also designated the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union and International Union of Virtual Media “for being owned or controlled by” the IRGC’s Quds Force, the department said.

“The Iranian regime uses false narratives and other misleading content to attempt to influence U.S. elections,” U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.



“This administration is committed to ensuring the integrity of the U.S. election system and will continue to counter efforts from any foreign actor that threatens our electoral processes.”

**■ Iran summons Swiss envoy over U.S. ‘baseless’ claims of election interference**

Meanwhile, Iran summoned the Swiss envoy on Thursday to protest against what it called “baseless” U.S. claims.

“Iran’s strong rejection of American officials’ repetitive, baseless and false claims was conveyed to the Swiss ambassador,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told state television. “As we have said before, it makes no difference for Iran who wins the U.S. election.”

Switzerland represents U.S. interests in Iran as Washington and Tehran have no diplomatic ties. Tensions have risen between the two states since 2018, when Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and imposed sanctions on Iran.

Separately on Thursday, U.S. Treasury also imposed sanctions against Iran’s Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi for being a “close advisor” to Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the world-renowned commander in the fight against terrorism who was killed in a Trump-ordered strike in Iraq on January 3.

**■ Iran blacklists U.S. ambassador to Iraq for his role in terrorist acts**

In response, Iran announced that it has blacklisted U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Matthew Tueller and two other diplomats for their role in acts of terror, violating the fundamental principles of human rights and imposing cruel and illegal sanctions against Iran.

In a statement on Friday, Iran’s Foreign Ministry said it had imposed sanctions on Tueller, Steve Fagin, the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, and Consul General in Erbil Rob Waller based on adequate evidence and in line with a bill overwhelmingly approved by Iranian lawmakers in 2017 to confront “America’s terrorist and adventurous actions” in the region.

Alireza Miryousefi, the spokesman for Iran’s permanent mission to the United Nations, has also said that Iran does not interfere in other countries’ elections.

Miryousefi told Newsweek on Friday that “we do not comment on election issues and are not interested in entering the debate.”

His made the remarks when asked to respond to Biden, who said during Thursday’s final presidential debate that he has “made it clear that any country, no matter who it is, that interferes in American elections will pay a price.”

The Democratic presidential candidate said it was “overwhelmingly clear” during this election “that Russia has been involved, China’s been involved to some degree, and now we learn that Iran is involved.”

“They will pay a price if I’m elected. They’re interfering with American sovereignty. That’s what’s going on right now,” he warned.

Miryousefi brushed off the warning, declaring Tehran’s neutrality in the affair.

# IRGC deployed in northwestern borders amid Armenia-Azerbaijan clashes



**1 →** Two rounds of truce talks have so far failed to calm the situation that took a turn for the worse earlier on Sunday.

A number of stray shells and projectiles have crossed the Iranian border, prompting stern warnings from Tehran.

Commander of the IRGC Ground Force Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour on Friday visited the border regions near Khoda-Afarin County in the Province of East Azarbaijan, after several rockets fell on Iranian villages and farms there.

“Although a number of shells fired in the Karabakh dispute have hit the Iranian soil, security prevails along the borders and there is no threat to the country,” Pakpour said, according to Tasnim.

Last week, Iran’s Foreign Ministry warned the warring sides that Tehran will not remain indifferent if the shells fired in the fighting continue to hit Iranian territories.

On Wednesday, Azerbaijan’s ambassador to Tehran appreciated Iran’s support for his country, underlining that Iran’s efforts to establish peace in the Nagorno-Karabakh region should be highlighted.

“We appreciate the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in support of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the liberation of the occupied territories,” Bunyad Huseynov said in an interview with the Iran Daily.

Huseynov added, “Over the past few days, the Leader’s international relations adviser, some members of the Islamic Consultative

Assembly, the Leader’s representatives in the northwestern provinces of Iran, the governors, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, the government spokesman, all of them, have supported the positions of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This was also covered in our media. The government of the Republic of Azerbaijan appreciates these rightful positions of Iran.”

The ambassador said Iran’s request to establish peace in Nagorno-Karabakh has been discussed during the phone conversations that were held between the presidents and foreign ministers of Iran and Azerbaijan, and the Azerbaijani side has officially announced that the role of the regional countries in establishing peace

and mediating should be highlighted.

**■ Army Ground Force conducts drills in northwest with ‘offensive’ focus**

Meanwhile, the Iranian Army Ground Force has conducted a set of tactical drills in the country’s general northwestern area, using the opportunity to field its optimized new “offensive” brigades.

The Army’s Public Relations Office released a statement on Sunday reporting successful conclusion of the exercise code-named Asheqan-e Velayat 99, Press TV reported.

It said the drills fielded the force’s offensive mobile brigades that have been developed from former mechanized infantry brigades under the ground force’s “new structure”.

## Leader: ‘Firm sovereign decisions’ needed to fight Coronavirus Ayatollah Khamenei insists on national unity, says disrespect is forbidden

**1 →** The Leader made the remarks during the first in-person meeting with President Hassan Rouhani and members of the national committee including Health Minister Saeed Namaki tasked to fight the Coronavirus.

“Of course,” the Leader added, “this cooperation is not limited to the confrontation with the coronavirus, but must exist in all issues, especially political issues, because the country, which has a strong nation, a new system and a new discourse, naturally faces important issues in the global and domestic arenas.”

Referring to measures taken in different countries to deal with the coronavirus, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “In some countries, such as the United States, the worst management has been applied in this regard, but we should try

to overcome the incident, which is related to the lives and health of the people and their security and economy, with the best management.”

During the session, Rouhani presented a report on the measures taken by the national committee to combat the Coronavirus, as well as the future plans of the committee.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution insisted on the need for unity and internal cohesion in the country, saying desecration is forbidden, especially among the top officials of the country.

The remarks by the Leader came after a senior MP heading the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee made stinging criticism of President Rouhani.

The Leader called on the opponents of the government

to “uphold respect of officials”.

“Desecration is forbidden, especially among the top officials of the country,” Ayatollah Khamenei asserted, according to Mehr news agency.

“You have the right to criticize, but criticism is different from insult and desecration. Such behavior and humiliation is the way Americans have exposed themselves in the world during their debates,” Leader noted in an open reference to the debates between Donald Trump and Joe Biden in the run-up to the November 3 presidential elections.

“Our method is Islamic and Quranic, that is, criticism is expressed but insult is not done,” he highlighted.

Ayatollah Khamenei said today the country is in need of unity and cooperation more than ever.

## Arab states should avoid an arms race with Iran: article

Iran won a major diplomatic victory on Oct. 18 when the United Nations arms embargo, imposed in 2007 over concerns about Tehran’s nuclear program, expired, according to Bloomberg.

The Trump administration’s efforts to expand them in the Security Council ended in an embarrassing American failure, as did efforts to mobilize the grievance mechanism under the 2015 nuclear deal, Hussein Ibish, a senior scientist at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, wrote in the opinion piece on Oct. 23.

The president of the Islamic Republic, Hassan Rouhani, described the expiry of the embargo as an important achievement of the nuclear deal. In theory at least, Iran is now back on the market to buy and sell conventional weapons. Russia and China strive to deliver advanced jets, tanks, and missiles.

This is alarming for the Persian Gulf Arab neighbors, and especially for the main adversaries Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They will be tempted to enter an arms race with Iran, using their deeper pockets - and easy access to American weapon systems - to maintain their significant technological lead over Tehran. It has been suggested that the UAE’s willingness to purchase F-35 jets, for example, anticipates Iranian purchases of new aircraft to upgrade their air force.

However, the greatest threat to Iran’s

neighbors will not come from Tehran’s heavy spending, but from the acquisition of technologies that improve its homemade weapons. State-of-the-art missile and drone targeting and guidance systems can help Iran inflict more damage than planes and tanks.

If the Russians and Chinese are ready to defy American sanctions - and give Tehran very generous terms - it is conceivable that the Iranians will order jets and heavy armaments. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has not been able to import advanced hardware for decades.

It may not be possible to prevent Iran from following Turkey in acquiring Russia’s S-400 missile defense system, which would be a significant improvement over the existing S-300. Moscow will likely argue that the S-400 is defensive and therefore does not pose a threat to Iran’s neighbors. (The Russians also want to sell it to the Arab Gulf states.)

Defensive weapons such as missile defense systems, however, are part of an overall integrated military structure and are just as important for offensives as defensive actions. Improving its capabilities in this area would significantly strengthen Iran’s strategic position. Even more alarming for the Arab states are the prospects that Iran will acquire new offensive missiles and drones. Presumably, great American efforts, whether diplomatic or punitive, will be directed to preventing this.

In the medium term, however, the greatest threat would come from relatively small purchases of precision technology to significantly improve Iranian domestic production. Iran has also developed significant drone manufacturing capabilities.

His enemies have already learned the power of these missiles and drones executed by the IRGC.

In all of this, the first line of defense for the Arab Persian Gulf states will be the U.S. Treasury Department’s secondary sanctions against corporations and possibly even countries that make important arms deals with Tehran. The Iranian neighbors also want to be armed against the new threats.

While the issue of F-35 sales to the UAE has made headlines lately, the EA-18G Growler is outfitted with the latest in electronic warfare technology, including jamming pods and communication countermeasures. This is the kind of weapon that Arab states want to use against more sophisticated Iranian attacks.

But the best way for the Saudis and Emiratis to respond to an Iran armed with more powerful conventional weapons, to work with the U.S. to create an effective secondary sanctions regime: the Treasury Department will do the heavy lifting, but they can help by refusing to cooperate with beings and individuals who go too far to arm their enemy. They should urge China, Russia and the former Soviet republics against

equipping Tehran with greatly expanded conventional firepower.

It would also be advisable to find a way to end the dispute with Qatar and present a more unified Persian Gulf Arab front. If they are ready to be more ambitious, they should create a collective missile defense system for the Gulf of Arabia. And of course, having a robust military stance is about enabling effective diplomacy with adversaries.

All of this can be achieved without an indiscriminate, wasteful arms race.

On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called on neighboring Arab countries to choose peace, security, stability and prosperity for all instead of remaining prisoners of the past and perpetuate instability and tension in the region.

Zarif made the remarks in an address to a virtual debate of the United Nations Security Council under the title “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Comprehensive Review of the Situation in the Persian Gulf”.

