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# Iran's strategic response

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Army personnel carry the coffin of prominent nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday.

## Transit of commodities via railway up 220% in H1

TEHRAN- Transit of goods through Iran's railway network rose 220 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), compared to the first half of the past year, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI), announced.

Saeed Rasouli also stated that the railways' share of transit has increased from 10 percent in the past year to 30 percent this year.

While the limitations due to the coronavirus pandemic have decreased road

transit significantly, transit via railways has increased, the official added.

Iran has been following new strategies for increasing the share of transit in its foreign trade basket and the country's railway network has become the center of the government plans for achieving the said goal.

According to Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, the country is capable of boosting its capacity of transit to 50 million tons per year.

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## 30 documentaries to compete for Avini Awards at Cinéma Vérité

TEHRAN – A lineup of 30 documentaries will be competing for the Avini Awards at the 14th edition of the Cinéma Vérité festival, Iran's major international festival for documentary films.

The award has been established by the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), which is the main organizer of the festival, to commemorate

the martyr Morteza Avini, the writer and documentarian who chronicled the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

Documentaries on the Islamic Revolution, the Sacred Defense and resistance in the region will be competing for the award.

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## No act of terror will go unanswered, defense chief warns

TEHRAN – Defense Minister Amir Hatami has reacted to the assassination of Iran's prominent scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, saying no atrocity, terror or stupid act will go unanswered.

"We will pursue the perpetrators till the end and we will follow the order of the Commander-in-Chief (Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei)," Hatami said on Monday during the funeral procession for Martyr Fakhrizadeh, Mehr reported.

"I sincerely thank all the nations and governments that sympathized with Iran for this incident and expressed their disgust with the assassination," Hatami said.

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## Air pollution hiding behind COVID-19

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, air pollution has been marginalized despite being much deadlier, causing over 7 million deaths annually, while the virus has just taken less than 1.5 million lives worldwide so far.

Pollution (mainly air, water, occupational) contributed to 8.3 million annual deaths globally in 2019.

Air pollution is the fourth-highest cause of death surpassed only by high blood pressure, tobacco use, and hunger. It kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year, while these days the pandemic is at the center of attention and air pollution is hiding behind the disease.

The pandemic compelled many countries to resort to a lockdown, and as a result, the daily average air quality index value drastically reduced to more than half in March-April 2020 in many countries, which had a positive impact on the environment, but sadly the effect was reversed as soon as they reopened.

### Ambient air pollution

From smog hanging over cities to smoke inside the home, air pollution poses a major threat to health and climate. Ambient air pollution accounts for an estimated 4.2 million deaths per year due to stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, as well as acute and chronic respiratory diseases.

Around 91% of the world's population lives in places where air quality levels exceed WHO limits. While ambient air pollution affects developed and developing countries alike, low- and middle-income countries experience the highest-burden, with the greatest toll in the WHO Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions.

Sources of air pollution are multiple and context-specific. The major outdoor pollution sources include residential energy for cooking and heating, vehicles, power generation, agriculture/waste incineration, and industry. Policies and investments supporting integrated policies that support sustainable land use, cleaner household energy and transport, energy-efficient housing, power generation, industry, and better municipal waste management can effectively reduce key sources of ambient air pollution.

Air quality is closely linked to the earth's climate and ecosystems globally. Many of the drivers of air pollution (i.e. combustion of fossil fuels) are also sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

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## Israel assassinated Fakhrizadeh with U.S. green light: American professor

BY JAVAD HEIRANNIA

TEHRAN – Professor Hossein Askari, who teaches international business at the George Washington University, says he is "almost sure" that the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was a joint project carried out by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Fakhrizadeh, 59, was assassinated in a complicated terrorist attack on Nov. 27 in a small city about 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran. The terrorists blasted a pickup - a Nissan sedan - laden with explosives on the way of the car carrying Fakhrizadeh and then started shooting at his car. Fakhrizadeh headed the Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND).

Iranian political and military officials have pointed the finger at Israel for the assassination.

"America's intelligence services are invaluable

to Israel. The Trump-Netanyahu cooperation are as close as you can get. Netanyahu would want to make sure that this fits Trump's current and future political agenda. So he would do nothing like this without a U.S. cooperation and green light." Professor Hossein Askari tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

**We witnessed the terror of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, an Iranian nuclear scientist.**

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was the only Iranian scientist mentioned by Benjamin Netanyahu in a presentation in April 2018. What is your assessment of the reasons for this terror?

A: The reasons are many. Netanyahu wants to take every opportunity to damage Iranian defensive capabilities and weaken Iran while he has the blind support of the United States in the presidency of Trump.

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## France: Protesters clash with police over new security law

Police and demonstrators have clashed in Paris as tens of thousands took the streets to protest against new security legislation, a controversy intensified by the beating and racial abuse of a Black man by officers that shocked France.

French activists fear that a proposed new security law will deprive them of a potent weapon against abuse - cellphone videos of police activity - threatening their efforts to document possible cases of police brutality, especially in impoverished immigrant neighborhoods.

French President Emmanuel Macron's government is pushing a new security bill that makes it illegal to publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm, amid other measures. Critics fear the new law could hurt press freedoms and make it more difficult for all citizens to report on police brutality.

"I was lucky enough to have videos that protect me," said Michel Zecler, a Black music producer

who was beaten up recently by several French police officers. Videos first published Thursday by French website Loopsider have been seen by over 14 million viewers, resulting in widespread outrage over police actions.

Two of the officers are in jail while they are investigated while two others, also under investigation, are out on bail.

The draft bill, still being debated in parliament, has prompted protests across the country called by press freedom advocates and civil rights campaigners. Tens of thousands of people marched Saturday in Paris to reject the measure, including families and friends of people killed by police.

"For decades, descendants of post-colonial immigration and residents in populous neighborhoods have denounced police brutality," Sihame Assbague, an anti-racism activist, told The Associated Press.

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## Absolute limits of magnificent Persepolis being documented

TEHRAN – An all-inclusive documentation project has been commenced on the absolute limits of the UNESCO-registered Persepolis in southern Iran.

The project aims to develop a detailed and descriptive cadastral map of the World Heritage, and privately-owned properties, which are located within close boundaries of the ancient site, Hamid Fadaei, director of the World Heritage, said on Sunday.

Experts are also preparing an accurate

data bank which is a prerequisite for having more efficient protection and management of the World Heritage yet to provide more appropriate services to visitors, the official added.

The Gate of All Nations, and routes from Persepolis to Naqsh-e Rostam (a nearby Achaemenid necropolis) are also high on the agenda for being fully documented, he explained.

Situated near Persepolis, the Achaemenid

necropolis of Naqsh-e Rostam, meaning "Picture of Rostam" is named after mythical Iranian hero which is most celebrated in Shahnameh and Persian mythology.

One of the wonders of the ancient world, Naqsh-e Rostam embraces four tombs where Persian Achaemenid kings are laid to rest, believed to be those of Darius II, Artaxerxes I, Darius I and Xerxes I, although some historians are still debating this.

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## Oxygen cylinders provided to COVID-19 patients

In a ceremony which was held on Monday, charity organizations in cooperation with the Iranian Red Crescent Society provided some one thousand oxygen cylinders to the needy patients who are suffering from COVID-19.

At a time when so many folks are in so many kinds of need, volunteers are stepping up in the country to give — to donate their time, skills, materials, and much more.

## Yemenis have become source of pride and inspiration for Arabs: Iraqi analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – An Iraqi political analyst describes Yemeni fighters as "a source of pride and inspiration for Arabs and Muslims" due to their resistance against the Saudi-led war.

Ali Fahim tells the Tehran Times that the Saudi-led war on Yemen has been "a total failure".

He also says, "We should take into account that Yemen is originally a poor country with an agricultural economy that does not have mineral resources and its people have been living in enclosed space and preoccupied with domestic wars," says Fahim.

The following is the text of the interview:

1- How do you measure the repercussions of the recent missile attack by Yemeni forces on the Saudi Aramco in Jeddah?

The missile attack on the Saudi Aramco facility was not the first and it will not be the last. It was preceded by an attack nearly a year ago on the same facility in Khurais and Abqaiq.

The importance of this attack, which affected the oil giant Saudi Aramco in an exceptional condition, is that it was carried out at the end of the G20 summit hosted by Riyadh and amid leaked news about the secret meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman inside the kingdom.

The attack caused a great media hype, as it came after a Saudi desire to normalize its ties with Israel, as well as the name of the cruise missile (Quds 2) that targeted Aramco. It carries the message that Ansarul-lah plans to improve their missile to reach Tel Aviv.

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## No act of terror will go unanswered, defense chief warns

Hatami says Iran will double the budget for defense projects

**1 →** General Hatami warned the countries that sponsor terrorism that the Islamic Republic has always dealt with terrorists “as we did in the region in Syria and Iraq, along with the governments and nations and the armed forces of those countries.” “We will do it again,” he said. “We will be proud and dignified, and whoever bows down to the terrorists will surely be ashamed.” He also said the Islamic Republic will double the budget for its defense projects.



*Iran's prominent nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was laid to rest at Imamzadeh Saleh mosque in Tajrish in northern Tehran on Monday morning, three days after he was assassinated outside Tehran. The burial ceremony was attended by top military and security officials, including Defense Minister Amir Hatami, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri, IRGC Chief Hossein Salami, Army Chief Abdolrahim Mousavi, IRGC Quds Force Commander Esmail Ghaani, Police Chief Hossein Ashtari, Supreme National Security Council secretary Shamkhani, and Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi.*

“The first step to continue the path of Martyr Fakhrizadeh was taken yesterday in the cabinet,” Hatami said, adding, “While the budget of the Research and Innovation Organization of the Defense Ministry was increased for 1400 (2020-2021), yesterday we decided to double this budget.”

On Friday at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack while his bodyguards were severely injured.

Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Friday that the attack was carried out with “serious indications of Israeli role”.

In a presentation in April 2018, Netanyahu repeated baseless claims about the Iranian nuclear program and called Fakhrizadeh as the captain of Iran's nuclear program. “Remember that name,” Netanyahu said.

Israel has embraced a strategy of targeted assassinations against Iranian nuclear scientists in attempting to slow down Iran's nuclear program, which Tel Aviv claims is intended to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran has strongly rejected the accusation. It also signed a nuclear agreement with six world powers to ensure the world of the peaceful nature of its nuclear energy program.

However, President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018, and imposed the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in line with his “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran.

Iran has also signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — whose aim is to prevent the spread of nuclear arms and weapons technology — in July 1968 and ratified it in February 1970.

Currently, Iran's nuclear activities are subject to the most intensive inspections in the history of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA).

## Weapon used in nuclear scientist's assassination made in Israel: source tells Press TV

**TEHRAN (Press TV)** — The remains of the weapon used in the Friday assassination of senior nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh show that it was made in Israel, an informed source has told Press TV.

The source made the revelation on Monday, saying the weapon collected from the site of the terrorist act bears the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry.

Iran's Ministry of Intelligence also said it had obtained “new leads” on the identity of the perpetrators and that the information “will be publicized very soon.”

A former head of the Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, Fakhrizadeh was targeted in an attack involving at least one explosion and machinegun fire in the town of Absard near Tehran.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Sunday that the assassination bears all the hallmarks of the Israeli regime.

The history of Tel Aviv's sabotage targeting Iran's nuclear energy program is as old as the program itself.

Many observers believe Israel is not able to carry out such dangerous operations without the prior information and support of the United States which left a landmark nuclear deal with Iran in 2015.

## JCPOA Joint Commission to meet on Dec. 16

A meeting of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) will take place in Vienna on 16 December.

The Joint Commission will be chaired on behalf of EU High Representative Josep Borrell by the Secretary General of the European External Action Service Helga Maria Schmid and will be attended by the representatives of E3+2 countries (China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom) and Iran.

