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# Dancing on the thin ice

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## Zarif responds to Erdogan's 'wrong' poem on Iranian Azerbaijan

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded to a poem recited by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan “wrongly” claiming that Iranian provinces of Azerbaijan were part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

“Pres. Erdogan was not informed that what he ill-recited in Baku refers to the forcible separation of areas north of Aras from Iranian motherland. Didn't he realize that he was undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan? NO ONE

can talk about OUR beloved Azerbaijan,” the chief Iranian diplomat tweeted.

Zarif also published the same tweet in Persian, a language he rarely uses on Twitter. The Persian version of the tweet is slightly different from the English one.

“They didn't tell Erdogan that the poem that he wrongly recited in Baku is related to the forcible separation of areas north of Aras from Iranian motherland,” Zarif said in the Persian tweet.

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## Iranian plateau gave birth to writing: French archaeologist

TEHRAN – New studies suggest the Iranian plateau was the birthplace of writing, predating Mesopotamia widely known as the cradle of the cuneiform writing, French archaeologist Francois Desset has said.

Desset, who is an archaeologist specializing in Near Eastern Archaeology, has deciphered a 4400-year-old cuneiform bas-relief, saying it may be a cultural “revolution” in the history of writing in the world, IRNA reported on Thursday.

The discovery proves that ‘Mesopotamia’ (present-day Iraq / former Babylon) is no longer the world's first cradle of writing, the news agency reported.

It took the French archaeologist some ten years to [completely] discover the mysteries of the cuneiform inscription, which is hand-carved on clay tablets and were found in the ruins of the ancient city of Susa, southwest Iran.

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## Khaf-Herat railway inaugurated

**BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI**

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Thursday officially inaugurated the strategic Khaf-Herat railway project in a video conference.

The 222-kilometer-long Khaf-Herat railway is part of the Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project started in the fiscal

year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Rouhani said that the launch of the Khaf-Herat Railway will strengthen relations between the two neighboring countries of Iran and Afghanistan.

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ISNA / Mohammad Ramezani

## Security must be inclusive

**BY M.A. SAKI**

As President-elect Joe Biden has announced that he is seeking to revitalize the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), Anwar Gargash, the UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, has said his country is seeking a “JCPOA++”.

According to All Israel News, Gargash said by “JCPOA++” he means that it should include Iran's activities in the region and the country's missiles.

The UAE minister should have noticed that Iran has insisted that the JCPOA is a legally binding deal endorsed by the UN Security Council and that Iran will not renegotiate it, thereby a new JCPOA is out of question.

If Iran was to renegotiate the deal it had done so with the outgoing President Donald Trump. Iran suffered the harshest sanctions in the history of the world under Trump's “maximum pressure” policy without backing down one step from its rightful position.

Biden himself has not linked joining the nuclear deal with other things. He has clearly indicated that if the conditions are ripe he will first join the agreement and then talk about other issues.

“I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern,” Biden wrote in a September op-ed for CNN.

Also in an interview with The New York Times' columnist Thomas Friedman, Biden said that he still stands by his views on the JCPOA that were expressed in the op-ed.

Even though Friedman tried to convey this idea that the situation has changed since Trump pulled the U.S. out of the multilateral agreement, Biden seemed unwavering in his position.

“It's going to be hard, but yeah,” Biden said when asked whether he still stands by his views.

The proposal for “JCPOA++” was first raised by Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud in an interview with CNBC during the G20 summit hosted by his country last month. Farhan illusorily argued that Trump's “maximum pressure” campaign has set the groundwork for a new agreement with Iran and Saudi Arabia should be a “partner” to the United States in any discussions with Iran.

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## Yalda Night needs national empathy against coronavirus

**BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI**

TEHRAN – For almost a year now, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the uninvited guest of the people across the world, forcing everyone to change their lifestyle; a new Yalda Night is approaching but this year Iranians must stay home, despite their thousand-year-old tradition of family gatherings.

The last evening of autumn and the beginning of winter is a ceremonious, auspicious time for Iranians and lovers of Iranian traditions everywhere on earth.

A peek into the bustling streets, grocery and confectionery stores have long shown that Iranians are preparing to celebrate Yalda Night, which basically celebrates the longest and darkest night of the year when family reunions were held entailing laughter, merriment, and good cheer.

Nationally called “Shab-e Yalda” or “Shab-e-Chelleh”, it literally means the night of the

forty. This refers to the first forty days of winter that are often the coldest and toughest to bear.

Of all the ancient Persian festivals, only two are celebrated by Iranians worldwide -- Yalda Night (the birth of a new sun) and Noruz or Persian New Year (the birth of a new day).

Falling on December 20 this year, Shab-e Yalda needs the empathy of the Iranian nation in the fight against the coronavirus, as people should stay home, despite their important tradition.

The outbreak reached its peak concurrent with the Iranian New Year celebration (March 21), which has made Noruz different from years and even centuries ago.

However, in Sizdah Bedar, people were also asked to stay at home and resist picnicking outdoor to break the chain of coronavirus transmission, and they were successful in curbing the disease.

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## Could COVID-19 immunity passports help life return to normal?

TEHRAN – The idea of immunity passports is rising worldwide to swiftly recognize who has been immunized and who has not. Some are calling the concept a ‘COVID-19 passport’.

For tourism insiders, this idea could led the battered travel industry to the rebound once again. Restaurants, theaters and offices could reopen with confidence by admitting those certified as vaccinated, and international travel could resume.

As the vaccinated population surges, normal life could gradually start again. This way, individuals could stop wearing face masks and following social-distancing rules if they can prove they have been inoculated and so aren't a risk to others.

The idea is that once the vaccine is widely available, the passport would be issued to people who have been vaccinated to let them move more freely, both locally and globally, by

allowing access to indoor restaurants, movie theaters, and international travel.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA), an airline trade association that represents 290 airlines worldwide, said on November 23 that it was in the final stages of developing a digital vaccine passport for travelers. The IATA Travel Pass will let travelers share their vaccination status and COVID-19 test results with airlines and border authorities, via a contactless passport app.

However, scientists and public-health experts caution, though, that it is too soon to know whether the vaccines being raced into production will confer true and lasting immunity to infection. Nor is it clear if they will be as effective at preventing transmission as they were at reducing the severity of illness in trials.

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## “Our Happy Comrade” on Commander Soleimani's valor published in Urdu

TEHRAN – Iran's Cultural Office in Pakistan has published in Karachi an Urdu translation of “Our Happy Comrade”, a book on Commander Qassem Soleimani's valor.

The Persian version of the book has been published by the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum and Library in Mashhad.

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

The book contains different chapters in-

cluding the memories of the martyr and his friends, his main characteristics, as well as his testament.

The book is scheduled to be introduced in a special ceremony the Iranian Cultural Center in Karachi will organize to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Soleimani.

After his martyrdom, Soleimani has become the subject of several films, theatrical productions and festival programs.

Recently, young filmmaker Behnam Ba-

hadori announced that he has made a short documentary named “Green Zone” about the good conduct of Commander Qassem Soleimani toward children.

The Children's Department of the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization is the producer of the film.

The 38th Fajr Film Festival announced it would honor films on resistance and jihad with an award named after Soleimani.

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## Historian says U.S. not entitled to meddle in West Asia

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

TEHRAN – Kurk Dorsey, a professor of history at New Hampshire University, is of the opinion that the U.S. administration has made many mistakes and is not entitled to intervene in West Asia.

“I would agree that the U.S. is not entitled to meddle in the Middle East (West Asia), and that the U.S. has made many policy mistakes,” Dorsey tells the Tehran Times.

Dorsey, who specializes in modern American history, World War II, and U.S. foreign policy, also says that the U.S. “will stick with the traditional ally (Israel) over the unknown.”

he following is the text of the interview:  
**Do you expect a main policy shift by the incoming Biden administration? Do you expect Biden to neglect U.S. arms deals with Saudi Arabia?**

A: I do not expect any substantial change to U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia in the first year of the Biden administration. There is a long list of higher priorities, starting with mending relations with the U.S.'s traditional allies in Europe, reassuring Asian allies that the U.S. will work with them to counter China, and rethinking policy toward Russia.

The Trump administration took almost all of its direction from the personal relationships that the president had with foreign leaders. Biden will return U.S. policy to an analysis of long-term U.S. interests based on the U.S. vision of the world since the Truman Doctrine in 1947.

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## Patients being visited free of charge

A group of volunteer physicians and nurses visit patients in less developed neighborhoods of the city of Mashhad free of charge on a regular weekly basis.

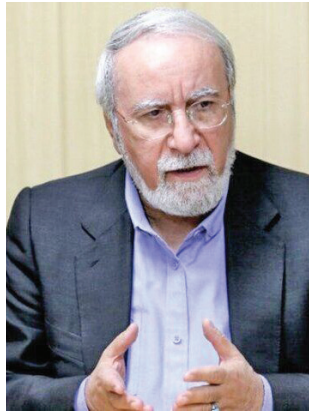
Since the onset of the coronavirus outbreak, more than 980 voluntary plans and projects to contain the epidemic have been implemented across the country, with 72,694 volunteers participating in the implementation of these projects.



## Riyadh after disrupting U.S. return to JCPOA, says expert

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — International affairs expert Sabah d e s k Zanganeh has said Saudi Arabia is seeking to disrupt the United States' return to the 2015 nuclear agreement under the incoming administration of Joe Biden.

"Riyadh knows that there will be no renegotiation [of the nuclear deal], and its goal is merely to disrupt the United States' return to the deal," Sabah Zanganeh said in an interview with IRNA published on Friday.



"These neighbors behave like someone who has just woken up and now wants to get on the train by running," he added.

Iran signed the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain, Germany and the European Union on July 14, 2015.

However, the JCPOA was abandoned by U.S. President Donald Trump on May 8, 2018. Trump replaced the pact with a "maximum pressure" policy against Tehran in order to pressure Iran into negotiating a new deal.

With the defeat of Trump in the November 3 presidential election, hopes were raised over a possible revival of the JCPOA under President-elect Joe Biden.

## Security must be inclusive

**1 →** Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who rejoiced Trump's exit from the JCPOA and imposition of illegal sanctions on Iran, this time are trying hard to undermine any possible return of the Biden administration to the agreement.

Sabah Zanganeh, an international affairs expert and former diplomat, has said Saudi Arabia is seeking to disrupt Biden's return to the JCPOA.

"These neighbors behave like someone who has just woken up and now wants to get on the train by running," Zanganeh told IRNA.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are Iran's neighbors. We cannot change geography. Gargash reportedly said that "last thing" that the UAE seeks with Iran is confrontation. Iran also does not seek confrontation with its neighbors and this position has been clearly stated by Iranian officials.

On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif advised the Persian Gulf Arab states to exclude the West from regional talks. Zarif said the U.S. and European powers themselves are the causes of problems in West Asia.

"Dear neighbors, why ask US/E3 for inclusion in talks with Iran when: a) There won't be ANY talks about OUR region with them as they're the problem themselves. b) We can speak directly about our region without outside meddling," Zarif tweeted.

Zarif said that the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE) is still on the table.

"We are always ready for talks with our neighbors. The proposals, such as the 1986 regional security, the 2016 regional dialogue forum and the 2019 Hormuz Peace Initiative, show this," Zarif stated.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia should not follow the policy adopted by Netanyahu and Pompeo in the last days of Trump at the White House. It is clear to all that Israel assassinated Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh through a collusion with Mike Pompeo and Donald Trump. The assassination not only was intended to completely kill any prospect for the revival of the JCPOA but to provoke a war with Iran. If Abu Dhabi and Riyadh do not understand this, they should be considered naïve.

Michael Wuthrich, assistant professor of political science at the University of Kansas, tells the Tehran Times that "why the nuclear scientist was assassinated and why it happened at this current time" is a very serious question.

If the UAE and Saudi Arabia are really worried about Iran's defensive missile program why they themselves are buying the most lethal weapons from the United States and other Western countries. Just on Thursday, the Republican-dominated Senate backed the \$23 billion deal for sale of F-35s and Reaper drones to the UAE.

