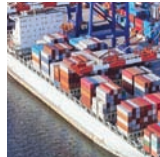




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# Israel plotting to split S.Arabia: Iran

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© File photo

By Afshin Majlesi  
Tehran Times Journalist

What are the opportunities for rural tourism in Iran?

**D**otted with tens of thousands of ancient villages, rural tourism perfectly suits the trend of many inbound and even domestic vacationers who are seeking unique natural experiences, unspoiled landscapes, stay in authentic accommodation, and feel local lifestyles.

When it comes to rural tourism Iran, which has many pristine yet diverse natural settings, has many to offer to nature lovers. Rural tourism as well as agritourism and farm-stays can be regarded as a win-win both for local communities, and post-modern travelers who are tracing unique experiences.

Sightseers may stay with a rural or nomadic family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

The rural tourism, most of all, sets the ground for economic development in rural areas by creating additional income and employment especially for young people and women; the prosperity of handicrafts, and more entrepreneurship prospects. It can also improve the social wellbeing in rural areas, for instance by stimulating improvements in infrastructure, sanitation, and electricity networks.

But, apart from benefits to rural communities, the preservation of their environmental and cultural assets is of very high significance that should be taken into account. In some villages, over-tourism could pose threats!

Rural tourism is also closely related to nature tourism and health tourism. Rural communities can play host to – or organize -- nature and health tours, thereby it fetches income for further tourist infrastructure.

There are thousands of villages in Iran which have immense potential to be turned into prosperous travel destinations. Needless to say that the topography and the water supply determine regions fit for human habitation, the type, and lifestyles of dwellers in the semi-arid country, which is full of deep gorges and defiles, empty deserts, and unnavigable rivers. **→6**

## Iran eyes transmitting electricity to Europe as region's power hub

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** – Following a plan for becoming West Asia's electricity hub, Iran has been taking serious steps for joining its electricity network with neighbors in the past few years.

The Iranian Energy Ministry has been negotiating with the neighboring countries including Iraq, Russia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Qatar for the connection of their power networks with Iran to make them enable to import or transmit their electricity to new destination markets through Iran.

The synchronization of power grids with the neighboring countries, not only enhances Iran's electricity exchanges with them, but it will also increase the political stance of the country in the region.

So far, Iran's electricity network has been synchronized with Iraq, and back in September, the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian announced

that the electricity networks of Russia and Azerbaijan are the next in line for becoming linked with the Iranian grid in the coming months.

"Within the next few months, the study project of synchronization of the electricity networks of Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia will be completed and then the executive operations will begin," the minister said.

Meanwhile, Ardakanian and Qatari Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi held an online meeting in late September to discuss joining the two countries' electricity networks via sea.

During the online meeting, Al-Kaabi said: "Electricity transfer between the two countries is possible and this proposal should be worked on."

Now, taking a new step toward becoming the region's power hub, Iran has suggested becoming a bridge between East and Europe for transmitting electricity. **→4**

## U.S. Protests: Cities, states and businesses brace for election unrest

Corporate America, city governments and federal and local law enforcement across the country are making plans to deal with political instability, civil unrest and violence around the upcoming presidential election.

Concerns range from isolated violent incidents to a long stretch of mass protests, violent confrontations between extremists and widespread property damage, if the outcome of the election remains unclear or is hotly contested for weeks or months, according to security consultants, analysts of extremism, police officials and local elected leaders who spoke with CNN.

"It keeps me up at night," Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, who chairs the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Mayors and Police Chiefs Task Force, about the threat of violence. "I'm also worried that there will be a bogus attempt to prevent the counting of all the ballots, and that also could lead to a variety of unrest in a variety of ways."

In recent months, federal law enforcement agencies,

led by the FBI, have held discussions with sheriffs and local police who would be charged with keeping order in any protests that may surround disputed results, according to U.S. law enforcement officials briefed on the matter. Among the concerns are armed extremists who may try to interfere with or halt vote-counting done by local canvassing boards. Groups ranging from right wing activists and white supremacists to antifa and anarchists have been active in recent months amid the George Floyd protests.

Police department leaders in cities from Baltimore to Seattle and Portland told CNN they have prohibited officers from taking days off around the election. Baltimore Police Detective Chakia Fennoy said, in an email, the department is taking "extra precautions to include opening the Incident Command Room, having dedicated personnel to respond to any issues and closely monitoring any information leading up to the election that may create issues affecting public safety."

## Land subsidence: an urgent problem that needs a different mindset

By Mehdi Garshasbi

Land subsidence by definition is the lowering of ground level from certain elevation references. The rates of subsidence can commonly vary between 1 and 20 centimeters per year and even more in certain places.

Groundwater extraction in connection with urbanization and population growth is the main cause of severe land subsidence in mega-cities.

Based on the latest studies, around half of plains nationwide are at the risk of deforestation.

This issue has led to land subsidence of more than 54 centimeters in some parts of the country, as much as 140 times the globally accepted rate of 4 millimeters per year.

**■ The sinking might be irreversible**  
Tehran is the most populous city in West Asia, and it's sinking into the ground at an alarming rate.

The metropolis is home to some 15 million people and is a victim of dramatic subsidence. New research reveals that the region is sinking by

more than 25? centimeters annually in some parts.

Environmentalism, Mohammad Darvish, has said that the drought situation over the past couple of years in the country has exacerbated land subsidence. "The subsided lands will not be back to their normal state and the only work we can do is to prevent it from getting worse."

"This year, in addition to precipitations, the coronavirus outbreak also helped the nature and its biodiversity to improve resilience, but thee all are just somehow temporary pacifiers. **→7**



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## Symposium to show unity with Palestinian children held

**TEHRAN** – The fourth international gathering in show of solidarity with the Palestinian infants and adolescent was held at the Persian Gulf hall of the Sacred Defense Garden Museum on Wednesday. The representatives of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Tehran as well as the chairman of the Majlis Resistance Committee attended the assembly.

## 50th Anniversary Rally for the National Day of Mourning: the original American Holocaust celebrated with turkey and dressing

Tehran Times correspondent in Washington

Fifty years ago, Native communities in New England created the National Day of Mourning rally in an effort to bring awareness of the true story behind Thanksgiving and to push back against the brutal and enduring legacy of colonialism.

For Americans, there are two important events in November. The 2020 U.S. presidential elections loom ever closer, complicated by the abysmal lack of viable candidates, making American political news even more complicated and hopeless than usual. The second event happens at the end of the month. By definition, Thanksgiving is a feast of "giving thanks", and usually refers to the bounty that we enjoy in America, Land of the Free and Home of the Brave.

However, for Native Americans, the original inhabitants of these lands, the appearance of European settler colonizers signaled an end of bounty and freedom and began an era of ruthless occupation, false treaties, massacres and extinction. In fact, since the European colonizers approached this hemisphere in the 15th century, Indigenous peoples from South America to North America were brutalized with impunity because of the Papal Bull which gave the official approval of the Pope and Christianity to the terrible acts. Certainly the acts of these early explorers prove that the original intent of settlers to the New World was conquest and plunder of resources, with enslavement or extinction for the original inhabitants if they resisted. **→5**



## Rafael Grossi says IAEA carried 400 inspections in Iran last year

JCPOA is “very much alive for the countries that are adhering to it”, IAEA chief notes

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has said that the UN watchdog carried out more than 400 inspections in Iran last year.

“We carried out more than 400 inspections in Iran last year,” Grossi said in an interview with Der Spiegel published on September 30.

The IAEA chief underlined that Iran demonstrated a “remarkable consistency” in its nuclear program over the past two decades.



He said the IAEA inspectors are always in Iran, 365 days a year

On some claims that Iran would only need three and a half months to produce the uranium for a bomb, Grossi said, “We have determined that Iran has more enriched uranium today than it did two years ago. On the other hand, the quantities are still much smaller than in 2015, when the Iran deal was agreed to.”

“I respect these analyses, although I do not necessarily agree,” he added, according to the Mehr news agency.

“We must be watchful, there's

no question about that. It is just as important to see things in perspective: Even if you have the necessary amount of uranium, that does not mean that you can immediately build a nuclear weapon,” he noted.

He continued, “[Iran's nuclear] activity did decrease after the signing of the nuclear deal. But it never stopped completely. This is in no way unusual for a country that has signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, provided we exercise our control function. The Iranian nuclear program is highly sophisticated, with a nuclear power plant for which there are plans to expand, research laboratories, and enrichment facilities. That's why we have such a vast inspection regime.”

On whether the JCPOA, the official name for the 2105 nuclear deal, is dead or not, the IAEA chief said, “It is very much alive for the countries that are adhering to it. Germany, France, Britain, Russia, China, and Iran have made clear that they find the agreement enormously important. There is a dispute because three Western countries claim Iran is violating it. Iran, in turn, is complaining of misconduct on the part of the other side. No one is doing anything - everyone wants us to continue with inspections.”

■ **‘It is an undeniable fact that nuclear energy is clean energy’**

Grossi also said, “It is an undeniable fact that nuclear energy is clean energy, almost free of CO2 emissions. Today's nuclear power plants save us two gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions per year in global electricity generation.”

Iran has been insisting that its nuclear program is solely for civilian uses.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Iran plans to produce 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity for its growing consumption.

The UN nuclear watchdog also inspected the second of two alleged former atomic sites in Iran as agreed with Tehran last month in a deal that ended a standoff over access, the agency said on Wednesday.

The IAEA has not named either of the two undeclared sites.

“As part of an agreement with Iran to resolve safeguards implementation issues specified by the IAEA, the agency this week conducted a complementary access at the second location in the country and took environmental samples,” it said in a statement.

Those samples and others taken at the first site will be sent to labs and analyzed for traces of nuclear material since the agency's main task is to account for all nuclear material in a country to ensure it is not being used to make weapons.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), confirmed the news of the inspection, saying he hopes it will stop the United States from taking advantage of the issue.

“We had a difference of opinion with the Agency and this difference was leading to an impasse due to political pressures. A country like the U.S. could take advantage of the continuation of these conditions,” he said.

“Therefore, after reviewing the situation, we voluntarily announced to the Agency that within a framework we will give you access to inspect these two sites once and for all.”

## Ambassador: Iran-China ties accelerating

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to China has felicitated the Mid-Fall Festival and National Day of the People's Republic of China, expressing satisfaction that Tehran and Beijing have accelerated their mutual cooperation in different spheres.

In a tweet on Thursday, Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh wrote that Iran and China have had good diplomatic relations for several decades.

The ambassador expressed the hope that the next year both countries will celebrate the 50th anniversary of these relations more gloriously.

The tweet came after Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif felicitated China on the 71st anniversary of the foundation of New China, and wished for wider partnership between Tehran and Beijing.

Zarif, on his Twitter account on Tuesday, expressed the hope that the two countries will develop further partnership and cooperation.

He also hailed the Chinese government and nation's handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

“China's success in controlling the pandemic and achieving a strong economic recovery was hard-won but difficult,” Zarif wrote in Chinese, according to Iran Press.

“On these two occasions, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to the Chinese government and people. I wish China more prosperity, and I also wish the prospects of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries will be broader,” he added.

A partnership plan between Iran and China, officially known as “Comprehensive Cooperation Plan between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran,” is still under negotiation.

Some details of the 25-year partnership have been leaked to the press. According to the leaks, China will invest a whopping \$400 billion in various Iranian sectors including oil and gas. In exchange, Iran will ensure steady energy supplies to China for a period of 25 years at a discounted rate.