Participants will discuss ongoing work to preserve the JCPOA and how to ensure the full and effective implementation of the agreement by all sides, including in preparation of exchanges at ministerial level.

(Source: ceas.europa.eu)

# Top ECFR members call for Europe to bolster diplomacy on Iran

“The Trump administration's maximum pressure campaign against Iran has failed, with the unprecedented sanctions negatively impacting ordinary Iranians”

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — A number of senior members of the European Council for Foreign Relations have called for European countries to working with the United States' incoming administration to bolster the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

“The Trump administration's maximum pressure campaign against Iran has failed,” they said in a joint statement.

\*The statement was signed by Carl Bildt, former Swedish prime minister; Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the Munich Security Conference; Jean-David Levitte, former ambassador of France to the United States; Andrzej Olechowski, former Polish minister of foreign affairs; Alistair Burt, former UK minister of state for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and Javier Solana, former EU high representative for the common foreign and security policy.

“The election of Joe Biden presents an opening to strengthen transatlantic relations on critical security issues, including on Iran. Having worked so hard to preserve the Iran nuclear deal over the last four years, European governments and the EU must now unequivocally call on the incoming Biden administration and Iran to swiftly come back into full compliance with the deal. European actors should pro-actively, and in a coordinated fashion lay out a viable roadmap to support this effort,” the statement read.

“The Trump administration's maximum pressure campaign against Iran has failed, with the unprecedented sanctions negatively impacting ordinary Iranians. In response to reimposed U.S. sanction since 2018, Iran has increased its nuclear activities and continues to step away from its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA),” it said.

The signatories noted that the Trump administration's remaining term in office is likely to be turbulent with new measures being invoked specifically to complicate Bid-



Solana

Carl Bildt

Olechowski

Ischinger

Alistair Burt

Levitte

en's return to the JCPOA. “Recent reports also suggest there is a risk of further military tensions between the United States and Iran. An incoming Biden administration could come into office facing renewed escalation.”

It is critical for the stability of the Middle East that the United States and Iran urgently cool tensions and restore diplomatic engagement on a range of issues, the statement said, adding that this should start with rehabilitating the nuclear deal, which is a critical global non-proliferation agreement, and move towards the wider set of issues fuelling regional instability that is so detrimental to European interests.

According to the statement, in the coming weeks, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, (E3) should coordinate a joint public statement calling on the incoming Biden administration, once inaugurated, to formally announce its intent to re-join the JCPOA, urging the United States and Iran to agree on steps for mutual re-compliance and then to build on the agreement.

“European governments and the EU should

simultaneously intensify Congressional outreach in Washington in support for Biden's return to the agreement,” the statement said.

It added, “The E3 countries should press for a Joint Commission meeting of the JCPOA parties to be held prior to 20 January. The European Union's High Representative Josep Borrell, should, as chair of the Joint Commission, encourage the current members of the agreement to call for the return of the United States to the JCPOA and for the U.S. to reaffirm support for UN Security Council resolution 2231. The Joint Commission should also call on the United States to reissue waivers for civil nuclear cooperation (revoked under Trump) as soon as possible to facilitate Iran's roll-back of nuclear activities and the modernisation of Iran's Arak heavy water reactor.”

“Between now and 20 January, the E3 and the EU should convene a political director level meeting with Iran, to scope out a clear pathway for Iran to reverse its nuclear activities,” ECFR members wrote. “Europeans should stress to Iran that such steps will

**“Recent reports also suggest there is a risk of further military tensions between the United States and Iran. An incoming Biden administration could come into office facing renewed escalation.”**

## Intelligence minister: Many clues found about the scientist's assassination

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi says numerous clues have been found with regard to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a top nuclear scientist who was killed in a terrorist attack outside Tehran on Friday.

“Following the assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh, my colleagues in the Intelligence Ministry have started following up on this incident in all aspects and have so far obtained many clues,” Alavi said on the sidelines of the scientist's funeral procession on Monday.

“Due to its security aspects, it is not possible to inform the public until all its dimensions are clarified, but as soon as the dimensions of this issue are clarified, the dear nation of Iran will be informed,” he added.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear and defense scientist, was assassinated in a small city east of Tehran on November 27. In a message after the incident, Leader of the Islamic

Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on all relevant administrators to “investigate this crime and firmly prosecute its perpetrators and its commanders” and “to continue the martyr's scientific and technological efforts in all the sectors where he was active.”

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Monday that no hit man was involved in the assassination, adding that the distinguished figure was killed in a complicated operation that involved electronic equipment without any assassin at the scene.

“Unfortunately, the operation was a very complicated one. It took place with the employment of electronic equipment. No person (assassin) was present at the scene,” he explained.

**■ IRGC chief: ‘We determine the time, place and quality of the response’**

The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said Iran will soon determine the time and place of a

retaliation for the act of terror.

“Enemies must await our response,” Major General Hossein Salami said on the sidelines of the funeral procession. “We determine the time, place and quality of the response.”

President Hassan Rouhani has said that Israel was behind the assassination of the prominent scientist.

“Once again, the evil hands of global arrogance and their Zionist mercenaries, were stained with the blood of another Iranian, causing deep grief across the nation for losing a hard-working scientist,” Rouhani said in a message on Saturday.

Undoubtedly, he said, the horrific terrorist attack is due to the inability of Iran's enemies against the country's scientific movement and the honors and capabilities of the great nation of Iran.

“It also comes after the enemies' repeated defeats in the region and other political arenas, and the depth of their malice and resentment,” the president noted.

## Iran denies meeting between martyr Fakhrizadeh, IAEA officials

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has denied any meeting between nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and the officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

“Martyr Fakhrizadeh had not had any meetings or conversations with the former director general of Agency, inspectors or officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency and allegations made in this regard are baseless,” Kamalvandi said on Monday, according to Mehr.

He explained that the IAEA's inspections are performed on the basis of legal principles accepted in the agreements inked between Iran and the IAEA, and just rules of safeguards or protocols are carried out and there is nothing beyond that.

No unusual inspections have happened

nor will happen, Kamalvandi said.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, 59, was assassinated on Friday in a terrorist attack involving at least one explosion and small fire by a number of assailants in Absard city of Damavand County, Tehran Province.

Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade.

“Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice—with serious indications of Israeli role—shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators. Iran calls on int'l community—and especially the EU—to end their shameful double standards & condemn this act of state terror.” Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet, hours after the Friday attack.

Several Iranian officials and lawmakers have also called for an end to Iran's coop-

eration with the IAEA.

Kamalvandi said if a new decision is taken by the Iranian Parliament and high-ranking officials in this regard, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran will implement it.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the dimensions of measures taken by the enemies of the Islamic Republic in various arenas, saying, “The enemies of the country have been defeated by the Islamic Revolution in the field of hard and soft power, and with these inhumane and brutal actions, they are trying to target technology, knowledge and security of our country.”

He added when the Zionists came to the conclusion that they cannot prevent Iran's nuclear program and technological progress, they resorted to assassinate the country's nuclear scientist Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had mentioned Fakhrizadeh in a 2018

presentation on the alleged atomic archive of Iran that Israel claims it stole from a warehouse in southern Tehran.

Netanyahu said at the time that he identified Fakhrizadeh as the head scientist in Iran's nuclear program, and asked people to “remember that name”.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said the U.S. and Israeli regimes are responsible for the assassination.

“The cowardly assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh — with serious indications of Israeli responsibility in it — is another desperate attempt to wreak havoc on our region as well as to disrupt Iran's scientific and technological development,” Takht Ravanchi wrote in a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and President of UN Security Council Inga Rhonda King on Friday.

## Israel assassinated Fakhrizadeh with U.S. green light: American professor

“Netanyahu wants to take every opportunity to damage Iranian defensive capabilities,” George Washington University professor says

**1 →** He has been leading Trump and Kushner by the nose and he is taking advantage of this unique opportunity in the rest of the time Trump is in office. Trump and Netanyahu have another goal. Make reconciliation between Iran and the United States almost impossible after Biden takes office. Make Iran more hostile and angry making even the start of negotiations ever more difficult. They have poisoned Biden's presidency in every way they can.

**■** What were the reasons for the assassination at this time?

A: Again, it is before Trump leaves office. Trump even wanted to attack Iran but was persuaded not to by his advisors. So he was clearly open to other means. This terror attack was a substitute for a direct military attack on Iran. Now their hope is that Iran retaliates while Trump is in office. Then attacking Iran would be more acceptable. I advise Iran

against any retaliation that can be traced to them.

**■** Netanyahu recently visited Saudi Arabia and Pompeo also visited the region. What can these events have to do with the assassination?

A: I think it was for several reasons. They wanted to discuss what would be the best action against Iran. And they wanted to welcome MBS to their club. Let him participate. This way he could see the benefits of relations with Israel. So Israel-Saudi relations could be nurtured for the future.

**■** In vague and, of course, meaningful statements, Netanyahu stated that he had done important works in recent days, which he apologized for mentioning. If Israel is behind the terror, it seems he is sending a message to the incoming Biden administration that Israel will go its own way, regardless of the U.S. government's approach to Iran's

**Professor Hossein Askari says Netanyahu and Trump want to “make reconciliation between Iran and the United States almost impossible after Biden takes office” and “they have poisoned Biden's presidency in every way they can.”**

nuclear program. What is your assessment?

A: Absolutely. Israel will do whatever it wants. But now Israel has been laying the groundwork to do what it wants even with Biden in office. Let's face it Israel has determined much of America's foreign policy in the Middle East. It is sad but true. I am afraid that the United States will pay a heavy price in the future. There will be blowback and at the end Americans will little by little turn against Israel. It may take years or even decades, but it will happen.

**■** Trump reacted to the Fakhrizadeh assassination by republishing a tweet by an Israeli journalist in which the journalist had said Mossad had been monitoring Fakhrizadeh for years to assassinate him. The tweet seems to show cooperation between Israel and the United States in carrying out the assassination. What is your assessment?

A: Yes, I am almost sure of it. America's intelligence services are invaluable to Israel. The Trump-Netanyahu cooperation are as close as you can get. Netanyahu would want to make sure that this fits Trump's current and future political agenda. So he would do nothing like this without a U.S. cooperation and green light.



# Iran’s strategic response

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — In a calibrated policy that was accelerated following the assassination of prominent nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Iranian lawmakers have moved to respond to the assassination by finalizing a bill that would rekindle the all-but-dormant Iranian nuclear program.

Fakhrizadeh was assassinated in an attack that was widely attributed to Israel. The attack took place on Friday at 14:30 in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. They vowed take revenge against it in due time. While Israeli officials kept silent about the assassination, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Tel Aviv was behind the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

But at the same time Rouhani described the terror attack as a trap set by Israel for Iran. “All think tanks and all enemies of Iran should know well that the Iranian nation and the country’s authorities are more courageous and Zealous than to let this criminal act go unanswered. The relevant authorities will respond to this crime at the proper time,” Rouhani was quoted by state news agency IRNA as saying on Saturday morning, a day after the assassination.

He added, “The Iranian nation is wiser and smarter than to fall in the trap of the Zionists (Israel). They are after chaos and sedition. They should understand that we know their plans and they will not achieve their ominous goals.”

With Iranian lawmakers putting forward a bill to lift sanctions against the country, Iran seems to be moving in the direction of giving a strategic response to Israel by using non-military tools in its toolbox. Since early November, the lawmakers have moved to review a step-by-step strategy to respond to the measures that the Trump administration has adopted against Iran over the past few years. The assassination of the nuclear scientist has only accelerated this strategy which aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran.

The strategy is being pursued through a



bill called “strategic action to lift sanctions.” The bill is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran and was put forward by the lawmakers in early November. It aims to force the United States into lifting sanctions on Iran by doubling down on nuclear activities.

If passed, the bill would compel the government to considerably increase nuclear activities such as increasing uranium enrichment level to 20% and installing more advanced centrifuges.

The bill also requires the government to suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) three months after the ratification of it if the parties to the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers failed to uphold their obligations under the JCPOA.

