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## Economic terrorism won't hinder Iran, Syria's development: Raisi

**TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has said the economic and psychological war imposed on the Syrian and Iranian nations will not prevent them from progressing.

"Resistance and steadfastness are the key characteristics that have made Syria and its nation proud in the region and the world," Mehr quoted Raisi as saying.

He made the remarks in a meeting with the departing Syrian ambassador to Tehran, Adnan Hassan Mahmoud, on Wednesday.

The Judiciary chief said such resilience against the Takfiri terrorist groups created by the United States and the Israeli regime will definitely lead to the Syrian nation's victory.

Raisi noted that "today, the name of Syria is associated with the resistance," and praised the role of the late Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar al-Assad in promoting and preserving the spirit of resistance in the Syrian people.

The top judge then pointed to the severe economic and psychological war waged by the enemy against the Syrian people, saying, "Certainly, the cruelty of the enemy, which has boycotted even the much-needed goods of the Syrian people and the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a crime against humanity."

"I am sure that the resistance of the Syrian people along with all the forces in the region, including Hezbollah and Hamas, will lead to victory and also will increase the misery and eternal hatred for the United States and the Israeli regime."

Raisi also hailed the efforts of the Syrian ambassador during his tenure in Tehran to strengthen relations between the two countries and wished him success in his new responsibility.

Adnan Mahmoud, for his part, praised Iran's support to Syria and said, "The Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the government and people of Iran play an important role in supporting the Syrian government and nation in the fight against Takfiri terrorism and thwarting their imperialist plans in the region."

"Our enemies are now focusing on economic warfare, which is a crime against all of humanity, and we must further strengthen our relationship to counter this war and achieve our common goals," he stated, adding that Iran and Syria will definitely impede the enemy from achieving their hegemonic goals in the region.

## TCCIMA holds webinar on expansion of trade with India

**TEHRAN** — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) held a webinar on the expansion of trade and economic ties with India in collaboration with India's PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as the two countries' embassies.

In this webinar which was attended by officials and businessmen from the two countries, the two sides stressed the development of banking cooperation and the establishment of a barter trade mechanism between the two countries, TCCIMA portal reported on Wednesday.

The webinar called "Development of Iran-India Economic Cooperation: Challenges and Opportunities" was held at the place of TCCIMA in the presence of the Tehran Chamber head, the ambassador of India to Tehran, the president of the Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce, and the representative of India's UCO Bank.

According to the TCCIMA office of Public Relations, this is the second specialized webinar related to Iran-India trade, which has been held in the last two weeks by the Tehran Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Indian private sector institutions.

During the event, in addition to the discussions over the trade-related issues, company executives and businessmen from both sides held talks to reach trade agreements.

In this online event, TCCIMA Head Massoud Khansari proposed the establishment of a branch of UCO Bank in Iran's southern Chabahar port to facilitate the business activities of the two countries' companies.

Pointing out that Chabahar could be a gateway for Iran and India to the markets of Eurasia, Afghanistan, and other countries, Khansari also underlined the use of national currency of the two countries in financial exchanges, **→4**

## Insulting Prophet Mohammad is an insult to all Muslims: Rouhani

**TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday denounced the republication of a cartoon in a French satirical newspaper featuring the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), saying that insulting the Prophet is an insult to all Muslims.

"The Westerners should know that the great prophet of Islam is loved by all Muslims and freedom-seekers of the world. Insulting the Prophet is a violation of ethics and an insult to all Muslims, Prophets of God, and human values," Rouhani was quoted by the official website of the president as saying.

Speaking at a cabinet session, the President added, "If the West, Europe, and France are right that they are after creating peace, brotherhood, tranquility, and security in today's society, they should stop interfering in the internal affairs of Muslims. Because all problems and resentment that have been created in the hearts are due to the oppression, harassment, and inappropriate interference of the West in the affairs of Muslims throughout history." **→3**

## Iran hopes to introduce coronavirus vaccine within 4 months

**TEHRAN** — Health Minister Saeed Namaki has expressed hope that the country will introduce the home-grown COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2021). The vaccine has achieved good results in three of about 12 cases, he said, adding, fortunately, the human trial will start in the coming weeks.

"We hope to introduce the domestically-made vaccine by early next year and maybe

sooner. The process of registration in the World Health Organization is also underway," he explained, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Under a new plan, a comprehensive disease screening will be started, and medical centers for COVID-19 treatment will increase to over 5,000 units, which are now 1,200 units, and the number of daily tests will reach from 25,000 to 40,000, he highlighted. **→7**

## Resistance festival to honor most influential film with grand prize

**TEHRAN** — The 16th Resistance International Film Festival has announced that it will honor the most influential film with a grand prize.

"The festival has consisted of several sections, some of which were held during the Sacred Defense Week in September. The selected works of the sections, in addition to the best of the coming sections, will

be competing in the 'Film in Its Absolute Meaning' category, and the winner will be receiving the grand prize," director of the new section Nasser Bakideh said on Tuesday.

The festival has been organized in two stages, and the second part of the festival will be held from November 21 to 27 to celebrate the anniversary of Basij Day, which falls on November 25. **→8**

## U.S. protests: Father of Black man killed by police urges calm after more unrest

The family of a Philadelphia Black man shot dead by police appealed on Tuesday for calm as a second night of protests over his death brought renewed violence, with clashes between police and demonstrators and some looting of stores.

Tension has gripped the streets of Philadelphia since Monday's deadly police shooting of Walter Wallace, 27, who was armed with a knife and described by relatives as suffering from a mental breakdown, in a confrontation with law enforcement, Reuters reported.

Hundreds of marchers demanded racial justice with some jeering and skirmishing with police through the night and into early Wednesday, as Philadelphia became the latest flash point in the United States on issues of race and police use of force.

Tuesday's rallies began peacefully but grew confrontational as darkness fell, just as on the previous day.

Police turned out in force to cordon off a West Philadelphia commercial district that was looted the previous night.

But looters broke into business elsewhere, including in the city's Port Richmond section, aerial news video from WPVI television showed. At times, police in riot gear shoved protesters back from barricade lines.

The dead man's father, Walter Wallace Sr., appealed to people to "stop the violence" out of respect for his son and family.

"I don't condone no violence, tearing up the city, looting of the stores, and all this chaos," he told reporters and a gathering of people. "It's an SOS to help, not to hurt."

He also called for justice in a case still being investigated.

The unrest in Philadelphia follows that in other cities where police have killed Black men.

## Most decorated Iranian Paralympian says sport serves as remedy

By Masoud Hossein

**TEHRAN** — Ghader Modabbar rose to create a name that many will live to remember. The most decorated Iranian Paralympian says that sport plays a great role in his treatment these days.

He has won five gold medals and a bronze in two Paralympic Games.

Modabbar has been a pioneer in the Paralympic sport and has inspired and paved the way for the Iranian para athletes in the Paralympics.

It is 24 years since the Atlanta 1996 Paralympics, where the 51-year-old para athlete created a legacy for Paralympic sport in Iran.

Modabbar claimed three gold medals in Atlanta in the Men's shot put, discus throw and javelin throw F51.

Four years later, he took two more gold medals and a bronze. The Ardabil-born athlete seized two golds at the Men's shot put and discus throw F52 and a bronze at the Men's javelin throw F52.

"I am exercising for many years and it works

as a way to relieve my pain. The sport is the best remedy for the people with disabilities," said the disabled war veteran.

Modabbar believes that the Iranian para athletes should be encouraged to participate in the training camps.

"We have so many talented para athletes and they can shine in the Paralympics but they need to be supported," he said.

Coronavirus has shut down many sports events around the world. **→3**

## Try to conjure up a picture of life in the past

Photo depicts a mudbrick gate inside a 19th-century architectural complex, which is situated in a desert oasis in Isfahan province, central Iran, October 27, 2020.

Locally known as Mazra-e Haj Hassan ("The Farm of Haj Hassan"), the ruined complex was once full of life in its heyday some 140 years ago.

The site was also chosen as one of the locations for the 1978 Iranian-American film Caravans directed by James Fargo based on the 1962 novel by James A. Michener.



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## Cultural heritage, tourism in critical situation if coronavirus crises continue: minister

**TEHRAN** — Iran's cultural heritage and tourism will be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Wednesday.

With the outbreak of the coronavirus, museums were at the forefront of closures and for several months now, they have not had any revenue from the sale of tickets, Mounesan explained.

Meanwhile, the ministry is facing a shortage of funds in the field of cultural heritage, which causes problems for maintaining and preserving 34,000 National Heritage properties as well as 24 UNESCO-tagged sites, the official explained.

It was estimated that museums would earn about 300 billion rials (about \$7.1 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in the first quarter of the year, but over the coronavirus pandemic they did not even come close to this figure, he added.

In July, Mounesan said that revenues from museums and historical sites were almost eight billion rials (about \$190,000) during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20), a sharp decline compared to around 300 billion rials (over \$7 million) in the same period last year.

He also noted that most of the income is spent on preserving the historical sites and museums, but due to the closure of the sites, the ministry is facing a challenge in maintaining these places. **→6**



## Araghchi says Iran deems border security 'a red line'

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said that Iran views security at its borders as a red line.

“Providing sustainable security at borders is our red line and in this regard, examining border problems is an essential priority,” Araghchi said in a visit to Iran’s northwestern borders on Tuesday.



The Islamic Republic attaches great importance to the security of its border areas, dams, and border buildings, the deputy foreign minister insisted.

“Security is Iran’s red line and it should not be harmed during the conflict between the two northern neighbors,” he added.

Since September 27, Armenian separatists in Azerbaijan’s breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh have been engaged in intense clashes against Azeri forces.

The clashes have so far killed over 1,000 people, most of whom Azeri. The flare-up has been the worst violence to break out between the two sides since 1992, when the separatists invaded the region, forcing the Azeri side into a retreat.

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.

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.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) recently deployed forces to northwestern areas of the country in order to protect common borders amid the ongoing military conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Sepahnews reported on Sunday that IRGC tanks and military equipment were stationed in cities of Jolfa and Khoda Afarin in the northwestern province of Azarbaijan, which have joint borders both with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

## Iranian protesters condemn Macron’s insult against Islam

**TEHRAN (FNA)** – Groups of people, including university students, gathered in front of the French embassy in Tehran on Wednesday to protest at President Emmanuel Macron’s position in support of the blasphemous acts against the holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH).



The protesters, who wore surgical masks and met social distancing protocols due to the coronavirus epidemic, condemned the organized sacrilege of Islamic sanctities in France, chanting slogans against Macron and other French officials.

They also called on the Iranian government to expel the French ambassador, and stressed the need for boycotting the France-made goods.

The Iranian people and students chanted slogans against the U.S., Israel and al-Saud, describing the French officials’ support for the insults to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as “modern ignorance”.

In recent weeks and after a French teacher was beheaded by an ISIL member after he displayed cartoons of the prophet of Islam, French President Emmanuel Macron attacked Islam and the Muslim community, accusing Muslims of “separatism”, and he said previously that “Islam is a religion in crisis all over the world”.

The incident in Paris coincided with a provocative move by Charlie Hebdo, a left-wing French magazine infamous for publishing anti-Islamic content, which has drawn widespread anger and outrage across the Muslim world.

The caricatures were first published in 2006 by a Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten, sparking a wave of protests.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday summoned the French Chargé d’ Affaires, Florent Aydalot, over the French President’s recent remarks against Islam.

The French Charge d’ Affaires was summoned to the Foreign Ministry, in absence of its ambassador, to hear Iran’s condemnation of the growing anti-Islamic moves and remarks in France.

Aydalot received the Iranian Foreign Ministry’s condemnation of the sacrilegious acts in France and the following unacceptable remarks of the French authorities that have hurt the feelings of nearly 2 billion Muslims in the world and millions of Muslims in Europe.

“Any insult and disrespect to the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the pristine values of Islam are strongly condemned and rejected by every person and in every position,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry official who met the French diplomat said.

“It is of deep regret to incite Islamophobia and spread hatred in the name of freedom of expression, which should serve relations, empathy and peaceful coexistence among human societies.”