Buying highly advanced arms and then expressing worry about Iran's defensive missile program is hypocritical, astonishing and unconvincing.

Officials and people in the UAE and Saudi Arabia remember very well that how Saddam Hussein was showering Iranian cities with missiles and chemical weapons provided by the Soviet Union and Western countries in the 1980s and Arab countries supported him. They also know that no country in the world was ready to sell arms to Iran to defend itself. The remains of our soldiers are still being uncovered because of the Saddam invasion. Though more than 30 years have passed since the then, its memories are still haunting our nation.

Even on Thursday when the U.S. military was flying two B-52 bombers in a show of teeth to Iran over the Persian Gulf, aircraft from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain also joined them.

The UAE minister of state for foreign affairs should be wise enough that one cannot have security at the cost of others.

Moreover, Iran is mostly concerned about repeated military threats by Israel and the United States. The assassination of Fakhrizadeh is a concrete example.

## Iran welcomes rejection of 'Islamic Emirate' revival in Afghanistan: Envoy

**TEHRAN (Press TV)** — A senior Iranian diplomat says Tehran welcomes the UN General Assembly's rejection of the idea of reviving an "Islamic Emirate" in Afghanistan and its call for protecting the country's constitution.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, made the remarks in a Thursday address to the 40th Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly, entitled "The Situation in Afghanistan".

He praised the Afghan government's positive approach to peace talks with the Taliban, and at the same time urged the militant group to stop attacks against Afghan security forces in order to show their good faith.

He welcomed the progress made in the peace talks and expressed Iran's preparedness to play a more active role to help its success in coordination with the UN.

"A sustainable peace in Afghanistan should not be imposed from abroad," he said, adding that the peace talks are not expected to resolve all the problems of the past decades over one night.

# Iran to exact vengeance on Israel for Fakhrizadeh assassination: IRGC chief

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The head d e s k of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has vowed to exact vengeance on the Zionist regime and its minions for the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a prominent Iranian scientist.

"The great nation of Iran will inflict its harsh vengeance on them at the right time," Major General Hossein Salami said on Friday, Fars reported.

He made the remarks during a visit to the late scientist's house.

"The crime of the savage terrorists created a great honor for the martyr Dr. Fakhrizadeh, and it presented this scientist as General Haj Qassem Soleimani, who had taken revenge on the Americans many times during his lifetime," he noted.

The general added that the children of the nation, who are assassinated by the Great Satan — the United States — and the Zionist regime, have brought honor for the Islamic Iran.

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

His assassination could further hamper diplomatic efforts to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which was abandoned by U.S. President Donald Trump in May 2018.



Iran has blamed Israel, which has carried out assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Immediately after the assassination, Foreign Minister Zarif said in a tweet that the attack was carried out with "serious indications of Israeli role".

Over the past years Israel assassinated five other Iranian nuclear scientists. It killed Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahrari, Darioush Rezaeinejad, and Mostafa Ahmadi

Roshan. Israel also attempted to assassinate Fereydon Abbasi, Iran's head of the Atomic Agency, but it failed.

President Hassan Rouhani has said Iran is entitled to take revenge for the assassination.

"Iran's government is entitled to take retaliation from the elements behind the assassination of the martyr," Rouhani said on December 3.

He said the terrorist attack showed that

## Envoy criticizes IAEA chief's assessment of new Iranian law

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador d e s k and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations has criticized the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency's remarks, saying the IAEA is only responsible with monitoring and verifying Iran's nuclear-related measures.

"@iaeaorg sole role is to monitor and verify the voluntary nuclear-related measures as detailed in the JCPOA and to provide regular updates in this regard," Kazem Gharibabadi wrote in a tweet on Friday.

"Any assessment or analysis is out of the mandate of the Agency," Gharibabadi added.

It came after IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi told Sky News that Iran should not follow through on threats to increase uranium enrichment and throw out his inspectors.

"If implemented," he said, "these measures would be an even further deviation from the commitments that Iran entered into when it joined the agreement."

"I cannot imagine who would win from such a situation. If there was any limitation of the IAEA inspectors as a result of this or any other situation were curtailed in their work," Grossi added.

He was referring to a recent move by Iran's Parliament that pushed nuclear program forward in order to fight the U.S.-imposed sanctions.

The Parliament passed the strategic action plan earlier this month. According to the 9-article bill, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) will be required to produce and store at least 120 kilograms of enriched uranium with 20 percent purity at the Fordow nuclear facility every year, and to fulfil the country's peaceful industrial demands with uranium enriched above 20%.

The bill became a law as the oversight Guardian Council approved it by asking the parliament to make some amendments to it. It will oblige the AEOI to increase the monthly output of enriched uranium for various peaceful purposes with different purity levels by at least 500 kg.

The parliamentary ratification also obliges the AEOI to stop the Additional Protocol to the NPT if sanctions are not lifted. The Additional Protocol allows for surprise and unannounced inspections.

Iranian lawmakers accelerated the process of passing the nuclear bill following the assassination of top Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and even described the bill as one of Iran's options to respond to Israel by resuming



nuclear activities.

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

## Iran hails Khaf-Herat railway as great step forward

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign d e s k Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has hailed the Tehran-Kabul relations as an excellent example of good neighborliness, referring to the Khaf-Herat railway as a great step toward expanding bilateral cooperation.

"The Iran-Afghanistan relations are day by day moving toward an excellent example of good neighborliness in this region," Khatibzadeh tweeted on Thursday.

He added that the Islamic Republic of Iran proudly stands by the friendly and brotherly people and government of Afghanistan along the path of stability and development of that country.

Earlier on Thursday, Iran and Afghanistan inaugurated a strategic railway that connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Herat.

The railway project began in the fiscal year of 2007-2008. It included four parts,



of which Iran was in charge of completing three, including two on its own soil and one on the Afghan soil.

During the inaugural ceremony, which was held via a videoconference, President Rouhani hailed the brotherly relations between the Iranian and Afghan nations, saying the inauguration of the Khaf-Herat railway will bolster the two countries' ties.

"Today is a day of greeting, a day of

blessing and a day of commencement for the two great nations of Afghanistan and Iran," Rouhani said during the ceremony, according to IRNA.

He said the fates of the nations are intertwined. "Afghanistan's development is our development and its security is our security."

The president explained that the Khaf-Herat railway and the Mirjaveh railway are two key railways in Iran's eastern parts, connecting the country to Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani also expressed satisfaction over the inauguration of the railway project, saying it was the outcome of the two countries' tireless efforts to bring prosperity to both sides.

He said the completion of the project in spite of problems created by the coronavirus pandemic is a clear example of the two sides' national will to ensure

development and economic progress.

Also, in remarks on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described the railway as an act of bridge-building, saying it will contribute to regional stability and development.

"The Khaf-Herat railway's significance is not only for Iran & Afghanistan, but for the greater region," Zarif wrote in a tweet.

"As a gateway that'll boost trade and people-to-people exchanges, it will also contribute to regional stability & development," he said, adding, "Turning our frontiers into bridges is a priority."

Mohsen Rouhisefat, Iran's former ambassador to Kabul, has told ISNA that the railway project is a "strategic move" that will help regional alliance.

Rouhisefat said the most important aspect the project is that it connects the land-locked Afghanistan to the sea.

## U.S. flies B52- bombers in Persian Gulf amid mounting tensions

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The U.S. military d e s k Thursday flown two B-52 bombers in a show-of-force mission in the Persian Gulf amid mounting tensions in the region in the final weeks of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

"Potential adversaries should understand that no nation on earth is more ready and capable of rapidly deploying additional combat power in the face of any aggression," General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of the U.S. military's Central Command, said in a statement on Thursday.

"We do not seek conflict, but we must remain postured and committed to respond to any contingency," General McKenzie said, according to the New York Times.

The flight comes on the heels of the assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh late last month.

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

Iran has blamed Israel, which has carried out assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Immediately after the assassination, Foreign Minister Zarif said in a tweet that the attack was carried out with "serious indications of Israeli role".

Over the past years Israel assassinated five other Iranian nuclear scientists. It killed Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahrari, Darioush Rezaeinejad, and Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan. Israel also attempted to assassinate Fereydon Abbasi, Iran's head of the Atomic Agency, but it failed.



The Thursday mission also included aircraft from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain. It came days after the U.S. military moved the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier, along with other warships, back into the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. military is on heightened alert and shoring up its forces in the Middle East to respond to a potential Iranian attack, a military official told POLITICO.

According to the unnamed official, the Pentagon is concerned that Tehran could take advantage of the presidential transition and U.S. troop withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the upcoming anniversary of the U.S. assassination of Iran's top general Qassem Soleimani.

"There is no plan here to act, there is a plan to portray a strong defensive posture that would give a potential adversary pause," the official added.

Last month, the New York Times cited four current and former U.S. officials as saying that Trump has asked senior advisers in an Oval Office meeting whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks.

A range of senior advisers dissuaded the president from moving ahead with a military strike, said the Times, adding that the advisers — including Vice President Mike Pence; Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary; and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — warned that a strike against Iran's facilities could easily escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of Trump's presidency.

Former Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan later warned that a full-fledged war could break out between the U.S. and Iran, saying while Iran is ready to defend itself, it does not welcome war.

"A limited, tactical conflict can turn into a full-fledged war," he said. "Definitely, the United States, the region and the world cannot stand such a comprehensive crisis," Brigadier General Dehghan said in an interview with the Associated Press last month.

"We don't welcome a crisis. We don't welcome war. We are not after starting a war," he said. "But we are not after negotiations for the sake of negotiations either."



# Dancing on the thin ice

U.S. seeks to build coalition that is dead on arrival

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump has once again announced a normalization deal between Israel and an Arab country. This time, the U.S. president said Morocco is going to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. An expert on West Asia tells the Tehran Times that normalization deals between Israel and some Arab states are meant to cover up the weak spot of the parties that sign them.

“Today, I signed a proclamation recognizing Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara. Morocco’s serious, credible, and realistic autonomy proposal is the ONLY basis for a just and lasting solution for enduring peace and prosperity! Another HISTORIC breakthrough today! Our two GREAT friends Israel and the Kingdom of Morocco have agreed to full diplomatic relations – a massive breakthrough for peace in the Middle East! [West Asia],” Trump said in a tweet on Thursday.

The U.S. president added, “Morocco recognized the United States in 1777. It is thus fitting we recognize their sovereignty over the Western Sahara.”

Western Sahara is a disputed in north-western Africa that Morocco and the Polisario Front both have a claim to it. The Polisario Front is a separatist movement of the Sahrawi ethnic group that seeks to establish an independent state in Western Sahara. The others were the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Bahrain.

Just like other recent normalization deals, the Moroccan-Israeli one was condemned by many countries and resistance groups. The Palestinian groups were at the forefront of those who condemned the deal.

Bassam al-Salhi, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s Executive Committee, denounced the deal as “unacceptable.”

“Any Arab retreat from the [2002] Arab Peace Initiative, which stipulates that normalization comes only after Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands, is unacceptable and increases Israel’s belligerence and its denial of the Palestinian people’s rights,” al-Salhi noted.

Hazem Qassem, the spokesman of Hamas, also slammed the normalization deal as “sin.”

“This is a sin and it doesn’t serve the Palestinian people. The Israeli occupation



uses every new normalization to increase its aggression against the Palestinian people and increase its settlement expansion,” the spokesman said.

Iran also condemned the Moroccan-Israeli deal, just as it did on all previous deals between Israel and other Arab countries.

“The declaration of the normalization of relations [between] Arab Morocco with the fake entity that occupies Jerusalem is a betrayal and a stab on the back of resistant Palestine. If some Arab rulers neglect the authentic Muhammadan Islam, they should at least reflect on Arab jealousy. The Zionists will have no place in the future of the region,” Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, said in a tweet on Friday.