Over the last few weeks, the lawmakers have been regularly holding meetings to discuss the details of the bill. The assassination of Fakhrizadeh has only intensified these meetings, especially after the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei called on all authorities to continue the scientific works of the late scientist.

The Parliament is expected to hold intensive sessions on the bill on Wednesday,

according to Hossein Ali Haji Deligani, a member of the Parliament’s presiding board, who said that the bill amounts to an ultimatum to the West. “With this bill, the Islamic Consultative Assembly seeks to act in such a way as to issue an ultimatum to Western countries to lift sanctions and to materialize what is the right of the Iranian people in the Iranian nuclear industry,” Haji Deligani told Tasnim news agency.

The lawmaker also said that the Parliament will hold an extraordinary session on Wednesday to discuss the bill in detail.

Earlier on Sunday, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the lawmakers have discussed the bill and that it will be finalized this week.

“This plan will strengthen the industry and the practical achievements of nuclear scientists and pave the way for Iran to overcome sanctions. This law, along with the reactions of other relevant agencies, in addition to reviving Iran’s nuclear industry, creates deterrence against the enemy and security for the people,” Ghalibaf said.

Pundits believe that resuming nuclear activities within this bill can be one of Iran’s options to give an effective response to the assassination of Fakhrizadeh, because increasing uranium enrichment to 20% really terrifies Israel, according to Amir Mousavi,

an expert on the West Asia region.

“Being hit with missiles is more tolerable to Israel than to have Iran increase uranium enrichment level to 20%. Israel would accept Haifa being hit with missiles but the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) does not stop,” Amir Mousavi told the Tehran Times.

It is because the Additional Protocol has imposed strict commitments on Iran that are unique and serve Israel’s interest, he added.

Israelis, for their part, seem to be worried about Iran’s self-restraint whose meaning they know better than anyone else. This concerns are obvious among Israeli political and military circles. Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin, the former Israeli army intelligence chief, said on Sunday that Iran’s move to accelerate the nuclear program is a “strategic reaction”.

Speaking at a Media Central virtual press event, Yadlin, who is the executive director of the Institute for National Security Studies, claimed that Iran may wait to react to the assassination of Fakhrizadeh with any kind of military force until the end of the Trump era, according to the Jerusalem Post. However, Yadlin said that Iran may respond by resuming its nuclear program. The former intelligence chief pointed out that Iran might just as likely “react in accelerating the nuclear program. The overt one. They have already done it since May 2019. They can enrich more [uranium], they can enrich [it] to a higher level, they can install advanced centrifuges. This would be a strategic reaction or step.”

Iran has long waited to calibrate its response to Israeli-American policies against it. This patience seems to have yielded a response that would considerably change the country’s nuclear policy. Mousavi said the Iranians took a courageous step toward resuming Iran’s nuclear program.

The expert also praised the Parliament’s move, calling it a “crushing” response to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

“The Parliament’s move is courageous, strong, and crushing. I think the bill, if passed and finalized, would come over the Zionists like a lightning strike,” Mousavi remarked.

## Assassination of Fakhrizadeh against international law: Chinese Daily

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The assassination of prominent Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh goes against international law and norms, China Daily said in an editorial on Sunday.

“The assassination not only raises serious questions about the moral standing of the perpetrators. It is against international laws and norms and thus criminal. That may partly be why nobody has claimed responsibility for it,” the newspaper said, adding that Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has talked about “serious indications” of an Israeli role in what he described as an act of “state terror.”

“Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice—with serious indications of Israeli role—shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators. Iran calls on int’l community—and especially EU—to end their shameful double standards & condemn this act of state terror,” the chief Iranian diplomat said in a tweet on Friday, hours after Fakhrizadeh was assassinated in a suburb of Tehran.

On Friday at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack while his bodyguards were severely injured. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade.



China Daily said there is speculation that this attack could be part of a concerted attempt to preempt any attempt to revive a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

“Fakhrizadeh had been on Israel’s blacklist for a while. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu famously told a news conference to remember his name. And neither the present leader of Israel nor that of the United States wants to see a new U.S. administration rejoin the nuclear deal, from which the U.S. withdrew in 2018,” the Chinese newspaper wrote. “Only that everything remains speculation with no

smoking-gun evidence.”

It added, “Given the tricky nature of the murder and its unusual potential political and security consequences, very likely the responsibility will go unclaimed, and the matter will remain a mystery, like in the Shahriari case.”

The Chinese newspaper said Iran might respond to the assassination of Fakhrizadeh by launching a retaliatory attack, a move that would “lend further munition for the anti-Iran hawks in Washington who would spare no effort to shoot down any effort to ‘appease’ Tehran.”

It also called on Iran and the United States to exercise restraint because the current situation is harmful to both.

“If the assassination was indeed driven by an intention to prevent Washington and Tehran from engaging in any meaningful, constructive communication, the two parties should do their best to avoid such a pitfall. The status quo of Iran-U.S. relations is toxic and harmful to both. Since President-elect Joe Biden has indicated a willingness for a reset in relations, even for rejoining the nuclear deal, it is important for both sides to work to foster some positive momentum,” China Daily said.

It added that the assassination of Fakhrizadeh is unlikely to stop Iran’s nuclear program.

“The perpetrators should also know assassinations didn’t stop Iran’s nuclear program in the past decade, and very likely won’t do it now,” the newspaper said.

## Switzerland condemns assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis has denounced the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh as an “act of violence,” calling on all parties to avoid further acts of violence.

“First of all, I would like to condemn any act of violence including the assassination [of Fakhrizadeh], and we call upon all parties to refrain from any further act of violence,” the chief Swiss diplomat told the Israeli channel Kan news.

Cassis also called for a de-escalation of tensions in the region and expressed readiness to provide help in this regard.

“Every effort to deescalate the violence in this situation should be supported and we stand ready to help supporting these acts,” the Swiss foreign minister said.

On Friday at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack while his bodyguards were severely injured. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Friday that the attack was carried out with “serious indications of Israeli role”.

Iranian officials also vowed to take revenge against Israel while underlining that they

will not fall in the trap of Israel.

“All think tanks and all enemies of Iran should know well that the Iranian nation and the country’s authorities are more courageous and Zealous than to let this criminal act go unanswered. The relevant authorities will respond to this crime at the proper time,” Rouhani was quoted by state news agency IRNA as saying on Saturday morning.

But Rouhani also said that Iran will not fall in the “trap” of the enemies.

“The Iranian nation is wiser and smarter than to fall in the trap of the Zionists (Israel). They are after chaos and sedition. They should understand that we know their plans and they will not achieve their ominous goals,” the Iranian president said.

**■ Oman, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, UAE, China condemn Fakhrizadeh assassination**

Swiss foreign minister was not the only foreign official who condemned the assassination Fakhrizadeh. Officials from other countries also denounced the terrorist attack on the Iranian scientist. Zarif received several phone calls from his counterparts in the region, including the foreign ministers of Oman, Azerbaijan, and Iraq.

Turkey, Jordan, the European Union, and the United Arab Emirates also issued statements condemning the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said in a statement that “emanating from its deep conviction on

the need to pursue all means for stability in the region, it condemns the heinous assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, which could further fuel conflict in the region,” according to Emirati state news agency WAM. “Given the current situation in the region, the UAE calls upon all parties to exercise maximum degrees of self-restraint to avoid dragging the region into new levels of instability and threat to peace,” the statement added.

The European Union called the assassination of the Iranian scientist “a criminal act” that goes against human rights.

“On 27 November 2020 in Absard, Iran, an Iranian government official and, according to reports, 1 of his bodyguards, were killed in a series of violent attacks. This is a criminal act and runs counter to the principle of respect for human rights the EU stands for,” the spokesperson for High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy said in a statement on Saturday.

Turkey’s Foreign Ministry denounced the “heinous murder” of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. “We are saddened by the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh as a result of an armed attack on 27 November in Tehran. We condemn this heinous murder and extend our condolences to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the family of the deceased,” the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday. “Turkey is against all attempts aiming at undermining peace and tranquility in the region as well as terrorism in all its



forms regardless of its perpetrator or target.”

China and Russia also condemned the attack on the Iranian scientist. Chairman of the State Duma’s Foreign Affairs Committee Leonid Slutsky described the attack as “terrorist.”

“The murder of Iranian physicist Fakhrizadeh is a terrorist attack aimed at new provocation against Tehran. It’s important to prevent the escalation of tensions in the region,” the Russian lawmaker said in a tweet.

“Russia condemns this killing, no matter who carried it out, and expresses deep condolences to Iran and Fakhrizadeh’s relatives,” Slutsky added.

Hua Chunying, the spokesperson of China’s Foreign Ministry, condemned on Monday the assassination of Fakhrizadeh, saying the assassination of the prominent Iranian nuclear scientist shocked China.

Jordan also condemned the assassination, calling for collective efforts to avoid an escalation in tensions in the region.

## SPORTS

### Persepolis down Shahr Khodro: IPL

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis defeated Shahr Khodro 3-0 in Iran Professional League (IPL) here at the Azadi Stadium on Monday.

The team could have won with more goal but their strikers lacked the cutting edge.

Persepolis captain Jalal opened the scoring in the 41st minute with a header from the center of the box following a cross from Saeid Aghaei.

Ahmad Nourollahi made it 2-0 in the 85th minute and Milad Sarlak scored Persepolis’ third goal with one minute remaining.

Persepolis striker Arman Ramezani missed two chances and Bashar Resan also failed to open an empty goal in the second half.

IPL leader Gol Gohar earned a late away win in Tabriz, beating Machine Sazi 1-0 thank to a penalty from Ahmad Zenderouh in the 82nd minute.

In Ahvaz, Foolad and Aluminum played out a goalless draw.

On Tuesday, Esteghlal are scheduled to meet Paykan, Nassaji face Naft Masjed Soleyman, Sanat naft Abadan play Zob Ahan and Sepahan host Saipa.

Gol Gohar sit top with 10 points from four matches, followed by Persepolis with eight points.



### Yahya Golmohammadi satisfied with his team’s performance

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi is satisfied with his team’s performance against Shahr Khodro.

The Reds defeated Shahr Khodro 3-0 in Iran Professional League (IPL) matchday 4 at the Azadi Stadium on Monday.

“We could have defeated Shahr Khodro with more goals but our strikers missed their chances,” Golmohammadi said in the post-match news conference.

Persepolis forward Arman Ramezani missed two golden chances in this match but Golmohammadi says he is satisfied with the player’s performance.

“Arman has recently joined us and needs more time. He is very strong in aerial duels and can play better with more trainings,” he added.

Golmohammadi also paid tribute to Argentine legendary player Diego Maradona who died last week.

### Syria stun Iran in FIBA Asia Cup qualifier

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran basketball team unbelievably lost to Syria in the second window of the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 qualifiers on Monday.

The Persians, who had humiliated the Syrian team 94-48 in last year’s February, lost 77-70 to the team in Doha, Qatar in Group E.

George Earl Kell III had an impactful game for Syria, doing a little bit of everything to end up with 34 points, 8 rebounds, and 4 assists. Mohammad Jamshidi scored 13 points for Iran.

Iran started the second window with a 71-64 win over Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Mehran Shahintab’s team will have to wait for the third and final window, where they will meet Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

There are 24 teams competing in the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers. Once the three windows of the Qualifiers conclude, the top two teams in each group will qualify directly to Asia Cup 2021. The six last-placed teams in each group are eliminated.

Meanwhile, the six third-placed teams in each group will then play in a separate qualifying tournament. Teams will be placed into two different groups of three teams. The top two teams of those respective groups will then lock in their spots at Asia Cup 2021, completing the 16-team roster who will also compete in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers.

### Nahid Biyarjomandi’s positive impact on Iran’s rugby

Iran Rugby Federation Head of Women’s Rugby Development Nahid Biyarjomandi has had a positive impact on her homeland’s sport.

