

MRS. THATCHER CLEARCUT

LONDON (UPI) — Margaret Thatcher, a deceptively fragile looking blonde housewife but one of the toughest infighters in the still largely male dominated world of British politics, won a clearcut general election victory Friday and was named by Queen Elizabeth II to be Britain's — and Europe's — first woman prime minister.

Mrs. Thatcher's conservatives won an overall majority of 43 seats in the new 635 seat House of Commons, giving her the prospect of five full years in office.

Her victory swept away the government of former prime minister James Callaghan, whose Labor Party has ruled Britain with strongly Socialist policies for 11 of the past 15 years.

Callaghan spent about 25 minutes at Buckingham Palace, almost as soon as he left, Mrs. Thatcher drove to the palace to meet with the queen, who traditionally asks the winning party leader to form a new government.

Former prime minister Edward Heath, the man Mrs. Thatcher ousted as leader of the Conservative Party, scored a thumping personal success in Thursday's elections and declared himself ready, if asked, to accept a post in the new government.

Heath nearly doubled his previous majority over the Labor candidate to win re-election in his South London constituency of Sidcup. He tallied 23,629 votes for a majority of 13,456, compared with a majority of 7,543 in the last parliamentary elections of 1974.

Heath, 62, was prime minister from 1970 to 1974, when he was forced into an early election after a disastrous confrontation with the labor unions. He was conservative party leader from 1965 to 1975, when the party voted him out and Mrs. Thatcher in the elections have proved a disaster for the Scottish National Party (SNP), nearly complete figures showed Friday.

With only results from outlying voting areas still to come in, the nationalists had lost seven of the nine seats.

AT 16.30 GMT, with 7 more results to be announced the party standings were:

LABOR	268 seats
CONSV.	334 seats
LIB.	11 seats
OTHERS	15 seats

It marked a strong swing to the right and away from state socialism in Britain.

Mrs. Thatcher, a 53-year-old lawyer who campaigned on a platform of private enterprise and tax cut, polled strongly throughout the country.

Iran calls for return of relics confiscated in Austria 8

Iran National Team first match in October 11

41 years with Tehran Times

Following the guidelines of martyr Beheshti

Mohammad Shojaeian
Managing Director

“The Tehran Times is not the newspaper of the government, but the loud voice of the Islamic Revolution and the supporter of the oppressed people in the world,” martyr Ayatollah Seyed Mohammad Beheshti has underscored.

Ayatollah Beheshti's strong advice has motivated us more than ever and it has always been the main strategy of the newspaper.

The Tehran Times, the oldest printed outlet in English language in the Islamic Republic, was established by one of the most prominent ideologists of the Islamic Revolution.

Obviously, a long time has passed since the emergence of the printed media outlets in the world, but there are still some papers which enjoy significant attention and supremacy due to their unique characteristics and privileges.

Nowadays, some people opt to search for their desirable topics via social networks. On the other hand, finding access to reliable news is not easy as fake news and rumors are being propagated in huge numbers by media, especially in the cyberspace. In such a complicated scene, access to authentic news and reports can be regarded as a gift of God.

The mission of those media, which have tried to treasure the real ideals of human being, is paramount in comparison to others. Such media outlets have differentiated their approach and taken giant strides on the true path which is nothing more than being the loud voice of the oppressed people around the globe.

In the mentioned path, we have promoted the mission of the Tehran Times as a reliable source for the non-Iranian readers who try to find out and analyze the country's internal developments. The Tehran Times can be regarded as the reflection of fundamental principles of the Islamic Republic in different fields.

Accordingly, we try hard to enrich the Tehran Times' contents which ultimately will explain the noble values of the Islamic Revolution. We are resolved to deepen the paper's content according to the strategies and guidelines proposed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. We promise to take serious stride to materialize our objectives in this regard.

We try to reach our readers via utilizing modern media tools, including a serious endeavor to use the capacities of social networks. Among our plans is to highlight developments and unique views pertaining to the causes of the axis of resistance through emphasizing and clarifying the principles of the Islamic establishment.

In the meantime, we are determined to continue our rational and illustrative approach against anti-Revolution media that have been trying to tarnish the image of the Islamic Republic.

This will certainly enable the Tehran Times to follow the path defined by Ayatollah Beheshti.

We will certainly implement the proposed plan with cooperation and endeavor of our hardworking staff in the Tehran Times editorial board. We are all together in advancing the goal.



ARTICLE

Hisae Nakanishi
Professor of Doshisha University

Economic sanctions and novel coronavirus: What is humanity today?

Iran has faced dual and unprecedented challenges now. One is a large number of the infectors of the novel coronavirus. The shortage of medicine and medical equipment is profound. The other challenge is how to tackle the impacts of prolonged economic sanctions. Iran's novel coronavirus cases reached 97,424, and its death toll has passed 6,000. While the government has already reported the gradual decline of the new infectors, the challenge continues to take care of the existing patients.

It is indeed hard for us to imagine how Iranian people have been leading their life in this harsh reality of the continuous economic sanctions today. The pandemic also hit the oil economy severely, as the price of oil declined sharply recently due to the dramatic fall of the demand. Iran's economic pressure has thus increased today.

The novel coronavirus situation has imposed us a new and universal rule: taking social distance. The WHO, the governments, and health specialists strongly suggest that we keep a distance from each other to prevent overshooting. Distancing each other with two meters apart is a standardized guideline these days globally. I wonder how Muslims in the world are leading their Ramadan, now being discouraged from celebrating Iftar collectively.

As Socrates said, we, human beings, are social animals. Human development has presupposed active human interactions. Human mobility and direct communications are keys for better trade and to share knowledge. Face-to-face engagement among people is indispensable for the betterment of our growth and development.

However, the idea and practice of social distance is the opposite. The pandemic has caused the closure of businesses and forced us not to see each other directly, and we are obliged to accept economic and social isolation. In this sense, we are living in a new reality that requires us to live very differently from the past. A new paradigm is to emerge. What is the alternative to seeking economic betterment? (See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Leader is an ‘excellent strategist’, ‘world-renown diplomat’, says Foreign Ministry spokesman

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has praised Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as a “world-renown diplomat” and an “excellent strategist”, saying the Leader has a deep understanding of the world.

Mousavi made the remarks in a TV program on Saturday evening, in response to why Ayatollah Khamenei has described himself as a revolutionary, rather than a diplomat.

“The stance of the Leader of the Revolution was very precise,” he said. “In my opinion, that's because he is the Leader of the Revolution.”

“I believe he is one of the world's most prominent diplomats and an extraordinary strategist, and the world acknowledges this as well,” he remarked.

Mousavi added that everyone agrees that the Leader is a person who knows the world, relations, powers and weaknesses of countries and individuals.

He further explained that diplomats have certain considerations before speaking or writing but revolutionaries such as Ayatollah Khamenei speak their mind without any hesitation.

Back in February 2013, Ayatollah Khamenei rejected any idea of bilateral talks with the United States, saying the Iranian nation will not negotiate under pressure.

“The U.S. is pointing a gun at Iran and wants us to talk to them. The Iranian nation will not be intimidated by these actions,” he said.

“Direct talks will not solve any problems,” he concluded.

He then said, “I'm not a diplomat; I'm a revolutionary, and speak frankly and directly. If anyone wants the return of U.S. dominance here, people will grab his throat.”

Nearly \$8b paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in a year

TEHRAN — Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade's data show that 335.77 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion) has been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

The mentioned payments were made in the form of 20,930 bank loans to various projects and production units, IRNA reported.

The highest payment was made to SMEs and projects based in Tehran Province with 1,434 facilities amounted at 67.44 trillion rials (about \$1.6 billion) and the lowest was related to the south of Kerman Province with only three loans amounting to 14.5 billion rials (about \$345,230).

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) defined supporting production as its major plan in the previous Iranian calendar year, which was named the Year of Pickup in Production.

CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has several times stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system.

In early May 2019, Hemmati outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

Charity foundation to launch 30 health centers in deprived areas

TEHRAN — Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated to the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejrai-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Imam, will build 30 health centers in deprived and rural areas of the country, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The health centers will consist of laboratories, medical equipment centers, and emergency bases, Mohammad Mahjouri, deputy head of the foundation, stated.

He said that the foundation established 40 comprehensive medical centers and clinics in the underprivileged areas of the country last year (ended March 19).

Mahjouri concluded that Barekat Foundation has a contract for implementing 210 healthcare projects across the country with a budget of 700 billion rials (nearly \$16.6 million).

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and power grids, building roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, granting non-repayable loans and insurance especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

Javad Bakhtiari designs medal of appreciation for nurses

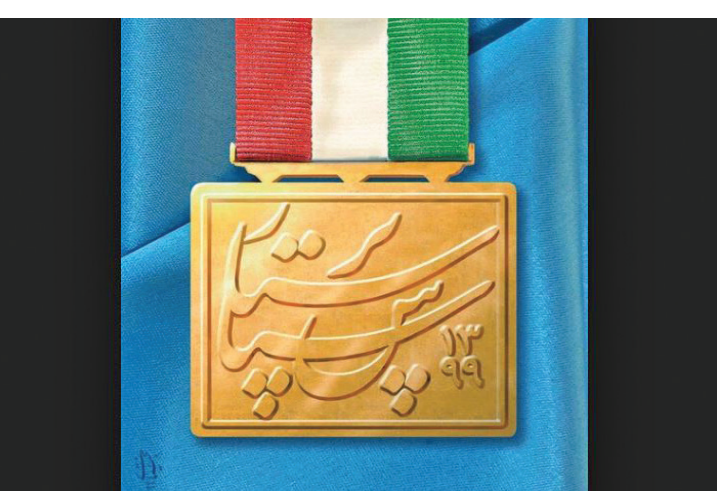
TEHRAN — Calligrapher and painter Javad Bakhtiari has designed a medal of appreciation for the nurses who are saving people's lives during the battle with coronavirus in the country.

He dedicated his medal to all the nurses who are working in hospitals sacrificing their lives these days, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Sunday.

Bakhtiari joined the nationwide #Moshahonar movement, launched by hundreds of Iranian artists to entertain people during the home quarantine for the coronavirus pandemic.

Hundreds of artists, including thespians, cineastes, painters, cartoonists and writers who launched the Moshahonar movement, have announced that they would produce artworks to showcase on social networks for at least 100 days in order to make the stay at home almost tolerable.

Photo: An image of the medal of appreciation designed by calligrapher Javad Bakhtiari in honor of nurses.



The Observer view on Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia

Dramatic falls in global oil prices are the result, primarily, of collapsing demand due to the coronavirus pandemic. Other factors predating the crisis are also at work: this year's price-cutting war between Saudi Arabia and Russia, overproduction resulting in crude oil surpluses and a chronic lack of storage capacity.

Yet conventional market explanations obscure a bigger, more exciting story. It is the story of the green, clean energy revolution, of rapidly expanding use of wind and solar power and the prospective end of the fossil fuel era. Renewables will make up almost 30% of world demand for electricity this year.

Last week, Britain set a record by going 18 consecutive days without resorting to coal-fired power generation, according to National Grid data. The UK also hit a new solar power high on 20 April. Since 2012, the amount of emissions required to produce one kilowatt hour of energy has declined by more than two-thirds.

These advances towards a net-zero carbon future are artificially accelerated by the Covid-19 lockdown. They could be reversed. Yet sustainable energy generation, and its crucial importance in tackling the climate crisis, is one of many areas where today's enforced changes could lead to fundamental, permanent shifts in the “post-oil” future.

Britain's dysfunctional and often embarrassing relationship with Saudi Arabia, one of the world's leading oil producers, should form part of any such post-pandemic reappraisal. British dependence on Saudi crude increased after Iran's 1979 revolution. North Sea discoveries changed that. Most imported UK oil now comes from Norway. Only 3% comes from Saudi Arabia.

Successive governments have nevertheless continued to nurture the Saudi relationship. A main reason is Riyadh's apparently insatiable appetite for weaponry. According to analysis by the Campaign Against Arms Trade, BAE Systems sold £15bn worth of arms and services to Saudi Arabia between 2015 to 2019. Thousands of British jobs are said to be contingent on such sales. ➡10

Iran to reopen mosques in low-risk areas

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani announced on Sunday that mosques will reopen in 132 regions designated as white under a color-coded system after being consistently free of the new coronavirus.

“Mosques will reopen in 132 towns, which were decided in today’s session as white and low risk, from tomorrow,” Press TV quoted him as saying in a meeting of the National Headquarters for Managing and Fighting the Coronavirus.



“Friday prayers will also resume in those areas and the mosques that respect the health protocols,” he added.

Iran’s Health Ministry has divided the country into white, yellow and red areas based on the number of infections and deaths. Iran has already lifted a ban on inter-city trips and malls, with large shopping centers resuming activities. The Health Ministry said Saturday the rate of infections has started a “gradual” downward trend.

The death toll from the outbreak rose by 47 over the past 24 hours to 6,203, Iran’s lowest in more than a month, ministry spokesman Kianush Jahanpour said on Sunday.

Iran has a total of 97,424 cases of the coronavirus, he said, adding 78,422 patients have recovered and been discharged from hospital so far.