In remarks on June 21, President Hassan Rouhani elaborated on the strategic partnership, saying that the agreement is a positive step towards increasing the importance of global energy and sustainable development of oil and gas resources, as well as renewable energy and joint investment in free zones.

# The Zionist regime is the greatest threat to world peace, Iran says

Tehran dismisses Netanyahu's UN speech as ‘ridiculous show’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has mocked the Israeli prime minister's speech at the UN General Assembly as a “ridiculous show” which intended to deceive people, reiterating Tehran's long-held view that the Zionist regime is the greatest threat to world peace.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed on Tuesday that Iran poses the greatest threat to peace in West Asia. He accused the Islamic Republic of attacking its neighbors and fomenting violence in the region.

In his speech, the Israeli prime minister also lauded U.S. President Donald Trump for leaving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and reimposing the sanctions that had been lifted against Tehran under the pact.

He also lashed out at the UN Security Council for refusing to extend an arms embargo on Iran.

The Israeli premier also claimed that Iran was seeking nuclear weapons.

Asked by reporters about Netanyahu's speech, Khatibzadeh described the remarks as a new act in a serial of puppet shows that originate from Netanyahu's conspiratorial mind and from the counter-intelligence campaign run by the Zionist regime's espionage services.

“The prime minister of the fake, usurper



and child-murdering Zionist regime continues to tell lies by taking the podium at international circles, and is trying to deceive public opinion and the global circles with ridiculous shows in order to prevent trial of the regime's criminal leaders at the international courts,” Khatibzadeh said on Wednesday, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

The spokesman added that the Zionist regime's nature is based on occupation, deception and racism.

He further condemned the Zionist regime as the greatest global threat to peace and security given its stockpile of hundreds of nuclear warheads.

Last week, on the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Iran condemned the U.S. and the Zionist regime for their destabilizing policies and activities which threaten world peace.

“The International Day for the Total

Elimination of #NuclearWeapons, provides an opportunity for the intl community to re-emphasize its commitment to nuke disarmament as a priority. We believe in a peaceful & secure world, with no state possessing weapon of mass destruction,” the Foreign Ministry wrote in a series of tweets on September 26.

“Also in our region, the Israeli Regime with its 10s of nukes remains the biggest threat to peace & security & - supported by the U.S. - prevents the ME to become a NWFZ,” the tweets read.

Israel is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and has refused to either confirm or deny the possession of nuclear weapons in its arsenal.

The regime is believed to possess 200 nuclear warheads, making it the only country in West Asia that has nuclear weapons.

This is while Iran has signed the NPT and its nuclear program is inspected regularly by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA has in numerous occasions certified the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

Tehran also signed a nuclear agreement with six major powers in 2015 to assure the world that its nuclear program is peaceful in nature. The U.S., however, exited the deal in 2018.

## Zarif talks with Dutch, Austrian counterparts

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has had a phone conversation with his counterparts from the Netherlands and Austria to discuss a whole range of issues.

In separate conversations, Zarif spoke with Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok and Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg on Thursday, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

During the talks, the sides exchanged views about mutual relations, especially in the consular domain, measures adopted by countries in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, the latest developments pertinent to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as well as the situation in the region.

Among the issues which came up for discussion during

Zarif's phone talks with his Austrian counterpart were the developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The two sides expressed concern over the recent flare-up of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan over that region.

The Nagorno-Karabakh region is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but it has an Armenian population because ethnic Azeris fled the territory in 1992 when separatists seized it in a move supported by Yerevan after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It is unclear what caused the renewed fighting, which is the heaviest since the 1994 ceasefire, and there are growing fears international powers could be dragged into the conflict.

On Wednesday French President Emmanuel Macron said he was “extremely concerned by the warlike messages” coming from Turkey, a staunch ally of Azerbaijan.

**The foreign ministers of Iran and Austria expressed concern over the recent flare-up of hostilities between the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.**



Stef Blok

Zarif

Schallenberg

Turkey says it is “fully ready” to help Azerbaijan recover the enclave.

## Snapback mechanism ‘not triggered’ against Tehran: UN Security Council president

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Russian Ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzia says contrary to the United States' claim, the “snapback” mechanism on sanctions against Tehran has not been triggered.

“On the snapback, I think everything is clear. The snapback has not happened,” Nebenzia, in his capacity as president of the Security Council for the month of October, said on Thursday.

According to Xinhuanet, the Russian envoy said the UN Security Council spoke about the issue unequivocally,

“Nearly all council members sent letters to the president of the Security Council in August, stating their position that they did not share the view of the United States and

that they believed Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the Iran nuclear deal, stays intact,” he stated.

The council members' position was confirmed in the presidential resume of the discussion at the end of August during the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council, and later confirmed by the Nigerien presidency, said Nebenzia.

After the so-called snapback grace period expired on September 19, the U.S. announced that the snapback now is in force, he said, adding, “The same countries reaffirmed their position, sending letters to the Security Council president and the UN secretary-general, saying that in their view, the snapback is wishful thinking of

the United States.”

“So we are living in a situation of no snapback, of the full implementation of Resolution 2231. I understand that the U.S. themselves understand it, and they simply use that situation in order to go with their own unilateral sanctions on Iran, to continue their policy of maximum pressure on that country,” he said.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo took a measure on September 19 that sent diplomatic shock waves across the world.

In a statement, Pompeo announced the return of “all previously terminated UN sanctions” on Tehran, a highly controversial measure that was met with global backlash from U.S. friends or foes alike.

## Israel plotting to split S.Arabia: Iran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, says Israel is hatching a plot to disintegrate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

“UAE's normalization of ties w/ the Zionists is only the betrayal job of Abu Dhabi, and not other emirates,” Amir-Abdollahian tweeted on Thursday.

“In the Head of Mossad's trip to Manama, Bahraini Al-Khalifa & Saudi Al-Salman are just puppets of Washington & London. #Israel is hatching the plot for KSA's breakdown,” he added.

The UAE and Bahrain have recently taken the rare step of fully normalizing ties with Israel.

U.S.-brokered normalization deals were signed on



who claim to be advocates of human rights prevent the delivery of medical supplies to the Iranian patients while supporting terrorist groups and acts of terror.

“These governments that do not allow oppressed children to have access to medicine provide facilities and a haven to executioners, butchers and terrorists, while arrogantly claiming to be defenders of human rights,” he said.

In relevant remarks in August, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani described the U.S. sanctions against his country as a crime against humanity, warning that ordinary people and the patients are suffering from the U.S. pressures.

“The pressure imposed by enemies on our

country is put on all people even children and the patients,” President Rouhani said, addressing a cabinet meeting in Tehran.

“This U.S. measure is a crime against humanity. We should resist and so far we have shown good resistance,” he added.

Also in the same month, Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki said Washington's unilateral sanctions against his country which is preventing medicines from being sold to Iran was a crime against humanity.

“Measures taken by the U.S. administration in banning (access to) medicines needed by Iranian patients and pressures mounted by Washington on Iran's health sector amount to crime against humanity,” the Iranian min-

ister said, in a joint press conference with his Lebanese counterpart, Jamil Jabak, in Tehran.

Namaki said that imposing sanctions on health and medical sector of any country is illogical and inhumane, emphasizing, however, that “at the present time, we produce 97% of medicines needed by (Iranian) patients inside the country and we are facing problems for the supply of only three percent of medications.”

“Despite the U.S. pressures, medicines needed by all patients have been supplied. We are also planning, in cooperation with Iranian knowledge-based companies and young scientists, to meet all our medical needs within the country in coming years and become need-less of imports,” the Iranian minister added.



# Mossad chief's visit to Bahrain stokes fears of disintegration

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Following the visit by a senior Israeli intelligence official to Bahrain, Iranian officials and analysts expressed concerns over Israel's secret plots to disintegrate larger countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia.

In a rare move on Thursday, the kingdom of Bahrain formally announced that Yossi Cohen, the director of the national intelligence agency of Israel (Mossad), paid a visit to the tiny Persian Gulf nation and met with high-ranking Bahraini officials including the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) President, Lieutenant-General Adel bin Khalifa Al-Fadhel, and the Strategic Security Bureau (SSB) Chairman, Shaikh Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Khalifa.

The two sides discussed topics of mutual interest, and stressed the importance of the declaration supporting peace deals signed recently between Bahrain and Israel, according to Bahrain News Agency.

The agency said the visit took place on Wednesday but it did not give any further details about the discussions that the Israeli intelligence official held in Manama. It only reported that the two sides said the recent normalization deal between Manama and Tel Aviv "would contribute significantly to enhancing stability and promoting the values of peace across the region, as well as to opening up horizons of cooperation."

Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have recently signed U.S.-brokered deals to fully normalize relations with Israel. On September 15, U.S. President Donald Trump hosted at the White House high-ranking American and foreign officials including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Abdullah bin Zayed and Abdullatif al-Zayani, the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, who traveled to Washington to sign the normalization deals, which are officially known as the Abraham Accords. Various officials from Bahrain and the UAE and Israel held talks thereafter. The Cohen visit to Manama was only the latest in a series of meetings between Israeli officials and their Bahraini or Emirati counterparts.

Iran has condemned in the strongest terms the normalization deals between some of its Arab neighbors and Israel. Following the normalization of ties between Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv, President Hassan Rouhani warned the UAE against giving Israel a foothold in the region.



"The rulers of the United Arab Emirates should know that they have gone in the wrong direction if they think that they can buy security for themselves by getting closer to the enemies of Islam and Iran," the president said, warning that "unfortunately, the United Arab Emirates has made a big mistake and we hope it would change its wrong tack. We warn them against giving Israel a foothold in the region, then they will be treated differently."

Iran also warned against any move by the Mossad against Iran, saying Iran's response to any provocative move by the Israeli intelligence services would include the UAE.

"Since the UAE disclosed the normalization of its relations with the fake regime of Israel, Iran's response to any overt or covert move by Israel's Mossad spy agency or their agents in the Islamic Republic or the region will not be directed at the Zionist entity only, but the UAE will also be part of the response," Hussein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, told al-Alam news network in early September.

Amir-Abdollahian said Israel's main goal in normalizing relations with Arab countries was to gain broad access to Arab and Muslim countries to disintegrate the region's countries including the UAE itself. The Israelis want to carry out their "big Zionists plot," which aims to disintegrate the region as soon as possible.

"Saudi Arabia will conclude from its

relationship with the Zionist entity that the U.S.-Zionist plots to disintegrate Saudi Arabia will be implemented faster, and there is a similar view about the UAE as well. You might say that the UAE is not a big country, but the Zionists want, through their secret plots, to divide the UAE into seven separate states or regions, and this is what they have sought to achieve in recent years against Iran, Iraq, Syria, and even Egypt and Turkey," the special aide warned.

On Thursday, as Bahrain announced the Cohen visit to Manama, Amir-Abdollahian once again warned of Israel's plots to disintegrate some countries in the region.

"UAE's normalization of ties w/the Zionists is only the betrayal job of Abu Dhabi, and not other emirates. In the Head of Mossad's trip to Manama, Bahraini Al-Khalifa & Saudi Al-Salman are just puppets of Washington & London. Israel is hatching the plot for KSA's breakdown," Amir-Abdollahian tweeted on Thursday.

Cohen's visit to Bahrain showed that the Israelis believe that their normalization deals with Bahrain and the UAE is not merely political but also have security dimensions, according to Seyed Reza Sadr al-Husseini, an expert on West Asia.