The Morocco-Israel normalization deal came at a time when the United States is scrambling to withdraw its troops or at least reduce their numbers in the region. Some analysts believe that the normalization deals are an attempt to create a coalition of Arab and Israeli forces to fill the vacuum after the U.S. pulls its troop out of the region but analysts point to the weak spots of this presumptive coalition.

“Americans were forced to pursue the issue of normalizing ties with Israel, which

is, in fact, should be called a publicization of ties, in order to further ensure the security of the Zionist regime [Israel], and if the region’s nations had accepted the normalization, many more countries would have normalized relations with Israel. However, a few countries with remarkable weak spots and no popular support have accepted the humiliation of normalizing ties with Israel,” Seyed Reza Sadr al-Hosseini, an expert on West Asia, told the Tehran Times.

According to the expert, countries including Morocco that normalized diplomatic ties with Israel have betrayed the Palestinian Cause. Sadr al-Hosseini said that remarkable pressure was put on Morocco to push the African Arab country into accepting the normalization with Israel.

The expert pointed to the trade-off that was offered within the Morocco-Israel deal, saying that Morocco agreed to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel in exchange for the U.S. recognizing the Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, a move that is a “direct interference in the affairs of another country and that the Polisario Front can certainly pursue the issue legally in the United Nations.”

Sadr al-Hosseini said that the normalization deals cannot negatively affect the Resistance Axis, because these deals were

made in an effort to cover up the failures of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu domestically. He also pointed out that the U.S. and its allies in the region think that they can put pressure on the Resistance Axis and the Muslim world by pushing forward with normalization deals.

“They thought that the Resistance Front would collapse if they put pressure on the center of Resistance i.e. Iran but they failed,” the expert remarked.

The whole issue of normalization has been presented as a way to counter Iran’s growing influence in the region, with some experts believing that the normalization is an American policy that intends to pave the way for the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from the region.

But recent events in the region may be indicative of a policy that was dead on arrival. While the Trump administration works to create a unified front against Iran, U.S. allies in the region show no interest in standing united against Iran. Saudi Arabia, which the Israelis have called it a big prize, has recently sought to distance itself from the normalization trend.

Saudi Arabia’s former ambassador to the U.S. Prince Turki al-Faisal al Saud strongly criticized Israel last week at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Manama Dialogue in Bahrain.

The influential Saudi prince said Israel has “incarcerated [Palestinians] in concentration camps under the flimsiest of security accusations – young and old, women and men, who are rotting there without recourse to justice.”

“They are demolishing homes as they wish and they assassinate whomever they want,” he added.

Prince al-Faisal also reiterated the Saudi position of the Arab Peace Initiative, which calls for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the territory Israel captured in 1967.

“You cannot treat an open wound with palliatives and pain killers,” the prince said.

The Saudi prince’s fiery remarks were the latest sign that the coalition that the U.S. wants to put together against Iran lacks political and cultural homogeneity, which will make the coalition doomed to fail.

## Zarif responds to Erdogan’s ‘wrong’ poem on Iranian Azerbaijan

**1→** The Iranian foreign minister was responding to a controversial poem recited by the Turkish president during a “victory parade” held in the Azerbaijani capital on the occasion of what Azerbaijan calls “victory” over Armenia.

“They separated the Aras River and filled it with rocks and rods. I will not be separated from you. They have separated us forcibly,” the poem says.

Aras is a border river between the Republic of Azerbaijan of the two ethnic-Azeri Turk majority of Iranian provinces of Ardabil and East Azerbaijan. The river is said to be a symbol of what some Iranian Azeri separatists call the separation of Iranian Azerbaijan from the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Erdogan’s poem has sparked outrage on social media platforms in Iran, with many Iranian users on social media warning about the Turkish leader’s “Neo-Ottomanism” ambitions against Iranian territorial integrity.

Some current and former Iranian officials also warned



about Turkish “expansionism.”

During the Baku parade two Iranian places – Arg of Tabriz and the Sabalan Mountain – were also mentioned in a recitation of epic poems that were broadcasted over loudspeakers. Abbas Akhoundi, the former transport minister of Iran, posted a video of the recitation on his Twitter

account, saying this shows that the Republic of Azerbaijan is going with Turkey’s regional expansionism.

“This shows the alignment of the regional expansionist policies of Turkey, the support of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the leadership and design of Israel. Azerbaijan has always been not only the protector of the land of Iran but also one of the founders and main pillars of Iranian civilization. Erdogan’s move should be condemned. But what do those who deliberately ignore things in Iran say about this?” Akhoundi tweeted.

Hesameddin Ashena, an advisor to the Iranian president, blamed Erdogan’s poem on the Center for Iranian Studies (IRAM), an Ankara-based think tank that has long been suspected by some Iranians as pushing for the disintegration of Iran through creating discord among Iran’s ethnic minorities.

Commenting on Zarif’s tweet about Erdogan, Ashena tweeted, “Relying on the pieces of advice from quasi-think tanks such as IRAM could not yield better results than this.”

## Iran summons Turkish ambassador over Erdogan’s poem on territorial integrity

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Foreign Ministry summoned Friday Turkey’s ambassador to Iran over Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s controversial poem that was recited during a parade in Baku.

The poem implies that the Azeri-populated Iranian provinces of Azerbaijan were part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

“They separated the Aras River and filled it with rocks and rods. I will not be separated from you. They have separated us forcibly,” the poem says. Aras is a border river between the Republic of Azerbaijan and two ethnic-Azeri Turk majority provinces in Iran.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh announced on Friday afternoon that the Foreign Ministry summoned the Turkish ambassador in response to Erdogan’s “interventionist and unacceptable” remarks during his trip to Baku.

“Today, Friday, December 11, 2020, the Turkish ambassador in Tehran was summoned to the Foreign Ministry by the Assistant Minister and Director General of Eurasia, and while expressing strong protest, it was underlined to the ambassador that the Islamic Republic of Iran wants an immediate explanation from the Turkish government,” Khatibzadeh said in a statement.

He added, “During the summoning, the Turkish ambassador was informed that the era of territorial claims and warmongering and expansionist empires was over.”

Khatibzadeh also said that the Foreign Ministry told the ambassador that Iran will not allow anyone to interfere in the country’s territorial integrity.

“It was stressed to the Turkish ambassador that the Islamic Republic of Iran does not allow anyone to interfere in its territorial integrity and, as its glorious history shows, it

will not compromise on its national security at all,” the spokesman stated.

Earlier on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also responded to Erdogan’s poem, saying that the poem was wrong.

“Pres. Erdogan was not informed that what he ill-recited in Baku refers to the forcible separation of areas north of Aras from Iranian motherland. Didn’t he realize that he was undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan? NO ONE can talk about OUR beloved Azerbaijan,” the chief Iranian diplomat tweeted.

Zarif also published the same tweet in Persian, a language he rarely uses on Twitter. The Persian version of the tweet is slightly different from the English one.

“They didn’t tell Erdogan that the poem that he wrongly recited in Baku is related to the forcible separation of areas north of Aras from Iranian motherland,” Zarif

said in the Persian tweet.

The Erdogan poem also sparked outrage among Iranians on social media platforms, with many users responding by publishing historical maps showing the Republic of Azerbaijan itself once was part of Iran.

Iranian former and current officials also responded to the controversial poem. Jalil Rahimi Jahanabadai, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said Erdogan’s positions do not ensure the security of the region.

“Erdogan’s positions and slogans of pan-Turkism do not ensure the security of the region, nor are they in line with the interests and friendly relations between Iran and Turkey. Historically, important parts of the Middle East, Central Asia, beyond the Caucasus, even Europe and Africa, were once under Iranian control,” lawmaker Jahanabadai explained.

## SPORTS

### FIFA ranking: Iran end year in 29th place

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team remain d e s k unmoved in the latest FIFA ranking released by the world football governing body on Thursday.

The ‘Persian Leopards’ are 29th in the ranking and also second best Asian team after Japan.

A total of 1082 full internationals were played in 2019, the biggest number since the FIFA World Ranking was introduced in 1993. By contrast, just 352 matches took place in 2020. Not since 1987 (323 matches), have so few fixtures taken place in a calendar year. And while 2020 has certainly had major disruptions, Belgium still managed to claim the title of FIFA World Ranking Team of the Year for the third consecutive time.

Winners of six of their eight matches in 2020, the Red Devils are not the only ones to see their position unchanged. Their three immediate pursuers – France (2nd), Brazil (3rd) and England (4th) – retain their respective rankings. The only change in the top five compared to 2019 is the appearance of Portugal in 5th place, fifa.com reported.

The team with the most progress in 2020 were Hungary (40th), after a gain of 44 points and 12 places allowed them to end the year in the top 50. In eight matches played in 2020, the Magyars lost just once (to Russia), a sequence of results that enabled them to secure a berth at UEFA EURO 2020.

Other notable climbers this year were Ecuador (56th, + 41 points compared to December 2019), Malta (176th, + 32 points), Brazil (3rd, + 31 points), and Equatorial Guinea (134th, + 31 points). Burundi (138th), meanwhile, picked up 29 points and made the most significant move in terms of places, ascending 13 positions.

Just like most of 2020, December saw a low number of games. Consequently, there is little movement to report other than a one-place rise for Qatar (58th, + 1), host of the next FIFA World Cup™, following their defeat of Bangladesh (186th, - 2) in a delayed AFC qualifying fixture for Qatar 2022. Ethiopia (146th, + 1), Djibouti (184, + 1) and Dominica (184th, + 1) all advanced one place and will be hoping to build on that progress in 2021.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on Feb. 18, 2021.

### Sepahan too strong for Nassaji: IPL

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Sepahan football team started d e s k Matchday 6 of Iran Professional League (IPL) with a 4-0 win over Nassaji on Friday.

The victory sees the Isfahan based football team move to second place in the table.

Brazilian forward Kiros Stanley gave the hosts the lead with a powerful header in the 21st minute. Mohammadreza Hosseini made it 2-0 in the 40th minute with a long-range strike inside the area. With a minute remaining in the first half, left-footed Sajad Shahbazzadeh scored the third goal after dribbling past several Nassaji players. Shahbazzadeh was on target once again in the 83rd minute to seal a 4-0 win over visiting team Nassaji.

On Saturday, IPL leader Gol Gohar will play Sanat Naft in Abadan, Foolad host Saipa, Paykan face Aluminum, Mes Rafsanjan play Naft Masjed Soleyman and Persepolis entertain Zob Ahan.

Machine Sazi will meet Tractor in Tabriz derby on Sunday and Shahr Khodro host Esteghlal in Mashhad.

### Doha confirmed as February 2021 FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers host

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** —The venues for the upcoming d e s k February 2021 window of the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers were confirmed by the FIBA Regional Office Asia.

After successfully holding the games of the Qualifiers in bubbles in November, the third and last window will also be organized as protected environment tournaments in order to ensure health and safety of all participants.

All remaining games of the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers will take place during this final window from February 18-22, 2021, fiba.basketball reported.

The locations approved are as follows:

The bubbles will be hosted in these respective cities: Clark (Philippines), Tokyo (Japan), Manama (Bahrain), and Doha (Qatar).

The most important criteria in choosing the hosts, like for the previous window, was health and travel guarantees and compliance with FIBA health protocols, including testing and controlled entry into a secure environment.

The exact schedule of games will be confirmed at a later stage.

Iran sit top of Group E with seven points, followed by Syria (six points), Saud Arabia (six points) and Qatar (five points).

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.

### Nemati’s goal among 6 Memorable ACL Semi-Final goals

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — With the 2020 AFC Champions d e s k League (East) semi-final fast approaching, the AFC.com takes a look back at six goals from the previous editions of the final four that continue to live long in the memory.

There have been some historic goals and goals alike when Asia’s most prestigious club competition reaches the business end of the tournament.

With the 2020 edition’s semi-final in the east between Korea Republic’s Ulsan Hyundai and Japan’s Vissel Kobe set to kick off on Sunday, the-afc.com takes a moment to remember some of the game-changing moments that have thrilled and stunned in equal measure.