President Rouhani said 83 percent of Iranians have observed the health protocols.

As many as 78 million people were screened for the COVID-19 symptoms in the first phase of a nationwide program and 30 million in the second phase, he said.

According to the president, the national coronavirus committee is also considering reopening schools in low-risk areas by May 16 to allow for a month of classes before exams are held.

“However, we will continue to review the situation,” the president said with a note of caution.

Iran is one of the Middle Eastern countries hardest hit by the outbreak. Illegal US sanctions have hampered the virus fight in the country, which reported its first COVID-19 infection cases in late February.

The United States slapped new sanctions on the Islamic Republic on Friday despite claiming to be ready to help Iran with the coronavirus.

President Rouhani has said the US offer to help Iran in its virus fight is “one of the biggest lies in history”.

Iran condemns any destabilizing action in Iraq

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Sunday condemned any action in Iraq which weakens stability and peace in the country.

“Iran supports Iraq’s efforts in fighting terrorism and establishing peace and stability in this country and condemns any action that undermines peace in Iraq,” Mousavi said.



He also condemned Daesh terrorist attack on the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) which left at least 10 members of the group killed.

He described the terrorist action as “criminal”.

According to Press TV, the coordinated assault which took place in the cities of Mekeeshfa and Balad, led to clashes between PMU forces and the Daesh terrorists on several fronts, the paramilitary group said on Saturday.

The PMU further said its fighters have now taken control of the situation, adding the Iraqi government has also sent reinforcements to supplement efforts and prepare for a possible retaliatory attack.

International Quds Day to be different with Leader’s live speech

TEHRAN (FNA) — An official with the Coordination Council of Islamic Propagation Organization said Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei will deliver a speech on the occasion of the International Quds Day corresponding with May 22.

Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif announced the likelihood of canceling this year’s International Quds Day rallies in Tehran due to the coronavirus outbreak, noting that Ayatollah Khamenei will deliver a live speech on the occasion.

He said because of the problems caused by the COVID-19 disease, the Council has been reviewing different options to commemorate this year’s International Quds Day.

“The cyberspace and social media are among the options that could be used properly for glorifying the event,” he added.

General Sharif said the final decisions will be announced later. Last year on May 31, participants at rallies of the International Quds Day in Tehran in their final communique re-voiced their all-out support for the “oppressed people of Palestine” till the final liberation of the occupied territories from “Zionist occupiers”.

The International Quds Day is an annual event opposing Israel’s occupation of Beitul-Muqaddas. Anti-Zionist rallies and demonstrations are held on the last Friday of Ramadan in Muslim and Arab countries around the world, especially in Iran, as well as a large number of non-Muslim states.

The International Quds Day was started by the late Founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, in 1979 as a way of expressing solidarity with the Palestinians and underscoring importance of the holy Quds to Muslims.

U.S. attempts to establish itself as JCPOA participant have no legal basis: Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that the United States’ attempts to establish itself as a participant to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, have no legal grounds.

“Amb. @Gharibabadi: The U.S. attempts to establish itself as ‘JCPOA participant’ have no legal grounds.”

Para 10, UNSC Res 2231 is a reflection of para 1.2 Annex IV of the JCPOA which enumerates ‘JCPOA participants’,” Gharibabadi tweeted on Saturday.

In another tweet, he noted that U.S. President Donald Trump ended Washington’s participation in the JCPOA on May 8, 2018.

“Trump ended The U.S. participation in JCPOA issuing a Presidential Memoranda on May 8, 2018: ‘... and I am today making good on my pledge to end the participation of the United States in the JCPOA’,” Gharibabadi said in his tweet.

In another tweet, the ambassador said, “The U.S. has also ended its participation in practice, it has not participated in the meetings within the framework of the JCPOA since its unilateral withdrawal from the Deal.”

“It has also violated all its commitments as a JCPOA participant and has spared no efforts to destroy it through re-imposition of sanctions and threatening others to be punished in case of trade with Iran,” he said in another tweet.

In a report on April 26, The New York



Times said U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is preparing a legal argument that the United States remains a participant in the Iran nuclear accord that President Trump has renounced, part of an intricate strategy to pressure the United Nations Security Council to extend an arms embargo on Tehran or see far more stringent sanctions reimposed on the country.

“In an effort to force the issue, Mr. Pompeo has approved a plan, bound to be opposed by many of Washington’s European allies, under which the United States would, in essence, claim it legally remains

a ‘participant state’ in the nuclear accord that Mr. Trump has denounced — but only for the purposes of invoking a ‘snapback’ that would restore the UN sanctions on Iran that were in place before the accord,” The Times said.

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren has dismissed the argument by the Trump administration.

“The international prohibition on weapons going to/from Iran ends in October. To extend this arms embargo, the Trump admin is suddenly arguing that the US is a party to the same Iran Deal it abandoned.

‘U.S. attempt to present itself as JCPOA participant proves paradox in its foreign policy’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Dennis Jett, a former U.S. diplomat, has said that the United States’ attempt to present itself as a participant to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, proves paradox in Washington’s foreign policy.

“Trump [U.S. President Donald Trump] boasts about quitting an agreement signed by Obama [former U.S. president], but his secretary of state [Mike Pompeo] says the United States is a party to the nuclear deal. It shows lack of coordination in Trump’s foreign policy which is based on words that have no stable sense,” Jett told IRNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He noted that no member of the UN Security Council will accept the U.S. claim of being a participant in the JCPOA.

In a report on April 26, The New York Times said Pompeo is preparing a legal argument that the U.S. remains a participant in the Iran nuclear accord that Trump has renounced, part of an intricate strategy to pressure the United Nations Security Council to extend an arms embargo on Tehran or see far more stringent sanctions reimposed on the country.

Trump unilaterally quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history on Iran as part of his administration’s “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran. By its exit from the nuclear accord, the U.S. flagrantly violated UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that approved the pact.

In a report published by Reuters on Tuesday, it was also said that the United States will face a tough, messy battle if it uses a threat to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran as leverage to get the 15-member Security Council to extend and strengthen an arms embargo on Tehran, diplomats said.

Washington has shared its strategy, confirmed by a U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity, with Britain, France and Germany, who are council members and parties to the 2015 deal between Iran and world powers.



Under that deal, a UN arms embargo on Iran is due to expire in October. A U.S.-drafted resolution to extend the embargo has been given to Britain, France and Germany, the U.S. official confirmed, but UN diplomats said it has not been shared with the remaining 11 council members, including Russia and China.

“It will be dead on arrival,” predicted a Security Council diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A resolution needs nine votes in favor and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, Britain or France to be adopted. Diplomats said the United States would likely struggle to get Russia and China to allow an arms embargo extension.

Russia and China are also parties to the Iran nuclear deal.

“It’s very difficult to present yourself as a compliance watcher of a resolution you decided to pull out of,” said a European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. “Either you’re in or either you’re out.”

It is a move likely to be challenged, diplomats said.

“It’s going to be messy from a Security Council standpoint because, regardless of what (Britain, Germany and France) think, Russia and China are not going to sign up to that legal interpretation,” said a European official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Germany has blacklisted Hezbollah under U.S. pressure: MP

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said that Germany blacklisted Lebanon’s Hezbollah under pressure from the United States.

“Despite being the first economic power among the European countries, Germany is weak from political point of view and cannot resist the United States’ pressure,” he told IRNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He noted that Hezbollah is a part of Lebanon’s government and slammed Germany’s action in designating it as a terrorist organization.

“This action is not acceptable and the German government must apologize the Lebanese government and people,” he said.

Germany announced on Thursday it has designated the Lebanese political group Hezbollah as a terror organization, banning all of its activities in the country and ordering raids on sites police say are linked to the group.

Police told CNN a number of properties in Berlin, Bremen, and North Rhine-Westphalia were searched early on Thursday. According to the police and the German Interior Ministry, four mosques and cultural associations were raided, as well as private homes of Hezbollah’s board members, treasurers, and tax advisers.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the German government’s action, saying the move is in line with objectives of Israel and the United States.

“The German government’s decision disrespects the Lebanese government and people because Hezbollah is an official and legitimate part of the country’s government and parliament and has always been an effective political party in stabilizing the country and is being supported by the Lebanese and regional people,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a statement on Thursday.

He noted that certain European

That makes no sense. Make up your mind, @SecPompeo,” Warren tweeted.

Professor Frank N. von Hippel, former assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology, has told the Tehran Times that “as I understand the argument, the Trump Administration does not want Iran to buy conventional weapons.”

Speaking on Friday, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the UN, also said, “The fact that the United States wants to say that it is a member of the JCPOA and use the path of Resolution 2231 is similar to a joke.”

The U.S. is attempting to extend an arms embargo against Iran. The ban on selling conventional weapons to Iran under the Security Council’s Resolution 2231 that blessed the nuclear agreement will be lifted on October 18, 2020.

EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell has also said that the U.S. can no longer be considered as a participating member of the JCPOA.

“It’s clear that in the statement by President Trump and the U.S. presidential memorandum of last May (May 218), they announced that he was ending his participation in JCPOA,” he said in an exclusive interview with RFE/RL on Thursday.

“And I also want to recall that the U.S. has not participated in any meetings of activities within the framework of this agreement since then. So it’s quite clear for us that the U.S. is no longer a participating member in this agreement,” Borrell added.



countries take decisions without considering realities in the West Asia region.

Hezbollah has been a strong force against terrorist groups such as Daesh in (ISIS).

Mousavi noted that the German government must be accountable for the negative consequences of its decision on the fight against the terrorist groups in the region.

Writing on his Twitter page late on Friday, Iran’s Supreme National Security Council secretary Ali Shamkhani strongly criticized Germany, saying if it was not for the sacrifices of resistance groups such as Hezbollah, Daesh (ISIS) would have reached Europe.

“#ISIS did not reach Europe because it was stuck behind the walls of #Resistance,” Shamkhani said. “The mask fell down the face of terrorism supporters.”

Alireza Sheikh-Attar, a former Iranian ambassador to Germany, has said that Germany’s action was intended to satisfy the U.S. and the Zionist regime of Israel.

“What Germany has done is a gesture to satisfy the United State and the Zionist regime. The move is propaganda because Hezbollah has no official and unofficial office in Germany,” he told ISNA in an interview published on Saturday.

Russia say U.S. attempt to extend arms embargo on Iran will reach nowhere

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that the United States’ attempt to extend arms embargo on Iran will reach nowhere.

In an interview with IRNA published on Sunday, Ulyanov predicted if the U.S. does not gain the UN Security Council’s approval, it will try another way which will reach nowhere.

The Russian diplomat said that he believes that the U.S. officials are after annihilation of the JCPOA, however their effort seems to be fruitless.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is preparing a legal argument that the U.S. remains a participant in the Iran nuclear accord that President Trump has renounced, part of an intricate strategy to pressure the United Nations Security Council to extend an arms embargo on Tehran or see far more stringent sanctions reimposed on the country, The New York Times reported on April 26.



In a tweet addressed to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren on Thursday, Pompeo claimed that the rights of the U.S. under the Resolution 2231 are separate from the 2015

nuclear agreement, known as the JCPOA.

Warren, a former Democratic presidential candidate, had dismissed the argument by the Trump administration.

In a tweet on Friday, Ulyanov criticized the U.S. for not saying a “single word” about its obligations under the Resolution 2231 that confirms the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

“US officials claim that US retains the rights under UNSC resolution 2231. No single word about US obligations which come together with rights. In particular, what about refraining from ‘actions that undermine implementation of commitments under #JCPOA’ (paragraph 2 of res.2231)?” he tweeted.

In another tweet on Thursday, Ulyanov said, “The US attempts to present itself as ‘JCPOA participants’ have no future. It is like common sense mockery. Those who invented this idea gave bad advice to US authorities. Cynical approaches must have their own limits in order not to compromise national policy to the worst extent.”

Iran can share coronavirus fight experience with Europe, America: advisor

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TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, said on Saturday evening that Iran can share its experience of successful fight against the coronavirus with Europe and America.

"#CoronaCrisis management has failed in America & parts of Western Europe," Amir Abdollahian tweeted.

"As #Iran expresses its sympathy, the Nation can share its successful #COVID19 experience w/ Europe & America," he wrote.

"Iran's National Health System proves its extraordinary knowledge, experiences & workforce," the advisor added.

Iran was initially among the countries hardest hit by the novel coronavirus pandemic. As of Sunday, the disease had infected 97,424 people in the country and claimed the lives of 6,203 people.

Suffering from the United States' illegal and unilateral sanctions that have severely damaged its economy, the Iranian government has not enforced any sort of lockdown or curfews that would force people to stay home, arguing that impos-



ing strict lockdown regulations will harm more people with subsistence problems than coronavirus infection.

Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces

Major General Mohammad Bagheri announced on Saturday the Iranian armed forces' readiness to share their experience in dealing with the coronavirus with friend-

ly countries across the region.

The top commander highlighted the Islamic Republic's success in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak, saying, "The Iranian armed forces are prepared to exchange the experiences that have been achieved and offer them to the officials of friendly and brotherly countries."

