

Iran strongly condemns Israeli air strikes on Gaza, Damascus 2

Top Iranian, Azeri officers meet, vow to broaden military co-op 2

Araghchi slams Dubowitz for cheering coronavirus spread in Iran 3

French festival to spotlight Iranian cinema 12

Parties reaffirm the need to preserve JCPOA



See page 2

Abbas Araghchi (R), Iran's deputy foreign minister, and the secretary-general of the European Union External Action Service (EEAS), Helga Schmid, chair the Vienna meeting on February 26.

Iran's steel output growth 23 times global average

TEHRAN — The latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA) shows that Iran's crude steel output has increased 46.7 percent in January while the global average growth rate stood at 2.1 percent, IRNA reported, citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).
Based on the WSA data, Iran produced 2.895 million tons of crude steel, 46.7 percent more than last January's 1.971 million tons. WSA report says that the world's 64 steel producers managed to produce 154.436 million tons of the commodity in January 2020, 2.1 percent more than last January's 151.228 million tons. According to the WSA report, China, India, Japan, the U.S., and Russia were the world's top steel producers respectively. →4

Govt. urges approval of FATF-related bills

TEHRAN — The government of President Hassan Rouhani, in a 9-paragraph statement on Wednesday, urged the Expediency Council to remove the existing barriers in the way of approving the CFT and Palermo bills.
The main topic of the cabinet on Wednesday was to review the decision by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which on Friday put Iran on its blacklist. The decision came after Tehran refused to comply with the watchdog's all requirements in due time. Ratifying the FATF-related bills has become a contentious issue in Iran. The parliament passed the FATF in October 2018. However, the oversight Guardian Council rejected the bill. →2

Rouhani: Coronavirus must not act as 'enemy weapons' to shut down economy

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani warned on Wednesday that the novel coronavirus epidemic should not be used as a "weapon by the enemies" to halt "work, activities and production" in the country.
He said the people must not allow the U.S. to add "another new virus" under the name of shutting down the country. "This is a plot that we are seeing today." Highlighted efforts taken by the Health Ministry to contain the coronavirus epidemic in Iran, Rouhani also said there is no plan to quarantine. The president said what is more dangerous than coronavirus is the "virus of fear and anxiety and doubt and distrust among the people."

PERSPECTIVE
Mahdi Garshasbi
Tehran Times journalist

How did the coronavirus disrupt the balance of oil market?

Crude oil prices remained low as the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 that emerged in China continues to spread worldwide while keeping pressure on global oil demand.

Assessments indicate that oil prices have fallen. China consumes about 14,000,000 barrels per day of oil, while the country has not yet returned to its normal situation. This trend has disrupted the market demand for oil. Of course, the downward trend that we have seen so far does not appear to be the main fall in oil prices.

China is still using its previous oil purchases, and if it runs out previous purchases and does not make new orders for oil, we will witness more decrease in oil prices. Since Monday this week, the various U.S. stock market indices have been down. On the other hand, we have seen lower prices for copper and some other metals, indicating general declining value of energy.

Given the OPEC and OPEC+ meetings, which are going to be held in the future days, there has been no sign of an agreement between Russia and Saudi Arabia so far. The reason for this disagreement seems to be the economic pressure that Russia is enduring. Of course, the \$49 oil could be justifiable and proper for Moscow. On the other hand, Russians know that if they reduce the supply of oil to the market, their rival, American Shale oil will take their place.

As a result, it seems less likely to Russia and Saudi Arabia reach an agreement. So far, no agreement has brokered between these two countries, but Moscow and Riyadh may have some behind-the-curtain deals. In this case, oil supply will remain steady. Demand has fallen as South Korea, which is an oil consuming country, has become infected with the coronavirus. If the same thing happens in Japan or the United States, the coronavirus pressure on oil prices will be obvious.

Given that oil demand often drops in the first half of the year, the U.S. oil price, which now stands at about \$49, seems to be at least \$45 a barrel. In general, any changes regarding the coronavirus, OPEC and OPEC+ agreement could affect oil prices.

UN urges warring Libyan factions to negotiate

By Salman Parviz
TEHRAN — The UN's Libya mission and world powers on Tuesday urged the country's warring parties to engage in peace efforts, as doubts hung over talks set to start the next day in Geneva.
Libya's National Oil Company (NOC) said financial losses over the blockade of Libya's vital oil fields and ports have rapidly swelled, surpassing \$2b on Tuesday, with production dropping from a typical 1.2m bpd to about 120,000 this week.
On Sunday NOC said that guards under the command of renegade general Khalifa Haftar's forces shut down the two key oil fields in the country's southwestern desert, following earlier closure of all eastern export terminals. Libya is home of Africa's largest proven crude oil reserves.
Oil-rich Libya, a country of 6.5 million, has been

