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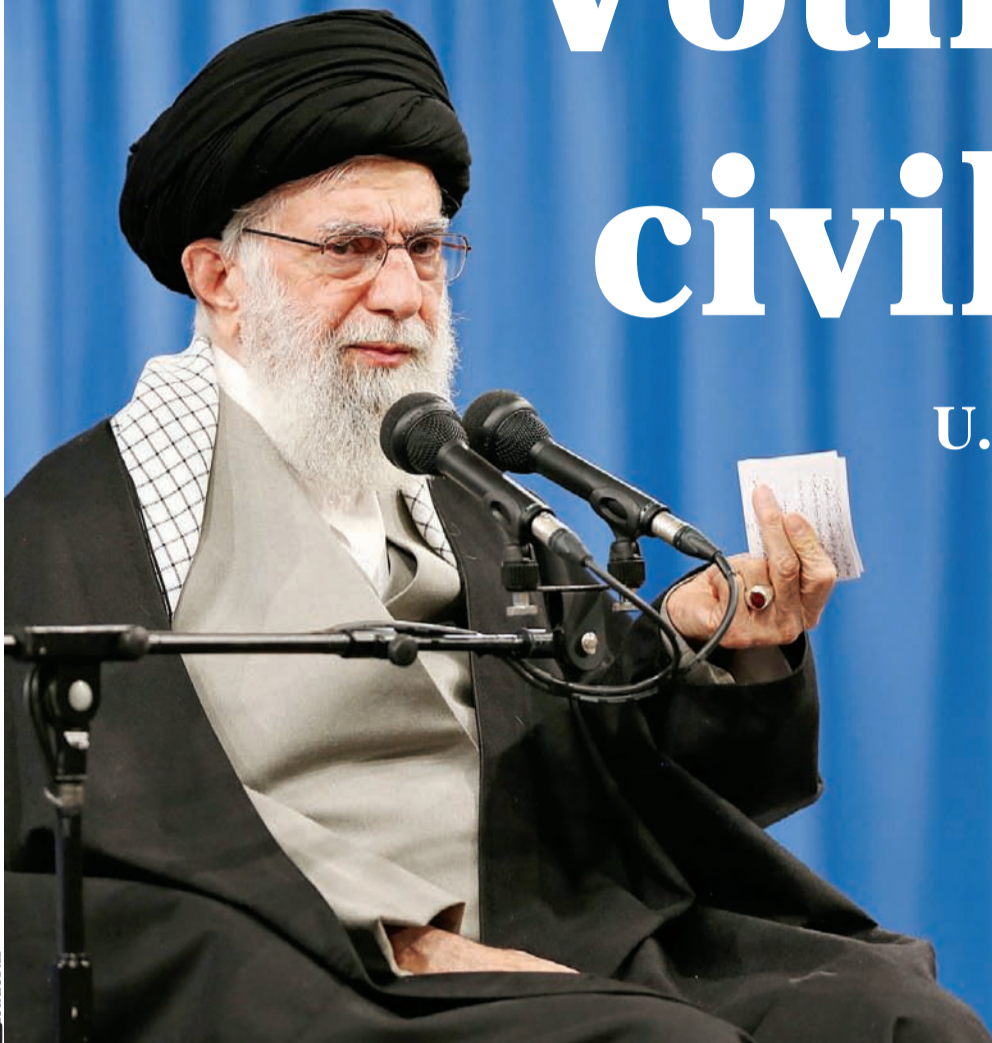
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# Voting is a civil right

## U.S. will sink like Titanic, Leader predicts

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## Inflation rate seen to fall to 20% next year

**TEHRAN** — Inflation rate in Iran is predicted to go down to under 20 percent in the coming Iranian calendar year (begins on March 19), Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced on Tuesday.

Speaking to the media after the annual conference of "Resistance Economy", the official said, "Our goal is curbing inflation rate and no estimation shows an inflation rate of over 20 percent for

the next year", IRNA reported.

As announced by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on January 20, which marks the end of the tenth Iranian calendar month of Dey, stood at 38.6 percent.

The SCI said that the inflation rate has fallen 1.4 percent in the mentioned time span from the twelve-month period ended in the last day of the ninth Iranian month of Azar. →4

## Zarif: Resistance and referendum are solutions to Palestine issue

**TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Zarif has suggested that the solution to the Palestinian issue is "resistance and referendum".