The French official said he would convey Iran’s strong objection to Paris very soon.

# Religious minorities’ representatives slam Macron’s blasphemous remarks

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Representatives of Iran’s religious minorities in the parliament have condemned the recent Islamophobic remarks by French President Emmanuel Macron and his support for blasphemy against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

“The most important factor in shaping and giving meaning to identities in today’s world is religion,” the religious minorities’ representatives said in a statement read out in the parliament on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

They emphasized the importance of mutual respect for co-existence in different societies, saying Macron propagates cultural violence in the name of freedom of expression.

“If extremism is condemned, insult which creates violence and violates rights is more condemned,” they said.

The statements came after Macron pledged to fight “Islamist separatism”, which he said was threatening to take control in some Muslim communities around France.

He supported a French teacher’s displaying of cartoons insulting the Prophet of Islam in his class. The teacher, Samuel Paty, was murdered by an 18-year-old Chechen assailant.

Macron’s comments, along with his backing of satirical outlets publishing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), have led to a social media campaign calling for the boycott of French products from supermarkets in Arab countries and Turkey.

Hashtags such as the #BoycottFrenchProducts in English and the Arabic #NeverTheProphet trended across countries including Kuwait, Qatar, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.



Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said extremism and offending the prophet are two sides of the same coin which the international Zionism and the global arrogance have adopted against Islam.

“In extremism the bodies of people are targeted and in insult their souls,” Velayati said, criticizing the French government’s pretext of freedom of expression to foment hatred between people.

The veteran politician also called on all Muslims across the world to be vigilant in

the face of such conspiracies against Islam.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has also censured the French president for anti-Islam stance, saying Muslims are the primary victims of the “cult of hatred”.

“Muslims are the primary victims of the ‘cult of hatred’—empowered by colonial regimes & exported by their own clients,” Zarif said via Twitter on Monday.

“Insulting 1.9B Muslims—and their sanctities—for the abhorrent crimes of such extremists is an opportunistic abuse of freedom of speech,” he said, adding, “It

**“If extremism is condemned, insult which creates violence and violates rights is more condemned,” the representatives of religious minorities say.**

## Senior advisor reiterates Iran’s support for peace in Afghanistan

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has said Iran opposes the continuation of war in Afghanistan and reiterated Tehran’s long-held position for establishment of peace and stability in the war-torn country.

“Any kind of war among Muslims is foul because Muslim blood is sacred,” Velayati said during a meeting with Afghan Ambassador Abdolghafour Lival, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

He voiced Iran’s opposition to the presence of American forces in Afghanistan and warned of the threat posed by the Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group to the prospects of peace and security in the country.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has expressed sympathy with the Afghans 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.”

Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.

**■ Afghan diplomat thanks Iran for backing peace**  
For his part, the Afghan ambassador thanked the Islamic Republic for supporting peace and security in his country.

The peace talks between the Afghanistan government and the Taliban began on September 12 in Qatar’s capital Doha to end decades of war.

Iran has strongly supported talks between the government and the Taliban without foreign interference. Zarif has also appointed an envoy for the purpose.

Chairman of Afghan peace council Abdullah Abdullah made a three-day visit to Iran earlier this month to hold talks with top Iranian officials.

In his meeting with Zarif at the Foreign Ministry, Iran’s chief diplomat reaffirmed Tehran’s support for the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the peace process under the leadership and management of Afghans, and the agreements among the participants in the intra-Afghan talks.

Zarif also admired Abdullah for his participation in the political process and assuming responsibility to run Afghanistan’s High Council for National Reconciliation.

The top Iranian diplomat finally expressed Iran’s support for the Taliban’s participation in Afghanistan’s political structure.

For his part, Abdullah expounded on the most recent developments in Afghanistan and the latest status of the intra-Afghan talks.

While in Tehran from Oct. 18-20, Abdullah also held talks with President Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Moham-



mad Bagher Ghalibaf, Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) secretary Ali Shamkhani and Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, who is the chairman of Iran-Afghanistan joint economic commission.

In a tweet on Oct. 19, Abdullah said, “Pleased to meet HE @HassanRouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We exchanged views on #AfghanPeaceProcess, talks in Doha & bilateral relations. I thanked HE, & I. R. of Iran for their principled & continued support to AFG & the peace process.”

Iran has been hosting hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

## Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf tests positive for coronavirus

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has tested positive for the coronavirus.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Ghalibaf announced that he has been infected with the respiratory disease after one of his office staff members tested positive for the virus

“I am currently under quarantine, and God willing, I will continue to do my tasks [from quarantine],” he added.

Iran is among the countries hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Authorities in Iran have in recent weeks warned that hospitals are running out of capacity as the number of Covid-19 patients has surged.

This week, Iran has reported the largest number of deaths in a single 24 hours since the crisis began.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry said in a tweet on Monday that coronavirus has been a



deadly disease everywhere but it is worse in Iran due to U.S. sanctions.

“Corona’s proven deadly, vicious & brutal everywhere, but it’s worse in Iran as it has a cruel collaborator: U.S. regime,” tweeted the Foreign Ministry.

It added, “U.S. has elevated maximum pressure to Health Terrorism & targeted Iranian people with inhuman sanctions while they’re fighting the pandemic. We’ll overcome but NEVER forget.”

## Zarif dismisses report that Iran has released two U.S. spies in prisoner swap

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday vehemently dismissed as untrue a report that Iran has released two U.S. spies in a prisoner exchange deal.

“This report is 100 percent false,” Zarif said in an interview with ICANA.

Zarif said the Iranian Foreign Ministry has already proposed the idea of exchange of all Iranian and American prisoners in all parts of the world.

However, he added, “The issue of exchange of two arrested spies with the U.S. is a complete lie.”

“We have put forward a suggestion for the compre-

hensiveness of this dignified nation,” he added.

Hassan Zaid was gunned down in Yemeni capital Sana’a by unidentified assailants.

Zaid, 66, was a leading opposition figure during the reign of the toppled regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh.

According to the Yemeni Interior Ministry, Zaid was shot in his car on Tuesday morning. His daughter, who was driving the car during the attack, has been seriously wounded.



hensive exchange of prisoners of the two sides. We have inmates held in various countries on the U.S.’s orders, and have prisoners inside the U.S. as well. We have people in the United States of America that have even served their illegal sentences, but the Americans prevent their return to Iran,” the minister said, according to Tasnim.

In June, Iranian scientist Sirous Asgari returned home after his release from a U.S. prison.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry later denied reports about a prisoner swap in the release of Asgari, saying the scientist was freed after being acquitted of charges.



# We'll cut the ground from under Americans: Iraqi resistance leader

‘U.S. plans new war to disintegrate Iraq’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Sheikh d e s k Akram al-Kaabi, the secretary general of Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, warned the United States on Tuesday against procrastinating the withdrawal of its forces from Iraq, saying resistance groups will resume their attacks on American targets if the White House fails to pull out the U.S. troops from Iraq as soon as possible.

Speaking at a press conference jointly hosted by the Tehran Times and Mehr news agency on Tuesday, al-Kaabi addressed a variety of issues related to Iraq and the future of the presence of the U.S. forces in that country.

“The fact is that the Americans in Iraq are not looking for the good of the Iraqi people; they only seek to plunder and loot the resources of Iraq. When Iraq asks them to leave its territory, they shamelessly threaten to either besiege Baghdad with sanctions or close their diplomatic facilities,” al-Kaabi said.

He was referring to the recent threats by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who threatened to close the U.S. embassy in Iraq and then launch a military campaign against the resistance groups after the attacks on the American interests in Iraq reached a very high level over the past months.

During a telephone conversation with Iraqi President Barham Salih in September, the secretary of state issued a stern warning to Iraq over the recent attacks on U.S. interests in Iraq, according to Iraqi news website Iraqi24.

“The decision to close the embassy in Baghdad is in President Trump’s hands and is ready... If our forces withdraw and the embassy is closed in this way, we will eradicate everyone who is proven to be involved in these acts,” the website quoted Pompeo as telling Salih.

The U.S. did not press ahead with this decision, a move that prompted some analysts to question the seriousness of the American threat to close the embassy. In October, the Iraqi resistance groups agreed to suspend rocket attacks on U.S. forces on the condition that Iraq’s government present a timetable for a withdrawal of American troops.

“The factions have presented a conditional ceasefire,” Mohammed Mohi, spokesman for the Kataib Hezbollah group, told Reuters on October 11.

The spokesman added, “It includes all fac-



tions of the (anti-U.S.) resistance, including those who have been targeting U.S. forces.”

Mohi did not elaborate on the Resistance’s conditions. But al-Kaabi gave more detail about their conditions and the behind-the-scenes discussions that led to the agreement on the conditional ceasefire.

According to al-Kaabi, the Iraqi resistance groups agreed to the ceasefire on three conditions: first, a very clear timeframe for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq should be presented; second, the U.S. must put an end to its military presence in Iraq’s aerospace, its embassy in Baghdad, and Baghdad’s airport; and third, the U.S. must stop interfering in Iraq’s internal affairs.

The Iraqi resistance leader pointed out that the U.S. has been given a timespan to implement these conditions, warning that the resistance groups will decisively respond to the U.S. in Iraq and shake the ground under the American troops’ feet if the U.S. continues to procrastinate.

But why al-Nujaba and other Iraqi groups agreed to a ceasefire in the first place? Al-Kaabi said some Iraqi politicians have reached out to the resistance groups, saying the U.S. wants

a face-saving withdrawal from Iraq and that these groups should give the U.S. enough time to make this happen.

But al-Kaabi, while casting doubt on the U.S. intention to leave Iraq, said Iraq is not responsible for saving America’s face.

“We reject America’s face being saved at the expense of Iraq’s sovereignty and dignity,” stated al-Kaabi, noting that the resistance groups agreed to a ceasefire with the U.S. to make Iraqi politicians understand that the U.S. will not abide by its commitments.

He added, “The language of politics and negotiations does not work with the U.S. America only understands the language of force.”

Referring to the U.S. exit from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) –, al-Kaabi pointed out that the U.S. has a long history of not complying with its commitments.

He also pointed to the Iraqi Parliament’s resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq. The resolution was passed on January 5 earlier this year, nearly two days after a U.S. army drone assassinated General Qassem Soleimani, the commander

of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps’ Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the deputy head of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Force, near Baghdad’s international airport. The drone strike targeted General Soleimani and al-Mohandes shortly after they moved out of the airport on their way to Baghdad.

“The United States did big foolishness and targeted the martyrs of victory quite openly inside Iraq. I need to emphasize that the revenge of the resistance following the assassination of the martyrs of the resistance is not over yet. This revenge will not stop until the last American troops leave Iraq,” al-Kaabi asserted.

He added, “The fact is that the blood of the martyrs of the resistance has borne fruit. One of the most important fruits of the blood of the martyrs of the resistance has been the formation of various groups of resistance. The resistance has so far dealt a deadly blow to the American body. These massive and deadly blows have led the U.S. government to put pressure on Baghdad and threaten it with various means.”

According to the secretary general of al-Nujaba, it is completely wrong to say that the withdrawal of the United States from Iraq is the only demand for resistance.

This is a national demand, the cleric added. “Not only the various groups of the resistance in Iraq but also all Iraqi people from all walks of life are calling for the withdrawal of American troops. Eventually, the Americans will have to leave Iraq and go home forever,” said al-Kaabi, adding that the resistance groups will never back down on their demand that the U.S. should leave Iraq.

He also warned about an American plot to wage a new war in Iraq to disintegrate the country after the U.S. November 3rd presidential election.

“Things will not change after the election. The Iraqi brothers should get ready for a new American war and sedition in Iraq. A war that is intended to disintegrate Iraq,” cautioned al-Kaabi, warning, “It makes no difference whether Trump remains U.S. president or Biden takes office. Both of these individuals are the backbone of a security system in the United States and are the only pillars of this security system. Whoever moves into the White House for the next four years, we should expect sedition and machination from him.”

## SPORTS

### Discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi answers critics

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi, d e s k who will have surgery next week to remove his heel spur, answered his critics.