splintered between competing factions and militias since former leader Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown and killed during a NATO-supported uprising in 2011.
The 76-year-old Haftar is the leader of the Libyan National Army (LNA) which controls most of south and eastern Libya, including country's ports and has been laying seed to the capital, Tripoli. Haftar is backed by the UAE, Egypt, Russia and Jordan, with political backing from France. The Tripoli government controls just a shrinking corner of the country's west, but maintains highly-valued authority over Libya's central bank, which holds oil revenues.
Since Haftar launched an offensive against Tripoli, seat of the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) last April. GNA was created during UN-brokered talks in 2015. The unelected administration has little influence outside Tripoli. According

to Financial Times at least 2,000 Libyans have been killed and more than 150,000 forced to flee their homes in areas such as Ain Zarah since Gen Haftar launched a surprise assault on Tripoli last April.
U.S. stance has been ambiguous. In past U.S. has supported UN-backed government and efforts to reach a political solution, as have the UK and France. But Trump appeared to break with that policy last May when he made a phone call to Haftar, during which he voiced support for a shared vision with the commander.
Meanwhile, according to news reports from Canada last summer, Ari Ben-Menashe is an Iranian-born former Israeli intelligence officer whose Montreal-based firm Dickens and Madson Inc. Ben-Menashe has previously been paid to lobby for ousted Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe and Libyan militia commander Khalife Haftar. →7

Sanders says may relocate U.S. embassy back to Tel Aviv if elected

Leading U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders said he would consider moving the U.S. embassy in Israel back to Tel Aviv if elected president.
Sanders's comments about revisiting U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial decision in 2018 to relocate the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem came during Tuesday's Democratic presidential debate.
Sanders has called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a "reactionary racist," days after the American senator said he would skip the annual conference by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).
"I'm very proud of being Jewish. I actually lived in Israel for some months. But what I happen to believe is that right now, sadly, tragically, in

Israel, through Bibi Netanyahu, you have a reactionary racist who is now running that country," Sanders said.
Sanders said in a tweet on Sunday that he would not be attending the annual AIPAC conference, accusing the pro-Israel lobbying group of providing a platform to "leaders who express bigotry and oppose basic Palestinian rights."
An AIPAC spokesman fired back at Sanders' comments, saying in a statement that the senator "has never attended our conference and that is evident from his outrageous comment."
Sanders, an independent senator from Vermont, has become the clear frontrunner in the Democratic presidential race after strong showings in the first three nominating contests in Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada.

Sanders, who calls himself a democratic socialist, proposes left-wing policies like increasing the minimum wage and scrapping private health insurance in favor of a government-run Medicare for All program, based on the government program for elderly Americans.
His momentum has alarmed a Democratic establishment wary of his plans to end economic inequality and strengthen the social safety net, something that will lead to defeat against Republican President Donald Trump.
Sanders is the second Democratic presidential candidate to say he will not be attending the AIPAC conference, which will take place in Washington on March 1-4. Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren also said earlier this month that she would not attend. →10

ARTICLE
Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

America is not immune

One of the more absurd claims is the assertion by a kook rabbi in Israel (where there are many of the same ilk) that the coronavirus (Covid 19) that is sweeping across the world won't halt creating its trail of devastation and dislocation until the so-called "third temple" is built in East Jerusalem, presumably atop the rubble of a destroyed al-Aqsa mosque and the Qubba al-Sakra. This rabbi, one Aryeh Lipo, a "religious studies" teacher who is a Likudist, apparently gave a lesson on the Haram esh-Sharif with a bunch of other unwelcome Zionists saying a "third temple" is a powerful cure for the coronavirus pandemic which now even Iran is struggling to corral and eliminate.
Better this kook might have suggested that the most damaging virus in the Middle East and beyond is Zionism itself, which is the deep root cause of most all the various conflicts in West Asia spawned by Israel and its U.S. partner in the Trump administration and by previous U.S. administrations in the Middle East? Lipo said he was sending up a prayer for the "healing of the entire world", a joke if ever there was one and equivalent to giving a murderous psychopath a loaded UZI machine gun.
At any rate, the virus seems to be just beginning its spread, and one Harvard University epidemiologist has said that it could infect 70 percent of the world's population before an adequate vaccine exists, which has been estimated anywhere from six months to more than a year away. Currently, the only possible palliative that may have some very modest promise is infusing some blood of those who have survived and recovered from the virus into those who are ill since some antibodies may be present there.
In the U.S. where the virus has not yet widely disseminated itself in the population, and this may not occur until later this year, there exists the potential for chaos such as one can read about in China (and other countries, like South Korea, rising). The financial markets are just beginning to reflect the threats of this disease with the stock market finally trending lower and possibly about to crash, an inevitability that existed before the virus emerged but which the virus has undoubtedly speeded up. →7



Foreign envoys, health officials convene meeting on COVID-19

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a meeting of foreign ambassadors residing in Tehran and national health officials on Wednesday.
The meeting was held with the aim of informing the audience of the preventive measures taken in the country to deal with spread of the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

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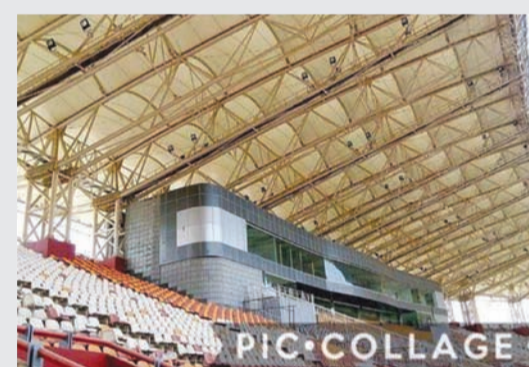


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Rare rhytons recovered in northeast Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Iranian police have recovered two rare rhytons, which are estimated to date from Sassanid era (224–651).