"Muslim countries should pay attention to this visit because it showed that the normalization or the publicization of ties between the Bahrain regime and the Zionist regime is not limited to political issues, but also has security goals, which

will certainly be one of the main factors in destabilizing the region," Sadr al-Husseini told the Tehran times, adding that Cohen's visit was certainly orchestrated by the security officials of the regimes in Bahrain and Israel.

The expert pointed out that the visit was an important issue that countries in the region should closely monitor.

The Mossad chief's visit came against a backdrop of soaring tensions in the region over Israel's possible plots to disintegrate large countries in the region, especially after the U.S. officials sought to put the normalization deals into the broader context of reshaping the Western Asia region or establishing what they call a "new Middle East," which is reminiscent of the policy the U.S. and Israel pursued since the 2000s.

"We're here this afternoon to change the course of history. After decades of division and conflict, we mark the dawn of a new Middle East. Thanks to the great courage of the leaders of these three countries, we take a major stride toward a future in which people of all faiths and backgrounds live together in peace and prosperity," Trump said during the signing ceremony at the White House on September 15.

Sadr al-Husseini said Israel and the U.S. are still seeking to establish what they call "the new Middle East" by partitioning the larger countries of the region in a bid to maintain the security of Israel.

"The plan to disintegrate large countries in the region was one of the U.S. main plots. It began before 2000 but it reached its climax in 2006 when they introduced the Greater Middle East plan. This plan was under consideration since Ronald Reagan's administration. It became clearer in 2000. And in 2006, former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice clearly pointed to it in a trip to Beirut," Sadr al-Husseini pointed out.

According to the expert, by pursuing the Greater Middle East plan, the U.S. sought to divide the region's large countries into small colonies in order to easily control them and advance its interests by sowing discord among these colonies.

"The Zionist regime was entrusted with implementing parts of this plan. The disintegration plan aims to maintain the security of the Zionist regime. The presence of this regime on the periphery of the large countries can help accelerate the disintegration process," Sadr al-Husseini stated.

## SPORTS

### Making fans happy is our biggest motivation: Golmohammadi

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team coach Yahya Golmohammadi says that their biggest motivation is to make Iranian fans happy in the match against Al Nassr.



Persepolis and the Saudi Arabian football teams will lock horn on Saturday at the 2020 AFC Champions League (West) semifinal at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha.

"Al Nassr are a strong team and are deserved to be in the semifinal. They are an organized team and play very good. We also are deserved to be in semi since we had faced so many challenges ahead of the competition," Golmohammadi said.

"We want to show our quality tomorrow and we have big motivation to reach the final. Our people face economic problems right now and we want to make them happy. This is our biggest motivation in the match against Al Sadd," he added.

"Persepolis have so much to say and we have achieved so many successes with togetherness and devotion in the recent years. However, there is a big different with the previous years and we cannot play in front of our fans due to the COVID-19. Our supporters are all behind us and have their positive energy to push us forward," Golmohammadi concluded.

### Muhammad Taqi to officiate Persepolis v Al Nassr

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari Bin Jahari has been appointed to officiate the match between Iran's Persepolis and Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia in the 2020 AFC Champions League (West) semifinal.

The match will be held at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha on Saturday.

Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari Bin Jahari is a Singaporean international football referee, who has been a FIFA listed referee since 2012.

Taqi Aljaafari has also refereed matches in the 2017 FIFA U17 World Cup in India.

He has also officiated at the 2019 FIFA U20 World Cup in Poland.

### 2020/21 IPL season to kick off on Oct.22: report

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The new edition of Iran Professional League (IPL), also known as Persian Gulf Premier League, will reportedly begin on Oct. 22.

Iran national football team will meet Uzbekistan and Mali in two friendly matches on Oct. 8 and 13 respectively and the domestic league will kick off nine days later.

Also, Iran's Super Cup between IPL champions Persepolis and Hazfi Cup winners Tractor will be held on Oct. 18.

The match will take place at a neutral venue.

### Iranian midfielder Reza Asadi joins St. Pölten

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Austrian football club St. Pölten have completed the signing of Iranian defensive midfielder Reza Asadi.

Asadi, 24, has joined the Austrian football team on a two-year contract from Tractor.

Sportklub Niederösterreich St. Pölten are an Austrian association football club from Sankt Pölten, capital of the Austrian state of Lower Austria.

St. Pölten play in the Austrian Bundesliga, which is the top tier of the Austrian football league system.

### Al Nassr want to win match: Rui Vitoria

Al Nassr coach Rui Vitoria says that since the beginning of the competition they have been confident and now want to win the match against Iran's Persepolis.

The Saudi Arabian football team will meet Persepolis on Saturday at the 2020 AFC Champions league (West) semifinal at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha.

"This is a final match in the west. We wanted to arrive at this game, and we are happy to be here but now we have a game that both teams want to win," said Vitoria.

"Since the beginning we have been confident. We respect the different problems each opponent poses to us. All teams have areas where they are good and others where they are not so good," added the Portuguese.

"We know Persepolis has some very good players, but confidence is something that comes from inside for us. We have to enjoy our play but also have the responsibility; this balance is my message for the players ahead of this final," Vitoria stated.

(Source: the-afc)

## U.S. offers talks with Iran on daily basis, spokesman says

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, has said the United States makes efforts to hold talks with Iran every day.

"Not a day goes by that the U.S. government does not seek to take pictures with Iranian officials and design a play. The Americans are so desperate in their maximum pressure policy against Iran that they are increasingly trying to open a path in which they think can stage a show," the spokesman said in an interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). "We do not give anyone the opportunity to stage show," he added.

Khatibzadeh was responding to a question on whether the U.S. has offered to start negotiations with Iran.

Tehran and Washington have not held direct talks since the White House unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deals between Iran and world powers, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran has called on the U.S. many times to return to the JCPOA and lift the sanctions it imposed on Iran following its withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

"Our framework is clear. The JCPOA specifies the obligations of the parties and that there is no need to give a message or renegotiate. We should not waste each other's time. Our message to Washington has been clear: Accepting responsibility for the destructive actions taken against the Iranian nation, stopping economic terrorism, respecting Iran's rights and responsibly compensating for the damages caused," Khatibzadeh said in the interview, which was published on Friday.

Referring to the UN Security Council opposition to the U.S. announcement that it has restored all UN sanctions on Iran, the spokesman pointed out, "America has heard a 'big no and become more isolated'. Trump failed to keep the promises that he had made to his election campaign but still,



**"We have warned the Americans that a misperception about Iran, would create the mother of all quagmires."**

he wants to portray himself as triumphant. Of course, at least over the past 70 years, the U.S. has taken a path of bullying. And it wants to get others on board through bullying. This is an addiction that Washington should quit sooner or later."

On Monday, Khatibzadeh strongly rejected news media reports suggesting that Iran and the U.S. are holding secret negotiations. He said, "There have been no negotiations, and there is not, and there will not be any negotiation [with the U.S.], all of this is for domestic consumption. It may benefit Trump, but it does not benefit Iran-U.S. relations."

During his interview with IRNA, Khatibzadeh also said Iran has warned the U.S. that any American miscalculation about Iran will bring about "the mother of all quagmires."

"The U.S. is our enemy. It's not our tutor. We make our choices according to our national interests and in an independent way. The U.S. big mistakes have led to its failure and

expulsion from the region," the spokesman said.

Responding to the U.S. threat that all options are on the table against Iran, Khatibzadeh asserted, "Since the early days of the Revolution, the U.S. sought to take a lot of measures against the government and the people of Iran, but failed to carry out a lot of these measures. Misperceptions and miscalculations lead to dangerous results. Therefore, we have warned the Americans that a misperception about Iran, would create the mother of all quagmires."

Khatibzadeh also touched on the European stance on the nuclear standoff between Tehran and Washington, saying it's likely that the European position on Iran will change if Trump is reelected.

"It's clear that the Europeans failed to implement their commitments under the JCPOA. Iran has announced this many times while triggering the Dispute Resolution Mechanism. Iran's five steps in reducing the nuclear commitments were aimed at restoring balance to the deal," noted the spokesman, adding that these steps were a response to the European inaction, not the U.S.

He explained, "Because the Europeans and the parties to the JCPOA did not fulfill their obligations, Iran reduced its commitments. Obviously, the United States unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA, and we consider their actions to re-impose sanctions and impose double pressure beyond the JCPOA illegal and against international law."

Khatibzadeh said Iran cannot reverse its nuclear measures unless Europe and other parties to the nuclear deal fully implement their obligations under the JCPOA.

"The Europeans have so far failed to meet their obligations. They could not even implement INSTEX, which is the prelude to their obligation to lift the sanctions. Therefore, we do not take the matter lightly and we pay attention to their actions, not to their words and promises."

## Rouhani hails Iran-China strategic partnership as 'major step'

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — In a message to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, President Hassan Rouhani hailed the 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership plan between Tehran and Beijing as a major step towards advancing mutual interests and international peace and stability, as well as countering unilateralism.

"The comprehensive strategic partnership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China, which stems from common cultural grounds, long-term historical relations and the two countries' view of international developments and their determination to fight unilateralism, has provided a great groundwork for developing bilateral relations in various fields,"

said Rouhani in the message, which was sent to President Xi on the 71st anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Rouhani added, "I am confident that the finalization and signing of the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Plan between the two countries will provide a major step towards the advancement of common interests and towards international peace and stability and the fight against unilateralism."

The 25-year partnership plan, officially known as the Comprehensive Cooperation Plan between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran, has not been finalized yet. The cabinet of Rouhani approved the draft of the plan on June 21

and tasked Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif with negotiating with China over the plan in order to finalize it. Three days later, the foreign minister held talks by phone with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. During the talks, Iran's chief diplomat expressed hope that 25-year cooperation would be signed soon.

China proposed the partnership during President Xi's visit to Iran in 2016.

On September 29, Foreign Minister Zarif wished a broader strategic comprehensive partnership between Iran and China, while praising China for bringing Covid-19 under control and reviving its economy.

Rouhani also praised China's efforts to combat the novel coronavirus, saying the disease "provided a ground for China to



## TEDPIX drops 7% in a week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 103,000 points, or seven percent, during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IRNA reported.

As reported, the index closed at 1.503 million points at the end of the previous week.

The weekly drop occurred while TEDPIX's 10,000-point growth in the last trading day of the past week has created some hope for the index returning to the rising trend.

The indices of Bank Mellat, Mobarakeh Steel Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Ghadir Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refinery, Iran Khodro Investment Development Company, and Iranian Investment Petrochemical Group Company (IIPGC) were the most traded indices during the past week.



Since the week ended on August 14, the TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange, has witnessed drop of its main index every week, except for the week ended on September 18.

The index dropped 5.7 percent in the week ended on September 25, and four percent in the week ended on September 11, while it had also experienced a five-percent decrease in the week ended on September 4, a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 28, an 11.3-percent drop in the week ended on August 21, and a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 14.

TEDPIX had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, and while it had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising over the recent months, it witnessed several days of drop in five weeks.

While Iran's stock market has not received any external shocks such as those form the foreign currency exchange rate, inflation, parallel markets, and international issues, some internal factors have caused the recent drops in this market.

## Annual production of 12m sets of home appliances targeted

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has targeted manufacturing of 12 million sets of home appliances in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry announced.

Keyvan Gardan, the director for the electrical and metals industries and home appliances office of the ministry, put the annual production of home appliances at nine million sets in the past Iranian year, Shata reported on Friday.

