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## Esteghlal plunged into crisis

**BY FARROKH HESABI**  
Esteghlal football club have had a good run of matches to give their fans hope of some success this season after several years of failure at the Iran Professional League (IPL), however, the Tehran giants' off-field problems are far from over, with the club now have plunged into crisis as it is released that they have filed a legal complaint against their captain Voria Ghafouri.

Esteghlal defeated Nassaji 1-0 on Friday to keep their lead at the top of the IPL standings. Voria Ghafouri, Iran national team player and the Esteghlal's star and captain, had a gloomy day at the Azadi Stadium as his performance was far from perfect. He also had an angry reaction after being substituted in the second half and denied to sit on the bench and even, as media reported, he left the stadium before the end of the match.

It seems that his outburst has had some consequences for him; The details of Ghafouri's contract earnings were leaked at Iranian press and it was revealed that the club's general manager, Ahmad Madadi, has launched legal action against Ghafouri at the Ethics Committee of the Iranian Football Federation more than two months ago!

The released complaint states that Voria Ghafouri, despite having a contract until the end of the current IPL season, has illegally signed a new contract with Esteghlal club during the management of the former GM, Ahmad Saadatmand, which has multiplied his income for this season and also next season.

Based on the published documents related to Ghafouri's deal, his previous \$100,000 contract for the current season has increased to \$240,000 for the same season!

On the other hand, the player's earnings for the next season will reach about \$300,000.

It is just the latest mess afflicting Esteghlal, who have been mired in debt and managerial turmoil since last season. The club have also failed to win a single title in the recent years.

Many believe that this incident will eventually lead to the departure of Ghafouri from Esteghlal and it is far from expected that such a problem can be easily solved for both parties.

Some saw the contract disclosure as an attempt to turn Esteghlal's fans against Ghafouri.

This incident once again confirmed the importance and necessity of ceding the country's most popular football teams Esteghlal and Persepolis to the private sector.

## Coup in Myanmar: Nothing has changed

**BY MOHAMMAD JAVDAN**  
Last week a military coup happened in Myanmar. The military junta arrested all government leaders after months of dispute with the government over approval or disapproval of the November 2020 elections.

It said in a statement that the government leadership had been in the hands of the military commander, General Min Aung Hlaing, for a year. But what really happened in Myanmar?

Southeast Asian countries, which have all been colonies of European countries, have often tasted military rule. Military rule in the region ended after they transitioned from underdeveloped countries to civilian systems and achieved economic progress through revolution, demonstrations, or ballot boxes. And democracy became dominant in most of them.

But countries that did not achieve economic progress remained in the hands of military men. Of course, military men still rule in countries like Thailand and

Vietnam even despite economic development.

Myanmar, now considered one of the least developed countries in Southeast Asia, is no exception. After independence from Britain, civilians ruled the country until 1962, but with a military coup, the military men came to power and ruled until 2011.

Myanmar's economic, cultural, and educational poverty, along with the horrific ethnic divisions that have led to the killing of tens of thousands of people in recent decades, have paved the way for military rule; but after widespread military crackdowns on opposition parties and voices, a tense atmosphere was created in the country against the military. Thus, in 2011, under external pressure as well as unprecedented protests by domestic opposition leaders, the military allowed elections to be held with the participation of opposition party leaders.

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## ICC rules it can probe Israeli military actions in Palestinian territories

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has confirmed that the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War are subject to its jurisdiction, paving the way for The Hague-based intergovernmental organization to open a war crimes investigation into Israeli military actions.

"Today, Pre-Trial Chamber I of ICC decided, by the majority, that the Court's territorial jurisdiction in the Situation in Palestine, a State party to the ICC Rome Statute, extends to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967," ICC said in a statement on Friday.

Israel occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, territories the Palestinians want for their future state, during the six-day Arab-Israeli war in 1967.

About 700,000 Israelis now live in over 230 illegal settlements built in the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds since then. The international community views

the settlements as illegal under international law but has done little – if any – so far to pressure Israel to freeze or reverse their exponential growth.

The United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 67/19 [reaffirmed] the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to independence in their State of Palestine on the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967," the ICC statement further read.

Back in 2019, the ICC's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, had maintained that there was a "reasonable basis" to launch a war crimes investigation into Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip – tightly besieged by Israel since 2007 – as well as Israeli settlement activity in the occupied West Bank. But she had asked the court to determine whether she has territorial jurisdiction before proceeding.

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## Paragliding over desert, exciting yet terrifying activity one needs to try

**BY SAMANEH ABOUTALEBI**  
The scorching deserts in the Iranian heartland have been always top tourist destinations for domestic and foreign travelers.

Enjoying the peace and silence of the desert and watching the clear sky during the day and full of stars at night without cities' pollution and visual distortions have been always the aim of desert tourism.

However, in recent years, more activities have been added to the bucket list of desert tourists.

The oasis city of Yazd in central Iran and its surrounding deserts is also a good place for the lovers of these kinds of recreational activities.

Before the coronavirus outbreak puts everything on a halt, paragliding, safari, sand therapy and even sitting alone on the margins of the deserts were popular especially in autumn and winter, when the weather is mild and cool.

The exciting, enjoyable, and pleasant act of flying has attracted several sportspeople as well as

nature lovers and ordinary people to this region to try the joy of flying at least once.

However, these days as the restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic have been relaxed, tourists and travelers have returned to the area.

Professional paragliding instructors with safe equipment accompany the excited, yet terrified tourists to enjoy once in a lifetime experience of flying over the pristine and barren desert in the region.

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## Air Force renews loyalty to ideals of Imam Khomeini

On the eve of Air Force Day a ceremony was held on Saturday to renew allegiance to the ideals of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The ceremony attended by a number of Air Force commanders and staff at Alavi School in Tehran. General Mohammad Ali Nasrollah, the deputy Navy chief for executive affairs, was also present at the ceremony.

## Trump was a symptom, not the illness: Lebanese researcher

**BY MOHAMMAD ALI SAKI**  
TEHRAN – A Lebanese political researcher is of the opinion that the division in the American society is not a newfound phenomenon, saying it has been existing for decades.

"Divisions existing for decades if not centuries in the American system," Ali Mourad tells the Tehran Times. "Trump was a symptom, not the illness in the American body."

While some American politicians and media are trying to present Donald Trump as a departure from the American history, there is a view that says Trump in fact represents conservative white supremacism.

"What happened during the last four years is that the conservative right that has been witnessing the excessive liberalization taking place inside America had a reflex and wanted to take over to keep the resources from being lost to immigrants and citizens of color," Mourad notes.

The following is the text of the interview:  
**How do you assess Biden's advisory team which includes peoples like Robert Malley and Jake Sullivan? Do you see a real shift in American foreign policy or the pick of such figures just send misleading messages to Iran?**

It seems that Biden is intentionally trying to send a positive signal to Iran by appointing the exact same staff who negotiated the nuclear deal from the American side in 2013-2015.

But the problem is that neither Sullivan nor Malley would have the keys to the lock unless there's a sovereign U.S. decision to return to the deal first without being influenced by the Zionist and Saudi pressure to impose new terms on Iran for returning to the deal.

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## Iran opens shoulder-fired missile, hybrid solid fuel facilities

**1 →** it is now a manufacturer of various advanced missiles with a range of around 5 kilometers and capable of hitting different types of approaching and receding targets with different velocities.

“Iran is now among the three or four countries in the world with the technical know-how to manufacture shoulder-launched assault weapons, employed for air defense at low and medium altitudes,” he remarked.

The major general also opened a hybrid solid propellant factory supplying fuel for ground combat weapons.

He emphasized, “It was necessary to extend the range and speed of missiles fired in the ground combats.”

“The new solid fuel would boost the power of tactical ground-to-ground, anti-tank and air defense missiles,” he added.

Moreover, Brigadier General Amir Hatami, the defense minister, said, “The country is able to widen the range and speed of its anti-armor and defense missiles, during the inauguration of these factories,” according to Fars news agency.

He stressed that the Armed Forces have almost reached self-sufficiency in manufacturing every equipment and weapon.

Hatami highlighted that the Iranian Armed Forces can increase the range and speed of various missiles, saying, “Relying on astonishing knowledge and advances, the Ministry of Defense and defense industry experts have proven that they are able to produce and supply almost all the defense needs of the Armed Forces.”

“Under the tough conditions of sanctions, the Defense Industries Organization has managed to take valuable steps in designing and producing various types of weapons by planning, cohesion, management and relying on totally native technology and know-how,” he remarked.

The minister added, “Today, no power in the world dares to encroach on our homeland due to the high preparedness of the Armed Forces.”

“The monopoly on production of such advanced [shoulder-launched] missiles is in the hand of few countries in the world, and today the Ministry of Defense has been able to indigenize and mass-produce these missiles,” Hatami stressed.

“The shoulder-launched missile is, in fact, one of the most sophisticated and effective weapons against individuals and low-altitude enemy targets,” the defense minister stated.

He continued, “The sophistication of shoulder-launched missiles technology is important in that it is simple to handle by combat forces, despite the high level of technology.”

“Such air defense shoulder-launched missiles are equal to the most modern ones in the world in terms of technology and tactical capability and are even superior to foreign models in some components,” Hatami said.

He added, “Definitely, these missiles increase Iran’s defense power in asymmetric low-altitude battle.”

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great headways in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere.

## Tehran welcomes new Libya interim government

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Saturday welcoming UN sponsored talks that produced a new interim government for Libya on Friday.

The interim government plans to resolve a decade of chaos, division and violence by holding national elections later this year.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed hope that the interim government would provide the necessary conditions for elections.

Khatibzadeh added, “We hope that the interim government of Libya will provide the ground for establishment of stability, security, and progress in this country based on sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and without intervention of foreigners.”

Based on the initial agreement reached in Geneva on Friday, Mohammed al-Menfi, a former diplomat from Benghazi, will head a three-man presidency council, while Abdulhamid Dbeibeh, from the western city of Misrata, will head the government as prime minister, Reuters reported.

Libya has descended into crises on multiple fronts, since the fall of former ruler Muammar Gadhafi in 2011, with the country essentially divided between a UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) based in the capital Tripoli, and a rival administration, led by General Haftar, who commands the western-based self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA).

During the conflict, Iran supported UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli.

“My appeal to everybody is to recognize and accept these results and to work with the new authorities that were elected,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

Stephanie Williams, the acting Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), said, “On behalf of the United Nations, I am pleased to witness this historic moment.”

According to news.un.org, Williams said, “The importance of the decision that you have taken here today will grow with the passage of time in the collective memory of the Libyan people.”

Williams, who has successfully steered the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) through a series of breakthrough agreements in recent months, added, “This process, your process, has come a long way from when we first convened you virtually in October of last year.”

Gamal al-Fallah, a political activist in Benghazi, said, “This is the last chance for the Libyan people and political leaders to end the conflict and division in the country. We hope to reach the stage of elections, just as they have promised, to achieve the people’s demands.”

**“Iran is now among the three or four countries in the world with the technical know-how to manufacture shoulder-launched assault weapons, employed for air defense at low and medium altitudes,” the military chief says.**

# Zarif urges U.S. to rejoin nuclear deal without hesitation

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Mohammad

Javad Zarif, Iran’s foreign minister, has urged Washington to act fast to return to the nuclear accord, pointing out that legislation passed by the parliament obliges the government to harden its nuclear stance if U.S. sanctions are not eased by Feb. 21.