The objects were confiscated from a band of illegal antique dealers and smugglers in Garmeh, North Khorasan province, CHTN reported on Thursday.

A couple of days ago, the law enforcement officers stopped two suspected cars in which the rhytons had been concealed. The culprits were detained and handed over to judicial system for further investigation, the report added.



A is a roughly conical container from which fluids were intended to be drunk or to be poured in some ceremony such as libation, or merely at table. They are typically formed in the shape of an animal's head, and were produced over large areas of ancient Eurasia, especially from Persia to the Balkans. Many have an opening at the bottom through which the liquid fell; others did not, and were merely used as drinking cups, with the characteristic that they could not usually be set down on a surface without spilling their contents.

Plans to shut schools and curb travel in UK if coronavirus spreads

Schools could close and travel around the UK could be restricted under stepped-up government plans to deal with the coronavirus as its spread accelerates across Europe.

Four countries registered new cases on Tuesday, while the death toll rose in Italy, which is struggling to contain the outbreak.

England's chief medical officer, Prof Chris Whitty, said: "There's a variety of things you need to look at, you look at things like school closures, you look at things like reducing transport."

"The expectation is not that we will do all these things, the expectation is we will be looking systematically, using the science, at all the building blocks and balancing the effects against costs to society."

Contingency planning may request that whole families self-isolate if one of them shows symptoms and, in a further expansion of British efforts to detect and contain the virus, patients who have flu and other breathing conditions will be tested. Health officials plan to start with patients in eight hospitals in England, including some in intensive care, and also at 100 primary care centers, including GP surgeries.

Experts said the move would help show if the virus was spreading, although officials stressed there was no evidence that it was circulating in the community at the moment. So far, 13 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the UK but have not suffered any major setback to their health as a result of Covid-19, the illness the virus can trigger.

(Source: The Guardian)

Visit modern village where all structures are made of timber

TOURISM TEHRAN – Serenely sprawling in a well-watered and fertile plain at the southern foot of the Binalud Mountains, Choobin ("Wooden") village is a special tourist destination situated near Neyshabur, northeast Iran.

Nearly every structure there is made of timber using modern methods inspired by cultural and historical background of the region. The village embraces a wooden mosque, museum, library, restaurants, bakery, pergola, as well as houses and shops.

Many visitors say that its mosque is the most attractive building of the village. Resembling an upside-down ship, the mosque is said to bear earthquakes of magnitude 8 on the Richter scale and less. Having a gable roof, the mosque covers an area of 200 square meters. Its two minarets are 13 meters high from ground and weigh four tons each.

Construction of the mosque took about two years and 40 tons of lumbers have been used in it. The wooden mosque is unique not only in Iran but also in the world. It can resist earthquake with intensities up to eight Richter and its structure is such that it would not be damaged for hundreds of years, according to Iran Review.

The minarets are joined to the roof in a way that there are no pillars inside the mosque. Its walls are double layered, and the framework is located between the layers. The framework of the minarets and the roof as well as the roof and the walls are connected in a spider web style. It refers to its construction method which is similar to weaving web by spiders so that the minarets are joined together in a way that their weights are transferred equally first to the roof and then to walls and from there to ground.

It is interesting that one can get access to the upper parts of the minaret by using ladder inside the minaret. More interesting is that a window has been installed at the spot the minaret and the roof are joined. The window acts like a ventilator helping to move hot and polluted air out of the mosque in summer and move in clean air through a special air duct installed on the roof. In this way, natural air conditioning takes place.

The walls of the mosque are a little slanted



Wooden mosque at Choobin ("Wooden") village near Neyshabur, northeast Iran.

in order to make it easier to transfer weight from minaret to the ground.

It is to be noted that the place where the mosque is constructed is termite prone, therefore, special strategies have been used in construction of the mosque and other buildings of the complex to prevent the destructive effects of termites. As an example, the resident of the constructor of the complex has remained intact after 20 years. To protect the exterior walls of the building against rain and snow, special timbers with special processing have been used.

The cabinets, walls and even the trays of

the pantry of the mosque are made of wood.

The mosque has an exterior porch, the floor of which is made of mud-brick. On the interior and exterior walls of the mosque, seven and six beautiful inscriptions with Quranic verses and with frames made of walnut and mulberry timbers, respectively, have been hung.