He also warned that a failure to cope with the virus in a correct and scientific manner could increase the spread of the disease and threaten the health of nations.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's successful performance in controlling the virus could provide solutions for other Islamic nations and friendly and neighboring states," the top commander added.

In remarks on April 14, commander of the Iranian Army Ground Force said his units are ready to provide other countries with the experiences in the fight against coronavirus at the discretion of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

On Wednesday, the Defense Ministry provided Afghanistan with a consignment of medical and health products for diagnosing COVID-19.

Envoy refutes U.S. allegation of Iranian meddling in Iraq

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iran's ambassador to Baghdad dismissed the allegation made by a senior U.S. diplomat that the Islamic Republic is meddling in the internal affairs of Iraq.

"... Iraq is an independent country and does not need interference from anyone," Iran's Ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi said in a tweet.

He was reacting to U.S. Assistant State Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker who has accused Iran of interference in the domestic affairs of Iraq.

"Instead of telling such lies, the U.S. had better end its policies that are based on threat, sanction and terror," the Iranian ambassador added.

Masjedi further condemned a "brutal" Daesh attack that resulted in the martyrdom of a number of Hashd al-Shaabi (PMU) forces in Iraq, and expressed sympathy with the Iraqi people and government.

At least ten members of Hashd al-Shaabi forces were



killed in the attack carried out by the Daesh terror group in the Arab country's Salahuddin province.

Daesh has intensified its attacks in Iraq amid Baghdad's call on the U.S. to pull out its forces from the Arab country.

In a vote on January 5, the Iraqi parliament called for an end to the presence of all foreign troops, including Americans.

The vote came two days after the U.S. military - acting on U.S. President Donald Trump's order - launched a fatal drone strike on senior Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani upon his arrival in the Iraqi capital at the invitation of the Baghdad government.

The attack also claimed the lives of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of the PMU, and eight other Iranian and Iraqi people.

Washington has threatened sanctions should U.S. troops be expelled instead of heeding the Iraqi parliament's call to end the occupation of the country.

Iran border guards had no part in harming Afghan citizens: Foreign Ministry

Tehran says a recent incident befalling a number of Afghan citizens at a border region close to the Iranian soil took place on the Afghan side of the border and Iran's border guards had no part in it.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi made the comments on Sunday after some reports claimed that Iranian border guards had tortured and thrown Afghans into a river in a western province to prevent their illegal entry into Iran.

"The incident affecting a number of Af-

ghanistan's citizens has taken place on that country's soil and the Islamic Republic of Iran's border guards have denied any involvement in this regard," Mousavi said while expressing sympathy with the families of the victims.

"Taking into account the significance of the issue and in order to obtain accurate information about how the incident took place on the Afghan soil, we have been probing the issue in cooperation with that country's officials," the Iranian spokesperson added.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry in a

statement on Saturday said an inquiry has been launched and a senior official in the presidential palace in Kabul said initial assessments suggested that at least 70 Afghans who were trying to enter Iran from bordering Herat Province were beaten and pushed into the Harirud river.

The Harirud river basin is shared by Afghanistan, Iran and Turkmenistan.

Iran spends eight billion dollars on Afghan migrants every year in various sectors and has repeatedly complained that the

countries which caused the displacement of Afghans must accept responsibility and help cover the costs.

The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Iran, Ivo Freijesen, last month hailed as an "important achievement" the country's hosting of Afghan refugees for more than four decades, vowing to help the Islamic Republic protect Afghans amid the ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic.

(Source: Press TV)

Memoir at the Tehran Times

By M.A. Saki

My experiences of work at the Tehran Times, which has recorded the most important events of the world in its four-decades of life, is full of sweet but mostly bitter memories.

Indeed I started my career as a journalist in the Tehran Times when the Bosnian war was still raging and the Rwandan genocide caught the world by surprise.

The life of the Tehran Times is almost equal to the history of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. In fact, the Tehran Times is the English version of the record history of the Islamic Revolution.

As Mostafa Mousavi Sabet, one of my long-time colleagues says, the Tehran Times has acted as a second foreign ministry for Iran. Before the emergence of internet and explosion of digital communications, the newspaper was one of the main sources of news and Tehran's political stance for non-Persian speakers.

The newspaper has done its professional and fair job in highlighting the war and injustices against the Palestinian people and the stealing of their lands by thieves such as Benjamin Netanyahu and his predecessors. I have written many articles through these years to bring readers' attention to the agonies of the Palestinians.

In the second half of the 1980s, when I was still a student, I read the frontpage headlines of the Tehran Times at newsstands. In those days, the main headlines were about the war the Saddam Hussein's army had started against Iran. Also, at the university, top students talked about the Tehran Times. They were mentioning the Tehran Times not because of the issues that it covered, but learning media language through it.

Now that I have been working at the Tehran Times for more than 25 years, I can imagine the difficulty of the job of journalists on those days when Saddam's army not only invaded and captured parts of our land, it also dropped bombs on our cities and gassed our soldiers and citizens alike.

My work at the newspaper continued through the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks happened in the United States. The attacks triggered the war on the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 which had given sanctuary to Osama bin Laden, whose al-Qaeda group was widely believed the chief architect of the attacks.

Almost 18 months later, the U.S., under George W.

Bush, who was surrounded by neo-cons, invaded Iraq against all warnings by the international community.

If I was not a journalist, most probably I would not have such an experience that how easily and sometimes without justification certain brainless rulers ignite tragedies in the world.

Now after 19 years, I am clearly seeing that the Taliban has emerged stronger in Afghanistan and it is the U.S. that is begging for a truce and a face-saving exit.

And the war on Iraq, which started under the false claim that the country was hiding weapons of mass destruction, led to unspeakable miseries and promotion and spread of terrorism, which its latest product was Daesh also called ISIS or ISIL.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac were two important European leaders who were fiercely opposed to the U.S.-British war on Iraq. Months after the conclusion of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, my colleague Negar Asadi and I had a chance for an exclusive interview with Schroeder at the German embassy in Tehran. When I asked him whether he had predicted such a chaos and bloodshed by the invasion of Iraq, he said "I predicted it but not to this extent".

Also, as the stupid U.S. war on Iraq was in its early stages, Washington and Tel Aviv created a commotion over Iran's nuclear program. To prove its nuclear transparency and that it was not seeking a nuclear weapons program, Iran agreed to temporarily suspend its nuclear activities on October 21, 2003, and agreed to the Additional Protocol to the NPT. The agreement was signed between Iran on one side and European trio of Germany, France and Britain on the other side. The agreement was known as the Tehran Declaration.

At the time, the current president, Hassan Rouhani, who was then secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, was negotiating with the European sides.

However, the intransigent White House officials under Bush refused to comply with the agreement between Iran and the Europeans and sought a permanent halt to Iran's nuclear program. After waiting for about two years, finally and gradually Iran removed caps on its nuclear activities. The resumption of nuclear activities was followed by unstoppable accusations against Iran. This was despite the fact that Iran's activities were being monitored by the United Nations nuclear watchdog.

Summarily speaking, working in the newspaper through all those years until July 2015, when the nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, was signed between

Iran and the 5+1 nations was laborious and stressful.

Translating Iranian officials' response to the unsubstantiated claims against Tehran's nuclear program had even annoyed Mohammed ElBaradei, who was running the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1997 to 2009. In an interview with CNN aired on October 28, 2007, ElBaradei said, "We haven't seen any concrete evidence" that Iran has a clandestine nuclear program and "I don't think I have seen anybody saying Iran today is working actively on a weapon program. And if there are such information, I would be very happy to receive it and go for it."

The politicization of Iran's nuclear program had made working in the Iranian media, including the Tehran Times, difficult. The political desk of the Tehran Times, which I was responsible for, was at the frontline. We were under pressure from two sides: adoption of sanctions resolutions when the nuclear issue was referred to the UN Security Council and issues that followed them.

Accusations, sanctions, and resolutions were continuing unabated despite the fact that about 120 countries member to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) were backing Iran's right to civilian nuclear activities. However, when the serious and tough negotiations started between Iran and the 5+1 group in Sept. 2013 and finally produced the landmark nuclear program - JCPOA - on July 4, 2015, I breathed a sigh of relief and wrote an article titled "History is Made".

I imagined that from now on I would have an easy time at the newspaper. However, that optimism did not last long as a reckless, thoughtless, mindless, envious, egoistic and callous person named Donald Trump took the helm at the White House. He defied all pleas and warnings by top political and academic figures around the world to keep the nuclear agreement. Trump did not lose any opportunity to make attacks against the multilateral nuclear deal which was approved by the UN Security Council Resolution and was backed by the entire international community except hawks such as Benjamin Netanyahu. Even now that Iran is hit hard by the deadly coronavirus pandemic he is adding new sanctions to his sanctions list.

Now as a journalist I am fully aware that Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute, is quite right in saying "Trump is the most dangerous man in the world".

MP urges U.S. to free coronavirus positive Iranian scientist

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — A member of the parliament has urged the United States to release Sirous Asgari, an Iranian scientist imprisoned in the United States who has contracted the novel coronavirus.

"Iranian scientist Mr. Sirous Asgari has contracted the coronavirus in U.S. jails," Alireza Salimi said during an open session of the parliament on Sunday.

"The Americans do not observe ethical issues," Salimi said, adding, "We released American prisoners but they did not comply with this matter."

Asgari, who has been pleading for weeks to be released from a U.S. immigration jail due to health problems, is in an isolation cell inside an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) jail in Louisiana.

His lawyers learned on Tuesday that his COVID-19 test was positive, and in a phone call with The Guardian, Asgari had a bad cough and said he had had a fever for days.

He and his family are calling for his transfer to a medical facility where he can receive proper care.

"It makes sense to send me to the hospital as soon as possible. I don't trust them at all," the 59-year-old said last week amid repeated coughing fits. "If something happens, they are not fast responders ... I prefer to leave this dirty place."

Asgari's story sparked international outrage after he spoke about his fears of COVID-19 spreading inside crowded ICE facilities with substandard cleaning practices and a lack of supplies.

The professor, who has a history of respiratory problems, was exonerated in a U.S. sanctions trial last year, but ICE has refused to release him or allow him to return to Iran.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif recently called for his release, as have some U.S. lawmakers and human rights groups.

Asgari is confined to a small room at the Winn correctional center in Louisiana, a state hard hit by the coronavirus.

While ICE informed the attorneys that his test was positive, Asgari said ICE had not yet told him the results and that he had learned of them on a call with his family and lawyers.

"The nurse ... always says the test results are not in," he said, noting that the medical staff checked on him twice or three times a day.

Continuation of arms embargo to kill JCPOA: top security official

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), has said continuation of the illegal arms embargo on Iran will kill the nuclear agreement Tehran signed with six world powers in July 2015.

"#JCPOA will die forever by circumventing 2231 Resolution & continuing #Iran's illegal weapons sanctions," Shamkhani wrote in a Twitter post on Sunday morning.

"Sanctions' virus is the US tool for survival of its declining hegemony," he said. "What will #EU do: Save dignity & support multilateralism or Accept humiliation & help unilateralism?"

Washington has called on the United Nations Security Council to extend its arms embargo on Iran.

Citing the Islamic Republic's recent satellite launch, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement last week that Tehran should not be allowed to buy and sell conventional weapons.

On April 22, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) successfully launched Iran's first military satellite into the orbit.

The military satellite, dubbed Noor 1 [Light 1], was launched upon Ghased (Messenger) satellite carrier in the early hours of April 22 from a location in the central desert of Iran.

Pompeo pointed to the announcement, claiming it showed that Iran's space program was in fact "neither peaceful nor entirely civilian".

Under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which the U.S. abandoned in May 2018, the UN ban on weapons sales to Tehran will end in October 2020.

In December 2019, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran intends to stay in the nuclear deal despite the U.S. actions, arguing that the internationally-endorsed pact will be put to good use in 2020 when the arms embargo comes to an end.

However, U.S. officials and UN diplomats said on Tuesday that the U.S. has circulated a draft UN resolution that would indefinitely extend the arms embargo.

The officials said since Iran is admittedly no longer complying with several elements of the nuclear deal, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Trump administration believes it has a case to make that the embargo should not be lifted.

Although the administration pulled out from the deal two years ago, the U.S. maintains that it retains the right to invoke a sanctions snapback that the deal envisaged in the event of "significant non-performance" by Iran.

That position rests on a novel State Department legal argument that was first presented in December and asserts that although the U.S. is no longer in the nuclear deal, it remains an original "participant" under the terms of the Security Council resolution that enshrined it.

Kourosh Ahmadi, an international law expert, has said the United States' legal argument that it remains an original "participant" under the terms of the Security Council resolution "lacks any legal logic".

In an article published in the Etemad newspaper on Wednesday, Ahmadi said headline senators such as Ted Cruz are pushing the Trump administration to take a tough stance in this regard.

"Their goal, which is approved and supported by headline elements in Trump's team, is to revive all anti-Iran UN Security Council resolutions by highlighting the dangers of lifting the arms embargo on Iran, and hence totally destroy the JCPOA," he remarked.

