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*Congratulation on Bahman 22 celebrations  
Congratulation on 41st anniversary of the revolution  
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# Iran self-sufficient in producing military jets



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## Railway projects worth \$142m inaugurated across Iran

**TEHRAN** — Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAD) said 56 railway infrastructure and service projects were inaugurated across the country on Sunday, on the occasion of the “Ten-Day Dawn” which marks the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Speaking in an inauguration ceremony in Tehran, Saeed Rasouli said the mentioned projects were carried

out with the aim of increasing the safety and speed of the country’s railway transportation.

According to the official, with a total investment of six trillion rials (over \$142.8 million), the said projects were in various fields including communications and electronic signaling, double tracking, as well as sub-lines, and the reconstruction and repairing of old rail lines in some blocks. **→4**

## Advisor says Soleimani was ‘outstanding diplomat’, ‘great politician’

**TEHRAN** — A senior foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker says Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was an “outstanding diplomat” and a “great politician” besides being a general. “Given the circumstances, he used diplomatic approaches to carry out his mission and he followed the rules of negotiation,” Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Sunday, IRNA reported.

He said General Soleimani was truly

a general of peace and security.

“He understood theories and ways of negotiation very well and believed in diplomacy as a tool and path towards reaching his goal,” the advisor said.

U.S. President Donald Trump ordered strikes that martyred General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), on January 3. **→3**

## Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union rejects Trump’s ‘deal of century’

The Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIU) has reiterated its absolute rejection of U.S. President Donald Trump’s so-called deal of the century on the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, terming the contentious plan a violation of the Palestinian nation’s legitimate rights.

Representatives of 20 Arab parliaments participated in an emergency AIU meeting titled “Supporting the Palestinians in

their Just Cause” in the Jordanian capital, Amman on Saturday to discuss the implications of the controversial U.S. plan.

In their final communiqué, the top Arab parliamentarians vehemently rejected any unfair or unilateral solution that does not fulfill the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the right to establish an independent state, with Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital. **→10**

## Syrian government forces recapture 600 square km of territory in Idlib campaign

Syrian government forces have recaptured more than 600 square kilometers of territory so far in a campaign to seize control of the last rebel strongholds of Idlib and the Aleppo countryside, a statement from Syria’s armed forces said on Sunday.

According to Reuters, Syria’s armed forces have taken control of dozens of towns and villages in recent days as part of the campaign, the statement said.

### ■ Syrian army takes Idlib crossroads town despite Turkish warnings

The Syrian army has taken control of a strategic northwestern crossroads town, its latest gain in a weeks-long offensive against the country’s last major rebel bastion.

Advance on Saraqeb came shortly after Turkey sent additional troops into the region and

threatened to respond if its military observation posts in Idlib, set up under a 2018 truce, come under attack, al Jazeera reported.

“Army units now exercise full control over the town of Saraqeb,” state television reported, showing footage of the town’s streets, deserted after weeks of bombardment.

Saraqeb is considered a strategic prize for the government as it seeks to regain control of the M4 and M5 highways that meet in the town. The M5, Syria’s longest highway, connects second city Aleppo to the capital Damascus and continues south to the Jordanian border.

With Saraqeb recaptured, little more than half of Idlib province remains in rebel hands, along with slivers of neighboring Aleppo and Latakia provinces.

Since December, government forces have

pressed a blistering assault against the Idlib region with Russian support, retaking town after town despite warnings from Turkey, which is allied with the rebels, to stop.

The violence has killed more than 300 civilians and has displaced approximately 600,000 people since, according to the United Nations.

Witnesses at the border said convoys of Turkish military vehicles had been crossing into Idlib since Friday, delivering supplies and turning back to return with more.

The conflict has disrupted the fragile cooperation between Moscow and Ankara.

Turkey says the advances by Russia-backed Syrian troops and their allies threaten a fresh humanitarian disaster, driving another wave of potential refugees to its southern border, and has threatened to act if they do not pull back. **→10**

## China’s coronavirus deaths surpass SARS as country plans halting return to work

China raised the death toll from its coronavirus outbreak to 811 on Sunday, passing the number killed globally by the SARS epidemic, as authorities made plans for millions of people returning to work after an extended Lunar New Year break.

Many of China’s usually teeming cities have almost become ghost towns during the past two weeks as Communist Party rulers ordered virtual lockdowns, canceled flights, closed factories and shut schools.

Even on Monday, a large number of workplaces and schools will remain closed and many white-collar employees will work from home.

The scale of the potential hit to an economy that has been the engine of global growth in recent years has taken a toll on financial markets,

as shares slumped and investors switched into safe-havens such as gold, bonds and the Japanese yen.

China’s cabinet said on Sunday it would coordinate with transport authorities to ensure the smooth return to work of employees in key industries such as food and medicines.

The State Council’s special coronavirus group also said workers should return in “batches”, rather than all at once, in order to reduce infection risks.

China’s ambassador to Britain described the newly identified virus as “the enemy of mankind” in an interview with BBC television on Sunday, but added it “is controllable, is preventable, is curable”.

“At this moment is very difficult to predict when we are going to have an inflection point,”

Liu Xiaoming said. “We certainly hope it will come soon, but the isolation and quarantine measures have been very effective.”

China’s National Health Commission recorded another 89 deaths on Saturday, pushing the total well above the 774 who died from SARS, or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in 2002/2003.

Total confirmed coronavirus cases in China stood at 37,198, commission data showed. New infections recorded the first drop since Feb. 1, falling back below 3,000 to 2,656 cases. Of those, 2,147 cases were in Hubei province, the epicenter of the outbreak.

The virus has also spread to at least 27 countries and regions, according to a Reuters count based on official reports, infecting more than 330 people. Two deaths have been reported outside mainland China - both of Chinese nationals. **→10**



## ARTICLE

**Reza Amoeei**  
Mehr News Agency  
journalist

## How much has the 16-year Iraq War cost the U.S.?

The U.S. has spent about \$120 billion a year on the Iraq War, a sum which is only \$55 billion less than the EU annual budget.

The war in Iraq from the outset was very controversial in the U.S. and other Western countries. Opponents to the Iraq War were not just among human rights groups or opponents to liberal democracy. Some of them were ordinary American citizens and voters whose opposition was purely due to economic reasons rather than moral or ideological ones.

The opposition considered the cost of the war in Iraq as a heavy burden on American taxpayers, so they wanted to prevent the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and have called for a halt to the war in Iraq since its beginning.

### ■ The latest estimation of the Iraq war: \$1922 billion

In the wake of economic opposition to the Iraq War, various U.S. groups and institutions have so far rallied to assess the costs of the war.

“The Costs of War Project” is one of the research projects on the costs of the war in Iraq, which has begun its evaluation of the costs since 2011.

The project is being observed and managed by Dr. Neta C. Crawford, Professor and Chair of Political Science at Boston University, examining the key features and effects of the Iraq War on the federal budget.

According to the latest results by the end of 2019, the report states that even if the U.S. government decides to pull out all of its troops in Iraq immediately, the war has incurred a 1922-billion-dollar cost on American voters from 2003 to the end of 2019.

It is said that this figure does not only include funding appropriated by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) for the war, but also the costs of the care of Iraq War veterans and interests on debt incurred for the 16 years of the U.S. military’s involvement in the country.

The DoD had allotted approximately \$838 billion for military operations in Iraq from the fiscal year 2003 to 2019, including operations fighting ISIS in Iraq and Syria. **→3**



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## National congress honors martyrs whose struggles led to 1979 Revolution

On Sunday, the Interior Ministry hall hosted a national congress to treasure the memory of those who were martyred in the struggle against the despotic Pahlavi regime from 1963 until 1979, the year that the Islamic Revolution reached fruition.



## PERSPECTIVE

**Mostafa Mousavi Sabat**  
Head of the Tehran Times  
Art & Culture Desk

## Grand exit from cinema ignored in controversies over “Exodus”

Faramarz Qaribian, the 78-year-old star of many memorable movies of the Iranian cinema, announced on Friday that “Exodus” is his final movie, but the surprising announcement was snubbed in the wake of controversies over the movie, which challenges the current policies of the government in the country.

Retirements of great artists, who have constantly done their best to make the world more beautiful for us, always leave a bitter taste in our mouths. However, the announcement came as no great surprise unfortunately.

Qaribian played a key role in making the history of the 120-year-old Iranian cinema by his powerful performances in over 70 films, including “The Deer” and “Senator”.

He was a big box office draw in Iran’s post-revolution cinema during the 1980s. He co-starred with many eminent actors such as Behruz Vossuqi in several acclaimed movies such as Masud Kimia’s “The Deer” and “The Soil” before the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, but the brilliant performances of other stars never overshadowed Qaribian’s strong position in the films.

It was anticipated that Qaribian’s return to cinema after a five-year hiatus would receive a warm welcome with “Exodus”, but his brilliant performance was overlooked in the storm of debates between director Ebrahim Hatamikia and journalists during a press conference after the premiere of the movie during the Fajr Film Festival.

It was no surprise for a septuagenarian to announce retirement, but it is regrettable that it received so little attention.

Qaribian made so many moments of our lives eternal by playing the roles of our imaginary heroes in films. He made a great portion of the history of our cinema. He is a hero of Iranian cinema, however, he was not treated like a hero following his announcement of his retirement.

Qaribian’s remarks in the announcement of his retirement need to be acknowledged: “I’ve become weary of the negative attitude of Iranian cinema officials, therefore, I am announcing that ‘Exodus’ is my final film.”



## Grand ayatollahs call for mass participation in Bahman 22 rallies

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A number of Iranian grand clerics have called for people's mass participation in Bahman 22 rallies (Feb. 11) which marks the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

Grand Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi said that the mass participation will disappoint the enemies.



"It has been for more than forty years that the enemies have been hatching plots against our people and system, but, with the grace of God, they have been defeated in all of them," he said.

Makarem Shirazi also expressed hope that the country's economic situation would improve.

Grand Ayatollah Hossein Nouri Hamedani said that the people's mass participation in the rallies will show national unity in the face of enmities.

He noted that the people will show their support for the revolution by participating in rallies, like the previous years.

The top religious scholar, Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, also urged the people to attend the rallies.

Javadi Amoli also noted that the officials should pay attention to the people's problems and make efforts to improve the economy and living standards.

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Alavi Gorgani said that the people will show their will in standing for the ideals of Imam Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Revolution, by participating in the Tuesday rallies.

President Hassan Rouhani, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani and Judiciary Chief Hojjatolislam Ebrahim Raesi said in a meeting of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination on Saturday that participation in the rallies is symbol of "national unity and integrity" against the United States' economic war.

Iran is celebrating the 41st anniversary of its revolution as the United States has tightened its illegal sanctions the Islamic Republic. Donald Trump himself has acknowledged that the harshest sanctions in history has been slapped against Iran.

At a Paris gathering in July 27, John Bolton, who served as Donald Trump's national security advisor, told members of the Mujahedeen Khalq, MEK, that the Trump administration should embrace the goal of immediate regime change in Iran and recognize the group as a "viable" alternative.

"The outcome of the president's policy review should be to determine that the Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution will not last until its 40th birthday," Bolton said.

## Salehi in Vienna to attend nuclear security conference

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), left Tehran on Sunday for Vienna to partake in an International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS 2020).

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is organizing the third International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts (ICONS 2020), at its headquarters in Vienna from February 10 to 14.

The ICONS meeting has been held every two years.

Salehi, heading a delegation, is scheduled to deliver a speech at the inaugural ceremony of the event.

The conference will provide a forum for ministers, policy-makers, senior officials and nuclear security experts to formulate and exchange views on experiences and achievements, current approaches, future directions and priorities for nuclear security.

## 'Gen. Soleimani viewed regional security as Iran's security'

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani viewed security in the region as Iran's security, the deputy chief for international affairs at the Office for the Preservation and Publication of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's Works said on Sunday.

Mohsen Pakayeen made the remarks at a conference on Soleimani's role in regional security hosted by the Islamic World Peace Forum.

"Martyr General Soleimani was a theoretician who believed Iran's security is dependent on security outside borders," Pakayeen said.

"He (Soleimani) believed no country would have security unless the whole region was secure," Pakayeen added.

Pakaeen, who is also a member of the strategic council of the Islamic World Peace Forum, said Soleimani always attached great importance national sovereignty of other countries.

He added that Soleimani also defended territorial integrity of the countries.

Pakaeen, Iran's former ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan, noted that it was Soleimani's strategies and policies which led to annihilation of Daesh.

The United States assassinated Soleimani, Iran's top anti-terror commander, in an airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

Soleimani is recognized internationally as a legendary commander in the battle against terrorist groups, especially Daesh (ISIS). He commanded forces who resisted ISIS which was advancing toward the Iraqi Kurdistan and came close to Baghdad.

Officials in Tehran and independent generals in the world have said the Soleimani assassination amounts to an act of war against Iran.

In an interview with Lebanese al-Mayadeen news network on Thursday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, "No person in their right mind would do such a thing. By doing this, Trump puts an end to presence of the United States in the region."

He added, "A government, which is not courageous enough to fight a commander [on the battlefield] has to martyr him through a cowardly terrorist operation.... Americans and the Zionist regime always act like this."

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has described the assassination of Soleimani as a "cowardly" act that brought "disgrace" upon the U.S.

# New missile, modern propellant for missiles, satellite carriers unveiled

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), in a ceremony on Sunday, unveiled its new products, including the surface-to-surface Ra'ad 500 missile and a new generation of propellants for missiles and satellite carriers.

The ceremony was attended by IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami as well as IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, according to Sepah News.

The news website said the Aerospace Force managed to unveil its new surface to surface missile with composite body titled Zahir, half the weight of Fateh 110, and 200 kilometers further in terms of range in comparison to Fateh.

The final range of Ra'ad 500 missile is 500 km.

The IRGC also unveiled the Salman space rocket engine with thrust vectoring nozzle which is considered as the new generation for the space rockets and trust rocket engines.

The newly-unveiled thrust vectoring nozzle has been manufactured by connecting composite body with a vectoring nozzle which paves the way for utilizing the engine with solid fuel in space.

**■ Being strong is heart of new defense policies: Salami**

Addressing the ceremony, General Salami pointed to the Saturday remarks of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei, saying, "Being strong is the heat of new defense policies of the Islamic Republic."

"Our real war is producing and manufacturing for being strong," the commander said, adding, "The newly-unveiled complex achievements are our key to enter far space."

**■ Iran able to control solid fuel of anti-shield missiles in space: Hajizadeh**

"Enjoying the technology of vectoring nozzles, the possibility of controlling solid fuel out of atmospheres



for spacecraft, trust rockets and anti-shield missiles has been materialized," the commander of IRGC Aerospace Force said at the ceremony.

"We, in the Guards Aerospace Force, have an agreement with the country's scientists and experts based on which the achievements in defense sector should be economically cost-effective; accordingly, today we witnessed our capabilities in military and technical field as well as cost effective productions," Hajizadeh went on to say.