Few semi-final goals will ever be celebrated by so many in attendance.

Tehran’s Azadi Stadium was packed with 100,000 fans and Nemati ensured they would not leave disappointed. The scores were level at 1-1 on aggregate following Baghdad Bounedjah’s opener but Nemati, who helped Persepolis past Al-Nassr in the 2020 semi-final, edged the Iranians back ahead.

It proved enough to take the team to a first AFC Champions League final.

Nemati will vie with Victor Simoes, Kwoun Kyung-won, Rafael Silva, Serginho and Bafetimbi Gomis to win the best goal.

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Foreign Ministry has congratulated the Iraqi government and nation on the third anniversary of victory in the war on the ISIS terrorist group.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran’s Foreign Ministry, offered congratulations on the third anniversary of the Iraqi government and nation’s victory over the terrorist group.

Hailing the victory as a result of the firm resolve and integrated fortitude of the Iraqi government and nation as well as all military and security forces of Iraq, Khatibzadeh said the triumph over inclusive terrorism has been inspired by the Iraqi religious authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, according to a ministry statement on Friday.

Highlighting Iran’s support for Iraq in the fight against ISIS terrorism, the spokesman said, “The Iranian government and nation have always stood by the Iraqi government and nation and will spare no effort to contribute to Iraq’s solidarity, security, stability, establishment, development, and prosperity.”

According to the statement, he also lauded the sacrifices that Iranian and Iraqi martyrs made in the holy fight against terrorism, saying, “The collaboration and rapport between the two governments culminated in the aftermath of the assassination of martyr Qassem Soleimani and martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, known as the commanders of the fight against terrorism and extremism.”

“Although the military force of Daesh (ISIS) has been

defeated, the Takfiri, anti-human, and terrorist ideologies and the overt and covert regional and extra-regional supports for that (ISIS) continue, and it is necessary for the international community to be vigilant in the face of the ideological spread and resurgence of that current,” Khatibzadeh added.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, also commented on the anniversary of the defeat of Daesh.

“On the anniversary of the collapse & breaking the bones of US/Zionist-backed terrorist DAESH, we commemorate & remember <Commander of Hearts> M.J. Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis & all brave warriors who lost their lives in defending the holy shrines and Resistance Movement,” Amir-Abdollahian said in a tweet on Friday.



## Industrial projects worth over \$45m inaugurated in Isfahan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini on Friday, inaugurated five industrial projects valued at 1.922 trillion rials (about \$45.7 million) in the field of home appliances in Isfahan Province central Iran, IRNA reported.

The projects included the expansion and development of production lines for various home appliances including televisions, refrigerators, washing machines and etc.



The inaugurated projects are going to save the country nearly €9.5 million every year and also create direct job opportunities for over 3770 people.

In recent years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has not been an exemption and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the previous calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) this industry's production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

In mid-August, the spokesman of Iran's Home Appliances Manufacturers Union said, "One of the country's major manufacturers is going to produce 1.5 million of various affordable home appliances and distribute them in the market by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021)."

According to Hamidreza Ghaznavi, the mentioned appliances include refrigerators, stoves, washing machines, 32 and 43-inch TV sets, and vacuum cleaners.

In early July, Ghaznavi had said that Iran is expected to become an exporter of some home appliance items as of the next Iranian calendar year (starts in March 2021).

"If the currency problems are solved and steel sheets and some petrochemical products are provided for this industry, we will become an exporter of some household appliances by the next year," he said at the time.

## Commodities worth over \$188m exported from Semnan Province

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Commodities valued at \$188.7 million were exported from Semnan Province, north-central Iran, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), a provincial official announced.

Ali Sa'adehin, the director-general of the province's customs department, said the value of the eight-month export from Semnan shows an 11 percent rise year on year.

He put the weight of exported commodities at 166,533 tons, with a nine percent drop compared to the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

The official said that 82 companies exported goods to 45 countries in the mentioned time span.

He further announced that 9,551 tons of commodities valued at \$39.949 million have been imported to the province during the first eight months of the present year, with 22 percent growth in terms of value and 21 percent fall in terms of weight.



The products have been imported from 16 countries, he added. As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year reached \$44.6 billion.

Mehdi Mirashrafi has said that in the mentioned eight months, Iran imported \$23.1 billion worth of goods, while the exports stood at \$21.5 billion.

The total volume of traded goods was estimated at about 97.7 million tons, of which over 75 million tons were related to exports and about 21.8 million tons were imported goods.

According to Mirashrafi, the imports in the said period declined one percent and 18 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

The exports also experienced a fall of 14 percent and 19 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Noting the downward trend of the country's foreign trade is ending and the trade is getting back to normal, the official said: "As we announced in previous months, fortunately, the downward trend of our country's exports is approaching normal conditions month by month, and we hope to have better conditions in terms of exports by the end of the year."

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were Iraq with over \$5.3 billion worth of exports, China with the same amount, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$2.7 billion, and Turkey with \$1.6 billion as well as Afghanistan with \$1.5 billion.

According to the IRICA head, the top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$6 billion, the UAE with \$5.4 billion, Turkey with \$2.6 billion, India with \$1.4 billion, and Germany with \$1.1 billion worth of imports.

Most of the imported goods into the country in the mentioned time span were basic goods or raw materials, Mirashrafi stressed.

# Khaf-Herat railway inaugurated

**1 →** "Today is a historical day for the two great nations of Iran and Afghanistan. The two nations from the same root, history, culture and from the same region who have maintained their brotherhood and neighborliness in the long run of history," Rouhani stated.

He further underlined the completion of the project despite the coronavirus pandemic as a great success for both sides, saying: "Today is a happy day for the two governments of Afghanistan and Iran, and I, for my part, am very happy that although I could not attend the inaugural ceremony of this important project due to the spread of the novel coronavirus, we will witness the grand opening by the order of the two presidents through videoconference and this day will surely be unforgettable for us as a historic day."

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani for his part called the project a historical plan and crucial for trade and economic development between the two sides.

The project inaugurated today is the fruit of efforts made by the two neighboring countries to reach economic welfare for the future, the



Afghan president said.

Further, he thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its help extended to Afghanistan to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ghani noted that completion of the Khaf-Herat railway during the pandemic era is an indication of

both sides' strong national determination.

He underlined the significance of the railway calling it the starting point for the revival of foreign trade and economic development of the two countries.

The Khaf-Herat railway was mainly implemented by the Islamic Republic of Iran

under a tripartite agreement between Iran, Afghanistan, and India, Eslami said, adding: "One of the most successful countries in using the capacities of Iran's Chabahar port for expanding trade exchanges is Afghanistan."

The project was implemented in four parts, Iran was in charge of completing three of the mentioned four parts, two of which are in the Iranian territory and the other two are on the Afghan side.

Iran sent its first cargo of exports to Afghanistan last week via the Khaf-Herat railroad as a trial dispatch to detect possible technical problems and issues on that route.

The 500-ton cement cargo from Iran's Khaf city arrived in Ghoryan district of Herat on Wednesday, December 2, indicating that the route was clear for the official inauguration.

Khaf-Herat line is part of the much bigger East-West Railway Corridor project which extends from China to Europe through Iran and Afghanistan.

Iran and Afghanistan have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with five other countries that are in the way of the East-West corridor and further negotiations are still ongoing in this regard.

## Tire output rises 20% in 8 months yr/yr

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of the tire in Iran has risen 20 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Some 175,650 tons of tires have been produced during the eight-month period of this year.

In terms of number, a 23-percent growth has been also achieved.

As reported, 104,025 passenger car tires were produced, which shows a 27-percent rise.

Some 16,135 van tires were produced, indicating a 12-percent growth.

Also, 36,305 truck and bus tires were produced, showing a 14-percent rise.

Production of the tires of light agricultural vehicles experienced a growth of 72 percent to stand at 3,052 tons, and that of the heavy ones rose 19 percent to stand at 11,011 tons.

Meanwhile, 4,151 tons of road building and industrial vehicle tires were produced, with a 17-percent growth compared to the first eight months of the past year.

The bicycle and motorcycle tire output stood at 12,346 tons, indicating 35 percent growth.

In early August, an official with Iran's Industry, Mining,

and Trade Ministry said that increasing the amount of investment making for the production of the tire in the country is a necessity.

Kamran Kargar, the acting head of planning, supplying, and market regulating office of the ministry, said the consumption of tire is noticeable in Iran due to the country's big transportation fleet.

"Now the ground is properly prepared for the production of light and heavy vehicles tires in the country, and investment making will play a significant role both for the establishment of new production units and for launching development projects", the official noted.

Having an annual production capacity of 426,000 tons of tire, Iran accounts for 41 percent of tire output in the West Asian region, according to the deputy director of the non-metal industries office of the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Mohsen Safdari has said that 11 tire production units are active in the country creating jobs for 14,500 people.

He said 426,000 tons is the nominal capacity, while the real output is less than this figure as some units are working with 60-70 percent of their capacity.

"Iranian tire industry is dependent on foreign raw materials by 40 percent, so we are self-reliant by 60 percent in this field", the official announced.



In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of "Pickup in Production" for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of "Surge in Production" for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic's determination to achieve this goal.

To this end, the Iranian ministries besides the private sector have been outlining their programs for the surge in production.

## Tehran, Lahore hold webinar on boosting trade

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) held a webinar on the expansion of trade with Pakistan in collaboration with Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the TCCIMA portal announced on Wednesday.

In the webinar which was attended by the officials and representatives of the two countries' private sectors, the two sides discussed ways for the expansion of trade ties.

TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, Head of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tariq Misbah, and TCCIMA Deputy Head for International Affairs Hesamedin Hallaj were among the attendees to this online event.



TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari

During the webinar, the two sides underlined the problems caused by the U.S.

sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic in the economic relations between the two countries and stressed the need for using barter trade, removal of non-tariff barriers, the expansion of cross-border and preferential trade as ways of increasing trade exchanges.

The two sides criticized the incompatibility of the volume of trade between Iran and Pakistan with the capacities and potentials of the two countries and called for boosting trade relations to over \$5 billion.

Addressing the event, Hallaj pointed to the existing capacities for the expansion of Iran-Pakistan trade and said the two countries could overcome banking problems by using barter trade.

## Iran-Austria energy working group's 6th meeting held via videoconference

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The sixth meeting of the Iran-Austria Energy Working Group was held via video conference on Wednesday, Shana reported.

Attended by the representatives of various energy organizations and government bodies, the meeting was mostly focused on the development of cooperation between the two countries in the field of renewable energies and following up on the previously signed agreements between the two sides in this regard.

Representatives of the Energy Ministry, Presidential Development Cooperation Center, Fuel Consumption Optimization Company, Renewable Energies Organization and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), Renewable Energies Association, the Electricity Syndicate, and the MAGFA Company and the representatives of the relevant Austrian organizations



and companies were among the attendees to this online event.

Stefan Schultz, Austrian Ambassador to Tehran, and Abbas Bagherpour Ardakani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Vienna, also addressed the meeting.

Special guests from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) were also present in the video conference meeting.

In his address, Schultz expressed hope that the cooperation between the two countries would expand to other areas as well in the future.

Ardakani for his part expressed hope that the current economic situation that is globally overshadowed by COVID-19 will be eased and normal daily life all around the world will be restored.

The 5th meeting of the Iran-Austria Energy Working Group was held in Vienna in mid-January, 2019.

## A weekly slight growth registered for TEDPIX

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 36,000 points, or two percent, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index stood at 1.506 million points at the end of the previous week.

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Social Security Investment Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Tejarat Bank, Esfahan Oil Refining Company, and Abadan Power Generation Company were the most widely followed indices.

TEDPIX, which had been experiencing a surprisingly rising trend since the last days of the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), hit the record high of two million points on August 2, but then it began to drop, coming down

to 1.2 million points.

After a period of correction, the index has been recently climbing.

A market analyst told IRNA on December 2 that the index is expected to resume its upward trend and reach 1.6 million points by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (December 20).