"While their immediate goal is to prevent the lifting of the arms embargo on Iran, but given the U.S. presidential elections in November, they wish to minimize the possibility of a JCPOA revival in the event of Trump's defeat," he opined.

Among many others, former Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren has also dismissed the argument, saying such an argument by the Trump administration, which has abandoned the nuclear deal with Iran, "makes no sense".

"The international prohibition on weapons going to/from Iran ends in October. To extend this arms embargo, the Trump admin is suddenly arguing that the US is a party to the same Iran Deal it abandoned. That makes no sense. Make up your mind, @SecPompeo," Warren tweeted on Wednesday.

German business groups push for swift end to lockdown

By Martin Arnold

German business groups are intensifying their calls for the government to lay out a firm timetable for lifting the lockdown and restarting the economy, warning that tens of billions of euros are being lost every week.



Some German children are going back to school this week and most shops reopened last month. But foreign travel is restricted, while strict social distancing rules have been kept in place.

Restaurants, hotels, bars, public and sporting events remain closed. "Our companies want and need to know in which stages social and economic life should start again," Dieter Kempf, head of the BDI business association, told the Funke media group.

"Every week of a shutdown costs the German economy a mid double-digit billion amount." On Wednesday, chancellor Angela Merkel is due to discuss with the heads of the German states whether to loosen the lockdown. But her ministers continue to urge caution.

Foreign minister Heiko Maas said the ban on foreign travel would be lifted only if people can be sure of returning home safely without bringing back coronavirus.

Horst Seehofer, German interior minister, told Bild newspaper: "As long as the virus does not go on vacation, we also have to limit our travel plans, as understandable as the desire for people and the tourism industry is.

Infection protection sets the schedule." If the lockdown has not been lifted by the time summer holidays start at many German schools in mid-June, the travel industry association warned it would lose €10.8bn in that time.

Norbert Fiebig, president of the travel association, said the sector needed a "reliable perspective of how we can gradually get tourism going again". "Release the lockdown before it is too late," said the federal association of small and medium-sized businesses in an open letter to Ms Merkel.

(Source: Financial Times)

China and Australia: how a war of words over coronavirus turned to threats of a trade war

"Downright despicable", "petty tricks", "menacing", "irrational".

The language of the diplomats and parliamentarians has been anything but diplomatic, and far from parliamentary. The robust conversations usually kept behind closed doors have tumbled into the public square, leaked to broadcasters and splashed in newsprint.

Australia and China's fractious relationship scrapped its way to an unedifying new low this week, with a degenerating dispute emerging, ostensibly, from Australia's call for an international, independent inquiry into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic that has so far killed more than 230,000 people.

But China and Australia view this inquiry – amorphous though the proposal still is – as entirely different entities.

China sees Australia as front running – yet again in Beijing's eyes – on an issue deliberately constructed to isolate, condemn and humiliate China. It contends the inquiry is a political witch-hunt, engineered by Washington.

From Australia's perspective, the Chinese response appears a dramatic overreaction to an entirely legitimate international concern to understand the origins of the Covid-19 outbreak. The response appears, to Canberra, like an attempt to deflect responsibility, or worse, to shift blame elsewhere.

Relations were already deeply damaged, scarred by a succession of antagonisms that the two countries seem to find easy to accumulate, but far harder to shake: the decision of Australia to exclude Huawei from the 5G network rollout; China's continued incarceration of Australian pro-democracy writer Yang Hengjun; a dispute over the South China Sea; concerns over Chinese influence in Australian business, economics and politics; continuing allegations of espionage.

Last week, the fracas was focused on the Covid-19 investigation, but that fight carried all the baggage of those gone before, and still being waged. It escalated to a thinly veiled threat from China's ambassador to Australia, Cheng Jingye, who told a newspaper – admittedly under some leading questioning – that Australia's push for an inquiry was "dangerous", politically motivated at the urging of the Trump administration, and would harm Australia's national interest.

"The Chinese public is frustrated, dismayed and disappointed with what you are doing now ... if the mood is going from bad to worse, people would think why we should go to such a country while it's not so friendly to China.

"The tourists may have second thoughts. Maybe the parents of the students would also think whether this place, which they find is not so friendly, even hostile, is the best place to send their kids to. So it's up to the public, the people to decide. And also, maybe the ordinary people will think why they should drink Australian wine or eat Australian beef?"

The ambassador later said in the interview he hoped there would not be a boycott, and that he was not seeking to "imply" anything through his comments.

But the Australian government was swift in its response, condemning what it saw as the threat of "economic coercion" through a consumer boycott.

And while neither of those terms were used by the ambassador, within the corridors of the Department of Foreign Affairs' RG Casey Building, the intent of the ambassador's comments was considered unmistakable: Beijing was seeking to paint Australia as vulnerable because of an economic dependence on China.

The foreign minister, Marise Payne, called out the Chinese statement for the threat Australia perceived it as: "We reject any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment, when what we need is global cooperation."

The spat degenerated further with the leaking of details of a subsequent phone call between Cheng and the Dfat secretary, Frances Adamson: fanned by freelancing commentary from Australian politicians, and thundering denouncements in the CCP mouthpiece the Global Times.

But there is important broader context.

(Source: The Guardian)

Tehran Times goes big on economy

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Since its establishment in May of 1979, the Tehran Times, as Iran's leading English-language newspaper, has been playing a significant role in the national economic development.

In this line, the economic desk of the newspaper, which covers the news related to industry, energy, and trade sectors of the economy, has always provided the most recent information for both people inside the country and those interested in the Iranian market outside the country.

While performing its role of providing news and information, the Tehran Times has been also trying to find and recognize extant problems and barriers in the above-mentioned sectors and offer necessary resolutions through conducting fruitful interviews with related officials and experts, and also providing informative reports and articles.

The leading Iranian newspaper has been always in contact with the foreign media as well, for a constructive exchange of the news, information, and viewpoints.

■ Energy sector

Energy sector, which has been always Iran's major source for revenue, is a main area for the news coverage in the economy desk of the Tehran Times.

The latest news in the oil, gas, petrochemicals, electricity and water sectors of the country are vastly published by the daily.



A number of petrochemical complexes in Pars Special Energy Economic Zone (PSEEZ) in the southwestern port city of Assaluyeh

It is a source of honor that the newspaper stood at the first place in the national "Oil & Media Festival" for two consecutive years in 2016 and 2017. The head of the economic desk of the Tehran Times was awarded the festival's trophy by the oil minister in both editions of the event.

■ Industry sector

Self-reliance in production is one of the top priorities of Iran, and industry sector is in the frontline to materialize this objective.

The daily's coverage of news about different industrial sectors and production units and bringing their issues under the spotlight is a big deal in this due.

The newspaper also investigates existing hurdles and obstacles in the way of industrial self-reliance and offers solutions and strategies to remove them through its detailed reports and interviews.

■ Trade sector

Having a strategic location in the region, Iran is a trade hub for many countries.

The country has been always hosting many foreign trade delegations visiting Iran hoping for business opportunities.

Meetings are also being held on a regular basis between Iranian officials and foreign counterparts on investigation of different ways and strategies for expansion of trade ties.



A container ship loading cargos in Shahid Rajaei Port (Iran's largest container port in southern Hormozgan Province)

Meetings of Iran's joint economic committees and also joint chambers of commerce with other countries are some important ones in this due.

Covering the news of all these meetings and also other trade events like exhibitions and conferences is a top agenda for the Tehran Times.

Through its strong links with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade and Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the country's major trade body, the daily also covers all related news highlighting Iran's trade status and elevating it.

Meanwhile, as the country is now seriously focusing on boosting non-oil trade to reduce its dependence on oil revenues, the economic desk of the Tehran Times is specifically working on the issues and topics for promotion of Iran's non-oil trade.

■ Stock market

Stock market in Iran has been booming recently. Number of companies listed on this market is noticeably rising and the market is witnessing more presence of the shareholders.

Even now, when the coronavirus pandemic is hurting many businesses and markets all around the world, Iran's stock market is experiencing gains and jumps.

The Tehran Times has made undeniable efforts in introduction of Iranian stock market to both domestic and foreign investors and providing them with the latest news from this market.

It is worth mentioning that the daily's all-out endeavors in covering the country's stock market news, especially in recent years when this market has been experiencing a time of flourishing, has led to winning another title by the Tehran



Times, as it stood at the third place in the third national festival of "Bourse & Press" in 2019.

■ A voice for private sector

The significant role of private sector in economic development of the countries is something obvious.

In Iran this role is becoming more and more important,

as the country is moving toward downsizing the government, and attaching high priority to the privatization program, that is highly stressed by the senior officials who are saying that the shares of the state-run companies specified in this program should be transferred to the private sector as soon as possible.

Through such approach, the government is being downsized while the private sector is becoming strengthened.

While the Tehran Times is playing a noticeable role in highlighting the achievements of private sector through its cemented relation with the country's chambers of commerce, it also makes this sector's voice heard by the government through its news coverage of the private units' problems and limitations.

■ Attracting foreign investment, attaining technology

Providing the most recent and comprehensive news and information about business in different sectors of Iran, the Tehran Times has also managed to specifically work on the issues for attracting many foreigners to the country, who bring both investment and technical knowledge.

The newspaper is highly demanded by the other countries' embassies inside Iran as they want to keep their traders and businessperson well informed of the business opportunities in the country.

The Tehran Times is, indeed, a valuable and reliable source of information about Iranian market for the foreigners.



Noticeable presence of foreign participants in an international conference on investment opportunity in Iran's transport sector

Covering the news and information about upcoming international business and trade events in the country, the daily has been playing a noticeable part in attracting the foreigners.

It comes true about hundreds of international exhibitions and conferences held in Iran every year, so that the Tehran Times was named best in the fifth edition of the aforementioned "Oil & Media Festival" in 2017.

The success was achieved for a report on the visit of a group of foreign participants in the 12th Iran Petrochemical Forum (IFP) to petrochemical complexes in Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ), located in the port city of Assaluyeh, in Iran's southwestern Bushehr Province.

To attract foreign investment and import technology to Iran, the newspaper has been also sending its journalists to other countries for participation in different events.

What mentioned above was just a glimpse of the daily's efforts for elevating the national economy.

And now, after 41 years of professional journalistic endeavors, the Tehran Times is more strongly moving in the way of promoting Iran in all areas including economy.

Meanwhile, as the imposition of the U.S. unilateral sanctions on the country's economy has put Iran in a path to reach economic self-reliance, the Tehran Times resolves to fulfill its responsibility as the media to help the country materialize this goal.

Shares of 4 refineries to be offered at TSE in late June



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Government spokesperson Ali Rabiei says the shares of Iran's four refineries, namely Isfahan, Tabriz, Bandar-Abbas and Tehran, are due to be offered at Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) on June 21, IRNA reported.

According to the official, privatizing state-owned companies is one of the most important measures taken by the government for the country's economic growth.

"These offerings will lead to attracting new investment in the economy and industry, which will be a major factor in boosting production, increasing employment and investment," Rabiei said.

He noted that listing state-owned companies on the stock exchange is a major strategy followed for downsizing the government and promoting the private sector's role in the national economy.

According to the official, the first phase of the offerings will be through exchange-traded funds (ETF) after which the remaining shares will be offered through

underwriting.

In late April, the government referred the executive regulations of the budget plan of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 19) regarding the privatization of state-owned enterprises to Finance Ministry for implementation.

The mentioned ministry is obliged to hand over all the revenues gained from the offerings to the government in order to be used as part of the current year's budget incomes.

In Iran, implementation of privatization plan aimed at more productivity, investment making, job creation, promotion of trade balance, more competition in domestic economy, and reducing financial and management burden on the government has been under the spotlight over the past decade.

The law on implementation of the general policies of the Article 44 of Iran's Constitution on privatizing state-owned companies was declared in 2006 in a bid to downsize the government and promote the private sector's role in the national economy.

Industry Ministry to establish export development working groups in provinces



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has it on the agenda to establish working groups for developing non-oil export in various provinces across the country. Head of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

According to Hamid Zadboum, due to the significant role of the country's provinces in developing export goals and to benefit from the potentials and capacities of the provinces in increasing non-oil exports, the industry ministry has decided to establish the mentioned working groups in the country's provinces and hold meetings weekly.

The official noted that given the country's current situation and considering the restrictions created by the U.S., non-oil exports play an important role in strengthening the production sector, maintaining employment, and meeting the needs for foreign currencies.

Therefore, developing non-oil exports has been focused on seriously as one of the major axes of the industry ministry's programs for the current calendar year, Zadboum said.

He further pointed to improving the country's non-oil trade balance, increasing the durability of exported goods, increasing the diversity of exported goods and markets, increasing the complexity of exported goods (in terms of value-added and technological content), and increasing the capabilities of the private sector as some of the major programs envisioned in the roadmap for promoting non-oil exports.

According to the official, the "Export Development Working Group" was formed under the responsibility of Industry Ministry and the Secretariat of the Trade Development Organization, and all organizations and institutions related to the field of non-oil exports, including Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Transport and Urban Development Ministry, Export Development Bank of Iran, National Standards Organization, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Chamber of Cooperative, and Agriculture Ministry are attendees of this working group.