Pointing to the Hormuz Peace Endeavor—or HOPE—that was proposed by President Rouhani in his address to the UN General Assembly last year, Zarif said Iran stands by that initiative which is the culmination of various Iranian proposals for security and confidence building in the Persian Gulf region.

Zarif also said Iran does not intend to engage in an arms race in the region and start a buying spree in spite of the end of Security Council restrictions.

## Tehran sympathizes with Afghanistan over suicide bombing at education center ‘Afghan students fell victim to ugly violence and an endless war they had never chosen’

**POLITICAL** **d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has expressed sympathy with the Afghan people and government over a suicide bombing at an education center in western Kabul.

“Afghanistan is once again wounded by blind terrorism,” Khatibzadeh tweeted on Saturday night. “Afghan students fell victim to ugly violence and an endless war they had never chosen.”

“The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the heinous crime, and offers condolences to the Afghan nation and government. Tonight Iran is in mourning over Afghanistan’s tragedy,” he added.

At least 24 people have been killed including teenage students following the suicide bombing in Afghanistan.

Another 57 people were wounded in the blast which struck in a heavily Shia neighborhood of western Kabul on Saturday.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Adrian said the



attacker was trying to get into the center before he was stopped by guards.

He added that most of the victims were aged between 15 and 26.

Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack on social media, but did not provide any evidence to support this. The Taliban has rejected being connected to the explosion.

A group associated with Daesh claimed responsibility for a similar suicide incident in August 2018, which killed 34 students.

Separately on Saturday, a roadside bomb killed nine people in eastern Afghanistan after a bus full of civilians was struck.

A police spokesman said that a second device was triggered and killed two police officers who were making their way to the scene of the devastated bus.

No one claimed responsibility for the blasts, although local police have blamed the Taliban.



## SPORTS

Persepolis acting GM  
Rasoul-Panah resigns

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Rasoul-Panah has stepped down from his role on Friday as Persepolis football club acting general manager.

Rasoul-Panah was appointed as the club's GM in March but was forced to retire after a video of him insulting Persepolis player and coach went viral on social media.

Under his management, Persepolis club paid former coach Branko Ivankovic's debt and the team won Iran Professional League title for the fourth time in a row.

Persepolis also booked a ticket at the 2020 AFC Champions League final.

However, Persepolis defenders Shoja Khalilzadeh and Mohammad Naderi left the team ahead of the Iran league and ACL final and it left the fans furious.

Persepolis star Khalilzadeh  
signs for Al Rayyan

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis and Iran national football team defender Shoja Khalilzadeh joined Qatari football club Al Rayyan.

Amid talk of contract extension, the 31-year-old player made a shock move from Persepolis to Al Rayyan Thursday night.

Khalilzadeh played a great role in winning three titles in the Iran Professional League with Persepolis and also helped the Reds to reach AFC Champions League final twice in three years.

Persepolis defender Mohammad Nadereh also joined the team's archivals Esteghlal on Friday.

Persepolis will suffer a big blow ahead of the final match of the 2020 AFC Champions League in late December.

Iran move one spot up in  
FIFA ranking

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team climbed one place up to 29th in October's edition of FIFA ranking.

Iran defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 in a friendly match on Oct. 8 in Tashkent.

Japan remained the best Asian team and 27th in the world. While the podium remains the same, the gap has narrowed between top-ranked Belgium and their immediate pursuers, France and Brazil, following the Red Devils' loss to England (4th) in the UEFA Nations League – their first defeat since November 2018.

The biggest climber this month was Malta (180th, +6), who jumped six places courtesy of victories over Gibraltar (195th, unchanged) and Latvia (142nd, -5) and a draw with Andorra (145th, -8). Also worthy of note is the progress of Ecuador (60th, +4), Panama (77th, +4) and Israel (88th, +5).

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 26 Nov, 2020.

Panetolikos completes signing  
of Iranian forward Azadi

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Greek football club Panetolikos have completed the signing of Iranian young striker Mohammadreza Azadi.

The 21-year-old rising star played for Iranian club Tractor in the previous three years.

Azadi has penned a three-year deal with Panetolikos.

Azadi's contract details have not been revealed. Super League Greece sit 12th in the 14-team Super League Greece table.

Bosnia, Iran friendly  
confirmed

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Bosnian and Herzegovina football team will host Iran in a friendly match on Nov. 12.

Iran have already played six times with the European team, where they have emerged victorious in four matches and lost a match. One match ended in a draw.

The 'Persian Leopards' defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 on Oct. 8 in Tashkent in a friendly match and were scheduled to meet Mali in Antalya five days later but the match was called off after two Malian players tested positive for COVID-19.

Iran prepare for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, where they sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

The 2022 World Cup qualifiers scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Hamed Lak the best 2020  
ACL (West) goalkeeper

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team custodian Hamed Lak was chosen as the best AFC Champions League 2020 (West) goalkeeper.

Persepolis were supposed to have a gaping hole in their rearguard with the departure of Iran star goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand to Belgium, but such has been the performances of his replacement Hamed Lak, that their steely backbone has lost none of their metal.

Lak conceded just two goals in seven matches, none of those from open play, and the 29-year-old has been a huge part of the Tehran giant march to the 2020 AFC Champions League final.

His shining moment came in the semi-final against Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr, with a big save in the penalty shootout to deny Maicon and help send Persepolis into the competition climax.

Lak won the poll with 97 percent of votes.

Brad Jones (Al-Nassr), Cassio (Al-Taawoun), Majed Nasser (Shabab Al-Ahli) and Saad Al-Sheeb (Al-Sadd) were in the poll.

Macron's Islamophobic campaign stokes  
fears of political exploitation

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — As French President Emmanuel Macron intensifies his anti-Muslim campaign, leaders and analysts in the Muslim world turn the spotlight on the French president's goal of inciting hatred against Muslims.

Leaders and people of Muslim countries around the world are protesting against Macron's reckless push to support what he called the French "right to blasphemy" against the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). On Saturday, France recalled its ambassador to Turkey after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his French counterpart needs mental treatment over his view of Islam.

"What is the problem of this person called Macron with Muslims and Islam? Macron needs treatment on a mental level," the Turkish president said in what appeared to be a criticism of the French president's recent vow to fight Islamism.

He added, "What else can be said to a head of state who does not understand freedom of belief and who behaves in this way to millions of people living in his country who are members of a different faith."

Erdogan and Macron have been at loggerheads in recent months over a range of issues, including a dispute over territorial waters between Turkey and Greece, the conflict in Libya, and Azerbaijan's Armenian separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Macron's support for blasphemous cartoons against the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) has only exacerbated the discord between the two presidents who, at times, personally attacked each other.

"Outrage and insult are not a method," Macron's office said in response to the Turkish president's remarks.

France's relations with the Muslim world took a dangerous turn in early October when Macron gave a speech to counter what he described as the ways radical Islamism infiltrates French society. Macron also turned the spotlight on what he called "Islamist separatism," outlining a plan to "build an Islam in France that can be an Islam of Enlightenment."

The Macron plan includes training imams in France rather than continuing to import them from Algeria, Morocco, and Turkey.

"Islam is a religion that is experiencing a crisis across the world," the French president claimed.

Macron's speech has raised eyebrows in France and beyond as it was a clear departure from his political platform over the past years which was based on liberal values and freedom of speech for all social groups in French society. The speech also sparked a wave of outrage among Muslims in France and the Muslim world.

While the debate over Macron's new approach toward Muslims in France was still ongoing, the president defended satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which published caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that helped inspire two French-born men to mount a deadly January 2015 attack on



the paper's newsroom. 17 people were killed in the attack, which marked the beginning of a wave of violence by the ISIS terrorist group in Europe.

In a provocative move, the newspaper republished the insulting caricatures in September as the trial began of 14 people over the attacks on the newspaper and a kosher supermarket.

The newspaper's insistence on republishing the insulting cartoons once again revived the debate over the relation between freedom of faith and freedom of expression. This debate was further exacerbated following the murder of Samuel Paty, a French middle-school teacher who was killed by a teenager in a suburb of Paris after he showed the Charlie Hebdo cartoon in the class.

Instead of containing the hatred toward Muslims in France, Macron chose to further crack down on Muslims who were fed up with the insults against their prophet. Of course, Muslims around the world denounced the killing of the French teacher, who was posthumously awarded Légion d'Honneur, France's highest honor.

Macron, who is seen by some as exacerbating hatred toward Muslims, tried to use the murder of Paty to move forward with his preplanned campaign against Muslims in France.

"He was killed precisely because he incarnated the Republic," Macron said of Paty, adding, "He was killed because the Islamists want our future. They know that with quiet heroes like him, they will never have it."

Earlier in September, Macron promised to counter "Islamic separatism" while defending the right to blasphemy.

Speaking at a ceremony in September celebrating France's democratic history and naturalizing new citizens, he said: "You don't choose one part of France. You choose France ... The Republic will never allow any separatist adventure."

Freedom in France, Macron said, includes: "The freedom to believe or not to believe. But this is inseparable from the freedom of expression up to the right to blasphemy."

But critics have questioned the idea of freedom of expression in France. They say if

ridiculing and committing blasphemy against a prophet revered by more than a billion and a half believers across the globe is considered to be part of freedom of expression, then why conducting research about or scientifically questioning the Holocaust, let alone ridiculing it, is not part of freedom of expression. This may be the reason why some analysts accuse Macron of pursuing double standards in dealing with a part of France's population that is known for being marginalized and deprived of their basic rights. France is home to the largest Muslim population in Europe.

Macron himself has acknowledged that the French governments have marginalized the Muslim citizens.

"We built a concentration of misery and difficulties, we concentrated populations according to origin and social milieu," he admittedly said. "We created neighborhoods where the promise of the Republic was never kept and where these most radical forms [of Islamism] became sources of hope."

However, Macron promised to attack these concentrations. "What we should attack is Islamist separatism," the French President said.

After the killing of Paty, Macron has doubled down on his Islamophobic agenda, expressing support for the insulting cartoons of Charlie Hebdo.

Speaking at a televised memorial service for the murdered teacher, Macron told viewers that France "will not give up our cartoons."