Zarif also referred to presidential elections in Iran in June, saying if a conservative president is elected, this could further jeopardize the nuclear deal.

In an interview with the Hamshahri newspaper, he added, “Time is running out for the Americans, both because of the parliament’s ratification and the election atmosphere that will follow the Iranian New Year.”

The parliament, dominated by conservatives, passed the legislation in December that set a two-month deadline for an easing of sanctions.

President Joe Biden’s administration is exploring ways to revive the 2015 nuclear deal that Iran signed with major world powers but that was abandoned in May 2018 by former President Donald Trump, who restored sanctions and added new ones.

After seeing no actions by the remaining parties, especially the European trio (E3), Iran announced in May 2019 that its strategic patience is over and started decreasing its commitments to the accord in a step-by-step



response. Last month, in accordance with the parliamentary legislation, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran also resumed enriching uranium to 20% at its underground Fordow nuclear plant - a level it achieved before the accord.

Biden has said that if Tehran returned to strict compliance with the pact, Washington would follow suit and use that as a springboard to a broader agreement that might restrict Iran’s missile development and regional activities.

**“The more America procrastinates, the more it will lose ... it will appear that Mr. Biden’s administration doesn’t want to rid itself of Trump’s failed legacy,” Zarif remarks.**

## Envoy says Iran not optimistic about Biden’s policy towards Yemen

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Hassan Irlou, Iran’s ambassador to Yemen, has said he is not optimistic about the U.S. new policy on the war-torn Yemen, according to Fars news agency.

“The U.S. is a great Satan & we are not optimistic about what they say,” Irlou tweeted on Friday.

He said the new American administration may have a different approach toward Yemen, but Tehran will not trust it.

The envoy expressed hope that, with the divine help, the people of Yemen will continue their victories against the Saudi-led aggression.

Irlou made the remarks in reaction to the U.S. National

Security Advisor Jake Sullivan who has said Joe Biden is going to put an end to the U.S. support for offensive operations in Yemen.

In relevant remarks in January, Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, strongly condemned the U.S. inclusion of the Ansarullah movement in Yemen on the list of terrorist groups, expressing concern about deterioration of the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country.

Khatibzadeh stressed the Trump administration’s move in its final tense days in office was rejected by the international community and international circles, “but was hailed by a handful of warmongers.”

## Academics hail resistance movements in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A third meeting of the online international conference on international law and armed conflict in the region with a focus on the resistance front, international law and resistance by Palestine, Syria and Hezbollah against Israel was hosted by the University of Qom.

Qassem Zamani, a professor of Allameh Tabataba’i University, noted the recognition of the Golan Heights by the U.S. as Israel’s territory is against international law.

“The Golan Heights in the eastern south of Syria, which border Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan, is around 1800 square kilo-

meter. It has also fertile soil, rich water resources and strategic position,” the professor explained.

Zamani added, “After the six-day war in 1967, Israel occupied the Golan Heights, evicted the people from their homes and destroyed the infrastructure. Israel declared the Golan Heights as part of its territory and annexed it in the early 1980s under the pretext of ensuring its security.”

“According to international law, the military occupation of a land doesn’t lead to transfer of sovereignty to the occupier,” he asserted.

Moreover, Dr. Ahmad Tabataba’i, a

professor from the University of Tehran, explained about the developments in the Palestinian territory, noting, “The Partition Plan for Palestine is a milestone in the history of Palestine which was pursued according to United Nations Resolution 181 in 1947.”

Pointing to the illegal establishment of Israel, he emphasized, “Israel declared its establishment based on the Partition Plan for Palestine in 1948.”

He sharply criticized the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights and said, “During the six-day war, Israel occupied all the Palestinian territory.”

Professor Gholamali Ghassemi from the University of Qom made a speech about the legitimacy of the Hezbollah movement and said, “The Hezbollah movement is created due to the occupations by Israel.”

He underlined the nature of Hezbollah in liberating occupied lands and said, “According to international law, Hezbollah is a liberation movement fighting against the occupation of Lebanon.”

Regarding the political activities of Hezbollah, he underscored, “Since 2005, Hezbollah members have been elected as representatives of parliament and also appointed as ministers in in Lebanese government.”

## Iraq seeking to act as mediator between Iran, U.S. and Saudi Arabia: analyst

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Hassan Hanizadeh, an expert on regional issues, says Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein has offered that Baghdad can mediate among Iran, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

During an interview with ILNA, Hanizadeh highlighted, “A possible U.S withdrawal from Iraq would increase the likelihood of security and military cooperation between Iran and Iraq.”

Concerning the revival of ISIS in Iraq, he noted, “According to the reports, 500 ISIS fighters come from Syria to Iraq

during the Trump administration. Therefore, Iraq faces with a security challenge. The recent explosion in Baghdad indicates ISIS is going to make Iraq insecure.”

He stressed that many Iraqi political factions insist that the U.S. forces have to be expelled from Iraq, however, the U.S. has no intention to leave Iraq.

“Therefore, the U.S. is seeking to use ISIS to destabilize Iraq and consequently justify its military presence in the country.”

Pointing to the assassination of Major General Qassem Soleimani by American forces in Iraq in January 2003, he said,

“The assassination of General Soleimani created a security vacuum in Iraq and caused ISIS to use the environment in order to destabilize Iraq.”

Given policies of the new U.S. administration towards West Asia, he emphasized, “In comparison with Trump’s administration, Biden’s administration has taken a different approach towards West Asia and Iran. So, it seems that huge changes will happen in the region. Moreover, it is likely Iraq can play a key role to reduce the tensions between Iran and the U.S., and between Iran and Saudi Arabia.”

## Blinken discusses Iran with British, French, German ministers

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed Iran and other issues on Friday in a virtual meeting with his British, French and German counterparts as the group weighs how to revive the Iran nuclear deal, Reuters reported.

The U.S. State Department said beside Iran, other issues including the coronavirus pandemic, Myanmar, Russia, China and climate change were also discussed and Blinken “underscored the U.S. commitment to coordinated action to overcome global challenges.”

“We just had an in-depth and important conversation on Iran ... to handle together nuclear and regional security challenges,” French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Twitter.

Britain’s Dominic Raab and Germany’s Heiko Maas also took part in the meeting.

“The E3 and the U.S. discussed how a united approach could address our shared concerns towards Iran,” UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said in a statement about the meeting, according to DW.

Shortly before Trump announced the U.S. would leave the deal, Prime Minister Boris Johnson wrote an opinion piece in The New York Times urging Donald Trump to stay in the agreement, with Johnson calling withdrawal “a mistake.”

The high-level conversation is the latest

step by President Joe Biden’s new administration to explore how to restore the 2015 nuclear deal that Iran signed with world powers but was abandoned in 2018 by Biden’s predecessor, Donald Trump.

The nuclear deal limited Iran’s uranium enrichment activity in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

In abandoning the deal approved by former President Barack Obama, Trump restored the U.S. sanctions it had removed and then piled on more.

Speaking before Friday’s meeting, a source familiar with the matter said it was unlikely to delve into great detail on Iran and was a first chance for the ministers to discuss the issues.

According to CNBC, the meeting came after President Joe Biden’s National Security Council met Friday afternoon to discuss the administration’s approach to Iran.

“The meeting today is part of an ongoing policy review. It is not decisional,” White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said on Twitter.

Biden, who took office last month, has said that if Tehran returned to strict compliance with the 2015 nuclear pact, Washington would follow suit and use that as a springboard to a broader agreement that might restrict Iran’s missile development and regional activities.

Tehran has insisted that Washington lift



sanctions before it resumed compliance, and ruled out negotiations on wider security issues. But Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif hinted on Monday at a way to resolve the impasse over who goes first by saying the steps could be synchronized.

“JCPOA has a mechanism built into the deal that is the Joint Commission. And the Joint Commission has a coordinator. The coordinator has two hats – it used to be Federica Mogherini now it is Josep Borrell. He has two hats: One hat is he is the high representative of the European Union for foreign defense policy. The other hat is the coordinator of the Joint Commission. He can put his hat as the coordinator of the Joint Commission and sort of choreograph the actions that are needed to be taken by the United States and the actions that are needed to be taken by

Iran,” Zarif said in an interview with the CNN late on Monday.

Exactly one year after Trump quit the deal and started to implement his “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, the Islamic Republic announced that its “strategic patience” is over and started gradually remove limits on its nuclear program at bi-monthly intervals. At the time Iran announced that if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially the European trio – Germany, France, and Britain –, protect Iran from the sanctions Iran will reverse its decisions.

Zarif, a former Iranian ambassador to the UN, said that Iran has acted in accordance with dispute mechanisms written into the JCPOA, since the U.S. withdrawal. “Iran used the mechanisms in the nuclear agreement in order to limit its cooperation. If you read paragraph 36, we acted in strict accordance with the nuclear agreement,” Zarif said in his interview with the CNN.

(Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.)

Analysts say it is the U.S. that must first return to the JCPOA because it was the U.S. that left the agreement.

Iran is still a party to the nuclear deal and is still implementing some terms of the agreement.



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — U.S. president Joe Biden touched a raw nerve when he and his national security officials made announcements signaling a reconsideration of former President Donald Trump's policies toward the region.

Saudi Arabia and its regional allies are clearly nervous about this reconsideration.

The Biden administration started off with suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia and notifying Congress of its decision to remove Yemen's Ansarullah movement from the U.S. government's list of foreign terrorist organizations. The Trump administration designated the movement in its final days, a move that sparked a global outcry from humanitarian organizations.

"We have formally notified Congress of the Secretary's intent to revoke these designations," The Washington Post cited a State Department official as saying in a statement on Saturday.

The Biden administration had announced in its early days that it will review a range of Trump-era policies on Yemen, Afghanistan, North Korea, Russia and beyond. The administration's review of other issues is yet to result in a concrete decision with Yemen being an exception.

Although the Biden administration sought to soothe Saudis' concerns about the possible fallout of its decision, Saudi Arabia and its allies received the news of the delisting with clear resentment, swallowing their disappointment with the new U.S. administration.

The delisting of Ansarullah comes on the heels of another U.S. decision on Yemen, which is the end of U.S. support for Saudi military operations in Yemen.

"This war has to end. And to underscore our commitment, we're ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arm sales," President Biden said in a recent speech at the State Department while underling the U.S. commitment to ensuring Saudi Arabia's security and territorial integrity.

The Saudis welcomed Biden's comments, particularly his commitment to the country's defense and addressing threats against it.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes



## Rising anxiety

the United States' commitment, expressed in President Biden's speech today, to co-operate with the Kingdom in defending its security and territory," Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan said in a tweet on Thursday.

Apart from these formal statements, Saudi Arabia and its allies in the region, especially the United Arab Emirates, feel nervous about the future given the regional state of play. The Biden administration has already suspended the sale of advanced F-35 fighter jets to the UAE all while signaling a different approach to dealing with the region's issues especially the situation around the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Biden's new approach caused concerns in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

"The UAE believes that U.S. credibility in the region is at stake and that withholding U.S. support from offensive operations in Yemen will only increase wariness that

Washington's policy reviews could go further than regional security requirements would warrant," Al Arab, a London-based newspaper close to the UAE, wrote a few days after UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan spoke by phone with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken.

On Thursday, Blinken and al-Nahyan discussed a range of bilateral and regional issues, according to a statement published by the UAE Foreign Ministry.