"In my opinion, this is an opportunity for the world of Islam to realize that the solution for the issue of Palestine turns around the two pivots of democracy and resistance," Zarif said in an interview with the khamenei.ir

published on Monday.

"The unity inside Palestine on the basis of resistance can turn out to be a very auspicious phenomenon for foiling Zionist policies," he said.

The chief diplomat also said democracy "is a very important player as well", noting the self-proclaimed defenders of democracy have no reason to oppose referendum in the occupied lands. →3

## Liberation of Aleppo not end of Syrian army's anti-terror campaign: Assad

**PRESS TV** — President Bashar al-Assad has congratulated the Syrian national and government forces over major territorial gains made in the country's embattled northwestern province of Aleppo following intense battles with foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants, emphasizing the achievements do not mark the end of the campaign against terrorism that has plagued the country.

"When the city of Aleppo was fully liberated back in [December] 2016, I highlighted that the status quo will not be... the same as it used to be. I well knew that Syrian Arab Army soldiers are fighting wholeheartedly, and the patriotism of Aleppo residents together with their sense of affiliation to their ethnic homeland and army will alter the calculations of the enemies." →10

## Does NATO respond positively to the Turkish supererogation?

By Ramin Hossein Abadian

**TEHRAN** — Turkey is once again turning to the West, while over the past two years, it had been distancing from the West and trying to collaborate with Russia due to the success of the Astana peace process on the Syrian conflict.

Damascus's strategic patience is over because Ankara has failed to fulfill its commitments regarding retaking the areas captured by terrorists backed by Turkey. The Syrian army's widespread advances over the last two weeks in areas occupied by terrorist forces in the northwest have led to Ankara's reaction and increased tensions between Syria and Turkey. Along with wresting control over the strategic Damascus-Aleppo highway, the Syrian army carried out successful operations in recapturing 1500 km<sup>2</sup> of Syrian territory and about 100 towns and villages in west and south Aleppo, especially key towns of

Khan Tuman and Saraqib. Following the Syrian army's operations, the Turkish government has sent thousands of troops and military equipment to the outskirts of Idlib to prevent the continued advance of the Syrian forces.

Turkey's moves were due to a green light by the U.S., NATO and the EU, which have so far not been in Ankara's favor; rather they have resulted in massive casualties and the loss of six military bases in Syria's territory.

Recently, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar called on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to support the Turkish military in order to halt the Syrian army's offensive against Idlib, the stronghold of the latest Turkish-backed terrorist elements.

Obviously, the move by Turkey has broken the commitments to the Sochi agreement and the

Astana process, with the aim of holding its place in NATO. This is a wish that seems unlikely to come true, given the chaotic situation of NATO and the West's distrust of Turkey.

Accordingly, it is certain that Idlib and its outskirts will soon be completely liberated because of the high motivation and ability of the Syrian army. The liberation will definitely thwart all hostile policies that Turkey has adopted in Syria for many years and will bring heavy defeat for Ankara.

The developments in Syria in the recent days shows that Turkey is no longer trustworthy as it has explicitly violated Syria's sovereignty as an independent state. There have been some accords on Syria, such as the Sochi agreement, regarding the establishment of a safe zone in Idlib, while Turkey has not considered the slightest value for the agreements.

## Why Netherlands approved asylum for a terrorist?

By Mohammad Homaeefar

**TEHRAN** — Association for defending victims of terrorism's public relation section reported in 17 February that, third session of "legal capacities in access to justice for victims" held in Allame Tabatabaee University. University professors and prominent human rights activists, law students and lawyers and some victims' families were attendances.

As first speaker, Mr. Jafar Kousha, Professor of law in Beheshti University, said: When a crime happens, community waits for a good and appropriate response to it, so, No response can bring negative consequences.

By mentioning to criminology he added: in criminology we should pay attention to goals,

roles and effects of punishments. In this regard, safeguarding values is the base of punishments and security is the most important value in the society. So we must oppose anyone who wants to put in danger the security of society.

This Prominent professor who was delivering about "non-punishment as a cause of spread of crimes" added that: goals of punishments are deterrence and compensation and without consistency between crimes and punishments, we face with negative effects.