These remarks sparked a wave of outrage across the Muslim world, prompting the people of some Muslim countries to launch a campaign aiming to boycott French products. Twitter users in the Arab world called for boycotting these products by using Arabic hashtags such as "Boycotting French products," "Macron insults the Prophet," and "Our Prophet is a red line." These hashtags have been trending in many Arab countries in recent days.

Twitter users also prepared a list of dozens of French firms that they want them to be boycotted by Muslims due to Macron's insult against the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

"Macron has deliberately hurt the sentiments of 1.8 billion Muslims by attacking Islam

and our Holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Boycotting any French product is a little gift we can give to him & his supporters," tweeted Suhaib Sadiq, while posting a picture showing the logos of many French firms.

Some Twitter users also published images showing supermarkets in some Arab countries such as Kuwait and Qatar that are empty of French products.

"Qatar's flagship Al Meera supermarket has removed all French products from its shelves after calls for boycott grew louder across the Arab and Muslim world, the corporation announced on Friday," tweeted a Twitter user called Gentleman.

Al-Reem, another Twitter user, said, "I invite you to boycott French products after the French government supported cartoons that insult our Prophet Mohammad peace be upon him."

Religious and political leaders in Arab countries also condemned Macron's approach toward Muslims, saying he is damaging the French-Islamic relations and instigating hatred for political and partisan gains.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) said in a statement that it has followed the ongoing practice of running satirical caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and it was "struck with astonishment at so unexpected a discourse from certain French politicians, which it deems to be harmful to the Muslim-French relations, hatemongering and only serving partisan political interests."

"The General Secretariat says it will always condemn practices of blasphemy and of insulting Prophets of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism," said the OIC statement, adding that it had earlier condemned the brutal murder of French citizen Samuel Paty.

Analysts and political leaders also agree with the OIC's assessment that Macron is politically exploiting the idea of freedom of speech to create a manufactured crisis with Muslim citizens of France in order to mobilize the public opinion ahead of France's 2022 presidential election.

According to a Politico report, since the beginning of his presidency, Macron has been pressured by critics – mostly from the right and far right – to address the security, cultural and social challenges posed by the so-called "radical Islamism."

"The theme will feature heavily in the public debate until the presidential election in 2022, where Macron is likely to face off once more against Marine Le Pen, in a country that struggles with tackling the issue without reviving colonial wounds or tipping into Islamophobia and racism," Politico said.

Erdogan also accused Macron of intensifying anti-Muslim sentiments ahead of the 2022 election, adding that France will witness a presidential election in about a year, which will determine Macron's fate.

"I think that his end is not far away because he did not benefit France in anything, so how can he benefit himself?" the Turkish president said.

## Iran calls on Israeli occupiers to end arbitrary detentions

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Ministry has called on the Tel Aviv regime to stop arbitrarily arresting the Palestinians and free hundreds of them who have been unjustly detained by Israel.

"For 3 months, Maher al-Akras has been detained without any charges. Despite his hunger strike & international outcry, Israeli regime has refused to end his unjustified detention. The occupiers must end arbitrary detentions & free him & 100s of Palestinians unjustly held," the Foreign Ministry said in a tweet on Sunday.

Al-Akras, 49, was arrested near the Palestinian city of Nablus and placed in what came to be known as administrative detention, a policy that the Israeli regime uses to hold suspected Palestinian people without charge. The Palestinian people have long sought to put an end to the policy of administrative detention, which they see as an Israeli ploy to suppress those who demand their rights.

The policy allows Israel to hold the Palestinian people indefinitely without trial, sometimes for years. Hundreds of Palestinians are being held in administrative detention.

Al-Akras has gone on a hunger strike since his arrest in early July to protest the policy. In early September, he was transferred to Kaplan Hospital, south of Tel Aviv.

After nearly three months of hunger strike, the health condition of the Palestinian political prisoner has deteriorated to a critical situation, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"More than 85 days into the hunger strike, we are concerned about potentially irreversible health consequences," said Yves Giebens, the head of the ICR's health department in the occupied Palestinian territories.

"From a medical perspective, he is entering a critical phase," Giebens added in a statement.

"The ICR encourages the patient, his representatives and the competent authorities involved to find a solution that will avoid any loss of life," the statement said.

Tasbeeh al-Akras, one of the detainee's six children, said doctors at Israel's Kaplan Medical Center have warned the family that her father faces organ failure and will soon die, the Guardian reported.

"His situation is critical, he is in continuous pain," she said. "He asked to be moved to a Palestinian hospital so he could stop his strike, but the Israelis refused. Freedom is the only way to stop his strike ... He should be with us."

Despite his grave health conditions, Israel's high court refused to release al-Akras. Instead, it agreed not to extend

his arbitrary detention beyond November.

The United Nations has called on Israel to immediately release al-Akras, warning that the political prisoner is in a "very frail condition."

"Mr. Al-Akras is now in very frail condition, having gone without food for 89 days," said Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur for human rights in Palestine. "Recent visits by doctors to his hospital bed in Israel indicate that he is on the verge of suffering major organ failure, and some damage might be permanent."

The UN special rapporteur also denounced the administrative detention as a policy that goes against democracy.

"Administrative detention is an anathema in any democratic society that follows the rule of law," Lynk said. "When the democratic state arrests and detains someone, it is required to charge the person, present its evidence in an open trial, allow for a full defense and try to persuade an impartial judiciary of its allegations beyond a reasonable doubt."

He added, "Administrative detention, in contrast, allows a state to arrest and detain a person without charges, without a trial, without knowing the evidence against her or him, and without a fair judicial review. It is a penal system that is ripe for abuse and maltreatment."

## Iran welcomes ceasefire deal between Libya's warring factions

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has welcomed a UN-brokered agreement reached between Libya's two main warring factions.

The agreement was signed on Friday at the United Nations in Geneva at the end of a weeklong meeting of delegates from the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Hifter.

In a statement on Saturday, Khatibzadeh appreciated the role of the United Nations and the Libyan negotiating parties in clinching the agreement, expressing hope that the ceasefire would be lasting and that all parties would live up to their commitments.

Emphasizing the need to cut off foreign interference in the process of negotiations between the negotiating parties in Libya,

Khatibzadeh reiterated Iran's opposition to a military solution to the crisis and called for the settlement of the Libyan crisis through dialogue.

Stephanie Williams, the acting head of the United Nations mission in Libya who was chairwoman of the most recent talks, described the ceasefire deal as "an important milestone for Libya and for the Libyan people."

She expressed hope that the ceasefire agreement "will end the suffering of the Libyan people and enable those in the diaspora and internally-displaced persons scattered to return to their homes and live in peace and safety."

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) said in a statement on Friday that the ceasefire agreement is "complete and permanent" and does not apply to UN-designated terrorist groups, adding that "With immediate effect and until the new unified government assumes its functions,

all military agreements on training inside Libya shall be suspended and training crews shall leave Libya's territory."

The agreement establishes a security and operations room which shall propose and implement special security arrangements to secure the areas cleared of military units and armed groups the agreement also foresees the establishment of a limited military force of regular military personnel under the security and operations room to deter violations of the ceasefire, according to the UNSMIL statement.

Under the ceasefire agreement, the parties agreed, with support and participation of the United Nations, to immediately start the identification and categorization of all armed groups and entities on the entire Libyan territory, whether integrated into state institutions or not. The agreement also stipulates that a mechanism and conditions

shall be developed to ensure reintegration, on an individual basis, of their members into state institutions.

The agreement also foresees the establishment of a mechanism to monitor, jointly with UNSMIL, the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. The parties requested UNSMIL to forward the ceasefire agreement to the Security Council and to request the Council to adopt a resolution to ensure compliance of all internal and external parties with this permanent countrywide ceasefire.

Libya has long been torn apart between the GNA and LNA for years, a conflict that has drawn foreign interference, making a political settlement to the crisis harder than ever. However, after years of infighting, Libyan warring factions appear to be ready for setting aside their differences and taking a new path that could lead to a peaceful resolution of the decade-long Libyan crisis.



## Iraq accounts for 60% of Iran's gasoline exports

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Secretary of Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union (OPEX) Hamid Hosseini said currently 60 percent of Iran's gasoline exports go to Iraq, IRNA reported.

The official did not provide information on the amount of exports.

"Currently, the country's export of oil products is favorable and all shipments are purchased," Hosseini said.



He explained that the oil products which are offered at the country's Energy Exchange (IRENEX) are exported to the destination markets after being purchased by domestic companies.

There is no problem in transferring money for the export of oil products, including gasoline, and the money is paid either by the exchange offices or in the form of hard currency by the buyer, Hosseini said.

Mentioning the payment of Iraq's electricity and natural gas dues to Iran, the official said the two sides have reached an agreement and hopefully Iraq will make the payments soon.

He put Iraq's electricity and gas dues to Iran at \$5 billion, adding that despite these dues Iran is still exporting gas and electricity to the Arab neighbor.

According to Hosseini, the mentioned money is going to be paid back to Iran through a mechanism in which Iran will purchase the country's necessary commodities, like foodstuff and medicine, and Iraq will pay for the mentioned products instead of Iran.

He further noted that Iran exported 32 million cubic meters of gas to Iraq during the Q1 of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) while the figure was even higher in Q2.

Earlier this month, the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) visited Iraq on the head of a high-ranking delegation to meet with the country's high-ranking officials, including the Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, the Minister of Finance, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq Mustafa Ghalib Mukheef.

Iran and Iraq had previously agreed to eliminate the U.S. dollar from their trade and to carry out trade exchanges with national currencies.

The two countries are planning to increase their mutual trade to \$20 billion in the near future.

## Over \$6.1b supplied for import of basic goods in 7 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has supplied \$6.124 billion for importing basic commodities and medicine in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), IRNA reported.

According to the CBI office of public relations, the priorities for the imports of the mentioned goods, in terms of type and amount, have been determined by the ministries of industry, agriculture, and health.



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.

As reported by CBI, so far most of the currency allocated by the bank has been used for the imports of consumable goods.

Accordingly, in the mentioned seven months, \$1.624 billion has been allocated for importing corn, \$260 million for barley, \$777 million for oil seeds, \$778 million for oil, \$638 million for soy press cake, \$330 million for wheat and \$40 million for the imports of fertilizers.

During the said period, \$615 million was allocated for the imports of medical equipment and \$985 million for medicine and raw materials for producing medicine.