NIOPDC preparing infrastructure to distribute 30 mcm/d of CNG

ENERGY TEHRAN — Director of compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Projects at the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) says the necessary infrastructure is prepared for developing the CNG sector to be able to distribute 30 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) of gas across the country.

"The Oil Ministry and National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company have created the infrastructure for the development of the CNG industry, only in the conversion sector development measures should be taken," Hamid Qasemi Dahcheshmeh told Shana.

The official noted that Oil Ministry has been supportive of the industry since very beginning through supporting the production of CNG-powered engines and converting automobile plants to produce dual-fuel cars in this regard.

"In the previous years, 920,000 vehicles were converted through the Oil Ministry's direct contracts," he added.



He further noted that currently over 2,500 CNG stations are operating across the country for supplying CNG to passenger cars and a

few stations are also providing gas to heavy vehicles like buses and trucks. The mentioned CNG stations account

for 22 percent of the country's fuel basket, according to Dahcheshmeh.

According to a report by NIORDC released in early February, consumption of compressed natural gas in Iran increased by 31 percent since the implementation of the gasoline rationing scheme up to the mentioned date.

As reported, the country's CNG consumption which stood at 19 mcm before the implementation of the fuel rationing scheme, increased to 25 mcm in February.

The Iranian government started, On November 13 2019, rationing of subsidized gasoline and increased fuel prices as it plans to use the revenue for supporting underprivileged families.

Later that month, the head of NIOPDC's CNG promotion program announced that CNG consumption in the country had increased by 10 percent only two weeks after the beginning of the program.

According to Hassan Qolipour, more than 2,478 compressors are installed in the country's CNG stations.

Energy Ministry saves 3,876 MW electricity in a year

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Ministry has managed to save 3,876 megawatts (MW) of electricity in the previous calendar year (ended on March 19) by implementing consumption management programs, IRNA reported, quoting an official with Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as Tavanir).

Cooperation with the various sectors resulted in reducing the consumption by 3,876 MW which is equal to the output of five 1000MW-capacity power plants, Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said.

According to the official, Energy Ministry signed memorandums of understanding with 135,000 industrial, agricultural, and domestic subscribers under the framework of consumption management programs, last year, to pass the summer consumption peak without outages.

Last year, 3.5 trillion rials (about \$83.3 million) were paid to the subscribers co-operating in the consumption management program in the form of incentives and relief packages, however, this figure is only five percent of what should have been paid to power plants to buy the said 3,876 MW, he said.

Back in January, Tavanir head had said that Energy Ministry managed to prevent the consumption of 70 trillion rials (about



\$1.66 billion) worth of electricity during the summer peak period by implementing consumption management programs.

"Implementation of this program allowed us to pass the summer without any power outages," the official said in a meeting of directors of the Energy Ministry subsidiaries' public relations departments.

He noted that Iran's electricity network has 100 percent coverage across the country, adding that this is an indication of the Iranian electricity industry's leadership in the region and the world.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new strategies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid.

China's March crude imports from Saudi slip, Russia up 31 percent

China's March crude oil imports from top supplier Saudi Arabia fell 1.6 percent from a year earlier, while purchases from No.2 supplier Russia rose 31 percent,

Reuters' calculations based on customs data showed on Sunday. China's March crude oil imports rose 4.5 percent year on year to 9.68 million barrels per day (bpd) as refiners stocked up on cheaper cargoes despite falling domestic fuel demand and cuts in refining rates due to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shipments from Saudi Arabia were 7.21 million tons, or 1.7 million bpd, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

That was down from 1.73 million bpd a year earlier and average daily imports of 1.79 million bpd during the first two months of this year.

Russia supplied 7.02 million tons last month, or 1.66 million bpd, down from 1.71 million bpd recorded for the first two months, the data showed.

While state refiners mostly maintained deep production cuts in March to reduce their fuel stocks, independent plants cranked up run rates as the oil price plunge triggered partly by Saudi and Russian pledges to increase supply boosted refining margins.

Saudi Arabia and other members of the



Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries as well as other producers have since reached a new agreement on output cuts, helping to lift oil prices off historical lows but with many saying that deeper reductions will be needed.

China's imports from the United States remained close to zero in March. After falling last year because of the U.S.-China trade war, they are expected to pick up later in 2020 after Beijing started granting tariff waivers on U.S. goods including crude oil from early March.

There were no shipments from Venezuela for a fifth month in a row, as China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), Caracas's top oil client, steered clear of Venezuelan crudes to avoid violating secondary U.S. sanctions.

Also, data showed China's imports from Iran at 255,779 tons, down 88.9 percent from a year earlier.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil-hungry Asian nations pounce on low prices to build stockpiles

Some oil-hungry Asian nations are taking advantage of the collapse in prices caused by the coronavirus pandemic to build up their crude stockpiles.

Here are some questions and answers about strategic reserves and the region's oil supplies: Strategic reserves are stockpiles of oil and other fuels held by governments in secure storage facilities to cover unexpected disruptions to energy supplies.

Major economies such as the U.S., China and Russia began to build up reserves after oil shocks in the 1970s, according to Ravi Krishnaswamy,

regional senior vice president for energy and environment at consultancy Frost & Sullivan.

China is believed to have the biggest in the Asia-Pacific. Beijing does not give an official estimate but analysts say it is at around 550 million barrels. In comparison, the United States' strategic reserves currently hold around 630 million.

State-owned China National Petroleum Corporation said recently that the country's reserves were "obviously insufficient, and have not yet reached the international standard '90-day safety line'."

The International Energy Agency requires its members to hold emergency oil stocks equivalent to at least 90 days of net oil imports. China is an associate member, but not a full member.

Japan's oil reserves were around 500 million barrels at the end of February, equivalent to national consumption for more than seven months, according to the latest official data, while South Korea had around 96 million barrels in strategic reserves as of December 2019, enough for 89 days.

India, by contrast, has reserves with storage capacity of approximately 40 million barrels —

which would last just 10 days in the country of 1.3 billion people.

Strategic reserves are stored largely in secure underground depots like natural rock caverns. The U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the world's largest supply of emergency crude, is stored in huge underground salt caverns along the Gulf Coast.

But building underground storage is challenging as it needs to have the right geological formation, and countries also need to build infrastructure to pump oil in and out.

(Source: Arab News)

Oil's recovery could take decades, not years

Who knows what the new normal for oil demand will be once Covid-19 is firmly in the rear view mirror? Not me, that's for sure. But it is likely to be lower than it was in 2019, and it could be that way for many years. That's going to create overcapacity throughout the oil supply chain and weigh on prices.

While signs are emerging that we might have passed the worst of this historic oil demand rout, they're very tentative. No one is predicting a swift recovery to where we were before the pandemic struck. Some, including Royal Dutch Shell Plc's chief executive officer, Ben van Beurden, suggest that oil demand may never recover fully.

Citigroup analysts don't see jet fuel consumption back at last year's level until well into 2022, and they're at the optimistic end of the spectrum. Boeing's CEO suggests passenger traffic might not get back to 2019 levels for three years, and even when the flying public does return, airlines will use their newest and most efficient planes to carry them, as my colleagues Liam Denning and Brooke Sutherland note here.

So let's make a guess about the loss in future demand, and let's make a fairly small one. Let's assume it's about 5 million barrels a day. That doesn't sound like too much; it's about 5 percent of last year's global oil demand. The drop in worldwide oil consumption in April has been put as high as 35 million barrels a day, and forecasts estimate 2020 oil use will be about 10 million barrels a day (or 10 percent) lower than in 2019.

Partial recovery

Sure, many of us will return to our pre-Covid-19 ways of life just as quickly as we can, but others will gladly give up the daily commute in favor of working from home more often — and employers may be happy to accommodate their wishes. After months of successful teleconferencing, those business trips that helped keep planes full of high-paying travelers may also come under more scrutiny. These changes may push up electricity use while they dampen fuel demand, but that will do



little to help the oil industry, which is increasingly struggling to hold onto its fragments of the power-generation sector.

Of course, we could collectively shrug off this latest crisis, just as we did the financial crash of 2008-09, which was consigned to history with barely a backward glance. But the global pandemic feels very different from the financial crisis. It hits at our physical well-being as well as our financial health, and it has forced us all, to one degree or another, to adopt new ways of living and working, whether we like them or not.

The industry can survive a 5 percent drop in long-term demand, but it will find it much harder to thrive.

A loss like that will cause structural overcapacity, right through the oil supply chain. There will be too many wells to get oil out of the ground, too many ships to move it, too many refineries to process it.

Even before the pandemic, we were looking at a world where oil demand growth was increasingly concentrated in plastics, rather than fuels. That was already darkening the outlook for refiners in Europe and North America, which were also facing growing competition from newer plants in the West Asia and Asia that were more efficient and had

beneficial long-term oil supply deals. A prolonged drop in demand will only make that competition stiffer, as more plants seek markets for their excess products.

The upstream part of the business — the bit that's concerned with finding the crude and getting it out of the ground — may face fewer problems. Oil fields naturally go into decline once they're brought into operation, requiring producers to create new capacity elsewhere. Nowhere is that more obvious than in the U.S. shale patch.

But the second U.S. shale boom was driven by, among other things, several years of robust growth in global oil demand. This led to most of the world's oil producers, including almost all of the OPEC countries, pumping as hard as they could, and helped to keep oil prices at around \$50 a barrel.

Lots to spare

But those OPEC producers are now cutting production by more than 20 percent, and non-OPEC countries are seeing their output fall by similar percentages. True, some of the wells that get shut will never be reopened, but most will sit waiting for their owners to see an opportunity to get them back to work. That overhang of spare production capacity will put an effective cap on oil prices, just as it did throughout the 1990s.

No amount of Saudi-led supply management, or U.S. presidential bullying of foreign oil producers, will be able to remove that spare capacity. And once the current crisis is past, Riyadh may be less willing to play the role of swing producer, restraining its output while everybody else reopens the taps.

Every time oil prices rise, producers will rush to use their idled capacity, undermining the recovery. After the oil-price slump of the mid-1980s, it took two decades for prices to return to their previous levels — longer if you build in the effects of inflation. This time the wait could be even more protracted.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Iraq's Kurdish region pumped 468,400 bpd in 2019 at export price of \$52.67/b

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region pump an average of about 468,400 bpd in 2019, with 93 percent of its oils sales exported at an average price of \$52.67/b, according to a Deloitte audit report published by the Kurdistan Regional Government on its website.

Oil for local consumption and refineries was sold at \$45.94/b, raking in \$88.85 million, the report showed.

The government generated \$8.35 billion from crude exports, while the gross value of crude oil and condensate sold, including piped exports and local sales was \$8.44 billion, the report showed.

The net cash balance received by the KRG for sales and related activities was \$4.515 billion last year.

Of the net cash balance, a balance of \$318.5 million at the end of December was held in a bank account in Lebanon, according to the report.

Baghdad dispute

The KRG and the federal government in Baghdad are currently locked in a dispute over oil sales and the distribution of oil revenue, including payments of KRG salaries by the Iraqi federal government.

The KRG has previously said it would contribute to Iraq's 1.061 million bpd output cut in May and June in line with OPEC+ production curbs.

The Baghdad government has insisted the semi-autonomous region take part in the OPEC+ pact, where oil cuts will gradually be reduced through to April 2022.

Iraq's federal government said on Friday its oil exports averaged 3.438 million bpd in April and were sold at an average price of \$13.80/b.

In March, the federal government exported some 3.5 million bpd at an average price of \$28.18/b.

(Source: Platts)

Canada's oil patch struggles to survive the worst recession ever

Canada is likely going through its worst-ever recession, with more pain to come in May when the statistics authorities and analysts will have a fuller picture of the economic disaster brought about by the coronavirus pandemic and the measures to curb its spreading.

The oil price collapse with the demand crash in the Covid-19 outbreak, and the month-long oil price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia are pressuring Canada's economic activity, more than 5 percent of which comes from the oil and gas sector.

Canada's oil industry — which contributed \$77.4 billion (C\$108 billion) in direct real GDP to the economy in 2019, or 5.6 percent of Canadian GDP — was hit hard by the double supply-demand shock over the past two months, becoming one of the first collateral victims of the Saudi-Russian spat.

The recovery of Canada's oil industry after this shock will be slow, considering the fact that the global glut threatens to fill up all available storage by as early as mid-May. Many firms may not survive this price crash.

Because of the importance of the oil industry in Canada's economy and trade in goods, overall economic recovery in the country could be slower than analysts had initially predicted and slower than in other advanced economies that are not big oil producers.

A Reuters poll of 25 economists at the end of April showed that Canada's economy likely shrank by 9.8 percent annually in Q1 and is set for a 37.5-percent plunge in Q2.

In a flash GDP estimate in mid-April, Statistics Canada said the economy contracted by 9 percent in March, the steepest one-month GDP drop ever since the series started in 1961. More than 1 million people lost their jobs in March, with employment rate down by 3.3 percentage points to 58.5 percent—the lowest rate since April 1997.

The energy sector in Canada is now even more pessimistic about its prospects than it was during the 2008 recession or right after the previous major oil price crash of 2014, according to a recent Bank of Canada Business Outlook Survey (BOS).