Various kinds of timber from fruitful and fruitless trees such as pine, mulberry, walnut, pear, cherry, ash and white poplar are used in the building and its interior decoration. Special lighting of the complex and extraordinary harmony of lively colors give special

effects to it at nights.

By constructing this complex, the constructor aimed to flourish tourism industry and revive the name and memory of a great man who once lived and served at this place.

Neyshabur, which has shifted its position repeatedly in historical times, lies at an elevation of 1,213 meters some 75 km west of Mashhad. The surrounding area produces cereals and cotton, and the town's industries include agricultural marketing and the manufacture of carpets and pottery. Neyshabur is linked by road and railway with Tehran and Mashhad.

Iran urges citizens to postpone travel to Qatar amid coronavirus fears

TOURISM TEHRAN – In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, Iran's embassy in Qatar has urged Iranian citizens to temporarily postpone travels to the Persian Gulf littoral state.

"All [Iranian] citizens planning to travel to Qatar, as their final destination, are strongly recommended to delay their travel until conditions are back to normal," IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The travel advisory comes in accordance with regulations and preventive measures being practiced at air and sea borders by Qatari authorities in relation to countries where the coronavirus spread has been reported.

Qatar Airways on Monday announced that it would quarantine any passengers arriving from Iran and South Korea who show symptoms of the deadly coronavirus.

"In line with various global and local health warnings, all incoming passengers from Iran and South Korea whose final destination is Doha and are showing no symptoms of the Novel Coronavirus will be asked to stay in home isolation or a quarantine facility for 14 days," a statement from the airliner said.

The virus initiated in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late December. It has since spread to countries across the globe, but until this week only minimal cases have been detected in the Middle East.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Sundarbans National Park

The Sundarbans contain the world's largest mangrove forests and one of the most biologically productive of all natural ecosystems.

Located at the mouth of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers between India and Bangladesh, its forest and waterways support a wide range of fauna including a number of species threatened with extinction.



The mangrove habitat supports the single largest population of tigers in the world which have adapted to an almost amphibious life, being capable of swimming for long distances and feeding on fish, crab and water monitor lizards.

They are also renowned for being "man-eaters", most probably due to their relatively high frequency of encounters with local people.

The islands are also of great economic importance as a storm barrier, shore stabilizer, nutrient and sediment trap, a source of timber and natural resources, and support a wide variety of aquatic, benthic and terrestrial organisms.

They are an excellent example of the ecological processes of monsoon rain flooding, delta formation, tidal influence and plant colonization.

Covering 133,010 ha, the area is estimated to comprise about 55% forest land and 45% wetlands in the form of tidal rivers, creeks, canals and vast estuarine mouths of the river.

About 66% of the entire mangrove forest area is estimated to occur in Bangladesh, with the remaining 34% in India.

(Source: UNESCO)

Arts of ancient Iran: Bowl with human figure

TOURISM TEHRAN – The pictured bowl, with an irregular circumference probably warped during firing, is one of painted ceramics which were crafted in Iran from the 5th and early 4th millennium BC.

Painted ceramics were the principal medium for artistic expression in prehistoric Iran. The objects have a simple, often open form and vary from one site to the next, according to Louver website.

At Susa, now situated in southwest of modern Iran, the three principal types of painted tableware were the bowl, the bushel and the small carinated jar. Their decoration consisted mainly in geometric and animal motifs, human figures being rare. This bowl is therefore an exception.

Painted ceramics in Iran

Then painted ceramics in Iran are characterized by the quality of their workmanship and diversity of their decoration. Pots were handthrown from a clay coil, the potter's wheel not having been invented. The ceramics were decorated with brown motifs including geometric figures and mo-



tifs inspired by the natural environment, with plants and animals stylized to the point of being hardly recognizable. Man is rarely depicted, except as a hunter. The

motifs were repeated several times; the rhythmic repetition of motifs was preferred to narrative in the art of this period.

Art at Susa at the time of the city's foundation

The predominant medium for art in prehistoric times was indisputably painted ceramics. This craft was at its most accomplished at Susa, a city in the Susian plain extending from the Mesopotamian plain. The clay used by the potters was often light-colored, very slightly green-tinted, so thin that it is sometimes known as "eggshell" pottery, and fired at a high temperature to the point of becoming "resonant." The decoration of each vase was unique, except for a small series of wide bushels with zigzag motifs, probably made at a time when funerary ware was in high demand following a large-scale killing.

More description of the object

On either side of the central Maltese cross motif are two superposed "comb-animals" drawn with such a degree of stylization that only their heads and tails are recognizable. Parallel lines suggest their

long woolly coats, an element emphasized at a time when goats were not only used for their meat but also for their milk and wool.

Flocks were specifically selected to meet these new demands. On either side of the "comb-animal" motifs are the figures of three birds and a scorpion, also highly stylized. At the top and bottom, within the frame formed by a group of three broken lines, interpreted by some scholars as irrigation channels, are two spade-shaped emblems, apparently references to work on the land.