He continued: our question is that what is the consequences if culprits or someone who put security in danger became unpunished?

Professor Kousha said about the case of Hafte

Tir terrorist incident in 1981 that in Iran, we have not any criminal code for terrorism and this is a major problem.

Professor of law in university of Beheshti asserted on the necessity of having professional structures and judges and said: the obstacles should be lifted. Political calculations and relations hinder judicial processes. Judicial branch is independent. Our problem is the security and authority of judiciary branch. If we impose suitable punishments on culprits there will be tranquility in victims and society will be in order and anyone who wants to do terrorist crime will be faced by a powerful judicial process and will be deterred from doing so. →7

**ARTICLE**  
 Farrokh Hesabi  
 Tehran Times journalist

## It's time for a unity ticket to support Team Melli

After days of openly pursuing replacements, Dragan Skocic was finally appointed as the head coach of Iran football national team and it's time for a unity ticket to support Team Melli.

During that time there were many names of Iranian coaches shortlisted for the Iranian national team hotseat. Among them Amir Ghalenoei and Ali Daei, both of whom had expressed their desire to coach Team Melli, were so close to signing a contract with the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI).

However, Iran football federation did a U-turn and selected a foreign coach, namely Dragan Skocic. The federation senior officials said that the negotiation with the Iranian coaches failed and Skocic was the best possible option for leading the national team in the current situation.

Skocic, 51, has replaced Marc Wilmots who left Team Melli in early December. FFIRI has been heavily criticized for the way Wilmots parted away with the Iranian national team. The Belgian coach left his role, just seven months after replacing Carlos Queiroz at the helm of the three-time Asian champions.

While Wilmots was selected to get the Iranian team to the World Cup 2022, the Belgian struggled to make any sort of meaningful impact on the team's performance and they lost back-to-back games against Bahrain and Iraq in the 2022 World Cup qualification and now the national team are in danger of being eliminated from the 22nd edition of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

After the appointment of Skocic, the Iranian media and football experts have intensified pressures on the Iranian federation because they believe that the new coach is not the right one, and is not selected in the right way.

FFIRI had contemplated a series of other names, including ex-international Vahid Hashemian and the former Persepolis coach Branko Ivanovic. Almost a dozen managers had been connected to the national team as rumors circulated. The impression was of a federation not sure which way to turn. →11

**ARTICLE**  
 Ebrahim Fallahi  
 Tehran Times journalist

## S.Korean companies leave Iran: Such a pity! But for them

South Korea's LG Electronics and Samsung have ended their presence in the Iranian market over the past few months, abiding by the U.S. pressures for cutting ties with one of their biggest markets.

This is not the first time that South Korean companies are turning their backs to Iran, assuming that whenever the condition is calm again they will be able to come back easily and Iran will accept them with open arms.

This time, however, the situation seems to be different, Iranian officials have warned the Asian companies that they won't be welcomed back even if the U.S. sanctions are removed.

But, who really is on the losing side of this whole situation? Iranian customers and consumers of the South Korean products or the companies that are facing the loss of an 80-million market?! This question is fairly easy to answer.

**S.Korean companies in Iran**  
 South Korean companies have been, for long, big players in the Iranian home appliances and electronics market.

Huge companies like Samsung and LG Electronics and even carmakers like Hyundai and KIA Motors have had a great share in the country's market and Iranian consumers have always welcomed the Asian country's brands.

According to the official data, South Korean brands have had a grip on over 30 percent of Iran's home appliance and electronics market on average and in some areas their share has been even more than 50 percent.

The Asian country, however, has been one of the most conservative trade partners of Iran when coming to the U.S. bullying. After the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions on Tehran, South Korea was the first country to withdraw from the Iranian market without any resistance, the country stopped its oil imports from Iran immediately after the U.S. threatened Iranian oil buyers to pull back from the Iranian market. →4



## "The Sun" up at National Will Manifestation Awards

**TEHRAN** — Majid Majidi's child labor drama "The Sun" stood on top again on Monday by winning five honors at the National Will Manifestation Awards following its win last week as best film at the Fajr festival.

The awards are presented to those films that promote issues being pursued by some public organizations and institutes. Juries from the organizations select winners from the films screened at the Fajr Film Festival every year. →12