In his remarks on Saturday, Ayatollah Khamenei said to prevent a war against itself, Iran must increase its military power, noting that being militarily vulnerable would prompt the enemy to take action against the country.

## Experts able to overhaul entire models of helicopters: defense minister

**POLITICAL d e s k** **ISFAHAN** — The Iranian defense minister said on Sunday that the army's technicians and engineers are capable of overhauling all models of combat and transport helicopters.

Amir Hatami made the remarks in a ceremony in the central city of Isfahan, where tens of overhauled helicopters delivered to the army's airborne division.

"The required infrastructures for the country's aviation industries have been vastly enhanced by the Armed Forces which are now well prepared to give harsh response to any aggression," the minister said.

He further said overhaul of helicopters has prevented exit of a hefty amount of money from the country.

Hatami added, "We have utilized capacities of domestic knowledge-based companies in overhauling the helicopters and have managed to decrease 50 percent of expenses in comparison with global prices."

Commander of the Army's Ground Force Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, Commander of the Army Ground Force's Airborne Division General Yousef Qorbani and Director of the Defense Ministry Aviation Industries Organization Second Brigadier General



Afshin Khajefard had also attended the ceremony.

In recent years, Iran has made great strides in the defense sector and become self-sufficient in producing essential military hardware and defense systems.

Iran has made it clear that its military might is

"In order to prevent war and in order to put an end to threats we must become powerful," Ayatollah Khamenei told a number of Air Force officers on the occasion of Air Force Day.

The Leader went on to say, "We are not seeking to threaten any country or nation, rather we are after protecting the country's security and preventing threats."

Ayatollah Khamenei also said reliance on domestic capacities and turning threats into opportunities are the chief reasons for the successes of the Air Force.

"In addition to repairing and maintenance of aircrafts, the Air Force has successfully planned and manufactured fighter jets in spite of the U.S. sanctions," the Leader stated.

merely defensive and that it poses no threat to other countries.

In December 2019, Brigadier General Qorbani announced that his forces mounted modern cannons and rocket-launchers on the transport helicopters.

"Previously, helicopter 214, which is a transport helicopter, could not defend itself and that was a weak point for the said helicopter. Today, the Airborne Division's helicopters have been equipped with 20mm Cannons and rocket-launchers," the commander said.

"The missiles that were previously mounted on our choppers enjoyed finally 3,500 meters of effective range but in the last 2 years the Airborne with the cooperation of the country's defense industries and universities have managed to produce long-range missiles and have mounted them on the choppers," he explained.

The commander went on to say that the Airborne Division has attained self-sufficiency in producing its spare parts. "We are producing nearly 240,000 different parts inside the country."

He said, the Airborne Unit turned sanctions into an opportunity."

## Military chief says U.S. hegemony has lost color

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri has said that the United States' hegemony does not play an important and influential role in regional developments.

In a message on the eve of the Bahman 22 rallies (Feb. 11) marking victory of the Islamic revolution, he said that the arrogant powers' "strategic defeats" in the region show that the U.S. has lost its influence in regard to regional developments.

He also pointed to Iran's retaliatory attack on a U.S. base in Iraq, calling it a "hard slap on the face of enemy and its policies".

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3. In a retaliatory move, Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a major U.S. military base



in Iraq on January 8.

Trump immediately tried to downplay the significance of the retaliatory attack, claiming that nobody had been hurt.

However in the latest reports released by the Pentagon it has been revealed that 64 troops had sustained brain injuries.

Iran became the first country since the Second World War Two to launch a military attack on the U.S.

## Pakistani PM treasures ties with Iran: ambassador

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Rahim Hayat Qureshi, Pakistan's new ambassador to Tehran, has said that Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has stressed the importance of fraternal ties with Iran.

"Pre-departure call on PM @ImranKhanPTI. He stressed the importance of brotherly and fraternal ties with Iran which are rooted in history, culture and society. As Ambassador to Iran it would be my earnest desire to take our bilateral ties to greater heights," he tweeted on Saturday.

Prime Minister Khan visited Tehran on October 13. He met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

Iranian ambassador to Islamabad Mohammad Ali Hosseini and Pakistani Minister for Defense Production Zubaida Jalal Khan exchanged views on Saturday

over promoting defense ties between the two "friendly" nations.

Also on Thursday, Ambassador Hosseini and Pakistan Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Nadeem Raza highlighted the importance of close security cooperation in border areas.

Hosseini praised Pakistan's determination to fence border areas.

Hosseini also met with Pakistan's Interior Minister Ijaz Ahmed Shah on January 30.

"It is unavoidable to boost security in borders to help the sustainable development of the region and also the well-being of the people of the two countries, especially those who reside in border areas," Hosseini said.

Shah said that Islamabad is determined to expand cooperation with Iran in various areas, including border security, fight against terrorism and drug trafficking.

## Iran self-sufficient in producing military jets: Air Force commander

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The commander of Iran's Army Air Force, in an interview with the national TV on Saturday night, said that the defense industry is capable of planning and manufacturing each and every parts of aircrafts inside the country.

Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh said, "Nowadays, large aircraft-manufacturing companies worldwide, including those in the U.S., do not produce the entire parts and accessories they need. Several countries participate in their production, but we manufacture the entire accessories of the aircrafts inside Iran."

"As we have attained the technology and knowledge of producing the aircraft, any request by the air force can be carried out by the defense industry," he stated.

Nasirzadeh added, "We are self-sufficient in training pilots in the Qiam

and Isfahan military training centers and other airbases based on up-to-date knowledge."

"I, personally, paid a visit to Eurofighter (Typhoon) manufacturing company and realized that production line of (Iranian Kowsar jet is better than the Eurofighter production line which is jointly owned by 6 to 8 different European countries," the commander went on to say.

He termed production of the engine of aircraft as a very complex technology and said, "This year, we designed and produced an engine and installed it on Kowsar jet. The engine's thrust power was much better than the engine of the U.S-made F-5 fighter jet. We have attained (technology of) manufacturing jet engine."

Touching upon production of the latest generation of drones, Nasirzadeh said, "Last year, we unveiled Kaman 12 drones

which was jointly manufactured by the air force and the defense industry. We employed a sum of six Kaman 12 drones in the air force. Now, we are after producing Kaman 22. Both Kaman 12 and 22 are combat drones which can also be used in reconnaissance operations. They can carry ammunitions too."

Nasirzadeh said on Friday that Iran was capable of responding quickly to any military threat.

"As we are capable of creating security in the region and will respond to any threat quickly, we also have the capability to create peace and stability," Nasirzadeh said, addressing worshippers in Tehran.

In remarks on Saturday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in order to prevent a war, Iran must increase its military power, noting that being militarily vulnerable

would prompt the enemy to take action against the country.

"In order to prevent war and in order to put an end to threats we must become powerful," Ayatollah Khamenei told a number of Air Force officers on the occasion of Air Force Day which is February 8.

The Leader went on to say, "We are not seeking to threaten any country or nation, rather we are after protecting the country's security and preventing threats."

Ayatollah Khamenei also said reliance on domestic capacities and turning threats into opportunities are the chief reasons for the successes of the Air Force.

"In addition to repairing and maintenance of aircrafts, the Air Force has successfully planned and manufactured fighter jets in spite of the U.S. sanctions," the Leader stated.



# Russia has made most efforts to preserve nuclear deal: diplomat

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levon Dzhagaryan has said that Russia has used its utmost efforts to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

In an interview with ILNA published on Sunday, he criticized Europe for being passive in keeping the JCPOA.

“Europe says it supports the JCPOA, but is passive in practice,” he said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has said that Europe must ensure Iran’s benefits from the nuclear deal if it wants the deal to survive.

“If we want the Iran nuclear deal to survive, we need to ensure that Iran benefits if it returns to full compliance,” he wrote in an article in the Project Syndicate published on Saturday.

Borrell was notified in January by Paris, London and Berlin that they had triggered the dispute mechanism.

He has said that the EU will extend indefinitely the time limit to resolve disputes in the nuclear deal to avoid having to go to the UN Security Council or triggering new sanctions.

“We are in agreement not to go directly to a strict time limit which would oblige (us) to go to the Security Council,” Reuters quoted him as saying during a visit to Tehran.

Borrell said on January 24 that he had extended the time available to discuss ways to save the nuclear deal.

“There is agreement that more time is needed due to the complexity of the issues involved. The timeline is therefore extended,” Borrell said in a statement.

In the meeting with Borrell in Tehran on



Feb. 3, President Rouhani criticized the EU for failing to honor its commitments after the U.S. quit the deal and reinstituted sanctions on Iran.

However, Rouhani said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is still ready to cooperate with the European Union for resolving issues, and at any time that the other side (EU) fully observes its commitments Iran will also return to its commitments.”

In May 2019 Iran started to reduce its commitments to the JCPOA at bi-monthly intervals in response to the abrogation of the pact by the U.S. coupled with the European Union’s inaction to shield Iran’s economy from sanctions.

## ■ ‘Iran’s failure to join FATF will cause problems’

Dzhagaryan also said that Iran will suffer if it refuses to join the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Opposition to join the FATF grew after the U.S. quit the nuclear deal and introduced sanctions against Iran.

“We are interested to see that Iran accept to join the FATF, otherwise it will cause problems. As a friendly country, Russia has announced its view to Iran. However, it is Tehran who should take the final decision, because it is an internal issue,” he pointed out.

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) said on October 18 that it has

given Iran a final deadline of February 2020 to tighten its laws against money laundering in compliance with the global watchdog’s financial standards.

“If before February 2020, Iran does not enact the Palermo and Terrorist Financing Conventions in line with the FATF Standards, then the FATF will fully lift the suspension of counter-measures and call on its members and urge all jurisdictions to apply effective counter-measures, in line with recommendation 19,” the FATF said in a statement, Reuters reported.

The government is pushing for the approval of the FATF.

In October 2018, the parliament voted to join the FATF. However, the Guardian Council rejected it. Now the ball is in the Expediency Council’s court.

When there is a dispute between parliament and the Guardian Council the issue is referred to as the Expediency Council for final arbitration.

## ■ ‘Assassination of Gen. Soleimani to have negative consequences on the region’

Ambassador Dzhagaryan also said that assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani will have negative consequences on the West Asia region.

He strongly condemned the U.S. action in assassinating Soleimani.

Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3. In a retaliatory move, Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a major U.S. military base in Iraq on January 8.

The Russian diplomat called on Iran and the U.S. to practice self-restraint and solve problems through dialogue.

## Zafar satellite lunched successfully, fails to reach orbit

The spokesman for the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) announced late on Sunday that Iran successfully launched its domestically-made Zafar satellite using a Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier, though the missile fell short of reaching the designated orbit.

Fars News Agency, quoting the Public Relations Department of Iran’s Defense Ministry, cited Ahmad Hosseini as saying, “Simorgh satellite carrier took Zafar

satellite into space with success, but the carrier failed to reach the speed needed to get the satellite into the designated orbit.

He added that the data from the launch will be used to optimize future launch attempts.

The launch took place after Iran’s minister of information and communication technology said earlier on Sunday that the countdown had started for launching the Zafar satellite,

which would orbit the Earth at an altitude of over 500 km.

In a post on his official Twitter page, Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said, “The countdown starts for the launch of Zafar satellite in a few hours...”

The minister had tweeted on February 3 that Iran would launch its Zafar observation satellite by the end of the same week (February 7).

(Source: Press TV)

## Advisor says General Soleimani was an ‘outstanding diplomat’, ‘great politician’

### ‘General Soleimani was truly a general of peace and security’

**1→** In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC attacked the U.S. airbase of Ain al-Assad in Anbar province in western Iraq as part of its promised “tough revenge” for the U.S. terror attack.

Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran, told the Arabic-language daily Asharq al-Awsat on January 23 that Esmail Ghaani, who is successor of General Soleimani, could also be assassinated.

Responding to the remarks, IRGC Chief Hossein Salami warned the U.S. and Israel that none of their military commanders will be safe should they take action against Iranian generals.

“The Americans and the Zionists beware that if they threaten our commanders with assassination and if they implement their threat, life of none of their commanders will be safe,” Major General Salami said.



## Era of U.S. presence in region is over, says Velayati

Syria has come to an end thanks to Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani’s blood.

The U.S. soldiers will be expelled from the region soon, Velayati said on Saturday, addressing a ceremony commemorating the 40th day after General Soleimani’s martyrdom.

He said the American rulers thought in vain that they could overcome the Resistance Movement by assassinating Soleimani, Mehr reported.

On January 3, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered strikes that martyred General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization

Units (PMU).

After the strikes, the Iraqi parliament voted to expel the U.S. forces from Iraq.

Velayati, a veteran politician, said the funeral procession for Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was unprecedented and exposed the United States’ miscalculations.

Massive funeral procession was held for Soleimani and al-Muhandis in Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf.

Later the body of General Soleimani was transferred to Iran. Millions of mourners took to the streets to pay their last respect to the general first in Ahwaz and then in Mashhad, Tehran, Qom, and finally in

Kerman — Soleimani’s hometown.

In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC attacked the U.S. airbase of Ain al-Assad in Anbar province in western Iraq as part of its promised “tough revenge” for the U.S. terror attack.

USA Today reported on Feb. 6 that as it turned out, despite troops huddling in bomb shelters, dozens suffered brain injuries from the explosions when a payload of nearly a ton slammed into their base.

The Pentagon recently announced that 64 U.S. service members suffered traumatic brain injuries (TBI) in the missile attack on the airbase.



POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has said that the era of U.S. presence in Iraq and

## With Iowa mess U.S. in no place to discuss Iran polls, says professor

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Mohammad Marandi, a professor at the University of Tehran, says with the disaster that happened in the U.S. state of Iowa, Washington is in no place to talk about Iran’s elections.

Marandi was referring to last week’s Iowa Democratic caucuses which aroused controversies due to a delay in announcing final results and inconsistencies in votes.

“We are witnessing how they are trying to prevent Senator Sanders from winning and this has become clear for the people in the worst possible form,” he said in an interview with Mehr published on Sunday.

On Thursday, three days after the caucus, and with three percent of the results still unreported, the Democratic Party chairman Tom Perez requested a recanvass of the results.

“Enough is enough. In light of the problems that have emerged in the implementation of the delegate selection plan and in order to assure public confidence in the results, I am calling on the Iowa Democratic Party to immediately begin a recanvass,”



said Perez.

Meanwhile, Sanders supporters on social media accused the Democratic National Committee of rigging the caucus against their candidate. Sanders won the popular vote on both the initial and final alignments, but another candidate Pete Buttigieg secured more delegates than the Vermont senator.

Also on Thursday, Sanders criticized the Iowa Democratic Party handling of the caucus results, saying at a New Hampshire town hall that the party “screwed up.”