Most oil and gas firms in Canada "saw the current shock as worse than those in 2008 and 2015 as access to financing had become more difficult. Indeed, while some thought they could withstand a period of low oil prices, many were concerned about access to financing amid declining equity prices, widening credit spreads and a general reduction in risk appetite," Josh Nye, Senior Economist at RBC Economics, said in a note in early April.

In the flash estimate for March GDP, Statistics Canada said that "Despite the collapse in oil prices and the pullback in the sector's investment activities, early indications seem to show that the volume of oil and gas extraction and pipeline transportation had not yet been substantially impacted in March as storage facilities were still being filled."

But in April and through the summer, the suffering in the oil patch will become painfully evident, with companies slashing capital expenditure and curtailing production as demand crashes, storage fills up, and Western Canadian Select barely manages to stay above \$0.00 a barrel these days.

"While it's encouraging that there's an agreement to end the irresponsible global oil price war, much damage has been done. The damage to the Canadian energy sector will be longer lasting due to the liquidity crisis triggered by these market manipulations," Tim McMillan, president and CEO at Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), said after OPEC+ patched up the broken alliance to promise nearly 10 million bpd off the market in May and June.

CAPP works with "federal and provincial governments to help ensure adequate support is in place to enable survival of oil and natural gas sector which is so critical to Canada's economy," McMillan said early last week.

The federal government is funding a \$717 million (C\$1 billion) program to provide grants to oilfield service contractors to perform well, pipeline, and oil and gas site reclamation work. The program is expected to keep 5,300 jobs in the oil industry at a time when many oil workers are losing their jobs.

Oil production shut-ins could reach 1.1 million bpd this summer, ATB Economics said this week, expecting Canada's oil production to slump by 14 percent compared to the over 3.5-million-bpd output in 2019. That is, if things with the pandemic, demand, and oil prices improve by the fall. Most analysts concur that Canadian oil firms are likely to curtail at least 1 million bpd of production in the coming months.

"There's no way to sugar-coat it: the recession brought on by COVID-19 and the oil glut will be the worst downturn in Alberta since the 1930s," Todd Hirsch, Vice President and Chief Economist at ATB Financial, wrote in a note last week.

The recession will be brutal, the recovery "will not be as V-shaped as we'd like, but the downturn will pass much sooner than it did in the 1930s," Hirsch says.

(Source: oilprice.com)

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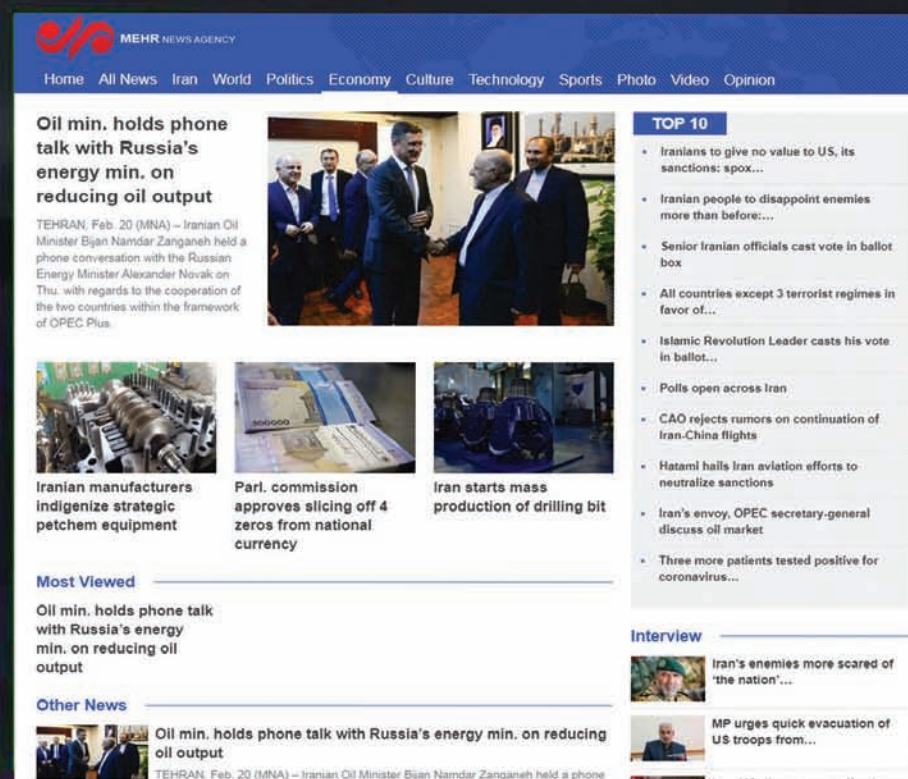
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Americans making a petition to ask Congress to halt annual aid to Israel

By Mohammad Jafari

Those Americans, who are worried about the United States' national interests and taxpayers, have called on the people to sign a petition to ask the Congress to put an immediate end to the Washington's annual aid to Israel as Tel Aviv has reportedly called for the U.S. aid that could surpass \$7.5 billion.

Alison Weir, the president of the Council for the National Interest, have criticized the 2016 agreement based on which the U.S. must grant a hefty amount of aid to Israel annually, saying that the United States has been heavily hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and should prefer its own people's interests over the Israelis.

Breaking Defense magazine updated the Weir's article published by the Information Clearing House.

The magazine reported that Israel might ask to get its yearly aid ahead of time, and possibly twice as much as usual... But 26 million Americans out of jobs and U.S. companies closing due to coronavirus might object... A petition proposes: Israel has received over \$10 million per day, year after year. This year it's time to keep our money home.'

Breaking Defense, a digital magazine that covers military issues, reports that Israel may ask for its U.S. aid early possibly in a lump sum that could be as high as \$7.6 billion.

This would work out to almost \$21 million per day from American taxpayers, even though the U.S. is approaching a \$4 trillion deficit (the largest in the world), and Israel typically has a lower unemployment rate than the United States.

The report was provided by Breaking Defense Israel correspondent Arie Egozi, an Israeli citizen who served in the Israeli military and is close to the Israeli security establishment.

Egozi's article reads that because of the coronavirus pandemic, "Israel's Ministry of Defense and high command have hammered out an emergency plan for an appeal to Washington."

The article, which carries a Tel Aviv dateline, reports: "Sources here say the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing Israel to ask Washington to make major changes to the [aid] agreement, including a request to receive the annual allocation \$3.8 billion earlier than planned."

U.S. aid to Israel is normally disbursed in October, in a lump sum that is deposited to an interest-bearing Israeli account in the New York Federal Reserve Bank. (Since the U.S. has been operating at a deficit, this means that the U.S. government borrows the money and pays interest on it long after it has gone out.)

Potentially \$14,000 per minute from American taxpayers In addition to receiving the aid earlier than usual, a "senior source" quoted by Egozi suggests that Israel may request that the aid expected for 2024 also be disbursed this year.

If that happens, it would work out to nearly \$21 million per day, or \$14,460 per minute to Israel from American



Image by If Americans Knew. There are indications that Israel may request an amount of U.S. aid this year that works out to over \$14,000 per minute from American taxpayers.

taxpayers suffering from a devastating hit to the U.S. economy.

Moreover, it is highly likely that when 2024 comes around, the advance would be forgiven, as have numerous U.S. "loans" to Israel, and Israel would get the aid again.

The current aid to Israel is based on a 2016 agreement by the Obama Administration to give Israel \$3.8 billion annually for the next 10 years – a total of \$38 billion, touted as the largest such aid package in U.S. history. Overall, Israel has received more U.S. aid than any other country, on average, 7,000 times more per capita than others.

While the Obama Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a non-binding agreement, Israel has received this sum every year since it was signed. Israel advocates in Congress are currently seeking to cement it into a law that would permit this amount to go even higher in the future.

Egozi reported that the former president of Israel Aerospace Industries, Joseph Weiss, said asking for the money ahead of time is "a wild idea," but said it "makes sense in the special conditions created [in Israel] by the pandemic."

However, it's unlikely that this would make equivalent sense to Americans, who have been at least as hard hit by the pandemic.

Over 26 million Americans so far have lost their jobs, and many U.S. companies are facing bankruptcy. A comment below Egozi's article suggests how Americans would respond to a massive outlay to Israel this year:

"Why do Americans put up with all this money going to Israel when millions of them have no healthcare, no job, and are eating from food banks?"

To deflect such outrage, Israel partisans in the U.S. typically defend the aid by saying that it eventually goes to U.S. defense companies. However, they fail to mention that millions of the dollars go to Israeli companies that compete with American businesses, often leading to job losses in the U.S. No other country receiving U.S. military

aid is allowed to do this.

In addition, many Americans feel that Israel should use its own money to purchase its weaponry, as the U.S. does. They point out that if Americans wished to subsidize weapons companies, the U.S. government could simply purchase items for American use.

Similarly, a growing number of Americans object to the uses Israel makes of U.S. weapons, regularly deploying them in violation of both international law and U.S. law (also this).

However, the pro-Israel lobby in the U.S. is extremely influential in both political parties, and U.S. media rarely report on aid to Israel, so the lump sum could slip through without notice.

An administration official recently said that Israel would not need to worry about money "even if there is a depression."

A critic of the aid, former CIA officer Philip Giraldi, points out that Israel is not an ally, and that it has often "done damage to the United States."

Giraldi, who is currently executive director of the Council for the National Interest (CNI), notes that Israel often spies on the U.S. and has stolen American technology.

It also tried to sink a U.S. Navy ship, killing 34 Americans and injuring over 170.

Giraldi feels that Egozi's article is unclear and suggests that Israel may ask for even more money this year. He says he "would not be surprised" if they seek advances for additional years, receiving possibly triple the normal amount.

Giraldi is asking people to sign a petition by CNI calling on Congress to "stop the money to Israel."

The petition states: "...We need to take care of Americans and not send our tax money to a wealthy foreign country. Israel has already received billions of dollars from American taxpayers. It has received over \$10 million per day, year after year. This year it's time to keep our money home."

Free speech opponents preparing to legalize censorship in the West

A large number of governments, authorities, officials in many world countries and even some pro-democracy activists in the West have found countering dissemination of fake news and misinformation amid coronavirus pandemic as good pretexts to stifle opposite voices, worrying human rights activists about an awful future for the freedom of speech and media.

Jonathan Turley, a professor of Public Interest Law at George Washington University, has concentrated, in his report published by The Hill, on the possibility of legalizing censorship and restricting freedom of speech by the governments amid coronavirus crisis.

Almost everywhere you turn today, politicians are telling the public to "get used to the new normal" after the pandemic. For some people, this means public health precautions from social distancing to banning handshakes. Others have quickly added long standing dreams for everything from the guaranteed basic income advocated by Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, which was also recently raised by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, to mailed voting elections advocated by many Democrats.

The most chilling suggestion, however, comes from the politicians and academics who have called for the censorship of social media and the internet. The only thing spreading faster than the coronavirus has been censorship and the loud calls for greater restrictions on free speech. The Atlantic published an article last week by Harvard Law School professor Jack Goldsmith and University of Arizona law professor Andrew Keane Woods calling for Chinese style censorship of the internet.

They declared that "in the great debate of the past two decades about freedom versus control of the network, China was largely right and the United States was largely wrong" and "significant monitoring and speech control are inevitable components of a mature and flourishing internet, and governments must play a large role in these practices to ensure that the internet is compatible with society norms and values."

The justification for that is the danger of "fake news" about coronavirus risks and cures. Yet this is only the latest ra-



tionalization for rolling back free speech rights. For years, Democratic leaders in Congress called for censorship of "fake news" on social media sites. Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have all engaged in increasing levels of censorship and have a well known reputation for targeting conservative speech.

Hillary Clinton has demanded that political speech be regulated to avoid the "manipulation of information" and stated that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg "should pay a price for what he is doing to our democracy" by refusing to take down opposition postings. In Europe, free speech rights are in a free fall, and countries such as France and Germany are imposing legal penalties designed to censor speech across the world.

Many of us in the free speech community have warned of the growing insatiable appetite for censorship in the West. We have been losing the fight, and free speech opponents are now capitalizing on the opportunity presented by the pandemic. Representative Adam Schiff sent a message to the heads of Google, Twitter, and YouTube demanding censorship of anything deemed "misinformation" and "false information."

YouTube did just that by removing two videos of California doctors who called for the easing of state lockdown orders. The doctors argued that the coronavirus is not as dangerous as suggested and that some deaths associated with the disease are actually not accurate. There is certainly ample reason to contest their views but, instead, YouTube banned the videos to keep others from reaching their own conclusions.

Facebook will not only remove posts it considers misinformation about the coronavirus but will issue warnings to those who "like" such postings. Facebook said that it wants to protect people from

dangerous remedies and false data. Ironically, the World Health Organization praised Sweden for its rejection of the very restrictions criticized by the two doctors. The group declared that Sweden is a "model" country despite its rejection of lockdown measures being protested in the United States.

Moreover, many mainstream media sources have reported information that is now known to be false from the lack of any benefits of wearing masks to the failure in trials of drugs like remdesivir to the shortage of thousands of ventilators. Despite those being wrong, related opposing views were often treated as either fringe or false positions.

