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## Coronavirus urges people to change: cartoonist Einstein



A cartoon exclusively designed by Brazilian artist Cival Einstein for the Tehran Times.

## 122 nuclear achievements in one year: Salehi

**TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, has said that Iran unveiled 122 nuclear achievements over the past Iranian calendar year.

The Iranian year, 1398, ended on March 19.

"I announce with honor that this organization's 122 new achievements in the past year have been the result of untiring efforts made by a large number of researchers of

the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran which herald a new chapter in expansion of the organization's activities," he said in a statement published on Tuesday on the occasion of National Day of Nuclear Technology, which falls on Wednesday, April 8. Salehi, a nuclear physicist, also said that production in nuclear medicine has increased, noting it is essential to meet the country's medical needs given the "cruel sanctions".

## 'Unilateralism virus' infects collective actions, Iran says

**TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Tuesday that the coronavirus crisis is an opportunity if the global fight on COVID-19 lead to global solidarity and collaboration. Mousavi made the comments on World Health Day.

"#WorldHealthDay is a timely day for rethinking abt post-corona world. #CoronaCrisis is an opportunity, if the global fighting on #COVID19 will lead to global solidarity & collaboration. @WHO

does its coordination task well, though 'unilateralism virus' infects collective actions," he tweeted.

Confirmed coronavirus cases across the globe now number at 1,347,803, and a total of 74,807 people have lost their lives as a result of complications caused by the virus, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University. More than 277,400 people have recovered, Press TV reported on Tuesday.

## Ancient bas-relief discovered in western Iran

**TEHRAN** — An ancient bas-relief carving, which depicts human being figures, has recently been discovered in western Iran.

Estimated to date from the Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE), the relief was found during an archaeological survey in Kuhdasht county, Lorestan province. A total of 112 historical relics were

found during the survey which took 45 days to complete, said senior archaeologist Hamzeh Qobadi, who led the survey, CHTN reported on Monday.

Traces of Paleolithic era (Old Stone Age) were also found during the survey, which is first in its kind in Kuhdasht, provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi said. → 8

**PERSPECTIVE**  
**Faranak Bakhtiari**  
Tehran Times journalist

## World Health Day: dedicated medics on frontline fighting the invisible enemy

This time, medical professionals have gone far to help patients afflicted by the coronavirus, so the least we can do is supporting them and paying tribute to those putting themselves at risk battling against a dangerous enemy which is not even visible.

Observed on April 7, World Health Day is the day to celebrate the work of nurses and midwives and remind world leaders of the critical role they play in keeping the world healthy. Nurses and other health workers are at the forefront of COVID-19 response - providing high quality, respectful treatment, and care, leading community dialogue to address fears and questions and, in some instances, collecting data for clinical studies. Quite simply, without nurses, there would be no response.

The COVID-19, an infectious disease first identified in Wuhan, China, has started spreading quickly and globally; since Tuesday, Iran reported more than 62,589 coronavirus cases and some 3,872 deaths from the disease, while affecting 1,356,369 people in 209 countries.

However, novel coronavirus has shown that human is still vulnerable to major disease outbreaks.

Here, health workers are those who make the most efforts but get the least attention among the nervous people and officials who are expected to make reasonable responses to the crisis.

The Iranian medical community has repeatedly succeeded in surviving the people in the floods and earthquakes, and so on, but this time the test is bigger and broader.

The reality of today's medical community shows that each member is working around the clock and does not back down.

Since March 25, it is reported that 43 medical staff in the country has lost their lives due to the coronavirus infection.

These days photos of health workers are being posted around social media, drawing attention and praise of nearly the whole people, while each one shows the physical and emotional toll the epidemic is taking. → 9

## Loading, unloading of goods at ports continue observing healthcare protocols

**TEHRAN** — Loading and unloading of commodities are being conducted continuously at the ports of Iran while the health requirements are completely met, the head of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced on Tuesday.

Mohammad Rastad reiterated that all port operations are done observing healthcare protocols and the principles set by the Coronavirus Containment Headquarters, PMO portal published.

The official further elaborated on the organization's programs for developing Shahid Rajaei Port (Iran's major container port located at the southern province of Hormozgan) during the current Iranian calendar year (began on March



20) and said about 900 meters of docks at the phase three of container part will be completed

and inaugurated in this year.