Biyarjomandi founded the first women’s rugby club in Iran and is an Unstoppable and her involvement in World Rugby’s global ‘Try And Stop Us’ campaign has had a positive impact in her homeland.

Iran has been an associate member of World Rugby since 2013 and is a full member of Asia Rugby.

Across 36 surveyed markets, there were more than 140 million female rugby fans in 2019, which marks a 29 per cent increase since 2018, and Iran has been at the forefront of driving women’s rugby interest, with more women playing the sport than men.

The number of registered players in Iran increased by 20 per cent from 10,000 to 12,000 between 2019-20 and more than 7,000 of those are female.

Hassan Mirzaaghabaie, President Iran Rugby President, said: “Iran Rugby has gone through difficult conditions to reach today. So at this point, I would like to thank the people who have helped Iran move forward in the development of rugby in Asia.

(Source: Asiarugby.com)

### Cheick Diabate out for three weeks

**Tasnim**— Esteghlal forward Cheick Diabate will be sidelined for three weeks with a strained calf muscle.

The Malian suffered the left foot injury in Esteghlal’s training session on Sunday.

Esteghlal are the favorites to win Iran Professional League (IPL) after eight years and it could be a big blow for the team.

The Blues will play Paykan on Tuesday in Matchweek 4 of the IPL in Tehran.

Esteghlal sit third in the table with six points from three matches.



## TEDPIX gains 38,000 points on Monday

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 38,656 points to 1.465 million on Monday.

Over 15.35 billion securities worth 181.352 trillion rials (about \$4.317 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.



The first market's index gained 30,165 points and the second market's index rose 71,323 points.

The index had stood at 1.345 million points at the end of the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

## Exports from mining sector exceeds \$3b in 7 months

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's exports from mining industry stood at \$3.049 billion in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Exports from this sector accounted for over 16 percent of the country's non-oil exports during the seven-month period.

As previously announced by the former acting minister of industry, mining and trade, reaching the minerals export of \$10.5 billion is planned for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

Making the remarks during a meeting with the board members of Iran Mine House in early June, Hossein Modarres Khiaabani had said the minerals and mining projects constitute the main part of the 200 major industrial, mining, and trade projects, which are planned to be inaugurated across the country by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (begins on March 20, 2021).

According to Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi, the said projects are going to be implemented under a new program called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports".

As reported, some 1.69 quadrillion rials (about \$40.23 billion) has been invested in the mentioned projects that are going to create job opportunities for 41,000 people.

In terms of the number of projects, Kerman Province with 26 projects and in terms of the volume of investment, Khuzestan Province with nearly 360 trillion rials (about \$8.57 billion) have the largest share of the said projects in the country, Zarandi said.

He noted that the said projects, which are characterized by factors like completing the industry's value chain, reducing imports, being export-oriented, using technology, and creating jobs, have been selected as national projects.

Currently, there are 12,500 projects with physical progress of over 60 percent across the country, of which 6,000 are related to leading and prioritized industries, according to the official.

In the current Iranian calendar year which has been named the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Seyed Ali Khamenei, the government is determined to support domestic production and promote the country's non-oil exports.

The "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports" program has been defined by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry in line with the government's new strategies for developing the country's infrastructure in order to realize the "Surge in Production" motto.

The spokesman of IMIDRO has announced that investment making in the country's mining sector has increased 60 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Mohammad Sepehr has put the investment made in the mining and mineral sector last year at \$3.2 billion, showing a considerable 60 percent growth as compared to a year earlier.

Iran's investment in this sector increased last year despite tough U.S. sanctions and also the spread of the coronavirus in the country, the official noted.

He further underscored that most mining and mineral projects were put into operation but the official inauguration of some of these mining projects was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The official further announced that mining and mineral projects worth \$2.2 billion would be inaugurated in the current year, which is named the year of "Surge in Production."

In early June, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) and IMIDRO for expansion of the country's mining sector.

The MOU was signed by Iran's Deputy Industry Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili, GSI Head Alireza Shahidi and IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour during a meeting between the acting minister of industry, mining and trade and the representatives of the country's mining sector.

Development of cooperation in the fields of exploration, extraction and processing of minerals, utilization of capacities, experiences and abilities of each sector, and attracting more investment from the country's private sector and cooperatives in this industry were reported to be some of the main goals of the signed agreement.

Also, the implementation of exploration projects by Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran and the formation of a joint committee whose task is to review the proposed exploration projects were also among the important subjects mentioned in the MOU.

Back in April, Esmaili 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 official said.

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

# Transit of commodities via railway up 220% in H1

**1 →** "We should make an essential improvement in our logistics power to gain our share of transit", Eslami has emphasized.

As the RAI head has said, by completing rail infrastructures like Khaf-Herat railway, Iran would be able to access transit markets with over 35 million tons of annual capacity.

Rasouli underlined Iran's geopolitical and strategic position which has turned

the country into a vital gateway for regional and international trade and said: "We must make the most of this position and these capacities."

We only have the capacity to transit 18 million tons of goods in the region, a large part of which is transported through sea, he said, adding: "With the development of rail infrastructure, including the Khaf-Herat, Chabahar-Zahedan and Shalamcheh-Basra



railway projects, we will access a market of 35 million tons in the region and we must step up our efforts to increase the share of rail transportation in transit."

"The Khaf-Herat line has a transit po-

tential of nearly two million tons; with the expansion of the rail network in Afghanistan, this capacity will definitely increase exponentially and we can reach much larger markets," Rasouli said.

## 45 idle industrial units to be revived in Khuzestan by Mar. 2021

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The head of Industry, Mining, and Trade Department of Khuzestan Province, in southwest of Iran, announced that 45 idle industrial units are planned to return to the production cycle by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Amir-Hossein Nazari said that 36 out of the mentioned 45 industrial units are located in the industrial parks of the province.

Khuzestan is one of the centers of oil, gas and petrochemical production, which is why large and parent companies are active in this province.

As the acting head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has announced, 819 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21).

Asghar Mosaheb said that reviving the mentioned units has created jobs for 14,458 persons.

The official also announced that ISIPO plans to revive 2,000 idle industrial units throughout the country by the end of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2021).

He said the targeted figure for the mentioned seven-month period was 1,500 units, but the figure was increased in line with the objectives of "Surge in Production", which is the motto of this year.

Preventing the inactive status of the industrial units is another major plan of ISIPO, the official reiterated and mentioned lack of liquidity, problems in terms of supplying raw materials and machinery, and absence of market as the



main reasons making the units inactive.

ISIPO's Previous Head Mohsen Salehinia has said that providing liquidity is the main issue for many of the country's production units, so based on the arrangements made, these units can receive part of their needed liquidity through bank facilities.

"Currently, the share of the country's production and industrial units in receiving bank facilities is about 31 percent and it is necessary to allocate a larger share of banking facilities to the country's production and industry," he added.

Given the position of production in the country's economy and employment, and the fact that production units are facing lack of liquidity to supply raw materials and equipment, it is necessary to increase their share of bank facilities up to

## Iran's 7-month export to Syria stands at \$73m

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran export-

ed commodities worth \$73 million to Syria during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), according to an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Farzad Piltan, the director-general of TPO's Office of Arabian and African Countries, put the value of Iran's imports from Syria at \$10 million in the seven-month period.

The official said that Iran-Syria trade stood at \$170 million in the past Iranian calendar year, of which the share of Iran's export was \$160 million, while that of Syria was \$10 million.

He named auto parts, medicine, steel ingots, pipes and profiles, gas turbine parts,



infant formula, pistachios, sanitary valves, and yeasts as the major products Iran exports to Syria, and phosphate, olive oil, vegetable, nuts, and fabrics as the main imported items.

In mid-October, the Chairman of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashe announced the official inauguration of the Iranian trade center in

Damascus.

"This trade center has been opened with the aim of realizing the goal for \$1 billion of annual exports to Syria," Kashefi said at the time.

The two countries have been exchanging numerous trade delegations in the past few months and Iranian private companies are investing in different areas like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction projects in Syria.

In a meeting with the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, in mid-October, Syrian Ambassador to Tehran Adnan Hassan Mahmoud pointed to the two countries' strong will

for strengthening economic and industrial relations, both in public and private sectors and said: "We make every effort to neutralize the impact of sanctions on the economies of the two countries and we will strengthen trade relations between the two sides."

Shafeie, for his part, stressed the significance of signing a free trade agreement between the two sides.

"With the signing of a free trade agreement between Iran and Syria, there will be good days in trade between the two countries," the ICCIMA head stated.

Referring to the Iranian Trade Center in Damascus, he said: "This trade center is one of the largest centers of Iranian trade abroad, which can play an important role in the development of trade between the two countries."

## IMIDRO investing \$7m on infrastructure development in mines of Bushehr

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) is making 300 billion rials (about \$7.14 million) of investment for the development of infrastructures in the mines of southwestern Bushehr Province, according to a provincial official.

Referring to the development of the infrastructure of the mines of the province in terms of road building and electricity supplying, Hossein Hosseini, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said IMIDRO has four projects under implementation in the province in this regard.

Last week, the director of IMIDRO's plan for building necessary infrastructure in large mines and mining areas said the necessary infrastructure will be provided for 30 mines across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

"The program for building the necessary infrastructure for the country's mines, including electricity supply and constructing access roads, has been defined in the form of six projects and will be implemented this year and the



next year," Darioush Divdideh stated.

According to Divdideh, the mentioned mines are located in South Khorasan, Yazd, Semnan, West Azarbaijan, Zanjan, and Qazvin provinces.

With the implementation of this plan, the necessary infrastructure will be provided for the development of 70 mines in the country, he said.

## Trade between Iran, Azerbaijan up 8% via Bileh Savar border

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Trade between Iran and Azerbai-

jan through Bileh Savar border crossing has risen eight percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), the chairman of Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Chamber of Commerce announced.

Underlining trade relations between the two countries, Hossein Pir-Moazen said, "Perhaps the only country with which we were able to maintain our economic relations during the coronavirus pandemic was Azerbaijan. So that our joint customs were never closed. While Bileh Savar and Astara

customs were not closed, they also faced an increase in export capacity."

Now the customs are open 24 hours a day and exports are done bilaterally, he stated.

In a telephone conversation in late June, Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev had explored the ways for the expansion of bilateral economic relationship between the two countries amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Dehpasand, who is also the Iranian chairman of the joint economic committee of the two counties, said, "I hope that with the help

of bilateral cooperation, we will be able to witness the expansion and strengthening of economic relations between Iran and Azerbaijan."

The minister also referred to the building of a joint industrial park near the border of the two countries and joint projects of North-South Corridor which is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road routes for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

A preliminary agreement on the establishment of a joint Iranian-Azerbaijani industrial park was reached in 2019. Along with



a joint industrial park, the two countries will also set up a joint logistics center in Iran's Ardebil Province.



# British scholar says Israel assassinated Fakhrizadeh in full coordination with U.S. and S. Arabia

“Europe’s response to terror of Iranian scientist sickening”

By Amir Muhammad Esmaili

**TEHRAN** – A British scholar believes that the assassination of Iranian scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, on November 27 was carried out by Israel in full coordination with the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Professor Rodney Shakespeare, a renowned political commentator and visiting professor of binary economics at Trisakti University, also lambasts the Europeans for their hypocrisy in the face of the Zionist regime and United States' behavior.

“European hypocrisy is sickening. All the time Europe shows creepy-crawly sycophancy to Israel and a complete unwillingness to ever stand up to the outrageous bullying of the USA,” Shakespeare, also a co-founder of the Global Justice Movement, tells the Tehran Times.

The following is the text of the interview:   
■ Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a senior Iranian expert specialized in nuclear technology, was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon. What is your take on this?

A: This cowardly assassination was done by Israel. Occupying and annexing the land of others whilst carrying out a creeping genocide in Gaza.