"During the phone call, the parties reviewed strategic relations between the UAE and the U.S. as well as a number of issues of common concern, including the peace accord between the UAE and Israel and its role in achieving security and stability in the region," the statement said.

Iran was not mentioned in the statement but Al Arab claimed that the Emirati Foreign Ministry's mention of "strategic relations" between Washington and Abu Dhabi is seen as a hint from Abu Dhabi at the type of supposed threats Iran constitutes

for countries of the region.

The Emiratis like the Saudis fear that the Biden administration moves ahead with its agenda in the region – whether in its relation with Iran or the Yemen war – without coordinating or cooperating with them. And this fear seems to have even caused disagreements between the crown princes of Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

There is a quiet disagreement between Mohammad bin Salman and Mohammad bin Zayed in terms of how to deal with the new U.S. administration's policies toward the region, according to a report published by the Lebanese Al-Akhbar newspaper.

"There is a hidden disagreement between the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, and his Emirati counterpart, Mohammed bin Zayed, who believes that complacency with the Biden administration will threaten the stability of the region, especially in light of what he says is Washington's desire to demolish all that has been achieved from the mobilization against Iran while bin Salman wants to temporarily calm the situation and wait to see what will happen on the ground," Al-Akhbar said.

The disagreement was reflected by the Al Arab report, which boasted that the UAE, unlike Saudi Arabia, can talk to the Biden administration without fearing media-related sensitivities.

"Sources said that the UAE has enough political and diplomatic weight to be able to talk with the new administration without the inhibitions of diplomatic and media-related sensitivities that could stem from dialogue between the Biden administration and its Saudi allies. Even before Biden's inauguration, the U.S.-Saudi relationship was the target of pressures related to the Jamal Khashoggi case and other cases linked to human rights in the kingdom," Al-Arab wrote.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE as well as Bahrain are equally concerned about Biden breaking from the policies of the Trump administration, which had very close cooperation with them. They currently prefer to wait and see what will happen in the coming months and then voice their possible opposition to Biden's approach.

## Good news on the way about Iran-China ties: ambassador

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to China Mohammad Keshavarzadeh said on Friday that the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Iran and China will be coupled with good news about the relations between the two countries.

"Six Chinese thinkers spoke about the successful experience of revolution in Iran in today's webinar, which was held on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. This year, the anniversary of the Revolution has coincided with the Chinese New Year and the beginning of the 50th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Good news is on the way about the relations between the two countries," Keshavarzadeh said in a tweet on Friday.

During the webinar, the Iranian ambassador pointed to a variety of bilateral issues ranging from the combat against the Covid-19 pandemic to China's efforts to rely on its own capabilities.

"Last year was a difficult year not only for the Chinese people but also for the people of the world and the people of Iran due to the outbreak of coronavirus. Fortunately, with the very good actions of the Chinese government and the hard work of the Chinese people, the situation against coronavirus is getting better day by day and good results are being achieved," the Iranian diplomat said in the webinar, according to China Radio International. "The excellent management used by the Chinese government and implemented by the Chinese people should be a great



model for the people of the world in dealing with the coronavirus epidemic."

Keshavarzadeh congratulated China on developing a Covid-19 vaccine.

"Fortunately, the vaccine made in China has also been approved, and I think it will help control the coronavirus. I would like to congratulate both the people and the Chinese government on this great achievement," he noted.

The ambassador described how the pandemic has affected Iran, saying that Iranian scientists are working on a vaccine.

"The lives of all of us were affected by coronavirus last year. Unfortunately, many people lost a family member or their job was affected by this pandemic. The start of this year coincided with the start of general vaccination in the world, and we hope to see a decrease in the number

of cases in the coming months. Iran, like other countries, was affected by the virus. Simultaneously with the spread of the virus, Iranian scientists began their research on making a vaccine. This self-belief of the Iranian scientist is one of the fruits that the Islamic Revolution has brought to the country's youth, and today two Iranian vaccines are in the clinical trial stage," the ambassador said.

Keshavarzadeh said Iran continued to make progress over the past four decades despite U.S. brutal sanctions.

"In fact, this self-confidence is a principle that can be used by all countries in the world, and China has also used it well. China has shown that by relying on its domestic capabilities, it is able to overcome its problems, bring prosperity and security to its people, and even play a constructive role in world peace and stability," the Iranian ambassador continued.

Underlining Iran's readiness to extend hand of friendship with countries in the world, Keshavarzadeh said, "Just as China's progress is not a threat to others, the progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not a threat to any country in the world."

According to the diplomat, Iran is ready to improve ties with the world, especially the countries of the region.

"Strengthening Iran and its stability play an important role in regional stability. We have extended our hand of friendship and brotherhood to all countries of the world, especially the countries of the region, and we are ready to share the achievements of the Islamic Revolution with them," the Iranian ambassador said.

## U.S. eyes easing restrictions on Iran without lifting key sanctions: report

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The United States is weighing options to ease economic pressure on Iran without lifting key sanctions – including on oil sales – as a step toward reviving the 2015 nuclear deal abandoned by former President Donald Trump, Bloomberg reported.

Citing four people familiar with the Biden administration's thinking, Bloomberg said the options U.S. officials are debating include providing backing for International Monetary Fund lending to Tehran for coronavirus relief and easing up on sanctions that have stymied international coronavirus aid from getting into Iran. Such moves could be justified on humanitarian grounds.

The people said Biden could also sign an executive order reversing Trump's decision to quit the multinational deal, but issuing sanctions waivers to allow Iran to sell oil on the international market isn't currently under serious consideration.

Biden officials have said the U.S. is willing to return to the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA), but they stopped short of laying out any plan to revive the deal, though Biden had vowed during his election campaign that he would rejoin the JCPOA if Iran returned to strict compliance with the deal.

Biden had promised in a mid-September op-ed for CNN that he will offer Iran a credible path back to diplomacy if it returns to strict compliance with the JCPOA. Biden reiterated this position after winning the U.S. election in November but said that reviving the deal would be hard and very difficult in what appeared to be a calculated policy of tempering expectations from his administration in terms of quickly reversing Trump's policy on Iran.

If true, the Bloomberg report now confirms that Biden seriously considers reneging on his campaign promise to revive the JCPOA. Because Iran is unlikely to accept a U.S. return to the deal without getting the oil and banking sanctions lifted.

Independent pundits have also said that Iran may refuse to fully implement the deal if the U.S. continues to procrastinate.

"Unless Iran's central bank is going to be allowed to freely operate in the international banking system, Iran is not going to accept returning to compliance with the JCPOA," Kenneth Katzman, a senior analyst on West Asia issues at the non-partisan Congressional Research Service, told an Atlantic Council event last week. "The central bank is the hub of Iran's international banking activity."

Iran has said that it will resume implementing the deal when the U.S. returns to compliance with it. Iran has said it will move step-by-step to revive the JCPOA.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president's chief of staff, outlined in January how Iran would deal with a possible return of the U.S. to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He pointed out that Iranian officials have made it crystal clear that in the next era, Iran's policy would be "commitment for commitment", "implementation for implementation," and "announcement for announcement."

Iran recently said that EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell can choreograph this process.

In a recent interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Borrell can "choreograph" the process of reviving the deal.

According to Zarif, there can be a mechanism through which Borrell would synchronize or coordinate what can be done to revive the JCPOA.

"JCPOA has a mechanism built into the deal that is the Joint Commission. And the Joint Commission has a coordinator. The coordinator has two hats – it used to be Federica Mogherini now it is Josep Borrell. He has two hats; One hat is he is the high representative of the European Union for foreign defense policy. The other hat is the coordinator of the Joint Commission. He can put his hat as the coordinator of the Joint Commission and sort of choreograph the actions that are needed to be taken by the United States and the actions that are needed to be taken by Iran," Zarif stated.



## Parliament speaker to visit Russia on Sunday

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of Iran's Parliament, will pay a three-day visit to Russia on Sunday to deliver a message from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Mohammad Hossein Farhangi, the spokesman for the Parliament's presiding board, said the visit is part of Iran's parliamentary diplomacy and will be done at the invitation of Vyacheslav Volodin, the chairman of Russia's State Duma.

"Russia has been one of our supporters in the inter-

national arena, and this trip will definitely be aimed at strengthening relations. The visits of the speaker of the Parliament are based on protocols such as official invitations and some trips are also made in the form of parliamentary friendship groups," Farhangi said on Saturday.

The spokesman said he does not know the details of the message and "it is not correct to speak about it."

Mojtaba Tavangar, a member of the Parliament's Economic Committee, said the speaker will focus on economic issues in his meetings with Russian officials.

## SPORTS

### Iranian girls ready for the World Weightlifting Championships: official

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Iran Weightlifting Federation vice-president Maryam Monazami said that the Iranian girls are getting ready for the 2021 IWF Junior World Championships.



Iran will send the female team to the event for the first time ever. "Our girls are training with strict health protocol in the national team's training camp. The weightlifters will remain in the camp until Feb. 18," Monazami said. "Pupak Basami, Elnaz Bajelani, Reyhane Seyedi and Forough Yousefi are training in the camp at the moment,"

"Elham Hosseini has missed the current training camp due to an injury but she will be added to the team in early March for the next preparatory camp," she added.

The 2021 IWF Junior World Championships will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from March 5 to 18.

The 2021 competition will be a Gold Level Qualification event for the Tokyo 2020 (2021) Olympic Games.

### We know our opponents well: Nikkhah Bahrami

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team captain Samad Nikkhah Bahrami says that they have been drawn along with powerhouse teams in the world but they know their opponents well.

Iran have been drawn with the U.S., who keep No. 1 spot in the FIBA world men's rankings, and No.6 France in Group A.

"The Olympic Games will bring the best 12 teams together so there are no easy matches," Nikkhah Bahrami told IRNA.

"We know that the U.S. will take part in the Games with their best team and our match against them will be very exciting. We will show a good performance in Olympics if we hold training camps ahead of the competition," he added.

Iran coach Mehran Shahintab has invited 16 players for the third and final window of the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers, where the team will meet Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The upcoming window is scheduled for Feb. 18 to 22 in Doha, Qatar.

"In the second window we lost to Syria since our players were not ready due to coronavirus restrictions. But we are well-prepared for the competition at the moment," Nikkhah stated.

### Mehdi Torabi returns to Persepolis

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Torabi, who left Persepolis in the summer to join Qatari club Al Arabi, returned to his former team on Saturday.

The 26-year-old winger has penned an 18-month contract with Persepolis.

Torabi canceled contract with Persepolis in September ahead of the team's matches in the 2020 AFC Champions League group stage and his departure made the fans angry.

He was sidelined in Al Arabi due to injury and was unhappy over his lack of playing time in the Qatari team.

"I am happy to return to Persepolis and I want to make up for the past," Torabi said.

Torabi joined Persepolis from Saipa in 2018 and claimed two Iran Professional League titles, one Hazfi Cup and one Super Cup with the team.

"I want to repeat my previous success with Persepolis, that's why I have returned to the team," he added.

### Shahab Zahedi to join FC Zorya Luhansk

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian forward Shahab Zahedi will reportedly join FC Zorya Luhansk.

The Ukrainian Premier League side have agreed to terms with Olimpik Donetsk regarding the transfer of Zahedi.