The male figure with a highly geometrical body stands, arms spread, in the position of master of the animals. He may personify a spirit of agriculture and livestock breeding. In this life-giving world, death is not absent, for the scorpion figure is there to bring it. If this interpretation is correct, this is a unique representation of man in the painted ceramics of Susa, in which only four human images have been found: contrary to the others, this is not a hunter but a figure related to a primitive mythology of the domestication of nature.

Stanford issues spring break travel guidelines restricting travel to China, South Korea

Vaden Health Center emailed students a list of spring break travel guidelines regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) on Tuesday, adding South Korea to the list of restricted countries along with China.

Vaden director James Jacob also recommended against travel to Hong Kong, Macau, Japan and Italy, writing that "it is possible that the 14-day self-isolation period may be extended to these locations." Stanford currently encourages those who have recently returned from China to self-isolate for 14 days.

According to the World Health Organization, there are now over 80,000 reported cases in 34 countries, including one in Santa Clara County and over 300 in Italy. On Monday, Stanford announced that students participating in the Stanford in Florence program will have to return

home before the start of next week.

In addition to restricting specific countries, Stanford encouraged students who are traveling internationally during spring break to be aware of the evolving situation and to consider the following four guidelines.

First, Jacobs wrote, COVID-19 may spread in current areas or into new regions. Stanford recommends checking for travel updates using International SOS, which has a comprehensive list of travel restrictions.

"Recently, community spread that is not linked to other cases or recent travel to mainland China has been observed," Jacobs wrote. "Stanford continues to assess risk based on the number of cases, community spread, public health infrastructure, as well as other factors."

Second, Stanford urges students traveling abroad to

monitor travel advisories daily. According to the announcement, re-entry into the U.S. and one's ability to return to campus could be affected by sudden changes to travel restriction policy, canceled flights or additional quarantine measures put in place.

Third, Jacobs warned that visa status may be impacted for international students and foreign nationals if they are unable to return to the U.S. by the start of the quarter. Stanford recommends checking immigration documents before leaving the country.

Lastly, he recommended that students register their travel with Stanford, allowing the University "to contact [them] in the event of a major emergency or changing circumstances related to your travel destination."

(Source: The Stanford Daily)

Rainfall in Tehran hits 69-year record high

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Rainfall doused the capital city of Tehran over the past two days, reaching 55.5 millimeters, which was unprecedented in the past 69 years.

The precipitation station in Tehran was first set up in 1951, and this is the first time it has recorded such rainfall rate, Sahar Tajbaksh, head of Meteorological Organization said.

■ **Tehran short of rain compared to last year**

Since September 23, rainfall in Tehran has amounted to 147.7 mm, compared to 186.4 mm in the previous year and 137.9 mm in the long run. Therefore, it demonstrates that the capital meets above-normal levels of rain compared to the same long term mean. But short of rain compared to the last year.

■ **Above-normal rainfall compared to long run**

According to the data released on Tuesday by the National Drought Warning and Moni-



toring Center affiliated to the Meteorological Organization, the whole country received 156.2 millimeters of precipitations since September 23, which indicates a 14.1-percent rise compared to the long-term averages.

But the amount shows a 7.8 percent drop compared to last year's precipitations in the corresponding period.

However, statistics show that Gilan, Mazandaran and Lorestan provinces with 539 mm, 420.1 mm and 343.6 mm precipitation, ranked the first three provinces with highest rainfall respectively.

This is while the three provinces are still short of rain compared to the previous year average.

When it comes to the highest variations in mean precipitation, provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr and Kerman are the winners with 89.7, 40.7 and 40.2 mm increase in rainfall compared to their long term means, respectively.

China provides Iran with masks, COVID-19 diagnostic kits



SOCIETY TEHRAN — China has delivered 250,000 face masks and 5,000 COVID-19 diagnostic kits to Iran.

Some 5,000 coronavirus test kits, a gift from the Chinese embassy and Chinese companies in Iran, was delivered to the Iranian side, China's Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua wrote on his Twitter account, adding that "our efforts will continue."

"Today, on behalf of the Chinese embassy in Iran, I granted 250,000 face masks to Iran and more aid will be provided in the future. Stay strong Iran," he also wrote.

So far, 139 people in Iran have been

infected with the virus, of whom 19 died. Meanwhile, Hua Chunying former Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman has praised Iran for sending medical face-masks. She referred to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's message that China has taken effective and firm actions to contain coronavirus as a sign of long-term and traditional friendship between two countries.

She also noted that Iran has so far sent three million face-masks to China and has expressed readiness for providing more medical aid to China, IRNA reported on Monday.

Broadcasters of coronavirus fake news to face imprisonment



SOCIETY TEHRAN — Broadcasting fake news about coronavirus will have a punishment of imprisonment up to 3 years, Hassan Norouzi, member of Majlis (the Iranian Parliament) has announced.

Concerning the crime and the punishment of those who publish false news about the spread of COVID-19, he stated that broadcasting false information is considered a crime under the law and the violator will be imprisoned for one to three years or flogged, IRNA reported.

Spreading fake news about the disease has raised people's concern and fright

which can result in interruption of daily routine, he stated, lamenting, closure of large factories and commercial complexes can cause widespread economic damage.