“It is really sad that the Democratic Party of Iowa screwed up the counting process so severely,” Sanders told CNN, noting that the scenario “distressed” him.

## Mosalla to host memorial service for Gen. Soleimani

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) spokesman Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif said on Sunday that Tehran’s Mosalla mosque will host a memorial service to commemorate top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

According to General Sharif, the coincidence of the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution with the 40th day after the martyrdom of General Soleimani would lead to huge turnout at the events, Tasnim reported.

On Bahman 22nd, which falls on February 11, Iranian people pour into the streets in their millions to commemorate the great victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Sharif said besides commemorating General Soleimani’s major role in national security, the “great and noble” Iranian nation will attend the nationwide rallies due to be held on Tuesday.



He said General Soleimani’s commemoration ceremony will be held on Thursday.

On January 3, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered strikes that martyred General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC attacked the U.S. airbase of Ain al-Assad in Anbar province in western Iraq as part of its promised “tough revenge” for the U.S. terror attack.

## Over 1.2 tons of narcotics seized in Sistan-Balouchestan

POLITICAL

**TEHRAN** — Police forces in Sistan-Baluchestan Province have dismantled a drug-trafficking cell and confiscated nearly 1,229 kilograms of narcotics, the provincial police chief has said.

The anti-narcotics police of Zahedan traced the haul of narcotics through extensive operations, arresting a member of the drug-trafficking cell while trafficking 179 kg of opium in a sedan, Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari said on Saturday.



Ghanbari said police forces identified the hideout of the drug cell and captured two other offenders along with 762 kg of Opium, 250 kg of hashish, 12 kg of heroin, 4 kg of crystal and 19 kg of other narcotics, Mehr reported.

Two cars and some ammunitions were also busted during the operation, he said.

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking. The drugs are mainly destined to lucrative markets in Europe and Persian Gulf Arab states.

The drugs originate from neighboring Afghanistan.

On Feb. 7 the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released the results of the annual U.S. government estimate measuring poppy cultivation and potential opium production in Afghanistan.

The U.S. government estimate of “Afghanistan Poppy Cultivation and Potential Opium Production” found poppy cultivation decreased in 2019 compared to 2018, but potential pure opium production increased, according to whitehouse.gov.

“Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan declined 28 percent, from 221,000 hectares in 2018 to 160,000 hectares in 2019. Conversely, potential pure opium production increased by 21 percent, from 5,550 metric tons in 2018 to 6,700 metric tons in 2019. Low opium prices at planting time drove the decline in cultivation. The rise in potential pure production is a direct result of favorable weather and harvesting conditions,” ONDCP said.

John F. Sopko, U.S. special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, said at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC, in November 2019 that the counternarcotics effort in Afghanistan “has just been a total failure”, the Business Insider said on December 5.

Opium cultivation covered 263,000 hectares in Afghanistan, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. That was down from 328,000 hectares in 2017 but still more than any other year since 1994.

In April 2019, Iranian Police Chief Hossein Ashtari described Iran as a pioneering state in the campaign against drug trafficking and said, “We have declared our information and needs to the international organizations but I should say that we have not pinned hope on their aid.”

“We do not have hope that the international organizations can seriously confront” the cultivation and production of narcotics in Afghanistan, General Ashtari said.

## How much has the 16-year Iraq War cost the U.S.?

**1→** Bonuses and the healthcare costs of service members are among the costs of the war in Iraq.

Aside from the Defense Department costs, the State Department added approximately \$59 billion to the total costs of the Iraq War for The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on Iraq and Syria.

According to the report, after the 9/11 attacks, about \$4.1 billion has been spent on medical and disability care on war veterans and compensation.

The report states that if post-9/11 wars had not been waged by the U.S., about \$444 billion of the total funds spent would have been financed.

These costs came at the time when the Pentagon has been trying to cut its expenditures for the past decade after its annual \$140 billion funds for the Iraq War heightened in 2008.

On the other hand, in some cases, Congress has appropriated funding required for the war in Iraq apart from previous approved plans.

### ■ The continued costly war by the U.S. within an ideological framework

To realize the great sum of the U.S. fund in the Iraq War from 2003 to 2019, which the Costs of War Project stated as being amounted for \$1922 billion, one should know that the EU budget in 2018, with 27 member countries and a population of 446 million people was set at \$175 billion.

In these circumstances, the Iraq War has obviously no outcome for Washington except endless costs, which are slightly different from the EU annual budget. So the question is, why is the war in Iraq still going on, despite the massive economic costs?

Some experts consider the ideological orientation of U.S. foreign policy to be one of the main reasons for the continued war in Iraq. From this point of view, Washington is trying to confront its ideological opponents rather than adopting short-term approach toward issues and the costs and benefits of the implementation of its policies.

In such a situation, Washington’s leaders regard the Islamic Republic of Iran as their most important ideological opponent, which defies the U.S. policies in the world. Therefore, White House leaders find it necessary to continue the war in Iraq to confront Iran.

On this basis, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq can be taken as a major defeat for the United States. That is why the U.S. continues to insist on maintaining its presence and even expanding its military bases in Iraq, despite the massive financial costs and the Iraqi parliament’s resolution for expulsion of foreign troops.

Washington is well aware that the withdrawal from Iraq will truly bring a major defeat to the Americans, and there is no doubt that this defeat will be the opposite of the “America First” populist slogan.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	454618.5
IFX	5759.00

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	45,972 rials
GBP	54,150 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$54.47/b
WTI	\$50.32/b
OPEC Basket	\$55.72/b
Gold	\$1,572.35/oz
Silver	\$17.77/oz
Platinum	\$971.25/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Railway projects worth \$142m inaugurated across Iran

**1 →** “Due to the overuse of some rail routes, the speed of trains has decreased and it was necessary to rebuild the trains; double-tracking is also aimed at increasing the capacity of the trains and higher efficiency of the country’s rail network,” Rasouli said. Expanded transportation via railway is, today, one of the major pillars of sustainable development for the countries; and it is why the governments usually allocate noticeable funds and resources to the development of the railway.



In Iran, the development of railway has been among the top-priority plans of the governments in recent years. The country’s Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) has envisaged that the railway will account for at least 30 percent of cargo transportation and 20 percent of passenger transportation in Iran. Such a target requires at least 850 trillion rials (about \$20.238 billion) of investment.

TEDPIX, IFX advance on Sunday

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 1,776 points to 454,618 on Sunday, IRNA reported. Over 6.2 billion securities worth 40.397 trillion rials (about \$961.8 million) were traded at TSE. The first market’s index climbed 327 points and the second market’s index rose 7,925 points. Also on Sunday, IFX, the main index of Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), ended 11 points higher at 5,759, the same report confirmed. Some 2.804 billion securities valued at 22.713 trillion rials (about \$540.7 million) were traded at IFB on Sunday.

TCCIMA to host conference on Iran-India trade

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) is going to hold an Iran-India trade conference on February 17, TCCIMA portal announced. The conference is going to focus on exploring ways of developing economic relations between the two countries and solving the existing problems in the way of mutual trade. As reported, the conference is going to be attended by senior officials from both sides including the Indian ambassador to Tehran, representative of India’s UCO Bank, as well as officials from Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country’s banking sector, Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and a number of Iranian businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Monthly aluminum ingot production climbs 38% yr/yr

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Production of aluminum ingots in Iran rose 38 percent during the tenth Iranian calendar month of Dey (ended on January 20) compared to the same month of the previous year, IRNA reported. As reported, Iranian aluminum ingot producers produced 24,893 tons of the product during the tenth month of this year. Although production by these producers has fallen 17 percent to 221,223 tons during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019-January 20, 2020) from the same period of time in the past year. Iran produced 276,575 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year. IRALCO accounted for producing 53 percent of the total production in the past year. As the world’s 18th producer of aluminum, Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026). The country is targeting the production of 823,000 tons of aluminum ingots for the next Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020-March 20, 2021), which requires an investment of \$1.8 billion.

E-Commerce Development Center launches system for monitoring businesses

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** — E-Commerce Development Center of Iran has officially launched a system for recording customers’ complaints against e-commerce businesses in the country, the chairman of the center announced in a press conference held at the place of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade on Sunday. Elaborating on the goals of the mentioned system, Ali Rahbari said the system is aimed to provide the customers with a profile of the electronic businesses for evaluating them. According to the official, there are nearly 300,000 Iranian e-commerce businesses with an operating website, of which 59,000 had received the “Trust Seal” license issued by the center. The official pointed to the evaluating of the e-commerce businesses and establishing trust for the customers as the first step toward the development of e-commerce market in the country, saying that the center started working on the mentioned system since the end of the Iranian calendar year of 1396 (ended on March 2018). Over the past three years, more than 35,000



e-commerce businesses in the country have received the center’s trust seal license, the official said. “Since the beginning of the current year

[March 21, 2019] so far, more than 12,000 businesses have received licenses from the E-Commerce Development Center,” Rahbari said.

Annual agricultural production anticipated to rise 6m tons



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s annual agricultural production is predicted to rise six million tons to 128 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), ILNA reported, quoting Mohammad-Ali Tahmasbi, the deputy agriculture minister for gardening affairs. Iran’s total agricultural production in various sectors including horticulture, live-stock, poultry and aquaculture reached 122 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year. In the past forty years, since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has witnessed a remarkable improvement in various sectors and the agriculture industry has been one of the areas in which the country has undergone huge development. Revolutionizing the agriculture industry through implementing billions of dollars worth of development, research and educational projects across the country has been one of the main reasons for the significant improvements in this sector in recent years. On January 31, managing director of

Iran’s Agricultural Parks Company (APC) said more than 80,000 tons of agricultural products have been produced in the country’s agricultural parks since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019). “This year, production in agricultural parks has reached 80,000 tons, however, considering the output from the subsidiary companies the total production would exceed 183,000 tons,” IRIB reported, quoting Ali-Ashraf Mansouri as saying. He further referred to some of the problems that the country’s agriculture is facing and said: “Reducing the impacts of droughts caused by reduced rainfall in recent years and increasing efficiency of water consumption in agriculture are among the top programs followed by APC.” According to Mansouri, more than 78 trillion rials (about \$186 million) of bank loans have been provided for investors in this area, since the beginning of the current year. Currently, more than 87 agricultural parks are under construction across Iran, the official said.

‘Participation in regional treaties a major key for trade development’



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) underlined the active participation in regional treaties like the one with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as an important step toward economic development and urged the government to place more importance on the issue. Speaking in a conference on the development of the country’s free and special economic zones’ cooperation with the neighboring countries on Saturday, Gholam-Hossein Shafeie emphasized the role of economic blocks in the economic development and said: “Iran is one of the countries which has had the least preferential trade agreements even with its neighboring countries.” “Over 481 bilateral and multilateral regional organizations were formed between the world economies in 2019,” he stressed. According to the official, Iran is currently a member of two trade organiza-

tions, namely the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation known as Developing-8, and unfortunately, the goals of none of the memberships have been fulfilled. He called for a detailed analysis of the country’s previous unsuccessful experiences for increasing the success chance of the preferential trade agreement with EAEU. “There is a 180-million-people market in Eurasia that should not be overlooked. The region’s Gross Domestic Production (GDP) is estimated at \$1.9 trillion,” the official stressed. He pointed to the lack of necessary infrastructure as the most important problem that the private sector is facing while trying to benefit from this agreement, adding that “The long stoppage of trucks in the borders, lack of suitable rail transportation, the lack of trucks with cold storages for transporting agricultural products are the most important challenges we face.”

Iran-EAEU trade surpasses \$1b since implementing FTA



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The value of trade between Iran and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)’s member states has exceeded \$1 billion since the free trade agreement (FTA) between Iran and this union came into force in late October, according to an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Hossein Kakhaki, the director general of International Affairs Department of IRICA, made the remarks during a conference titled “Exports-Transit and Eurasia” held in IRIB Conference Hall on Sunday, IRNA reported. A promising future is prospected for the EAEU, specially given that some countries like India has started negotiations to join the block, and now it is a good time for Iran to take its transit advantage to expand ties with this union, the official stressed. He further emphasized that IRICA attaches high significance to trade with EAEU and offers the most facilities to the exporters of commodities to this union’s

member states. After several years of negotiations, Iran and Eurasian Economic Union finally reached a free trade agreement in 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items are subject to preferential tariffs. The interim agreement enabling formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018 and officially came into force on October 27, 2019. Iran is a very important market in the region and development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). The free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides. Iran’s signing the agreement with the bloc has increased the country’s exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic to boost its export under the sanctions time.

‘\$12b of basic goods cleared in Iranian customs since Mar. 2019’



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Some 21 million tons of imported basic goods worth \$12 billion have been cleared from Iranian customs since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019), IRIB reported, quoting an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). According to Mehrdad Jamal Orounaqi, IRICA deputy for customs affairs, imports of such commodities have increased by 21 percent in terms of weight and 23 percent in terms of value compared to the same period of time in the previous year. The official noted that in addition to the mentioned figures, currently over four million tons of goods are going through clearance processes in the country’s customs, about three million tons of which is in Imam Khomeini Port. Mentioning some vessels which have been waiting for unloading at the country’s ports, Orounaqi said: “About 19 vessels carrying essential goods are unloading at

Imam Khomeini, Anzali and Amirabad ports, while 20 vessels are waiting at the harbor to unload their cargoes.” IRICA has been providing new facilities for importers of basic goods to make them able to clear their commodities in the shortest possible time. In August 2019, Iran’s Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand, in a directive addressing the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), obliged the customs administration to take measures for facilitating customs processes. The directive set a deadline for IRICA to take the necessary actions. The directive was in line with improving business conditions for enterprises and promoting foreign trade. Later in September, IRICA announced that the time of customs operations has decreased 46 percent for the imports and 39 percent for the export processes in the country in 2019.



# Iranian companies ink deal for establishing polyethylene unit

**ENERGY** TEHRAN — Iran's Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC) signed a deal with Tabriz Petrochemical Company on Saturday, for providing technical knowledge, design package and basic engineering services for construction of the country's first high density polyethylene (HDPE) unit.

As reported by Shana, the document was signed by PRTC's Managing Director Ali Pajouhan and the CEO of Tabriz Petrochemical Company in Tehran.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Pajouhan underlined PRTC's expertise and experience in the field of HDPE, saying that PRTC has been conducting research on the technical knowledge of producing heavy polyethylene for over 1.5 decades and the company has been also producing the necessary catalysts for polyethylene production in mass scale.

"Special hardware and software facilities have been provided in the company and the needed catalyst is being developed



Managing Director of Iran's Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (R) exchanging signed deal documents with the CEO of Tabriz Petrochemical Company in Tehran on Saturday.

on an industrial scale," Pajouhan said.

He pointed to the possibility of producing MMP-grade polymers as a feature of this technical knowledge and stated that these products are being produced with total local knowledge for the first time in the country.

As reported, the project is expected to be completed within four years.