Ehsan, who is in Germany to treat his injured foot, has been criticized for going to the European country for his treatment.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Hadadi has answered his critics.



“There has been a lot of criticism in recent months about why I came to Germany. It was the Sports Medicine Federation of Iran’s decision, and nobody, as well as no organization, can question the decision of the Sports Medicine Federation about treating the Iranian athletes.”

Ehsan feels the criticism against him was unfair, saying, “Before my trip to Germany I had not left Iran for more than a year, and I just practiced in different cities of Iran like Tehran, Kish Island, and Mashhad. They want to put me against my country’s people who are experiencing a difficult economic situation.”

“They say you are spending public money in another country for your personal goals, but I repeat that once again this decision is made by Iran’s Sports Medicine Federation. Now that I’m injured, I expect these critics support me, not criticize me,” he said.

Ehsan Hadadi, 35, became the first Iranian to earn an Olympic track and field medal when he took silver in the discus at the 2012 London Games.

He was eliminated in qualifying at the Rio Olympics and placed seventh at last fall’s world championships in Doha.

Despite all these criticisms and problems, Ehsan does not want to leave the sport. The four-time Asian Games gold medalist is going to compete at his fourth Olympic Games in Tokyo, and in 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China.

“I want to win one more Asian gold medal for my country. I am going to win my fifth gold medal of the Asian Games in Hangzhou and try to win a medal in Olympics. Of course, I know very well that no athlete is 100 percent guaranteed to win a medal neither in the Olympics nor in the Asian Games,” he added.

Hadadi, who has lost nearly six weeks of training due to infection to the coronavirus, thanked everyone who has helped him throughout his successful career.

“My Olympic medal, and other medals as well, was not just the result of my own work, but also of coaches, massage therapists, the federation, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the National Olympic Committee, and even journalists. I thank them all who helped me to win those medals. Thank God that at 35, I still throw the discus very well,” Hadadi concluded.

## Insulting Prophet Mohammad is an insult to all Muslims: Rouhani

**1→** Underlining that the Prophet was also the teacher of humanity and mercy for all the world, Rouhani pointed out that disrespecting a prophet encourages violence.

“Surprisingly, those who claim to have culture and democracy encourage others to commit violence and bloodshed, though unwittingly,” the president noted.

According to Rouhani, the Prophet Mohammad preached about the need to show respect for others, ethics, and freedom.

“Offending, insulting, stating improper things, and drawing ugly cartoons are not part of ethics, democracy, and humanity,” Rouhani said in an apparent response to the cartoon recently republished by the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo that sent shock waves throughout the Muslim world.

Muslims around the world, including political and religious leaders, condemned in the strongest terms the insulting cartoon, with some leaders even calling on Muslims to boycott French products in response to French President Emanuel Macron’s insistence on displaying the blasphemous cartoons in public places.

Rouhani praised the Muslim world’s “decisive” response to the Western officials’ remarks, saying that “this very timely and decisive reaction showed that the Muslim world will continue to be guided by its great leader the prophet of Islam.”

He also called on those who took the wrong path of insulting the Prophet Mohammad to change tack and return to the path of justice and show respect for all divine religions.

Rouhani sought to draw a fine line between freedom and ethics, saying that freedom does not allow people to commit immoral acts.

“Where does freedom say that freedom means closing the moral lesson? Freedom can be beneficial to society when it is accompanied by respect for all values. We cannot abandon

ethics and values,” the president asserted.

Muslim leaders have strongly criticized President Macron after he said that France will not give up the blasphemous cartoons of Charlie Hebdo.

Macron, who is accused of instigating hatred against French Muslims for political gains ahead of a fateful election, insisted on displaying the Charlie Hebdo cartoon in what he sees as a move to protect the freedom of expression in France. But Muslims say freedom of expression should not be used as an excuse to secure political goals by insulting a Prophet who is deeply loved and revered by more than a billion and a half human-beings.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has recently warned against promoting anti-Muslim sentiments in France for myopic political reasons.

It 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,

**“Where does freedom say that freedom means closing the moral lesson? Freedom can be beneficial to society when it is accompanied by respect for all values. We cannot abandon ethics and values,” president asserts.**

## Iran’s deputy FM undertakes shuttle diplomacy to end Azerbaijan-Armenia war

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Seyed Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs, has begun a regional tour of four capitals to help end the deadly war in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Araghchi set off his tour on Tuesday morning by paying a visit to two Iranian provinces on the borders with the Republic of Azerbaijan. He left Tabriz for Baku late on Tuesday. Upon his arrival in Baku on Tuesday night, the Iranian diplomat said he was conveying an “innovative initiative” to put an end to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Araghchi, who was visiting Azerbaijan as the special envoy of the Iranian president, pointed out that he is visiting countries that are able to play a role in ending the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“The main purpose of the visit is to present the proposed initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve this conflict and achieve a lasting peace between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan and, consequently, the region,” said Araghchi, adding

that he would discuss the initiative with the Azerbaijani officials.

The deputy foreign minister stated, “The framework of this initiative has been prepared. In this trip, the officials of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be consulted. This initiative is capable of bringing the situation to lasting peace and put an end to the existing disagreements and of course the occupation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.”

According to Araghchi, the issue of ending the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories is an important part of the Iranian initiative.

“Minority rights and human rights are another pillars of this initiative,” pointed out the Iranian diplomat, noting that another element of the initiative is to end the conflict and start talks with the help of influential countries that help and guarantee peace.

Araghchi said he will discuss the Iranian initiative during his visit to regional countries, underlining that Iran has warm relations with Azerbaijan and has always supported it in its efforts to liberate its occupied territories.

“The territorial integrity of the Republic

of Azerbaijan and other countries in the region and the unchangeability of borders is an important and inviolable principle that must be maintained,” stressed the Iranian diplomat.

During his visit to Baku, Araghchi met with several high-ranking Azerbaijani officials, including Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov, and Hikmet Hajiyev, an assistant to the Azerbaijani president.

Following Araghchi’s meeting with Bayramov, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying the two sides “thoroughly discussed” the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The statement said, “Minister Jeyhun Bayramov informed the Special Envoy of the President of Iran on the latest escalation in the region, military provocations by the leadership of Armenia, irresponsible statements and actions by the Armenian Prime Minister aimed at increasing tensions in the region and undermining the negotiated settlement of the conflict. Minister stressed that the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan launched

hate-mongering and only serving partisan political interests.”

Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Egypt’s al-Azhar, also expressed regret over using anti-Muslim sentiments to rally votes in elections.

Al-Tayyeb, who sits at the head of the thousand-year-old seat of Sunni Muslim learning, said, “It is painful for insulting Islam to become a tool for mobilizing votes and doing business in the election markets.”

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the president of Turkey, also echoed the same assessment. He 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?” he said.

The Turkish president said on Wednesday that the enemies of Islam are using the hatred discourse for election purposes.

Western analysts also highlighted Macron’s political motivations, accusing him of creating a crisis with Muslim citizens to counter the far-right groups led by his rival Marine Le Pen.

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.

counter-offensive measures within its right of self-defense and to protect civilian population of Azerbaijan.”

Bayramov especially highlighted the gross violation of international humanitarian law by Armenia and deliberate targeting of peaceful Azerbaijani population, according to the statement.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister also reiterated the position of the president of Azerbaijan that “the ultimate goal of our country is the withdrawal of foreign armed forces from the sovereign soil of Azerbaijan and to restore territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.”

According to the statement, Araghchi reiterated the official position of Iran on the peaceful settlement of the conflict based on the norms and principles of international law and within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

After Azerbaijan, Araghchi is expected to visit Russia and Armenia as well as Turkey. Russia’s Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday that Araghchi will be visiting Moscow on Thursday.

## Volleyball coach will be appointed next week

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) president Mohammadreza Davarzani said that the new head coach of the National Team will be appointed next week.

Davarzani said the federation has narrowed down its candidates to three coaches.

Daniel Castellani, Andrea Giani, Ferdinando De Giorgi, Lorenzo Bernardi and Vladimir Alekno were among the five candidates in the running to take the helm of Iran volleyball national team.

“We’ve narrowed down our list of candidates to just three. A Russian coach, an Argentine and an Italian are among the final three,” he said.

“Two coaches have sent their programs and we are waiting for the third one. We will appoint new head coach in a session with the participation of the committee members and experts next week,” Davarzani stated.

Alekno, who has led Russia to a gold medal at the 2012 Olympic Games, has a high chance of becoming Iran coach.

Iran volleyball team are without a coach since parting ways with Igor Kolakovic in March, en.iranvolleyball.com reported.

In the Olympic Games, Iran have been drawn in Pool A along with Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela.

Pool B consists of Brazil, USA, Russia, Argentina, France and Tunisia.

## Mahram, Mes land two American players

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mahram Tehran and Mes Kerman basketball clubs completed the signing of two American guards.

Mahram have tabbed 26-year old Malique Trent, while Mes signed Devin Martin. Trent played most recently at BCM U FC Arges Pitesti in Romanian Liga Nationala. He also played for Prometey in Ukrainian league that season where in 15 Ukrainian Superleague games he had 12.3ppg, 2.6rpg, 3.2apg and 1.9spg.

Martin has also played in the summer in Heroes in the LPB league of Venezuela.

He has previously played in Chile (Osorno Basketball), Finland (Lahti), Portugal (Sampaense) and Ukraine (Odessa).

The new edition of the Iranian Basketball Super League will start on Nov. 5.

## Most decorated Iranian Paralympian says sport serves as remedy

**1→** “Unfortunately, the COVID-19 has caused that we stay home. The virus should be completely eradicated as soon as possible since the disabled people need to stay healthy with the sport,” Modabber added.

Iran’s National Paralympic Committee (NPC) has recently unveiled his bust in recognition of his efforts in the Paralympic sport. Ghader Modabber can become a role model for the new generation.



## Iran, Belarus confer on holding 15th joint economic committee meeting

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – Head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and Belarusian deputy industry minister, as representatives of the two countries’ joint economic committee, held online talks to discuss preparation for the 15th meeting of the committee in near future.

In the meeting, Hamid Zadboum and Dmitry Kharitonchik discussed issues related to the agreements reached in the 14th joint economic committee meeting of the two countries held three years ago and followed up on their implementation, TPO portal reported.

The two sides further stressed the development of cooperation in the fields of investment, trade, and industry and welcomed the holding of a trade meeting between the two countries’ businessmen.

Kharitonchik also expressed his support for the expansion of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the forthcoming additional negotiations on a preferential trade agreement with the union.

It was also decided in the meeting that the parties take the necessary measures, considering health and safety protocols regarding the coronavirus, to develop relations between the two countries and to prepare the conditions for holding the 15th meeting of the two countries’ joint economic committee as soon as possible.

Back in April, Iran’s former Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said Iran’s Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with EAEU has created a great opportunity for Iran and Belarus to deepen their trade ties.

Rahmani made the remarks in a meeting with Belarusian Ambassador in Iran Yuri Ivanovic Lazarcic.

Referring to earlier economic agreements between the two countries, Rahmani said the two sides should take serious measures to remove the barriers in the way of realization of these agreements and the expansion of trade.

Iran and Belarus signed an agreement in December 2019 for promoting mutual trade.

The agreement was signed by the Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi, and the Chairman of Belarus State Customs Committee Yuri Senko on the sidelines of a World Customs Organization (WCO) event in South Korea.

In the mentioned agreement, several important factors including identifying the two sides’ needs, increasing efficiency, customs control of goods, and vehicles in transit between the two countries were emphasized.

## Investment making in Mazandaran Province’s industry sector rises 29% in H1

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Investment making in the industry sector of Iran’s northern Mazandaran Province rose 29 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) from the first half of the past year, according to a provincial official.



Hossein-Qoli Qavanlou, the head of Mazandaran Province’s Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that 20.12 trillion rials (about \$479 million) of investment has been made in the industry sector of the province in the first half, while the total investment made in the past year has been 15.61 trillion rials (about \$371.6 million).

According to the latest data released by Iran’s Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first half of the current year, 18,766 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which mark a 47-percent increase year on year.

As previously announced by the ministry, the issuance of permits for setting up industrial units in the country increased 16 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019).