Following the closure of schools, children will have to attend school during the summer to compensate for this month, he noted.

COVID-19 outbreak is a matter of concern for health officials in both Iran and the world to think of a solution, but the closure of manufacturing and economic units will result in thousands of billions of damage to the nation, he concluded.

Rare bat may have been in UK for decades

An elusive British mammal, the tiny bat *Nathusius' pipistrelle* (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), may be more widespread and numerous than previously thought.

Sometimes described as a rare visitor or a new coloniser because of climate change, it may have been here decades but had gone undetected.

Perhaps this is because the species tends to avoid humans and lives in woods on the edge of lakes where insects are plentiful. It is also a featherweight, a maximum of 15g, the same as a 50p coin.

All British bats are fragile-looking creatures, most often seen by humans on warm summer evenings at dusk, although they are often unnoticed when out hunting. They



even emerge in the winter if it is warm enough.

Now that bat detectors know this species of pipistrelle is resident in the UK, sightings are being reported not just in the south-east of England but in Anglesey, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Cornwall.

In the summer breeding season males have territories, the successful ones have a harem of up to 10 females, while others manage only two or three.

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature is that they migrate across the North Sea. One that was ringed at Blagdon Lake, near Bristol, was discovered in the Netherlands three years later, 370 miles away.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'City-friendly schools' scheme launched in Tehran

The "city-friendly schools" scheme was launched in the capital to promote environmental protection and urban development issues among students, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Mojtaba Daneshvar, director general of citizenship education at Tehran Municipality, said that the project covers more than 550 schools, consisting of 160,000 students.

It aims to familiarize students with the rights and duties of citizens, the environment, waste, transportation and traffic, safety and security, crisis management, he explained.

The training programs will be in the form of workshops, role plays, cultural and educational camps, production of educational content such as books, brochures and posters, he concluded.

آغاز طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» در تهران

طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» با هدف آشنا کردن دانش آموزان با حقوق و تکالیف شهروندی، محیط زیست و پسماند، حمل و نقل و ترافیک، و ایمنی و مدیریت بحران در مدارس منتخب شهر تهران آغاز شد.

به گزارش ایسنا مجتبی دانشور، مدیرکل آموزش‌های شهروندی شهرداری تهران، گفت این طرح بیش از ۵۵۰ مدرسه شامل ۱۶۰ هزار دانش‌آموز را در بر می‌گیرد.

برنامه‌های آموزشی این طرح در قالب برگزاری کارگاه‌های آموزشی، تولید محتوای آموزشی در قالب کتاب، بروشور و پوستر، اجرای نمایش و برگزاری اردوهای فرهنگی و آموزشی خواهد بود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"agro-, agri-, agr-"

■ **Meaning:** soil or field

■ **For example:** The workshop presents information on sustainable **agricultural** systems.

PHRASAL VERB

Hand something down

■ **Meaning:** to give or leave something to people who will live after you

■ **For example:** The ring was handed down to her from her grandmother.

IDIOM

Broad strokes

■ **Explanation:** if something is described or defined with/in broad strokes, it is outlined in a very general way, without any details

■ **For example:** "In a few broad strokes he summed up the situation."

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Geneva conventions on prisoners of war

(March 24, 2003)

The American Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has condemned the sight of captured American soldiers being interviewed on Iraqi television. He said the interviews violated the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war. But what do the Conventions say, and how do they apply? This report from Alix Kroeger:

The **Geneva Conventions** say that prisoners of war must not be **subjected to** insult or public curiosity. Legal protections begin for **PoWs** at the moment of capture. **Recognized prisoners of war** have to be **charged** or **repatriated** at the end of a **conflict**. They're expected to give only their name, rank and number when questioned - and must be removed from the **combat area** as soon as possible so that they're not in danger. Nearly two hundred countries have signed the conventions - including Iraq and the United States. The United States has itself been criticised for failing to **apply the Conventions to prisoners of war** captured in Afghanistan. Instead it declared them "unlawful combatants".

■ **Words**

Geneva Conventions: agreements about how to treat people hurt or taken prisoner in war
subjected to: affected by
PoWs: prisoners of war
Recognized prisoners of war: people who are officially accepted as prisoners of war
charged: formally accused of having committed a crime
repatriated: sent back to their own country
a conflict: a war or battle
the combat area: the place where the fighting is taking place in a war
to apply the Conventions to prisoners of war: to use the Geneva conventions in relation to prisoners of war
combatants: people who take part in a fight or in a war

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING
One's worth is augmented by goodness and liberality, and one's modesty completes the benevolence to others and greatness is the result of bearing hardship.
Imam Ali (AS)

"Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH" comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — The children's book "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH" by American novelist Robert Leslie Carroll Conly, also known by his pen name Robert C. O'Brien, has been published in Persian in Tehran. Translated into Persian by Parastu Purgilani, the novel has been released by Peydayesh Publications. The 1971 book is about a widowed field mouse, Mrs. Frisby, who seeks the aid of a group of former laboratory rats in rescuing her home from destruction by a farmer's plow, while her youngest son is suffering from pneumonia.