Earlier this month, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had said that the bank supplied over \$5.267 billion for importing basic goods in the first six 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.

# PGSR's exports rise 120% in 6 months on year

**1 →** Construction of the refinery started in 2006, but the project was delayed as the result of some mismanagement and also financial limitation due to the West-led sanctions against Iran.

As the largest processing facility for gas condensate in West Asia, PGSR is planned to play a big role to turn Iran into an exporter of gasoline.

Iran exported over \$1 billion worth of

gasoline in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), following a decrease of consumption and increase of production in the country.

Despite the sanctions, industry data indicates that Iran has not only managed to continue exporting some volumes but actually boosted exports almost three-fold in the mentioned period compared to the previous year.



The significant increase in the country's gasoline production and exports comes despite the fact that nearly 15 years ago Iran was importing over 10 billion liters of gasoline every year.

Iran became a net gasoline exporter in February 2019, after the inauguration of the third phase of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery project which added 120,000 barrels to the country's daily gasoline production.

## Sarajeh UGS noticeably under development

**1 →** On October 10, the managing director of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) said that the reproduction capacity of Sarajeh underground gas storage will exceed one billion cubic meters by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

According to Ramin Hatami, over 902 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas was reproduced from Sarajeh storage in the previous Iranian calendar year, while 869 million cubic meters of gas was injected into this storage.

The reproduction capacity of the storage is expected to reach more than one billion cubic meters this year with the addition of at least 150 mcm to the injected gas, he said.

Referring to the company's complete readiness for supplying natural gas in winter, the official added: "With the increase of gas storage in the Sarajeh storage, we are fully prepared to supply and support the national gas line in the cold season."

Reproduction from Sarajeh and Shourijeh storages in-



creased by 33 percent in the past Iranian calendar year compared to the preceding year, according to Ahmad Rajabi,

## 28 new renewable power plants to go operational in Iran by Mar. 2021

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Some 28 new renewable power plants are going to be inaugurated across Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), an official with the country's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA) said.

According to Ali Shab-Navard, currently, 54 companies are constructing renewable power plants, including solar, wind, hydro-electric, etc. with a total capacity of 229.39 megawatts (MW) across Iran.

With the mentioned power plants going operational, not only 493,500 meg-

awatt-hours (MWh) of electricity will be produced annually, but it will also save equivalent to 140 million cubic meters of natural gas fuel and 109 million liters of water consumption and carbon dioxide pollution will be reduced by 318,000 tons every year, Shab-Navard said.

Noting that the Iranian households and small businesses are also welcoming renewable energies, the official said over the past two months 105 rooftop PV stations with a total capacity of 1,607 kilowatts have been put into operation across the country.

Over 44 percent of Iran's renewable power plants are solar farms, while 34 percent are

wind farms and 12 percent are hydroelectric power plants and the rest are other types.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for just seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

According to SATBA, the number of small-scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is also increasing noticeably



as Iranian households and small industries are embracing the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

## Monthly bread, grain prices rise over 50% yr/yr

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The prices of bread and various grains in Iran increased by 50.6 percent in the seventh month of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22-October 21) compared to the same month in the previous year, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

Based on the SCI data for the mentioned month, the inflation rate for bread and various grains like beans, barley, and wheat, stood at 52.6 which was the highest inflation rate among the food and beverage category.

Last week, SCI had announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on October 21, which marks the end of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr, stood at 27.2 percent.

The inflation rate has risen 1.2 percent in the mentioned time span from the twelve-month period ended on the last day of the sixth month.



The SCI put the inflation rate at 41.3 percent in the urban areas and at 42.2 percent in the rural regions during the mentioned time span, and announced that the figure shows a 6.8-percent rise in the urban areas and an 8.1-percent growth in the rural regions.

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in a statement in April announced that the annual inflation rate for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) is set to be 22 percent.

The statement published on the website of the CBI read, "Given the adopted policies and taken measures and also taking the country's macro-economic factors into account, the CBI believes that based on the realistic scenarios, the inflation rate in the current year will continue its downward trend."

Last year, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had said, "Our goal is curbing inflation rate and no estimation shows an inflation rate of over 20 percent for the next year."

## Nearly 400,000 tons of commodities traded at IME in a week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on October 23), 398,846 tons of commodities valued at over \$190 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 162,476 tons of various products worth close to \$102 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 145,484 tons of steel, 8,700 tons of aluminum, 7,400 tons of copper, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal



concentrates as well as 700 tons of zinc ingot were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 236,062 tons of different

commodities with the total value of \$91 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 55,000 tons of VB feed stock, 30,831 tons of bitumen, 63,568 tons of polymer products, 30,648 tons of chemical products, 43,500 tons of lube cut oil, 1,420 tons of insulation, 2,965 tons of base oil, 150 tons of argon as well as 8,000 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 308 tons of commodities were traded on the side market of the IME.

As previously reported, more than 3.585 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.56 billion were traded at IME in September.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

In late April, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

## Online anti-corona medical achievements exhibit underway

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) is holding an online exhibition on the country's medical and healthcare achievements in the battle against the coronavirus outbreak, in collaboration with Iran National Innovation Fund (INIF).

As reported by the TPO portal, the exhibition called "Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements" kicked off on October 20 and will wrap up on October 29.

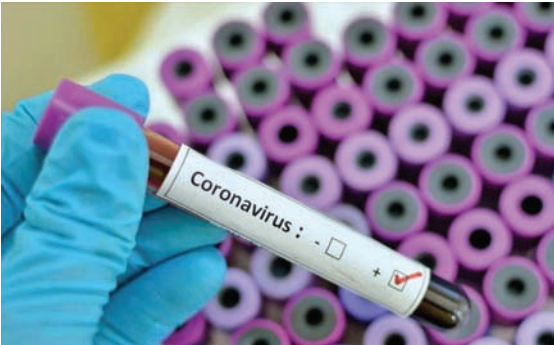
In this virtual exhibition, the achievements and capabilities of 40 domestic knowledge-based companies in a variety of fields, including cellulose and health products, medical,

dental and laboratory equipment, diagnostic kits, equipment and cleaning and disinfecting materials, pharmaceutical products and software systems, are being showcased.

Those interested can visit this online exhibition through the internet address <https://www.inif.ir/corona-exhibition/>.

Visitors can view the digital content of each company's booth, including posters, photos, brochures and advertising teasers, and get acquainted with their products and services.

It is worth mentioning that this exhibition is presented in three languages (Persian, English and Arabic) in both three-dimensional and two-dimensional formats.





## News

## Pakistan's PM accuses Macron of 'attacking Islam'

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan accused French President Emmanuel Macron of "attacking Islam", after the European leader criticized extremists and defended the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

Khan's comments follow statements Macron made last week after a French teacher was beheaded near Paris after he had shown cartoons of the Prophet during a class he was leading on free speech, AFP reported.

Macron said the teacher "was killed because extremists want our future."

In a series of tweets, Khan said the remark would sow division. "This is a time when Pres Macron could have put healing touch & denied space to extremists rather than creating further polarization & marginalization that inevitably leads to radicalization," Khan wrote.

"It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists."

Macron already sparked controversy earlier this month when he said "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world".

"By attacking Islam, clearly without having any understanding of it, President Macron has attacked & hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims in Europe & across the world," Khan said.

## Erdogan says Macron 'needs treatment' over attitude to Muslims

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has launched a fresh attack on his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, saying he needed treatment and "mental checks" over his attitude towards Muslims and Islam, leading Paris to recall its ambassador in Ankara.

Earlier this month, Macron pledged to fight "extremist separatism", which he said was threatening to take control in some Muslim communities around France, drawing a sharp rebuke from Erdogan, al Jazeera reported.

France has since been shaken by the beheading of a history teacher earlier this month. The assailant had wanted to avenge the teacher's use of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in a class on freedom of expression.

"What is the problem of this person called Macron with Muslims and Islam? Macron needs treatment on a mental level," Erdogan said in a speech at a provincial congress of his Justice and Development (AK) Party in the central Turkish city of Kayseri on Saturday.

"What else can be said to a head of state who does not understand freedom of belief and who behaves in this way to millions of people living in his country who are members of a different faith?" Erdogan said. "First of all, have mental checks."

France recalled its envoy to Turkey for consultations after "unacceptable" comments by Erdogan questioning Macron's mental health.

## Resistance News

## Palestinians denounce Sudan's normalization with Israel

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — Palestinians have denounced as "great betrayal" Sudan's recent decision to follow the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in forging diplomatic relations with Israel.

Deputy speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council Ahmad Bahar said Saturday that the normalization of relations between Sudan and Israel constitutes a support for US President Donald Trump ahead of the November presidential election, the Arabic-language Palestinian Safa news agency reported.

The normalization agreement between Tel Aviv and Khartoum is a great betrayal of the principles and culture of the Arab and Islamic nations, said Bahar, adding that the deal poses a threat to the identity of the North African nation and its future.

## It is unlikely that U.S. policies produce democracy: Marvin Zonis

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — Marvin Zonis, a professor emeritus of business administration, says it is unlikely that U.S. policies lead to democracy in any country, citing Iran before the 1979 revolution in Iran and Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003 and 2003 respectively.

"It is unlikely that any policies that the U.S. could have pursued would have produced any democratic outcome in either country," Zonis says in an interview with the Tehran Times.

The professor describes the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 under the pretext that the Saddam regime was hiding weapons of mass destruction was "disastrous".

Most observers believe that U.S. policies in West Asia have ended in failure, and it is time for the United States to withdraw its forces from the region.

U.S. policy approaches, especially "constructive chaos" proposed by former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, brought nothing but misery and endless wars for people in the West Asia region.

Before invading Iraq in March 2003, President George W. Bush ordered war on Afghanistan on the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

"The stupid policies of the George W. Bush administration in both Afghanistan and Iraq were a disaster," Zonis added.

After it was found out that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. claimed the invasion was worth to bring democracy to Iraq.

American academic emphasizes that



"it is unlikely that any policies that the U.S. could have pursued would have produced any democratic outcome in either country."

U.S. rapprochement with the Shah regime in Iran helped institutionalize corruption in the country.

However, the relationship between Iran and the U.S. has been deeply troubled since the victory of the 1979 revolution.