Most of the issued permits were related to the food industries; and Semnan, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi were the provinces receiving the highest number of permits.

Last month, the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced that 670 idle industrial units had been revived throughout the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

He said: “Despite all the limitations, we are currently witnessing an increase in production in some units, for example, those active in the field of home appliances; also, according to the plans made and by solving the problems in the way of the production and industrial units, we will realize the motto of “Surge in Production” by the end of this year.”

Strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

To this end, the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) has been named the year of “Surge in Production”, and all governmental bodies as well as the private sector are moving in line with the materialization of this motto.

Regarding its significant role in the realization of the mentioned goal, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has already defined its main programs for supporting the domestic production in the current year.

The ministry’s seven main axes of the surge in production are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

## TCCIMA holds webinar on expansion of trade with India

**1 →** avoiding double taxation and establishing a preferential tariff agreement between the two countries as ways of boosting trade between the two sides.

The Indian Ambassador in Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra for his part invited companies and producers of his country to visit Chabahar port and get acquainted with the trade opportunities of this region and said: “Chabahar port is of great importance for economic cooperation between the two countries and traders can access markets in the north of the Caspian Sea and Eastern Europe through this port.”

# Modern irrigation systems implemented in 185,000 hectares of farmlands

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – The director of Iranian Agriculture Ministry’s modern irrigation systems development plan announced that 185,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

According to Abbas Zare, the irrigation systems are under construction for 131,099 hectares, while for 53,953 hectares the systems have been put into operation.

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

According to Zare, in the current Iranian calendar year, nearly 16 trillion rials (about \$380.9 million) has been allocated from the annual budget and the National Development Fund (NDF) for the development of various



irrigation methods.

The official has said that the implementation of this plan is going to increase the irrigation efficiency of the farmlands to 44 percent which will increase the production capacity of agricultural products by 30 percent.

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

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

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

## Nearly \$770m of loans paid to industrial units in 6 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**— Some 32.312 trillion rials (about \$769.3 million) of loans has been paid to industrial units throughout the country during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), IRNA reported.

According to the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry’s data, under the framework of a production and employment program, 2,010 units applied for the mentioned facilities in the mentioned six months, of which 1,087 units received facilities.

The mentioned program has been defined by the government to support small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SMEs) and also to help completion of semi-finished projects with over 60 percent of physical progress.

The government is obliged to create 11,000 job opportunities in the current Iranian calendar year (began on

March 19) by supporting industrial units and completing semi-finished projects.

Qom province with 46 loans, Razavi Khorasan Province with 53 loans, and Tehran with 32 loans were the top three provinces in terms of receiving the said facilities in the first six months of this year, respectively.

Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi had previously announced that these facilities will be provided to pave the way for national production and support economic enterprises within the framework of this year’s slogan which is “surge in production”.

“These facilities will be paid with the aim of maintaining and increasing production, and to create employment by modernization and reconstruction of enterprises and production units, and completion of semi-finished projects with a physical progress of more than 60 percent,” he said.



## Majlis approves double-urgency plan of subsidized essential goods

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian parliament (Majlis) on Wednesday approved the double-urgency plan which obliges the government to subsidize essential goods, IRNA reported.

As reported, the plan was approved by 215 votes in favor, 14 votes against, and five abstentions.

Based on this plan, which is aimed at meeting some livelihood needs of the families especially the underprivileged ones, the government is committed to

monthly payments of cash subsidies merely for the supply of essential goods, and the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade is responsible to offer discount on these commodities to those subject to receive the mentioned subsidies.

The plan says that those families, whose income is less than the minimum wage, will receive subsidy twice more than that of the other families.

Recognizing the families subject to this plan is the duty of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare.

## ICCIMA suggests an amendment to 7th National Development Plan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – The Macroeconomic Committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has stressed the need for working on proposals for better drafting of the country’s Seventh Five-year National Development Plan (2021-2026).

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, in its latest meeting which was focused on exploring the potential issues regarding the drafting of the country’s next national development plan, the committee discussed

ways of improving the mentioned plan considering the country’s current economic condition.

In the meeting, the head of ICCIMA Research Center criticized the process of drafting the national plan and suggested a new model for amending the mentioned plan, in which the external factors impacting the content production and implementation will be taken into account.

The official also stressed the need for monitoring of the implementation of the proposed model in every step.

## Isfahan Province issues 70 mining licenses since late March

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The head of Isfahan Province’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Department said that 70 mining licenses have been issued in the province for exploration and mining operation since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Iraj Movafaq said that of the mentioned figure, 50 licenses were for the exploration operations, and 20 licenses were for the mining operation.

He said the mentioned operations provide jobs for 131 persons.

In early June, Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili had said that the country’s Mining Investment Insurance Corporation (MIIC) was going to allocate 30 trillion rials (over \$714.2 million) for supporting mining exploration projects.

He said that the ministry has it on the agenda to increase the country’s discovered mineral reserves by 25 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

In late April, the official had said that the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has provisioned operational targets in the mining sector’s three major areas of exploration, extraction, and processing, for the current year.



“In the mining industry sector, we have targeted a 25-percent increase in the production of mineral products, and in the exploration sector, we will add about 20 percent to the previous reserves.”

The mining sector accounted for 25 percent of the country’s non-oil revenues in the past Iranian calendar year, he said.

In the past few years with new resilient economy strategies coming into play, the mining sector has become a

## Housing price in Tehran rises 10% in a month

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Housing price in Tehran city has risen 10 percent in the seventh Iranian calendar month (September 22-October 21), from its previous month, according to the latest report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

The CBI’s report put the average price for one square meter of a residential unit at 267.2 million rials (about \$6,361) in the capital city in the seventh month of this year, up 110 percent from the figure for the same month in the past year.

Meanwhile, the number of real estate deals has risen 2.3 percent in Tehran in the seventh month of this year compared to the sixth month, while rising 154.5 percent compared to the same month of the past year.

Last month, a member of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Civil Committee said that the drastic and unprecedented rise in housing prices in recent months is going to lead the housing market to a recession in the coming months.

“With the dramatic and unprecedented rise in housing prices, the market is expected



to enter a recession for at least three to four years in the coming months, but naturally, as the recession intensifies, housing prices will fall by about 10 to 20 percent”, Mojtaba Yousefi stated.

Unfortunately, housing prices have risen by about 200 percent in recent months, and this has created many problems for real house buyers, he lamented.

“The main problem is that in such a market real buyers cannot afford to buy houses and instead the market has become a playground for brokers and speculators.”

According to the official, the housing market trend in Iran has been sinusoidal,

meaning that housing prices have risen over a period of time and then the market has entered a recession, however, in the last two years the trend has become contrary to the previous years and the housing prices have been constantly increasing.

Last week, President Hassan Rouhani launched and inaugurated the projects for the construction of nearly 11,000 residential units throughout the country via video conference.

The executive operation for the construction of 8,896 units under the National Housing Action Plan was started in some provinces, while 1,959 units under the Mehr Housing Plan were inaugurated in the southern Fars province, in an online ceremony attended also by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami.

Back in August 2019, Rouhani had officially launched the government’s National Housing Action Plan, by inaugurating a project for constructing 110,000 affordable housing units across the country.

The National Housing Action Plan aims to construct 400,000 small and medium-size

apartments (70-100 square meters in size) across the country and particularly in Tehran, where housing prices have risen most sharply.

Nearly half of the total number of the said homes will be constructed in Tehran’s suburban “new towns” such as Parand and Pardis, respectively located in the west and east of the city.

According to the transport and urban development minister, the government plans to complete the new units by April 2021.

While the ministry will provide the land for the new developments, it will only supervise construction, enlisting private sector construction firms who will bid for contracts that entitle them to receive state loans and subsidized building materials.

The government’s investment in construction will help create new jobs across the country and is expected to boost wages among laborers.

Providing housing to low-income families could also help alleviate economic hardship, especially if the government’s assistance can help inflation-hit renters become homeowners.



# Turkey accumulating differences with NATO

By Abir Bassam

Starting in March 2015, Russia decided to take military action against the war on Syria. Ironically, as Syria began retrieving its power over the occupied areas by ISIS and al-Nusra, the Turkish political situation was getting more and more complicated every day.

Today it is entangled in a dispute with its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]. According to [rosaelyousef.com](http://rosaelyousef.com), after imposing military sanctions on Turkey, the American Congress started taking procedures to exclude Turkey from NATO.

Consistently, Tulsi Gabbard, the representative for Hawaii's congressional district, raised the issue of sanctions on Turkey for discussion on July 17, after a series of Turkish decisions in which America found a major violation of its interests, especially in the deal to buy Russian-made S400 missiles.

As the "Arab Defense" website's political analysis read, her request included demands to exclude Turkey from NATO by next year. Immediately, on October 20, Canada responded by discontinuing supplying Turkey with military hardware.

The sanctions on Turkey came at a time in which the U.S. declared about the intelligent members' visits to Syria as an attempt to reveal the fate of the American journalist, Austin Tice, who disappeared in Eastern Ghouta. However, Syria refused to cooperate with the Americans unless they show serious practical steps to eliminate their occupation of the East and Northern-East of the country. Oddly, the visit comes at a time the U.S. is preparing to end its military presence in Iraq, which may imply that the U.S. is re-arranging its cards in the region.

It seems that the missile system deal that was offered by Russian President Vladimir Putin turned out to be a trap that Turkey had fallen into. It jeopardized its relation with the United States. Stupidly, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stepped into the game. He was trying to manipulate the contradicting relations between Russia and the U.S. It seems that Erdogan has constantly misinterpreted reading the U.S.'s priorities after dismantling the Soviet Union [CCCP]. Because Turkey is no longer located on the CCCP borders, its geographical position has lost its importance after 1989. Hence, the U.S. priorities are former Eastern European states that border Russia. And Turkey has become a liability.

It is also possible that Erdogan was deluded by the Americans. He might have been given the idea that his participation in the war on Syria and toppling



Assad's government might offer him the chance to bring back Turkey into leading the Muslim and the Arab world again. However, he failed to deliver. Totaling that, the Turkish interference in Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea was seen as a sign of threat to the European interests, especially after the provocations near Greece's coastal shores.

The Turkish meddling in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan has also raised speculation about the Turkish intentions by both Europe and its regional allies Russia and Iran. In its attempt to support Azerbaijan, Turkey brought in the terrorists fighting under its banner from Libya and Syria to fight the Armenians. This put the regional allies, who went to Syria to fight the terrorists, at the risk of having them near their borders.

Accordingly, Turkey swamped Europe with the Syrian refugees. It opened its borders and allowed Syrians, amongst many others, to start uncontrolled immigration towards Europe. In addition, both the U.S. and the Europeans were uncomfortable with the war that Turkey initiated against the Kurds and the Syrian Democratic Forces [SDF] in order to prevent establishing a Kurdish state in the Syrian territories despite the Western will.

In this context, it is important to understand the basic American plan to involve Turkey in its war on the region. It was recommended by the American "intellectual" Samuel Huntington in his book "The Clash of Civilizations: the New World Order. In 1996, he wrote advocating for creating a New Middle East (West Asia) under the Turkish leadership. In doing so, Washington should support the rise of the second Ottoman state. According to Omar Ihab on [marsad.ecsstudies.com](http://marsad.ecsstudies.com),

Barak Obama embraced the idea as long as it lied within the American and Western interests.

The idea was first established by Bernard Lewis, who was the first to use the term "Second Ottoman State" in 1953. Lewis also called for re-establishing the State of Greater Kurdistan between the regions inhabited by the Kurds in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. According to Ihab, those ideas were echoed by the Syrian Kurdish separatists and the Turks when the West made them the Republic of "Rojava" in northeastern Syria in 2016 during the Arab "Spring".

Erdogan's head must have been filled with fantasies about the rise of "Neo Ottomanism" as a concept. However, the greatest disappointment was when Turkey's membership in the European Union [EU] was denied or constantly postponed.