The novel is the winner of the 1972 Newbery Medal, which is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. After O'Brien's death in 1973, his daughter, Jane Leslie Conly, wrote two other novels based on the book, "Rasco and the Rats of NIMH" and "R-T, Margaret, and the Rats of NIMH". "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH" was adapted for the screen in 1982 by American director and animator Don Bluth.

NEWS IN BRIEF

"Elsinor" to compete in San Diego mobile filmfest
TEHRAN — "Elsinor" directed by Ehsan Majuni from Iran will be competing in the International Mobile Film Festival in the U.S. city of San Diego during April, the organizers have announced. The synopsis of "Elsinor" is "I'm going to mom's wedding". Only films shot with smartphones are allowed to participate in the festival, which will be held from April 24 to 26.

Intl. Quran Competition postponed until end of Ramadan
TEHRAN — The 37th International Quran Competition has been postponed to a time after the holy month of Ramadan due to the new coronavirus epidemic in the country. The exact date of the competition will be specified later, the organizers announced on Wednesday. The competition was scheduled to be held in the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad in mid-April. Ramadan will probably begin on April 24 and end on May 23.

Jane Goodall's 'The Book of Hope' coming out in 2021
NEW YORK (AP) — Jane Goodall's next book will be a tribute to her enduring optimism. Celadon Books announced Monday that Goodall's "The Book of Hope" will be published in fall 2021. The project is a collaboration with Doug Abrams, author of the bestselling "The Book of Joy," and comes 60 years after the celebrated primatologist began her pioneering research of chimpanzees in Africa.

"The Book of Hope" will serve as an extraordinary exploration of our very nature as human beings and offer a compelling path forward to create hope in our own lives and in the world," according to Celadon's announcement. "Through both Jane's observation and the latest scientific research, readers will experience the resilience of nature to recover from the harm we have inflicted and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of loss and devastation." Goodall's previous books include "My Friends the Chimpanzees," "In the Shadow of Man" and "The Ten Trusts: What We Must Do To Care for the Animals We Love."

French festival to spotlight Iranian cinema

TEHRAN — The 15th Panorama of Maghreb and Middle Eastern Cinemas, a Parisian international film festival, will review a lineup of the latest Iranian movies in a special section. Feature films "Dressage" by Puya Badkubeh, "Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness" by Masud Bakhshi, "Hendi and Hormoz" by Abbas Amini and "Esrafil" by Ida Panahandeh are among the films to go on screen in this section. Documentary films "Sonita", a co-production from Iran, Germany and Switzerland by Iranian filmmaker Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami and "Women According to Men" by Saeid Nuri will also be screened at the festival, which is scheduled to be held from March 3 to 21. The festival will also screen short films by female Iranian filmmakers, including "Personal" by Sonia Haddad, "Double" by Ronak Jafari and "The Drive" by Tanin Torabi. "The Toaster I Used to Live In" by Rojin Shafiei and "Horn" and "Online Shopping", both by Ghasideh Golmakani, are also among the films. Round tables on women elites of Iranian cinema will also be organized on the sidelines of the festival. Filmmaker Ghasideh Golmakani, France-based Iranian cinema expert Bamshad Purvali, Lebanese director Dima El-Horr and French scholars Emna Mrabet and Claudine Le Pallec Marand are scheduled to attend the sessions.



A scene from "Hendi and Hormoz" by Iranian director Abbas Amini.

Musicians Abdi, Haqiqi touring Europe to promote dotar



Dotar virtuoso Abdollah Abdi performs in an undated photo.

TEHRAN — Dotar virtuoso and vocalist Abdollah Abdi from Torbat-e Jaam and percussionist Rahman Haqiqi are touring Europe to promote the dotar. The tour has been organized by Iran's embassies in Warsaw and Lisbon to observe the registration of the traditional skills of crafting and playing the dotar in Iran on the UNESCO list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2019, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Wednesday. The tour began with performances in several Polish cities in early February.

They performed another concert at the Ismaili Center in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon during the second leg of their tour on Tuesday. The duo has previously performed in Faro, Portugal's southernmost city. They will have their next stop in Darmstadt, a city near Frankfurt in southwest Germany, and Munich. Geneva and Bern in Switzerland will also host performances by the group. Dotar, a string instrument with a pear-shaped body, is mostly played in folk performances common in Torbat-e Jaam and nearby regions in North Khorasan Province.

IRIB prepares listings of comedies to relieve stress caused by coronavirus outbreak



A scene from "A Man with a Thousand Faces" by Mehran Modiri.

TEHRAN — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has prepared listings of comedy series to help alleviate stress and worries in society due to the new coronavirus outbreak in the country. The TV series, previously aired on different channels, include "Homeless Man" directed by Reza Attaran, "Life Is Amazing" by Mojtaba Cheraghali and "A Man with a Thousand Faces" by Mehran Modiri. "Samu Bandari", a mini-series by Ebrahim Foruzesh, is also included, IRIB announced on Wednesday.