The president of Olimpik Donetsk Vladislav Gelzin also confirmed the move during an interview with Footboom:

"Olympic Donetsk have agreed on the transfer details with FC Zorya, and the transfer will take place soon. We have reached an agreement with the president of the Luhansk club, Yevhen Heller."

Olimpik Donetsk coach Ihor Klymovskyi also shared his thoughts on losing his talented striker.

"This is a really big loss for us. The striker must score, and Shahab was just such a forward," he said.

It is reported that Olympic Donetsk will receive \$365,000 for Zahedi.

This season, Zahedi has played 11 matches in the UPL, scoring 8 goals. He is currently the top scorer in the Ukrainian championship.

Another Iranian forward Allahyar Sayyadmanesh is a member of Zorya Luhansk.

### Taremi chosen player of the month

**SPORTS** **TEHRAN** — Porto football team striker Mehdi Taremi has been chosen as the best player of January.

The Iranian forward has been chosen the best player of the month by Players' Union.

Taremi showed an eye-catching performance against Benfica, Gil Vicente and Rio Ave in Primeira Liga.

He has helped Sergio Conceicao's team stay on course behind Sporting in the table.



## TEDPIX down 37,000 points on Saturday

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 37,623 points to 1.135 million on Saturday (the first day of the Iranian week). Over 6.923 billion securities worth 70.911 trillion rials (about \$1.688 billion) were traded at the TSE on Saturday. The first market's index dropped 31,580 points, and the second market's index fell 61,950 points.

TEDPIX fell 2.8 percent in the past Iranian calendar week.



The index closed at 1.173 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

After several weeks of drop, TEDPIX could finally register growth in the Iranian calendar week ended on January 29.

The index rose two percent to stand at 1.207 million points in that week.

In early August 2020, when all the major stocks around the world were experiencing serious declines, TEDPIX surpassed two million points.

This situation created some skepticism among investors regarding the creation of a bubble in the market, and some economists and market analysts also warned about the government's over-interfering in this market.

The government, however, continued offering more and more of its entities on the market and further encouraged people to invest in the market.

Turning the fears of the investors into reality, TEDPIX started a downward trend in mid-August and has since slumped about 38 percent.

## Commodities worth \$518m exported from Gilan Province

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — An official with the customs department of Gilan Province, in north of Iran, said that 877,393 tons of commodities valued at \$518.7 million have been exported from the province during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021).

Abolqasem Youssefinejad said that the export from the province in the mentioned time span indicates a 46-percent rise in terms of value, and a 33-percent growth in terms of weight, as compared to the corresponding time in the previous year.

He mentioned vegetable products, minerals, foodstuff, weaving products, and plastic products as the major exported commodities, and Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Afghanistan, and Iraq as the main export destinations in the said time.

The official said that Gilan Provinces accounted for 25 percent of the value and 37 percent of the worth of Iran's non-oil exports to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)'s member states in the ten-month period.

Youssefinejad further announced that 1.435 million tons of products worth \$799.43 million have been imported to the province during the first ten months of this year, indicating a seven-percent rise in worth, and a 32-percent growth in weight year on year.

He mentioned grains, meat, oil, soybean meal, and pulp as the main imported items, and Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Azerbaijan, UAE, Ukraine, and Turkey as the major sources of imports during the ten-month period.

Iran has traded 122.8 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$58.7 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).



Of the total volume of the country's non-oil trade in the mentioned period, 94.541 million tons worth \$28.63 billion was the share of exports and about 28.249 million tons valued at \$30.639 were the imported goods, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said.

According to the official, the exports of non-oil goods in this period decreased by 17.7 percent and 20 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

The figures, however, grew significantly compared to the previous calendar month (December 21, 2020-January 19, 2021), the official added, noting that the upward trend is expected to continue in the coming months.

In comparison to the previous year's same time span, the imports of the mentioned commodities also declined by two percent and 15.5 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, according to the IRICA head.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$7.2 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$6.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$3.7 billion, Turkey with \$2 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.9 billion.

The mentioned countries imported a total of 69.5 million tons of goods worth \$21.3 billion from Iran in the said 10 months, accounting for 73.5 percent and 76 percent of the total exports in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$7.9 billion, the UAE with \$7.4 billion, Turkey with \$3.4 billion, India with \$1.8 billion, and Germany with \$1.4 billion worth of imports.

# Petchem industry is Iranian economy's driving force: VP

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri has stressed the significance of the petrochemical industry for the Iranian economy, calling it one of the country's major driving forces.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of a petrochemical complex in Kerman-shah province on Saturday, Jahangiri said: "Every country relies on its major industries for development; such industries can play the role of locomotives that carry hundreds of wagons with them. Iran's petrochemical industry has such a position."

Stating that extensive measures have been taken for this industry, the official said: "The petrochemical industry in the country has reached a desirable point so that petrochemical production is going to reach 100 million tons in [the Iranian calendar year] 1400 (begins on March 21), the value of which is more than \$25 billion."

He further mentioned the technological



achievements in the industry and said currently all the construction steps, including design and implementation and

providing equipment for the country's major petrochemical projects are carried out by local experts, which is an indication

## Iran, Syria stress accelerating establishment of joint bank

**1 →** Speaking in the gathering, Kashefi pointed to the above mentioned issues as the requirements for the development of economic relations between Iran and Syria.

According to the official, promoting profitable trade and increasing economic exchanges between Iran and Syria are among the major goals of his visit to the Arab country.

Further in the meeting, Syrian economic and trade officials stressed their interest in increasing cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and proposed ways to develop the two countries' trade relations.

Iran and Syria have been taking major steps for the expansion of their mutual trade ties. The two sides have exchanged numerous trade delegations and Iranian

private companies are investing in various fields of the Syrian economy like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction projects.

Back in 2020, Kashefi had said that the value of Iran's trade with Syria could reach \$1 billion by the next Iranian calendar year 1400 (starts on March 21).

"Syria is one of our main trade markets and export destinations, especially in the future, and we have common interests with this country in various fields, which can support our economic relations," he said.

Syria is also very interested in boosting economic relations with Iran, and the two sides could take advantage of this opportunity, according to the official.



Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi (1st L)

## SEO passes new regulations to facilitate transactions in stock market

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has passed new regulations in order to facilitate and adjust transactions in the capital market, the SEO Head Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi announced.

As reported by ILNA, the mentioned regulations and decisions were approved in a board meeting on Friday.

According to Dehnavi, first, in order to support the capital market and strengthen the demand side, the Capital Market Development Fund was allowed to finance up to 30 trillion rials (about \$714.2 million) through the issuance of subordinated securities.

Secondly, it was also decided to



increase the stock price adjustment coefficient and the shares' pre-emptive rights in credit transactions from 45 percent to 60 percent, the official explained.

According to the third enactment, it was decided to review the executive instructions for the purchase, maintenance, and offering of treasury shares, with considerations for facilitating the purchase and maintenance by issuers.

The issuance of credit cards to holders of "Justice Shares" by banks was another decision made in this meeting which will be operational during the coming week.

"Negotiations to extend these services to other shareholders, especially small shareholders, should also be on the agenda," he said.

It was also decided to review the preferred stock guidelines in such a way that it would be possible to grant preferred stock to the employees of the

subsidiaries or the parent company or the entire financial group in addition to the direct employees of certain companies.

The SEO head further stressed that in order to promote transparency and provide up-to-date information; the revaluation of companies' assets should be accelerated and facilitated.

Also in this meeting, other important issues like creating peace in the market, participation, and responsibility of external and internal market elements, improving the level of government support for the market, and fulfilling the remaining obligations of the National Development Fund (NDF) were discussed and important proposals were formulated, the official added.

## Monthly housing price up 8.2% year on year: SCI

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has announced that the housing price in the country has risen 8.2 percent during the past Iranian calendar month Dey (December 20, 2020 - January 19, 2021), as compared to the same month in the past year.

Also, as previously announced by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the housing price in Tehran city has risen 1.8 percent in Dey.

The CBI has put the average price for one square meter of a residential unit at 273.9 million rials (about \$6,521) in the capital city in the tenth month of this year, up 98.3 percent from the figure for the same month in the past year.

Back in last December, the deputy managing director of Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) for economic studies had said that the exchange plans to presell housing units through standard salaf bonds in near future.

"We will soon see the issuance of standard housing salaf bonds in the capital market to help financing in the housing sector and construction of new housing units in the country," Javad Fallah said.



A standard parallel salaf is an Islamic contract similar to futures, with the difference being that the contract's total price is paid in advance.

According to the official, IME is following two major approaches for implementing the mentioned plan, one is offering bonds related to the already existing housing units like assets owned by the government and state banks and the other is preselling the units that are going to be constructed in the future.

## 27 vessels overhauled in Hormozgan since late March 2020

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The head of Hormozgan Province's Ports and Maritime Department said 27 vessels have been successfully repaired in this province since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

According to Alireza Mohammadi Karaji-Ran, keeping the service vessels of Shahid Rajaei port at good operational conditions is one of the most important tasks and strategies of Maintenance Department.

"All vessels are referred to this department for periodic overhaul operations according to a systematic work calendar to make them ready for providing better services," Mohammadi said.

Mentioning the beginning of the overhaul operation of the Persian Gulf 4 tugboat

at the mentioned port, the official said: "This vessel was brought to shore and placed on a repair slide on February 1, so that overhaul operations can be completed for this vessel within a month."

Over the past few years, the Iranian shipping industry has been following new strategies for providing the infrastructure needed for the overhaul of various types of vessels including supertankers inside the country.

Back in 2019, the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) successfully finished the overhaul operation of an oil supertanker called "DORE" for the first time in the country.

According to NITC, before this, Iranian technicians had successfully completed the overhauling and maintenance operations



of a variety of smaller vessels, however, due to some technological limitations the repair operations of supertankers like DORE were carried out in foreign countries.

The country has also taken serious measures for building new vessels for

the country's maritime fleet.

Earlier in January, PMO signed a deal worth 1.408 trillion rials (about \$33.5 million) with a domestic company called SADRA Iran Marine Industrial Company (SIMIC) for cooperation in building five small-scale vessels.

According to Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Head Mohammad Rastad, in addition to the deal which was signed for the mentioned five vessels, five more vessels are also under construction in Shahid Mahalati Yard in Bushehr Province to be used in the southern portal areas.

"Given that maritime transport is an important factor in international trade, so conducting research and having foresight in this area is of utmost importance," the official said in the signing ceremony.



# Coup in Myanmar: Nothing has changed

Military men, the undisputed rulers of the less developed countries in Southeast Asia

**1 →** The election resulted in the decisive victory of Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of daughter of General Aung San, the leader of Myanmar's independence. She had previously lived in Britain.

**The Aung San Suu Kyi leadership did not change anything**

Although Suu Kyi won the election with the slogan of democracy, free society and economic progress and was able to take over the leadership of the government, in fact she has not been able to make fundamental changes in Myanmar ever since.

Suu Kyi's victory in 2011 and the formation of a civilian government in 2012 prompted Western nations to defend Myanmar in full force. Shortly afterwards, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and Suu Kyi's actions were considered measures towards freedom and democracy, but the reality was something else!

The hero daughter of the Myanmar could not exclude the army from power politics. She merely took over the political leadership of the government and did not take any action to solve the country's main problems during these years. Terrible ethnic divisions, lack of economic development in the north and south, the forced involvement of the army in parliament (a 25-percent share in parliament) and important state positions (and the national identity crisis and nation-state divide were major problems that remained unresolved during a decade of Suu Kyi's leadership. Suu Kyi has not even been able to bring the northern states in the country, which are controlled by armed smugglers and run semi-autonomously, into a single Myanmar.