The TSE index will continue its upward trend until the end of the current year (March 20, 2021) and is expected to reach 1.8 million points by the end of the year, Ahmad Eshtiaqi said.

Referring to the return of the uptrend to the stock market, Eshtiaqi said: "One of the factors affecting the uptrend in the stock market is the sharp correction of the index and stock prices in the market, which has once again motivated investors

to re-enter the stock market."

Eshtiaqi stated that the lack of increase in bank interest rates is one of the influential factors in the return of growth to the stock market and said: "Initially, there were rumors about an increase in bank interest rates in the market, which strongly affected the market trading process and accelerated the downward trend of the stock market index, but with the news of the stabilization of bank interest rates, we have witnessed a positive impact on the market in the form of the resumption of liquidity inflow."

"The market is not facing any fundamental issues currently, but shareholders should not be expecting surprising growth like what we saw in the first few months of this year," he said.



He further noted that other than some political issues like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), no external factor is threatening the stability of the country's stock market in near future.



# Historian says U.S. not entitled to meddle in West Asia

➔ ■ How can Iran trust the U.S again while the Trump administration ditched the nuclear deal unilaterally? What is the guarantee that the incoming administration won't behave like Trump's?

A: Iran's government should recognize that their problem was with Donald Trump, and he will have no more influence after January 20th. If they believed that they could work with Barack Obama, they should believe that they can work with Joe Biden and his advisors, many of whom worked for President Obama. Having said that, they also should ask themselves why European leaders have not pressed the United States harder on Iran over the last four years. Partially, they did not because those leaders did not think that they could sway Trump, but partially they did not because they do not have much sympathy for Iran's goals.

So, Iran may well decide to focus more on relations with Russia and China, but it should do knowing that each of those countries has its own interests, which may not align with Iran's. China's Belt and Road initiative has angered people in many of the countries of Asia, and Russia's neighbors might encourage Iran to think twice about trusting Moscow.

■ Why does Washington follow the policy of "Israel First"? How can the U.S. provide security for Israel at the expense of the others?

A: This question requires a longer answer than you will want here, but the simple fact is that the U.S. has supported Israel from its founding. **Now in the U.S., there are many people who see Israel's security as central to U.S. policy in the Middle East (West Asia). In addition, there are many evangelical Christians in the U.S. who believe they have a biblical obligation to support Israel.**



Joe Biden understands in a way that Donald Trump never did that the Palestinian refugee problem is central to the on-going tension in the region, so he will not be as close an ally to Israel as Trump was. But at the same time, it is hard for me to imagine a policy that will satisfy both the Palestinians and the Israelis, and I think Biden and his aides agree. Given a choice, they will stick with the traditional ally over the unknown. Iranians also need to look at the recent recognition of Israel by Bahrain and the UAE as evidence that some Arab states no more see Israel as a threat. It appears that MBS met with Netanyahu, which is simply incredible. These Arab states are moving toward acceptance of Israel as a normal state, not a threat to their existence that needs to be destroyed.

■ How do you measure the Nov. 27 assass-

sination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh? Can it affect the nuclear deal negatively?

A: This assassination story is very strange. The Iranian government has offered several stories about what happened to Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, and no one has claimed responsibility. **The logical explanation is that Israel was behind the assassination to slow down Iranian technical progress.** And it is logical to think that the assassination might trigger an Iranian reaction that would make it impossible for Joe Biden to restart the JCPOA. But it just feels to me that there is something important about this story that we do not know yet, maybe something that the Iranian government does know or suspect. So, at this point, it does not look like it will change the direction of the nu-

clear deal when Joe Biden becomes president.

■ How do you assess the U.S and Israel's record in waging wars, especially in West Asia?

A: That is a fair question, but you do need to separate Israel and the U.S. The U.S. was opposed to the Israeli/French/British attack on Egypt in 1956 and was caught unprepared for Israel's attack on Egypt and Syria in 1967. Likewise, Israel stayed out of the U.S. wars against Iraq in 1991 and 2003, even though clearly those wars benefited Israel. I also think that the U.S. has generally used the term peace-keeping to describe, for instance, the forces in the Sinai Peninsula, rather than its forces in Syria.

I would say that the (Persian) Gulf War in 1991 was a justified and prudent use of force against a state that used force to conquer a smaller state. Iraq's invasion was an attack on peace and order in the world, hence the UN-authorized action to remove Iraq from Kuwait and many Arab states cooperated. At the end of that war, Iraq agreed to give up its chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons. I think it is fair to say that Iraq never complied fully with the UN inspection scheme, largely because Saddam Hussein did not want Iran to know what he still had. The decision to go to war in 2003 was a tragic mistake with awful consequences for Iraq based in part on the assumption that Iraq still had those weapons.

So, I would agree that the U.S. is not entitled to meddle in the Middle East (West Asia), and that the U.S. has made many policy mistakes. And yet it is the closest thing to a good broker for the region with the power and prestige to make things happen. Even a poorly run Trump administration with a secretary of state who does not command much respect was able to broker recognition agreements between Israel and both Bahrain and the UAE.

## Kansas professor says few claim U.S. actions in the region have been positive

There is question why assassination of Iranian scientist “happened at this current time,” Professor Wuthrich notes

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — An American academic says “few people would claim that the United States actions in the region (West Asia) have all been positive or always reflected its ideals.”

Michael Wuthrich, assistant professor of political science at the University of Kansas, also says Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel see eye to eye.

“The Trump administration has certainly shown more of a priority for Israel even than other administrations. Part of this was because Trump and Netanyahu have similar political styles and outlooks,” Michael Wuthrich tells the Tehran Times as he was asked about his prediction of Joe Biden's administration toward Israel.

This is the text of the interview:

■ Given the U.S. arms deal with Saudi Arabia, do you expect a significant shift in U.S. policies towards Arab states and West Asia?

A: The Biden administration is most likely to repair relationships with European countries and probably decrease some of the closeness of the Trump administration to Saudi Arabia and Israel. These two countries are likely to encounter more criticism for their domestic and international politics from the Biden administration, but I doubt that they will completely pull out of arms agreements that Trump has already made unless it is very easy to do so.

■ The U.S. has meddled in West Asia under the pretext of providing security for Israel and stability for the region. But it seems that Washington is ready to sacrifice the entire region for the sake of Israel.

A: The Trump administration has certainly shown more of a priority for Israel even than other administrations. Part of this was because Trump and Netanyahu have similar political styles and outlooks. The Biden administration would likely be more balanced in its approach to Israel. Biden and Netanyahu are less likely to get along as well. Attitudes toward Israel do vary from president to president. Israel is considered an ally by the United States, but this doesn't mean that everyone agrees with all of their actions in the region. The United States and the region would probably benefit most from a balanced and fair approach to all parties.

■ How can Iran trust the U.S again while the Trump administration quit the nuclear deal unilaterally? What is the guarantee that the incoming administration won't behave so?

A: You ask a reasonable question from the perspective of the Iranian public. It is important for Iranians to understand that President Trump was a very unusual political leader in American politics. He broke many norms that presidents of either party would not have. Most of these behaviors, where Trump behaved differently than other leaders, have created a lack of trust or confidence in the promises of U.S. leaders. President-elect Biden is definitely a member of the older tradition of American politics. He has signaled and expressly stated over and over that he wants to return to the JCPOA agreement with Iran and the European countries. The question is not what the U.S. will do, but how will the Iranian government respond to a gesture by a new president who fully intends to keep his promises to international agreements.

Iran has a lot of potential strength, and even though it is operating in conflict with the U.S. now, a healthy relationship with the U.S. would actually reveal that both countries could benefit from a renewed partnership. Most of Iran's concerns in its regional neighborhood overlap with similar or complementary concerns of the United States. Now considering the coming alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia, it would be good for Iran to begin to open channels of communication with the U.S. Turkey under Erdogan has tried to make a friend of Putin and Russia, but this has only led to if anything, Russia taking advantage of Turkey, and Turkey losing some of its political leverage. Iran should, of course, work with Russia and China as most countries do, but I'm not sure that a close friendship would work out well for Iran. Like it or not, Iran has the most to gain by working out its relationship with Europe and the United States.

■ How do you measure the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh on Nov. 27? Can it derail a possible revitalization of the nuclear agreement?

A: The assassination was very concerning. There is only speculation about who and why the nuclear scientist was assassinated and why it happened at this current time. Most people believe that Israel was behind it, but I don't know what their intention was. Were the assassins trying to bait Iran into



a greater conflict with the United States? The situation could potentially affect the nuclear deal in various ways, or it could end up not being an issue. How much will Iran end up playing into the intentions of those who instigated the assassination?

■ The U.S. claims that it want to establish peace in the region while it seems that American policies and Israel's adventures are the main sources of insecurity. What is your comment?

A: This is a very complex question. There is propaganda on both sides of the U.S. involvement in the region. As you know, there is a lot of propaganda about Israel and Iran's involvement in the region. I think few people would claim that the United States' actions in the region have all been positive or always reflected its ideals, but few people inside or outside of Iran would say that Iran's involvement in the region has always been completely successful. This does not mean that Iran, like every other state, shouldn't have interests or involvement in the region. The problem is that when countries see one another as enemies, they see all involvement and action of the other as threatening. At the same time, even in the current situation of tension between the U.S. and Iran, some of the actions and involvement of these two countries in the region, HAVE nonetheless benefited one another. Israel has its own interests and agenda in the region that also sometimes works against the benefit of Iran and even the U.S. If we look at the interests of these actors, though, the primary expressed concern of all of them is security. There are many ways that greater security and peace in the region would work to everyone's benefit.

ganize a referendum on the region's status.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres believes “the solution to the question can still be found based on Security Council resolutions,” his spokesman said.

Morocco became the fourth Arab country, after the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Sudan, to normalize ties with the Israeli regime since August.

The normalization deals have been condemned by all Palestinian factions as a betrayal of their cause.

(Source: Press TV)

## Global activists slam Nigeria for crackdown on protesters

Global activists and celebrities have hit out at the Nigerian government over a violent crackdown on peaceful protesters demonstrating against police brutality two months ago.

In an open letter addressed to Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and made public in Lagos to coincide with International Human Rights Day on Thursday, 60 activists condemned the government for “unwarranted force against its own unarmed citizens”.

Writing under the auspices of Diaspora Rising, which calls itself an advocacy body formed to strengthen “bonds among members of the global Black family”, the activists called for the release of jailed protesters as well as the prosecution of security operatives responsible for shooting civilians in Lagos, al Jazeera reported.

They also urged the government to lift a ban on public demonstrations.

Among the signatories were US activist Opal Tometi, actors Danny Glover and Kerry Washington, Swedish teenage eco-warrior Greta Thunberg, singer Alicia Keys, civil rights campaigner Angela Davis, US congresswoman Ilhan Omar, Nigerian American rapper Jidenna and Bernice King, the daughter of Martin Luther King Jr.

Tometi, a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. and founder of Diaspora Rising, described Nigeria's response to the protests as “very shameful”.

“Instead of showing up alongside [the people], the government went to suppress them, went to squelch the protest, and stamp it out,” she said.

Amnesty International has said security forces shot dead at least 10 people during a protest at Lekki Toll gate, the epicenter of the demonstrations, in Lagos on October 20.

But the military has denied using live ammunition, insisting soldiers only fired in the air to disperse the crowd that had gathered in defiance of a curfew.

However, the Nigerian authorities have said more than 100 people, including 43 security officers, were killed nationwide following days of street protests.

## Erdogan says U.S. sanctions disrespect ally Turkey

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said that U.S. sanctions over Turkey's purchase of Russian defence systems was disrespectful to an important ally in NATO, state-owned Anadolu news agency reported on Friday.

After sources told Reuters that Washington was poised to impose sanctions on Turkey, Anadolu cited Erdogan as saying that Turkey will be patient and see what trend emerges after the new U.S. administration takes office next month.