A significant margin was given to Erdogan to play within, which accorded with Huntington's recommendations. However, the man did not accurately weigh his options. He fell into the Russian temptations. He committed the biggest mistake of all, especially after he raised a high level of differences with Europe and by a defect with the U.S. over his interference in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and his refusal to stand on the fence in the war, his interference in Libya, and finally the escalation with Greece and his insistence to dig in the eastern Mediterranean.

U.S.-Turkish relations began to nosedive after the failed coup attempt that was supported by the Americans in 2016. This was followed by the U.S. vacillating and supportive position to Mohammed bin Salman in assassinating Khashoggi in Turkey in 2018. Finally, the U.S. support

to European Union against Turkey in the conflict with Greece has raised questions about Turkey's fate in NATO.

By digging for oil and gas in the East Mediterranean, Erdogan has been playing his final card. But, he hit a nerve. Both the Americans and their allies in Europe and "Israel" would not allow Turkey to be competitive in the region. Even the Russians have their own preservations and opposition to the Turkish plan. Consequently, Turkey is now standing alone, unable to benefit from its allies in NATO. The political and economic returnees seem to be sized along with the gains of Turkey's wars next to NATO in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya. Add to that the retreat of its relations with Iran and Russia.

The S400 missile deal from Russia was the final straw that added to the disagreements and lack of confidence between Turkey and NATO members. It led to the F35 aircraft deal's failure in the U.S. Senate, whose members voted against it, both the Republican and the Democrats.

In March last year, a study was published by [carnegie-mec.org](http://carnegie-mec.org). Carnegie warned that the completion of the S400 missile defense system would inevitably lead to expelling Turkey from NATO. Deutsche Welle also published multiple points of disagreement with Ankara, which is related to its cooperation policy with the Russian military in Turkey, and consequently strengthening its position in Syria and undermining the building of a Kurdish state through its military operation "Peace Fountain."

The site published a poll result, which revealed that 58% of Germans voted for excluding Turkey from NATO, while only 18% opposed it.

There are two dilemmas concerning the Turkish departure from NATO; the first is related to the American Military Bases and American weapon factories. The second is related to the size of the NATO military forces since Turkey is considered to be the second military power in the military bloc. However, for the Americans, the issue is related to Turkish behavior and role, which became overdue and getting out of control.

These facts now impose the need to return to the basic American plan for the West Asia region, which is the re-division. This re-division might be applied to Turkey to control its behavior in the future. Accordingly, Turkey must be divided into two states, Eastern Islamic Asian Turkey and European Turkey. This arrangement has become an urgent need to protect Europe from the neo-Ottoman infringements and Europe's dilemma bypassing the refugees into its lands.

## Turkey condemns Charlie Hebdo over Erdogan cartoon

The rift between Muslim nations and France is growing after French President Emmanuel Macron said earlier this month that Islam was a religion in "crisis".

Tension escalated after French teacher Samuel Paty was killed on October 16 near his school in broad daylight. He had shown caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad to his students. Since the crime, French officials were perceived as linking the killing to Islam.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has criticized Macron, saying the French leader needed "mental checks" over his attitude towards Islam, [aljazeera](http://aljazeera.com) reported.

Top officials in the Muslim world have condemned France and Macron, including Pakistan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Iran; while tens of thousands have attended protests and called for a boycott of French goods.

Tensions heated further on Wednesday after the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo published a new caricature depicting Erdogan. In response the Turkish president has threatened to sue the magazine.

## Trump predicts Biden will be assassinated just weeks into his presidency

Campaigning at one of his Super-spreader Covidpaloosa rallies in Lansing, Michigan, Donald Trump gleefully predicted that Joe Biden will be assassinated.

He deludes himself into thinking this is why there is so much talk of the 25th Amendment...because DEMOCRATS need to be prepared for when Biden is "shot" and Kamala Harris ascends to power.

TRUMP: That's why they're talking about the 25th Amendment, right? Three weeks. Three weeks in. Joe's shot! Let's go, Kamala, you ready? Most liberal person in the Senate. She makes Bernie Sanders look like a serious conservative.

Why isn't the Secret Service hauling his ass off the stage right then and there? David Corn rightly asks on Twitter, "What nut is going to interpret this as encouragement?"

## U.S. military tankers smuggle crude oil from Syria's Hasakah to Iraq

The U.S. military has reportedly used dozens of tanker trucks to smuggle crude oil from Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah to western Iraq.

Syria's official news agency SANA, citing local sources, reported that a convoy of 37 tankers left Syria through al-Walid border crossing near al-Ya'rubiya town on Tuesday evening, and headed towards Iraqi territories. The sources added that several armored vehicles belonging to the U.S. military and militants affiliated with the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) escorted the convoy until it arrived at the border crossing.

The looting of Syrian oil by the US was first confirmed during a Senate hearing exchange between South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in late July.

## Putin, Erdogan discuss Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, Libya

Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed deep concern about the persisting conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as the rising presence of foreign terrorists in the clashes in a phone conversation with his Turkish counterpart.

"Developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone were discussed. The Russian side expressed deep concern about the ongoing military action, and the growing involvement of terrorists from the Middle East," the Kremlin press service said in a Tuesday statement carried by the official TASS news agency, referring to the discussions between President Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Putin informed Erdogan about "contacts with the leadership of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and measures taken for soonest ceasefire and de-escalation of the crisis" during the conversation, which was initiated by Ankara, the statement said.

## U.S., EU continue economic terrorism against Syria: UN ambassador

Syria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Bashar al-Ja'afari, has censured the U.S. and the European Union for their economic terrorism against the people of the Arab country.

Ja'afari made the remarks during a UN Security Council session via video conference on Tuesday, saying that the Western restrictions come in clear disregard for international law and the UN charter.

The Syrian diplomat also underlined that the U.S. and its allies have defied calls from the UN chief and the UN human rights council for the lifting of such restrictive measures, particularly at the time of the covid-19 pandemic.

## Resistance News

## Hamas delegation concludes visit to Egypt

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN—A Hamas delegation concluded a visit on Wednesday to the Egyptian capital, Cairo, after meeting with several Egyptian officials.

Hamas stated in a statement on Wednesday morning, that a delegation from the Movement's leadership ended its visit to Cairo after several meetings with Egyptian officials. During these meetings, they discussed many issues of common interest, especially bilateral relations between the two sides and ways to enhance and develop them.

The Movement said that the delegation discussed with Egyptian officials the challenges that the Palestinian cause is going through, regional political developments, ways to end the division successfully and achieving national partnership in addition to means of strengthening the Palestinian position to face the major dangers that the national cause is going through and means for supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people.

The delegation also discussed the difficult humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and ways to alleviate its inhabitants' suffering.

Hamas affirmed that its leadership delegation sensed Egyptian keenness to achieve Palestinian national partnership and reconciliation.

## Macron's remarks endanger peace in France: German expert

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

**TEHRAN** — Stating that Macron's domestic political plans have failed, Dr. Markus Fiedler believes that the French President's irresponsible suspicious remarks endangers the country's peace.

A tension between France and Muslim nations is growing after French President Emmanuel Macron said that Islam was in "crisis."

Tension has simmered since September when the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo republished cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad on the eve of a trial of 14 people accused of involvement in an attack against the publication's offices in 2015 for publishing the same caricatures. Tension escalated after French teacher Samuel Paty was killed on October 16 near his school, who had shown the Prophet Muhammad's caricatures to his students. Since the crime, French officials were perceived as linking the killing to Islam.

Several French cities responded by projecting caricatures of the Islamic Prophet on the walls of buildings as a gesture of defiance and defense of secularism, and Macron told a vigil in Paris that his country "would not give up cartoons."

The comments have raised controversy and provoked a wave of criticism from the Muslim world against the French leader, and some protests took place in several countries against the French President.

To shed light on the issue, we reached out to Dr. Markus Fiedler, a German sociologist, Islamic scholar, and lecturer at al-Mustafa Institute in Berlin.

The following is the text of the interview:

**■** What do you think about the recent anti-Islamic remarks of French President Emmanuel Macron?

A: I am astonished that Emmanuel Macron, as President of a country, behaves so insensitively and promotes a general suspicion against Islam. After all, it is also about inner peace in "his" country. The inhabitants of the French overseas department of Mayotte are 95% Muslims. Overall, according to French citizenship and anti-discrimination laws, official surveys on ethnic and religious affiliation are not permitted, which is why one can only estimate the number of Muslims living in France; today, about 7-9 million Muslims live in France.

It should also be remembered that northern Algeria was still seen in France as part of the French motherland



in the early 1960s. If General de Gaulle hadn't opted for Algeria's independence, the majority of the French population today would be Muslims. As a President of the country, Macron is responsible for ensuring that no one in "his" country sees himself or herself under general suspicion and that no one becomes a second-class citizen because of his or her religion.

**■** In your opinion, what are his goals by making these statements? And why does he generalize the action of one person to the whole Islamic world?

A: Macron is faced with the Front National (new name: Rassemblement National) under the leadership of Marine Le Pen, a strong right-wing opposition party. Therefore, Macron wants to show that he does not make any concessions to the Muslims and is ready to face them hard. He cannot afford to back down on this matter because he is then considered a wimp. Macron's domestic political plans have failed and ended in mass protests. He also has no success in foreign policy. In terms of foreign policy, he has recently taken a different approach, especially in relation to Russia. Now he has the opportunity to present himself to the French as an intrepid "defender of freedom."

**■** Given that many Muslims live in France, won't his remarks spread hatred in French society and polarize it?

A: That was predictable from the start. One can raise the question of what actually drove those responsible at Charlie Hebdo to reissue the "Muhammad cartoons" in a special issue after past experiences have shown where this is leading. Macron immediately spoke up, saying that it was in defense of freedom of expression, which

includes the right to blasphemy. The suspicion remains that these insults against religious sentiments are intended to drive Muslims into thoughtless reactions.

**■** In your opinion, is insulting the divine religions compatible with the principle of freedom of expression?

A: It is well known that one person's freedom ends where that of another begins. If you insult another person on the street with swear words, for example, you will hardly be able to invoke the unrestricted freedom of expression in court. How can it be in a sane community that the religious sentiments of a group of people living in that state can be hurt? That endangers the internal peace of a country.

Therefore, there are laws that ensure inner peace between people and different world views in a society in a functioning state. For this reason, e.g., the Russian media regulator also threatened newspapers that want to publish cartoons with criminal penalties. In the West, it is said again, and again that satire is allowed to do anything. It is about freedom of the press and freedom of expression, one of the West's supposedly highest goods. However, freedom of the press and freedom of expression quickly come to an end in the West when it comes to the really powerful.

Here are two examples: In March 2018, the Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) fired its illustrator Dieter Hanitzsch after 35 years of collaboration. The reason: Hanitzsch had drawn a caricature of the Israel regime's Prime Minister Netanyahu at the Eurovision Song Contest and published it in the SZ. Another example: In 2015, in the dispute over the cartoons, the most important German newspapers began to reprint the cartoons, again allegedly to defend Western freedom of the press. The Berliner Zeitung (BZ) published these caricatures on January 8, 2015, under the title "Attack on Freedom."

However, those responsible made a mistake: a caricature with alleged "anti-Semitic content" accidentally made it onto the front page. Despite all the talk of "satire is allowed to do anything", the BZ promptly apologized: "On January 8, 2015, the Berliner Zeitung accidentally published an anti-Semitic cartoon by Joe Lecorbeau. We would like to apologize again for this. It is an extremely unfortunate mistake that we made on the day of the terrorist attacks in Paris." Those affected are apologized for allegedly anti-Semitic content. On the other hand, Muslims who do not have a lobby in the West can be mocked and insulted.



## Cultural heritage, tourism in critical situation if coronavirus crises continue: minister

➔ **1** In August, Mounesan said that Iran's tourism has suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

He also noted that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."



Back in April, the government announced it will support those which are grappling with fiscal problems by offering loans with a 12-percent interest rate. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also suggested a rescue package for tourism businesses.

The government has also allocated a 750-trillion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises suffered by the coronavirus concerns.

In September, deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri pointed to the 1.3 million tourism workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said "This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry's decisions."