The fact is that Suu Kyi did not deserve to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Her performance shows that this award was just a pretext by Western countries to make her a chaffy hero. Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize while Myanmar's butcher (General Min Aung Hlaing) continued to play a key role in commanding the military. On the other hand, Suu Kyi's silence on the unprecedented genocide of Muslims in Rakhine State is a big black stain on her forehead who claimed to defend peace.

Suu Kyi did not even mention the name



of the Rohingya people in the International Court of Justice, who were butchered in the most horrific way possible by the country's military, and eventually her government took no action to resolve the crisis. It could be argued that this unprecedented genocide was a continuation of the same killings by the Myanmar army in the years before the Suu Kyi government.

In fact, a decade of Suu Kyi's rule in Myanmar achieved nothing but superficial freedoms, creating a critical atmosphere against the army, and portraying a so-called form of democratic government based on the will of the people.

**Support for Suu Kyi and the Western scandal**

Since the coming into power of the civilian government in 2012, Westerners have created a media machination to support it so much so that by awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Suu Kyi, she was declared the hero of Myanmar and international circles described her as a peace-loving figure.

After nearly 10 years of civilian rule under her leadership, Myanmar's various problems, which could not be resolved by Western publicity, were revived. First, armed groups in the northern states, now revived by military

involvement in the ruling system, boosted drug and human trafficking. The military then resorted to genocide in Rakhine State under the pretext of a fictional story. On the other hand, lack of significant progress in economy and a persistent gap between the rich and the poor caused the class conflict to remain the same as before. In fact, the election based on which the Westerners awarded the Nobel Prize to its winner only changed the appearance of the government. The situation somehow remained the same in the country.

Perhaps the crisis of the Rohingya Muslim genocide could be seen as a turning point in the Western scandal in support of Myanmar's civilian government. While most human rights organizations broadcast the Rohingya genocide crisis in Myanmar with various documents, Suu Kyi safely traveled to countries who portray themselves as defender of human rights and continued her policy of silence about the crisis.

The brutal massacre of the people of Rakhine State was so evident that the Nobel laureates voiced protest and several people demanded that the prize be taken back from Suu Kyi, but again countries supporting her remained silent and said her party's victory deserved the Nobel Peace Prize and her politics were viewed in line with the implementation of democracy

in Myanmar.

**What will happen next after coup in Myanmar?**

With only a few months to go until the end of his military term, General Min Aung declared martial law and then all government leaders, including Suu Kyi, were arrested under the pretext of election fraud in November in which military parties lost. The military is back in power after 10 years, and this time it is going to try the heads of state, just like it did in 1962.

The coup was met with international backlash. Myanmar's neighbors, such as Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, all of whom their democratic governments have been ousted in coups, have not reacted strongly. However, other Southeast Asian countries have called on the parties to show restraint and talked about differences.

Westerners, who had turned a blind eye to various crimes in the Suu Kyi-led Myanmar, have now condemned the coup. The United States, which has not yet announced its new global policy, is facing a crisis of intervention or non-intervention in Myanmar's case. Analysts see the Biden administration's response to the coup as a reflection of U.S. policy towards Southeast Asia. They argue the United States, like before, either intervenes in countries or just issues political statements.

The two biggest countries in the region, China and India, have so far called for calm in Myanmar. Security and stability in Southeast Asia seem to be more important to regional powers than anything else. Although the United States has accused China of supporting the coup, China has so far provided valuable assistance to stability in Myanmar. Creating a mechanism for a dialogue between the warring parties in the northern states of Myanmar, investing in Myanmar under the "One Belt, One Road" plan, and raising its trade balance with the country among other measures.

Although the coup has overthrown the civilian government in Myanmar, the core policies in the country will not change. If the military can keep the country united and calm by avoiding successive genocides, it looks like the fate of Myanmar will be the same as that of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand; that is, with the institutionalization of military governments, these countries will continue on their way.

## Trump was a symptom, not the illness: Lebanese researcher

**1 →** What Sullivan said to CNN on January 3rd isn't encouraging. He spoke about a wider deal and additional "regional" participants in the negotiations. Time won't be Biden's friend and I think the only way Sullivan, Malley, and Blinken to succeed in their mission with Iran is to save their time and acknowledge that Washington must return to the deal and remove all the "maximum pressure" sanctions imposed by Trump, as an initial move by Washington.

Maybe their plan is to try to use their European allies to have more backers in their unjust demands to pressure Tehran to accept stop its retaliatory steps regarding uranium enrichment, but it will fail.

**How do you see repercussions of the U.S. election on West Asia from Lebanon to Saudi Arabia?**

Of course Trump's personal blank checks to Persian Gulf states would come to an end with Biden. The latter will hand over the Middle East (West Asian) policy to the U.S. establishment, where the intelligence community and the Pentagon will have the upper hand in planning policies in the region.

All the campaign promises that Biden made concerning the "Pariah" Saudi Arabia must not be taken seriously because in the end Biden still needs the Saudis in his approach to arrange its bloc in the region.

Saudi Arabia ruled by MBS has a role in the normalization process between Arab states and the Zionist regime, and also Riyadh can still play a role in funding Wahhabi Jihadists from Iraq to China.

The rest of the regional files would be arranged depending on the outcomes of the White House's approach towards Iran since the U.S. establishment handle the situation in Lebanon for example through the overall strategy towards Iran.

**Some scholars suggest that Biden must use Trump's policies as leverage and jumping platform instead of reversing them. What is your comment?**

Biden is looking forward to reversing the clock to January 2017 with regards to America's relations with its allies and alliances. He will soon find out that the world has changed, and even Washington's historic allies in Europe will deal with Washington cautiously after what they've been through during the Trump era, because anything that they would agree on with the Biden Administration in the upcoming four years, there won't be any guarantees that it will still be working with a different administration that would reengage again with the historic allies based on the isolationist "America First" vision.

But for sure Biden will make use of the decisions Trump made with adversaries like Iran or China. We've seen Blinken praising Trump's work with China during his confirmation hearing in the Senate. It's obvious that Biden will try to use Trump's sanctions on Iran to have a deal that would satisfy Zionists and Saudis, and would borrow some of the bullying style of Trump regarding trade talks with other competitors worldwide.

**What is Trump's legacy for the U.S.?**

Trump was a symptom, not the illness in the American body. Divisions exist for decades if not centuries in the American system. What happened during the last four years is that the conservative right that has been witnessing the excessive liberalization taking place inside America had a reflex and wanted to take over to keep the resources from being lost to immigrants and citizens of color.

This current that Trump spoke for is still out there and will be there all the time, even if Trump is gone, and it can still succeed in delivering an isolationist president in the future, that's why liberals and their like-minded in Europe are still worried. Trump would be the first president in U.S. history to be impeached twice; he deserved it for his stupidity and misconduct, but he will be remembered as the guy who gave hope to the white conservative right that they can reach power again



and rule. He will be marked as the president who weakened the U.S. soft power that used to change political regimes worldwide.

**How do you measure the disputes over the U.S. election? Do you agree that the deep state in the U.S. elected Biden as Trump supporters claim?**

Trump messed up during the pandemic crisis. I think this factor made him lose. A big portion of the white population that lives in the south and the southern mid-west voted against him, though this portion used to vote Republican for decades. Also, an alliance of liberals and leftists and neo-conservatives was there united to defeat him and they succeeded. Corporate America and the establishment wanted him to leave because their interests were damaged by his policies and rhetoric, but on the other side, the way those enemies flocked to defeat him gained him a solid base that will be there to work against Biden and try to make him fail.

If Trump had an experienced political background, like Nixon for example, he would have won the second term, but his mistake was that he only leaned on the incitement factor that wasn't that effective in an election year with a bad economy due to the pandemic.

of impeachment."

**How is this trial different from trump's first trial?**

Trump's first trial was based on evidence uncovered over several months by the House about a private phone call between Trump and the president of Ukraine, as well as closed-door meetings that happened before and afterward. Democrats held a lengthy investigation and then compiled a report of their findings.

In contrast, the second trial will be based almost entirely on the visceral experience of a riot that targeted the senators themselves, in the Capitol building. The insurrectionists even breached the Senate chamber, where the trial will be held.

The fresh memories of Jan. 6 could make it easier for the House impeachment managers to make their case, but it doesn't mean the outcome will be any different. Trump was acquitted in his first trial a year ago Friday with only one Republican, Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, voting to convict, and there may not be many more guilty votes this time around.

In a test vote Jan. 26, only five Senate Republicans voted against an effort to dismiss the trial - an early indication that Trump is likely to be acquitted again.

(Source: AP)

## ICC rules it can probe Israeli military actions in Palestinian territories

**1 →** According to Press TV, Palestinians, who warmly welcomed the ICC's Friday decision, joined the court in 2015, a year after they asked it to open a probe into Israeli crimes during its 2014 bloody war against Palestinians in the blockaded Gaza Strip, as well as the regime's construction of settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

"Victory for justice, humanity, and freedom"

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh warmly welcomed the ICC's decision, describing it as a victory for justice, humanity, and freedom, as well as a redress to the victims of the Israeli war crimes and their families, Palestine's official Wafa news agency reported.

"The resolution is a message to the perpetrators of crimes, that their crimes will not be subject to a statute of limitations, and that they will not go unpunished," he said, hailing the decision as a victory for the court itself, which has thwarted Israel's attempts to politicize its deliberations.

Separately, Nabil Shaath, a senior aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, hailed the ruling, saying that it proved the Palestinians were right to go to the court.

"This is good news, and the next step is to launch an official investigation into Israel's crimes against our people," he said.

Abbas is the head of the Palestinian Authority, which runs the occupied West Bank.

## Biden reverses Trump's terrorist designation of Yemen's Ansarullah

The administration of US President Joe Biden has formally notified Congress that it will remove Yemen's popular Houthi Ansarullah movement from the list of foreign terrorist organizations, reversing a last-minute designation by former president Donald Trump.

"Secretary [Antony] Blinken has been clear about undertaking an expeditious review of the designations of Ansarullah given the profound implications for the people of Yemen, home to the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe," an unnamed State Department official confirmed on Friday.

"After a comprehensive review, we can confirm that the Secretary intends to revoke the Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist designations of Ansarullah," the official added.

Two sources familiar with the matter said the State Department had formally notified Congress of its plan to delist the Houthi movement.

## Pakistan PM: We would give Kashmiris 'right to independence'

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has pledged to allow the people of Kashmir the right to independence if residents of the disputed Himalayan territory were to vote for joining Pakistan in a United Nations-mandated plebiscite that has been delayed for decades.

Since gaining independence from the British in 1947, Pakistan and India have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, with both sides claiming the territory in full but administering separate portions of it that are divided by the Line of Control (LoC).

Addressing thousands at a Kashmir Solidarity Day rally in the Pakistan-administered Kashmir town of Kotli on Friday, Khan asserted he was willing to allow citizens of the territory the full right to self-determination, al Jazeera reported.

In 1948, a UN Security Council resolution mandated the holding of a plebiscite in the territory, giving residents a choice between joining India or Pakistan.

## Trump should not get U.S. intel briefings: Joe Biden

Donald Trump should not continue to receive intelligence briefings normally available to former presidents because of his "erratic" behavior, U.S. President Joe Biden said in a US media interview.