The official further stated, "Following the policies of Resistance Economy, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has defined a path for the development of domestic industry, and we will pass this way with our all-out efforts."

He said that 500 production units with an annual turnover of \$6 billion are currently active in the field of home appliances throughout the country.

The data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry show that the manufacturing of three home appliance items has experienced growth during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

The ministry's data show that 481,600 TV sets have been manufactured during the mentioned five-month period, indicating a growth of 78.7 percent year on year.



Manufacturing of refrigerators and freezers has experienced an 18.8-percent rise to stand at 673,800 units.

Washing machine output stood at 368,400 units, with a 58-percent increase.

In mid-August, the spokesman of Iran's Home Appliances Manufacturers Union said, "One of the country's major manufacturers is going to produce 1.5 million of various affordable home appliances and distribute them in the market by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021)."

According to Hamidreza Ghaznavi, the mentioned appliances include refrigerators, stoves, washing machines, 32 and 43-inch TV sets and vacuum cleaners.

These devices are meant to be distributed among the low-income classes and will be sold in two packages. Ghaznavi said, adding that they will be of good quality and the manufacturer is not going to make any profit from selling them.

In early July, Ghaznavi had said that Iran is expected to become an exporter of some home appliance items as of the next Iranian calendar year (starts in March 2021).

"If the currency problems are solved and steel sheets and some petrochemical products are provided for this industry, we will become an exporter of some household appliances by the next year," he said at the time.

In recent years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has not been an exemption and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the previous calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) this industry's production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

# Over \$3.8b of foreign investment attracted in H1

**1 →** "The other advantage of foreign investment attraction is that the investor becomes a supporter of our country's interests in his/her country, and in this way the relations between the two countries will be strengthened", the official added.

He also mentioned attracting Iranian expatriates' investment making in Iran, and stressed the necessity for removing the problems in this due and facilitating the processes for those investors.

Dejpasand also said that Finance and Economic Ministry has outlined a plan for facilitating and expediting attraction of Iranian expatriates' investment, based on which some incentives and guarantees will be allocated to those investors.

According to the finance minister, materializing the motto of "Surge in Production" requires an investment of 7-10 quadrillion



rials (about \$166.6-\$238 billion), and attraction of foreign investment can play a significant part in this regard.

The current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) is named the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

It should be considered that the trend of strengthening domestic production has been started in Iran a couple of years ago, as the country is determined to nullify the U.S. sanction on its economy through boosting production to reach more and more self-reliance.

The Leader had named the previous year as the year of "Pick up in Production", something that came true in all economic and industrial sectors through cooperation between the state-run bodies and private sector.

## Iran eyes transmitting electricity to Europe as region's power hub

**1 →** In a virtual conference dubbed 1st Caspian Europe Forum hosted by Berlin on Thursday, the Iranian energy minister has expressed the country's readiness for joining its electricity network with Europe.

"We are ready to connect Iran's electricity network, as the largest power generation power in West Asia, with the European countries and to provide the ground for the exchange of electricity with Europe," Ardakanian said addressing the online event.

Iran's energy infrastructure in the oil, gas, and electricity sectors can be used as good platforms for the transfer of energy from east to Europe, he noted.

In the event, which was aimed to study issues related to the development of economic cooperation, especially energy, between the countries of the Caspian Sea region, the official added that Iran, with its huge energy resources and having skilled manpower and advanced facilities in the field of energy, can pave the ground for the prosperity of

international transport and energy corridors.

"In order to help promote communication between our landlocked neighbors with international markets, we have created a huge transit infrastructure in our country and have demonstrated in practice our commitment to regional development and peace and stability," Ardakanian said.

He pointed out that having a major percentage of proven oil and gas resources in the world, regional states need to strengthen relations in a bid to regulate production and export policies of these huge resources and potentially play a role in determining the price and supply of these resources worldwide.

"EU countries can join our regional cooperation in the framework of bilateral or multilateral mechanisms such as ECO," he said.

Given the growing regional and global energy needs and the insufficient investment in the field, as well as Europe's increasing needs, this area can become a sustainable area

of cooperation, he noted.

Ardakanian also said that by investing in energy production in Iran, Europe can meet part of its future energy needs on a sustainable basis.

Iran currently has electricity exchange with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan.

The country's total electricity exports vary depending on the hot and cold seasons of the year, since during the hot season which is the peak consumption period, the country's electricity exports decreases, however electrical communication with neighboring countries continues.

Enjoying abundant gas resources, which is the main fuel for the majority of the country's power plants, Iran has the capacity to produce about 85,500 megawatts [85.5 gigawatts (GW)] of electricity.

Currently, combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share in the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants.

## Non-oil trade exceeds \$30b in 6 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) reached \$30.349 billion, according to the Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi.

In the mentioned six months, Iran imported \$16.783 billion worth of goods, while exporting \$13.566 billion, ILNA reported.

The volume of traded goods was estimated at about 62.842 million tons, of which over 46.318 million tons were related to exports and about 16.524 million tons were imported goods.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with over \$3.709 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$2.971 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$1.933 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.103 billion as well as Turkey with \$731 million, so the country's top five export destinations remained the same in comparison to previous months, according to IRICA.

China accounted for over 27 percent of Iran's total exports, followed by Iraq,

UAE, Afghanistan, and Turkey with 21.9 percent, 14.2 percent, 8.1 percent, and 45.3 percent respectively.

Polyethylene, natural gas, liquefied propane, and other light oils and products are Iran's major export items.

According to the IRICA head, more than 70 percent of the imported goods were basic goods and the rest were mainly raw materials, machinery and spare parts for production units.

The top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$4.295 billion, the UAE with \$3.961 billion, Turkey with \$1.814 billion, India with \$1.097 billion, and Germany with \$835 million worth of imports.

China accounted for nearly 26 percent of Iran's total imports, followed by UAE, Turkey, India, and Germany with 23 percent, 10.8 percent, 6.5 percent, and five percent, respectively.

Like all other countries around the world, Iran's trade with its foreign partners has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, however, the situation is getting back to normal and the country's trade borders are opening one by one.

## Agricultural co-op discussed between Iran, Azerbaijan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi held talks with his Azeri counterpart Inam Karimov in a videoconference meeting on Wednesday to discuss the expansion of cooperation in agricultural sectors, Mehr News Agency reported.

In the meeting, Khavazi expressed Iran's readiness for cooperation and exchange of views on common agricultural issues and the implementation of the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) previously signed between the two countries.

"President Hassan Rouhani emphasizes the expansion of economic relations with Azerbaijan, and we believe that there are a variety of common fields for economic cooperation between the two sides," the Iranian minister said.

Khavazi further expressed Iran's readiness to expand cooperation with Azerbaijan in scientific fields including greenhouse cultivation, introducing new cultivars, embryo transfer, and genetic materials.

"Agricultural Research Education And Extension Organization which is a subsidiary of the Agriculture Ministry has more than 3,000 researchers who can cooperate

well with the Republic of Azerbaijan in the various scientific fields," the official said.

Inam Karimov, for his part, hailed the strategic relations of Iran and Azerbaijan and noted that agriculture is one of the major areas for strategic cooperation between the two countries.

Stating that the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan have met each other 13 times so far, he expressed hope that the agricultural cooperation between these two neighbors continues.

Mentioning the two neighbors' collaborations in the field of agricultural equipment, Karimov said, "I hope that in the near future Iranian companies and Iranian production equipment enter the Azerbaijani markets."

According to Karimov, agricultural products like fruits, and vegetables are the most traded products of the two countries.

He finally mentioned a comprehensive cooperation document signed between the two countries, saying: "It has been about 26 years since the signing of the cooperation document between Iran and Azerbaijan, and it seems that many parts of this document need to be updated."

## South Pars phase 14 refinery operational by Sep. 2021

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The operator of the South Pars Phase 14 development project said the project's onshore refinery is scheduled to be fully operational by the first half of the next Iranian calendar year (September 2021).

"Based on the defined benchmarks, by the end of this [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021), utility units (including water, electricity, and steam), gas condensate storage unit, independent water intake unit, torches, etc. will be completed and commissioned, Mohammad Mehdi Tavassolipour told Shana.

According to Tavassolipour, Phase 14 refinery project has currently progressed more than 84 percent, while the project's total EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) has progressed over 88.86 percent.

He noted that some problems caused by the U.S. sanctions and limited financial resources were the main challenges that slowed down the completion of the project.

Phase 14 refinery will be the last onshore processing facility belonging to the massive joint gas field that Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf waters.



The official further said that the offshore section of the phase was fully operational with 56 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) of production capacity. The last platform of the project came online on March 19 with a production capacity of 14.2 mcm/d.

## Industry Ministry plans boosting exports of finished steel products

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's newly appointed industry, mining, and trade minister has said his ministry is planning to limit the exports of raw materials and to boost the exports of finished steel products, Shata reported on Friday.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of a steel plant development project in Fars Province, Alireza Razm Hosseini said: "One

of the strategic plans and priorities of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade is the completion of the country's industrial chains, including steel, and fortunately this goal has been achieved in some provinces."

"We must move towards the exports of finished steel products," he stressed, adding: "by preventing the sales of raw materials, we ensure creating more employment."

"We have the completion of the chain

of all industries, including copper, aluminum, etc., on the agenda and we will seriously follow up on this plan," Razm Hosseini continued.

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since late September 2019.

According to the Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Dariush Esmaili, 10 years ago Iran exported more than 20 million tons of unprocessed iron ore and the figure fell to a maximum of six million tons last year.

The deputy minister noted that exports of the mentioned commodity have also fallen to 500,000 tons in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).



News

Turkey rebuffs Russia, France and U.S. over Nagorno-Karabakh ceasefire moves

The presidents of France, Russia and the United States called on Thursday for an immediate ceasefire between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces around Nagorno-Karabakh, but Turkey said the three big powers should have no role in peace moves.

France, Russia and the United States are co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group, set up in 1992 to mediate in the decades-old conflict over the mountainous enclave in the South Caucasus, Reuters reported.

They appealed for peace as the death toll rose in the heaviest clashes since the 1990s around Nagorno-Karabakh - part of Azerbaijan, but run by its mostly ethnic Armenian inhabitants.

"We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities between the relevant military forces," the joint French, Russian and U.S. statement said.

They urged the ex-Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan to "commit without delay to resuming substantive negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions" under what is called the Minsk process.

But in a speech to the Turkish parliament just before the three countries' statement, President Tayyip Erdogan said he opposed their involvement.

"Given that the USA, Russia and France have neglected this problem for nearly 30 years, it is unacceptable that they are involved in a search for a ceasefire," Erdogan said.

Donald Trump and Melania test positive for coronavirus

Donald Trump says that he and his wife Melania have tested positive for Covid-19, and will begin to quarantine immediately.

The U.S. President and first lady received tests after close aide Hope Hicks started to show symptoms. Ms. Hicks tested positive earlier on Thursday night.

In a post on Twitter, Trump wrote: "Tonight, @FLOTUS and I tested positive for COVID-19. We will begin our quarantine and recovery process immediately. We will get through this TOGETHER!"

According to Independent, the move immediately threw into chaos the race for the presidency, barely 30 days away.

Lebanon, Israel agree framework for talks to end border dispute

Lebanon and Israel have agreed to a framework for the United States-mediated talks aimed at ending a long-running dispute over borders that have been the front line of several conflicts.