Back in September 2019, PRTC signed an agreement with Tabriz Petrochemical Company for cooperation on indigenizing the technology for production of high density polyethylene.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of Iran's 13th International Exhibition of Plastic, Rubber, Machinery and Equipment (IRAN PLAST 2019), in a ceremony attended by National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Managing Director Behzad Mohammadi.

High-density polyethylene (HDPE) or polyethylene high-density (PEHD) is a thermoplastic polymer produced from the monomer ethylene.

## Free-falling LNG prices wreak havoc on trade amid coronavirus fears

Record low prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) are roiling the global gas market, creating havoc as traders rush to find alternative locations for cargoes with Chinese buyers rejecting shipments amid the coronavirus epidemic.

Asian spot prices for LNG have already tumbled to troughs of \$3 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) — less than half of what they were at the same time last year. At least one cargo bound for India has already traded below \$3/mmBtu, down 30 cents within a week, traders said.

Concerns that Chinese companies could back out of contracts because of the impact of the coronavirus outbreak have slowed oil and gas sales into China. Reuters reported on Thursday that China's top LNG buyer China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) declared force majeure on some prompt LNG deliveries with several suppliers.

Energy ship broker and consultancy firm Poten & Partners said on Friday at least five LNG cargoes had been diverted from China, and another 30 due to land there this month could face diversions, delays or force majeure declarations.

"Prices are free-falling just within this week," a Singapore-based LNG trader told Reuters. "This kind of force majeure situation is unprecedented and has never happened before so it's big news."

In one example of the turmoil in the market, an executive from French oil major Total said it had rejected a force majeure notice from an LNG buyer in China, without identifying the company.

At least one cargo bound for China, the world's second-largest LNG importer, has diverted and is heading towards Singapore storage tanks, several sources told Reuters. Three other vessels bound for China have

reduced speed, one of them said.

### ■ Major suppliers of CNOOC

At least two major suppliers to CNOOC told Reuters that the firm had requested that its cargo deliveries be delayed.

A CNOOC executive declined to comment. Consultancy Rystad Energy on Friday cut its forecast for Chinese LNG demand growth this year to 4.7 percent, from a year on year gain of between 10 percent and 13 percent.

Traders are now casting around for homes for unwanted cargoes. India, which recently commissioned an LNG terminal, has some scope for more purchases, but is restrained by inadequate pipeline infrastructure, industry sources said.

Europe, which also has strong seasonal winter gas demand, is also struggling to accommodate more, they said.

"Europe absorbed most of the incremental LNG supply in 2019," said James Taverner,

director at research and consultancy firm IHS Markit. "However, with gas storage at high levels, limited opportunity for further power sector fuel switching, and uncertainty around how pipeline suppliers will respond, Europe may struggle to accommodate the surplus in 2020."

Major buyers in Japan and South Korea such as KOGAS and JERA could benefit as they are able to tap demand from utility companies, but overall consumption levels there are also limited due to mild weather, sources said.

"Low spot prices will certainly challenge the economics of many export projects," Taverner said. "Some LNG suppliers may even need to reduce their exports if they become uneconomic, but there are contractual, logistical, and portfolio considerations that may limit any turning down (of cargoes)."

(Source: thehindubusinessline.com)

## Wind energy in Cantabria, wind farm of the Sierra del Escudo

The government of Cantabria supports the creation of the wind power farm that the Biocantaber Company intends to install in the Sierra del Escudo with an investment of 114 million euros.

Cantabria has set as priority the development of wind energy projects in the region and has guaranteed "maximum agility" in the processing of the same, "complying at all times with all technical and environmental precautions", in order to strengthen "safety legal status and the tranquility of citizens."



This has been transmitted to the directors of Innovation, Industry, Tourism and Commerce, Francisco Martín, and Rural Development, Live-stock, Fisheries, Food and Environment, Guillermo Blanco, to the director of the company, Agustín Valcárcel, and to the head of business of Iberdrola Renovables, Roberto Izaga, during the meeting they held this Thursday and which the Executive reported.

Martín and Blanco have highlighted the interest of the regional Executive and the operators to carry out this type of action in the region, giving the government "top priority to the issue" and existing a "willingness for Cantabria to rise from once and for all to the world of renewable energy."

They have also stressed that the projects remain in the Ministry of Industry "the essential time, hardly more than two months", time in which it is necessary to verify "absolutely everything" to "not incur insecurities that give rise to these energy initiatives being look bad."

In this way, the two councilors see "with good eyes" the interest that the region has for projects such as the one presented and they have trusted that the experience of the Cañoneras Park "will help us to continue to overcome the obstacles."

In addition, both have stressed that the general directorates of Industry, Energy and Mines and Biodiversity, Environment and Climate Change, which have been present through their general directors, Raúl Pelayo and Antonio Lucio, respectively, work to fulfill "scrupulously" with the regulations, always looking for entrepreneurs to have certainty in a reasonable time for their projects.

(Source: evwind.es)

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Renovation Organization of Iran



Islamic Republic of IRAN  
Ministry of Industry, Mine & Trade

# A Glance at Activities and Performance of IDRO in 41st Victory Anniversary of Islamic Revolution

In a meeting with some producers, entrepreneurs and economic activists, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that sanctions will be neutralized with the domestic production.

## Introduction:

The below report represents highlights of activities and performance of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) in nine months of the current year in 1398 (from March 21 to Dec. 22).

In the current year, IDRO, to realize strategies of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, has focused on realizing the domestic production and the movement of domestic manufacturing.

In addition, IDRO has fulfilled its mission for the industrial development through alleviation of poverty and deprivation from less developed provinces of the country as well as investing in modern technologies and advanced industries.

With more than half a century role creating in industrial development of the country, IDRO has focused on training able and competent manpower and has managed to take a giant stride in realizing economic objectives of the country.

## ● Movement of Domestic Manufacturing of Product

Exacerbation of US sanctions on Iran, senior officials of the country such as officials at the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade caused the country to rely on the domestic capabilities for the removal of requirements of industries. US imposition of sanctions on Iran prompted knowledge-based firms to take effective steps in this regard.

Accordingly, in line with the movement of domestic manufacturing, the first domestic production exhibition was held in Tehran in July 2019 with the aim of introducing and identifying requirements of industries of the country in the field of car and its accessories, minerals, home appliances, marine industries, oil, gas, petrochemicals and telecommunications.

The effective and strong pres-



ence of IDRO in a Technology Exhibition entitled "RINOTEX-2019" was in line with promoting the movement of domestic production. Organizing specialized panels for deepening domestic manufacturing, signing and sealing MoUs unilaterally and multilaterally, supplying 3,200 products as required by industries for domestication, signing a number of 202 MoUs between companies participating in the exhibition, organizing specialized panels in the presence of experts, signing and sealing 11 agreement letters between companies attending in pavilion of IDRO and other companies participating in the technological exhibition are of the salient strategies of this strategy.

## ● Situation of Investment Projects

Thanks to its inner nature, Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) has various projects at hand in different fields, ranging from 25 investment projects, two plan management projects, one general contracting project, 6 production boom projects and 40 projects at the feasibility studies' stage.

The rials volume of total investment projects of IDRO stands at 177,000 billion rials while the rate of cost spent for these projects since the beginning of the current year up to the end of Iranian month of Azar at 22,530,000 billion rials.

## ● Plan Management Projects

During nine-month period,

Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) has been active in two projects as the project manager and commissioner including supply of 2,000 metro wagons at entrepreneurship of Municipalities and Rural Aids Organization of the country and also expansion project of export-oriented industries in Jask coastal areas up to Gwadar with entrepreneurship of Plan and Budget Organization (PBO).

## ● Supply of 630 Wagons

Finalization of contract for the supply of 630 wagons, amounting to €782 million, as a part of plan for the supply of 2,000 wagons for metro, is of the projects which has been followed up by this organization.

Following up for the removal of problems and setting up Technical-Commercial Committee are of the salient measures of the organization during the nine-month period.

## ● Expansion Project of Export-Oriented Industries in Jask Coastal Areas to Gwadar

The measures carried out according of the allocated credits stand at 1,047 billion rials which was led to the start of construction operation and creation of 16 projects with the total investment of 2,548 billion rials and generating employment for 734 people in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan and Hormozgan.

Total investment of projects introduced is following up. Totally, 2,296 billion rials, requested

facilities rate from the operating bank [591 billion rials] and credits needed for subsidize of facilities [608 billion rials] which 409 direct employments will be generated primarily.

## ● General Contracting Projects

- Project for the development of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field  
In this field, IDRO is composed of consortia from eight companies in the development project of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field.

This project has generated employment for 4,300 people and the amount of contract stands at \$5.249 million with about 87 percent. In this project, the third gas project "SPD14B" with 2,400 tons was transported and installed in July 2019 in its location at 105 km of coastal part of Kangan. With commissioning these 500 million feet cubic, equal 14 million cubic meter /day is transferred through a 32-inch pipeline to the land part and then is transferred to the Phase 12 with the completion of pipeline in Phase 14 of the refinery.

## ● Renovating Heavy Public Transportation Fleet

Given the problems caused by the international sanctions and dire need of car manufacturing companies to supply parts from overseas, this plan is moving ahead slowly. Therefore, follow ups by IDRO (Industrial Development and Renovation Organization) in the reported period as well as presenting practical strategies for overcoming sanctions, the executive process has been accelerated and it is hoped that the speed of substitution of dilapidated heavy commercial vehicles will increase. To date, order registration has been made for more than 42,000 heavy vehicles, valued at €1.990 billion.

## ● Plan to Support Development of Rail Transport Fleet

Increasing the rail transport share of cargo from nine percent to 30 percent as well as rail transport share from total transportation of passengers from 10 to 20 percent has been cited as the main aim behind implementation of the plan.

## ● Implementation of Industrial Projects I Less

## Developed Areas

A number of 35 large and mid-sized projects have been defined with the aim of identifying the salient advantages of investment in less developed and disadvantaged areas of the country in line with

the plan entitled 'Land Preparation for the Industrial Development'.

In this regard, 170,000 billion rials worth of investment has been made in these project which will generate 5,000 employments for job-seeking people.





# Factbox: China's fight against novel coronavirus outbreak



Patients enter the ward of Leishenshan (Thunder God Mountain) Hospital in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province, Feb. 8, 2020. The makeshift hospital received its first batch of patients of the novel coronavirus pneumonia Saturday night. (Photo: Xinhua/Xiao Yijiu)

**BEIJING** — China has stepped up efforts to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Here are the latest developments:

- Authorities on Sunday started to disinfect the city of Wuhan twice a day to beef up efforts in containing the outbreak of the novel strain of coronavirus. Wuhan is the epicenter of the virus outbreak in central China's Hubei Province.

- More medical teams are arriving in virus-hit Wuhan to help battle the epidemic.

On Saturday night, 260 medical workers came to Wuhan from the Third Xiangya Hospital of Central South University, bringing new medical equipment and supplies. A charter plane of Xiamen Airlines brought 264 medics from Xiamen City, in east China's Fujian Province, and authorities sent 132 medical staff by plane from Wuxi City, in the eastern Jiangsu Province.

Chinese health authorities have dispatched a total of 11,921 medical personnels from across the country to Hubei Province to aid the fight against the novel coronavirus pneumonia, according to the National Health

Commission on Sunday.

- Trade unions in China have provided a financial aid of more than 20 million yuan (about 2.9 million U.S. dollars) to help Hubei Province battle the epidemic.

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions also donated 200 tons of disinfectants and 20,000 masks.

- Chinese authorities have reassured producers of key medical supplies that the government would be the ultimate buyer in a move to encourage production to contain the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Such products initially include test kits, medical goggles, medical protective gear and masks, as well as their raw materials, and the list will be adjusted with the development of the epidemic, according to a guideline jointly issued by several ministries.

- Authorities have begun closed-off management in some residential buildings in Huanggang, one of the cities worst hit by the epidemic in Hubei.

The buildings include those hosting confirmed cases of infection, suspected cases, patients with fever and possible link to the virus, and

those who had close contacts with infected patients.

- The National Health Commission Sunday said it received reports of 2,656 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection and 89 deaths on Saturday from 31 provincial-level regions and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

The overall confirmed cases on the Chinese mainland had reached 37,198 by the end of Saturday and 811 people had died of the disease.

- A total of 2,649 patients infected with the novel coronavirus had been discharged from hospital after recovery by the end of Saturday, the commission announced Sunday.

- Central China's Hubei, the hardest-hit province, reported 2,147 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection and 81 new deaths on Saturday, local health authorities said Sunday. The figure is 694 less compared with the new confirmed cases reported in the previous day.

- The mortality rate of the virus in Hubei stood at 2.88 percent, with the city of Tianmen and Wuhan having the highest death rates at 5.08 percent and 4.06 percent, respectively.

- The newly-built Leishenshan Hospital in Wuhan, the second in the city replicating Beijing's SARS treatment model, received on Saturday the first batch of patients infected with the virus. The two makeshift hospitals -- Leishenshan (Thunder God Mountain) and Huoshenshan (Fire God Mountain), together can accommodate 2,600 beds.

- China released an application guide to solicit research and development projects on rapid test kits for the novel coronavirus. The on-site quick testing equipment and reagents should be able to identify confirmed infection among suspected patients within 1.5 hours to help prevent and control the epidemic. Research institutes, universities and enterprises can submit applications to the Ministry of Science and Technology from Feb. 8 to 13.

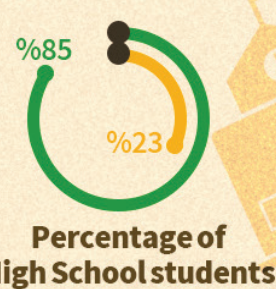
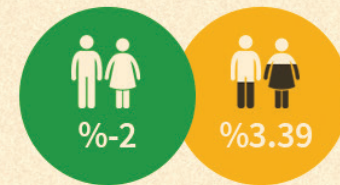
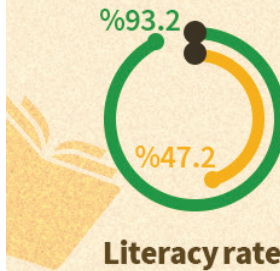
(Source: Xinhua.net)

## Iran's scientific status before vs. after the revolution

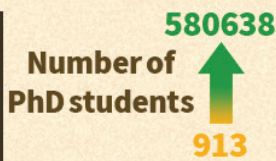
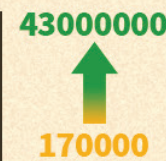
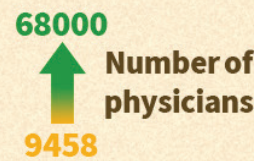
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● Before the Revolution - 1976 ● After the Revolution - 2016

Disparity of higher education attainment among men and women



Population of citizens with university degrees



Number of university students



Number of universities

223

2940

Undergraduate majors 196 → 914

Master degree majors 182 → 1033

Number Of PhD degree majors 28 → 793



Number of members of academic staff



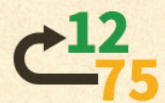
Number of full Professors



## Improvement of Iran's global rank in science



Nuclear energy



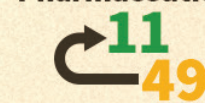
Aerospace engineering



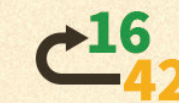
Physics and Astronomy



Pharmacology and Pharmaceuticals



Nano technology



## Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan (Football Club (KSC



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HONGTIAN DRILLER CONTROL CABIN

National Iranian  
Drilling Company

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3/228/372	Tender No.:FP/20-98/118 Indent No.: 08-22-9745052	38,600,727,298

• Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	scoring (50) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
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• Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.		
	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148656 -06134148615 Room No. 431, 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, Oil central building No.8.Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran - Iran	
	Submitting Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank.</li> <li>• Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.</li> </ul>	
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	• 14 Days after the last time of Purchasing.	
	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569	

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Value of guarantee	1,931,000,000 Rial / 15,096 Euro
Type of guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.</li> <li>✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.</li> </ul>
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## 37 million Iranian pilgrims, travelers visit Mashhad in 10 months

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Some 37 million Iranian pilgrims and travelers visited the shrine city of Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019).