## Hezbollah rejects charges against Diab in port blast

Lebanon resistance group Hezbollah said Friday recently filed charges were politically targeting the caretaker prime minister and three allied former ministers over this summer's massive explosion in Beirut.

The group called on the investigating judge to reconsider his decision, saying it lacked a legal and constitutional basis and that the four were being selectively charged.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab, resigned in the wake of the Aug. 4 explosion and remains in his post in a caretaker capacity, as Lebanese officials have failed to agree on a new Cabinet.

The four were the most senior officials to be charged in the investigation and are set to be questioned next week by investigating judge Fadi Sawwan. He was named by the government to the post a few days after the explosion, and has been conducting his probe mostly in secrecy.

The explosion in the port was caused by the ignition of a large stockpile of explosive material that had been stored at the port for six years, with the knowledge of top security officials and politicians who did nothing about it. It killed more than 200 people and wounded thousands, devastating large parts of the capital Beirut.

## Resistance News

## Morocco, Israel reach U.S.-brokered normalization amid Palestinians' condemnation

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — Morocco and Israel have reached a U.S.-brokered agreement on normalizing relations, making Morocco the fourth Arab country - after the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Sudan - to agree to a normalization deal with the Tel Aviv regime since August.

U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted on Thursday that “Israel and the Kingdom of Morocco have agreed to full diplomatic relations”, claiming that agreement would be “a massive breakthrough for peace in the Middle East!”

The White House said in a statement that Trump sealed the agreement in a telephone conversation with Morocco's King Mohammed VI. It quoted the Moroccan king as saying that the agreement aimed to resume “diplomatic relations between Morocco and Israel and expand economic and cultural cooperation to advance regional stability.”

As part of the agreement, Trump who is due to leave office on January 20 agreed to recognize Morocco's “sovereignty” over the contested Western Sahara region.

Morocco annexed the vast Western Sahara region, a former Spanish colony, in 1975 and has since been in conflict with the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, a movement that seeks to establish an independent state in the territory and end Morocco's presence there.

The West African Arab country is currently in control of 80 percent of the region, including its phosphate deposits and fishing waters.

The American president “reaffirmed his support for Morocco's serious, credible, and realistic autonomy proposal as the only basis for a just and lasting solution to the dispute over the Western Sahara territory,” said the White House statement, Press TV reported.

It stressed that as such Trump “recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the entire Western Sahara territory.”

Under the agreement, Rabat will establish full diplomatic relations and resume official contacts with Tel Aviv and grant it overflights. It will also direct flights to and from Israel for all Israelis.

## Russia rejects U.S. decision on Western Sahara

Russia has rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Moroccan “sovereignty” over Western Sahara — as part of a normalization deal between Morocco and the Israeli regime — as a violation of international law.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov on Friday called the U.S. decision “unilateral” and said “there are relevant resolutions, there is the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.”

“This is a violation of international law,” Bogdanov said.

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ria-backed Polisario Front, a movement that seeks to establish an independent state in the territory and end Morocco's presence there.

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On Thursday, the United Nations (UN) said its position on the disputed Western Sahara region was “unchanged” despite the U.S. recognition of Moroccan “sovereignty.”

The UN has deployed a peacekeeping mission, the MINURSO, to the region to monitor a ceasefire and to supposedly or-

The statement said the figures were designated for what it alleged as “human rights abuses”.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, condemned the U.S. sanctions on the Yemeni Ansarullah officials as “a terrorist act.”

“Recent sanctions by the United States, which itself is commanding aggression and attacks on the Yemeni people, are condemned and viewed as an illegal act. There is no ruling that allows the United States to sanction others,” Houthi wrote in a post published on his official Twitter page

The U.S. Treasury has imposed sanctions on five Yemeni citizens and members of the Houthi Ansarullah movement in Yemen, with the popular group denouncing the move as “an act of American terrorism” against the war-racked Arab country.

The department, in a statement released on Thursday, announced that the U.S. sanctions were slapped on several officials including Deputy Director of Yemen's National Security Agency Mutlaq Amer al-Marani, Head of the Political Security Office Maj. Gen. Abdul Qader al-Shami, and Abdul Hakim al-Khawani, who runs the National Security Agency.

## Yemen condemns U.S. sanctions on Ansarullah officials as “American terrorism”



## Could COVID-19 immunity passports help life return to normal?

➔ **1** The World Health Organization has already questioned the reliability of a so-called COVID passport since medical officials still don't know how long vaccine immunity will last.

The COVID passports will also, theoretically, be used for access to workshops, exhibits, concerts, sporting events, and other large gatherings.



Last month, Iran's National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control issued a directive, based on which corona tests would be mandatory upon entry and exit for passengers during air, land, and sea travels.

Over the past couple of months, many countries, including Iran, have imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, flights have been suspended and road and sea travels restricted to a great extent.

Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki has expressed hope that the country will introduce the home-grown COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2021).

## 300 ancient relics unearthed in northern Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A total of 300 historical objects have been unearthed so far in an archeological site in the ancient neighborhood of Sarcheshmeh, which is located in the historical texture of Gorgan, the capital of northern Golestan province.



The relics have been discovered during an excavation season, which commenced by a team of Iranian archeologists some forty days ago, deputy tourism minister has said.

The archaeological project could resolve ambiguities and answer the questions about the history and cultural heritage of this ancient region, Mohammad-Hassan Talebian announced on Thursday.

He also noted that the recovered objects, which belong to different historical eras, will go on display in the museums across the country after being restored.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus — a one-millennium-old brick tower — amongst its most famous.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that the tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

## IranAir granted license to resume Tehran-Ankara flights

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iran's flag carrier IranAir has attained a license to restart its roundtrip Tehran-Ankara flights.

Iranian Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on Thursday revealed the issuance of a flight license for Iran's National Flag Carrier (IranAir) to resume Tehran-Ankara service amid the pandemic, Mehr reported.

Now, with the reduction of restrictions imposed on countries to battle COVID-19, IranAir, which had suspended its flight to Ankara due to coronavirus, will resume a weekly flight en route Tehran-Ankara and vice versa with consulting and receiving the license from the Iranian Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the news agency said.



The flight will be resumed by fully observing health protocols and guidelines between the two countries.

In the coronavirus era, all air travelers are required to wear masks, maintain physical distancing and present a recent health certificate to show they have tested negative for the novel coronavirus.

# Iranian plateau gave birth to writing: French archaeologist

➔ **1** The Elamite writing was unearthed in 1901 and no one could decipher that over the past 119 years, the report said.

"This could be a historical revolution, because scientists have long believed that the cradle of writing the world is in Mesopotamia, in other words, present-day Iraq."

Susa was once the capital of the Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the Achaemenian king Darius I and his successors from 522 BC. Throughout the late prehistoric periods, Elam was closely tied culturally to Mesopotamia. Later, perhaps because of domination by the Akkadian dynasty (c. 2334–c. 2154 BC), Elamites adopted the Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform script.

Elam, located in the region of the modern-day provinces of Ilam and Khuzestan in Iran, was one of the most impressive civilizations of the ancient world. It was never a cohesive ethnic kingdom or polity but rather a federation of different tribes governed at various times by cities such as Susa, Anshan, and Shimashki until it was united during the Middle Elamite Period, briefly, as an empire. The name Elam was given to the region by others — the Akkadians and Sumerians of Mesopotamia — and



is thought to be their version of what the Elamites called themselves — Haltami (or Haltamti) — meaning "those of the high country". 'Elam', therefore, is usually

translated to mean "highlands" or "high country" as it was comprised of settlements on the Iranian Plateau which stretched from the southern plains to the elevations of the

Zagros Mountains.

Elamite language, extinct language spoken by the Elamites in the ancient country of Elam, which included the region from the Mesopotamian plain to the Iranian Plateau. According to Britannica, Elamite documents from three historical periods have been found. The earliest Elamite writings are in a figurative or pictographic script and date from the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.

Documents from the second period, which lasted from the 16th to the 8th century BC, are written in cuneiform; the stage of the language found in these documents is sometimes called Old Elamite.

The last period of Elamite texts is that of the reign of the Achaemenian kings of Persia (6th to 4th century BC), who used Elamite, along with Akkadian and Old Persian, in their inscriptions. The language of this period, also written in the cuneiform script, is often called New Elamite.

Although all three stages of Elamite have not been completely deciphered, several grammatical features of the language are known to scholars. These include a plural formation using the suffix -p, the personal pronouns, and the endings of several verb forms.

## Yazd mosques, temples made national heritage

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Four mosques and Zoroastrian temples along with other historical properties, scattered across the central Iranian province of Yazd, have recently been added to the National Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Thursday in separate letters to the governor-general of the province.

Molla Ahmad Seyyedabad Mosque and the Taqareh-Band Mosque, Hosseinieh and Cistern Complex as well as the remnants of Kuh-e Gabri Fire Temple and Nersi Abad Pirangah, a temple worshipped by Zoroastrians, are among the properties added to the National Heritage list.

The list also includes the remnants of Turan Posht Fortress and Turan Posht Qadamgah.

Qadamgah refers to places of pilgrimage in the Islamic world where there is believed to be a footprint attributed to a prominent religious figure or a place where a holy person is thought to have stepped in.

Back in May, provincial tourism chief Ali-Asghar Samadiani announced that 59 historical and natural sites in the province were added to the National Heritage List during the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March

20), while over 150 archaeological and historical sites were identified across the province through excavations and surveys conducted by Yazd Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department during the same period.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

It is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls



create a pleasant microclimate.

Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities.

It survives today with its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

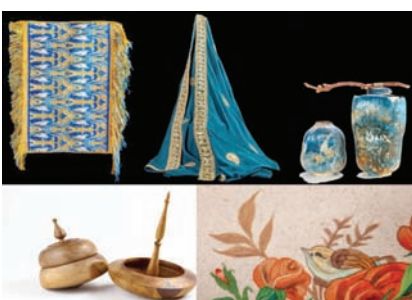
## Pandemic forces Fajr handicrafts festival to go fully online

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The 5th Fajr national handicrafts festival, one of Iran's major crafts shows, will be held entirely online in February due to the coronavirus outbreak, according to the organizers.

Full arrangements have been made to hold the festival at the same time as previous editions, which were held in February, Vida Tavahodi announced on Thursday.

Extensive planning has been done to create significant visual attractions for the online event, which is expected to be well-received despite all the problems and issues caused by the pandemic, the official added.

The festival, which brings together works from all over the country, is a venue for showcasing tens of ancient and modern Iranian handicrafts.



The event will showcase woodwork, illuminated manuscript, miniature, textile printing, enamel, leatherwork, calligraphy, metalwork, mirrorwork, and marquetry, among others. It will also feature potteries, ceramics, personal ornamentation, rugs, and kilim carpets.

## Exhibit to highlight obsolete fields of handicrafts

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A crafts competition and exhibition will put the spotlight on the lesser-practiced Iranian handicrafts, which are on the brink of extinction.

The event titled "Design and Construction in Handicrafts" will be inaugurated at the National Museum of Iran on December 22, showcasing skills, which are in dire need of being preserved, deputy tourism minister announced on Thursday.

The event also aims at identifying active and talented crafters in such fields, emerging creative ideas while preserving the originality, and updating the products for the potential buyers, Pouya Mahmoudian said.

Fortunately, 99 handicrafts fields, which had been fallen into oblivion, have been identified and revived across the country so far by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism,



and Handicrafts, the official added.

The exhibition will continue until December 28, she

concluded.

Back in May, the official noted that due to the outbreak of coronavirus, suitcase exports of handicrafts were completely stopped since the month of Esfand (the last month of the year), and official exports of handicrafts experienced a steep decline.

"Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages," she said.

The country exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19).

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.

## A peek into Iranian traditional houses, mansions

(Part 5/8)

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — During Qajar era when cultural interactions and political affairs with foreign countries begin to grow, more attention was paid to fine arts, and European architecture started to be blending with the Iranian architecture in governmental buildings and some palaces.