Lebanon and Israel, still in a formal state of war, have contested their land and maritime borders for decades, including an area on the edge of three Lebanese offshore energy blocks. Washington has been mediating in efforts to bring the two sides to the table, al Jazeera reported.

On Thursday, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said the framework for talks had been agreed.

"This is a framework agreement, and not a final one," Berri told a news conference, saying discussions would be held under the auspices of the United Nations at a base near the UN-monitored boundary with Israel, known as the Blue Line.

"The United States were asked by both sides, Israel and Lebanon, to act as a mediator and facilitator to draw up the maritime borders, and it is ready to do this," he quoted an agreement as saying.

After Pompeo criticism, Vatican asserts right to go its own way on China

The Vatican's number two said on Thursday after talks with Mike Pompeo that the two sides' positions on China remained far apart and firmly asserted the Holy See's right to pursue an accord with Beijing denounced by the U.S. Secretary of State.

Pompeo met Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and Foreign Minister Archbishop Paul Gallagher on Thursday on a visit to Rome marked by Vatican irritation over Pompeo's public criticism of a Holy See accord with Beijing on the appointment of bishops.

According to Reuters, Vatican officials have said they were "surprised" by Pompeo's comments, made last month, and particularly that they were published in a conservative U.S. Catholic publication that has called Pope Francis' pontificate a failure.

Parolin, second only to the pope in the Vatican hierarchy, spoke to reporters on the sidelines of a book launch on Thursday night. He was asked if the positions were still distant.

Resistance News

IOF kidnaps senior Hamas official Hasan Yousef

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN — The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) at dawn Friday kidnaped senior Hamas official Hasan Yousef, 64, from his home in Beitunia town near Ramallah city in the central West Bank.

According to local sources, Israeli soldiers from the Ofer military base stormed Beitunia town and raided the house of Yousef before taking him prisoner.

He was released in last July after spending 15 months in administrative detention. He had spent a total of about 21 years in Israeli jails, mostly in administrative detention.

Yousef suffers from several chronic health problems, including high blood pressure and diabetes, and needs constant medical care.

Meanwhile, the IOF kidnaped another citizen called Maher al-Qadi from his home during its campaign in Beitunia town and kidnaped his nephew Nour al-Qadi from his home in al-Bireh city.

Earlier, the IOF stormed Zububa village in western Jenin on Thursday night and kidnaped two kids identified as Ahmed Jamil and Zaid Osama from the family of Atatira.

Saudi Arabia playing immoral role in the region: Egyptian opposition leader

The late Kuwait Emir was ‘a reasonable leader’, says Ayman Nour

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — A prominent Egyptian opposition leader describes some Persian Gulf Arab states like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as immoral, saying they have acted irresponsibly against the interests of Arab nations, including Egypt.

"This role was represented in the position of Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and some other Arab countries party to the Saudi-led coalition," Ayman Nour, who ran against former President Hosni Mubarak in 2005, tells the Tehran Times.

The following is the text of the interview:

■ What is the role of Persian Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, in the developments in regional countries, particularly in Egypt?

A: The truth is that these countries played an immoral role after revolution erupted in Egypt on January 25, 2011. This role was represented in the position of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and some other Arab countries which are party to the Saudi coalition.

This alliance aborted the Egyptian revolution since the first day and refused to help Egypt or provide any aid to the Egyptian nation as it caused economic and political conditions in Egypt to deteriorate. The UAE specifically played a major role in buying Egyptian media to support some of the parties representing the deep state and plotted the coup project against the elected government in 2012.

The Emirates supported the organized demonstrations in Egypt by the Tamarod movement, which led to the toppling of the government.

According to audio leaks that came out of Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's office, they proposed millions of dollars to form a rebel group to lead the crisis that ended with the military coup against the legitimate government seven years ago.

Therefore, we believe that the UAE's role and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with all their intelligence services, had undeclared relations with Israel, and their policy in the region is a



very dangerous. They support suppressing the Egyptian people and moving against their will.

■ Why do some Persian Gulf states, including Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman, adopt relatively independent policies from the Saudi coalition?

A: Qatar, Kuwait, and the Sultanate of Oman took a respectable position since the beginning of the revolution in Egypt. They did not back the coup to abort the revolution from the start.

Qatar was one of the first countries that provided financial support to Egypt and its revolution and respected the will of the Egyptian people. Also, Qatar clearly welcomed the will of the Egyptian people to remove Hosni Mubarak and their struggle to establish a democratic system.

Except the Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the position of Oman and Kuwait was moderate. They play a positive role in the region.

This is due to leadership attitudes in these countries, which is characterized by moderation,

rationality, and objectivity, and non-interference in the affairs of others.

On the contrary, the approaches of the previous Saudi rulers toward the region were destructive, and now the current rulers are worse than their predecessors.

Moreover, in general, the unprincipled position that the Emirates and Saudi Arabia took in the region was against the Arab Spring in all its forms.

■ What is the effect of the death of the Emir of Kuwait on the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Arab world in large?

A: There is no doubt that Kuwait's Emir was a moderate person, popular in all (Persian) Gulf countries. He was a reasonable leader, and this may have appeared clearly in the management of armed conflicts in the (Persian) Gulf region. The region will be affected by the absence of the Emir of Kuwait, who always sought reconciliation.

This man had a lot of experience, and I know him. I met him in 1971 when he was

the minister of foreign affairs, sitting for 6 hours discussing the Iraqi condition at that time. I saw that the man was keen to listen and understand, and he had a great ability to find political solutions to the crisis that followed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

I wish Kuwait to follow the same path that its late Emir founded, which is the path of reconciliation, moderation, rationality, and permanent support for the Palestinian cause.

We have always seen strong stances by Kuwait's leadership and its parliament, which represents the Kuwaiti nation.

■ How do you assess the Emirati and Bahraini normalization deals with Israel?

A: I think that normalization of ties with Israel was secret as they (Bahrain and Emirates) had warm relations in recent years, and what we are now witnessing is overt (declaration) of normalization of ties with Israel. It had been prepared in recent years behind closed rooms.

It is a crime practiced in public. We are against the normalization of relations with Israel, and we will continue to oppose normalization. Likewise, the people will remain against this measure until the return of the Arab lands. I believe that these regimes will pay a heavy price for such a wrong move, regardless of the support they get from the Zionist lobbies in the world and from the current U.S. administration.

Still, I think it is these regimes that have lost their people, history, and dignity.

■ Do you think that Kuwait will also enter a normalization deal with Israel?

A: I do not wish this, even if it remains a possibility, but I do not wish it because the nature of the Kuwaiti position has always been different in support of the Palestinian cause. I believe that the Kuwaiti parliament, which has a good record in this direction, prevents normalization with Israel. I hope that Kuwait will endure, and I believe God wanted to save the former Emir of Kuwait from being involved in establishing relations with Israel. I hope that the new Emir will continue this path, specifically in the issue of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Why the U.S. would torpedo the UN over Iran: Iranian strength

By Ramin Mazaheri

Washington has illegally snapped back illegal sanctions on Iran. No one in the world cares, but all this illegality has not gone unnoticed: The U.S. is gutting both its international reputation and that of the United Nations all over Iran.

Risking the international order, which Washington partially controls, over China - Ok, they could be viewed as a serious enough threat by the realpolitik fanatics in the Pentagon. Over the former USSR? That unsub missive bloc also threatened total U.S. control.

But over Iran?

We must remind ourselves that the question seems strange only because in all the Western coverage of Iran-U.S. relations, what is never broached is the merest notion of Iranian strength.

But if Iran is so powerless, then why is the U.S. going to such unprecedented lengths? Why did the warmongering New York Times take a pause from their yellow journalism to concede that, yes, the absurd sanctions move means, "the United States has largely isolated itself from the world order."

But they didn't genuinely explain, much less even ask: "Why risk so much over Iran?"

Here is the never-stated reality: the U.S. has made this desperate, sure-to-fail gambit because U.S. policy has been defeated by superior Iranian strength.

This is not jingoistic propaganda on my part: The New York Times conceded that "The act was born of frustration." Iran is not some behemoth ready to steamroll the entire world, nor is it a media darling welcomed by foreign masses with strewn flowers - so how can it frustrate the superpower so very much, even as so many other countries fear to engage in the smallest acts of independence or defiance?

It can't merely be the morally-bankrupt answer so popular in the U.S., "It's the economy, stupid," - i.e., that Iran has a lot of oil.

No, Iranian strength rests upon the fundamental success of Iran's unique combination of post-1917 socioeconomic, political structures adapted under a genuine and modern interpretation of Islam.

This strength has even another strength on top of it - what a tremendous appeal this combination has for the huge portion of the globe known as the Muslim world.

The idea that the Iranian Islamic Revolution could be universally exported is not achievable - forced conversion to Islam is proscribed in the Qur'an, for starters, and Islamic culture does not seem readily compatible with that of Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, or Tokyo any more than the culture of Tokyo,

Rio and Amsterdam are readily compatible with that of Iran's. But the idea that a post-1917, Islamically-based government cannot just exist but thrive - even in total and open opposition to Western imperialism - is most definitely exportable to the Muslim World.

But even allowing this option to be democratically presented within Muslim countries is something which imperialists - from any region or culture - cannot risk.

Iran's frightening strength, and its massive threat, is thus this: it keeps democratically presenting this option. That is the true reason why the U.S. is so very deranged over Iran that they would topple the world order just to keep Iran from succeeding.

In a sense, they are right: Iran's success really does challenge the world order, after all, given the modern importance of oil - a Muslim world not chained by arrogant imperialists would force the West to cooperate and not dominate finally, and also free up trillions of petrodollars for local use.

Washington demands that 80 million Iranians must be viciously sanctioned because they keep selecting this option: keep getting out to vote; keep democratically participating; and - in 2020 - keep on respecting the national democratic will no matter how many sanctions get levied in an effort to, as former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry once said by accident in Paris, "implode" Iran.

(In 2020 in the U.S., however, it seems like neither side will honor the national democratic will if their own candidate doesn't win - more proof that the U.S. is not a very democratic culture, perhaps.)

Savvy commentators know that Trump's sanctions may have increased economic difficulties, but they also know that they have only increased domestic patriotism: a country which fought for eight years to preserve 5 centimeters of Iranian land from Iraqi & Western aggressors cannot be easily cowed, nor have they come this far to stop now.

Increasing this sense of patriotism is the reality that Iranians truly feel that they deserve international respect precisely because the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 has created a novel system so very strong and egalitarian that it can face endless sanctions and still win.

These post-1917 and Islamic-inspired creations, solutions, and levers are what are so treasured domestically; are what explain the success for Iran's resistance; cannot even be objectively described, much less openly admired, in the West, which is why the West doesn't even want to inquire about possible Iranian strengths.

It also these systems - their very success, support, and how they increase sovereign Iranian strength - which explains why

not mentioned) befriend the Pilgrims (miraculously they can communicate with them through their interpreters Samoset and Tisquantum, but no mention of how these men learned English) and teach them how to plant corn and live off the land. To celebrate, they have a huge feast together, and this is called "the first Thanksgiving". This whitewashed version tends to give the impression that this meeting was a "first-contact" scenario, but that is not the truth. The Native people of the New England region had had visits of varying durations from Europeans since 1524, some of them peaceful and some were vicious, unprovoked attacks. More specifically, it is not told that the settlers brutally attacked the very Wampanoag who had saved them from starvation only a year earlier. In fact, the timeline for one "Thanksgiving" feast places it after a successful military blitz by the British on the Wampanoag.



it is China which courted Iran for the Belt and Road Initiative and not the other way around. For over five years, Iran has rather rejected Beijing's overtures in order to give the JCPOA a chance.