"I just think that there is no need for him to have intelligence," President Biden said in an interview with CBS Evening News.

"What value is giving him an intelligence briefing? What impact does he have at all other than the fact he might slip and say something," Biden said.

Questions had been raised during Trump's presidency about his ability to keep sensitive US intelligence secret.

## Thousands protest Myanmar coup despite internet ban

Thousands of people took to the streets of Yangon on Saturday to denounce this week's coup and demand the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi despite a blockade on the internet by the junta.

According to Reuters, in an upwelling of anger in the country's largest city protesters chanted, "Military dictator, fail, fail; Democracy, win, win" and held banners reading "Against military dictatorship". Bystanders offered them food and water.

Many in the crowd wore red, the color of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) which won Nov. 8 elections in a landslide, a result the generals have refused to recognize, claiming fraud.

## Resistance News

### Hamas praises ICC decision

**INTERNATIONAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Raafat Marra, the head of Hamas's media department, praised the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) that its jurisdiction extends to all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967.

Marra said in a press release that, "Any international decision that leads to supporting the rights of Palestinians, defends their freedom, provides them with justice and prosecutes war criminals is in conformity with human values and international human rights."

"We are confident that any court that enjoys integrity, justice and professionalism will stand by the Palestinian people and their rights", he added.

He called for the use of all means to stop terrorism and Zionist crimes against the Palestinians who have suffered more than 70 years from the injustice of the occupation.

The Hamas official said, "The Zionist entity (Israel) and its leaders practiced organized terror against the Palestinians, robbed them of their rights and the international silence encourage them to continue their criminal practices against the Palestinians."

The ICC announced in a statement on Friday that it had territorial jurisdiction within areas occupied by Israel since 1967, opening the door for a possible investigation into Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people.



## Paragliding over desert, exciting yet terrifying activity one needs to try

➔ **1** As all activities in the dessert are done outdoors, the health protocols and social distancing could be observed strictly, which will help the tourism boom in the region amid the global pandemic.

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.



With its winding lanes, forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region.

Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

## Work starts on Qaleh-Hatam Bridge restoration and protection project

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — A project has been launched to restore and protect one of the centuries-old brick bridges in western Iran: Qaleh-Hatam Bridge.

“A restoration and maintenance project has been commenced on Qaleh-Hatam Bridge of Borujerd (a county situated in Lorestan province),” Seyyed Amin Qasemi, the provincial tourism chief, announced on Thursday.



“A budget of one billion rials (\$23,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project which includes repair works on the foundation, brick facade, arches, and its cracks,” the official noted.

200-meter-long Qaleh-Hatam Bridge is an early Qajar era (1789-1925) structure built over a small river of the same name. The monument is 2.5 meters in width and it has 14 brick arches.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

## Exhibit features indigenous Iranian handicrafts, cuisines, and textiles

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — An exhibition of local Iranian handicrafts, cuisines, and handwoven textiles has opened to the public in the city of Sardasht, West Azarbaijan province.

Potteries, kilim carpets, enamel and embroidery works, traditional food, various side dishes and pickles, as well as hand-woven textiles are amongst highlights of the 15-day exhibit, which is organized on the occasion of the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, CHTN quoted a local tourism official as saying on Friday.



Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19, 2020). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

# First-of-its-kind Post-Museum-School inaugurated in Rasht

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — Rasht’s d e s k Post-Museum-School, which according to its authorities is the first of its kind in the world, was opened in the northern city on Saturday.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by the CEO of the National Post Company, Ramezan-Ali Sobhanifar who also doubles as the deputy minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and several cultural officials and cultural heritage experts.

A selection of stamps printed before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and a collection of envelopes and rare foreign letters, as well as a collection of old items in the field of communication, are on display in this museum, which is the first of its kind in the world, IRNA quoted the director of the Post and Communications Museum, Hassan Amidi, as saying.

The museum aims at educating children in various fields of communication and media as well as promoting the culture of post by holding communication courses and classes, the official added.

The private stamp collectors are also



welcomed to display their collections in the museum, he explained.

He also noted that the second Post-Museum-School is scheduled to be inau-

gured in Delgan county, southeastern province of Sistan-Balouchestan in the near future.

It was only in 1851 when the government of Iran started to produce its own stamps, thus the creation of a unique mailing and communication arrangement.

It was through the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar’s (1848-1896) that the postal system in Iran has begun developing.

He was inspired by the reported successes of a postal system in many regions, so he decided to send a group to France to study the system and launch it in Iran.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it’s the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

## Top Iranian archaeologist, Firouz Bagherzadeh, dies at 90

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Iranian archaeologist d e s k Firouz Bagherzadeh, who was former director of the Archaeological Center of Iran and a specialist in Islamic art, has died aged 90.

He passed away on Thursday due to old age and following two weeks of hospitalization in Paris, an official with the National Museum of Iran told the Tehran Times.

“The National Museum of Iran extends sincerest condolences to his family, friends, former students, and colleagues,” Jebrael Nokandeh, the director of the National Museum of Iran, said in a condolence message. “His directorship period was one of the brilliant periods for the Iranian archeology and the National Museum of Iran.”

Abolishment of the law on the division of archaeological finds resulting from the surveys and excavations of joint Iranian and foreign delegations, establishment of a laboratory for the restoration of archaeological finds, inscription of the three Iranian monuments in the World Heritage List (Chogha Zanbil, Persepolis, and Naqsh-e Jahan Square) in collaboration with Shahriyar Adl are among his most important works.

Born on May 31, 1930, in Tabriz, West Azarbaijan province, Bagherzadeh received his B.A. degree from Tehran University in 1954. In 1956 he joined the Department of Fine Arts where he founded the periodical Honar-va-Mardom (Art and Ethnography), of which he was the editor until he obtained a Fulbright Scholarship for postgraduate studies in the U.S., where he read Art History at the University of Southern Illinois (1959-60).

He started his specialization in Islamic art and archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London (1960-62) under the late Storm Rice.

He went to Paris where he worked at the Sorbonne (1962-67) under the tutorship of the late Gaston Wiet, at the same time reading Islamic Art and Archaeology at the Ecole du Louvre under the late Jean David Weil.

In 1967 he was admitted to the CNRS as a researcher in Oriental cultures, and he worked there until he was commissioned by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Arts in 1971 to return home and prepare the project for the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research (ICAR).

He founded the ICAR in 1972 and was its Director-



General until 1978. He initiated the Annual Symposium on Archaeological Research in Iran and is the editor of the proceedings thereof. In June 1977 he was elected the first President of the World Committee of Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO).

## Open-air museum to be launched on 7,000-year-old hill

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — An open-air d e s k museum site is planned to be established on the ca. 7,000-year-old Qoli Darvish Hill, which is situated in Qom province, southern Tehran, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

As the archeological excavations carried out on the ancient hill have yielded rich results, launching a museum for displaying the results to the researchers and history buffs seems necessary, Ali-Asghar Najafpur said on Saturday.

Last month, the provincial tourism chief, Hamid Yazdani, announced that an archaeological project is scheduled



to be launched on the ancient hill with a budget of one billion rials (about \$24,000

at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar).

Dating back to the Iron Age, the hill is located southwest of the city Qom. Archeological excavations, which began in 2002 showed that Qoli Darvish dates back to six to seven thousand years ago.

The hill covers land as big as 50 hectares. The discovery of historical elements of an ancient temple from the Bronze Age to the end of the Iron Age led to conclusions about the social classes and further anthropological researches about those periods of history.

In recent years, domestic and foreign

tourists can visit the ancient hill, which was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 2003.

The country’s second-holiest city after Mashhad, Qom is home to both the magnificent shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and the major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage at the holy shrine, the city is also a top destination for Shiite scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

## Attar’s mausoleum gains former glory

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** —The tilework of the dome d e s k of the mausoleum of the classical Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar (c. 1145-1221) in the northeastern city of Neyshabur has recently been restored to its former splendor.

The tiles, which were damaged and destroyed by atmospheric factors over the past few years, were restored or replaced [by exact replicas], Neyshabur’s tourism chief, Mohammad-Esmail Ettemadi Moqaddam, said on Saturday.

A budget of four billion rials (about \$95,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, the official added.

The historical structure has been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Abu Hamid bin Abu Bakr Ibrahim, also known as Farid ud-Din, was born in the city of Nishpur (Ney-



shabur) and is known for his magnificent work “The Conference of the Birds”.

Attar is one of the most famous mystic poets of Iran, whose works were the inspiration of Rumi, Hafez, Jami, and many other mystic poets.

Attar means ‘apothecary’ and this nickname was given to him due to his profession. He was probably the son of a prosperous chemist, receiving an excellent education in various fields, but he abandoned his profession and traveled extensively, seeking wisdom in Baghdad, Basra, Kufa, Mecca, Medina, Damascus, Kharazm, Turkistan, and India, before finally returning to his birthplace Neyshabur.

Located on the Silk Road, Neyshabur is one of the ancient cities in Iran, which houses several religious, historical, and cultural monuments.

## Persian handicrafts: Gabbeh of Bushehr

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Gabbeh is d e s k one of the most popular handicrafts, which has long been woven in almost all the villages, and even some of the cities of the southwestern Bushehr province.

It may also be the first or second source of income of many households. Gabbeh is similar to carpet, but they differ in motifs, size, colors, and the number of its long and thick wefts.

Motifs and patterns of Gabbeh are not the same as carpet. Gabbeh may not have any margin, or may not be symmetrical. Many of its motifs look like paintings of children, quite simple and primitive, but inspired by nature and surroundings.

Patterns of Gabbeh are created by

the memory of their weavers. They are completely free to use any motif and they can place it anywhere they desire in the pattern. Another major difference between Gabbeh and carpet is the color palette used in them.

A major part of the Gabbeh are weaved using wools in their raw color. The kind of Gabbeh, which is made across Bushehr, has plain backgrounds in white, cream, brown, black, and grey, and the patterns are made in black, red, dark blue, and other similar colors.

The weavers are mostly women and girls who each have a special kind of motif on their minds and they skillfully weave them. In general, the common feature of the Gabbeh of Bushehr is the traditional patterns that have been evolved through

generations and are artistically valuable.

According to Visit Iran, the materials used in the process of Gabbeh weaving is produced from the wool of the sheep that are bred locally. Today European countries and Arab States of the Persian Gulf are two major buyers of Bushehr Gabbehs. Therefore, the makers have begun dying the wool with herbal pigments such as orange, blue, green, and yellow to use them in the background.

The motifs of these products are animals and doll-like. Some of the most famous patterns are Langer (anchor), Khesht (brick), chang (harp), geometric forms, birds and animals, and kinds of paisley motifs. Bushehr Gabbehs are made in villages such as Shoul, Kamali, Bahmanyari, Mohammad Salehi, Sakhareh,



Zakariyayi, Bamonir, Mal Mahmoud, Khalifehee, Otaybeh, Dehdaran, etc.



# Iran to start mass vaccination against coronavirus this week

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Mass vaccination against COVID-19 will begin this week, with the priority given to medical staff, the elderly, and people with underlying diseases, President Hassan Rouhani announced on Saturday.

Statistics released last week showed that compliance with protocols has decreased to 81 percent, and this week's report shows a 75 percent observance of health protocols, which will result in the increase of the disease prevalence, Rouhani lamented.