Israel has always wanted a war; Saudi Arabia has always wanted a war, and Trump has always wanted a war. But they lack an



excuse for starting one. So a dirty, slimy killing is done in order to goad Iran into a response which could then be used to justify an attack.

If there is no response from Iran then it is certain that there will be some sort of (Mossad-organised) false flag incident for which Iran will be blamed thereby enabling Israel, Saudi, and the USA to attack Iran.

However, it is also certain that neither Israel nor Saudi Arabia (two bully-boy regimes) will attack Iran by themselves – they will want to be sure that the USA is also involved.

At present, only one thing restrains an attack on Iran and that is the certainty that, if it happens, a large part of West Asia (particularly America's brutal, autocratic allies)

will go up in flames.

■ Israeli media have announced that the plan for the assassination failed last year. They also claimed that the name of Fakhrizadeh had been released to Israeli spy agency Mossad by the United Nations. What do you think?

A: Israel did it; Saudi connived at it -- and Trump is delighted. He wants war so that he can pose as a Great President who (allegedly) is keeping America safe and so have an excuse to remain in the White House.

(NB. Trump's legal campaign to overthrow the recent American election has a great weakness – lack of time to actually get the evidence particularly in relation to the Dominion computers. A war would give him more time to fight the legal cases.)

■ Iran is urging the international community - especially the EU- to end their shameful double standards and condemn this act of state terror. How do you think the international community should react to this crime?

A: European hypocrisy is sickening. All the time Europe shows creepy-crawly sycophancy to Israel and a complete unwillingness to ever stand up to the outrageous bullying of the USA.

■ How do you think Iran should respond?

A: My feeling is that Israel and Saudi see the situation as their last chance for war so, even if Iran makes no open response, they will still be bent on precipitating war in some way.

## Yemenis have become source of pride and inspiration for Arabs: Iraqi analyst

1 → This cannot be overlooked, especially this attack came at the stage of presidential transition in the U.S. and a shift in American policies.

There are two policies in the U.S. that may differ relatively in terms of dealing with the war in Yemen; Trump supports Riyadh and the Saudi-led coalition as he provided them with experts, weapons, and even pilots, while Biden's policy tends to refuse U.S. meddling in Yemen.

Biden has pledged not to supply arms to Saudi Arabia and reduce U.S. support for the ongoing war in Yemen to the lowest levels.

This strike targeted the Saudi economic artery as Aramco represents a great symbol for the Saudi kingdom; and on the ground the attack affected oil exports and navigation in the Red Sea.

This is why we have seen global oil prices rise to a record level, and we can measure the effectiveness and significance of this strike by observing the Saudi reaction, as it lodged a complaint in the Security Council and considered the strike a threat to global navigation in the region.

2 - Do you think that the Saudi-led war has made a significant achievement in Yemen?

Absolutely there is no achievement for the Saudi-led coalition on Yemeni territory. After nearly six years of a fierce war in which all types of weapons, even internationally prohibited ones, were used by an army that was considered one of the advanced armies in the world in terms of arms, training, possession of modern technologies, cooperation with American and British advisors and even the Israelis who contribute directly to the war, Saudis failed to undermine Ansarullah's influence in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia defined its political goals to restore what they call "Yemeni legitimacy" and to return the ousted Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, while their military goal is intended to eliminate the Houthis group to secure the borders of the Saudi kingdom in the south.

Today the Saudi government faces a large budget deficit and high prices of fuel and ser-

vices. During the first nine months of 2020, the deficit reached 184.11 billion (Saudi) riyals, or approximately \$ 49.11 billion.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Saudi Arabia spent huge sums of money to buy weapons to continue the war on Yemen. The U.S. Security Assistance Monitor indicates that Saudi Arabia has spent 82 billion dollars on arms purchase from the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, Spain, and Italy, which includes the purchase of weapons, ammunition as well as military training personnel, making Saudi Arabia the third in the world in terms of arms spending after China and the U.S.

The Washington Institute for Middle East Studies also stated in a report that Saudi Arabia spends five to six billion dollars monthly in the war on Yemen.

The question is that what has it achieved throughout this war? The answer is a total failure! Saudi Arabia could not return what it calls legitimacy to the country and failed to undermine the Houthis; on the contrary, the result is that the Houthis have increased their military strength and are targeting new targets inside Saudi Arabia after their combat capabilities developed, especially missiles and drones, as on the ground they are achieving great victories.

Now Saudi Arabia seeks solutions and mediators to lift the siege and create a buffer zone between its borders and the Houthis in the southern provinces.

3- How do you describe the Yemeni resistance struggle?

Indeed, Yemenis have become a source of pride and inspiration for Arabs and Muslims because of their amazing achievements that must be studied in institutes and universities around the world.

So we should take into account that Yemen is originally a poor country with an agricultural economy that does not have mineral resources and its people have been living in an enclosed space and preoccupied with domestic wars.

All of this has made the Yemeni citizen a man who is stubborn to be broken. He is strong and a fighter who does not accept humiliation, subservience, and never compromises on his principles.

This was made under a sincere, faithful, wise leadership who never gives up to the forces of global arrogant powers. All this is because of an Islamic doctrine molded in the form of a Hussaini faith which loves martyrdom for the sake of truth. The Yemeni leadership has made all its efforts in forming the resistant Yemeni man.

4- How do you see Saudi policies and performance in terms of human rights in Yemen?

Saudi Arabia is committing crimes that endanger humanity in Yemen and violate human rights blatantly through brutal aggression and the cruel siege that it imposes on Yemenis, preventing them to get access to medicine, food, and oil products. Attempts have been made to starve the Yemeni people.

The Saudi-led coalition, amid the silence of global community and international organizations and the negligence or even the Islamic and Arab countries, commits war crimes after it bribed regimes and organizations to support this obvious injustice. The world is witnessing innocent citizens who face death because of daily bombing operations, starvation, and diseases.

It is time for the global community to stand in face of these crimes while the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, warned some days ago about the worst famine in Yemen that may threaten

the lives of millions of people for decades.

5- It is said that after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has adopted the approach of Samuel Huntington (who theorized the clash of civilizations), to perpetuate conflict and create a permanent imaginary enemy, this time Muslims replacing the Soviets. This is made to portray Muslims as threat to the existence and national security of Americans. What is your analysis?

The U.S. is resorting to the fourth generation of wars that means raising domestic conflicts and distracting Islamic nations by creating a crisis inside to pave the way for division and fragmentation.

The role of America and Israel is to monitor and sell weapons and then reap the fruits without effort or fatigue, and this strategy has been applied in the Arab East and the Arabian Peninsula, so Arab human and financial capacities have been exhausted in futile wars that have brought nothing except destruction and devastation to the region.

If this money had been spent on sustainable development in these countries and investment in training Arab experts and scientists, we would have been on the list of advanced countries.

Countries that have financial power, such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, are fueling strife and conflicts in all Arab countries and igniting wars all around the Islamic world, from Iraq to Syria, Libya, Yemen, Ethiopia, and Morocco.

All of these wars are under U.S. supervision, and to serve Israel's security in the region. If Washington decides to end the war in Yemen, the Saudis won't dare to oppose and they won't prolong it more; but Yemen has all characteristics to be on the American blacklist, including the growth of the Islamic faith, opposition to American hegemony, involvement in the axis of resistance, and the adoption of anti-American and Israeli slogans and its important geographical location. All these and other factors have convinced the Americans that Yemen is going to be a potential power that may challenge Israel and its allies in the (Persian) Gulf countries.

**“Indeed, Yemenis have become a source of pride and inspiration for Arabs and Muslims because of their amazing achievements that must be studied in institutes and universities around the world.”**

## Trump — the most Israeli friendly president ever

By John Steppling

I think the first thing to talk about is timing. I mean there are several things going on simultaneously here. One is that Netanyahu is finally facing a trial day. His trial begins very soon in a week or so. The second thing is of course the Trump is a lame-duck president. And so he only has two months left before Biden takes over.

So, it's both timings on the part of Netanyahu and its timing on the part of Trump. I mean it's dangerous in a sense, but Pompeo was part of this alleged visit to Saudi Arabia. Netanyahu, Pompeo met the Mad Prince in some coastal city or other.

Now, Netanyahu would already meet with the UAE and clandestinely, Israel has worked for many years, decades with the Arab monarchs, Persian Gulf States. So none of this is new. Part of this is symbolic, but the worrisome part of it is that there were reports that Trump had wanted to have an actual war with Iran before he left office.

And, you know, his advisor said: “No, Donald, you can't do that.” That's not a wise decision. But Pompeo is quite mad. I can't believe I'm saying it to people. I mean he's really a xenophobe, a religious zealot, an extremist Dominionist Christian.

You know he expects the Rapture any day now and he's a former head of the CIA. So anything is possible with Pompeo. And he's also trying to make a name for himself before Trump leaves office, and because apparently, they're reports that Pompeo wants to run on the Republican ticket for the next



presidential election, which he has absolutely no possibility of doing, but, you know, that's beside the point.

So, Netanyahu is doing this at this moment just because he's doing anything he can to kind of muddy the climate and delay things, an odd sort of chess moves made with a boss and the Palestinian, a partisan Israel and the negotiations with them. It's something he wouldn't have done a few years ago, but he's parted ways with Lieberman, and so they're in conflict, he's supposed to turn over his prime minister ship as it were to Benny Gantz but nobody believes that's going to happen, certainly Benny Gantz doesn't believe that. But you know there is a very real possibility Netanyahu goes to jail. This is not impossible. The corruption charges are numerous and well-documented against him and his wife.

So, I think the motivations are probably slightly different,

but you have to look at this and think that from the Saudi perspective, they can't carte blanche it with Trump. ... New York Times did, you know, a huge op-ed Thomas Friedman, a puff piece on Prince Mohammad.

And, Biden probably won't do that and there's a lot of worries that the Saudis will be kind of one of the victims of perception management from the new Biden team that they're going to want to make an impression because, you know, he's already appointed Nick Burns, and Tony Blinken is the nominee anyway for Secretary of State.

And these guys are hawks, liberal interventionists but extreme hawks, cheerleaders for war. They're tied with the Defense Department with the Pentagon. So Biden as I suggested before is going to be a really militaristic president.

Now the other factor in all of this, you know, besides the Saudis kind of worrying and hedging their bets a little and wanting to make sure that they have secure relationships in the region, beyond that we're facing a global depression.

I mean, it's sort of like the demolition of capitalism in a sense with all these countries under lockdown and we're seeing in the United States, you know, 40 million jobs as a conservative estimate lost.

You know museums, cinemas, theaters closed, everything's closed; we're seeing this throughout Europe. You know a country like Indonesia I was just reading today is under extreme lockdown. And yet, a country of 276 million people has only had 16,000 deaths from COVID.

(Source: Press TV)

## France: Protesters clash with police over new security law

1 → Videos by the public have helped to show a wider audience that there is a “systemic problem with French police forces, who are abusing, punching, beating, mutilating, killing,” she said.

Activists say the bill may have an even greater impact on people other than journalists, especially those of immigrant origin living in neighborhoods where relationships with the police have long been tense. Images posted online have been key to denouncing cases of officers' misconduct and racism in recent years, they argue.

Assbague expressed fears that, under the proposed law, those who post videos of police abuses online may be put on trial, where they would face up to a year in jail and a 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fine.

## China to impose sanctions on four over egregious behavior on Hong Kong

China will impose sanctions on four people over their egregious behavior regarding the Asian financial hub of Hong Kong, it said on Monday.

They will be banned from entering China, foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular news briefing, Reuters reported.

This month, the United States said it was imposing sanctions on four more Chinese individuals related to actions over the former British colony, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

## Moderna asking U.S., European regulators to OK its virus shots

Moderna Inc. said it would ask U.S. and European regulators Monday to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine as new study results confirm the shots offer strong protection - ramping up the race to begin limited vaccinations as the coronavirus rampage worsens.