"The U.S. was humiliated by the overthrow of the shah, by the seizure of the U.S. embassy, by the holding prisoners of 52 American citizens for 444 days, and by the constant chants of 'marg bar Amrika' (down with the USA)," Zonis notes.

"Iran was also insulted by the constant U.S. support, over decades, for the shah,

by his return to the U.S., by the shooting down of Iran Air 655," the academic argues.

Those humiliations and insulting policies produced rage in each country, which have been on the basis of the troubling relationship between Tehran and Washington.

While the ousted Shah of Iran tried to strengthen ties with powerful states like the U.S. and other international superpowers, he came to "see the Iranian people as the greatest obstacle to the realization of his dreams."

"As a result, the ties between the monarchy and the Iranian people collapsed, paving the way for the revolution," Zonis concludes.

Before the Islamic revolution in Iran,

## Iran wants a stable Afghanistan: Pakistani analyst

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — A Pakistani political analyst says that Iran, as an important neighbor to Afghanistan, wants a stable region that will be in its favor.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai predicts that Tehran will play a "key role in the near future in shaping stability in Afghanistan."

Yousafzai adds, "Iran, like the other regional states, wants a stable Afghanistan that is in its favor."

The following is the text of the interview: ■ How do you assess the achievements of Abdullah Abdullah's visit to Tehran? Was it successful?

A: Iran, being a regional player, is crucial for any development in its neighborhood. Afghanistan is not an exception as it (Iran) has geo-political, historical, and cultural relations with Afghanistan. Dr. Abdullah's recent visit was an indication that Iran holds a vital role in Afghanistan. Historically, Iran was used to support the anti-Taliban factions in Afghanistan where almost all of the non-Pashtun factions were anti-Taliban. However, the post-Taliban setting in Afghanistan is quite different from the past. Iran now maintains friendly relations not only with the Afghan government, non-Pashtun groups but also with the Taliban. The Ghani-Abdullah coalition government is seeking deep cordial relations with the neighboring countries that is evident from Abdullah's visit to Pakistan, India, and now Iran vis-à-vis their support for the future setting that could happen once the intra-Afghan talks concludes. Abdullah's discussion on developments in Afghanistan, intra-Afghan talks and bilateral issues with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Javad Zarif and other Iranian officials marked Iranian role and support for the ongoing peace process that is not only in Afghanistan's favor but also in Iran's favor.

■ How do you evaluate Iran's role in seeking to establish peace in Afghanistan in view of Abdullah's statement about Iran?

A: Iran like the other regional states want a stable Afghanistan that is in its favor. Since the U.S.-Taliban agreement, regional countries have been repositioning themselves to make the most out of a forthcoming U.S. withdrawal and a power-sharing plan among the Afghan government and the Taliban. In this regard, Iran, an important neighbor for Afghanistan, will likely play a key role in the

near future in shaping stability in Afghanistan. Iran will benefit greatly from a stable and secure Afghanistan in terms of trade and cultural relations. However, Iran also stands at a critical juncture wherein the outcome or progress of the peace process will likely shift the strategies that best suit its interests: the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Iran will in all likelihood continue on its current course of openly supporting the Afghan government while encouraging intra-Afghan talks and maintaining its ties to the Taliban to keep its options open as the United States prepares to withdraw. Ultimately, Tehran would prefer that Afghanistan maintain its status as a republic as it limits the influence that other states including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Iran's regional rival, can exert on Kabul, and creates a more favorable environment for Iran to protect its own interests in Afghanistan. However, Iran's main goal is peace though the U.S. withdrawal and a peace agreement that Hassan Rouhani reiterated in his meeting with Dr. Abdullah.

■ How do you see the role of India and Pakistan in the Afghanistan peace talks?

A: There is a sharp contrast when it comes to Pakistan and India's role in the Afghan peace talks. The peace talks were first between the U.S. and the Taliban and now between the Afghan government and the Taliban. India did not want the Taliban to become a part of the Kabul administration due to their close links with Pakistan. Back in the 1990s, India supported the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, an act which still maintains a gap between India and the Taliban. Following the U.S.-Taliban agreement, Taliban ex-chief negotiator, Mullah Abbas Stanakzai told the media: India should play positive role in Afghanistan, a statement that indicated to India's negative role in Afghanistan. Even India, the only country in the world who saw the U.S.-Taliban agreement with suspicion, and was not in favor of the deal. On the other hand, Pakistan has cordial relations with the Taliban since their rise in the mid-1990s that provides it a leverage over the Taliban. The U.S. was persistently asking Pakistan to push the Taliban for a peace deal that could pave the way for their successful withdrawal. The U.S.-Taliban peace talks headed towards a positive end once Pakistan freed Mullah Biradar, who had been in jail in Pakistan since 2010.

■ Do you expect the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan reach a long-term

agreement?

A: If we look at the whole peace process in Afghanistan since 2009, the U.S. was trying for a deal between the Afghan government and the Taliban. However, the Taliban were always against this idea as they saw Americans as the real decision makers in Kabul. Following the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement, the Taliban has now an upper hand on the table. Their gains against the U.S. has encouraged them to have a favorable bargain with the Afghan government. On the other hand, the Afghan government has no other way but to sign a deal with the Taliban as their position is weak in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal. Trump's withdrawal announcement has put significant pressure on the Kabul administration, where they will have to defend the country against the mighty Taliban if there is no U.S. military support that will put them in hot waters.

■ How is Iran's relations with different parties in Afghanistan?



A: Iran's relations are balanced with both the Afghan government and the Taliban. Iran considers the U.S. presence a threat for their security. The Taliban's struggle against the U.S. is likely to fulfill Iran's desire: the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan will put Tehran and the Taliban on one page. Besides, Iran sees Taliban as part of the government in near future with whom they would like to have a cordial relationship. A stable Afghanistan is in Iran's favor.

■ What are the main obstacles of to peace in Afghanistan?

A: Any future political setup in Kabul now lies in the Afghan hands in shape of the intra-Afghan talks. The U.S. wants to withdraw its troops and hand over the charge of security to the Afghans. Any political settlement between the Kabul administration and the Taliban is not a simple process. Both the parties have been fighting against one another for the last two decades, having opposite views about the governance and political system. Kabul wants democracy while the Taliban are pushing for an Islamic system. The Kabul administration wants to prolong the process till the result of the U.S. elections. If Joe Biden wins, they assume he may withdraw from the U.S.-Taliban agreement that will give enough room to the Afghan elite to rule for another term. However, there are little possibility for this to happen. Furthermore, Kabul is pushing the Taliban for a ceasefire before any deal, while the Taliban are not accepting



it by calling it before time. Since the start of the intra-Afghan talks on September 12, both sides have not still agreed on the agenda of the talks that shows their hardening stances. A negotiation process can only succeed once the parties soften their stances and go for give and take.

 <b>Call for public tender (First/Second publish)</b> <b>One Stages tender</b> <b>N.I.O.C 1399.4023</b>				 <b>National Iranian Drilling Company</b>	
<b>Subject of Tender: P/F:"HYDRALIFT"TOP DRIVE</b>					
<b>Tender descriptions:</b>					
<b>The Tender holder</b>	<b>Registration No. through national electronic tendering system</b>	<b>Tender No. /Indent No.</b>	<b>Estimated value (Rial)</b>		
<b>National Iranian Drilling Company</b>	22/706/232	Tender No.: FP/20-99/083 Indent No.: 08-22-9945018	13, 868, 000, 000		
<b>Qualitative evaluation of tenderers</b>					
<b>Method</b>	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.				
<b>Purchasing &amp; Submitting</b>					
<b>Tender Document Distribution by Company</b>	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof ) closing date : <b>November08,2020(</b>				
	<b>Distribution Place</b>	Hall No.:113, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148707			
	<b>Submitting Method</b>	•□Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491( Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. •□Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.			
<b>Documents Receiving Method</b>	<b>Closing date</b>	•□ 35Days after the last time of Purchasing.closingdate: <b>January18,2020</b> •□The envelopes will be opened <b>At. 9:15 a.m On January19,2020</b>			
	<b>Address</b>	Hall No. 107, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569			
<b>Tender Guarantee</b>					
<b>Value of guarantee</b>	694,000,000Rial / 2 458,Euro				
<b>Type of guarantee</b>	✓Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 ( Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.				
<b>Duration of credit &amp; quotation</b>	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.				
* According to the meeting-minutes No: 138/665/98 dated: 1398-04-03 of deputy of research and technology dept. of oil ministry all the companies and participations should enlist and in "SETAD SAMANE" is necessary for all.					
(Foreign Procurement Dept.)					
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: <a href="http://www.nidc.ir">www.nidc.ir</a> <a href="http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr">http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr</a> تهران تایمز نوبت دوم ۹۹/۸/۵					

## Thousands rally in -1000plus locations, calling on Netanyahu to resign

Thousands rally in more than a 1000 locations throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, asking Israel's politically-embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to step down for engaging in corrupt practices.

The protests began in Tel Aviv, the holy city of Jerusalem al-Quds, and numerous other spots on Saturday and continued on Sunday, Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper reported.

In al-Quds, five marches converged on Netanyahu's residence, including one that had begun from the whereabouts of Knesset (Israeli parliament). The latter protest march alone packed around 2,000 demonstrators.

The police tried to stop one of the marches using roadblocks, but demonstrators "broke into a run and bypassed" the obstacles, the paper said. Seven people were arrested as the police were trying to handle the outpour of public anger.

The occupied territories have witnessed regular demonstrations against the premier in defiance of a total ban on such rallies, purportedly introduced to contain the new coronavirus, Press TV reported.

The rallies grew in size last year in the run-up to Netanyahu's indictment for "receiving a bribe, fraud, and breach of trust" in four corruption cases, and began to gain further momentum afterwards.



## No harm to Zanjan historical sites by quake

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — No damage was inflicted on historical sites across the northwestern Zanjan province as a medium-sized 5 magnitude earthquake struck the neighboring province of Qazvin on Saturday, the provincial tourism chief has said.



However, due to the severity of the earthquake and the importance of historical buildings, experts are on standby to inspect the possible harms to historical sites of the province, Amir Arjmand announced on Sunday.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

In late January, Zanjan was designated as a "world city of filigree" by the World Crafts Council after the WCC assessors visited various craft workshops, stores, exhibits, and bazaars of the city in a two-day itinerary last December.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting fine, pliable metal threads and soldering them at their points of contact with each other with a metal groundwork.