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

## Archaeological survey yields traces of Iron Age settlement, metal-melting kiln in west-central Iran

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — The first phase of a demarcation project has recently come to an end on Tepe Kuzechi in west-central Iran, yielding traces of an Iron Age settlement and other findings, including a metal-melting kiln.

Tepe Kuzechi is situated adjacent to the historically-rich Chehrabad Salt Mine in Zanjan province, where several salt men and their personal belongings have been discovered so far.

One of the important goals of the demarcation project was to identify possible ancient settlement areas around the salt mine, the provincial tourism chief, Amir Arjmand, said on Wednesday.

Since Kuzechi hill is the only ancient site around the mine that had superficial evidence from the Iron Age and the Achaemenid period, it became the subject of the demarcation project, which began on September 11 and ended on October 26, after obtaining a permit from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the official explained.



Archaeological survey shows that the salt mine was exploited during the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras as major ancient deposits and collapsed tunnels are related to these two periods, Arjmand added.

Salt mummies are the highlights of the findings in the mine. In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan Province, accidentally came across a mummified head, dated to 300 CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another "saltman", which was followed by further excavation unearthing remains of a human body along with a large number of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery. In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ, due to lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy, dubbed the "Saltman", is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive. This particular "saltman" was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, "before present" or 1750 years ago), the height of the Sasanian Empire. The second "saltman" was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first "saltman", the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and fifth "saltmen" were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period. The individual "saltman" has a few secrets of their own, for instance, the first "saltman" that was discovered had the blood type B+, and 3D imaging of his skull revealed fractures around his eye and other damage that occurred before death by a hard blow to the head. His clothing (the impressive leather boot) and his gold earring, show a person of some rank; the reason for his presence in the mine still remains a mystery.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the Taenia sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the saltmen is saltman No. 4, a sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

# Cyrus Cylinder: the story of 2,600-year-old icon of freedom

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — The 2,600-year-old Cyrus Cylinder is a small barrel-shaped clay cylinder, almost the size of an American football, which was inscribed in enigmatic-looking cuneiform on the order of the Persian King Cyrus after he captured Babylon in 539 BC.

The Cyrus Cylinder, which is being kept at the British Museum, bears many insights and links to a past that we all share and to a key moment in history that has shaped the world around us.

Famed as the "first bill on human rights", the clay object's inscriptions appear to encourage freedom of worship throughout the Persian Empire and to allow deported people to return to their homelands.

The cylinder was buried under the walls of Babylon in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) after Cyrus had captured the ancient city. It was concealed undisturbed for more than 2,400 years until it was dug up in 1879 by a British Museum excavation led by Hormuzd Rassam.

When the Babylonian cuneiform was deciphered and translated, it was immediately realized that the cylinder had a very special significance. It describes how Cyrus was able to defeat the Babylonian king Nabonidus with the aid of the Babylonian god Marduk, who had run out of patience with Nabonidus and his shortcomings.

Once Cyrus and his army entered the city, they did not burn it to the ground (as usually happened with conquered cities at this period) but he freed the population from forced labor obligations, sent back to various shrines statues of gods, and allowed the people who had been brought to Babylon by the Babylonian kings to return to their homes. By this act, he was effectively allowing people to pursue unmolested their own religious practices.

The empire, founded by the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius, stretched from the Balkans to Central Asia at its peak. It was the first state model based on diversity and tolerance of different cultures and religions.

### ■ The cuneiform text

The text, according to Ancient History



*The Cyrus Cylinder, seen from the back, during installation at the Getty Villa. Achaemenid, after 539 B.C. Terracotta, 22.9 x 10 cm. The British Museum*

Encyclopedia, can be divided in two parts: Lines 1 to 18 tell a story of Cyrus' deeds in the third person: the document tells of Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king, who is said to have forbidden the cult of Marduk among others, and to have oppressed his subjects. Consequently, the subjects made complaints to the gods, and Marduk found Cyrus in order to make him the world's ruler. All the inhabitants of his new empire then became very happy to see him as their new king.

In the second part, Cyrus speaks in the first person. He begins with his titles, and continues saying that he took care of the Marduk's cult at Babylon and that he had "allowed them to find rest from their exhaustion, their servitude". He also tells that lots of kings bring to him levies, and that he restored the cults in all the former kingdoms which are now part of his, and that he released the former deported persons.

Different readings of this document can be and have been made: Formerly some specialized historians took the text as a

testimony close to reality, but today this interpretation is mostly out of use.

Some others see in this document confirmation of the Bible in its historicity, with Marduk assimilated to Yahve. In fact in the Bible Cyrus is shown as Yahve's object, who gives to him the power to create his kingdom and the will to release captive Jews and help them to rebuild their temple. In fact, the cylinder shows Cyrus saying: "the gods who dwell there I returned to their home and let them move into an eternal dwelling. All the people I collected and brought them back to their homes," (line 32) which could be the confirmation of releasing captive Jews, even if these are not named in the text. One thing is clear: Cyrus chose to show that he has one powerful God at his side, Marduk, who gives him the legitimacy to overthrow Nabonidus and conquer his empire.

Many historians today agree that this document is propaganda, in which Nabonidus is treated worse than he was, using for this false portrayal of the Marduk cultists' anger against the last Babylonian king.

## Water tourism, an untapped potential in Lorestan

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — The western province of Lorestan is a land of natural resources, waterfalls, and ever-flowing rivers, which holds great potential for boosting water tourism in the region.

Water tourism involves traveling to locations specifically to take part in water-based activities. It is also combined with vacation and holiday activities and is generally more popular in the summertime.

Ancient water structures such as qanats, wells, mills, bridges, dams, and canals, with a significant diversity in Lorestan, have attracted the attention of many tourists in the world.

There are also natural properties related to water tourism, including lakes, spas, wetlands, and waterfalls, which are considered natural treasures in a land that has always struggled with the lack of water.

The province is considered the land of springs and waterfalls and historic bridges, with about 60 unique waterfalls and 100 historic bridges.

So, for a majority of local and even some foreign travelers who stumble upon a waterfall with a substantial flow, it would be rather eye-catching and worthy to spend a few

minutes of time.

There are over 300 waterfalls in the Iranian plateau, some of the most famous ones are Margoon in Fars Province, Rayen in Kerman Province, Latun in Gilan Province, Piran in Kermanshah Province, and Akhlamad in Khorasan Razavi Province.

According to statistics, about 12 billion cubic meters of drinking and freshwater is discharged from Lorestan province annually; While Lorestan farmers are not allowed to harvest enough of it, nor is it possible to build large dams on the roaring rivers of Kashkan, Zal, and Sezar, so in such circumstances the only way to benefit from this wealth and current opportunity is tourism.

There are few places in the country that have dozens of geotourism phenomena and more than a thousand historical water structures like Lorestan province, but despite having these capacities, this branch of tourism hasn't been promoted well yet.

While promoting water tourism could bring more money to the tourism industry of the province, it also could help to preserve and protect historical and natural properties related to this branch of tourism.



Lorestan is a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan (Lorestan) Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

## Ancient caravanserai of Yengi Imam restored

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — All four domes of the historical Yengi Imam caravanserai, dating from the 17th century in northern Alborz province, have been fully restored after almost five months of work.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization provided financial support to restore the ancient caravanserai, Abbas Noori, the deputy provincial tourism chief, said on Wednesday.

UNESCO paid 4.2 billion rials (\$100,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) for the third phase of the caravanserai's restoration project as a part of the Silk Roads Heritage Corridors project in Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, the official added.

The caravanserai is one of the most important forms of Persian architecture, which emerged across the Silk Roads, and offers a unique venue for exchanging goods and traditions among travelers coming from the most



diverse cultures. Stylistically, this building dates to the 17th century (11th century AH).

The building takes the form of a square with a central courtyard. At the center of the courtyard is a square platform accessed via a short flight of stairs. Four iwans open onto the courtyard at the center of its four sides.

The corners of the courtyard are angled, and passageways lead off of these corners

onto octagonal domed halls.

Between the iwans and the corner passages are three shallow alcoves opening onto three small chambers (making for a total of six on each side of the courtyard). The octagonal domed halls lead onto wide corridors that run behind the aforementioned chambers.

According to the UN cultural body, UNESCO and the European Union launched the project "Silk Roads Heritage Corridors in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran – International Dimension of the European Year of Cultural Heritage" in October 2018. The overall project objective is to strengthen the contribution of culture to sustainable progress, notably through heritage-based tourism development, diversification of tourism products, and delivery of high-quality visitor experiences along the Silk Roads heritage corridors in the participating countries.

Within the framework of this project, several Silk Roads heritage sites in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran will be selected for conservation/restoration, rehabilitation, and promotion to reveal their importance for the cultural identity of the region and for promoting intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. Historically, the Silk Road was a network of trade routes connecting China and the Far East with West Asia and Europe.

For thousands of years, the Silk Roads have connected civilizations and brought peoples and cultures in contact with each other from across the world, permitting not only an exchange of goods but also an interaction of ideas and cultures that have shaped our world today.

This project is jointly implemented by UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office and Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry with the financial support of the European Union.



## Millennia-old tree in Alborz to be demarcated

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — A 2700-year-old Juniper in Shahrestanak village, Alborz province, is scheduled to be demarcated in the near future, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The demarcation project aims at preserving the national property by installing guards, barbed wire, and profile board as well as banning camping and livestock grazing within its boundaries, Abbas Noori announced on Wednesday.

The project will be carried out in close collaboration

with the natural resources and watershed management department of the province, the official added.

Juniper is a very valuable and long-lasting species that grows in mountainous and high areas and has a special place in the legends and myths of Iranian people.

It has long been a symbol of immortality in Iranian culture and it can be seen in historical Iranian miniatures.

Historical resources and documents as well as archaeological studies indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to prehistoric times.



# Iran hopes to introduce coronavirus vaccine within 4 months

**1 →** Some three million test kits are being imported to the country from South Korea, which takes between 20 and 25 minutes to identify the infection, he stated, adding, of course, this type of test is being produced domestically to perform 100,000 tests a day, which is the most successful method in early detection, he explained.

Namaki emphasized that with the cooperation of the Ministry of Communications, the COVID-19 patients will be tracked so that the identified positive cases will not be able to infect others by moving; it will drastically reduce mortality in the next months.

## ■ Death toll at record high

In a press briefing on Wednesday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,824 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 588,648. She added that 467,911 patients have so far recovered, but 5,012 still



remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, coronavirus daily deaths and new cases hit the record high, as 415 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 33,714, she added.

Lari noted that so far 4,821,681 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.

## SDSs affect 43% of wetlands nationwide

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Wetlands across Iran measure about 3.4 million hectares in area, 1.4 million hectares of which, equivalent to 43 percent, have become sand and dust storm (SDS) hotspots.

Of course, coastal wetlands are not included because the water of these wetlands is usually supplied from the sea, so they do not dry out to become dust centers, Masoud Bagherzadeh Karimi, director of the wetlands protection and rehabilitation unit of the Department of the Environment (DOE), said on Wednesday.

There are 42 types of wetlands in the world, of which 12 are coastal-marine, 20 are inland and 10 are artificial. Of these, 41 types exist in Iran, except for the very cold tundra wetlands, all other wetlands have been registered in the country, and therefore, Iran is one of the countries with the most types of wetlands.

He highlighted that this year's rainfall has reduced SDS hotspots across wetlands by two to three percent, IRNA reported.

Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They store water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustainable development by supplying all our freshwater.

Wetlands play a major role in protecting



the land against floods and the impacts of storms. They provide food and diverse habitats which support genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity. Wetlands play a key role in the life cycles of many species and in annual migration patterns.

Unfortunately, wetlands are being degraded and lost due to pollution, over-exploitation, climate change, and human population growth. In recognition of these challenges, the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty, was adopted in 1971.

There are 80 big and small wetlands in the country, 24 sites designated as wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) out of 2,290 worldwide. About one-third of Iran's 24 sites are under pressure or in a critical condition.

Chief of the DOE, Issa Kalantari, has said in order to restore wetlands in the country a budget of 600 trillion rials (nearly \$14 billion) is required.