Multiple vaccine candidates must succeed for the world to stamp out the pandemic, which has been on the upswing in the U.S. and Europe. U.S. hospitals have been stretched to the limit as the nation has seen more than 160,000 new cases per day and more than 1,400 daily deaths. Since first emerging nearly a year ago in China, the virus has killed more than 1.4 million people worldwide, AP reported.

Moderna is just behind Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech in seeking to begin vaccinations in the U.S. in December. Across the Atlantic, British regulators also are assessing the Pfizer shot and another from AstraZeneca.

## Biden breaks foot while playing with dog, to wear a boot

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden will likely wear a walking boot for the next several weeks as he recovers from breaking his right foot while playing with one of his dogs, his doctor said.

According to AP, Biden suffered the injury on Saturday and visited an orthopedist in Newark, Delaware, on Sunday afternoon, his office said.

“Initial x-rays did not show any obvious fracture,” but medical staff ordered a more detailed CT scan, his doctor, Kevin O'Connor, said in a statement. The subsequent scan found tiny fractures of two small bones in the middle of his right foot, O'Connor said.

“It is anticipated that he will likely require a walking boot for several weeks,” O'Connor said.

## War not over, says Ethiopia’s Tigrayan forces leader

The leader of Ethiopia's rebellious northern forces said on Monday he was still fighting close to the regional capital of Mekelle after it was captured by government troops following nearly a month of battles and air strikes.

The war in Tigray region has killed hundreds and probably thousands, sent refugees into Sudan, enmeshed Eritrea, impacted a peacekeeping mission in Somalia, and heightened frictions between Ethiopia's myriad ethnic groups, Reuters reported.

In a text message to Reuters, Debretsion Gebremichael, who heads the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), denied reports that he had fled to South Sudan and said he was still resisting in Tigray.

## Resistance News

## Hamas urges Intl. community to turn words into actions to end Israeli occupation

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — The Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas, has called on the international community to turn its slogans of solidarity with Palestinians into actions to put an end to the decades-long Israeli occupation of their land and enable them to live a dignified life.

In a written statement on Sunday, Hamas spokesman Abdul-Latif al-Qanu made the call, marking the International Day of Solidarity with the People of Palestine, which is celebrated annually on November 29.

The occasion is a UN-organized observance to remind the world of the Palestinian people's just cause and legitimate rights. It is commemorated worldwide, with officials expressing their support for the Palestinian cause and denouncing the Israeli conduct in the occupied lands.

“Our people's oppression and daily suffering as a result of occupation and siege should be a constant reminder,” the spokesman of the Gaza-based resistance group further said, the Palestinian Information Center reported.

He added that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has been assigned to remind the world of the Palestinian people's just cause and legitimate rights.

Gaza has been under Israel's land, air and sea blockade since 2006, with the international community consistently demanding Israel to end it. In 1977, the UN General Assembly called for the annual observance. It marks the day in 1947 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Palestine partition resolution 181.

According to Press TV, more than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.



## Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari could become biggest tourism hub of Iran: Rouhani

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iranian president Hasaan Rouhani has said Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, which is currently an under-the-radar destination, has [enormous] potential to become the biggest tourism hub of the country, CHTN reported on Monday.



“This province could be turned into the biggest tourism hub of the country,” the president said talking about the tourism potentials of the western province.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of a petrochemical plant in Lordegan county, the report said. Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari has various traditions and rituals related to tribal lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

The province is also a hub for making wool felt products, majorly of which exported abroad. It is home to some 500 crafters, in over 250 workshops, making handmade felt products.

## National handicraft expo to remain online during pandemic

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — The 34th national handicrafts exhibition of Iran, which is currently underway online due to coronavirus restrictions, will be extending for the months to come.

The virtual sales exhibit will be continuing until further notice and other editions of the event will be held online if the coronavirus pandemic lasts for a long time, a tourism official said on Sunday.

It’s the first time that the annual expo is organized online in a decision is made by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts to promote handicrafts, craftspeople, and dealers in the pandemic era.



Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

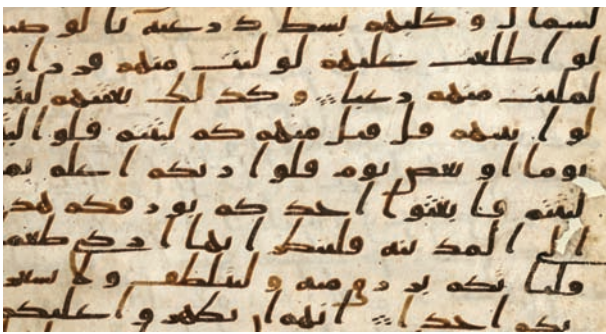
## Quran inscriptions, ancient rhytons added to national heritage list

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A total of seven relics, including ancient copies of the holy Quran, and centuries-old rhytons, have recently been inscribed on Iran’s National Cultural Heritage list.

The objects are native to Kerman and they are being kept at various museums across southeastern province, ILNA reported on Sunday.

The new entrées were selected by a special committee of experts affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts before being officially declared to the provincial government in two separate letters.

The Quranic manuscripts are famed as “Qarakhatai, and Hussein both handwritten in styles that originate from Kufic style script.



A is a roughly conical container from which fluids were intended to be drunk or to be poured in some ceremony such as libation, or merely at table. They are typically formed in the shape of an animal’s head and were produced over large areas of ancient Eurasia, especially from Persia to the Balkans.

Many have an opening at the bottom through which the liquid fell; others did not and were merely used as drinking cups, with the characteristic that they could not usually be set down on a surface without spilling their contents.

Eged by the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut, Kerman province, is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south.

The big and sprawling province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabaleh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

# Absolute limits of magnificent Persepolis being documented

➔ 1 There are gorgeous bas-relief carvings above the tomb chambers that are similar to those at Persepolis, with the kings standing on thrones supported by figures representing the subject nations below. There also two similar graves situated on the premises of Persepolis that probably belong to Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III.

Beneath the funerary chambers are dotted with seven Sassanian-era (224–651) bas-reliefs cut into the cliff depict vivid scenes of imperial conquests and royal ceremonies.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e

Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (“Mountain of Mercy”), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

The royal city ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.



The city was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

The city’s immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire’s king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of

architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall (“Hundred-Column Hall”).

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world’s greatest archaeological sites.

## 5th-century church being restored in northwestern Iran

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The ancient Saint John Church has undergone some rehabilitation works in the village of Sohrol, near Shabestar city in East Azarbaijan province, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

The restoration involves the reinforcement of the main structure, filling small cracks, as well as erecting retaining walls for stabilizing soil from a potential landslide, Alireza Quchi said on Sunday.

Also known as Sohraqueh Church, the Armenian Catholic church was built in circa 5th century, but it was rebuilt on the older church foundation in 1840 by Samson Makintsev, a Russian general in the service of Iran during the Qajar era.

The historical monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1968.

Iran is home to several ancient and historical churches. Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the most significant religious minorities in the country with Christians constituting the bulk.



Iranian Azerbaijan was a center of several ancient civilizations. It formed part of Urartu and later of Media. In the 4th century BC, it was conquered by Alexander the Great and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander’s generals, Atropates, who estab-

## Birdwatching tour held in compliance with health rules

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A group of bird enthusiasts, students, and researchers has come together on a birdwatching tour, which has been held in compliance with health rules on near Baq-Bahadoran, Lenjan county, central Isfahan province.

It was the first birdwatching tour [of the town this year] organized by the local birdwatching committee with regards to the restrictions imposed over the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, Lenjan’s tourism chief has said.

Lenjan is home to various species of birds and several historical pigeon towers which could put the town on tourism map



for birdwatchers yet help better preservation procedures for existing natural and historical properties, Ahmad Fathi said on Sunday.

## Meshkinshahr Archaeological Museum complete by 60 percent

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Construction of an archaeological museum is complete by 60 percent in the ancient city of Meshkinshahr in Ardebil province.

Meshkinshahr Archaeological Museum is estimated to be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1399 (ending on March 20, 2021), provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi said on Sunday.

Referring to the huge number of historical relics and cultural objects so far being discovered in this city, he expressed hope that the museum would provide the opportunity for displaying the objects for the public as well as attracting more tourists to the region.

He also reminded the motto of “Ardebil the City of Museums”, which the provincial cultural heritage department is selected for the next Iranian calendar year, adding that the department is planning to estab-



lish more museums to the currently operating ones across the province.

Meshkinshahr embraces several historical sites including Qale Kohnneh (“Old Castle”), the ancient site of Shahr-e Yeri, and Qahqaheh castle.

Being near the high Mount Sabalan, Meshkinshahr enjoys a moderate mountainous climate and the Sabalan summit can be seen in the south of the city with an eye-catching scenery.

The antiquity of the city dates back to the early centuries of Islam but in the Safavid era, it was thriving even more. The city is well known for its rugs and its mineral springs.

Meshkinshahr suspension bridge with 345 meters long, 3 meters wide, and 80 meters high, which was inaugurated in 2015 and is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia, is also one of the top tourist destinations of the city.

## History’s first superpower sprang from ancient Iran

By Jaime Alvar Ezquerro

Part (1/5)

I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world . . . Found on a cylindrical tablet in the 19th century, these words commemorate Persia’s conquest of Babylonia and the taking of its capital city, Babylon, in 539 BC (Babylon was the jewel of the ancient world.)

After Cyrus came to power in 559 BC, Persia expanded its holdings to become the world’s original empire. Previously, other peoples such as the Assyrians had held sway over vast tracts of Mesopotamia, but none had reached the geographical extent as Persia, whose territory stretched from eastern Europe to the Indus River. Strengthening the empire, Cyrus’s policy of tolerance toward the conquered allowed

local peoples to maintain their languages, traditions, and religions, which in turn allowed Persian culture to benefit from a truly global exchange.

Cyrus’s construction of an imperial identity made up of many religions and languages continues to inspire the modern world. As the Greek historian Xenophon wrote, “Cyrus eclipsed all other monarchs, before or since.”

### Origins of empire

When crowned king of Persia in 559 BC, Cyrus II was little more than a tribal leader of the Parsua (Persian) people who lived in the south of present-day Iran. The latest ruler in the Achaemenian dynasty, Cyrus inherited a kingdom that was effectively a vassal state of the more powerful Median empire to the north.

In 612 BC, the Medes had taken the Assyrian capital Nineveh, giving them control of a territory that stretched across

Mesopotamia. Later, at the height of his power, the Median king Astyages decided to marry his daughter, Mandane, to the king of Persia, Cambyses I, in the 580s BC. Their son, Cyrus II, would rise up to not only conquer the Medes but also build the world’s first true empire.

A famous tale about Cyrus’s birth comes from the Greek historian Herodotus, writing about a century after the king’s death. His account mirrors several Greek myths, such as the story of Oedipus, in which a prophecy of being overthrown by a son causes a king to try (and often fail) to thwart fate by killing the child. Herodotus tells how King Astyages had a dream in which his daughter Mandane “urinated so much that the urine filled his city, then went on to flood all of Asia.”

The king consulted his sages. They interpreted the dream as an omen that his grandson would one day conquer the



The remains of Persepolis, capital of the Persian Empire, sit at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (“mountain of mercy”) in present-day Iran.

Medes. To challenge the prophecy, Astyages married his daughter to a Persian ruler, so her offspring could not take the Median throne. Later, however, Astyages dreamed that a vine sprouted from his daughter’s womb and spread over Asia. Alarmed, the king placed his daughter under guard.



# Iran joins DEEP network to share diabetes expertise

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — Iran has joined Novo Nordisk's DEEP (Disease Experience Expert Panel) as the twentieth country to share experience on diabetes with the world.

Novo Nordisk, a global healthcare company founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark, has established the DEEP network, which is a group of people living with a chronic disease or their family members and caretakers.

Some 11 percent of Iranians above 25 years old, accounting for 5 million people, are suffering from diabetes, and 18 percent of the population are pre-diabetic, health ministry official Alireza Mahdavi said in November 2019.