## IranAir flights to Europe running on normal schedule

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iran-Europe flights operated by the Iranian flag carrier IranAir are currently running on a normal schedule again.

"IranAir is currently operating all flights to the European destinations on schedule after they were suspended for months due to the coronavirus pandemic," Mehr quoted Hossein Jahani, the head of the airline's public relations office, as saying on Saturday.



Flights to England, France, Austria, Germany, and Italy are being operated normally, according to schedule, Jahani noted. The airline is set to re-launch flights to Rome, Karachi, Beirut, and Istanbul in the following months, he added.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on Iran's civil aviation sector with reports showing that airlines lost hundreds of millions of dollars because of flight cancellations during the busy New Year travel season in late March. Nearly all Iran-Europe flights were postponed over the past couple of months.

## National handicrafts expo to be held online due to coronavirus

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — The 34th national handicrafts exhibition of Iran will be held online due to the outbreak of coronavirus.

It's the first time that the annual expo is set to be online in a decision is made by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to promote handicrafts, crafts people and dealers in the pandemic era.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the fig-



ure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

# Persian carpet: a crossroads of intricate designs, lavish colors, and peerless artistry

→ 1 In the 15th century the art of the book, which had long been considered the supreme artistic accomplishment and already had behind it centuries of superb achievement, reached a degree of elegance and sophistication unknown either before or since. The bindings, frontispieces, chapter headings, and, in the miniatures themselves, the canopies, panels, brocades, and carpets that furnished the spaces all received the richest and most elegant patterning. These beautiful designs were appropriated in various degrees by the other arts and account in no small measure for the special character of the court carpets of the period, the variety of color, the ingenuity and imaginative range of pattern schemes, and the superlative draftsmanship that is both lucid and expressive.

Among the products inspired by book illumination were the medallion carpets of northwest Persia, which consist of a large center medallion connected with pendants or cartouches on the long axis and with quarter-section designs of the medallion in the corner areas. First used on ornamental pages and bindings of Persian books, on carpets this arrangement provided an effective center and allowed several layers of designs to overlap because the medallions could cover multiple vine and flower patterns. The depiction of the latter motifs is more relaxed than their medieval rendering, and new motifs (inspired by painting) such as animals, humans, and landscapes began to be worked in.

A special court atelier, possibly located in Tabriz or Soltaniyeh, translated the most gorgeous illuminations into carpets. Among the 12 or so surviving examples are the world's most famous carpets, each a masterpiece of superb design, majestic size, purity and depth of color, and perfection of detail. The best-known of these are two carpets from the mosque at Ardebil in East Azarbaijan,



Nomads are seen at a carpet production workshop outside Shiraz, southern Iran (Credit: The New York Times)

Iran, dated 1539–40. The better, skillfully restored, is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; the other, reduced in size, is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

These carpets, in the opinion of many, represent the supreme achievement in the whole field of carpet design. Nonetheless, other royal workshops were also producing many beautiful rugs. Particularly costly silk carpets with figure motifs (such as the silk hunting carpet in Vienna's Austrian

Museum of Applied Art) were probably woven in Kashan, Persia's silk center. Smaller silk medallion carpets were also made there during the later 16th century, their designs mostly variations of the original medallion system. The court manufacture of Kashan also produced silk carpets with a decidedly royal style.

The distinctive rugs called vase carpets (because of the flower vases in their designs) are generally thought to be from Kerman. The pattern usually consists

**It is a scene that seems as ageless, a procedure that can take as long as a year, these efforts have long put Iran's carpets among the most complex and labor-intensive handicrafts in the world.**

## Rice paddy fields, an untapped tourism potential

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Agritourism, a relatively new branch of the tourism industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas, could be developed in Ilam province due to its mild climate, which makes it a suitable place to cultivate a variety of agricultural products such as rice.

Sirvan and Chardavol counties on the lesser-known western province have the potential to become agritourism hubs, as more than 3,000 hectares of their lands are dedicated to the cultivation of Anbarbu rice, from which about 10,000 tons of the crop is harvested annually.

Anbarbu rice is one of the famous agricultural products of the province, which has an extraordinary aroma and taste and has its own fans, and due to its high quality and flavor, it is considered one of the local souvenirs of Ilam.

The Anbarbu rice harvest festival, which is one of the tourism events registered on the province's tourism calendar, could be effective in attracting more domestic and foreign tourists to the region.

Considering that agritourism and farm/ranch recreation is not limited to visiting farms and paddy fields, but also tourists participate in the harvesting of agricultural products and do activities conducted on private

agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays and educational activities, this branch of tourism could be intriguing for many tourists.

Boosting agritourism in the region could help the development of villages and rural areas as well as their economic prosperity by creating a source of income for the villagers.

Holding some customs and celebrations that are done during the harvest can also be effective in promoting agritourism.

Back in June, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri announced that permits would be granted to eligible tour operators to launch their agritourism businesses, aiming to set certain standards in a move to ensure the quality of such services in the country.

Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

Rural tourism, however, differs from agritourism in two ways. First, rural tourism enterprises do not necessarily occur on a farm or ranch, or at an agricultural



plant, they do not generate supplemental income for the agricultural enterprise.

To cite an example, we could refer to saffron farms in northeast Iran that are going to fame as a new destination for agritourism. Iranian Saffron is known as the "red gold", saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to physical and spiritual medicine.

## Relics dating from 6,000 years ago to Islamic eras on National Heritage list

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Nine historical moveable properties dating from 6,000 years ago to early Islamic eras in Isfahan province have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

The relics include two wooden minbars (pulpits), which date back to the early Islamic era, clay utensils, a cylindrical stone seal, and a burial jar, dating back to some 6,000 years ago, IRNA quoted Fereydun Allahyari, the provincial tourism chief, as saying.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of interna-



tional trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled

with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges

but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

## UNWTO conference in Iran postponed over coronavirus

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The International Conference on Ecotourism and Rural Tourism, which was scheduled to be held in Iran in November, has been postponed over the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the conference aimed at promoting rural tourism and finding new ways to empower villagers through generating jobs as the UNWTO has designated 2020 as the Year of Tourism and Rural Development.

Promoting and developing rural tourism in collaboration with the private sector and consulting with domestic and foreign experts are on the agenda of the tourism ministry. ISNA quoted the deputy tourism minister, Vali Teymouri, as saying on Sunday.

Iranian villages are considered as treasures of national and indigenous customs and subcultures of different Iranian ethnic groups, and each has at least one outstanding feature so that it can be considered as a



tourist attraction, the official added.

He also noted that developing rural tourism could

slow down the process of depopulation of villages and cause reverse migration while preserving culture and customs through job creation.

Having a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers varied excursions to nature lovers. Sightseers may live with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stay. The country is home to abundant historical mansions, caravanserais, bathhouses, madrasas, and other massive monuments, which can buttress its budding tourism and hospitality sectors if managed appropriately and refurbished properly.

The World Tourism Organization sees rural tourism as a type of activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, angling, and sightseeing. Such tourism also possesses characteristics such as low population density, a landscape dominated by agriculture and forestry, as well as traditional social structure and lifestyle.



# Govt. supports women breadwinners during pandemic: VP

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar stressed the need to further empower women, breadwinners, in the context of the economic war and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women entrepreneurs and virtual businesses need to be further strengthened during the economic war and the pandemic, and that is why they are supported by the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs, Ebtekar wrote on her Twitter account on Saturday.

In Iran, there are 3 million Women Headed Households (WHH), out of a total of 22 million families, and most of the WHH can be found in less developed areas of the country, according to the UNDP office in Iran. The labor market structure indicates that most women in Iran, especially those in rural and less developed areas, are keen to start micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME). As in many other countries, WHH is most likely to re-invest their earnings in the children's wellbeing. However, women face many barriers in accessing the market and developing viable MSMEs, in particular with access to finance, awareness of competitive value chains, and untapped local economic potential in their geographic area.

COVID-19 adds additional challenges for economically empowering WHH in Iran, meaning that innovative strategies are needed.



In March, President Hassan Rouhani said the government has allocated 1,000 trillion rials (about \$24 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to help lessen impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the national economy.

"We allocated the sum in addition to the next year's budget in order to prevent from huge losses and to be able to go on more

conveniently."

He elaborated that 120 trillion rials (about \$3 billion) has been allocated to the health sector and 50 trillion rials (about \$1.2 billion) has been allocated to the unemployment fund.

Moreover, 750 trillion rials (about \$17.8 billion) will be paid in low-interest loans to businesses, Rouhani noted.

The United Nations Population Fund

(UNFPA) and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare of Iran held a joint webinar in July aimed to build partnerships to help boost the resilience of female heads of households.

In the same line, Maryam Mirmalek, director-general of the office of Support and Empowerment, informed participants about the first on-line dashboard developed by the ministry in order to monitor the socio-economic and health status of female heads of households on a real-time basis.

"The socio-economic recovery plan requires \$50 million. \$15 million have already been mobilized by UN agencies in Iran", concluded Ugochi Daniels, UN Resident Coordinator in Iran, and one of the panelists. "UN agencies in Iran stay committed to complementing government's efforts to leave no one behind".

Moreover, Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejraiy-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Imam, implemented 60,000 job creation plans for those financially struggling families who were affected by coronavirus outbreak.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation also planned to extend home-based employment programs in a bid to support female-headed households.

Fifty-five percent of the families supported by the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation are women heads of households, Seyed Morteza Bakhtiari, head of the Foundation said.

## Air pollution has no effect on coronavirus spread: expert

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Air pollution has no special effect on the spread of the coronavirus disease, and studies have showed that there is no connection between these two issues, Ali Maher, deputy chief of Tehran special working group for coronavirus control said.

Pointing to the coronavirus outbreak in winter, he noted that the prevalence of coronavirus in winter depends on the people, if they observe health protocols, the infection will reduce.

Because there has been no evidence that temperature affects the prevalence, therefore the only way to control the virus is the observance of health protocols by the people, he highlighted, ILNA reported.

### COVID-19 toll hits 32,000 in Iran

In the press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,191 new cases of COVID-19



infection, raising the total number of infections to 568,896. She added that 455,054 patients have so far recovered, but 4,969 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 296 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 32,616, she added.