The most lenient analysis in 2020 would be that the JCPOA is at least a partial failure, and it seems very historically logical to predict that even a victory by Joe Biden would not lead to the U.S. actually honoring the treaty.

But as the JCPOA's promises continued to go unfulfilled Iranian diplomats were also laying the groundwork for the \$400 billion, 25-year strategic partnership with China that now seems certain to be finalized.

None of it adds up over Iran, to the U.S. elite:

Why would the U.S. blow up the UN over little old Iran? Why is China making Iran (and not, say, Russia) their make-or-break node in their Belt and Road Initiative? Why is the world standing with Iran against almighty Washington?

But it's impossible to intelligently answer such questions if the idea of Iranian strength cannot be openly discussed.

Fortunately for the average Iranian: strength means having the ability to disregard the ignorance, collusion, and duplicity of those weaker than yourself.

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The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect those of the Tehran Times

(Source: Press TV)

50th Anniversary Rally for the National Day of Mourning: the original American Holocaust celebrated with turkey and dressing

➡ Despite claims of seeking "freedom", the U.S. began as a colony and they continued to operate on a colonial model. That mind set continues in our current day politics.

Fifty years ago, pushback from the Native communities in New England created the National Day of Mourning in an effort to bring awareness of the true story behind a beloved American holiday--the "First Thanksgiving" and to fight the brutal and enduring legacy of colonialism. The most basic version of that story, the one most often used in elementary school classrooms, is that the "Pilgrims" from England, seeking religious freedom, landed on Plymouth Rock, ill-prepared to spend their first winter in the New World. (The Pilgrim reference in the timeline is generally vague, resulting in many students, in fact many adults, having a poor understanding of the founding of this nation.) "Natives" (the Wampanoag tribe's name is usually



## Mehregan celebrations called off across Iran due to coronavirus

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Almost all Mehregan celebrations have been canceled across Iran due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The most notable was the congregational celebration scheduled to take place in Ardakan, Yazd province, on Thundery (October 1st concurrent with Mehr 10th of the Persian calendar), sources reported.



Mehregan typically brings together clusters of Iranian Zoroastrians in celebration of Mithra, an ancient goddess of friendship, affection, and love. The celebrations are usually opened up with keynote speeches by Zoroastrian religious figures and officials, followed by Shahnameh recitations, exciting contests, and other joyful customs.

A key feature for the event is large spreads in purple laden with various ingredients, dishes, and elements each on behalf of a particular belief. Fruits, vegetables, dried nuts, sweets, rosewater, grilled lamb meat, lotus seeds, and silver coins and a scale are typically placed, the latter symbolizes autumnal equinox.

Mehregan falls on the 196th day of the Iranian calendar year that usually equals October 2 in the Gregorian calendar. The festivity was used to be a traditional autumn harvest festival with several accounts on its origins.

During the Achaemenid era (c. 550–330 BC), Mehregan was observed in an extravagant style in Persepolis at a time for harvest when taxes were collected. Avestan texts divide the Iranian year into two equal parts or seasons; summer and the winter. The advent of the two seasons is celebrated in Noruz and Mehregan.

The legend says Mehregan was a day of victory for Fereydoon and Kaveh, who overcame Zahak. They imprisoned him in Mount Damavand where he later died of his wounds. After the capture of Zahak, Fereydoon was nominated as the king and the people celebrate this occasion with great fervor. The story has been narrated in Shahnameh, a long epic poem by the illustrated Persian poet Ferdowsi (940-1020 CE).

Last year, the Islamic Republic submitted five separate dossiers, including the Mehregan celebration, to UNESCO for possible inscription on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

## ‘Domus’ Eyes on Iran’ released by Italian Embassy

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — On October 2, the premises of the Italian ambassador's residence in Tehran witnessed the inauguration of the latest series produced by the Italian Embassy, entitled “Domus’ Eyes on Iran”.

The initiative features 10 episodes that will bring viewers back in time, showcasing the main stories on Iran covered over the last few decades by the internationally acclaimed Italian magazine on architecture and design, “Domus”.

Each episode will focus on different landmarks realized in Iran by Iranian or Italian architects and designers, thereby highlighting the extreme relevance of Iran in the history of modern architecture and design and its continuous and fruitful interaction with the Italian architecture and design community.

During his welcoming remarks to a select group of professionals due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Italian envoy Giuseppe Perrone mentioned the historic role played by Domus magazine as the collector of the best international experiences in architecture and design, stressing the importance of continuing collaboration between Italy and Iran in the creative arena and the world-level outcomes it has already produced.

“The initiative is aimed at retracing, through 10 video episodes from the ‘50s up to the present day, the main stages of Domus’ interest towards projects carried out in Iran by Iranian and Italian architects and designers, thus underlining Iran’s significant role in the history of modern architecture and design and its constant and fruitful interactions with the Italian architecture and design scene,” according to Domus.



Each episode takes inspiration from an article published by Domus magazine on a specific project or initiative realized in Iran and will display details, go behind the scenes, and narrate the latest developments on the landmark and its creator.

Episode 1 of the series will feature Alireza Taghaboni designed Villa for an Older Brother, located in the residential suburb of Lavasan, and is being made available through the social media channels of the Italian Embassy in Tehran. Future episodes are currently being shot and they include contemporary creations by Iranian architects as well as older buildings featured by past articles by Domus magazine.

# What are the opportunities for rural tourism in Iran?

→ **1** Here, one can see arrays of felt yurts of the Turkmen, the black tents of the Bakhtyari people, and the osier huts of the Balochi tribespeople as typical examples, as the tribespeople roams from summer to winter pastures. Mountain villages on the rocky slopes; and ones on southern areas of the Caspian Sea are among alternatives.

The vast central and southern plains of the country are dotted with numerous oasis settlements and villages which follow ancient rectangular patterns with high mud walls, flat roofs of mud and straw supported by wooden rafters, and corner towers from the outer face of the houses.

Rural tourism, however, has many definitions, including rural areas, rural communities, and rural experiences. Rural travelers have the opportunity to participate in activities, lifestyles, and traditions of rural communities, which yielded a personalized experience of the countryside combined with the usage of local social, cultural, and natural resources.

Health and safety are important to the majority of rural travelers who often inquire about the safety of their destination to realize which places are safe to visit and which are not. Here, it's the duty of



A traditional rustic cottage in Gilan province, northern Iran.

tour operators and the local hosts to do their best. For instance, accommodation establishments should have safety measures in places, such as first-aid kits, 24-hour medical assistance, smoke detectors, and

fire extinguishers.

“Tourism and Rural Development” has been selected as the motto of the World Tourism Day to encourage countries around the world to look to tourism to drive recovery

## We are formulating responsible, smart tourism for coronavirus-era, deputy minister says

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Regulations and rules for launching responsible and “smart” package tours are being formulated by senior experts of the tourism ministry in close cooperation with counterparts of the health ministry in a bid to somehow restart the sector which has come to a standstill since the coronavirus outbreak, deputy tourism minister has said.

“Regarding the coronavirus pandemic, which has dramatically plunged travels in the country, we are currently planning to save the tourism industry from [the immense] damage caused by the outbreak,” Vali Teymouri said on Thursday.

The official made the remarks on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony for a new hotel in Isfahan, central Iran, CHTN reported.

“Since the outbreak of this disease in [the month of] Esfand (March 2020), the country’s tourism insiders in various fields, including accommodation, sightseeing, ... and recreation have suffered a lot due to a significant reduction in travel demand in the country....”

“So the tourism ministry, in addition to its actions to compensate some damage, is planning to launch infrastructure projects in order to support the tourism industry both in coronavirus and post-coronavirus times,” the official explained.

“The ‘smart’ travel plan is one of the newest approaches of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts aimed to cement tourism-related people. Accordingly, the plan, in order to rebound domestic travels during the outbreak, defines protocols and regulations from the beginning to the end of journeys.”

“That includes the implementation of smart tourism tours

along with the implementation of all health instructions in public transportation units, accommodation units, restaurants, reception centers as well as historical, recreational, and tourism sites,” Teymouri explained.

As soon as the plan is drafted, it would shortly be submitted to both the health ministry, and the national headquarters for coronavirus control in order to obtain their approvals, before instructions are declared for being implemented, he noted.

Tourism minister Ali Asghar Munesan last month said that if coronavirus-related restrictions persist, the tourism industry of the country would suffer irreparable losses and many tourism insiders would be bankrupt. It’s time to replace “smart and responsible traveling” with “do not travel” recommendations, the minister said.

Mounesan also announced that he would soon meet with Health Minister, Saeed Namaki, to find a way for lifting travel bans. “The outbreak of the coronavirus has severely damaged an already fledgling industry,” he added.

Mounesan has repeatedly announced that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitality centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that “people’s health is our first priority.”

For the time being, lockdown measures have been lifted in Iran and many other places across the globe, and the tourism sector is being gradually opening up but under mandatory strict guidelines for wearing face masks, maintaining social distance, thermal scanning, and sanitization as well as arrangements for testing. The last few months witnessed changes in demand for immediate travel largely due to individuals traveling for essential purposes or to



Deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri in an undated photo

their hometowns. Now that we are in the unlock phase, we are seeing destinations such as the southern Caspian Sea areas being the top picks for tourists.

The ‘new normal’ entails strict sanitization and hygiene processes at all travel touchpoints. From the hospitality industry to transport services, there are guidelines laid down by different stakeholders to provide customers a safe environment and further boost their confidence to travel. Each destination is developing to be more digitalized to minimize human contact, and information is being conveyed through apps and reliable sources using technology letting consumers are well-informed regarding protocols for each destination.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

## Discover Susa, once capital of Elamite, Achaemenid empires

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Now sprawling in the southwest of modern Iran, Susa is one of the oldest yet magnificent cities in the world.

A UNESCO World Heritage, Susa was once the capital of Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the Achaemenian king Darius I and his successors from 522 BC.

Excavations have uncovered evidence of continual habitation dating back since about 5000 BC. Earliest urban structures there date around 4000 BC.

Part of Susa is still inhabited as Shush, Khuzestan province on a strip of land between the rivers Shauru (a tributary of the Karkheh) and Dez.

According to UNESCO, “the excavated architectural monuments include administrative, residential, and palatial structures” and the site contains several layers of urban settlement dating from the 5th millennium BC through the 13th century CE.

Relics unearthed from the region demonstrates that even earliest potteries and ceramics in Susa were of an unsurpassed quality, decorated with birds, mountain goats, and other animals designs.

The finest pottery was found in the lowest strata and belonged to two different civilizations, both Neolithic, according to Britannica.

The archaeological site, identified in 1850 by W.K. Loftus, consists of four mounds. One held the citadel and was excavated (1897–1908) by Jacques de Morgan, who uncovered, among other objects, the obelisk of the Akkadian king Manishtusu, the stele of his successor Naram-Sin, and the code of Hammurabi of Babylon. A second mound to the east was the location of the palace of Darius I and was excavated (c. 1881) by Marcel Dieulafoy. A third mound to the south contained the royal Elamite city, while the fourth mound consisted of the poorer houses.