Due to the increasing incidence of non-communicable and chronic diseases, high treatment costs, and the inability of governments to meet the whole patients' needs, NGOs have been formed to attract people participation to take steps in this regard, head of Diabetes Association Alireza Estaghamati said.

The Diabetes Association was founded about three decades ago, aiming to fa-



cilitate access to diabetes medicine, even during the pandemic, he added.

## Diabetes burden in Iran

In Iran, 25 percent of people are not aware of their diabetes. The figure is 50 percent in the world and 60 percent in West Asia and North Africa region.

About 422 million people worldwide have diabetes, the majority living in low- and middle-income countries, and 1.6 million deaths are directly attributed to diabetes each year.

Both the number of cases and the prevalence of diabetes have been steadily in-

creasing over the past few decades. As it is expected that by 2030, 578 million people will develop diabetes, and the number of patients may exceed 700 million by 2045.

In 2019, 4.2 million people died of diabetes. And now, 50 percent of coronavirus patients were diabetic.

About 90 percent of diabetics are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes worldwide. Education, self-care, and following a healthy lifestyle, and using medication are effective in controlling the disease.

Type 2 diabetes is preventable and in some cases can be cured early. Lack of access to insulin, failure to early diagnosis of type 1 diabetes leading to diabetic ketoacidosis is a common cause of death in children and adolescents.

Diabetes is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke, and lower limb amputation. A healthy diet, physical activity, and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. In addition, diabetes can be treated and its consequences avoided or delayed with medication, regular screening, and treatment for complications.

## Air pollution hiding behind COVID-19



**1 →** Policies to reduce air pollution, therefore, offer a "win-win" strategy for both climate and health, lowering the burden of disease attributable to air pollution, as well as contributing to the near- and long-term mitigation of climate change.

### Household air pollution

Household air pollution is one of the leading causes of disease and premature death in the developing world.

Exposure to smoke from cooking fires causes 3.8 million premature deaths each year, mostly in low- and middle-income countries. Burning fuels such as dung, wood, and coal in inefficient stoves or open hearths produce a variety of health-damaging pollutants, including particulate matter (PM), methane, carbon monoxide, polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), and volatile organic compounds (VOC). Burning kerosene in simple wick lamps also produces significant emissions of fine particles and other pollutants.

Particulate matter is a pollutant of special concern. Many studies have demonstrated a direct relationship between exposure to PM and negative health impacts. Smaller-diameter particles (PM2.5 or smaller) are generally more dangerous and ultrafine particles (one micron in diameter or less) can penetrate tissues and organs, posing an even greater risk of systemic health impacts.

Exposure to indoor air pollutants can lead to a wide range of adverse health outcomes in both children and adults, from respiratory illnesses to cancer to eye problems. Members of households that rely on polluting fuels and devices also suffer a higher risk of burns, poisonings, musculoskeletal injuries, and accidents.

### Over 4,000 deaths in Tehran annually

Between 4,000 and 5,000 people residing in the capital city of Tehran lose their lives per year due to air pollution, according to statistics published by the ministry of health in 2019.

There are numerous vehicular trips per day in Tehran, which are the leading cause of air pollution in the capital so that the air in Tehran is amongst the most polluted in the world, Tehran City Council member, Arash Milani, said.

According to a report by World Bank published in April 2018, Tehran is ranked 12th among 26 megacities in terms of ambient PM10 levels. After Cairo, Tehran is the most polluted non-Asian megacity. In 2016, the annual ambient level of PM10 was estimated at 77 micrograms per cubic meter. This is almost four times the WHO's recommended threshold of 20 micrograms per cubic meter.

The pandemic has indirectly produced both positive and negative effects on the environment, particularly in terms of air quality; in the city of Tehran, however, air reported even more polluted than it was before the outbreak.

Contrary to expectation, the average concentrations of both the PM2.5 and the PM10 were markedly higher.

### Tehran more polluted

According to the statistics published by Air Quality Control Company, the Tehran air quality index (AQI) demonstrated 15 days of excellent air since the beginning of this [Iranian calendar] year (March 21), while during the same period last year, Tehraners breathed 25 days of clean air.

An AQI is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.

The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), acceptable (51-100), moderately polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

This is while, last year over the same period 184 days of acceptable quality air reported in the city, while this year it was reported 181 days.

Since March 21, polluted air haunted the capital for 2 days which was almost dangerous for all the residents, which is the same as last year.

This is while, last year over the same period 45 days were unhealthy for sensitive groups, which

The leading cause of air pollution in the capital is PM 2.5, PM 10, and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2).

### How air pollution raises COVID-19 deaths?

Air pollution can cause health problems, like bronchial asthma, lung carcinoma, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic lung/liver/kidney diseases, leukemia, skin diseases, eye diseases, and neonatal diseases. Many have been identified as pre-existing medical conditions that raise the chances of death from COVID-19 infection.

Emerging research has now suggested that breathing more polluted air over many years may itself worsen the effects of COVID-19 (8 percent increase in mortality from COVID-19 infection for every 1 microgram/cubic meter increase in air pollution), according to the Citizen.

The Doctors for Clean Air (DFCA) has warned that compromised lung function due to air pollution could lead to a serious complication in patients affected by the Covid-19.

Air pollution may also exacerbate symptoms of "long COVID", which is a term used to describe symptoms of COVID-19 persisting weeks and months after recovery - with symptoms of cough, fatigue, diarrhea, joint pain, muscle aches, and lungs, heart, and kidney damage.

## Beavers build first Exmoor dam in over 400 years

Beavers which have recently been re-introduced to Somerset have constructed a dam – the first in the area since beavers were hunted to extinction in the UK over 400 years ago.

The Eurasian beavers were relocated from Scotland and released onto the National Trust's Holnicote Estate in January 2020 as part of an effort to reduce flooding.

Water held back by the beavers' engineering works reduces flood risks and

has been found to significantly increase biodiversity.

Hidden cameras recorded footage of the beavers felling trees and accumulating vegetation to build the small structure, which they began making in October and which has created an "instant wetland", according to rangers at the site.

It is the first time the trust has reintroduced beavers in its 125-year history.

"It might look modest, but this beaver dam

is incredibly special – it's the first to appear on Exmoor for almost half a millennium and marks a step change in how we manage the landscape," said Ben Eardley, project manager at the National Trust.

"What's amazing is that it's only been here a few weeks but has created an instant wetland. We've already spotted kingfishers at the site, and over time, as the beavers extend their network of dams and pools, we should see increased opportunities for other

wildlife, including amphibians, insects, bats and birds."

Beaver dams, ponds and channels help prevent flooding by slowing, storing and filtering water as it flows downstream. The process also creates space for water and wildlife, leading to a more resilient river catchment.

The animals are known as a "keystone species" because of the broad range of positive impacts they can have on biodiversity.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## Non-repayable loans for e-bikes must increase: Tehran City Council chairman

While an important strategy to contain Tehran's air pollution is using clean energies, non-repayable loans to incentivize the owners to replace their motorcycles with electric ones is not sufficient and must increase, Mohsen Hashemi, Tehran City Council chairman, has said.

The scheme on encouraging the citizens to replace carbureted motorcycles with electric ones has started over a few years ago, however, the process has been evolving slowly, he said, adding, we hope to increase the use of electric motorbikes by allocating the necessary funds along with supporting the manufacturers next year (March 2019-March 2020). The handouts supporting the residents to purchase the motorbikes has been about 25 million rials (nearly \$600), which is not adequate anymore given the current economic condition, he stated, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

## تاکید رئیس شورای شهر تهران بر افزایش وام بلاعوض خرید "موتورسیکلت های برقی"

محسن هاشمی رئیس شورای شهر تهران با اشاره به اینکه یکی از راه های کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران استفاده از انرژی های پاک است، گفت: رقیمی که به عنوان وام بلاعوض خرید موتورسیکلت برقی برای تشویق دارندگان موتورسیکلت پرداخت شده است، پاسخگوی این شرایط نیست و این رقم باید افزایش یابد.

وی تصریح کرد: جایگزینی کردن موتورسیکلت های برقی به جای موتورسیکلت های کاربراتوری از چند سال پیش آغاز شده است اما این کار با کندی پیش رفته است و امیدواریم در سال آینده با تخصیص اعتبارات لازم و حمایت از تولیدکنندگان، میزان استفاده از موتورسیکلت های برقی افزایش یابد. به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم هاشمی با اشاره به میزان تسهیلاتی که تا به امروز به عنوان وام بلاعوض برای خرید موتورسیکلت برقی در نظر گرفته شده است، یادآور شد: با توجه به افزایش قیمت خرید موتورسیکلت برقی، رقم ۲ میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار تومان رقم قابل قبولی به عنوان وام بلاعوض نیست و باید این رقم افزایش یابد.

## Researchers examine which approaches are most effective at reducing COVID-19 spread

The researchers developed a model to test the effectiveness of measures such as physical distancing, masks or social bubbles when used in various settings.

Their paper was published Nov. 19 in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS).

They introduce the concept of "event R," which is the expected number of people who become infected with COVID-19 from one individual at an event, according to Science Daily website.



Tupper and Colijn look at factors such as transmission intensity, duration of exposure, the proximity of individuals and degree of mixing -- then examine what methods are most effective at preventing transmission in each circumstance.

The researchers incorporated data from reports of outbreaks at a range of events, such as parties, meals, nightclubs, public transit and restaurants. The researchers say that an individual's chances of becoming infected with COVID-19 depend heavily on the transmission rate and the duration -- the amount of time spent in a particular setting.

Events were categorized as saturating (high transmission probability) or linear (low transmission probability). Examples of high transmission settings include bars, nightclubs and overcrowded workplaces while low transmission settings include public transit with masks, distancing in restaurants and outdoor activities.

The model suggests that physical distancing was effective at reducing COVID-19 transmission in all settings but the effectiveness of social bubbles depends on whether chances of transmission are high or low.

In settings where there is mixing and the probability of transmission is high, such as crowded indoor workplaces, bars and nightclubs and high schools, having strict social bubbles can help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The researchers found that social bubbles are less effective in low transmission settings or activities where there is mixing, such as engaging in outdoor activities, working in spaced offices or travelling on public transportation wearing masks.

They note that masks and other physical barriers may be less effective in saturating, high transmission settings (parties, choirs, restaurant kitchens, crowded offices, nightclubs and bars) because even if masks halve the transmission rates that may not have much impact on the transmission probability (and so on the number of infections).

The novel coronavirus is relatively new but the science continues to evolve and increase our knowledge of how to effectively treat and prevent this highly contagious virus. There is still much that we do not know and many areas requiring further study.

"It would be great to start collecting information from exposures and outbreaks: the number of attendees, the amount of mixing, the levels of crowding, the noise level and the duration of the event," says Colijn, who holds a Canada Research Chair in Mathematics for Evolution, Infection and Public Health.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 71)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

water	/āb/ آب	
slowly	/āhes'te/ آهسته	
often	/aq'lab/ اغلب	
if	/agar/ اگر	
take	/bardār/ بردار	/bardā'stan/ برداشتن
fast	/tond/ تند	
rice and a kind of stew	چلوخورش	
fork	/can'gāl/ چنگال	
soup	/sup/ سوپ	چلوکباب
tray	/si'ni/ سینی	
food	/qazā/ غذا	
to eat	/qazā xor'dan/ غذا خوردن	
spoon	/qā'soq/ قاشق	سالاد
accepted, passed	/qā'bul/ قبول	
enough	/kā'fi/ کافی	
to put	/go'zār/ گذار	/gozā'stan/ گذاشتن
pleasure	/lez'zat/ لذت	لیوان
kindly; please	/lot'fan/ لطفاً	
time	/vaqt/ وقت	
(it) means; namely, that is	/ya?'ni/ یعنی	نوشابه



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There are five activities that I won't leave off till I'm alive so that they would become part of my tradition. [One of them] is greeting children.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

## 30 documentaries to compete for Avini Awards at Cinéma Vérité

→1 "More than My Mother" by Alireza Baghsheni, "Virtual Flags" by Hassan Jafari, "Birth of a Tragedy" by Hojjatollah Edalatpanah, "Deserted Houses" by Mohammadreza Abbasian, "The General" by Mohammad Talebi and "World of Javad" by Sadeq Ghafurain are among the documentaries.