## National observatory to come on stream by mid-June 2021

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The national observatory of Iran, which is being built near the city of Kashan, central Isfahan province, will be put into operation by mid-June next year.

“All the components of the telescope and the control systems, except the mirror, are produced domestically,” said Sourena Sattari, the vice president for science and technology, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The main activities of the national observatory include designing, construction, monitoring, and operating the 3.4-meter INO340 telescope, its instruments, and infrastructures. The range of instruments initially planned for the telescope includes a wave-front sensor, auto-guider, imaging CCDs, and a high-resolution spectrograph.

INO is a national project and has been envisioned to become an international scientific platform for astronomy in the future. Therefore, educating the general public and especially the younger generation about the basics of astronomy is another important step ahead of the INO project.

An important focus of these activities is the residents close to the area around the INO site whose lifestyles



can directly affect the workflow of the INO observatory. So far, about 1,400 students from 22 schools in towns and villages close to Gargash site have been educated about the basics of astronomy and the effects of light pollution on the INO observatory. Furthermore, the project is using social media to engage the general public with the project.

INO scientists selected Mount Gargash in 2009 after a rigorous eight-year campaign spanning the entire country that measured the atmospheric features that could affect the location of the Iranian National Observatory. Many tasks have been done since then including building a dedicated 11.2 km road connecting the national road network to the summit. The observatory building is currently under construction and is planned to be opened by the next 8 months.

## 2020 is on course to be the warmest year on record

2020 is set to be the warmest year on record, according to data from different sources, including NASA. This is even more remarkable despite it not being an El Niño extreme weather event year.

The first nine months of the year saw record concentrations of major greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, and nitrous oxide.

Arctic sea ice extent was also at record low levels for much of the summer.

While this year will be memorable for many reasons, it is now more likely than not that 2020 will also be the warmest year for the Earth's surface since reliable records began in the mid-1800s.

This is all the more remarkable because it will lack any major El Niño event – a factor that has contributed to most prior record warm years.

However, with three months remaining, there is still some uncertainty. There is a chance that a growing La Niña in the tropical Pacific may drive cooler temperatures leading to a second-place finish – at least in some of the

global temperature records produced by different groups of researchers around the world.

The first nine months of the year saw record concentrations of major greenhouse gases – CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, and nitrous oxide – in the atmosphere. Arctic sea ice extent was at record low levels for much of the summer and the summer minimum clocked in as the second lowest on record after 2012.

While climate records are a useful benchmark to highlight the warming of the planet, the change in temperatures, sea ice and other climate factors over time are much more important than if any single year sets a new record.

There has been a clear warming trend over the past 50 years, along with hints in some datasets of potential acceleration in recent years. Similarly, both sea ice extent and volume are clearly declining over time.

## ■ Surface temperatures show record warmth

The first nine months of 2020 were remarkably warm. Surface temperature records have shown around 0.9C

warming since the year 1970, a warming rate of about 0.18C per decade. During 2020 many of the months have set new temperature records, though the results vary a bit across datasets due to different observations used, adjustments for changes in measurement techniques over time, and methods to fill in gaps between measurements.

Six of the nine months in 2020 – January, April, May, June, July and September – saw record temperatures in at least one of the global surface temperature datasets. All months of the year saw either the second warmest or warmest in at least one dataset and no dataset has any months below the fourth warmest on record.

It is likely that a growing La Niña event in the tropical Pacific will modestly depress temperatures in the next few months, but its main effect will be felt in 2021, as global temperatures tend to lag behind those in the El Niño region of the Pacific by around three months.

While predicting the course of La Niña and El Niño events is challenging, it does make it likely that 2021 will be at least modestly cooler than 2020.

## Air pollution linked to 19% of COVID-19 deaths in Europe

New research has said that long-term exposure to air pollution contributed roughly 15 percent to COVID-19 deaths worldwide and 19 percent in Europe.

Czechia, Poland, Austria and Germany were among the countries with the highest percentages of COVID-19 mortality attributed to air pollution.

The study, published in the journal Cardiovascular Research by experts from Germany and Cyprus, used satellite and ground-based data of global exposure to fine particulates, along with an atmospheric chemistry model, combined with data from the U.S. and China relating to air pollution, COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-1, to measure the role of air pollution in the COVID-19 mortality rate.



Data showed that East Asia had the highest percentage of COVID-19 deaths that could be attributed to air pollution and its effects on human health, at 27 percent, while in North America the proportion was slightly lower than that in Europe, at 17 percent.

According to the researchers, exposure to air pollution aggravated conditions that led to an increased risk of death from infection by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, representing a “potentially avoidable, excess mortality.”

“Considering the cardiovascular and respiratory health impacts of air pollution, the relationship to COVID-19 mortality is not unexpected,” the authors said.

“The mortality from COVID-19 depends on comorbidities, including conditions that increase cardiovascular risks such as arterial hypertension, diabetes mellitus, obesity, and established coronary artery disease, as well as respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), being similar to those that are influenced by air pollution,” they explained.

## ■ Europe's air pollution

While the study found that East Asia was the region faring the worst in terms of COVID-19 mortality attributed to air pollution, on a country-level, European countries Czechia and Poland had the highest percentages, 29 percent and 28 percent respectively, coming in above China and North Korea, both at 27 percent.

Other countries in Europe with at least a quarter of COVID-19 deaths attributed to air pollution are Slovakia (27 percent), Austria (26 percent), Belarus (26 percent), Germany (26 percent), Hungary (25 percent) and Luxembourg (25 percent).

In parts of Europe where deaths were particularly high, researchers said there was also evidence of high levels of fine particulate matter, or pollution.

“In Italy, it was found that the high pollution concentrations that are typical for the Po valley, especially in the Lombardy region of which Milan is the capital, were associated with a high mortality rate.”

The study's authors explained that while the limited data do not allow conclusions about cause-effect relationships, i.e. that air pollution itself was killing people with COVID-19, they would not rule it out, as “the biological mechanisms of air pollution-related disorders, acting as comorbidities in COVID-19, are well documented.”

“Furthermore, it seems likely that fine particulates prolong the atmospheric lifetime of infectious viruses, thus favoring transmission,” the authors added.

The scientists also hope that this data will help inform policy decisions, as it suggests air pollution is an important co-factor increasing the risk of death from COVID-19. “This provides extra motivation for combining ambitious policies to reduce air pollution with measures to control the transmission of COVID-19.”

The authors also highlight that if measures are not taken soon, air pollution will continue to kill large numbers of people even in a post-pandemic world. “The global loss of life expectancy from long-term exposure to ambient air pollution exceeds that of infectious diseases, and is comparable with that of tobacco smoking,” they explained.

“The pandemic ends with the vaccination of the population or with herd immunity through extensive infection of the population. However, there are no vaccines against poor air quality and climate change. The remedy is to mitigate emissions,” the authors added.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 45)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Possessive pronouns may be written in the joined forms which are less emphatic. The joined forms are:

مَ : کتابم / کتابمان / کتابتان / کتابشان  
تَ : کتابت / کتابتان  
شَ : کتابش / کتابشان

● Exercise 3. Write with joined pronouns:

۱. شهر من ..... نان آنها .....  
۲. جواب تو ..... شیر شما .....  
۳. ساعت او ..... بنیر ما .....  
۴. خواب ما ..... زبان او .....  
۵. کشور شما ..... حال تو .....

□ یَ "نَگَرِه بَعْد از وَاکِه" کتاب کار

Note the insertion of a mediatory letter between the final vowel

and the indefinite marker یَ /i/ in writing:

آقا + یَ آقایی /āqāyi/

دانشجو + یَ دانشجویی /dāneshjuyi/

خانه + یَ خانهای /xā'nei/

صندلی + یَ صندلی‌ای /sanda'lii/

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## \$1.2m donated to provide the underprivileged with warm clothing

Iran's Welfare Organization has managed to collect a contribution of 50 billion rials (nearly \$1.2 million) to provide the underprivileged with warm clothing, Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday.

Within the framework of a campaign dubbed “kindness smile” from December 10, 2018 to January 9 some \$1.2 million was solicited from the public for procuring warm clothing for the financially struggling children in underprivileged areas, an official with the Organization has said.

Mohammad Ali Kozehgar explained that some 50,000 packages of warm clothing were obtained by the money and distributed among the children.

## کمک ۵ میلیاردی برای تامین لباس زمستانی کودکان در مناطق کم برخوردار

به گزارش خبرگزاری تسنیم سازمان بهزیستی کشور با هدف تامین تهیه لباس گرم برای کودکان مناطق کم برخوردار مبلغ ۵ میلیارد تومان جمع آوری کرده است.

رئیس مرکز مشارکتهای مردمی و توانمندسازی سازمان بهزیستی کشور با اشاره به اتمام پویش لبخند مهربانی با هدف تامین تهیه لباس گرم برای کودکان مناطق کم برخوردار اظهار کرد: این پویش از ۱۹ آذر با مشارکت خیرین و نیکوکاران آغاز شد و تا ۱۹ دی ماه ادامه داشت و در این طرح یک ماه ۵ میلیارد تومان جمع آوری شده است.

محمد علی کوزه گر گفت: ۵۰ هزار بسته لباس گرم به ارزش ۵ میلیارد تومان تهیه شده است و در اختیار کودکان قرار گرفت.



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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)

## Manuscripts of Hafez embellish world's major collections of rare books

### Part 2

With a few exceptions (noted below), most of the early sources for the ghazals are not redactions of the Divan as such. Scattered verses and poems may be found in sources composed during the poet's lifetime. One of the earliest sources is the Majmu'a-ye latayef o safina-ye zarayef, a handbook on rhetoric by Sayf-e Jam Haravi, which, although completed around 1400-01, was begun much earlier, in the reign of the Delhi sultan Firuzshah b. Mohammad b. Toghloq (1351-88). (The manuscript, which was probably re-copied around the end of the 15th century, was formerly in the library of the Kabul University Faculty of Literature; an incomplete manuscript in the British Museum known as the Dastur al-shoara, dated 803, is another copy of the same work.) The book's main section, on the poetic art, is followed by an anthology of poetry by Persian poets (plus a section of poetry by Indian poets) containing 127 ghazals by Hafez, arranged non-alphabetically. These were published by Nadir Ahmad; one wishes he had published the entire text, as the manuscript — now undoubtedly lost to scholars — is an important document for the history of the reception of Hafez.

Indeed, the question of reception has received relatively little attention. Indicative of the early stages of "publication" of Hafez's poems is the fact that they are found chiefly in anthologies, the varied nature of which may be shown by a few examples. (1) Library of the Academy of Arts, Dushanbe, MS 545, dated 1404-05, a miscellany of varied texts in prose and verse, with 41 ghazals and two moqatta's by Hafez on the margins. (2) Koprulu Library, Istanbul, MS 1589, dated 1408, an anthology of mystical treatises with selections by various poets, including Hafez, on the margins. (3) Aya Sofya Library, Istanbul, MS 3945, dated June 1410, containing the divans of twenty poets including Hafez. (4) Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, MS Pers. poetry 36/2289, dated May 1410, an anthology containing a prose abridgement of the Koffi-e Alai, a medical text by Esmail Jorjani (d. ca. 531/1136), and poetry, including excerpts from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and three of Nezami's verse romances, with more selected poetry on the margins, including 47 of Hafez's ghazals in non-alphabetical order. The ghazals were published by Nadir Ahmad, with facsimile reproductions of the relevant folios. Ahmad's conclusion, on the evidence of this manuscript and another anthology from the same period (probably that made for Eskandar Soltan) in which the ghazals are in alphabetical order, that the Divan must have existed in two recensions, alphabetical and non-alphabetical (although the original recension was probably non-alphabetical), clearly rests on the assumption of a single "original" on which later copyists drew, and ignores the possibility of multiple sources, or of alphabetical or non-alphabetical ordering being a matter of choice.