Some eight million people came by road, six million by rail, 3.8 million by air, and 18 million by private cars, Mehr reported.



A view of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad

Every single day, Mashhad plays host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries and even across the globe to visit the imposing, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

## SeaWorld to end ‘dolphin surfing’ trainer tricks at all parks

Since the release of the explosive 2013 documentary Blackfish, SeaWorld has ended their orca breeding program, ceased all whale kissing and dancing in their orca performances, and has made other changes to their animal encounters to make the performances more about education and less about entertainment.

The most recent of these changes is SeaWorld’s decision to cut all “dolphin surfing” tricks performed by the parks’ trainer during the dolphin shows. Dolphin surfing is a term used for tricks that include trainers riding through the water on dolphins by placing their feet on the backs or snouts of two swimming dolphins.

According to the Los Angeles Times, “the decision to move away from such showy theatrics in the dolphin shows was disclosed in a letter sent earlier this month by a SeaWorld attorney to the Securities and Exchange Commission.” The letter referenced a proposal made by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal (PETA), which, as of Dec. 2019, holds 163 shares of SeaWorld stock, late last year to SeaWorld Entertainment shareholders, asking for a shareholder vote to end dolphin surfing in the parks’ shows.

The letter regarding SeaWorld’s plans to “no longer demonstrates ‘surfing’ (on dolphins) at any of its locations” states that SeaWorld trainers have already ceased riding on the back of dolphins and that the parks plan to phase out tricks that include trainers ride on a dolphin’s snout in the next few months, reports the Los Angeles Times.

Since the news of the change broke after PETA’s call for a shareholder vote regarding dolphin surfing, along with other measures the group has taken against the practice, the animal welfare organization is claiming responsibility for the end of dolphin surfing at SeaWorld.

(Source: MSN)



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Machu Picchu

Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu is among the greatest artistic, architectural and land use achievements anywhere and the most significant tangible legacy of the Inca civilization.

A World Heritage, the sanctuary is embedded within a dramatic landscape at the meeting point between the Peruvian Andes and the Amazon Basin.

The property covers overall 32,592 hectares of mountain slopes, peaks and valleys surrounding its heart, the spectacular archaeological monument of “La Ciudadela” (the Citadel) at more than 2,400 meters above sea level.



Built in the fifteenth century Machu Picchu is well recognized for outstanding cultural and natural values. It was abandoned when the Inca Empire was conquered by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. It was not until 1911 that the archaeological complex was made known to the outside world.

The approximately 200 structures making up this outstanding religious, ceremonial, astronomical and agricultural center are set on a steep ridge, crisscrossed by stone terraces. Following a rigorous plan the city is divided into a lower and upper part, separating the farming from residential areas, with a large square between the two. To this day, many of Machu Picchu’s mysteries remain unresolved, including the exact role it may have played in the Incas’ sophisticated understanding of astronomy and domestication of wild plant species.

The massive yet refined architecture of Machu Picchu blends exceptionally well with the stunning natural environment, with which it is intricately linked. Numerous subsidiary centers, an extensive road and trail system, irrigation canals and agricultural terraces bear witness to longstanding, often on-going human use.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Tehran proposes to host UNWTO Global Summit on Urban Tourism

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Tehran Municipality has suggested to host the [United Nations] World Tourism Organization’s Global Summit on Urban Tourism in 2021.

Representatives from Tehran Municipality put forward the proposal to UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili on the sidelines of the 40th FITUR tourism trade fair, which was held from January 22 to 26 in Madrid, Spain, Hamshahrionline reported earlier this month.

The municipality is intending to hold the summit at the Abbasabad Lands, which is situated in a large north-central neighborhood of the metropolis.

Last September, the World Tourism Organization picked Abbasabad Lands Rehabilitation Company as one of its new affiliate members from Iran. The designation was made during the 23rd UNWTO General Assembly held in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The UNWTO Global Summit on Urban Tourism seeks to focus on how developing smart cities can contribute to address complex urban challenges faced today by many destinations across the world.

The most critical issues in sustainability, accessibility, urban management, innovation and technology will be discussed, while stressing the importance of including tourism in the wider city agenda as a means to make tourism a true contributor to the development of inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities.

The summit also entails workshops



People cross Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge, which is located in the north-central part of the city of Tehran in a zone called Abbas Abad Lands.

and masterclass on topics such as current trends in the meeting industry, how to be a successful destination for meetings and

how to organize sustainable meetings.

Tehran seeks to grab a bigger share in the tourism market as it is home to

many historical travel destinations and museums and is also a gateway to many others particularly natural ones.

## German sightseers visiting Iran’s Sistan-Baluchestan province

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A nine-member group of German sightseers has commenced an excursion to southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, which is amongst Iran’s lesser-known destinations.

The group, composed of cultural people such as authors, teachers, and retired school managers, arrived in Zahedan (the capital city) on Saturday, deputy provincial tourism chief Mojtaba Mirhosseini said on Sunday, IRNA reported.

The first two days of the excursion is dedicated to northern parts of the province, while their itinerary will continue to southern parts, the official noted.

Over the past couple of months, Sistan-Baluchestan has welcomed separate groups of Italian as well as French and



British tourists visiting attractions in Zabol, Nimruz, and Hamun. They also set up an overnight camp in the [UNESCO-registered] Lut desert.

The vast province was long shunned by potential foreign and domestic travelers though it is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert, parts of latter is situated in Kerman province.

For mainstream Iranians, the name of Sistan-Baluchestan conjures up stories of drought, desiccated wetlands, and dust storms. On the international scale foreigners may consider it a reminiscent of the big red blot on the Iran safety map.

## UNWTO closely monitoring developments related to coronavirus outbreak

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The [United Nations] World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is closely monitoring developments related to the outbreak of novel coronavirus both in China and other parts of the world, the organization announced in a Friday statement.

During times of crisis, tourism has to live up to its responsibility as an integral part of wider society. The sector must put people and their wellbeing first, the statement said.

“Since the very start of the emergency, the Chinese authorities have acted swiftly and decisively. UNWTO expresses its solidarity with the Chinese people, its government and its tourism sector at these challenging times.... It is also cooperating closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) [in this regard].”

In recent years, China has emerged as a true global tourism leader, both as a source market and as a leading destination in itself, providing livelihoods for millions

of people across the country. And tourism will offer a valuable lifeline as China recovers and rebuilds from this setback, just as the sector has proven its resilience many times before.

“The cooperation of the tourism sector will be vital in stopping the spread of the virus and limiting its impact on people and communities. Tourists also have a responsibility to inform themselves before they travel in order to limit the threat of transmission, and they should follow the recommendations of the WHO and their own national health authorities.”

The statement adds that tourism is vulnerable to the effects of public health emergencies and is already being affected by this outbreak. “However, it is too early to fully estimate the impacts this outbreak will have.”

UNWTO as the specialized UN agency for tourism will continue supporting WHO, the lead UN agency for the management of this outbreak by advising and providing tourism specific guidance.



Passengers wearing masks walk outside the Shanghai railway station in Shanghai, China (Reuters via ANI File photo)

## How to travel car-free with a family

By Lauren Matison

In one writer’s experience, letting go of the wheel leads to happier travels, especially with children.

When I moved to New York and started a car-free travel blog in 2007, I was a recovering Los Angeles transplant, keen to ditch driving and atone for my environmental sins. I hiked the Appalachian Trail off the Metro-North train, surfed via the Queens-bound. A subway and biked into the Hudson Valley from the Bronx’s South County Trailway. No car? No problem!

Then I became a mother, breastfeeding on buses and potty training on trains. I’ll admit I felt less like a weekend warrior and more like a pathetic peripatetic parent. However, seeing how much my son loves riding the rails and engaging with different people continues to be more rewarding than any adventure in an automobile.

Here are a few tips, for biking and using public transit, that have helped me avoid the simple mistakes and fuel the fun.

■ **Pack less, see more**

After a bit of trial and error, you’ll find car-free travel is a liberating choice that forces you to schlep considerably less. Take only two pairs of shoes, bid adieu to the car seat and gain back the time wasted mulling over “just in case” outfits or scavenging for souvenirs. My son, now 3 and a half, and I share a 100-liter hybrid duffel backpack and



he enjoys carrying the essentials in his own “Kikki” backpack. Using packing cubes and choosing lightweight, water-resistant and convertible luggage can also make life easier. If possible, leave the stroller at home — the peer-to-peer rental marketplace goBaby rents strollers and other baby gear from more than 100 locations throughout North America.

■ **Pass the road test**

Before committing to a long vacation, get the entire family in a go-with-the-flow groove to better handle the inevitable car-free setbacks: delayed buses, stuck trains, no available seats, overly ambitious parents. A few summers ago, with our then 1-year-old, my husband and I were hoping to shorten our cycling route through France’s Pays de la Loire

region and incorrectly assumed that the local trains would allow bike trailers on board. Following our France fiasco, we experimented with car-free excursions closer to home, and now research policies for buses and trains ahead of time and carry information for just-in-case taxis and tour companies.

■ **Before all aboard, check the tourism board**

Cities with efficient mass transit systems and widespread bike share programs are a boon to car-free travelers. Destinations like Los Angeles, Connecticut, Banff and Scotland are part of a growing tourism movement celebrating the road less driven with digital car-free brochures. You can continue your research with Bikabout, which offers family guides to bike-friendly towns, hotels and Airbnbs in North America.

For other places to go and apps to use, Wanderu, a car-free booking site, finds the most affordable transit options in addition to providing handy travel tips such as under \$20 getaways from major cities in the United States, and the bus companies that accept mobile tickets. And Hipcamp, an app with more than 300,000 public and private campsite listings, has a search tool that allows you to filter for sites that don’t require a car.

■ **Discover the family-friendly deals**

Train travel in particular offers excellent family-friendly savings. The

Family Eurail Pass allows up to two children, ages 0-11, to travel for free per adult in Europe, and Amtrak in the United States offers 50 percent off for children along with a newly expanded bikes-on-board reservation system.

Once the destination has been selected, plan for what could be big travel snafus: Are guides needed to reach certain attractions? Does the bus have a bathroom or require a booster seat? I also strategize ways to make the transition between modes of transit less stressful.

■ **Put the children in charge**

Your children, believe it or not, can help with those transition points.

On a recent outing to Chautauqua Park in Boulder, Colo., I designated my son as our guide, “Ranger Remy.” When we switched from bike to shuttle bus, he couldn’t wait to lead the way, first stopping at the ranger center near the Chautauqua Trailhead to borrow a goodie-filled discovery backpack. But in San Francisco, we had to jump from the BART train to Amtrak and my son wasn’t in the mood to be the station navigator. So I successfully teased the journey with Amtrak’s Trails & Rails program, when National Park Service guides give on-board show-and-tell presentations about landmarks along the route. Older children can keep things running smoothly as snack supervisors or travel planners, charged with picking out the next activity from the guidebook.

(Source: The New York Times)



# Precipitation rate rises by 22% in a water year

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Rainfall has reached above normal levels in Iran as the country received 22 percent more rainfall since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2019) compared to the long run, head of the National Drought and Monitoring Center of the Meteorological Organization has announced.

Gilan, Mazandaran and Hormozgan provinces surpassed other provinces in terms of high rainfall rates over the aforesaid period, ISNA quoted Ahad Vazifeh as saying on Sunday.

Referring to the fact that 137.9 mm rained since September 23 till February 4, he stated that the figure has increased by 22.1 percent compared to the long-term average and also 0.5 percent in comparison to the same period last year.

Pointing to Gilan, Mazandaran and Hormozgan provinces as the rainiest provinces, he noted that Gilan province got 459.5 mm of rain, Mazandaran and Hormozgan provinces also received 358.9 mm and 286 mm, respectively.

However, compared to the long term, Gilan province faced 2.2 percent decline



in rainfall, and Mazandaran province experienced a 14.3 percent increase in precipitation, he added.

The average long-term rainfall in Hormozgan province is reported 93.6 mm, which shows that this year's precipitation has increased by 205.5 percent, he highlighted.

He went on to say that in Sistan-Baluchestan province, there has been reported 125.6 mm of rainfall since the beginning of the current water year, adding that the precipitation has increased in the province by 136.6 mm in comparison to the long term averages.

Precipitation in East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardabil, Isfahan, Ilam, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, North Khorasan, Khuzestan, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Golestan, Gilan, Lorestan and Yazd have declined relative proportion of the long-term average, he lamented.

Speaking about precipitation in Tehran during the aforementioned period, he stated that 120 mm of rain doused Tehran, which shows a 4.4 percent increase compared to the long run but a decline of 30 percent compared to last year.

## 'A global conservation disaster': Fury as Botswana sells 60 elephant shoot permits to trophy-hunters

Botswana has sold licences to shoot dead dozens of elephants for tens of thousands of pounds each, in what experts are warning could be a "major global conservation disaster".

The country auctioned off hunts for 60 of the huge mammals for a total of 25.7m Botswanan pula – £1.8m, or more than £30,200 each.

Conservationists have told the country's leaders they risk hastening elephant extinction.

And African organisations that wanted to bid at the auction and put the money towards local community projects instead of shooting animals were angry at being excluded from the bidding.

The EMS Foundation tweeted afterwards: "Shame on you, President Masisi – we will not forget."

Wildlife activists had lobbied against the decision last year by Mokgweetsi Masisi to end Botswana's five-year ban on big-game hunting.

The government has issued a quota for the killing of 272 elephants during this year's hunting season, from April to September.

A seventh lot at Friday's auction – to shoot 10 others – failed to meet the reserve price of 2 million pula (£141,000).