### ■ Early Susa

“In the fourth millennium BC (the ‘Uruk Period’), the city became the capital of Elam and was able, at times, to challenge the Sumerian and Akkadian towns in southern



Ceramic depicts Persian soldiers (“immortals”), Susa; ca. 500 BC

Iraq. The city itself expanded to the east, to that part of the city that is now called the royal city. From written sources, we know that there must have been ziggurat. A third part is the artisan’s quarter, which was even further to the east,” according to Livius.org; a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

The kings of the Awan dynasty are known to have been the rulers of Elam in the last third of the third millennium; they were contemporaries of the dynasty of Sargon of Akkad, who was temporarily able to incorporate Susa into his empire. However, the Awan kings managed to regain their independence and a treaty between Sargon’s grandson Naram-Sin and his colleague in the east proves that in the end, mutual respect reigned.

The kings of Awan even conquered the kingdom of Anshan, east of the Zagros. This was just the first of several unifications of these two kingdoms; although there were periods in which they were separated, the title “king of Susa and Anshan” was to become common.

The Awan dynasty collapsed when the Gutians descended from the mountains and created havoc on the alluvial plains of Elam and Mesopotamia. Susa was controlled by king Shulgi of Ur and later by other Mesopo-

tamian rulers, and still under attack from the Gutians. Still, the city, although claimed by the kings of Larsa, was independent under an Elamite dynasty. However, this was not to last forever: king Hammurabi of Babylon (1792-1750) annexed Elam.

### ■ The middle Elamite period

After the disintegration of the Old Babylonian Empire, Elam was independent again, and a new dynasty, probably from Anshan, seized power in Elam. These Kidinuids were later replaced by the Igehalkids and the Shutrukids. Under these dynasties, Susa saw its greatest flourishing. The city of Anshan was destroyed and its kingdom was integrated into the Elamite state; although it would regain its independence, the city was never rebuilt.

Many buildings were erected in Susa, like the Dynastic Temple of the Shutrukids, and many objects found in Susa confirm what is known from written sources: that the Elamites were able to capture Babylon, sacked it, and took away everything they could use or found interesting, like the Codex of Hammurabi. However, the Babylonians reorganized themselves, and were able to loot Susa, according to Livius.

### ■ Neo-Elamite Susa

During the eleventh, tenth, and ninth centuries, which are Dark Ages in most of the ancient world, Elam is almost absent from our sources. Assyrian sources mention that Elamites and Babylonians unitedly opposed the expansion of Assyria, and that may well be true, as we can see the same coalition in the next centuries. This alliance was to become Susa’s misfortune: when the Babylonians had been defeated by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (705-681), the next target of Assyrian aggression was Elam. In the end, it was king Assurbanipal who destroyed the Elamite capital between 645-640 BC.

However, Assyria was doomed; its capital Nineveh was sacked in 612, and the Babylonians started to rule the Near East. Elam appears to have been divided into several

in rural communities where the sector is a leading employer and economic pillar.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili has said: “All around the world, tourism empowers rural communities, providing jobs and opportunity, most notably for women and youth. Tourism also enables rural communities to hold onto their unique cultural heritage and traditions, and the sector is vital for safeguarding habitat and endangered species. This World Tourism Day is a chance to recognize the role tourism plays outside of major cities and its ability to build a better future for all.”

Certainly, paying attention to rural tourism as one of the tiniest segments of the tourism industry will be very effective in re-viving the whole industry in the post-COVID 19 time. Moreover, it gives tourism experts another chance to recognize the weaknesses and strengths as well as the impact of tourism in small towns and villages.

Iranian officials and policymakers in the realm of travel expect rural tourism development will end and possibly reverse the trend of migration from villages to cities by creating sustainable jobs and prosperity for local communities.

princedom, the rulers of which all called themselves “king of Susa and Anshan”.

### ■ Achaemenid capital

At some stage, they were integrated into the empire of Cyrus the Great (559-330), the founder of the Achaemenid Empire. One of his successors, king Darius the Great (522-486), built one of his residences in Susa. An inscription in the palace, known as DSf, describes how Darius built it. Susa was clearly his favorite palace. The Greek researcher Herodotus of Halicarnassus, who wrote a lot about the Achaemenid Empire, did not know of another capital.

We can catch a glimpse of the beauty of the city in some of the scenes of the Biblical book of Esther, the story of which is situated in Susa, at the court of king Ahasverus (Xerxes). Unfortunately, a big fire during the reign of king Artaxerxes I Makrochir (465-424) destroyed much of the buildings from this age. An inscription, D25a, records reconstruction works from the age of this king and his son and successor Darius II Nothus. King Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358) built a second audience hall on the opposite bank of the river.

### ■ Seleucid, Parthian, Sasanian age

After the fall of the Achaemenid empire and the reign of Alexander the Great, who married in Susa, the city became part of the Seleucid empire. It was now called Seleucia on the Eulaeus. A palace in Greek style was erected, next to Darius’ palace. The administrative center, however, was in the southern part of the city, where nearly all Greek and Parthian inscriptions were discovered. In the Parthian age, the city minted coins.

During the Sasanian age, the city had a large Christian community. It was sacked by the Sasanian king Shapur II, who transferred the population to Iwan-e Karkheh, but Susa was sufficiently recovered in the early seventh century to fight against the Arabs, who nevertheless captured the city which remained important until the thirteenth century CE.



# Significant strides made for women's empowerment in Iran: VP Ebtekar

SOCIETY

**TEHRAN** — Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, has said that significant strides have been taken for the empowerment of women and family in the country.

During a high-level meeting to commemorate the landmark 1995 UN women's conference in Beijing, Ebtekar said that she was the head of her country's delegation in Beijing and witnessed how women from all nations strived to improve the inclusive qualities of the Platform for Action.

She also said that "25 years after Beijing, the world has advanced in some areas but, in other dimensions, we still have many challenges before us."

"We have not achieved on many of those areas and have retreated in some like war, poverty and disease," she said. "The struggle against inequality and racism is ongoing and has emerged as a major issue in the Western Hemisphere."

"The world needs a paradigm shift to reflect justice, human values, and to protect the rights of women. Four decades after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, we still have many challenges, even though we have advanced significantly in many areas like education and health, life expectancy for women has increased by 25 years."

Our nation has resisted superpowers and stands proudly and independently and advances on its own homegrown paradigm of development.

The government has taken major strides for the advancement of women and family in Iran, through an inter-sectoral process, we developed national indicators for gender equity, which laid the ground for the first result based Plan for Women and Family Advancement in 31 provinces and we recently launched the dashboard for monitoring indicators on gender equity and family prosperity.

The Vice President added that based on our review of legislation on women and family, we have proposed 10 new bills including the bill on the Protection



Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President for Women and Family Affairs spoke on behalf of Iran at the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

**The government has taken major strides for the advancement of women and family in Iran, through an inter-sectoral process, we developed national indicators for gender equity, which laid the ground for the first result based Plan for Women and Family Advancement in 31 provinces and we recently launched the dashboard for monitoring indicators on gender equity and family prosperity.**

of Women's Security Against Violence and several new laws.

At least 2700 women-focused NGOs are active in Iran and we have plans for the empowerment of civil society activities, we have successfully implemented schemes like enhancing social resiliency, also the economic empowerment of thousands of women heads of the household through micro-credit Funds and Cooperatives, she added.

She went on to highlight that the family is the cornerstone of human development, through the National Family Dialogue scheme; we have taken an initiative to empower civil society in dialogue skills to enable family and social cohesiveness. The International Center for Family Dialogue has been recently launched in Tehran, even while foreign intervention has plagued our region, Iran has endeavored to promote

peace and stability.

At the end of her statement, Ebtekar praised the dedicated efforts of Iranian healthcare workers who have successfully managed the Covid-19 pandemic in the midst of economic and propaganda war and hoped for the health, and prosperity of all humanity.

**Steps taken to improve status of women and family**

In August, Ebtekar said that in 2017 the national headquarters for women and family upgraded the quality of pre-marriage, marriage, and post-marriage education.

The adoption of gender justice indicators in 2018, the compilation of 31 documents to improve the status of women and the family, which have made each province a local program to improve the situation of families, as well as the development and approval of family indicators in 2019, are among other measures taken, she explained.

In addition to these policies and plans, the government's practical measures include increasing and providing marriage loans for youth and prioritizing young couples for home mortgages, she highlighted.

Ebtekar went on to say that also, paying attention to the communication skills of family members in the framework of the national family dialogue plan, which has been modeled and implemented in 68 parts of the country so far.

Economic empowerment of women heads of households across the country has also been one of the important measures, she also added.

In the field of legislation, finalizing the bill to ensure the security of women against violence, which can play an important role in combating domestic violence, the implementation of the plan granting Iranian citizenship to children born to Iranian women and non-Iranian men, and the bill banning the marriage of girls under 13, has been among the government's efforts, she concluded.

## Pharmaceutical, biotechnology projects worth \$120m inaugurated

**1 →** Sourena Sattari, vice president for the science and technology said for his part during the ceremony.

Referring to the launch of 82 medicinal products during the ceremony, he said that these plans will save a considerable currency, as the import of one of these medicines cost \$27 million.

He went on to highlight that the import of pharmaceutical products needed for the production brought us a cost of \$900 million, of which, \$520 million is allocated to chemical drugs and \$380 million is related to biomedicine, which today are produced.

The first production plan for plasma-based products, which was put into operation today, has the capacity to produce 150 million liters of blood products per year, and if supported, this amount will increase, he noted.

The plan saves €60 million annually for the country; currently, 160 people are directly employed, 70 percent of whom are young professionals, he emphasized.

The production of the "HPV" vaccine, or human papillomavirus, as one of the most effective vaccines in the prevention of uterine cancer in women, was another project inaugurated during the ceremony.

Sattari also told the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview that Iran is playing the leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record



sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year.

To date, 42 knowledge-based companies with a total value of 2.8 quadrillion rials (nearly \$66.6 billion) have been listed on the stock exchange and they will soon turn into the biggest businesses in the country," he said.

Sattari said that U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by

the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2021).

Mehdi Kashmiri, director for technology and planning at the science ministry, said in July that about 450 knowledge-based companies were active in the country for manufacturing protective equipment and treatment products to fight the coronavirus.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the products manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, head of the Food and Drug Administration said in January that the Iranian pharmaceutical industry and scientists are capable of producing any kind of medicine over a two-year period. Iran also produced drugs confirmed to be effective in the coronavirus treatment, including, Remdesivir, Tocilizumab.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki said that some 97 percent of the whole medicine consumed in the country is produced domestically and only 3 percent is imported.

## Persons with disabilities, elderly immunized against flu

SOCIETY

**TEHRAN** — Persons with disabilities and the elderly in 311 daycare centers received influenza vaccines on Friday, the deputy head of the Welfare Organization for rehabilitation has announced.

"Vaccination against the flu has started in the centers covered by the Welfare Organization, especially the elderly," Mohammad Nafiehi stated, adding, in fact, vaccination will be performed in 311 centers that offer services to 13,896 elderly.

In other centers, which take care of the persons with a mental or physical disability on a 24-hour basis, as well as other vulnerable people, will receive influenza vaccination, he noted.

Vahid Qobadi Dana the head of the Organization said a week earlier that influenza vaccines have been provided free of charge to some 80,000 people under the Organization's coverage.

The Ministry of Health is implementing a national plan aiming to provide two million doses of influenza vaccines for at-risk groups such as the elderly, transplant patients, cardiopulmonary patients, and pregnant women to reduce COVID-19 effects.

According to the national plan on influenza vaccination, the distribution of vaccines is the responsibility of the University of Medical Sciences in different provinces.