Meanwhile, Alireza Reisi, a spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has warned of a slight rise in coronavirus new cases in some provinces and announced that the medium-risk orange cities in the country have doubled.

"Fortunately, no cities are in high-risk 'red' zones, but the orange cities have increased from 18 to 36, which is alarming," he stated, adding, low-risk "yellow" cities have also reached up to 178, which was previously 130, and safe blue cities reduced from 306 to 234 cities.

To set restrictions on each area based on the virus incidence, the cities are divided into four levels of alert, namely red, orange, yellow and blue.

The first consignment of Sputnik V, the



Russian-made vaccine for the coronavirus, was imported on Thursday.

Importing vaccine from COVAX, a global initiative to ensure rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, is also on the agenda, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, head of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said.

On January 27, Health Minister Saeed

Namaki said that there are four different ways to supply the coronavirus vaccine, including direct purchase from a foreign country, procurement from the World Health Organization's COVAX facility, a joint production with a Cuban company as well as domestic production of the vaccine.

He emphasized that Iran will soon be one of the world's important manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, was unveiled and injected into three volunteers during a ceremony on December 29, 2020.

Meanwhile, Iran and Cuba have formed a 'strategic alliance' through working jointly on a project for producing a potential coronavirus vaccine.

**COVID-19 daily new cases and mortalities**

In a press briefing on Saturday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,983 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,459,370. She added that 1,247,374 patients have so far recovered, but 3,825 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 76 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 58,412, she added.

So far, 9,612,033 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 36 cities are in medium-risk "orange" zones, and 178 in low-risk "yellow" zones.

## How air pollution may up CVD risk

Researchers have identified that fine particulate matter has a detrimental impact on cardiovascular health by activating the production of inflammatory cells in the bone marrow, ultimately leading to inflammation of the arteries.

The study indicates that tiny particles of air pollution—called fine particulate matter—can have a range of effects on health, and exposure to high levels is a known risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

"The pathway linking air pollution exposure to cardiovascular events through higher bone marrow activity and arterial inflammation accounted for 29 per cent of the relationship between air pollution and cardiovascular disease events," said researcher Shady Abohashem from the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in the US.

"These findings implicate air pollution exposure as an under-recognised risk factor for cardiovascular disease and suggest therapeutic targets beyond pollution mitigation to lessen the cardiovascular impact of air pollution exposure," Abohashem added.



For the study, published in the European Heart Journal, the researchers included 503 patients without cardiovascular disease or cancer who had undergone imaging tests at MGH for various medical reasons.

The researchers estimated participants' annual average fine particulate matter levels using air quality monitors located closest to each participant's residential address.

Over a median follow-up of 4.1 years, 40 individuals experienced major cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and strokes, with the highest risk seen in participants with higher levels of fine particulate matter at their home address.

Their risk was elevated even after accounting for cardiovascular risk factors, socioeconomic factors, and other key confounders, the researchers said.

Imaging tests assessing the state of internal organs and tissues showed that these participants also had higher bone marrow activity, indicating a heightened production of inflammatory cells (a process called leukopoiesis), and elevated inflammation of the arteries.

Additional analyses revealed that leukopoiesis in response to air pollution exposure is a trigger that causes arterial inflammation.

## Plant-based diets crucial to saving global wildlife, says report

The global food system is the biggest driver of destruction of the natural world, and a shift to predominantly plant-based diets is crucial in halting the damage, according to a report.

Agriculture is the main threat to 86 percent of the 28,000 species known to be at risk of extinction, the report by the Chatham House thinktank said. Without change, the loss of biodiversity will continue to accelerate and threaten the world's ability to sustain humanity, it said.

The root cause is a vicious circle of cheap food, the report said, where low costs drive bigger demand for food and more waste, with more competition then driving costs even lower through more clearing of natural land and use of polluting fertilisers and pesticides.

The report, supported by the UN environment programme (Unep), focused on three solutions. First is a shift to plant-based diets because cattle, sheep and other livestock have the biggest impact on the environment.

More than 80 percent of global farmland is used

to raise animals, which provide only 18 percent of calories eaten. Reversing the rising trend of meat consumption removes the pressure to clear new land and further damage wildlife. It also frees up existing land for the second solution, restoring native ecosystems to increase biodiversity.

The availability of land also underpins the third solution, the report said, which is farming in a less intensive and damaging way but accepting lower yields. Organic yields are on average about 75 percent of those of conventional intensive farming, it said.

Fixing the global food system would also tackle the climate crisis, the report said. The food system causes about 30 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, with more than half coming from animals. Changes to food production could also tackle the ill health suffered by 3 billion people, who either have too little to eat or are overweight or obese, and which costs trillions of dollars a year in healthcare.

"Politicians are still saying 'my job is to make food cheaper for you', no matter



how toxic it is from a planetary or human health perspective," said Prof Tim Benton, at Chatham House. "We must stop arguing that we have to subsidise the food system in the name of the poor and instead deal with the poor by bringing them out of poverty."

Benton said the impact of the food system on climate and health was becoming widely accepted but that biodiversity was too often seen as a "nice to have", the Independent reported.

Susan Gardner, director of Unep's ecosystems division, said the current food

system was a "double-edged sword" providing cheap food but failing to take into account the hidden costs to our health and to the natural world. "Reforming the way we produce and consume food is an urgent priority," she said.

Jane Goodall, the renowned conservationist, said the intensive farming of billions of animals seriously damaged the environment and inhumane crowded conditions risked new pandemic diseases crossing into people: "It should be phased out as soon as possible."

A landmark review by Prof Sir Partha Dasgupta concluded the world was being put at extreme risk by the failure of economics to take account of the rapid depletion of biodiversity.

The Chatham House report said the world had lost half its natural ecosystems and that the average population size of wild animals had fallen by 68 percent since 1970. In contrast, farmed animals, mainly cows and pigs, now account for 60 percent of all mammals by weight, with humans making up 36 percent and animals just 4 percent.

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Increased life expectancy leading cause of elderly population growth

In recent years, increased life expectancy has led to a growth in the elderly population of the country, an adviser to the health minister has said.

"This issue shows the provision of appropriate health services and having experienced people in the community," Mohammad Taghi Joghataei said on Wednesday on the occasion of International Day of the Elderly. Noting that the national document on older persons has been drafted, he said that empowerment of the elderly, prevention, provision of medical services and rehabilitation are some of the plans.

The national document on older persons, the roadmap showing the way for better planning for the elderly, unveiled on October 1st, 2019.

In 1976, the elderly population constituted 5 percent of the total population, which has now reached about 10 percent.

According to Joghataei, about 9.28 percent of the population are currently elderly, which means that about eight million people in the Iranian population are old, which is expected to increase to about 20 percent by 2041.

## افزایش امید به زندگی جمعیت سالمند کشور را زیاد کرده است

مشاور وزیر بهداشت در امور توان بخشی گفت: در سال‌های اخیر، امید به زندگی افزایش یافته و منجر به افزایش جمعیت سالمند در کشور شده است.

محمد تقی جغتایی روز چهارشنبه به مناسبت فرارسیدن یکم اکتبر (۱۰ مهر) روز جهانی سالمند افزود: از جهتی این موضوع نشان دهنده ارائه خدمات مناسب سلامت و داشتن افراد با تجربه در جامعه است.

او با اشاره به اینکه سند ملی سالمندان تدوین شده است گفت توانمندسازی سالمندان، پیشگیری، ارائه خدمات درمانی و پزشکی و توان بخشی از موارد پیش بینی شده در این سند است.

در سال ۱۳۵۵ جمعیت سالمند کشور حدود ۵ درصد بود که در حال حاضر به حدود ۱۰ درصد رسیده است.

به گفته او، حدود ۹.۲۸ درصد از افراد جامعه در حال حاضر سالمند هستند و این یعنی حدود هشت میلیون نفر از جامعه ایران را سالمندان تشکیل می‌دهند که پیش بینی می‌شود در سال ۱۴۲۰ جمعیت سالمند کشور حدود ۲۰ درصد شود.

## Education budget up by 72.5%

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Education will receive a budget of 1.1 quadrillion rials (nearly \$26 billion) as proposed in the national budget bill for the next calendar year (starting on March 20), an increase of 72.5 percent compared to the current year.

Currently, some 13 million students are studying and 880,514 people are working in state-run schools, 83 percent of whom are teachers, IRNA reported on Saturday.



Therefore, the budget will be spent on improving education, constructing and equipping schools, paying salaries, and implementing teacher ranking plan.

A budget of 1.1 quadrillion rials (nearly \$26 billion) was proposed for the Ministry of Education in the budget bill, equivalent to 13.4 percent of the whole national budget, while it was 10.9 percent of the current year's national budget.

The government submitted the draft of the national budget bill for the next year to the parliament (Majlis) on December 2, 2020.

The proposed budget amounted to about 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$580 billion), with a 20-percent rise from the current year's budget.

Supplying basic goods, treatment, and medical equipment; securing livelihood; supporting production and employment; promoting and supporting non-oil exports and knowledge-based companies are the focal points of the bill.

### 35% growth in school renovation budget

A total of 51 trillion rials (nearly \$1.2 billion) was proposed for school renovation in the budget bill, which is 21 percent higher than that of the previous year, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), the number of schools in need of reconstruction and retrofitting was 30 percent, of which some 12 percent must be completely rebuilt and 18 percent must be retrofitted. The rate has reached 19.5 percent over the past four years, with 12.5 percent of schools in need of retrofitting and the rest rebuilding.

## Relief Foundation to inaugurate over 9,000 houses for the deprived

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation will provide 9,305 housing units to the deprived families during Ten-Day Fajr celebrations (January 31-February 10, marking the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution).

Some 1,790 housing units have been built in urban areas and 7,515 in rural areas, Ahmad Reza Dalvand, director of the housing and engineering office of the foundation stated.



Last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019-March 2020), 8,922 houses and four support units were opened those under the foundation's coverage, he noted, IRIB reported on Saturday.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empowers financially struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 125)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

□ جَدُول (با عدد بنویسید)

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| ۵ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ۶ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ۷ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**افقی**  
۱. صد و بیست و سه + پنج و شصت و هفت ۲. سه × صد + چهل و پنج ۳. چهل + چهار × سی و هفت + هفت ۴. چهل و پنج + سی و هفت ۵. هفت × صد و شصت و پنج ۶. سیصد و هفت

**عمودی**  
۱. صد + یازده × صد + یک ۲. شصت و نود + دو × بیست و دو × دو ۳. پنج + شش ۴. هزار و هشتاد و شش ۵. هفتصد و هشتاد و هفت ۶. تکرار شمارهای قبل

Mathematical symbols may simply be read as follows:

۲ + ۴ : چهار و دو

۲ - ۴ : دو از چهار

۲ × ۴ : چهار در دو

۲ ÷ ۴ : چهار به دو

‘چه’ یا ‘قدر’ در جمله‌های سوالی تکیه می‌گیرند نه در جمله‌های

صوتی. معنی ‘چه روزی’ را در دو جمله‌ی زیر مقایسه کنید:

چه روزی می‌آیی؟ یعنی کدام روز می‌آیی؟

چه روزی می‌آیی! یعنی روز خوبی می‌آیی؛ یا روز بدی می‌آیی.