Africa's elephant population has plummeted by more than two-thirds in 40 years: from 1.3million in 1979 to 415,000 in 2015, official figures show, and the species is listed as vulnerable to extinction by wildlife body the IUCN. Poaching is the leading cause of the decline.

But Botswana has the world's biggest population of elephants – about 130,000 – almost one-third of the continent's total.

Their numbers in the country have grown since the 1990s, and as humans have expanded farmland, elephants have increasingly taken crops, prompting officials to promote hunting to ease the "human-elephant conflict".

However, some environmentalists fear licensed hunting could fuel demand for body parts and so encourage even more illegal poaching, opening the path to extinction.

Eduardo Goncalves, founder of the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, told The Independent that attrition



from trophy-hunting and poaching was greater than the annual birth rate of elephants in Africa.

"Scientists have noticed that trophy hunting and poaching of African elephants is leading to elephants having shorter tusks and that there are now more adult elephants with no tusks," he said.

"Trophy hunting is artificial selection. By targeting the biggest and strongest animals, it leaves the weaker, smaller animals behind. This means the best genes are being lost, so the species will be less able to adapt to accelerating climate change, it will be more prone to disease, and the risk of extinction is greater."

He said the move would be bad for some of Botswana's poorest communities, as it meant one-off trophy fees replacing income streams from nature tourism of \$2m (£1.5m) over an elephant's lifetime.

A letter from wildlife experts and celebrities, including explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, to President Masisi when he was reconsidering the ban said: "Trophy-hunting of elephants often brings a slow, painful death. With its population dwindling and increasingly scattered, the impact of trophy-hunting could be disastrous and possibly contribute to the extinction of the species."

"This would be a major global conservation disaster

– potentially the worst in living memory – and have tremendously damaging consequences for efforts to conserve endangered fauna and flora everywhere."

The country's government says the large sums of money from trophy-hunters benefit local communities.

But Leslie Olonyi, an environmental lawyer from Kenya, said: "African youth are now, more than ever, alive to the truth that elephants are part of our pride and heritage to conserve and hold in trust for future generations. Short-sighted politicians, poachers, trophy-hunters and their silver bullets must never be allowed to endanger this heritage."

Animal Defenders International appealed to people to protest outside the Botswanan embassy in their country.

Rosemary Alles, co-founder and president of the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos, said: "Studies have shown that local communities do not reap the benefits that they are promised from the hunting industry."

"Killing 272 elephants in Botswana will not control elephant numbers, it will not reduce human-elephant conflict and will not create jobs in areas where opportunities are scarce."

"Appropriate land-use planning including dedicated migratory corridors will aid elephant dispersal and increase the probability of amicable human elephant coexistence."

When the government last year decided to allow new culls, an environment ministry spokesperson said: "Predators appear to have increased and were causing a lot of damage as they kill livestock in large numbers."

"There is a negative impact of the hunting suspension on livelihoods, particularly for community-based organisations that were previously benefiting from consumptive utilisation [of wildlife]."

Tiro Segosebe, who lives in the capital, Gaborone, said: "Elephants have killed a lot of people and destroyed livelihoods. I think government is doing the right thing in reducing their numbers."

Last year, Botswana banned two professional hunters who shot dead a research elephant and tried to hide the evidence.

(Source: The Independent)

## Wildfire extinguished in northern forests

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Wildfire, erupted in northern forests of Gilan province over the past 2 days, has been fully extinguished, commander of the protection unit of natural resources and watershed management organization of Gilan has stated.



According to the latest statistics, approximately 130 hectares of forests in Gilan province have been burnt in recent days, IRNA quoted Mohammad Qorbani as saying on Sunday.

He went on to say that 99 percent of fires in 13 cities of Gilan province have caused no serious damage to the trees.

In spite of the complete containment of fire, the protection unit is on full alert, he further noted.

Appreciating all the forces who made efforts to control the wildfire, he concluded that fire broke out in various cities, including Rezvanshahr, Talesh, Roudbar, Shahrak and some others.

Gilan, as the country's greenest land, has 565,000 hectares of forest and 224,000 hectares of grassland.

## Endangered mountain gorillas 'killed by lightning' in Uganda

Four endangered mountain gorillas, including three adult females, have been killed by an apparent lightning strike in a Ugandan national park, a conservation group has said.

A post-mortem examination has been performed on the four, including a male infant, who died on 3 February in Mgahinga National Park in south-west Uganda.

"Based on the gross lesions from the post-mortem ... the tentative cause of death for all four individuals is likely to be electrocution by lightning," the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration said in a statement on Saturday. Laboratory confirmation will take two to three weeks.

The four were members of a group of 17 known as the Hirwa family, which had crossed into the Mgahinga national park in August last year from Volcanoes national park in neighbouring Rwanda.

"This was extremely sad," collaboration executive secretary Andrew Seguya told the BBC. "The potential of the three females for their contribution to the population was immense."

The other 13 members of the group had been found.

In 2008, there were estimated to be only 680 of the great apes left, but thanks to conservation efforts and anti-poaching patrols, their population has grown to more than 1,000.

Due to these efforts, in 2018 the mountain gorilla – a subspecies of the eastern gorilla – was moved from "critically endangered" to "endangered" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's "red list" of threatened species.

Covering the northern slopes of three volcanoes, Mgahinga National Park is part of the Virunga massif shared with Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The massif is one of the most important conservation sites in the world and one of only two places where mountain gorillas are found.

(Source: The Guardian)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa

(January 29, 2003)

The final report of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission can now be published. Doctor Mangosutho Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Party had questioned the findings of the report, but the two sides have now reached agreement. This report from Alastair Leithhead:

The **settlement** of the long-running dispute between Doctor Mangosutho Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Party, and the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, now **paves the way** for the final report to be published, and the issue of **reparation payments** to be addressed. President Thabo Mbeki was due to be handed the final document last year, but the objections raised by Doctor Buthelezi and the IFP had **delayed** its publication. They were challenging thirty-seven separate statements directly blaming he and his party for a series of human rights abuses in the years **leading up to the collapse of apartheid**. Thousands of people named in the report have been recommended for reparations - payments as compensation for the suffering they **endured** under apartheid. These will progress with the publication of the final report.

■ **Words**  
**settlement:** a settlement is an agreement after conflict  
**The Truth and Reconciliation Commission:** The organization trying to discover the truth about the apartheid years and unify South Africa  
**paves the way for:** if something paves the way for another thing, it makes it possible  
**reparation payments:** money paid to victims who have suffered  
**delayed:** postpone or defer (an action)  
**human rights abuses:** unfair treatment, ignoring people's basic rights  
**leading up to:** in the years before  
**collapse:** an instance of a structure falling down or giving way  
**apartheid:** the former South African system, where different races lived apart  
**endured:** if you endure something bad, you live through it

(Source: BBC)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## Iran breaks U.S. monopoly on aviation navigation charts

Iranian researchers have succeeded to produce aviation navigation charts, known as Inflight AIP (Aeronautical Information Publication), which was monopolized by the United States, IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

Prepared by Iran's Army, the Inflight AIP was unveiled in Tehran with Air Force Commander Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh and Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari in attendance.

Digital aeronautical charts, including instrument flight rules (IFR) and visual flight rules (VFR), is a high-quality knowledge-based product which was solely produced by Jeppesen Company and was not available for Iranian airlines due to U.S. sanctions.

## ایران انحصار آمریکا در نقشه‌های هوانوردی را شکست

ایران با تولید نقشه‌های هوانوردی (INFLIGHT AIP) که پیش از این در انحصار آمریکا بوده به موفقیت چشمگیری در زمینه صنعت هوانوردی دست یافت.

به گزارش ایرنا، روز یکشنبه با حضور امیر سرتیپ خلبان عزیز نصیرزاده فرمانده نیروی هوایی ارتش و سورنا ستاری معاون علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری از نقشه‌های هوانوردی (INFLIGHT AIP) تولید داخل رونمایی شد.

چارت‌های هوایی دیجیتالی شامل نقشه‌های پروازی IFR و VFR یک محصول دانش بنیان با فناوری بسیار بالا است که پیش از این انحصار آن در اختیار آمریکا و شرکت جیپسن (Jeppesen) قرار داشت که به دلیل اعمال تحریم‌های ظالمانه شرکت‌های هواپیمایی ایرانی از دسترسی به این نقشه‌ها محروم شده بودند.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “-dom”

- **Meaning:** state, condition, quality
- **For example:** we do have some **freedom** of choice.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Pull in

- **Meaning:** to move to a designated place at the side of the road
- **For example:** A police car signaled to me to pull in.

## IDIOM

### Do a double take

- **Explanation:** to look at someone or something again because you are very surprised by what you saw or heard
- **For example:** Colleagues often walked past me in the hallway, then stopped and did a double take.



## Bahrain summons, detains another Shia cleric as crackdown persists

Bahraini authorities have summoned and arrested another Shia Muslim cleric as the ruling Al Khalifah dynasty presses ahead with its heavy-handed crackdown against members of the religious community in the country.

Arabic-language and independent Manama Post on-line newspaper reported on Saturday that Sheikh Mohammed al-Reish was detained after he underwent an hours-long interrogation at the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) building in the capital Manama, the press agency said.

This is not the first time that the Bahraini cleric has been detained.

Back in September 2018, Bahraini officials ordered the arrest of Sheikh Reish following an investigation at a police station in the Hoor district of Manama.

Also on Friday, Bahraini regime officials renewed the imprisonment of Shia preacher, Mullah Qasim Zain al-Din, for 15 days pending investigation.

The clergyman was arrested on January 29 with no charges pressed against him.

Another Shia cleric, identified as Mullah Abdul Zahra al-Samaheji, was remanded in custody for 15 days pending the investigation.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established. Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3, 2017.

(Source: Press TV)

## Surrendered Pakistani Taliban spokesman escapes custody

A leading member of the Pakistan Taliban has escaped custody more than two years after surrendering to authorities, a senior security official said Sunday.

The confirmation comes days after Ehsanullah Ehsan -- the former spokesman for the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) -- released an audio message claiming he had escaped detention and was now in Turkey.

A senior security source told AFP Ehsan was "one of our major assets in identifying and later tracking down militants".

The source was unable to confirm claims that Ehsan was in Turkey, or provide details of how he escaped.

Ehsan was infamous for issuing chilling claims following TTP attacks and has been linked to some of the country's most bloody attacks -- including the bombing at a park in Lahore during Easter 2016, and the targeting of education activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

Ehsan surrendered to authorities in 2017 and later gave high-profile interviews on Pakistani television, angering many in the country who believed he was being pampered by authorities after years of helping lead the bloody insurgency.

Pakistani security officials argued, however, that he had supplied valuable intelligence in the fight against militants.

Pakistan has been battling a homegrown insurgency for over a decade, with thousands of civilians and security personnel dying in extremist attacks, especially after the TTP began their campaign of violence in 2007.

Overall levels of extremist-linked violence have dropped dramatically last year, with 2019 seeing the fewest deaths since 2007 when TTP was formed.

Analysts have credited the fall to military offensives against the Taliban in the tribal areas of North Waziristan and Khyber where they were headquartered, as well as operations in the country's largest city of Karachi.

In 2018, the TTP was further degraded after a U.S. strike in Afghanistan killed their leader, Maulana Fazlullah.

(Source: AFP)

## Two U.S. troops killed by Afghan soldier in Nangarhar attack

Two American troops were killed and six others wounded by an Afghan soldier armed with a machine gun, the U.S. military confirmed Sunday.

The deaths come at a sensitive time in the 18-year-old war, with President Donald Trump eager to bring troops home and end the longest conflict in U.S. history.

The incident occurred late Saturday at a base in Sherzad district, in Nangarhar province, eastern Afghanistan.

"Current reports indicate an individual in an Afghan uniform opened fire on the combined U.S. and Afghan force with a machine gun," U.S. Forces-Afghanistan spokesman Sonny Leggett said in a statement on Sunday.

The defence ministry said one Afghan soldier was killed and three local security forces injured during the shooting, and added that an investigation had been launched while vowing to continue fighting "terrorism" with the U.S.

"Incidents such as this fail to have negative effects on the friendship and spirit of cooperation and between the ANDSF and U.S. military forces," the ministry said in a statement.

Provincial governor Shah Mahmood Meyakhil had earlier said it was not immediately clear if the incident was a deliberate act by an "infiltrator" or an accident.

(Source: AFP)

# U.S. warns Israel against 'unilateral' West Bank moves

A U.S. envoy warned Israel on Sunday not to declare sovereignty over West Bank land without Washington's consent, pushing back against calls for immediate action by ultra-nationalists within Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition.

Unilateral action by Israel to annex land in the West Bank would endanger U.S. support for a proposed blueprint for the region, U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman has said.

"Israel is subject to the completion [of] a mapping process by a joint Israeli-American committee. Any unilateral action in advance of the completion of the committee process endangers the Plan & American recognition," Friedman said, in a message posted on Twitter.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Saturday that his government had begun to draw up maps of land in the occupied West Bank, in accordance with U.S. President Donald Trump's proposed peace plan. However, Judging by Friedman's message, it appears that Washington has taken issue with being excluded from the process, and could po-



tentially withdraw support for the plan if Israel proceeds alone.

The area being mapped includes all of Israel's illegal settlements in the Jordan Valley. Palestinians view these lands as rightfully

theirs, comprising part of a future state.

"The only map that can be accepted as the map of Palestine is the map of the Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital," said Nabil Abu

## Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union rejects Trump's 'deal of century'

→ 1 "This plan represents a new chapter of violations of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people after their decades-long suffering," said the communiqué, calling for increased Arab support for the Palestinians in their struggle for self-determination and statehood.

"This requires unifying the Arab ranks and mobilizing the efforts to support the question which represents a top priority for the Arab joint action," read the communiqué.

The chief Arab lawmakers described the U.S. move to recognize Jerusalem al-Quds as the Israeli "capital" as "a dangerous escalation that threatens the security of the region and cuts the road to peace opportunities, paving the way for a religious war to which Israel will be a major party."

The union called on the Arab countries to adopt legal measures that could put an end to Israel's unilateral moves in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The communiqué called Trump's plan a unilateral agreement which does not represent a step towards just and comprehensive peace.

"Peace will be unlikely without recognition of the Pal-



estinians' right to statehood, the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homes and receive compensations for their prolonged suffering and commitment to the UN resolutions as basic points of reference for a just, comprehensive and durable settlement to the conflict," it said.

At one point during the AIU meeting, Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim demonstrated

## Qatar may become first Persian Gulf Arab state to operate submarines

Qatar is reportedly expected to acquire submarines from Italy and turn into the first Persian Gulf Arab country to operate those watercrafts.

The American business magazine Forbes reported that a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Italian company Fincantieri, Europe's largest shipbuilder, covers the "supply of cutting-edge naval vessels and submarines" to the Qatari Emiri Navy.