Beautiful samples of colorful buildings, plaster woks and mirror works can be found in the houses remaining from Qajar dynasty in Kashan. The Boroujerdi House as one of the best architectural works of

Iran is full of the innovations of Iranian traditional artists.

However, it is important to remember that the furniture and the behavioral patterns inside such places do not exist anymore and it is hard to investigate the relationship between internal architecture and behavioral patterns.

Iranian miniatures or portraits can be considered the only visual documents which provide us with valuable information in this field; because although their space and elements are not reflected in a mirror-like manner, some parts of the space in the

individual form or in combination with other spaces and in some cases abstract spaces are pointed to in accordance with the subject and importance of the portrait.

However, it still points to the elements or spaces which exist. Iranian three dimensional drawing methods helped project some parts and elements of the space, while other parts attracted less attentions. As it can be observed, the ceiling of the architectural spaces is less frequently painted in drawings, yet the floor, walls and elements which are located on it are usually represented perfectly.



A view of the 19th-century Boroujerdi House in Kashan, central Iran.



# Cities to be classified for climate change impact

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Cities across the country are to be classified in terms of feeling the impact of climate change so that solutions will be presented for cities experiencing more changes in temperature.

Climate change is an issue that affects the whole world and Iran is no exception, so we are assessing cities in terms of damages climate change has done to urban infrastructure or will do in the future, Masoud Tajrishi, deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE) for human environment, told IRNA on Friday.

It is planned to classify cities in terms of the effects of climate change and the problems caused by it, and then, based on global experience, determine the best way for each to reduce their vulnerability, he noted.

He went on to say that this is done in collaboration with the DOE and the Institute of Transportation Studies and Research, which will be fully prepared by May 2021.



The effects of climate change will be estimated in cities such as Tehran, Kerman or Shiraz, in which infrastructures were affected by climate change or will be in the future, then the cities are ranked and in the next step a solution is suggested based on the global experience, he explained.

He also added that strategies will be chosen to increase the resilience of cities.

The idea is to gradually identify and classify cities in terms of rainfall, drought, or sand and dust storms, and finally prepare an action plan so that cities will suffer the least from climate change in the future, he highlighted.

Mohammad Darvish, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office said in January 2019, the effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences.

## Reproduction site: Persian zebras at lesser risk of extinction

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — The central province of Yazd is one of the areas where several sites for the protection and reproduction of some wildlife species established, including the endangered Persian zebra.

The Persian onager, also called Persian zebra, is a subspecies of onager native to Iran. It is listed as Endangered, with no more than 600 individuals left in the wild and only 30 individuals living within North American institutions.

Persian onagers are known to inhabit mountain steppes, semidesert, or desert plains. They are usually found in desert steppes. Their largest population is found in Khar Turan National Park.

The Persian onager is listed as endangered by IUCN Red List, as it is close to extinction. Currently, poaching for meat and hides, competition with livestock, and drought are the greatest threats to this species. Asiatic zebras are highly and legally protected; hunting them is forbidden.

Persian zebra breeding site in Abarkooh is the third site in Yazd province, which was established in 2010 with an area of about 200 hectares, and started activity with four zebras transferred from the Gorab breeding center of Mehriz city.

In recent years, due to the measures taken by the Department of Environment (DOE) to conserve Persian zebra, and the population of this species in Abarkooh site has had a favorable growth.

Nayerreh Poormolaei, the provincial DOE chief said



that "According to the organization's policies in order to manage the population of zebra through breeding, in 2010, 15 zebras were transferred from this site to Siahkoo National Park and after a while released to their natural habitat, and also this year, 9 other zebras were transferred from this site to the Mehriz breeding site."

Currently, this site is in a good condition with five zebras, and it is planned to carry out a project to release and re-introduce the population of this species in the habitats of Abarkooh city in the future after the conditions are provided, she noted.

This protective action is very complex and requires study before introduction, special measures at the time of introduction and a long, round-the-clock process after

re-introduction, she highlighted.

She went on to say that considering that the plains of Siahkoo National Park in Ardakan city have hosted a large population of zebras in the past, an attempt was made to release them in their historical habitats.

Wildlife transfer projects face high risks during transportation and release, but there is sufficient knowledge, tools, and experience in this field in Yazd province and so far there have been no casualties during species transfer, she stated.

For the first time, the re-introduction of zebras to the northern habitats in Yazd province was carried out with complete success, and after a year, the results of monitoring showed that the adaptation process has been satisfactory, she emphasized.

Noting that the region has a good capacity to maintain and breed native animal species, she said that due to the climatic conditions of the region and the supply of food, zebras are able to reproduce every year.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the Department of the Environment (DOE) held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas. By the year 2003, the size of the DOE supervised areas reached 11,791,788.225 hectares.



as in 2019, and indeed some of our estimates suggest Chinese emissions may have actually increased for the year as a whole in 2020 relative to 2019, despite the pandemic," he added.

Researchers believe that dramatic drop experienced through the pandemic response might be hiding a longer term fall-off in carbon, more related to climate policies.

## Climate change: Covid drives record emissions drop in 2020

The global response to the Covid-19 pandemic has driven the biggest annual fall in CO2 emissions since World War Two, say researchers.

Their study indicates that emissions have declined by around 7% this year.

France and the UK saw the greatest falls, mainly due to severe shutdowns in response to a second wave of infections.

China, by contrast, has seen such a large rebound from coronavirus that overall emissions may grow this year.

The decline in carbon in 2020 has dwarfed all the previous big falls.

According to the Global Carbon Project team, this year saw carbon emissions decline by 2.4 billion tons.

In contrast, the fall recorded in 2009 during the global economic recession was just half a billion tons, while the ending of World War Two saw emissions fall by

under one billion tons.

Across Europe and the US, the drop was around 12% over the year, but some individual countries declined by more.

France saw a fall of 15% and the UK went down by 13%, according to one analysis. "The main reason is that these two countries had two waves of confinement that were really quite severe compared with other countries," said Prof Corinne Le Quéré, from the University of East Anglia, UK, who contributed to the study.

"The UK and France have a lot of their emissions come from the transport sector and generally have a bit less coming from industry and other sectors.

"This is even more true in France, because so much of their electricity production is from nuclear energy, so 40% of their emissions are from the transport sector."

Aviation around the world has been

badly hit by restrictions and by the end of this year, it's expected that emissions from this sector will still be 40% below 2019 levels.

One country that may have bucked the trend is China.

Overall, the research team estimates that the country will experience a fall in emissions of 1.7% this year but some analysis suggests that the country has already rebounded enough from Covid-19 that the overall carbon output may have increased.

"All our datasets show that China experienced a big drop in emissions in February and March, but the datasets differ in the level of emissions towards the end of 2020," said Jan Ivar Korsbakken, a senior researcher at CICERO, who was involved in the study.

"In late 2020, China is at least close to having the same level of daily emissions

## Yalda Night needs national empathy against coronavirus

**1 →** Sizdah Bedar, also known as Nature Day, is an Iranian festival held annually on the thirteenth day of Farvardin, the first month of the Iranian calendar (falling on April 1 this year), during which Iranians reconcile with nature by spending time in resorts, gardens, and natural areas. It marks the end of the Noruz holidays in Iran.

It can now be said that Iranian families who have been involved with coronavirus infection have come to the conclusion that they will not get rid of the disease except by observing healthcare methods and social distance.



### COVID-19 control underway

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused most of the infected cities to get out of the high-risk "red" zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow.

Due to the high prevalence of the disease, a plan also went into effect on November 21, according to which all occupations, except for emergency services and basic food suppliers, get closed for two weeks in high-risk cities.

In a press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 9,549 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,092,407. She added that 787,853 patients have so far recovered, but 1,408 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 232 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 51,727, she added.

Lari noted that currently, 34 cities are in high-risk "red" zones, 260 in orange and 154 in yellow.

## 'Urgent action' required as UK air pollution soars to higher level than before pandemic

After a brief fall at the height of the national lockdown in spring, pollution levels across the UK are now higher than they were before the pandemic, exacerbating the impacts of the coronavirus, and putting millions of people at higher risk.

A new study has found toxic air is set to rise significantly when coronavirus control measures ease further, while the pandemic has pushed air quality concerns down the agenda as national and local policymakers grapple with immediate healthcare and economic impacts.

The analysis by independent think tank the Centre for Cities, revealed that while the spring lockdown reduced NO2 levels by 38 per cent on average across 49 cities and large towns, they subsequently rose again in the second half of the year as activity increased.

As a result, NO2 levels have now hit or exceeded pre-pandemic levels in around 80 per cent of places studied during the second half of 2020.

This is despite 98 per cent of the country remaining under significant lockdown restrictions – raising serious concerns air quality will significantly worsen once life returns to something resembling normality next year.

In some cities, such as Barnsley, Bournemouth and Portsmouth, NO2 levels in September were already even higher than they were before the spring lockdown.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 80)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

### واژه‌نامه‌ی فارسی به انگلیسی\*

bus.....	اتوبوس	آ	
car.....	اتومبیل	آب	water.....
Muslim male name.....	احمد	آسان [آسون]	easy.....
	أحوال، جمع حال	آشیدا	Bosnian female student.....
indicative.....	اخباری	آقا	man; gentleman; Mr; Sir.....
abbreviation (جمع: اختصارات)	اختصار	(جمع: آقایان) آقایان	
Armenia.....	آرمنستان	آلمان	Germany.....
Europe.....	اروپا	آلمانی	German.....
from; of.....	از	آمدن - آ [آمدن - میام]	to come.....
	آسامی، جمع اسم	آن [اون]	it; that.....
Spain.....	اسپانیا	آنجا [اونجا]	there.....
Spanish.....	اسپانیایی	آنها = آن‌ها [اونها]	they; those.....
professor.....	استاد	آهسته	slowly.....
use n.....	استفاده	آیا / آیا / آیا	interrogative particle..... /آیا/
to use.....	استفاده کردن (آز)	آ	
name.....	اسم <sup>۱</sup> (جمع: اسمی، اسم‌ها)	آتاق	room.....
England.....	انگلیس [انگلیس]	اسم <sup>۲</sup> (جمع: اسم‌ها)	noun.....
English.....	انگلیسی [انگلیسی]	اضافه	genitive; addition.....
he; she.....	او [اون]	اضافه کردن	to add.....
	اوقات /ow/، جمع وقت	اغلب	often.....
Ukraine.....	اوکراین	آفسانه	Iranian female name.....
first.....	اول مرتب، قید	افقی	horizontal.....
	اهالی، جمع اهل	آگر [اگر]	if.....
citizen, native.....	اهل (جمع: اهالی)	ایترامی	subjunctive.....
Iran.....	ایران	آلفبا	alphabet.....

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → C

## FDA to penalize manufacturers producing unlabeled GM foods

Iran's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will penalize food manufacturers who have not labeled genetically modified (GM) food products, Vahid Mofid, the caretaker of the FDA department of food and beverages has announced.

All food products containing ingredients derived from GMOs must be labeled, including soybean and corn oil, rapeseed and cottonseed, he also noted.

He went on to say that eight laboratories in addition to the Energy & Power Industries Laboratories Company can test the products in terms of containing GM organism.

Labeling the products is merely done out of respect for the customer and providing the consumer with different choices and has nothing to do with the product's safety and health, he concluded.

## سازمان غذا و دارو با محصولات تراریخته فاقد برچسب برخورد می کند

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو، وحید مفید در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اعلام کرد: تمام محصولات تراریخته در سطح عرضه کنترل می شوند و در صورتی که تراریخته باشند اما برچسب نداشته باشند، حتماً برخورد می کنیم.

وی اضافه کرد: برخی محصولات در کشور مانند ذرت، سویا و کلزا از نوع تراریخته وجود دارد و فرآورده های غذایی در صورت استفاده از این محصولات تراریخته باید آن را روی برچسب خود اعلام کنند. مفید افزود: هشت آزمایشگاه علاوه بر آزمایشگاه مرجع در کشور می توانند تراریختگی را تعیین کنند.