Other anthologies support the argument that the anthologists' aim was not to provide a definitive text of Hafez's Divan but to furnish selections of poetry chosen for various reasons. In another early anthology (British Museum, London, dated 1411-12), Hafez's ghazals appear in two places (145 arranged alphabetically, another 9 arranged non-alphabetically) on the margins of Nezami Eskandarnama. This anthology, compiled for the governor of Fars Eskandar Soltan b. Omar Shaikh, may have had more than mere "literary" significance, as it was prepared only a few years before Eskandar rebelled against his uncle Shahrokh. An anthology dated between 1415 and 1434, containing 43 ghazals, was copied for Eskandar Soltan's successor Ebrahim Soltan by Mohammad Golandam, and includes a qasida by the latter in praise of the prince. In a manuscript in the Asafiya Library, Hyderabad, dated November 1415, the main text is Kalila wa Dimna with, on the margins, Attar's Manteq at-tayr and the Divan of Hafez arranged alphabetically. Nadir Ahmad, who published the ghazals, argues that since in many of the panegyric ghazals the name of the mamduh is omitted, as are encomiastic verses or passages, the Divan was later revised, either by the poet himself or by someone else; the suggestion is that the "original" version lacked the encomiastic elements, which were later added, but it is unclear why the situation might not be the reverse.

The fact that so many of the early sources are anthologies reflects the vogue for such works during the Timurid period. The extent and lavishness of Timurid patronage is well known, as is their interest in learning and literature; but Timurid bibliophilia was especially connected with their patronage of the arts of the book, which, under them, became highly professionalized. Books were not merely records of literary greatness, but objects of value, of gift-giving and exchange, as well as important components of military spoils, to be placed in the royal treasuries and, most probably, only rarely read. Some later manuscripts belonging to the Mughals bear inscriptions noting the dates on which they were viewed by the current ruler. Many manuscripts of this period, especially those which were highly decorated, were not public texts whose purpose was to disseminate the work of a writer or poet, but symbols of the ruler's magnificence.

(Source: Encyclopædia Iranica)

# European Film Week announces lineup

By Manijeh Rezapoor

**TEHRAN** — A lineup of 16 films by European filmmakers from different countries will go on screen at a festival titled "European Film Week" opening in Tehran on November 7, the organizers have announced.

The movies are from 14 countries including Italy, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece and Austria.

The lineup includes "The Conductor" by Maria Peters (Netherlands), "Sister" by Ursula Meier (Switzerland), "Transit" by Christian Petzold (Germany), "Truman" by Cesc Gay (Spain) and "Little Joe" by Jessica Hausner (Austria).

"The Conductor" is about a 24-year-old Dutch Willy Wolters who has immigrated to the American continent with her parents as a child. She dreams of becoming a conductor, but this is an ambition that no one takes seriously.

"Sister" centers on Simon, the 12-year-old boy. The film follows him around a busy Swiss ski resort, apparently unnoticed by everyone but Meier's camera, as he goes about his business, which involves furtively stealing ski equipment from vacationers, hauling it down the mountain in the lift and re-selling



A scene from "Transit" by Christian Petzold.

it for bargain prices below.

In "Truman", Julian, living in Madrid, receives an unexpected visit from his friend, Tomas, a professor living in Canada. Julian

is an actor and has had cancer for a year, and his only companion now is Truman, his loyal dog. The friends and Truman share four days together.

## Resistance festival to honor most influential film with grand prize

→1 He added, "Proper content, good communication with the audience, good structure and high influence on the viewers will be among the characteristics of the selected films from each section."

He also explained that the film, which can be a feature, documentary or short, must also be an economic film.

"The film must be the most influential compared to the budget allotted to the project," Bakideh said.

In addition, the organizers will pay tribute to Iranian correspondent Mohsen Khazai who covered the war news in Syria for several years and was martyred in Aleppo on November 12, 2016.

Earlier, the organizers had announced that the best screen and TV adaptations of books on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as Sacred Defense in Iran, will be honored in a new special section this year.

Adaptations of books on the Islamic Revolution, resistance and regional issues, and Islamic awakening will also be accessed in this section named "Narration of the Pen Section".

A short, a feature-length movie and a telefilm will be honored in this section. Screenwriters from across the world whose screenplays have not been made into films are invited to attend the festival in the three languages of Persian, English and Arabic.

The festival will review films on Commander Qassem Soleimani's role in awakening people of the region and the world in a special section.

Interested filmmakers are asked to submit their films on the main characteristic of the martyr as the symbol of



A poster for 16th Resistance International Film Festival. resistance, highlighting the bravery of the commander, and the soldiers without borders as the main themes of the section named "Prominent Resistance Martyr Section".

The oppression of the people in the region, their resistance, and the role of Soleimani in their awareness are also highlighted in the section, which is due to be held internationally.

The organizers have so far received over 700 submissions, including videos, short films, screenplays and mostly documentaries in this section.

The festival has been organized in two stages, the first of which took place during the Sacred Defense Week from September 21 to 28.

The second part of the festival will be held from November 21 to 27 to celebrate the anniversary of Basij Day, which falls on November 25.

## Iranian platforms stream "The Last Fiction"

**A R T TEHRAN** — Opera d e s k and Namava, two major Iranian platforms for online movie screening, began streaming the acclaimed animated film "The Last Fiction" by Ashkan Rahgozar on Wednesday.

A Hoorakhsh Studio production, "The Last Fiction" recounts a story from Persian poet Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh. It is about Zahak's treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology that reveals human nature.

An all-star cast including Parviz Parastui, Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, Baran Kowsari, Ashkan Khatibi, Akbar Zanjani



A scene from "The Last Fiction" by Ashkan Rahgozar.

and Farrokh Nemati have lent their voices to the characters in the production.

The world-renowned Iranian vocalist Shahram Nazeri has sung the closing credits song in the movie, which has been acclaimed at several prestigious Iranian and

international events.

The movie has been screened in numerous international events, winning over a dozen awards. It was named best animated film at the 37th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February 2019.

"The Last Fiction" was among the submissions for consideration at the 2020 Oscars, but it failed to receive a nomination.

The film went on screen in a non-competitive section of Annecy in 2018.

Also in summer, MX Player, an Indian media streaming service, offered the animated film "The Last Fiction". Users from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal have had access to the MX Player service.

Earlier in April, Hoorakhsh Studio, also said that platforms providing video on

Christian Petzold's "Transit" is a portrait of German refugees in Marseille during World War Two and based on Anna Seghers's 1942 novel by the same name. "Transit" is attuned to the experience of flight and exile in both the past and the present.

"Little Joe" focuses on a genetically engineered plant which scatters its seeds and seems to cause uncanny changes to living creatures.

Also included are "The Clowns", a 1970 mockumentary film by Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini about the human fascination with clowns and circuses; "When Tomatoes Met Wagner", a Greek documentary film by Marianna Economou; and, "Before the Frost", a Danish drama by Michael Noer.

The festival, which was held in various cities of Iran for the past three years, will go online this year in Tehran, and the movies will be available on Hashure, an Iranian platform providing video on demand (VOD) service for documentary films.

The program has been organized as a collaborative effort between Iran's Art and Experience Cinema and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC).

The two institutions have previously organized the festival in Iran in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Following the assassination of Commander Soleimani during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, several other cultural events in Iran established awards in memory of the chief of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

The first of them was the Fajr Film Festival, which announced it would honor films on resistance and jihad with an award named after Soleimani.

The award went to "Abadan 11, 60" directed by Mehrdad Khoshbakht about the people's fight against Iraqi forces in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan during the early months of the Iran-Iraq war.

In addition, the 17th edition of the Resistance Theater Festival has established an award named after Commander Qassem Soleimani to honor a play every year.

"Due to the importance of the resistance issue and the need to promote the teachings of the popular figure of Iran's resistance culture and the leader of the resistance front, Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani, we plan to honor a top play with an award named after Hajj Qassem Soleimani this year for the first time," the organizers have announced.

The award will be presented in the next editions of the festival to represent its organizers' committed devotion to the divine commander.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater organizes the festival every year in collaboration with several other institutions. This year's edition is scheduled to be held in November or December.

demand (VOD) service in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) offered "The Last Fiction" in the region.

The movie can also be downloaded on the VOD platforms Filmin in Spain and Cinesquare in Macedonia, which covers Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Slovenia, Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

The 7Sky Entertainment in Turkey and Hoorakhsh are jointly distributing the film around the world.

Hoorakhsh Studio also unveiled a video game based on the movie in December 2019.

The game includes ten characters from the Shahnameh with their own superpowers, and can be downloaded from Café Bazar and Sib Apps for free.

## "Walnut Tree" to go on screen in Sanandaj

**A R T TEHRAN** — Mohammad-Hossein d e s k Mahdavian's new film "Walnut Tree", on the profound tragedy of Iraq's chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987, will go on screen in Sanandaj, Kordestan Province today.

"Walnut Tree", the child labor movie "Sun Children" along with "Yalda: A Night for Forgiveness" and "Careless Crime" are among the movies competing to represent Iran during the 93rd Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category.

The film will have four screening sessions in the Bahman Cinema for one week, said Heidar Moradi, the director of the Bahman-Sabz Institute, an affiliate with the Art Bureau.

He invited people to watch the film and asked the moviegoers to observe and respect health protocols and social distancing.

The film was warmly received by people in the Iranian Kurdish-speaking regions during its several screenings at



A scene from "Walnut Tree" by director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian.

the 38th Fajr Film Festival in February.

Starring world-renowned actor Payman Maadi, "Walnut Tree" was made based on the true story of the profound

tragedy of Iraq's chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987.

It tells the story of Qader Mulanpur, a man who was away when his family was affected by the chemical attack in a village near Sardasht. His effort to save his pregnant wife and their three children are in vain and they die one by one from the fatal wounds sustained as a result of the chemical attack.

Maadi, the star of the Oscar-winning movie "A Separation", portrays Qader Mulanpur in the film, which brought the Crystal Simorgh for best actor at the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival in Tehran.

The festival also picked Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian as best director for the movie.

In 1987 Iraq bombarded the Iranian town of Sardasht and the surrounding region with chemical weapons, killing over 1000 and injuring over 8000 civilians, many of whom were permanently disabled.

## IIDCYA republishes "En Famille" by Persian translator Mohammad Qazi

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — "En Famille" d e s k by French author Hector Malot translated into Persian by prominent Persian translator Mohammad Qazi (1913-1998) have recently been republished by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

The first edition of the Persian translation of the book was released in 1977. The English adaptation is known as "The Adventures of Perrine".

The book tells the story of the charming account of a young orphan girl Perrine Paindavoin making her own way in France as she tries to connect with her grandfather.

Perrine is the daughter of an Anglo-Indian mother, Marie, and a French father, Edmond, who dies in Bosnia at the very beginning of the story. Before dying, Edmond asks his wife and Perrine to return to his hometown, Maracourt, where Perrine's grandfather, Vulfran, owns a factory and a family mansion.

Perrine and her mother run a traveling photo studio in their journey to France. Upon reaching Paris, however, Marie falls ill. Although they sell everything they have to spend on medication, Marie eventually dies. At her deathbed, she reveals that Perrine must not expect a welcome from her grandfather. Vulfran strongly opposed Edmond's marriage

and as such, he detests Perrine.

Hector Malot (1830-1907) was a French writer born in La Bouille, Seine-Maritime. He studied law in Rouen and Paris, but eventually literature became his passion. He worked as a dramatic critic for Lloyd Francais and as a literary critic for L'Opinion Nationale.

His first book, published in 1859, was Les Amants. In total Malot wrote over 70 books. By far his most famous book is "Sans Famille" (Nobody's Boy) (1878), which deals with the travels of the young orphan Remi, who is sold to the street musician Vitalis at age 8. "Sans Famille" gained fame as a children's book, though it was not originally intended as such.

He announced his retirement as an author of fiction in 1895, but in 1896 he returned with the account of his literary life "Le Roman de mes Romans" ("The Novel of my Novels").

He died in Fontenay-sous-Bois in 1907.

Among the works that Qazi rendered into Persian are Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's "Don Quixote", French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" and Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis's "Zorba the Greek".

Also included are "Paulina" by Spanish writer Ana Maria Matute, and "Joao de Tintubal" by French writers Jacqueline Cerven and Michel Gourlier both published by IIDCYA.