"Qatar may become the first Arab Persian Gulf state to operate submarines," the report said, adding that currently Iran is the only submarine operator in the Persian Gulf.

According to the report, the Qatari submarines, which are likely to be relatively small light ones, may be part of a much larger 5-billion-euro deal with Italy which was agreed in 2017.

The accord, it noted, included a large helicopter carrier, called a Landing Platform Dock (LPD), four warships and two

patrol boats as well as shore support and help with a new offshore naval base.

It further said that Saudi Arabia and the UAE, two of Qatar's neighbors embroiled in a diplomatic crisis with Doha, have both stated needs to acquire submarines.

"Qatar has difficult relations these countries so the submarine acquisition could be seen, at least in part, as a response to these moves," the report added.

In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE imposed a land, naval and air blockade on import-dependent Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism; an allegation strongly denied by Doha.

The Saudi-led bloc presented Qatar with a list of demands and gave it an ultimatum to comply with them or face consequences. Doha, however, refused to meet the demands and stressed that it would not abandon its independent foreign policy.

(Source: Press TV)

## Soldier kills 26 in bloodiest shooting spree in Thailand

A soldier with a grudge gunned down 26 people and wounded 57 in Thailand's worst shooting spree before he was fatally shot inside a mall in the country's northeast Sunday, officials said.

Officials said the soldier was angry over a financial dispute, first killing two people on a military base and then went on a far bloodier rampage Saturday, shooting as he drove to the mall where shoppers fled in terror.

It took police sharpshooters 16 hours to end the crisis.

Authorities said Sgt. Maj. Jakrapanth Thomma was behind the attack in Nakhon Ratchasima, a hub for Thailand's relatively poorer and rural northeastern region. Much of the shooting took place at Terminal 21 Korat, an airport-themed mall filled with colorful Lego sculptures, a merry-go-round and huge replicas of landmarks from around the world.

Rudeinah, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Palestinian outrage over the so-called 'deal of the century' has already led to violent incidents in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

On January 28, Trump unveiled his so-called deal of the century, negotiated with Israel but without the Palestinians.

Palestinian leaders, who severed all ties with Washington in late 2017 after Trump controversially recognized Jerusalem al-Quds as the so-called capital of the Israeli regime, immediately rejected 'the deal of the century', with President Mahmoud Abbas saying it "belongs in the dustbin of history."

Palestinian leaders say the deal is a colonial plan to unilaterally control Palestine in its entirety and remove Palestinians from their homeland, adding that it heavily favors Israel and denies them a viable independent state.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which represents 57 Muslim-majority countries, has already expressed its outright opposition to Trump's skewed initiative.

(Source: agencies)

his anger at Trump's self-proclaimed 'Vision for Peace' by throwing a copy into the dustbin, arguing that was the place where it rightfully belonged, hence drawing an applause from those present at the summit.

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(Source: Press TV)

## China's coronavirus deaths surpass SARS as country plans halting return to work

→ 1 Mistrust and dismay

As millions of Chinese prepared to go back to work, the public dismay and mistrust of official numbers was evident on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter.

"What's even more frustrating is that these are only the 'official' data," said one user.

"We all know we can't purchase masks anywhere, why are we still going back to work?" said a second.

"More than 20,000 doctors and nurses around the country have been sent to Hubei, but why are the numbers still rising?" asked a third.

Authorities had told businesses to tack up to 10 extra days on to holidays that had been due to finish at the end of January and some restrictions continued.

Gaming giant Tencent Holdings Ltd said on Sunday it had asked staff to continue working from home until Feb. 21.

Hebei province, which surrounds Beijing, will keep schools shut until March 1, the People's Daily newspaper said. Several provinces have shut schools until the end of February.

The local government in the southern manufactur-



ing hub of Shenzhen, meanwhile, denied a report in the Nikkei business daily that it had blocked a plan by Apple Inc supplier Foxconn Technology Co Ltd to resume production in China from Monday. The company would restart once inspections were completed, it said.

■ Global alarm

Among the latest deaths, 81 were in Hubei. An American hospitalized in the provincial capital Wuhan, where the

outbreak began, became the first confirmed non-Chinese victim. The Washington Post identified him as Hong Ling, a 53-year old geneticist who studied rare diseases at Berkeley.

Joseph Eisenberg, professor of epidemiology at the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, said it was too early to say whether the epidemic was peaking.

"Even if reported cases might be peaking, we don't know what is happening with unreported cases," he said.

Major cities and capitals announced new travel restrictions as concern over the spread of the virus increased.

Chinese-ruled Hong Kong introduced a two-week quarantine on Saturday for all people arriving from the mainland, or who have been there during the previous 14 days. Malaysia expanded its ban on visitors from China.

France issued a new travel advisory for its citizens, saying it did not recommend traveling to China unless there was an "imperative" reason. Italy asked children traveling from China to stay away from school for two weeks voluntarily.

(Source: Reuters)

## Syrian government forces recapture 600 square km of territory in Idlib campaign

→ 1 Turkey already hosts 3.6 million Syrian refugees.

■ Response in strongest manner

Turkey beefing up its forces in Idlib has failed to stem the advance by Syrian government forces, leading Ankara and Moscow to hold talks on Saturday about the offensive.

According to Turkish state news agency, Anadolu, Ankara has sent more than 350 vehicles filled with commandos and ammu-

nition to bolster its observation posts in Idlib since Friday.

Officials from Turkey and Russia held three hours of apparently inconclusive talks in Ankara, agreeing to meet again next week.

The two countries support opposing sides in Syria's nearly nine-year war but have forged a series of agreements since 2017 aimed at containing the bloodshed.

"The situation in Idlib was discussed," Turkey's foreign ministry said after the talks.

"Steps that could be taken to establish peace on the ground as soon as possible and advance the political process were evaluated."

A Turkish security source said the troops' sole mission was to reinforce the country's 12 existing observation posts, established under a 2018 deal with Russia that aimed at preventing a major battle and an ensuing humanitarian crisis.

Turkey says three of its outposts, all in the southeastern part of Idlib, have been

surrounded by the Syrian army and has threatened to respond if any of its posts come under attack.

"Our observation posts in Idlib continue their duties and are capable of protecting themselves with the weapons and equipment they possess," the Turkish defense ministry said on Twitter.

"In the event of a new attack, proper response will be given in the strongest manner, based on the right of self-defense."

(Source: agencies)



# Esteghlal not afraid of any team in ACL 2020: Majidi

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal coach Farhad Majidi says that they are not afraid to play any team in the forthcoming 2020 AFC Champions League.

The Iranian Blues are scheduled to meet Iraq's Al Shorta in Group A at the Franso Hariri Stadium in Erbil on Monday.

While Al Shorta booked their place in the group stage as domestic champions, Esteghlal had to negotiate two qualifiers, and did so in style, brushing aside Kuwait SC 3-0 in the Preliminary Round 2 before demolishing Qatar's Al Sailiyah SC 5-0 in the Play-off round.

Now, Majidi says they are ready to face any opponent in the continent.

"We are ready to show a good performance against Al Shorta but we're a little worried about our physical fitness because our players are very tired," Majidi said in the pre-match news conference.

"In the previous four matches I've coached Esteghlal, we scored 12 goals and just conceded three goals and it shows that how strong we are. In Tehran derby against Persepolis, we should have won the match but they escaped the loss with a late goal. Esteghlal are not afraid of any team in Asia.

"We have analyzed Al Shorta very well and will play for a win," he added.

Esteghlal forward Cheick Diabate will be absent in this match after he suffered a foot injury in Iran league but Majidi is not worried about that.

"Diabate is a great player but we have other players to fill his place," Majidi concluded.



## Alighardashi re-elected Iran's Table Tennis Federation president



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mehrdad Alighardashi has been re-elected as president of Iran's Table Tennis Federation on Saturday.

Single candidate Alighardashi will be in charge for another four years after securing 41 out of 41 votes available in the elections held in Iran's Olympic Academy, located in Tehran.

"We know that the expectations are very high for the successes we've achieved over

the past years. We aim to secure a quota place for individual event however it's very difficult but we do our best to accomplish it," Alighardashi said.

Table tennis is among the sports contested at the Summer Olympic Games. It was introduced at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, where singles and doubles tournaments were held for both genders.

Iran table tennis has been growing in the recent years.

## Alamian brothers win ITTF Challenge Spanish Open



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian brothers Nima and No-shad Alamian claimed a gold medal at the 2020 ITTF Challenge Spanish Open in Granada on Saturday.

The Iranian pair defeated Korea Republic's Baek Kwangil and Park Chan-Hyeok 3-1 (11-6, 13-11, 8-11, 11-9) to claim men's doubles gold.

Alamian brothers had previously defeated Belarus 3-1, South Korea 3-1 and

Spain 3-2 in the competition.

A total of 157 men and 86 women competed in Granada, Spain from Feb. 4 to 8.

Play concluded in Granada, next on the agenda is the 2020 ITTF Challenge Plus Portugal Open, play commences in Lisbon with qualification on Wednesday 12th February.

The competition will be held in Lisbon from Feb. 12 to 16.

## Iran boxing on a growth path

Iran Boxing Federation President Hossein Sourì has developed the country's boxing in the recent two years and the eight-member team is ready to win medals in Amman, Jordan, Asian Boxing Confederation reported.

Sourì worked hard to develop the country's boxing and attended all of the important ASBC events and meetings to strengthen the presence of Iran's boxing. Their focus is on the upcoming Asian & Oceanian Olympic Qualification Event where Iran will be sending eight boxers covering all men's weight classes.

The main strategic plan of Sourì is to progress Iran's boxing life and the popularity of the sport into the same level where wrestling is. The quantity of their boxers is significantly increased and the quality of their boxing life is also in developing stage. Sourì had great efforts to launch women's boxing in Iran following the new rules which approved to wear Hijab for the ladies' boxers.

Iran competed in all of the important international competitions in the recent two years and claimed several medals



on these top events. The Iranian boxers reached the Top eight in the Yekaterinburg 2019 AIBA World Boxing Championships and at the very first time in an AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships in Budapest one and half year ago.

The Iranian athletes achieved medals in all of the recent ASBC Asian Boxing Championships and their schoolboys and juniors also showed their potentials in 2019.

The boxers shined mostly in Bangkok, Kuwait City and Fujairah last year and their target is to make it even better in 2020.

Boxing spread in the Armed Forces, in the students, high school students across Iran in the last two years well enough to build up better grassroots. Iran had Elite, U-22, Youth, Junior and Schoolboys National Championships in their official program in the current years. The regular TV stations broadcasted the national competitions which increased the popularity of boxing and the number of athletes in all regions of Iran.

The Iranian national team has been preparing for the upcoming Asian & Oceanian Olympic Qualification Event which will be held in Amman, Jordan on March 3-11.

(Source: ASBC)

## Preview MD1 - Group A: Al Shorta (IRQ) vs Esteghlal FC (IRN)

Al Shorta SC of Iraq make their AFC Champions League debut on Monday as they host Islamic Republic of Iran's Esteghlal at Franso Hariri Stadium in Group A.

As the 2018-19 Iraqi Premier League winners, Al Shorta earned the honour of being Iraq's first representatives in the AFC Champions League after the resumption of the country's eligibility for the competition.

Safety reasons mean the Baghdad-based side have to play their home matches 220 miles north in Erbil, with the first challenge of the campaign pitting them against Tehran giants Esteghlal.

Coach Farhad Majidi's side are determined to bounce back from a below par result in 2019, when they narrowly missed out on a place in the knock-out stage, finishing third behind eventual champions Al Hilal and Qatar's Al Duhail.

Unlike Al Shorta, Esteghlal have had to navigate two levels of qualifiers before reaching the group stage, and the two matches offered

them an opportunity to flex their muscles.

Against Kuwait SC in Preliminary Round 2, Cheick Diabate bagged a brace and Vorya Ghafouri rounded off the scoring in a 3-0 victory. Three days later, they emphatically beat Qatar's Al Rayyan 5-0 with Mahdi Ghaedi & Amir Arsalan Motahari netted twice each after a Diabate opener.

Preparing for their maiden AFC Champions League campaign, Al Shorta splashed the cash on January signings; acquiring Colombian forward Diego Calderon from Saudi Arabia's Al Faisaly SC and bolstering their midfield with Ugandan international Anthony Mawejje from Kuwait's Al Arabi SC.

It hasn't been all positive news on the transfer news for Al Shorta as they lost two Iraqi internationals; Amjad Attwan left for Kuwait SC and Sherko Kareem signed for Erbil SC.

Al Shorta (IRQ) v Esteghlal FC (IRN)  
Venue: Franso Hariri Stadium, Erbil  
Kick-off: February 10, 17:30 UTC+3

(Source: the-afc)

## Preview MD1 - Group B: Al Hilal SFC (KSA) vs Shahr Khodro FC (IRN)

Al Hilal SFC kick-off their AFC Champions League title defence at Al Wasl Stadium against Islamic Republic of Iran debutants Shahr Khodro FC on Monday.

The Saudis lifted the coveted trophy in Saitama back in November, becoming the first West Asian side to be crowned champions since Al Sadd in 2011.

Going into the 2020 AFC Champions League, Al Hilal opted for stability, retaining the core of the squad that delivered glory last year under coach Razvan Lucescu with 2019 top scorer Bafetimbi Gomis leading the line once more alongside Sebastian Giovinco.

Domestically, Al Hilal romped to a fiery start to their season, losing just one of their first 17 matches and sitting top of the table, three points ahead of their nearest chasers, Al Nassr. Gomis has also been in top form, leading the Saudi Pro League scoring charts with 14 goals.

Shahr Khodro, meanwhile, finished

fourth in the 2018-19 Iran Pro League, earning a place in the 2020 AFC Champions League Preliminary Round 2 as a result of second-placed Persepolis winning the 2019 Hazfi Cup.

Striker Mohammed Reza Khalatabari, an AFC Champions League veteran who had scored for Zobahan and Sepahan previously, joined Shahr Khodro ahead of the competition, and scored the opener in their 2-1 win over Bahrain's Riffa SC in Preliminary Round 2, setting up a clash against Qatar's Al Sailiyah SC in the Play-offs.

The tie went to penalty shootouts after a goalless 120 minutes, and it was thanks to Karim Ansarifard's missed spot-kick that Shahr Khodro advanced to the group stage for the first time in their history.

Al Hilal SFC (KSA) v Shahr Khodro (IRN)  
Venue: Al Wasl Stadium, Dubai  
Kick-off: February 10, 18:40 UTC+4

(Source: the-afc)

## Iranian teams still uncertain about their hosting rights at ACL

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — According to the latest 2020 AFC Champions League schedule that has been released in the AFC Magazine, the place of home matches of the Iranian clubs at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) elite club competition this season is still uncertain.