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو گفت: درج تراریختگی در برچسب جلوی ترکیبات، صرفاً احترام به مشتری و فراهم کردن قدرت انتخاب برای مصرف کننده است و هیچ ارتباطی با ایمنی و سلامت آن فرآورده ندارد.



# Majid Majidi's next film on COVID-19 pandemic in China

**A R T** TEHRAN — Majid Majidi, the director of acclaimed movies “Sun Children” and “Children of Heaven”, will be doing his next project on the coronavirus pandemic in China.

He is currently in China to promote his latest drama “Sun Children” at the Hainan International Film Festival now underway in the city of Sanya.

Speaking to the China Global Television Network (CGTN) on Wednesday, he said that he will be traveling to Yunnan Province in southwest China after the festival to scout for potential locations for his upcoming movie. This follows a trip to the eastern city of Hangzhou for the same purpose.

Majidi said the film centers on a little girl during the coronavirus crisis, without giving more details. He added that the cast will be all Chinese.

Earlier in January, Majidi announced his plans to adapt the experience of the Chinese people with COVID-19 for the silver screen in what was reported to be a story of struggle and resistance.

“I know you are going through very hard days and moments,” Majidi said in a letter sent to the Persian service of China International Radio (CRI) in late January.

“I should tell you that the hearts of the people of the world and especially the Iranian



A poster of the Hainan International Film Festival for Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi's master class.

people are with you. I have been thinking of you and the innocent children of China every moment,” he noted.

Children are a recurring theme in the works of the award-winning filmmaker, who said that a story told from a child's perspective is “more beautiful and appealing.”

“I care a lot about children, both at home and abroad. Children are the hope and future

of a country. The kids are important and we should take good care of them. That's what I hope to convey through my films,” the director told CGTN.

Majidi's “Sun Children” was an entry to the festival. He also held a master class on Friday to share his experience in and insight on filmmaking.

This is not the first time that the director

has taken part in the Chinese film circuit. Last year, Majidi served as one of the seven jury members at the 9th Beijing International Film Festival.

The child labor drama “Sun Children” represents Iran during the 93rd Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category, while it is also one of Iran's submissions to the foreign language film category of the 78th Golden Globe Awards.

The movie tells the story of 12-year-old Ali and his three friends. Together, they work hard to survive and support their families, doing small jobs in a garage and committing petty crimes to make fast money.

“Sun Children” has been acclaimed previously in several festivals. The film won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February.

It was named best film in the international competition of the 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan in late October. Majidi was also crowned the best director.

The movie brought Ruhollah Zamani the award for best actor and Majidi the Zaven Qukasian, a Golden Butterfly.

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

## Iranian producers urge government to organize Fajr filmfest amid pandemic

**A R T** TEHRAN — The Film Producers Guild of Iran has asked the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and its Cinema Organization of Iran not to shut down the Fajr Film Festival amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement published by media on Thursday, the association wrote, “Perhaps, the shutdown of this major and unique event is the easiest and best way for those people who either do not have the ability to resist against a crisis or have no concern about the total closure of the Iranian cinema.

“However, it is not to be forgotten that the Iranian cinema can intelligently use every event to reach to better days, and has the potential and resilience to remain the most

important cultural event of the country as ever.

“Surely organizing the Fajr Film Festival in the midst of these conditions under the auspices of the relevant organizations will change the event into a new and valuable experience in the history of the Iranian cinema, making its friends happy and its enemies disappointed.”

The association also pointed to the major international film festivals, including Locarno, Toronto, London and Annecy, which were organized during the pandemic, and asked the Fajr organizers to follow the procedures they instituted.

Earlier, the Fajr Film Festival announced that the 39th edition of Iran's major film event would go ahead with screenings but only for the jury due to a sharp spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

They said that the festival would be organized on its regular date from January 31 to February 10, 2021, however, there would be no public screenings during the festival unless there would be a dramatic change in conditions.

Since the organizers have no safe platform to guarantee the festival entries against piracy, they have no plans for organizing the festival online either.

The 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival was held in Tehran from February 1 to 11, just a few days before the first cases of the COVID-19 infection were detected in the country.

Afterwards, the international edition of the festival, which was scheduled to be held in April, was canceled due to the pandemic.

## Iranian movies honored at Barcelona Asian festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — Three Iranian films “African Violet”, “Diapason” and “Old Men Never Die” have been honored at the Asian Film Festival Barcelona in Spain.

“African Violet” written by Hamidreza Bababeigi won the award for best screenplay in the official competition, while “Diapason” directed and written by Hamed Tehrani won the same award in Discoveries Section.

Directed by Mona Zandi-Haqiqi “African Violet” is about the middle-aged Shokuh who finds out that her elderly ex-husband Fereidun has been placed in a nursing home by their children. With her second husband Reza,



“African Violet” by Mona Zandi-Haqiqi won the best screenplay at the Asian Film Festival Barcelona.

she decides to remove Fereidun and take care of him in their own home.

“Diapason” focuses on a single mother facing the tragic death of her young daughter and problems in its aftermath. It is Hoda's 17th birthday. She plans to study dentistry, and has spent the morning taking exams alongside other girls with their own dreams of college, a profession and a life in which they are able to provide for themselves. Hoda's proud mother Rana organizes a modest celebration and promises a big party when she passes her university entrance exams.

“Old Men Never Die” directed by Reza Jamali won a special mention. It is about

100-year-old Aslan, the head of a death squad in his youth, who lives with his other single old fellows in a remote village. Since he came to the village 45 years ago, nobody has ever died there! Now, most of the population consists of old and disabled men. All being done with life, they believe the only way to bring death back to the village is to commit suicide!

In the official competition, the Asian Film Festival Barcelona, which took place from October 28 to November 8, selected “Balloon” by Chinese director Pema Tseden as best film, while Jeon Gye-soo from South Korea won the award for best director for “Vertigo”.

## Resistance Theater Festival picks six plays for Guest Section

**A R T** TEHRAN — The organizers of the 17th Resistance Theater Festival in Tehran announced on Thursday that six plays would be performed in the Guest Section of the event this year.

“Blood Dance” by Reza Saberi, “Returning” by Hossein Mosafer Astaneh, “The Vein” by Ayyub Aqakhani and “Zipper” by Kianush Ayazi will be the plays that will go onstage.

“Darya Qoli” by Malek Absalan and “The Epic Assembly of the Sixth Person” by Hossein Barfinejad will be done as street theater performances.

“Returning” is about a businessman who launches a large shopping center project in Khorramshahr, the Iranian city that was almost totally destroyed during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. But in the aftermath of the war, people in the city need homes and jobs rather than a shopping center.

“The Vein” is about the resistance of three border guards in the Aras region in Iran's northwestern province of East Azarbaijan against the Russian Army during World War II.



Thespians perform “Returning” by Hossein Mosafer Astaneh at the City Theater Complex in Tehran on November 15, 2019. (Honaronline/Nilufar Javanshir)

In addition, twenty-five plays will be performed according to the official lineup of the festival.

One of the highlights of the lineup is “The Memories of the House that No Longer Exists” that Amin Ashrafi will direct based on a play by Kamran Shahlai.

## “Leadership in the Creative Industries” published in Persian

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — American media scholar Karen L. Mallia's book “Leadership in the Creative Industries: Principles and Practice” has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

The Academic Center for Education Culture and Research at the University of Tehran is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Mehdi Sharifi and Nasser Jenani.

“Leadership in the Creative Industries” is a much-needed guide to the theory and practice of the creative leadership skills that are essential to lead effectively in creative fields. As the growth of creative industries continues to surge and “noncreative” businesses put increasing emphasis on creativity and innovation,

this book offers a practical resource that explores how to confidently lead a workforce, creatively.

In order to lead creative people, it is essential to understand the creative process, creativity, and the range of variables that affect it.

The book fills a gap in the literature by exploring the creative leadership practices that are solidly grounded in evidence-based research. The author includes suggestions for overcoming the challenges associated with leading creative people, and puts to rest many of the current industry misconceptions about leading creatively.

This vital resource is the first book that highlights the theory and practice of creative leadership skills in the creative industries.

The book includes best practices of leading for creativity, and reveals what encourages creativity and what suppresses it.

It debunks commonly held myths about leading a creative workforce with evidence-based guidance, as well as, contains a wealth of helpful tips, visualizations, callouts from primary research, and anecdotes from recognized thought leaders, to highlight and underscore important principles.

Written for academics and students of leadership, those working or aspiring to work in the creative industries, “Leadership in the Creative Industries” puts the focuses directly on the theory and practice of creative leadership in creative fields.

Mallia is professor at the University of



A poster for the Persian translation of Karen L. Mallia's book “Leadership in the Creative Industries”.

South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

## “Our Happy Comrade” on Commander Soleimani's valor published in Urdu

→ The award went to “Abadan 11, 60” directed by Mehrdad Khoshbakht about the people's fight against Iraqi forces in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan during

the early months of the Iran-Iraq war.

In addition, the 16th Resistance International Film Festival, which will be held during December, plans to review films on

Commander Qassem Soleimani's role in awakening people in the region and around the world in a special section named “Prominent Resistance Martyr Section”.

### INTERNATIONAL DAILY

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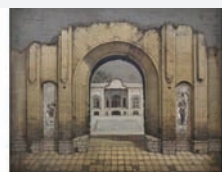
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### GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is reward for kindness to every living thing.  
Prophet Muhammad (S)

### WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



**Painting**  
■ Taher Purheidari is hanging his latest collection of paintings portraying a number of Iranian historical sites and buildings in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibit runs until December 29 at the gallery located at No. 8, Forth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



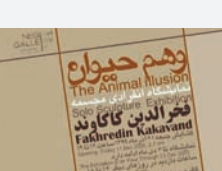
■ Seyhun Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mohsen Karami.

The exhibit entitled “Armun” runs until December 23 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Maryam Nikbakht is currently underway at Saye Gallery.

The exhibit named “Everlasting in This Boundary” will continue until December 16 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.



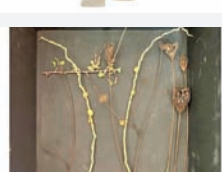
**Sculpture**  
■ Sculptures by Fakhreddin Kakavand is currently on view in an exhibition at Negah Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “The Animal Illusion” will run until December 23 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.



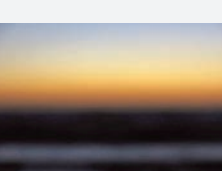
■ Bijan Nemati-Sharif is showcasing his latest sculptures in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition will run until January 12, 2021 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



**Collage**  
■ Collages by Hedyeh Khanali are currently on display in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibit named “Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter” will continue until December 29 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.



**Photo**  
■ O Gallery is currently showcasing a collection of photos by Mohammadreza Mirzai in an exhibition named “Postcards”.

The exhibit will run until December 22 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



**Multimedia**  
■ Ehsan Gallery is displaying artworks in various media by Hajar Mohammadimanesh, Neda Eftekhari, Masumed Etedali, Fatemeh Abbasi, Shiva Soheili, Saeid Ostadi, Shadi Akhundi and several other artists.

The exhibit entitled “Fusion” will run until December 16 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Samaneh Yusefi, Mehdi Jalali, Mina Asadi, Fatemeh Ahankar, Mohammad-Ali Famuri, Parstu Khosh-hesab and several other artists in underway at Alayha Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Infinity” will run until December 25 at the gallery located at No. 31, Ahmadi-Moqaddam Alley, near Quds Square, Shariati Ave.



■ An exhibition of artworks by a group of artists, including Faezeh Janalizadeh, Helen Kuhkan, Nasrin Mohebejjad, Javid Jafari, Sara Adib, Rana Zakaria, and Paymaneh Javan, is currently underway at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition titled “White and Black” will run until December 16 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



■ A group of artists, including Amin Mirmoqaddam, Ali Malek, Shahram Karimi, and Sara Abri, are displaying their latest artworks in an exhibition at Saleh Gallery.

The exhibition entitled “What the Pop” will run until December 20 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