By completing phase three, the capacity of this port will increase significantly, Rastad underscored.

According to the official, PMO will pay 36 trillion rials (about \$857 million) for supplying marine fleet during the current Iranian calendar year.

He said this fund will be paid to the marine industries of the country for supplying the required fleet in this year, which is named the year of "Surge in Production".

The official further underscored that all parts required in the maritime and port projects will be supplied by domestic producers.

**PERSPECTIVE**  
**Bimolendu B. Nath**  
Environmentalist

## COVID-19 and evolutionary selection pressure

According to the World Health Organization, a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) has emerged from China and rapidly spread across the world, now with 1,362,850 confirmed cases and 76,367 deaths (as of 7 April 2020).

Movement of human population, in terms of exploration, pilgrimage, politics, business and pleasure impacted global dispersal of microbes.

During the entire span of 200,000 years of human history, movement of hominins across the continents finds antecedents in modern international tourism.

Recent headlines such as, Ebola, Zika, SARS and the last but not the least the COVID-19 repeat the human history buried in the classical antiquity when human ancestors began acquisition of microbial pathogens from the animals as hunters-gatherers.

Globalization has rewarded us to travel geographic distances far greater than what we could do in the past. Incidentally, the emergence of at least 40 new infectious diseases in the last 50 years has interplayed with the ever-increasing density of touring human population.

So far, the COVID-19 transmission tends to be horizontal and the viral fitness is trading off with the host fitness as a function of mobility and population density.

Here comes the persistence of COVID-19 life strategy which is critically dependent on temporal and spatial nature of the infected cluster of human population. On the other hand, the preventive measures through social, cultural, political and clinical management have been impacting a negative selection pressure on COVID-19.

Moreover, persistence or decline of widely dispersed viral population might exhibit 'Allee effect'. The possibility of either stabilization or decline of COVID-19 will depend on the size and density of the infected 'floating' population of humans who are yet to reach to their base from the site of infection. Alternatively, disease-driven mutual selective pressures and disease-modified fitness can lead to modular evolutionary consequences, such as, de novo gene acquisition, one of the frequent events in the past history of viral evolution. In this context, there is an urgency to call upon policy makers for formulating a sustainable strategy to tackle COVID-19 like future pandemic disasters.

## Amnesty, HRW urge Bahrain to release political inmates amid COVID-19 pandemic

Twenty international rights groups, including the Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch, have called on the Bahraini regime to release opposition leaders, political activists and journalists amid the coronavirus outbreak.

In a joint statement on Monday, the rights groups said all prisoners of conscience remain detained in Bahrain solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, Press TV reported.

The statement said many of the prisoners of conscience currently jailed in Bahrain are old and/or suffer from underlying medical conditions. "Such prisoners are at high risk of serious illness if they contract COVID-19, and thus ought to be prioritized for release," it added.

Last month, Manama released 1,486 prisoners

in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, but the releases excluded opposition leaders, activists, journalists and human rights defenders.

Opposition leaders imprisoned for their roles in the 2011 protest movement remain behind bars. These include Hassan Mushaima, the head of the opposition group Al-Haq; Abdulwahab Hussain, an opposition leader; Abdulhadi Al Khawaja, a prominent human rights defender; and Dr Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, the spokesman for Al-Haq.

Other prominent opposition figures, including Sheikh Ali Salman, the secretary general of the Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society (Al-Wefaq), also remain imprisoned.

A few days ago, Bahrain's most prominent Shia cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim demanded the immediate and unconditional release of

political dissidents currently being held in the Manama regime's prisons in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic, stressing that failure to take the measure will have dire consequences.

"Even if the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Bahrain, whose number stands in thousands, might not be recognized as a religious, constitutional, national and human right and would have no priority among the policies of ruling authorities, there is inevitable truth that COVID-19 virus could hit prisons and lead to consequences much more catastrophic than what the world has been witnessing," he said in a statement.

Manama has been engaged in a heavy-handed crackdown since a popular uprising began in the Kingdom back in 2011. It has detained thousands of activists since then. → 10



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## Charities provide basic goods for the underprivileged

Charity societies in Tehran are providing basic goods for the low-income and underprivileged families as the coronavirus outbreak has crippled their livelihoods.

The government has allocated 1,000 trillion rials (about \$24 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to help lessen the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the national economy.