This subjectivity of censorship is why the cure is worse than the illness. The best cure for bad speech is more speech rather than regulation. The fact is that the pandemic, as Clinton reminded voters, is a "terrible crisis to waste." Yet the waste for some would be to emerge from the pandemic with free speech intact. Even former Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, who has falsely declared that hate speech is not protected under the First Amendment, recently boycotted MSNBC until it stopped airing press briefings by President Trump as "fake news."

Ocasio Cortez has called for action against Facebook for not censoring false or misleading political ads. In a confrontation with Zuckerberg, she dismissed concerns over censorship of speech and demanded, "So you will not take down lies or you will take down lies? I think that is a pretty simple yes or no." Whether contesting lockdown orders by officials or challenging the views of politicians, you can just declare an opposing view as "misinformation" and demand that others not see it.

This crisis is a chance to redefine free speech to allow greater ability to control

what opponents say and what the public reads. Academics have been laying the foundation for an anemic form of free speech for years. Even college presidents a few years ago had declared that there is no protection for "disingenuous misrepresentation of free speech."

Goldsmith and Woods wrote that the public should resist those "urging a swift return to normal," and the "extraordinary measures we are seeing are not all that extraordinary." So this is the new normal that some leaders and academics want the public to accept. After all, it is hard to get people to give up freedoms. It takes a crisis to convince them that notions like free speech are no longer relevant. After spending years seeking to convince Americans to follow the European trend against free speech, these folks are using the pandemic to claim that free speech could kill you.

Censorship works in a country much like the coronavirus. Initially, you feel better from silencing those views that you consider lies. Then comes the crash as others demand more and more censorship, including views that you consider to be true. That is what has happened in Europe, where an expanding range of speech is being criminalized or censored. Without uncensored speech, the political system is left gasping for air.

China has been particularly eager not to "waste" the opportunity of this crisis. Chinese professor Xu Zhangrun is one of many citizens arrested after publishing criticism of Xi Jinping on his handling of the crisis. The government deemed such criticism to be fake news causing panic. It has censored accounts of its concealing the source of the original outbreak, including censorship on popular Chinese apps such as WeChat.

Citizens now will have to decide, as Goldsmith and Woods insist, if "China was right." For my part, I remain hopeless in my desire for old fashioned free speech before the pandemic. You see, this "new normal" seems a lot like the old normal that the Framers changed with the First Amendment. China may be right for many in Congress and academia, but it remains on the wrong side of history. Not even a pandemic will change that.

The coronavirus becomes a battle cry for U.S. extremists

By Neil MacFarquhar

America's extremists are attempting to turn the coronavirus pandemic into a potent recruiting tool both in the deep corners of the internet and on the streets of state capitals by twisting the public health crisis to bolster their white supremacist, anti-government agenda.

Although the protests that have broken out across the country have drawn out a wide variety of people pressing to lift stay-at-home orders, the presence of extremists cannot be missed, with their anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic signs and coded messages aimed at inspiring the faithful, say those who track such movements.

April is typically a busy month for white supremacists. There is Hitler's birthday, which they contort into a celebration. There is the anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, the domestic attack 25 years ago that killed 168 people and still serves as a rallying call for new extremist recruits.

But this April, something else overshadowed those chilling milestones. It was the coronavirus, and the disruption it wreaked on society, that became the extremists' battle cry.

Embellishing Covid-19 developments to fit their usual agenda, extremists spread disinformation on the transmission of the virus and disparage stay-at-home orders as "medical martial law" — the long-anticipated advent of a totalitarian state.

"They are being very effective in capitalizing on the pandemic," said Devin Burghart, a veteran researcher of white nationalists who runs the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, a Seattle-based research center on far right movements.

What success the groups have had in finding fresh recruits is not yet clear, but new research indicates a significant jump in people consuming extremist material while under lockdown. Various violent incidents have been linked to white supremacist or anti-government perpetrators enraged over aspects of the pandemic.

The New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness said in March that white supremacists have encouraged followers to conduct attacks during the crisis to incite fear and target ethnic minorities and immigrants. "We have noticed domestic extremist groups taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic by spreading disinformation," Jared M. Maples, its director, said in a statement. The coronavirus has been dismissed as a hoax, painted as a Jewish-run conspiracy and, alternatively, described as a disease spread by nonwhite immigrants, he said.

Last month, the Department of Homeland Security warned law enforcement officials throughout the United States of the mobilization of violent extremists in response to stay-at-home measures, according to a senior law enforcement official and a congressional staff member, who were not authorized to discuss the warning publicly.

Extremist organizations habitually try to exploit any crisis to further their aims. While not monolithic, a spectrum of organizations — from anti-immigrant groups to those with a variety of grievances and those that overtly espouse violence — found something to like about the coronavirus.

"They view it as a chance to turn people," said Megan Squire, a professor at Elon University in North Carolina who tracks online extremist chatter.

New material sprouts regularly on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, while those exiled from mainstream platforms migrate to less-policed venues, including Telegram, Reddit, 4chan and gaming sites.

One subculture known as "accelerationists" lives in constant expectation of a race war that will topple the federal government. The pandemic became the latest in a long line of possible igniters.

Some label their expected second civil war "the boogaloo," and experts have tracked a spike in interest in the term on social media, plus a proliferation of advice on how to prepare.

The name is a pop culture reference derived from a 1984 movie flop that became a cult classic called "Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo." It went through various mutations and emerged sometimes as the "Big Igloo" or the "Big Luau." That is why adherents sometimes wear Hawaiian shirts, say those who track them. Many such shirts were in evidence when armed protesters stormed the state capital in Lansing, Mich., Thursday and they have appeared in rallies across the country.

(Source: NY Times)

North and South Korea exchange gunfire across border at guard post

North and South Korea exchanged gunfire around the South's guard post early on Sunday, raising tension a day after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ended an almost three-week absence from public life with state media showing him visiting a factory.

Multiple gunshots were fired from North Korea at 7:41 a.m. local time towards a guard post in South Korea that borders the North, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staffs (JCS) shot in a statement.

South Korea responded by firing two shots towards North Korea, no injuries were reported.

After weeks of intense speculation about Kim's health and whereabouts, the country's official media published photographs and a report on Saturday that Kim had attended the completion of a fertiliser plant, the first report of his appearance since April 11.

Kim was seen in photographs smiling and talking to aides at the ribbon-cutting ceremony and touring the plant. The authenticity of the photos, published on the website of the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper, could not be verified.

The exchange of gunshots was the latest confrontation between the rival Koreas that technically remain at war.

In a lengthy briefing held later on Sunday, an official at South Korea's JCS said the gunshots did not seem a planned provocation, as the area where it occurred was farmland, but declined to provide a clear conclusion about the incident.

"In absence of vision (for the target) and in the fog, would there be an accurate provocation?" the official said.

Choi Kang, vice president of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, said he believed the timing of the 'grey area' provocation shows it could be planned to show that Korea was still in charge of the North Korean military.

"Yesterday, Kim was trying to show he is perfectly healthy, and today, Kim is trying to mute all kinds of speculation that he may not have full control over the military," Choi said.

"Rather than going all the way by firing missiles and supervising a missile launch, Kim could be reminding us, 'yes I'm healthy and I'm still in power'."

(Source: Reuters)

Private sector restores historical mansions

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Three historical mansions in Davarzan, northern Khorasan Razavi province, were restored in collaboration with the private sector, provincial tourism chief Mohammad Abdollahzadeh-Sani said on Saturday, CHTN reported.



Khalili and Mohammadi mansions in Mazinan village and Moein al-Sharieh mansion in Sadkharv village were restored in a bid to become tourist destinations, he added.

Khalili mansion belonged to the 20th century Iranian pilot and poet Colonel Mohammad-Taqi Khan Pesyan, while Mohammadi mansion dates back to Qajar era (1789–1925).

The 150-year-old Moein al-Sharieh mansion was inscribed on the National Heritage list on 2005.

Over the past couple of years, tens of historical places and monuments have been temporarily ceded to the private sector under the supervision of the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places.

Affiliated with the tourism ministry, the Fund is in charge of concession with the aim of historical sites receiving better maintenance by repurposing them into thriving boutique hotels, eco-lodges, traditional restaurants or other profitable niches.

The country boasts hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Historical Chahar-Suq public bathhouse to undergo restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Historical Chahar-Suq public bathhouse in Shahrud, north-central province of Semnan, will undergo some rehabilitation works, deputy provincial tourism chief announced on Saturday, ISNA reported.

The bathhouse's ceiling, windows, walls and gutters as well as its foundation need restoration and reinforcement, which will be done in the near future, he added.



The bathhouse, which dates back to the 18th century, was inscribed on the national heritage list in 2001.

Bathhouses or 'hammams' in Iran were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They had a social concept for people who gathered at these places weekly.

It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life and shared humor and news. There are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore since most people have bathrooms in their homes due to the modern lifestyle.

Persian literature is full of proverbs, narrations, and folk stories about bathhouses, which indicate the importance of the place in the past time.

Iran is a rich country for its cultural heritage

By Paolo Patricians

(Part 3/3)

Shiraz gave birth to two of Iran's most beloved poets, Hafez e Sa'adi. The verses of Hafez are familiar to everyone. They are carved on monuments up and down the country, have been sung several times and are often cited in the course of daily conversation.

Beyond 600 years after his death, many flock to his memorial every day, with families happily preparing to caress his alabaster tomb to attract fortune.

Tabriz it is the second oldest city of Iran and the fifth largest, but the city looks more like a big country. Not only is the center accessible on foot, but people are also extremely friendly, which is not particularly common in large cities.

Tabriz it's a great introduction to Iran. It was at the center of the world for the trade of carpets for hundreds, maybe thousands of years. His bazaar, on the list of UNESCO World Heritage, is one of the oldest in the world, an endless maze full of busy people and friendly shopkeepers. You can easily wander around for a whole day without shopping, observing the daily life of the bazaar by itself an attraction.

I went to Iran for the same reasons I travel everywhere: to get out of my culture and learn, to take distant places to people who still have to go there. For me, traveling means understanding people and their lives wherever I go.

Know the Iranian culture it is an experience that makes the eyes open. We hope that even the most skeptical can appreciate the humanity of 80 millions of people. Political leaders sometimes make us forget that all of us on this small planet are equally precious children of God. If all this seems too idealistic, try going to Iran and meeting these people face to face.

This travelogue is posted to the Cultural Institute of Iran, a representative of Iranian cultural institutions in Italy.

Tehran Times: an advocate of cultural heritage, travel and folk awareness

Iran's first UNESCO sites registered when the daily was born

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Since it was established in May 1979, the Tehran Times has put the priority on covering top stories about Iran's history, cultural heritage, tourism, folk traditions, festivals and arts as well as notifying potential threats in these realms in line with its main mission to air the voice of the Islamic Revolution.

The Tehran Times was born at a time when no commercial traces of digital media and the Internet were found, growing over time, getting stronger, and more influential. The daily's general policy has been defined based on martyr Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti's statement: "The Tehran Times is not the newspaper of the government; it must be a loud voice of the Islamic Revolution and the loudspeaker of the oppressed people of the world".

The Tehran Times also covers political, economic, social, cultural, international, and sports news and also includes commentaries and interviews.

Stories on Iran's tourist attractions, medical tourism, eco-tourism, handicrafts, archaeological excavations, ancient relics, museums, and religious tourism make the content more colorful.

Throughout its lifetime, the newspaper has identified the need to reflect dynamic cultural activities to preserve both tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the country.

It's interesting to remind that the Tehran Times started work months before Iran gained its first UNESCO status by registering three separated sites namely, Persepolis; Tchogha Zanbil; and Imam Square (Meidan-e Emam).

Below are excerpts of introductions that the UN body has provided for each of those sites:

■ Persepolis

Persepolis, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy) in south-western Iran, is among the world's greatest archaeological sites. Renowned as the gem of Achaemenid (Persian) ensembles in the fields of architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, the royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent and which bear unique witness to a most ancient civilization.

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

Inspired by Mesopotamian models, the Achaemenid kings Darius I (522-486 BC), his son Xerxes I (486-465 BC), and his grandson Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC) built a splendid palatial complex on an immense half-natural, half-artificial terrace. This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

The terrace is a grandiose architectural creation, with its double flight of access



stairs, walls covered by sculpted friezes at various levels, contingent Assyrianesque propylaea (monumental gateway), gigantic sculpted winged bulls, and remains of large halls.

By carefully engineering lighter roofs and using wooden lintels, the Achaemenid architects were able to use a minimal number of astonishingly slender columns to support open area roofs. Columns were topped with elaborate capitals; typical was the double-bull capital where, resting on double volutes, the forequarters of two kneeling bulls, placed back-to-back, extend their coupled necks and their twin heads directly under the intersections of the beams of the ceiling.

Persepolis was the seat of government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

The terrace of Persepolis continues to be, as its founder Darius would have wished, the image of the Achaemenid monarchy itself, the summit where likenesses of the king reappear unceasingly, here as the conqueror of a monster, there carried on his throne by the downtrodden enemy, and where lengthy cohorts of sculpted warriors and guards, dignitaries, and tribute bearers parade endlessly.