He went on to note that up to 80,000 people who are in welfare organization's care centers are eligible to receive free vaccines.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 and the observance of health protocols such as social distancing, personal hygiene, disinfection of hands, and use of masks, the flu infection will be much lower than the previous years. Therefore, vaccination is not necessary for the whole population, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, head of the Food and Drug Administration, said.

**COVID-19 toll reaches over 26,000**

In the press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 3,552 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 464,596. She added that 385,264 patients have so far recovered, but 4,137 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 187 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 26,567, she added.

Lari noted that so far 4,067,861 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamedan, and Yazd.



## Land subsidence: an urgent problem that needs a different mindset

**1 →** Unfortunately, wildfires at forests are growing at an unprecedented rate and this is very worrisome for the country which only seven percent of its area is covered by forests."

**Groundwater exploitation, the main culprit**

According to a study carried out by the Transport, Housing, and Urban Development Research Center, some 18 densely populated provinces are vastly subsiding and consequently, become increasingly vulnerable to flooding and natural incidents as well as bearing huge infrastructure damage.

Over the past decades, groundwater exploitation has increased dramatically due to permanent droughts, leading to aquifer depletion.

Inefficient irrigation methods in addition to digging illegal wells are the other main causes of groundwater extraction-induced subsidence, according to the study.

All in all, government authorities and local people often fail to realize that falling land levels are an urgent problem. A different mindset and an integrated approach are required to stop the trend.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 27)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

❑ Negative ❑ منفی ← کتاب کار

You are not /nisti/ هستی ← نیستی

You do not have /nadāri/ نداری ← داری

● Exercise 1. Complete with "to be" or "to have":

۱. بله، تو یک ایرانی

۲. بله، تو یک اتاق قشنگ

۳. نه، تو یک میز خوب

۴. تو اهل کدام شهر

۵. برادر و خواهر تو چند بچه

۶. پدر و مادر او کجا

❑ Simple Infinitive ❑ مصدر ساده

Persian infinitives end in ین:

to read خواندن رفتن

to have داشتن بودن

❑ Compound Infinitive ❑ مصدر مرکب\*

A simple infinitive, often preceded by a noun or an adjective:

to live زندگی کردن درس خواندن

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → B

## Clean air bill projected to create 10,000 green jobs

The clean air bill, proposed by the Department of Environment to curb air pollution, is projected to generate some 10,000 green jobs over the course of the sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021), an environmental official said.

In line with the one of the articles of clean air bill units of Health, Safety, and the Environment (HSE), with regard to health and safety of the employees, customers, and contractors as well as the protection of the environment are bound to be established in all industrial and manufacturing enterprises, Shina Ansari told ISNA news agency.

"Accordingly, those graduates in the field of environment can apply for job opportunities in HSE units," Ansari added.

## ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی نتیجه اجرای لایحه هوای پاک

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ضمن اشاره به مواد قانون هوای پاک - که به پیشنهاد سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اخیراً به تصویب مجلس شورای اسلامی رسید- از ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی طی برنامه ششم توسعه از طریق اجرای مواد این قانون خبر داد.

شینا انصاری در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا افزود: در ماده ۱۶ لایحه هوای پاک، کلیه مراکز و واحدهای صنعتی و تولیدی، برای انجام امور مربوط به سلامت و ایمنی مشتریان و کارمندان و کارفرمایان مکلف به ایجاد واحدهای سلامت، بهداشت و محیط زیست (HSE) و به‌کارگیری نیروهای متخصص این حوزه هستند بنابراین تعداد زیادی از فارغ التحصیلان محیط زیست می‌توانند جذب هسته‌ها و بخش‌های زیست محیطی صنایع متوسط و بزرگ کشور به منظور پایش صنایع شوند.



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The most generous person is the one  
who forgives while in power.

Imam Hussein (AS)

## Assen Podium Zuidhaege displays works by Iranian artists

**A R T** TEHRAN — Podium Zuidhaege in the Dutch city of Assen is displaying works by two Iranian artists from Tehran, Hossein Tadi and Amir Mohammadzadeh.

The two have displayed a selection of their impressive drawings and videos in the exhibition "Art without Borders", which opened in the northeastern Netherlands on Friday.

Art collector Willem Vugteveen from Assen, who was searching for unknown artists, traveled to Tehran, visited the two Iranian artists and organized their exhibit in Assen at the Podium Zuidhaege.

Tadi represents his artworks, the hands, especially for the exhibition as a tribute to the Dutch sculptor Edu Waskowsky.

Artist Amir Mohammadzadeh is multi-talented. He plays various instruments, composes music, writes poems and is a great drawing talent. His drawing style is narrative.

During their stay in Assen, they are planning to do a second exhibition together with two artists from Drenthe.

The exhibition will be running until November 13, 2020.

# "Silk Script" online exhibit offers works by Iranian, Chinese calligraphers

→1 "We decided to hold a grand exhibition with calligraphers from 23 countries in Mashhad, however, the spread of coronavirus forced the exhibit to be held online," he explained.

Ayyubi talked about works by Panahi and said his works have traveled to all parts of the world, the East and the West, and said, "Panahi is actually a powerful ambassador of Persian culture and civilization. He has trained many students in France and has taught those who did not know the Persian language but their interest in calligraphy gradually made them familiar with the Persian letters and language."

Panahi also on his part expressed thanks to all those who helped to hold the exhibit virtually under these difficult circumstances.

Panahi added, "China has a long history in calligraphy. Chinese painting and calligraphy have been combined with one another, and usually those who learn painting also learn calligraphy as well. Chinese calligraphers have long been the elite of their country. That is, a Chinese calligrapher is also a painter and the Chinese have preserved their national assets well."

The exhibit offering a variety of works features 20 by Panahi and 20 by Hajji Noor Deen.

Panahi has studied art at the College of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran,



A calligraphy work by Iranian calligrapher Bahman Panahi.

ESAD - École Supérieure d'Art et de Design de Valenciennes, France, and Paris-Sorbonne University. He wrote his doctoral thesis on connections between music and calligraphy.

He has held courses and exhibitions at world-renowned academic centers, including

Harvard University and Northeastern University.

Born in 1964, Hajji Noor Deen Mi Guang Jiang, who is an expert in Chinese style Islamic calligraphy and a native of China's Shandong Province, teaches at an Islamic

college in Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan Province in China.

In 1997, he was the first Chinese Muslim to be awarded the Egyptian Certificate of Arabic Calligraphy and to be admitted as a member of the Association of Egyptian Calligraphy.

During the 3rd Global Islamic Economy Summit in Dubai in 2016, he received the Dubai Islamic Economy Award "in recognition of his valuable contribution toward the development of the global Islamic economy."

His work has been displayed around the world and has been acquired for the permanent collections of many museums including the British Museum, San Francisco Asian Museum, National Museum of Scotland and Harvard University Art Museum.

The ancient Silk Road has existed for thousands of years, passing through many different empires, kingdoms, dynasties and societies throughout history. At certain times in its long history, traders could travel freely along these routes, whereas at others, travel was difficult or dangerous.

According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages and, of course, material goods into societies across Europe, Asia and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

## Music video featuring poem by Leader marks Intl. Week of the Deaf

**A R T** TEHRAN — A music video featuring a poem by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has been released on Wednesday to observe the International Week of the Deaf.

The music video named "Invocation of the Deaf" has been produced at the Mava Islamic Revolution Music Center, which is affiliated with the Owj Arts and Media Organization, a major institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema.

Over 50 people with hearing problems have collaborated in this music video directed by Mehran Alavi. Omid Roshanbin

is the composer of the project.

The Leader is an old hand in composing poetry. He wrote under the pseudonym "Amin".

The International Week of the Deaf (IWDeaf) is an initiative of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and was first launched in 1958 in Rome, Italy.

It is celebrated annually by the global deaf community on the last full week of September to commemorate the same month the first World Congress of the WFD was held.

The International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL), which falls on September 23 every year, is part of the celebration for the IWDeaf.



A scene from the music video "Invocation of the Deaf" with a poem by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

## Only for God

He always sat in front of the door. He stood in respect of everyone who took part in the mourning ceremonies of Muharram and Ah al-Bayt. A young man with a mental disability entered the hall with torn shoes and old clothes. He rose to his feet like he did as the others entered, welcoming and greeting him warmly. Then he respectfully hugged him, kissed him, and offered him a seat.



## "Sunless Shadows" named best at CinéDOC-Tbilisi



Iranian-Norwegian co-production "Sunless Shadows" directed by Mehrdad Oskui.

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian-Norwegian co-production "Sunless Shadows" won the award for best documentary in the international competition of the 8th edition of CinéDOC-Tbilisi, a Georgian international documentary festival, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

In an Iranian juvenile detention center, a group of adolescent girls are serving time for having murdered their father, husband or another male family member. Filmmaker Mehrdad Oskui managed to build up a remarkable relationship with these inmates, whose frank conversations and playful interactions he observes, and who gradually open up about the consequences of, and sometimes the reasons

for, their terrible act. Mehrdad occasionally leaves them alone with the camera, allowing it to become a means for them to address both their victims and their accomplices, three of the girls having killed their fathers with the help of their mothers. The mothers await execution elsewhere.

"Sunless Shadows" has been screened in numerous renowned international events and won awards in some of them. One of the latest screenings was at the 60th Krakow Film Festival in Poland where it received a Silver Horn for Oskui.

Oskui also won the best director award at The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) for his documentary in November 2019.

French filmmaker Anne Georget, DocPoint — Helsinki Documentary Film Festival director Tapio Riihimäki and Czech film expert Igor Blazejevic were the members of the CinéDOC international jury.

"The Earth Is Blue as an Orange", a co-production between Lithuania and Ukraine directed by Iryna Tsilyk, won the special jury mention.

The Georgian documentary "Pavilion" co-directed by Ana Jegnaradze and Marita Tevzadze was named best film in the CinéDOC Caucasus competition.

The special jury award in this section went to "Dead Souls' Vacation" by Georgian director Keko Chelidze, while "Labyrinth" directed by Oktay Namazov won a special mention. This film is a co-production from Hungary, Portugal, Belgium and Azerbaijan.

The 8th CinéDOC-Tbilisi, which started on August 30, is organized by the Noosfera Foundation every year.

## Mohammad-Mehdi Tabatabaiejad appointed new director of Fajr Film Festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — The Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) director Hossein Entezami has appointed Mohammad-Mehdi Tabatabaiejad the new director of the 39th Fajr Film Festival.

Tabatabaiejad replaced Ebrahim Darughehzadeh who had held the position since 2017.

Tabatabaiejad was the director of the Supervision and Evaluation Office of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

As the former director of the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), he also presided over the Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival of documentary films, for several years.

In August, Hossein Entezami announced that the organization is searching for a safe platform to organize the Fajr Film Festival online if the pandemic continues until February 2021.

He said that there is no platform in Iran to guarantee the festival entries against piracy, adding that he has asked his colleagues to find solutions for this issue.

"If we cannot have a platform that ensures the safety of films during the festival, it will be impossible for us to organize the event online," he had said.

The 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival, Iran's major film event, was held in Tehran from February 1 to 11, just a few days before the first cases of the COVID-19 infection were detected in the country.



Mohammad-Mehdi Tabatabaiejad in an undated photo.

Afterwards, the international edition of the festival, which was scheduled to be held in April, was canceled due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, groups of Iranian cineastes called on the Cinema Organization of Iran to cancel film festivals in the country to allocate the events' budgets to those filmmakers and film organizations affected by the coronavirus shutdown.