Lari noted that so far 4,719,597 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamedan, Yazd, and Kordestan.

The provinces of Hormozgan, Fars, and Golestan and Sistan-Baluchestan are also on alert.

## Italian envoy highlights role of art in commemorating healthcare workers

1 → "The episode showed us that artists can send a powerful message, first of all, we are all the same in the entire world and the virus does not differentiate, the second message is that we need to be united to fight the virus."

If humans should get together to be more effective to contain the disease, he emphasized.

These short episodes conveying that how corona changed lives throughout the world, was a way to promote art in addition to raising awareness among the people, he concluded.

The event was attended by foreign and Iranian officials, including, Mohsen Asadi Lari, deputy health minister, and Christoph Hammelman, WHO representative to Iran.

The fifth of the eight-episode series will be presented on November 4.



## Coronavirus is not helping to slow down climate change

One of the few positive outcomes (if we want to call them that) of the drastic measures implemented to contain the pandemic is that we may have reduced our planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions. Disrupting our lives, the pandemic has transformed our society by reducing transportation, production of goods, and a whole series of activities that heavily add CO2 into the atmosphere.

Global CO2 emissions immediately after the global lockdown last spring decreased by 17% from 2019 average levels during the same period, with the peak of the reduction reaching 26%. A new study now takes stock of the situation and predicts that, based on data in the energy, industry and mobility sectors, in 2020 global

CO2 emissions will drop by up to 8%. Unfortunately, although this may seem like a victory, this value is a drop in the ocean of emissions that we humans have injected in the atmosphere. Alone, it is not enough to have a significant effect on climate change.

"To reduce the CO2 concentration in the atmosphere in the long run, the restrictions imposed during the pandemic would have to be continued for decades. But even this would be far from sufficient," says study author Ralf Sussmann of the Karlsruher Institut für Technologie in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), cumulative reductions of this magnitude would be needed each year to achieve the Paris Agreement goals by 2030.

Sussman and his colleague also studied a long-term scenario to understand how quickly and how much emissions will have to be reduced to reach the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The results showed how this goal can only be achieved with a significant and immediate reduction of CO2 emissions, and a further decrease to zero emissions by 2055.

"The restrictions imposed during the corona crisis, however, are far from being sufficient," says Sussman. "They have just resulted in a one-time reduction by eight percent. To reach zero emissions in the coming decades, cumulative reductions of the same magnitude would be required every year, i.e. 16 percent in 2021, 24 percent in 2022, and so on."

### ENGLISH IN USE

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## Persian literature Olympiad to be held internationally next calendar year

Persian literature Olympiad will be held internationally in Iran in the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), deputy director at National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents affiliated to Education Ministry has said. In a collaborative attempt between National Library of Iran, ECO Cultural Institute, Allameh Tabatabaei University, Sa'di Foundation and Academy of Persian Language and Literature, the Olympiad will be held in Iran, Fars news agency quoted Enayat Salarian as saying on Wednesday.

Moreover, he added, the first international student Olympiad on stem cells and regenerative medicine in the name of Iran will be held in 2020.

## المپیاد ادبی از سال ۹۸ به صورت جهانی برگزار می شود

معاون مرکز ملی پرورش استعدادهای درخشان گفت: المپیاد ادبی از سال ۱۳۹۸ به صورت جهانی برگزار می شود.

عنایت سالاریان در گفت و گو با خبرگزاری فارس در تشریح المپیادهای علمی امسال اظهار کرد: المپیاد ادبی از سال ۱۳۹۸ با کمک تعدادی از سازمان های فرهنگی مثل کتابخانه ملی، موسسه فرهنگی اکو، دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی، بنیاد سعدی و فرهنگستان ادب فارسی به صورت جهانی برگزار می شود.

سالاریان ادامه داد: همچنین در سال ۲۰۲۰ اولین المپیاد جهانی سلول های بنیادی به میزبانی و با ابداع ایران برگزار می شود.

## Small increases in air pollution linked to rise in depression, finds study

Small increases in people's exposure to air pollution are linked to significant rises in depression and anxiety, according to the first such study of UK adults.

The researchers found that an incremental increase in nitrogen dioxide, largely produced by diesel vehicles, heightened the risk of common mental disorders by 39%. For tiny particle pollution, which comes from burning fuels, and brake and tyre dust, the risk rose by 18%.

The scientists also found that people living in places with higher levels of particle pollution were twice as likely to experience mental health problems as those in the least polluted areas. The researchers acknowledged that other factors were important for mental health, such as genetics and childhood experiences, but added that, unlike these, air pollution could be prevented, the Guardian reported.

The study followed more than 1,000 adults in south-east London over five years, but the results are relevant for cities and towns across the world. In the UK, almost every urban area has particle pollution levels above the World Health Organization guidelines, and around the globe 90% of people breathe dirty air.

"Air pollution is not the only factor that may have an impact on the presence of mental disorders, but it is a preventable one," said Dr Ioannis Bakolis, a lecturer at King's College London who led the research. "Introducing measures to reduce air pollution may represent a rare and potentially impactful primary health measure for the prevention of psychiatric disorders."

Dr Ian Mudway, a lecturer at Imperial College London and part of the research team, said rates of mental health disorders were known to be higher in urban areas, with suggested causes including deprivation and lack of green space. "But the amazing thing with this study is that when you control for all of those other features of the urban environment and socioeconomic factors, the air pollution signal remains. It's a very robust finding," he added.

The World Bank has estimated that air pollution costs the global economy \$5tn (£3.8tn) a year but this includes only the well-known damages caused to heart and lungs by dirty air.

"There is now an increasing body of evidence suggesting air pollution isn't great for the brain either," Mudway said. "We may actually have been underplaying the adverse effects of air pollution on our health from cradle to grave."

Recent research has linked dirty air to increased suicides and indicated that growing up in polluted places increases the risk of mental disorders. Other research found that air pollution causes a "huge" reduction in intelligence and is linked to dementia. A global review in 2019 concluded that air pollution may be damaging every organ in the human body.

The Bakolis-led research is published in the journal Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, and used standard questionnaires to assess the mental health of people in the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth over five years. It used data on individuals to take into account factors including age, socioeconomic status, neighbourhood deprivation, and frequency of drinking, smoking and exercise.

The research improved on previous work by estimating air pollution levels every 20 metres across the area, meaning homes on busy roads could be distinguished from those on back streets. The study also took account of noise levels, which can be hard to separate from air pollution because traffic influences both.

The average NO2 levels in the boroughs varied from 24 to 83 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³), but the study found a rise in exposure of just 3 units increased the risk of common mental disorders by 39%. Small particle pollution ranged from 9 to 23 µg/m³ and a 5-unit increase led to the risk of mental health problems rising by 18%.

Epidemiological studies cannot prove a causal link between air pollution and mental health problems and scientists cannot experiment on people. But a broad range of psychiatric conditions have been linked to inflammation in the body, including the brain, and recent work has shown tiny air pollution particles lodged in the brain are associated with molecular damage.

The latest study is important, and accounted for a long list of other factors that may affect mental health, said Prof Antonio Gasparini, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. But he said the broad definition of mental health used made it difficult to assess potential causal links. "More studies are needed before offering [health] recommendations," he added.

Prof Anna Hansell, at the University of Leicester, said the research was interesting and carefully conducted. She also said more studies using different statistical techniques were needed to confirm the findings.

"However, there are already urgent grounds to reduce air pollution due to its association with chronic disease and premature deaths," Hansell said. She added that regular exercise, even in polluted places, benefits mental and physical health.

"People should act, not only worry," said Bakolis. The evidence of air pollution's harm was now strong enough that people should ask their elected representatives for more action, he added.

Mudway, who is raising a young family in central London, said he walked as much as possible and chooses less polluted routes.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 42)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

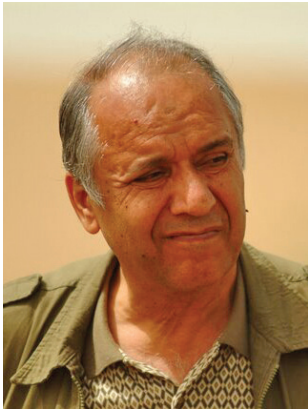
Each fruit of the tree you have planted will be appreciated by a reward from Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

## “Mokhtarnameh” producer Mahmud Fallah dies at 75

**A R T** TEHRAN — Mahmud Fallah, the producer of Iranian TV series “Mokhtarnameh” and “The Charged Rifle”, died from a lung disease in a Tehran hospital on Thursday. He was 75.

He was born in the northeastern Iranian city of Sabzevar.



Producer Mahmud Fallah in an undated photo.

He then moved to Tehran in 1968 and began working as an electronics technician at the radio and television organization.

He was then employed in mobile units providing radio and TV reports on various events.

The most significant major event that he covered in the units was the return of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, to Iran on February 1, 1979 after years of living in exile abroad.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, he was appointed production manager at the television organization.

Under his directorship, many TV and radio units were dispatched to the frontlines to cover Iran’s operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

After his retirement as production manager of television, he began working as a producer in many TV productions.

One of the projects was the series “Mokhtarnameh” directed by Davud Mirbageri during the 2000s about an uprising organized by Mokhtar Saqafi after the events of Ashura, the 10th of Muharram during the seventh century, to take revenge against the killers of Imam Hussein (AS).

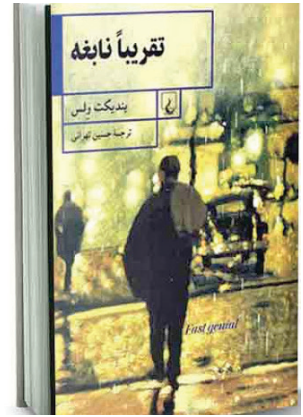
Another outstanding project was “The Charged Rifle” directed by Amrollah Ahmadi during the 1990s about the dictatorship of local Iranian rulers during and after World War I.

He was also worked as a producer in several acclaimed movies, including director Saman Salur’s “A Kilo of Dates for the Funeral”.

## Benedict Wells’ “Almost Ingenious” comes to Iranian bookstores

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — A Persian translation of “Almost Ingenious” by German author Benedict Wells has recently been published by Qoqnus Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Hossein Tehrani.