Competition Record	Domestic Record		
	Season	League	Hazfi Cup
First appearance	2009	4th	Quarter-finals
	2008	18th	Round of 32
	2007	18th	Round of 32
	2006	10th	Round of 16
	2005	10th	Semi-finals
Domestic Honours			
No major titles yet			

On January 23, the General Managers of the four clubs representing Iran at the 2020 AFC Champions League - namely Persepolis, Esteghlal, Sepahan, and Shahr Khodro - along with Mehdi Alinejad, Deputy Minister of Sport and Youth, and Ibrahim Shakouri, Acting Secretary General of The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), met with AFC Secretary General Dato Windsor John at the Asian Football Confederation's headquarters in Malaysia to change the AFC's decision to move matches out of Iran.

The governing body of soccer in Asia cited "security concerns" in explaining why the Iranian sides were denied their hosting rights.

Following the Iranians' appeal against the decision, the AFC suggested that home group-stage matches on matchday one, two and three involving Iranian clubs would be switched to away fixtures "to allow time to reassess the security concerns in the country".

This vote again prompted an objection from the Iranian teams and the managers of the clubs decided to meet AFC senior officials. After the aforementioned meeting with the AFC Secretary General in Malaysia, the Iranian delegation proudly and loudly spoke of a "big victory" in their negotiations and claimed that the AFC had removed the "security concerns" requirement and that the second leg matches of the Iranian team at 2020 AFC Champions League will definitely be played on Iranian soil.

However, in the latest issue of AFC Magazine which includes updated information about all the teams participating for the 2020 AFC Champions League group stage, the place of home matches of the Iranian teams is still unknown, something that contradicts the claims made by the Ministry of Sport and Youth of Iran and the General Managers of the four Iranian clubs.

## Esteghlal forward Diabate among candidates for ACL2020 top scorer

Esteghlal striker Cheick Diabate is among the 10 target men who will have eyes on becoming the 2020 AFC Champions League's most prolific.

Diabate has already put Asia on notice after netting three times in two 2020 AFC Champions League qualifying matches and his little and large partnership with diminutive Iran starlet Mehdi Ghayedi could be one of the most effective in this year's tournament.

The 6'4" Mali international spent much of his career in France with Bordeaux but also took in spells in Turkey and Italy before moving to Tehran giants Esteghlal in July.

Currently among the top scorers in the Iran Pro League, Diabate is sure to be a handful for any defence at ACL 2020.

Al Hilal's Bafetimbi Gomis earned himself the top scorer award in 2019 with 11 goals. Gomis returns but alongside him below are a selection of leading candidates who could take the mantle from the Frenchman in 2020.

Baghdad Bounedjah (Al Sadd), Teruhito Nakagawa (Yokohama F. Marinos), Adam Taggart (Suwon Samsung Bluewings), Kodjo Laba (Al Ain), Talisca (Guangzhou Evergrande), Omar Al Soma (Al Ahli Saudi), Adam Le Fondre (Sydney FC) and Dragan Ceran (Pakhtakor) are the other candidates for the ACL 2020 top scorer.

(Source: the-afc)

## Al Hilal picked as ACL Club of the Decade!

Al Hilal SFC's excellence in the AFC Champions League has seen them voted as the ACL Club of the Decade by fans.

Al Hilal lifted the trophy in 2019 after twice having to settle for runners-up finishes as they saw off some tough challengers from a decade that had seen nine different AFC Champions League winners.



Arguably the biggest club on the Continent with a record seven Asian titles to their name, Al Hilal had been one of the most consistent sides in the AFC Champions League era but, prior to 2019, had failed to lift the trophy.

The Riyadh giants have qualified for every edition since 2009 and only once exited at the group stage; however, narrow runners-up finishes in 2014 and 2017 deprived them of the title they craved most.

But in 2019 they returned with a star-studded cast and avenged their defeat to Urawa Red Diamonds two years earlier as a 3-0 aggregate victory saw them crowned kings of Asia.

In the past 10 years Al Hilal were the only side to appear in three AFC Champions League finals and were in a further two semi-finals.

(Source: the-afc)



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you give away so much of your wealth to become needy yourself, trade with God by giving charity to the needy.

Imam Ali (AS)

## London's Crystal Palace festival to screen Iranian animations

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian short animated movies "Malakout" and "Greyish" will go on screen at the 11th edition of the Crystal Palace International Film Festival in London.



A scene from "Greyish" by Iranian director Eqbal Shirzai.

Directed by Farnush Abedi, "Malakout" is about a pianist, who has lost one of his hands and can't play the piano anymore. Doctors decide to transplant a dead criminal's hand to his body. The pianist with his new hand starts killing people.

Eqbal Shirzai is the director of "Greyish" that portrays the life stages of an old man as a metaphor of our lives.

The Crystal Palace International Film Festival will be held from March 5 to 28.

## Robert Conrad, star of "The Wild, Wild West", dies at 84

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Robert Conrad, the rugged, contentious actor who starred in the hugely popular 1960s television series "Hawaiian Eye" and "The Wild, Wild West," died Saturday. He was 84.



In this June 12, 2013, file photo, actor Robert Conrad of TV series "The Wild Wild West" poses for photographers during the 2013 Monte Carlo Television Festival, in Monaco. (AP/Lionel Cironneau)

The actor died of heart failure in Malibu, California, family spokesperson Jeff Ballard said. A small private service is planned for March 1, which would have been his 85th birthday.

"He lived a wonderfully long life and while the family is saddened by his passing, he will live forever in their hearts," Ballard said.

With his good looks and strong physique, Conrad was a rising young actor when he was chosen for the lead in "Hawaiian Eye." He became an overnight star after the show debuted in 1959.

Conrad played Tom Lopaka, a daring private investigator whose partner was Tracy Steele, played by Anthony Eisley. They operated out of a fancy office overlooking the pool at a popular Waikiki hotel.

The two private eyes alternated on simple investigations with help from the island's colorful characters, including a singer named Cricket Blake (Connie Stevens) and a ukulele-strumming taxi driver named Kazuo (Poncie Ponce).

After five seasons with the show, Conrad went on to embrace the television craze of the time, period Westerns, but with a decidedly different twist.

In "The Wild, Wild West", which debuted in 1965, he was James T. West, a James Bond-like agent who used innovative tactics and futuristic gadgets (futuristic for the 1800s anyway) to battle bizarre villains. He was ably assisted by Ross Martin's Artemus Gordon, a master of disguise.

The show aired until 1970.

The series "Baa Baa Black Sheep" followed in 1976 and was roughly based on an autobiography by Marine Corps ace and Medal of Honor recipient Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, who wrote of the raucous fliers he commanded during World War II.

Conrad played Pappy Boyington, so nicknamed because he often rescued his pilots from severe punishment. Bringing his customary intensity to the role, he even learned to fly.

# Shiraz, hometown of Sadi, Hafez, named Iran's 2020 Book Capital

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — Shiraz, the d e s k hometown of Hafez and Sadi that also houses the tombs of the great Persian classical poets, has been named as Iran's 2020 Book Capital.

The decision to select the city was announced at the National Library and Archives of Iran on Saturday during a ceremony attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and a number of cultural officials.

Shiraz was selected from among over 30 nominees, including Urmia, Tabriz, Hamedan, Sabzevar, Bushehr, Babol, Bandar Abbas and Bojnurd.

The ministry picks Iran's Book Capital every year in collaboration with several cultural organizations, including the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO.

In addition, ten villages across the country were selected as Book Loving Villages of the Year.

The villages are Zavarom in North Khorasan Province, Vadeqan in Isfahan Province, Seyyedabad in West Azarbaijan, Bonegaz in Bushehr Province and Alavieh in Fars Province.

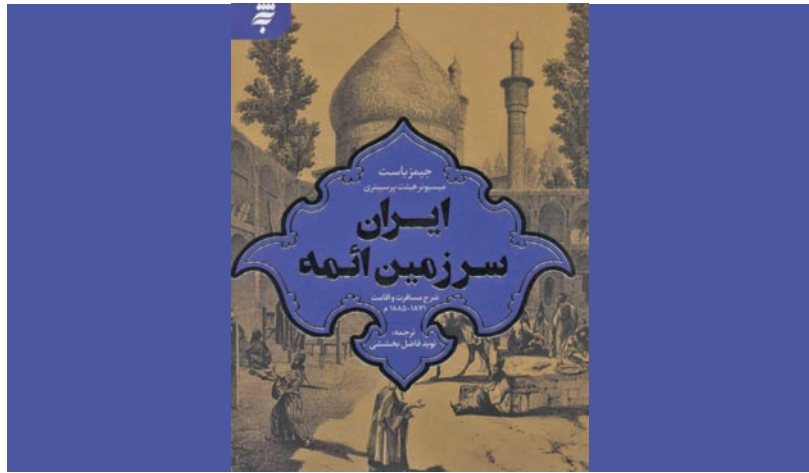
Also included are Kheirabad in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Khorshid in Mazandaran Province, Isin in Hormozgan Province, Seyyedshahab in Hamedan Province and Gerdkuh in Yazd Province.

Yazd, the central Iranian city that is home to many magnificent historical mosques and ancient Zoroastrian fire temples, was Iran's 2019 Book Capital.



Culture Minister Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi (L) honors a reading promoter during a ceremony held at the National Library and Archives of Iran on February 8, 2020 to announce Iran's 2020 Book Capital. (IRNA/Shiva Attaran)

## American missionary's travelogue of 19th century Iran published in Persian



Front cover of the Persian version of "Persia, the Land of the Imams - A Narrative of Travel and Resident 1871 to 1885" by American missionary James Bassett.

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — "Persia, the Land of the Imams - A Narrative of Travel and Resident 1871 to 1885", American missionary James Bassett's 1886 travelogue of Iran, has recently been published in Persian by Behnashr Publications in Mashhad.

Translated by Navid Fazl Bakhsheshi, the book is about the daily

lives and religious beliefs of Iranians in Tehran, Hamedan and Tabriz during the Qajar era.

Bassett was a missionary for the Presbyterian board and he lived in Iran from 1871 to 1885. In 1872, under the auspices of the American Mission Board, he founded the first American mission in Tehran.



Producer/actor Shahab Hosseini attends a press conference after the premiere of "Sheen" during the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex on February 8, 2020. (Mehr/Hamid Vakili)

## "Sheen" producer Shahab Hosseini asks Iranian artists to be voice of people

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Shahab Hosseini, the producer and a cast member of the thriller "Sheen", has asked Iranian artists to be the voice of their people.

"If we are artists — as we claim that we are — we should be the voice of our people. If people have a loud voice to make their demands known to officials, they do not need to take to the streets and pay the price of heavy losses," he made the remakes in a press conference at the Mellat Cineplex on Saturday after the premiere of the film during the 38th Fajr Film Festival.

A number of actors and filmmakers announced over the past month that they would not take part in the festival in sympathy for the families of those people killed following

## "To Die in the Pure Water" gets extra screenings at Fajr festival



A scene from "To Die in the Pure Water" by Tehran-based Afghan brothers Navid and Jamshid Mahmudi.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The organizers of the 38th Fajr Film Festival have arranged 15 additional screenings for "To Die in the Pure Water" in Mashhad, Shiraz and Kish Island due to popular demand.

The film directed by Tehran-based Afghan brothers Navid and Jamshid Mahmudi is competing in the official

section of the festival, which will come to an end on Tuesday.

Starring Ali Shadman, Neda Jebraeli, Matin Heidarnia and Sadaf Asgari, the film is about a young Afghan man who is faced with the dilemma of choosing between converting to Christianity to obtain a European visa or continuing to live as a Muslim with all his problems.

## Lost portrait and unpublished letters of Charles Dickens to go on display

**LONDON (Reuters)** — A lost portrait of Charles Dickens and 25 of his unpublished letters will go on display for the first time after a major acquisition from a private collector.

The Charles Dickens museum in London has bought a huge collection of objects belonging to the Victorian novelist, including a delicate chalk and pastel portrait by Samuel Laurence.

A lithograph of the portrait already exists, but the original was thought to be lost. It is likely to be from 1837, the museum said.

Among more than 300 items are 144 letters, offering a window into the author's life through his famously vivid prose.

One letter from 1857 describes getting lost on a walking tour with fellow-novelist Wilkie Collins, who sprained his ankle after the route "necessitated amazing gymnastics".

In another, he answers fan mail, writing "The mystery is not here, but far beyond the sky...".

The collection, bought in the United States for 1.8 million pounds (\$2.3 million), also

includes a handwritten excerpt from "David Copperfield", original drawings by illustrator George Cruikshank, jewelry, books and a golden writing tool that doubles up as a pen and a pencil.

"This is a treasure trove — a true once-in-a-lifetime moment for the museum," said Cindy Sughrue, director of the Charles Dickens Museum.

"150 years after the death of Dickens, it is wonderful to be able to bring such a rich

and important collection to the museum at his first family home."

The writer's great-great-grandson, Mark Dickens, said that "this quite staggering material brings us even closer to the man himself, his character, feelings, family and friends."

The objects will be cataloged and conserved at the museum — which is in a Bloomsbury townhouse Dickens' family moved into in 1837 — before going on display over the next two years.

## "Cats" and its furry stars nominated for Razzie worst film awards

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — The widely panned movie musical "Cats" and four of its stars were nominated on Saturday for Razzie awards, an annual ritual that lampoons the worst of cinema.

James Corden, Judi Dench, Rebel Wilson and Francesca Hayward received Razzie acting nominations for their "Cats" roles, in which they were costumed in digitally created fur. Oscar winner Dench was singled out for "looking suspiciously similar to The Cowardly Lion from Wizard of Oz," organizers said in a statement announcing this year's nominees.

Overall, "Cats" was given eight Razzie nominations, tying for the lead with Tyler Perry's "A Madea Family

Funeral," and Sylvester Stallone's "Rambo: Last Blood." All three movies are in the running for worst picture, alongside psychological thriller "The Fanatic" and horror flick "The Haunting of Sharon Tate."

"Cats", an adaptation of the popular Broadway musical of the same name, was released in December and drew widespread ridicule from film critics. The \$95 million production flopped at the box office, taking in just \$69.7 million at theaters worldwide, according to website Box Office Mojo.

The tongue-in-cheek Razzies, created in 1980, serve as an antidote to Hollywood's glitzy Academy Awards ceremony. Nominees were announced a day before the bestowing of

the Oscars, the highest honors in the movie industry.

John Travolta received two Razzie nominations this year for "The Fanatic" and "Trading Paint", as did Anne Hathaway for "The Hustle" and "Serenity." Her "Serenity" co-star Matthew McConaughey also was named.

The worst screen combo category piled on "Cats" with a nomination for "any two half-feline/half-human hairballs."

It was not all bad news. Eddie Murphy was nominated for the Razzie Redeemer Reward for his role in "Dolemite is My Name", along with Jennifer Lopez in "Hustlers" and Adam Sandler in "Uncut Gems." The redeemer award goes to a past Razzie nominee or winner who has recently earned acclaim.