In addition, a lineup of children's programs has been arranged to entertain schoolchildren who are forced to stay at home in light of the latest spread of the novel coronavirus. Moreover, several educational programs on basic protective measures against the new coronavirus are due to be aired. The programs produced by world organizations teach how to protect against the disease, what the symptoms of the disease are, how to protect against it, what people must know about the disease, and what to do if an individual is infected.

Berlin documentary explores value of work in Germany's struggling car industry

BERLIN (Reuters) — Disruptions in Germany's car industry are eroding job security and national identity, with the most vulnerable drawing more self-respect from work than the wealthy, the director of a documentary screening at this year's Berlin Film Festival said. The German documentary "Automotive" explores the value of work in the age of automation and digitization, with low-skilled workers struggling to keep their jobs in Germany's mighty automobile industry. The malaise in Germany's car industry, caused by weaker demand from abroad, stricter emission rules and electrification, is starting to leave a wider mark on Europe's largest economy by pushing up unemployment, eroding job security and hitting pay. German auto manufacturers and their suppliers are expected to cut nearly a tenth of their 830,000 jobs in the next decade, the VDA industry association has said. Some think-tanks and government officials fear that the toll will be higher as electric cars provide less assembly work than combustion engine vehicles, simple work steps are replaced by automation and companies relocate production. The documentary follows 20-year-old Sedanur who during night shifts is sorting car parts on the assembly line for the robots at a near-by car factory in the Bavarian town of Ingolstadt. But when the diesel emission scandal starts to hit, temp worker Sedanur is among the first to become unemployed. Her dreams of getting a permanent job contract and earning enough money



A worker assembles a new Audi at the production line of the German car manufacturer's plant in Ingolstadt, Germany, March 14, 2018. (Reuters/Michael Dalder)

one day to buy a Mercedes Benz contrast sharply with the plans of Eva, a 33-year-old headhunter for Audi, which is looking for experts to automate some of its logistics. Eva's goal is to earn as much money as possible now so that she can escape this modern world of work as soon as possible and buy a property on the beach in the Caribbean with her partner. "It's interesting to see how differently both women view their job. For Eva, work is only a means to an end. For Sedanur, her job is partly her identity," director Jonas Heldt said. But even Eva with her well-paid, highly specialized job in headhunting sometimes fears that it is not 100 percent safe as improved algorithms one day could do her work as well. "What I wanted to show with my documentary is how, sooner or later, everyone might be replaceable. And this poses important questions about the role and importance of work in the future," Heldt said.

"You messed with the wrong women" say Weinstein accusers, turning sights to LA

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Some of the more than 80 women who have accused Harvey Weinstein of sexual misconduct said on Tuesday they are looking to the disgraced producer's trial in Los Angeles to build on what they called a seismic shift in attitudes signaled by his conviction in New York. A day after a New York jury found Weinstein, 67, guilty of rape and sexual assault - in a watershed moment for the #MeToo movement - a dozen women held an emotional news conference in Los Angeles. "Now we know that if we dare to speak, there is a far greater chance we will be heard and our abusers will be punished," said actress Rosanna Arquette. "It is a historic shift that I never thought I would see in my lifetime," added Arquette, one of a group of Weinstein's accusers called the Silence Breakers. Weinstein, who plans to appeal his New York conviction, was led away in handcuffs on Monday prior to sentencing on March 11, when he faces up to 29 years in prison. Weinstein, who reportedly experienced chest pains or palpitations after the verdict, was taken to a New York hospital as a precautionary measure, his lawyer said. Weinstein, once one of the most powerful producers in Hollywood, was the key force behind acclaimed films such as "The English Patient" and "Shakespeare in Love." In January, he was charged in Los Angeles with raping one woman and sexually assaulting another in the city in 2013. Weinstein has denied having nonconsensual sex with anyone; no date has been set for the Los Angeles case to begin. "Now we can turn our attention to the



Lauren O'Connor speaks with "The Silence Breakers", a group of women who spoke out about Harvey Weinstein's sexual misconduct during a news conference outside Los Angeles City Hall in Los Angeles, California, U.S. February 25, 2020. (Reuters/Mike Blake) upcoming trial here in Los Angeles. We have an opportunity to build on this momentum," Canadian actress Larissa Gomes told the news conference on Tuesday. The women praised their six peers for their bravery in testifying at the New York trial, where the accusers were grilled by Weinstein's lawyers, who sought to portray them as using the movie mogul to advance their careers. "Harvey, you messed with the wrong women," said former actress and screenwriter Louise Geiss. "We will see you here in Los Angeles, where hopefully your conviction will leave you in jail for life." The women reported mixed emotions on hearing about Weinstein's conviction on Monday. For some, the verdict came more than 20 years after they say they were abused by the producer. "Many of us didn't think this day would come," said television reporter Lauren Sivan. "We were actually really nervous and holding our breath because there was a very good chance he would walk."