Front cover of the Persian translation of German author Benedict Wells’ “Almost Ingenious”.

Francis Dean lives with his mother in a rundown trailer park in New Jersey. He figures he will probably live there until he dies. That is, until the day when he finds out the truth about how he was brought into the world. Apparently his existence is the result of an absurd experiment that his mother took part in. And it seems that his father is not some loser who left his family in the lurch after all, but a scientific genius from Harvard.

Meeting his father could change Francis’ life. Together with his best friend Grover, an eccentric brain-box, and the girl of his dreams, the delicate, unpredictable Anne-May, he sets off on a cross-country journey to the West Coast to find his father. Francis wants to find out who he really is, and he has nothing to lose – or does he? A dramatic journey of discovery takes place with unrelenting twists and turns and a truly breathtaking showdown.

Wells was born in Munich in 1984, and moved to Berlin after completing school and focused on his writing, earning a living with various jobs.

His fourth novel, “The End of Loneliness”, spent more than a year and a half on the Spiegel bestseller list, and was awarded the 2016 European Union Prize for Literature, among other awards, and has been published in 37 languages. After several years in Barcelona, Wells now lives in Zurich.

# “Sun Children” shines at Isfahan film festival

→1 Zamani was named the best young actor at the 77th Venice Film Festival, winning the Marcello Mastroianni Award in September.

The 33rd edition of the children’s film festival opened last week in Tehran and Isfahan, physically screening a number of Iranian movies for limited numbers of people in audiences due to an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases.

The winners were honored at the Abbasabad Complex during the closing ceremony of the festival attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami and a limited number of cineastes.

The jury of the International Centre of Films for Children and Youth (CIFEJ) at the festival gave its prize to the German animated drama “Fritzi: A Revolutionary Tale” by Ralf Kukula and Matthias Bruhn.

Also in the international section, the Golden Butterfly for the animated short went to “The Eleventh Step” by Maryam Kashkulinia from Iran.

“The Last Visit” by Mohammad-Mehdi Fekrian received the Corona-Narrative Section Special Award for the great care



Filmmaker Majid Majidi holds the Golden Butterfly he won for his film “Sun Children” at the 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth on October 23, 2020. (ICFF)

the director showed regarding healthcare workers and heroes.

The winners in the national competition section were also honored.

“Wolf Cubs of the Apple Valley” produced by Majid Barzegar was named best film in the national competition.

“The Eleventh Step” by Kashkulinia was selected as best short animated film and “The Driver” by Reza Nejati won the Golden Butterfly for best short fiction film.

The Golden Butterfly for best feature film went to “Cocoon and Butterfly” by Mohammad Salehinejad.

The Golden Butterfly for best technical and artistic achievement was presented to set designer Keivan Moqaddam for “Sun Children”.

Mohammadreza Alivar was named the best actor for his role in “Wolf Cubs of the Apple Valley” by director and writer Fereidun Najafi who also won the award for best screenwriter.

The Golden Butterfly for best director in the section was given to Majidi for “Sun Children”.

The special jury award was given to director Mahin Javaherian for “Yes”.

## Iranian photographers honored at Siena Intl. Photo Awards

no-profit association organizes every year.

The association creates cultural initiatives aimed at spreading, promoting and enhancing art, monuments, traditions, cultures and natural beauty from all around the world.

“Benediction” by Amir-Mehdi Najafli Shahpar from Iran won the top prize in the Journeys & Adventures category.

The photo shows Muslim women attending the morning prayers of Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, in Hamedan, Iran.

“Blooming” by Vietnamese photographer Thien Nguyen and “Diver and Jacks at Cabo Pulmo” by Christian Vizl from Mexico won took second and third places in this category.

“Life Is Live” by Majid Hojjati from Iran also won an honorable mention in this section.

Fattah Zinuri, another Iranian photographer, was selected as runner-up in the Fascinating Faces and Characters section for his “Taboo” depicting a person clad in a burka.

“I took this photo inside my home studio in Iran while I

was working on a movie project about Afghan immigrants living in Iran,” Zinuri has said about his photo.

“It was the first time that I witnessed in person someone wearing a burka,” he added.

“Mother” by Iranian photojournalist Hassan Qaedi was named Remarkable Artwork in the Documentary & Photojournalism section.

The photo shows a mother who has returned to her destroyed home in Homs, Syria on June 16, 2012 to take her child’s toy after the end of the conflict.

“Frozen Mobile Home” by French photographer Greg Lecoeur was selected as the Photo of the Year at the Siena International Photo Awards.

His photo depicts an iceberg as massive and mysterious habitat that supports marine life.

The winning images are showcased at Via Fiorentina in the Italian city of Siena from October 24 to November 29 during an exhibition named “Imagine all the People Sharing all the World”.

## Iranian photographers top at Munich contest on coronavirus cultural shutdown

**A R T** TEHRAN — A collection of 12 photos by Iranian photographers Ali Haddadi and Zohreh Salimi has won first prize at a competition on the cultural shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The contest named “Cultural Shutdown: Social Distancing & Empty Spaces” was organized by Pasinger Fabrik, a former factory in Munich, Bavaria, Germany, which is used as a cultural center and event venue nowadays.

An exhibition displaying a selection of submissions to the competition opened at the center on October 23 and will run until November 29.



A photo from a collection by Iranian photographers Ali Haddadi and Zohreh Salimi won first prize at Pasinger Fabrik’s competition “Cultural Shutdown: Social Distancing & Empty Spaces”.

Thomas Linsmayer and Stefan-Maria Mittendorf are the curators of the exhibition.

Second prize went to Jana Madzigon from Austria, and Ulrich Opitz from Germany won third prize at the contest, which also had participants from Italy, England, Ukraine, the U.S., Egypt and several other countries.

The organizers have said that Cultural Shutdown: Social Distancing & Empty Spaces has been organized to record the image of the pandemic in contemporary art.

In a statement for the exhibition, the organizers said, “The crisis led to depopulated places, cities and spaces worldwide. An unprecedented void in many centers of

civilization on earth manifested itself as an evident consequence of a disused society. A whole socio-cultural fabric broke apart when cultural life was switched off on March 14. Galleries, museums, cinemas, cultural centers and theaters were closed. The audience’s resonance chambers were locked and the art audience was deprived of the shared euphoria. The cultural shutdown caught all artists because they are not systemically relevant.”

Consequently, in its call, Pasinger Fabrik invited artists who recorded their experiences of inside and outside life as well as personal inspirations and visions of the crisis in graphic representations.

## “Careless Crime” wins Silver Hugo at Chicago festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian director Shahram Mokri’s latest film “Careless Crime” has won the Silver Hugo of the jury at the Chicago International Film Festival, which was held from October 14 to 25.

Jurors Violeta Bava, Chinonye Chukwu, Tetsuya Mariko, Adam Stockhausen, Eliane Umuhire and Boyd Van Hoeij presented the awards in the International Feature Film Competition section.

“Careless Crime” goes back to forty years ago, during the uprising to overthrow the Shah’s regime in Iran, when protestors set fire to movie theaters as a way of showing opposition to Western culture. Many cinemas were burned down. In one tragic case, a theater was set on fire with four hundred people inside, most of whom were burned alive. Forty years have passed and, in contemporary Iran, four individuals also decide to burn down a cinema. Their intended target is a theater showing a film about an unearthed, unexploded missile.

“Careless Crime” won the best original screenplay of the Venice festival in September.

“Fish & Cat” and “Invasion” are among two other praiseworthy films by Mokri.

“Fish & Cat” is about restaurant owners who lurk around a student assembly holding a kite competition near a lake during the winter solstice. In 2013, the movie won the special jury prize at the Venice International



A scene from Shahram Mokri’s “Careless Crime”.

Film Festival in Italy.

“Invasion”, which went on screen in the Panorama section of the 68th Berlin International Film Festival in 2018, is set in a mysterious stadium covered by a strange fog, where a murder is committed.

While a re-enactment is organized by the police, the murderer and his accomplices prepare another assassination. But little by little everyone seems caught

in an infernal time loop.

The Gold Hugo of the Chicago festival went to “Sweat”, a co-production between Poland and Sweden by Magnus von Horn.

Andrei Konchalovsky from Russia was selected as best director for his movie “Dear Comrades!”

The Silver Hugo for best screenplay went to “Apples” Greek director Christos Nikou co-wrote with Stavros Raptis.

The screenplay of “Apples”, delicately constructed and sketched with impressive economy, manages to create a world with its own, odd rules, even as the element that breathes life into this world is the fact it so clearly parallels our own experiences and understanding of the world we live in. The main character’s gradual coming into his own, as he navigates between a past and future unknown, is beautifully modulated, gradually blossoming from an anonymous avatar into a fully fleshed out human being.

Japanese actor Yakusho Koji won the Silver Hugo for best performance in “Under the Open Sky” by Miwa Nishikawa, while the Silver Hugo for best ensemble performance was awarded to Mala Emde, Noah Saavedra,

Tonio Schneider, Luisa-Céline Gaffron, and Andreas Lust for their roles in “And Tomorrow the Entire World” by Julia von Heinz from Germany.

## Movies from Iran picked for Quarantine Film Challenge at San Diego festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — Five Iranian movies were in a lineup featuring the Best of the Quarantine Film Challenge at the San Diego International Film Festival.

The movies were screened in the Virtual Village section of the festival, which was held in the city in southern California from October 15 to 18.

The Iranian movies included “Don’t Worry” by Mana Pakseresh, which is about a teenage girl whose birthday is quarantined

at home because of coronavirus. Her nurse mother from the hospital has a surprise for her.

The animated movie “I Don’t See Any Borders, Do You?” by Parham Manian was also screened.

This movie shows that with the advent of the coronavirus, although governments initially seek to blame each other for this issue, all nations and politicians gradually find themselves on a common front against the common enemy.



A scene from “Don’t Worry” by Mana Pakseresh.

Other Iranian movies were “Once Upon a Time in the World” by Babak Beigi about nurses’ struggle against a coronavirus, “C-19” by Hassan Dehqanian about a different world and a great tragedy, and “Home Sweet Home” by Mohammad Zare and Raana Vaezi.

Twenty films made in quarantine across the world were screened in this section.

The Quarantine Film Challenge received over 1000 submissions from 75 countries in less than 3 months.