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When Allah chooses to favor someone, He makes him the source of satisfying other people's needs.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

## “Day of Armita” highlights Iranian scientist’s assassination at Fajr Theater Festival

→1 “How the scientist was martyred and its effect on his widow and daughter are also major parts of the play,” she noted. Gunmen riding motorcycles shot Rezainejad in front of his house in Tehran in July 2011. Rezainejad, 35, was martyred and his wife was wounded during the terrorist attack.



Armita, daughter of Martyr Dariush Rezainejad and her mother in an undated photo.

“A play needs to be both attractive and influential. This play is mostly based on real events, while it also tries to narrate how nuclear medicine can help children with cancer. It tries to show the humane side of the martyr,” she noted.

She further noted that the audiences of street plays are composed of people from all walks of life including artists, students, workers, clerks, children and passersby, so the plays need to be both simple, dramatic and professional as well,” she added.

The play was staged at the Rudaki Open-Air Theater near Vahdat Hall on Friday and Saturday. The troupe will give another performance Sunday evening.

According to Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, over 10 plays on Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani have been performed during the festival that is currently underway in Tehran.

The minister saw the play “The Soldier” by director Hossein Parsai about Martyr Soleimani at Vahdat Hall last week.

“The play has a specific type of narration about the characteristics of Martyr Soleimani, a character who was a hero in the war and a kind companion with people. He was a father, a brother and a friend with others, and the play had an interesting narration about his character,” the minister said.

He also added that the festival is a venue where interesting topics such as history and revolutionary identity are portrayed.

## 36th Fajr Music Festival to go online

CULTURE TEHRAN — The organizers of the 36th edition of the Fajr Music Festival have decided to stream the performances online this year due to the pandemic and coronavirus restrictions.

The ensembles have begun recording their performances and the organizers plan to announce the festival schedule in the near future.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi has also called the virtual space an important venue for musical performances and holding the festival online a new experience.

The festival will be running from February 16 to 21 this year. Iran’s Music Office director Mohammad Allahyari had already said that the top selected music albums produced in 2018 and 2019 will be honored with the Barbad Award during the festival.

The Barbad Award established in 2016 at the 31st edition of the festival is dedicated to the best album of the year.

Member of the festival’s committee Amir Abbas Setayeshgar had also said that due to the two-year halt in granting the Barbad Award, the section has been warmly received, and 148 albums have been submitted to the jury for the final Barbad Awards.

“In the non-competition section, over 60 ensembles have been reviewed. However, the number of performances will be decreased due to the pandemic,” he had said.



A poster for the 36th Fajr Music Festival.

# Baharestan artworks to promote environmental protection in Tehran during Noruz

A R T TEHRAN — Tehran will welcome spring with artworks promoting environmental protection during the Baharestan art festival, which is organized in mid-March every year to embellish the city for the Noruz celebration.

“Artists will try to promote environmental protection, and help revive the values of traditional art through modern approaches,” the director of the Tehran Municipality’s Beautification Organization, Barzin Zarghami, said in a press release published on Saturday.

The festival aims to develop urban art based on the needs of the urban spaces, and strengthen the interactions of citizens and artists before Noruz, the Iranian New Year, he said.

The event will be held in the three sections of egg-shaped statues, murals and sets of installation art across the capital.

“The project also intends to put emphasis on interaction among the artists and pay attention to urban spaces in the field of environmental art and urban decoration. Artworks can be educational, social, or just



Artists paint massive egg-shaped statues in an art festival held in several neighborhoods across Tehran on March 15, 2017. (Mehr/Mehran Riazi)

environmental. These works can change urban landscapes, and draw the citizens’ attention to lesser-known issues in the city,” he added.

“One of the ways to establish effective interaction is to shape a bilateral and meaningful relation between people and urban spaces. On the other side, the current lifestyle requires much simpler and less complicated services, therefore making use of the meaningful content of symbols in designing urban spaces is necessary,” he noted.

“Since Tehran is a city composed of preset activities and cultural interactions, the organization tries to redefine the urban spaces through peace, entertainment and interaction. The Baharestan festival tries to reinforce bilateral interaction between artists and citizens, and promote peaceful spirits and human values,” he concluded.

The painted eggs symbolize life and fertility, and are used to decorate Haft-Seen spreads, an arrangement of seven symbolic items all of which start with the letter ‘S’ in the Persian alphabet as a gesture to salute new year.

The project has helped bring back joy and dynamism to the city, creating a pleasant living environment during the Noruz holiday.

## “Epidemic” exposes liars in Nowhere City

that disgraces liars in the imaginary metropolis of Nowhere City.

This comedy-drama tells the story of a town named “Nowhere City” that is thrown into chaos after a young man invents a substance, which prevents anyone who uses it from telling lies. The man sells the substance to the police for use on criminals, but this transaction exposes police corruption. Consequently, he distributes a large amount of the substance across the city.

The play was performed by Purtorab’s troupe at the Fakhreddin Asad Gorgani Hall in the northern Iranian city of Gorgan in December 2018.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNA on Saturday, Purtorab said that his cast, which is composed of 13 actors, is performing the play using the Brecht distancing effect. By this effect, Brecht wanted to “distance” or to

“alienate” his audience from the characters and the action, and, as a result of that, render them observers who would not become involved in or sympathize emotionally with or empathize by identifying individually with the characters psychologically. Rather, he wanted the audience to understand intellectually the characters’ dilemmas and the wrongdoing producing these dilemmas exposed in his dramatic plots.

Purtorab lamented the shutdown of theaters during the COVID-19 era and said, “Due to the pandemic, our troupe has not performed over the past year and they are under pressure mentally and financially.”

“The Fajr Theater Festival can help the theater troupes resume their activities afterwards,” he added.

The 39th Fajr Theater Festival will wrap up on Monday by announcing winners in several categories.



Iranian director Reza Purtorab's troupe performs “Epidemic” at the Fakhreddin Asad Gorgani Hall in Gorgan on December 24, 2018. (Theater.ir)

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Reza Purtorab is competing at the 39th Fajr Theater Festival with his latest play “Epidemic”

## “Once Upon a Time Abadan” tops list of Fajr popular films

A R T TEHRAN — Actor Hamidreza Azarang’s directorial debut “Once Upon a Time Abadan” stood on the top of the list of the most popular movies competing at the 39th Fajr Film Festival based on a public poll published on Friday.

In the outbreak of the war between the U.S. and Iraq, a missile hit a large storehouse in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan by mistake. Fifteen years ago, this incident inspired Azarang, who is best known for his theatrical performances, to write a play, but it was never performed.

In early 2020, he decided to convert the play into a screenplay for his first



Fateme Motamed-Aria and Mohsen Tanabandeh act in a scene from “Once Upon a Time Abadan” directed by Hamidreza Azarang.

directorial film.

In “Once Upon a Time Abadan”, the missile hits a house in Abadan, making troubles for a family with a father who is suffering from drug addiction.

“In Iran’s abandoned theaters, a play can remain on stage only for 30 days and it may have a maximum of 4,000 viewers, while the thespians would like to share their ideas with a larger number of people,” Azarang said in a press conference after the premiere of his film at the festival on Thursday.

“Moreover, a war story is never a timeworn story. We see its ugly face every day and I feel that it is everlasting because

there is no end to human greed, which has frequently led them toward wars,” he added.

“The missile in ‘Once Upon a Time Abadan’ is more of a nobleman that the politicians, who do not show any sympathy towards people,” Azarang said.

“If a politician was in the place of the missile, he surely would cheat the family and cause them more troubles, but the missile of the story is not like that,” he added.

“Gijgah” by Adel Tabrizi and “Expediency” by Hossein Darabi stand second and third on the list of the most popular movies of the Fajr festival, which will run until February 10.

## Joe Paul Kroll’s “A Human End to History?” published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Joe Paul Kroll’s “A Human End to History?” Hans Blumenberg, Karl Lowith and Carl Schmitt on Secularization and Modernity” has recently been published by Pegah-e Ruzgar-e Now Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Zanir Ebrahimi.

Against the intellectual backdrop of mounting uncertainty concerning the secular nature of modernity, the present study reconstructs a philosophical debate in Germany, concerning the origins and legitimacy of the modern age as a secular age.

This debate was carried out between Hans Blumenberg, Karl Lowith and Carl Schmitt, between about 1950 and 1980. Blumenberg’s little-known early work is considered as a preliminary to his best-known book, “Die Legitimität der Neuzeit”, in which he attacked Schmitt and Lowith for propounding versions of a theorem whereby modern thought consisted of “secularized” religious matter.

It is also shown to develop other core concepts, notably that of human self-assertion, while being charted against Blumenberg’s own intellectual self-assertion, his struggle to find a distinctive voice. A



A poster for the Persian translation of Joe Paul Kroll’s book “A Human End to History?”.

historical discussion of the concept of secularization is followed by an examination of Lowith’s derivation of

the progressivist philosophy of history from Christian eschatology, which is shown to be less straightforward than Lowith’s popularizers assumed.

Lowith’s personal confrontation with Blumenberg having been shown to conceal a deeper affinity in the rejection of apocalyptic thought, the focus shifts to Schmitt’s political-theological critique of modernity. Schmitt deploys the secularization theorem to call into question the human autonomy on which Blumenberg founds the modern age’s claim to legitimacy.

Schmitt is shown to argue against what he perceived to be a human plan to terminate history in an earthly utopia, precluding a divine judgment on history and man. The subsequent debate between Blumenberg and Schmitt in letters and texts reveals fundamental differences concerning the status of man with regard to the absolute, with Schmitt’s concept of antagonistic, absolute potencies being pitched against Blumenberg’s vision of a division of powers, which he discusses in terms of the myth of Prometheus. In arguing for the autonomy of the modern age, Blumenberg is shown to challenge critiques of civilization that avail themselves of religious rhetoric for political ends.

## Swedish writer Malin Persson Giolito’s “Quicksand” comes into Persian bookstores

A R T TEHRAN — Swedish author Malin Persson Giolito’s novel “Quicksand” (“Störst av allt”) has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Ketabe Kooche is the publisher of the 2016 novel translated into Persian by Hossein Masudi Ashtiani.

The book tells the story of a mass shooting, which has taken place at a prep school in Stockholm’s wealthiest suburb. Eighteen-year-old Maja Norberg is charged for her involvement in the massacre that left her boyfriend and her best friend dead. She has spent nine months in jail awaiting trial.

Now the time has come for her to enter

the courtroom. How did Maja, popular, privileged, and a top student—become a cold-blooded killer in the eyes of the public? What did Maja do? Or is it what she failed to do that brought her here?

An English rendition of “Quicksand” by Rachel Willson-Broyles was published in 2017.

The book, which has been sold in 24 countries, received the Best Crime Novel of the Year Award in 2016, Sweden’s official suspense literature award given by the Swedish Crime Writers’ Academy. It also won the 2017 Glass Key award.

Kirkus Reviews said, “Giolito gives us the unsettling monologue of a teenage girl

as she works her way through her role in the murder. It is a splendid work of fiction.”

In September 2017, it was announced that Netflix had ordered an adaption of the novel to be developed into an eponymous series, “Quicksand”, and would partner with FLX to produce the series. The series premiered on April 5, 2019.

Giolito was born in Stockholm in 1969, and grew up in Djursholm. She has worked as a lawyer for the biggest law firm in the Nordic region and as an official for the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium.

She has published three previous novels. She lives in Brussels together with her husband and their three daughters.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Swedish author Malin Persson Giolito’s novel “Quicksand”.