Also included are "Gambling" by Mohammad-Mehdi Dezfuli, "Cross" by Ahmad Rahmanian, "Report of a Chaos" by Mohammadreza Giunchian and "Single Battalion" by Dariush Yari.

Morteza Avini, the acclaimed documentarian who was martyred by a landmine in 1993 when he was making a documentary about soldiers who were still listed as missing in action in the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran.

Avini rose to fame for "The Narration of Triumph". He was considered a "master of martyred writers" by his colleagues and war veterans due to the fervent narrations he wrote for his documentaries.

Cinéma Vérité also plans to review a selection of documentaries acclaimed at 2020 international events across the world in a special section named "World's Best".

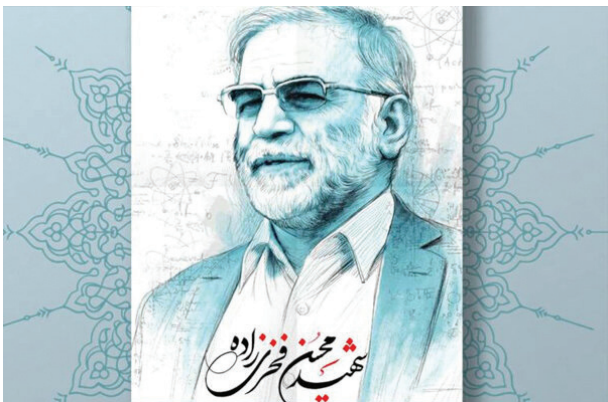
A number of top Iranian and international documentarians and critics will be holding online workshops and panel discussions during the festival.

The international figures include Betsy A. McLane, Bill Nichols and James Bertrand Longley in addition to famous Iranian documentarians Mehrdad Oskui and Farhad Varahram.

## Art Bureau launches website for nuclear scientist Fakhrizadeh

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization has launched a website to promote artworks on Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior expert who specialized in nuclear technology, was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon.



A portrait of Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh on display on the Art Bureau's website for the Iranian nuclear scientist.

The website promotes posters, poems and other artworks on Fakhrizadeh. The art bureau has also asked artists to send their artworks for publication on the website that can be found on www.shahidfakhrizadeh.com.

## Actor Behzad Farahani tries his hand at writing with "55 Short Stories"

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Actor Behzad Farahani, who is also a prominent stage director, has tried his hand at writing with publishing his first collection named "55 Short Stories".

The book has been published by the Gooya House of Culture and Art.

Farahani has narrated what he has seen, experienced and learned over the years throughout his life, and has dedicated the book to all the people of Farahan, the actor's hometown located in Markazi Province.

Farahani, 75, is a graduate of dramatic arts and completed his studies in France. He began his acting career in theater and joined cinema with his screenplay "Journey of Stone" in 1978.

He has also performed numerous plays for radio and television, and has played leading roles in a number of acclaimed movies of Iranian cinema over the past five decades.

# Life story of top IRGC commander subject of play "Borunesi"

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Director Morteza Shahkaram plans to stage a play about the life story of Abdolhossein Borunesi, a senior commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who was martyred during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The play will be performed at the Charsu Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex after the end of the coronavirus lockdown, Shahkaram said in a press release on Monday.

His military life as a soldier during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah and his activities during the Islamic Revolution and post-revolution life will be shown in the play.

A major part of the play will portray Borunesi as the commander of Javad ul-Aemah (AS) Brigade 18, an IRGC combat unit that took part in Operation Badr in March 1985.

Borunesi was martyred during the operation and his soldiers failed to return his remains. However, some of his personal



A portrait of Martyr Abdolhossein Borunesi.

effects, including his ID tag, were excavated 27 years after his death along with a skeleton in the area where the operation had been carried out.

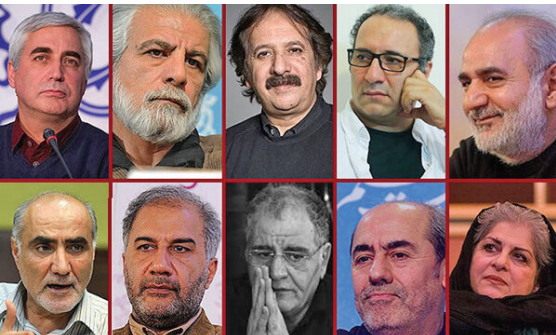
The play is from a collection of plays on Iranian veterans martyred during the Iran-Iraq war, which was unveiled by the General Office for Dramatic Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance at Tehran's City Theater Complex in February.

The collection titled "The Bright Pen" contains four books, each of which carries two plays.

Book one contains "Or Not Being" by Kamran Shahlai and "All My Brothers" by Reza Goshtasb. The second book carries "Heliborne" by Mohsen Azimi and "Season of Red Sapphire" by Neda Sabeti.

"From Behind His Shoulders" by Mehdi Nasiri and "Borunesi" by Shahkaram are the plays in the third book of the collection. Book four includes "A Drum That Trembled Underfoot" by Maryam Mansuri and "Scarf" by Ladan Shirmard.

## Art elites issue statements of grief over assassination of Fakhrizadeh



This combination photo shows a number of the cineastes who signed a statement in sympathy over the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian cineastes and stage artists have issued statements

on Sunday evening expressing their grief and regret over the assassination of the Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

The statement signed by 34 cineastes begins with the phrase, "To you whom I didn't know".

"We heard the news of your cruel assassination and regretted why we didn't know you as well as the enemies of our country.

"It's a little bit late, but we are really proud of you for the scientific endeavors that you made anonymously and willingly in honor of our beloved country."

Among the cineastes is the Oscar-nominated filmmaker Majid Majidi, whose latest movie "Sun Children" is also Iran's submission to the 93rd Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category.

Hassan Barzideh, director of the drama "Mazar-i-Sharif" about Taliban terrorism in Afghanistan, has also signed the statement.

The statement was signed by Mohammad-Hossein

Mahdavian, the director of the anti-terror dramas "Walnut Tree", "The Middy Event" and "Trace of Blood".

Filmmakers Ebrahim Hatamikia, Narges Abyara, Kamal Tabrizi, Maziar Miri, and Reza Mirkarimi, and actors Parviz Parastui and Atila Pesyani are also among the artists who signed the statement.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior Iranian expert who specialized in nuclear technology, was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon in the Abe-Sard region of Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran.

In a statement published by the General Office for Dramatic Arts, groups of stage artists condemned the terrorist attack.

In addition, members of the Media Managers Guild also condemned the terrorist attack in a statement published on Sunday.

They also called on the international media and human rights organizations to censure terrorism and support Iran as a victim of terrorism.

## Top plays of Divine Commander festival to go on stage at Fajr

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A selection of top plays from the 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival are scheduled to be performed during the 39th edition of the Fajr Theater Festival.

"If conditions and the pandemic allow, the plays will be staged for the audience, and if not they will be recorded and will be streamed through a platform," Divine Commander Theater Festival director Amir-Hossein Shafiei has said.

The festival was established after the assassination of Commander Qassem Soleimani during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3 in memory of the chief of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Shafiei is the author of the play named "The Soldier", which will be performed



A poster for the 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival.

in different villages within Kerman Province, Commander Soleimani's hometown in January.

The play is dedicated to the commander's leadership of Iranian forces during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. His role in the victory of the Lebanese in the Israeli 33-Day War of 2006 has

been spotlighted in the second stage.

The drama also focuses on the key role the martyr played in the defeat of the ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

Twelve plays will be performed during the 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival.

"When the Muscles Turn to Stone" by writer and director Kianush Ahmadi is among the entries picked by a selecting committee that is composed of Shahram Ahmadzadeh, Mehdi Nasiri and Maziar Rashid-Salehi.

"Carnelian" by Shahram Soltani is another highlight of the lineup, and director Morteza Asadimaram will stage "Standing like a Cypress to Watch the Sun" written by Hashem Purmohammadi.

"Dragunov" written by Zeinab Zavalan

will be directed by Doosti Irani, and director Mohammad-Hamed Esmaeilpur will stage "Tiny Little Birds" written by Govan-Mehr Esmaeilpur.

"1:20 AM" by Pejman Shahverdi, "Soldier" by Mohammad-Hossein Nazari, "Cold Breathe" by Mohammad Qasemi and "January 3" have also been selected.

The lineup also includes "The Sociology of Death" by Asghar Garusi, "Wave" by Sajjad Mansuri and "An Appointment in Damascus" by Nasser Hajibaqeri.

The 2nd edition of the festival will take place in the southern Iranian city of Kerman from December 21 to 26.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater and the Revayat Foundation are the main organizers of the event.

## Hainan festival to screen "Sun Children", "Bandar Band"

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — "Sun Children" and "Bandar Band" from Iranian filmmakers will go on screen at the Hainan International Film Festival, which will take place in the Chinese city of Sanya from December 5 to 12.

The movies will be going on screen in Asian Spectrum, a non-competitive section that aims to construct a new landscape for Asian cinema.

"Bandar Band" by Manijeh Hekmat is about some Iranian women singers who are going to enter an unofficial competition in a coffee shop in Tehran.

Pregnant Mahla along with the other members of Bandar Band, her husband and one of their closest friends, starts her journey to Tehran from a southern province just when they have lost all they had in a flood.

They still keep their hopes alive, however, every road they take leads to a dead-end in a flood-stricken land. They intend to go to Tehran, but they wonder if it is just another turn around a vicious circle.

"Sun Children" by Majid Majidi tells the story of 12-year-old Ali and his three friends. Together, they



"Sun Children" by Majid Majidi.

work hard to survive and support their families, doing small jobs in a garage and committing petty crimes to make fast money. Everything changes, however, when Ali is entrusted to find a hidden treasure underground but must first enroll at the Sun School, a charitable institution that tries to educate street kids and child laborers.

## Iranian play "Labor" wins best script award at Red Curtain International

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian play "Labor" won the award for best script at the Red Curtain International on Sunday in the U.S. city of Marietta, Georgia.

The best individual performance, best ensemble, most innovative use of technology, best direction and best production were also awarded by the organizers on Sunday, "Labor" writer Mahana Narimani told the Persian service of ILNA on Monday.

"Labor" has been produced by the Gaze Theater Group. Narimani also directed the play, which was performed by a cast composed of Mona Arbasi, Mobina Ruzbehani, Sepideh Mazaheri, Kimia Nahrein and Narimani herself.

A year has passed since the Filoviridae Virus has spread all over the world and decreased the world's population by 50% when four women in their ninth month of pregnancy enter a governmental institute to undergo different screening processes by which their parenting, survival and other abilities are to be tested. If selected, they will receive the recently discovered, very expensive and very rare vaccine. However, since this is a life and death situation, it has its own costs.

"I wrote the play two years ago and I imagined that such a virus would perhaps spread 50 years later, not one year later," Narimani said.

"Following the outbreak of



This file photo shows Mahana Narimani performing "Ground Zero" at Tehran's Mashyekhi Theater.

coronavirus, I translated the play into English to submit it to several

international festivals," she added.

The play does not intend to place women against men, she said, and added that it speaks only about humanity.

Narimani has previously staged "Ground Zero", "Machinist" and several other of her plays at Tehran's theater.

A jury composed of members from the Philippines, Singapore, India, Italy, Finland, the UK and the USA select winners from the finalists from Brazil, the USA, the UK, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Cape Verde, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, India and Singapore.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the finalists gave their performances through the Zoom platform.