■ Tchogha Zanbil

Located in ancient Elam (today Khuzestan province in southwest Iran), Tchogha Zanbil (Dur-Untash, or City of Untash, in Elamite) was founded by the Elamite king Untash-Napirisha (1275-1240 BC) as the religious center of Elam.

The principal element of this complex is an enormous ziggurat dedicated to the Elamite divinities Inshushinak and Napirisha. It is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument. The archaeological site of Tchogha Zanbil is an exceptional expression of the culture,

beliefs, and ritual traditions of one of the oldest indigenous peoples of Iran.

Our knowledge of the architectural development of the middle Elamite period (1400-1100 BC) comes from the ruins of Tchogha Zanbil and of the capital city of Susa 38 km to the north-west of the temple).

The archaeological site of Tchogha Zanbil covers a vast, arid plateau overlooking the rich valley of the river Ab-e Diz and its forests. A "sacred city" for the king's residence, it was never completed and only a few priests lived there until it was destroyed by the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal about 640 BC.

The complex was protected by three concentric enclosure walls: an outer wall about 4 km in circumference enclosing a vast complex of residences and the royal quarter, where three monumental palaces have been unearthed (one is considered a tomb-palace that covers the remains of underground baked-brick structures containing the burials of the royal family); a second wall protecting the temples (Temenus); and the innermost wall enclosing the focal point of the ensemble, the ziggurat.

The ziggurat originally measured 105.2 m on each side and about 53 m in height, in five levels, and was crowned with a temple. Mud brick was the basic material of the whole ensemble. The ziggurat was given a facing of baked bricks, a number of which have cuneiform characters giving the names of deities in the Elamite and Akkadian languages.

■ Imam Square

The Imam Square is a public urban square in the center of Isfahan, an ancient city located on the main north-south and east-west routes crossing central Iran. It is one of the largest city squares in the world and an outstanding example of Iranian and Islamic architecture.

Built by the Safavid shah Abbas I in the early 17th century, the square is bordered by two-storey arcades and anchored on each



side by four magnificent buildings: to the east, the Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque; to the west, the pavilion of Ali Qapu; to the north, the portico of Qeyssariyeh; and to the south, the celebrated Royal Mosque. A homogenous urban ensemble built according to a unique, coherent, and harmonious plan, the Meidan Emam was the heart of the Safavid capital and is an exceptional urban realisation.

Also known as Naghsh-e Jahan ("Image of the World"), and formerly as Meidan-e Shah, the square is not typical of urban ensembles in Iran, where cities are usually tightly laid out without sizeable open spaces. Esfahan's public square, by contrast, is immense: 560 m long by 160 m wide, it covers almost 9 ha. All of the architectural elements that delineate the square, including its arcades of shops, are aesthetically remarkable, adorned with a profusion of enameled ceramic tiles and paintings.

Of particular interest is the Royal Mosque (Masjed-e Shah), located on the south side of the square and angled to face Mecca. It remains the most celebrated example of the colorful architecture which reached its high point in Iran under the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722; 1729-1736).

The pavilion of Ali Qapu on the west side forms the monumental entrance to the palatial zone and to the royal gardens which extend behind it. Its apartments, high portal, and covered terrace are renowned. The portico of Qeyssariyeh on the north side leads to the 2-km-long Esfahan Bazaar, and the Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque on the east side, built as a private mosque for the royal court, is today considered one of the masterpieces of Safavid architecture.

The Meidan Emam was at the heart of the Safavid capital's culture, economy, religion, social power, government, and politics. Its vast sandy esplanade was used for celebrations, promenades, and public executions, for playing polo and for assembling troops.

Iran calls for return of relics confiscated in Austria

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has called for the return of relics, which were discovered from a safety-deposit box of a bank in Austria last year.

"Based on national law and international pacts such as the 1970 UNESCO Convention, to which Austria is a signatory, it is required that the items seized to be returned to the Islamic Republic of Iran as soon as possible," CHTN quoted Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, deputy minister for cultural heritage affairs, as saying on Saturday.

"According to experts' assessments and available photos, the [seized] relics certainly belong to the geographical and historical realm of Iran [and they date back to the] first millennium BC, as well as the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras," the official noted.

"Among the above-mentioned objects, there are examples of bronze objects known as Lorestan's pins, similar examples of which are being kept at the museums of Reza Abasi and the National Museum of Iran."

"The images [that have been received from the confiscated objects] show a metal rhythm in the Achaemenid style, which its counterparts are found in the National Museum of Iran and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; and a bronze headpiece of the Sassanid King (Shapur II), the original of which is made of silver being kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York....," he explained.

"It seems that a number of these items, such as the last two, are counterfeit, given



the images sent yet," he said. "But any careful expert commentary requires observing the original."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Talebian noted: "Any careful and expert commentary on their authenticity is required to observe the original works or receiving high quality images of them."

"In Azar 1398 (the Iranian month falling on November 22 to December 21, 2019) through a telephone call from the head of Iran's Interpol, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts was



informed of the discovery and seizure of some ancient objects of Iranian origin from a safety-deposit box of a bank in Austria."

"Correspondence has been made with the Interpol and the general directorate of international affairs of the judiciary regarding the announcement of expert assessments and the receiving accurate information on the number of confiscated items, as well as high-quality images of them."

In April, Second Brigadier General Hadi Shirzad, the head of the Iranian Police's international department, announced that the

police "in a European country" have seized a cache of ancient Iranian relics hidden at a safety-deposit box of a bank.

"According to the Interpol, one of the banks in a European country intends to renovate and open the safe-deposit boxes inside the bank (previously informed the holders of the safe-deposit boxes that the bank intended to open them). Then, the bank finds out that one of the holders keeps some antiques of gold and silver in his/her box," the senior police official added without mentioning the name of the European country.

"In coordination with the judicial authorities and with their assistance, a lawsuit has been prepared, translated and submitted to that country. We are following the case through Interpol and diplomatic channels until the relics are back home," Shirzad said.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and to India.

The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power in ancient Iran.

The Parthians largely adopted the art, architecture, religious beliefs, and royal insignia of their culturally heterogeneous empire, which encompassed Persian, Hellenistic, and regional cultures.

The Sassanid era (224 CE–651) is of very high importance in the Iranian history, under which Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.

Stay healthier during Ramadan

Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan is seen as a way to purify spiritually as well as physically - a time to detach from material pleasures and be closer to God. The act of fasting is also believed to increase Muslims' piety, reminding them that others are less fortunate than themselves.

Fasting involves abstaining from all food, drink from sunrise to sunset. Muslims will wake up before sunrise for Morning Prayer and to eat before the day's fast begins. Most will break their fast alongside their families in the evening with a communal "Iftar" meal, typically often started with dates.

Children and elderly people are exempt. Pregnant or breastfeeding women, anyone who is sick and anyone travelling on a journey are also exempt.

Nonetheless fit and able adults are expected to fast which could be pretty beneficial to the body.

The Iranian traditional medicine has provided the Muslims with some dietary recommendation to avoid illnesses and discomfort after long fasting days.

Here are some tips:

■ Eat less sweets

It is better to cut back on sweets such as halve (a dessert made with flour, rosewater and oil), Sholezard (an Iranian traditional saffron rice pudding dessert), or Zulbia and Bamiyeh (traditional deep fried sweets) as they are rich in sugar and fat and consuming them in large quantities might work up thirst,



cause poor digestion, spoil appetite and increases risks for obesity.

It is better to eat them in very small quantities and two hours after Iftar.

■ How to avoid sever thirst

Smelling apple, cucumber, lemon, and rosewater, washing or spraying face and neck with cold water and rosewater, avoid spending long hours outside and not involving in mental and physical activities especially in hot places, wearing light colored clothes to keep cool, rubbing violet or almond oil on the belly, cheeks, forehead and behind the ears, and taking rests in dark and cool places with cool scents would help to avoid sever thirst.

■ Fasting is a treatment process

Fasting is a treatment course more effective than any anti-obesity or weight loss medications for excreting excess humidity, losing weight, and to achieve an even balance of four bodily fluids and correspondingly a balanced temperament.

One can spot signs of improvement upon their health by feeling lighter after fasting.

■ Fasting decreases humidity, increases warmness

Fasting decrease humidity and increases warmness in the body consequently those with wet, and wet and cold Mizaj would benefit fasting the most.

■ Do not overeat

Eating as much as one used to eat before Ramadan, from Iftar to Suhur, is a huge mistake as it both contradicts the true purpose of fasting- which is to practice abstinence- and cause harms to the body.

■ Consuming too much tea, water, watermelon increases thirst

Consuming too much tea, water, and watermelon at Suhur does not quench thirst, it rather leads to increased urination and inevitably increases thirst during the day.

■ How to avoid constipation

To prevent constipation, it is recommended to consume lettuce, cucumber, and plum- especially for those with warm Mizaj- at Suhur meal.

■ Make sure to have Suhur

Not having Suhur is a huge mistake. The human digestive system converts food into nutrients that the body needs and once there is no food digestive acids eat away at the lining tissues of the stomach and lead to stomach ulcer and painful sores in the stomach lining or small intestine.

■ Do not insist on eating too much

Generally, fasting would shrink the stomach, decrease the appetite, and result in losing weight. Therefore, insisting on eating as much as one used to eat before Ramadan might cause nausea, excessive throat mucus and Acid reflux.

34 ha park to be created in garrison in Tehran



SOCIETY TEHRAN — A plan has been approved by the Supreme Urban Planning Council of Tehran to create a 34-hectare park in the O6 garrison, head of the urban planning committee of the Tehran City Council has announced.

According to the memorandum of understanding signed between the Tehran Municipality and the Army, it was decided to liberate 70 percent (34 hectares) of the garrison area as public green space and make it available to the Tehrani citizens, Zahra Nejad-Bahram explained.

Flight to return Iranians from Austria amid coronavirus



SOCIETY TEHRAN — The d e s k Iranian Embassy in Vienna has issued a statement announcing that "a flight will be launched to return Iranians living in Austria and its neighboring countries, following the outbreak of COVID-19."

According to the announcement, flag carrier Iran Air will launch a flight from Vienna on May 5 to bring back those ap-

plied for returning to Iran, ISNA reported.

Besides, two flights to Spain will be made on May 4 and 6 to return the Iranians living in that country, including students.

The Iranian health ministry on Sunday announced that the total number of people diagnosed with the coronavirus has reached 97,424 of whom 6,203 have died and 78,422 (equaling 72 percent), have recovered.

Society under spotlight

Over the past four decades, the Iranian people have stood side by side with the government to achieve lofty goals of the Islamic revolution. During ups and downs, joy and grief, people were present in different fields to play their part in social development of the country. Below is a brief description of some of the most important social events covered by the Tehran Times since its establishment in May 1979.

■ 1) Assistance during the Sacred Defense

During the eight-year Sacred Defense against Iraq (1980-88), people behind the front were always backing soldiers by providing assistance both in cash and kind and dispatching to battlefronts via mosques and Basij bases.

■ 2) Participation in elections

People from all walks of life have been participating in different elections. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has said that election is a civil right, public Jihad, and divine test that if accompanied with massive participation of people it will bring glory and respect to the Islamic establishment and protect the country against plots.

■ 3) Implementation of the Subsidy Reform Plan

The subsidy reform plan, started in December 2010, allowed the Iranian government to gradually slash subsidies on fuel, electricity, and certain goods over the course of five years, with low-income families being compensated with direct cash handouts. The plan has brought positive results for the national economy.

The World Bank has announced that the subsidy reform plan has reduced poverty and income disparities in the country significantly.

■ 4) Jubilant football fans ruling the streets

On November 29, 1997, when Iran qualified after a dramatic 2-2 draw against Australia in Melbourne, millions of people poured onto the streets. They were happy, singing in public. The victory sparked some of the biggest street celebrations ever seen in the country. Thousands of motorists honked their horns. Joyful young boys and girls handed out flowers and sweets.

■ 5) Manifestation of altruism during coronavirus

People in Iran, like almost all across the world, are grappling with a predicament, called the novel coronavirus or Covid-19. At a time when so many folks are in so many kinds of need, people voluntarily donate their time, skills, materials, and much more.

To feed those in need, they are working at charities. They are making deliveries to the more vulnerable and producing and distributing sanitizers to prevent the spread of the virus. They are donating facilities, money, food, and even their own blood to help their neighbors make it through tough times.



Amazon deforestation could trigger new pandemics, experts warn

The Brazilian government is seeking to use coronavirus as cover to usher in laws which could lead to increased occupation of indigenous lands and deforestation in the Amazon, campaigners and experts allege, amid warnings that further environmental disruption may lead to new pandemics.

The country has been divided on the severity of Covid-19, with president Jair Bolsonaro dismissing it as "a little flu" and opposing lockdown measures, for which public support is waning, despite mass graves being dug in Sao Paulo in the face of rising fatalities.

While the crisis has seen most industries grind to a standstill, government data suggests deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon rose 30 per cent in March compared to the same period last year, with the most recent data suggesting the trend has continued in April.

There has also been a reported increase in forays into some indigenous lands by miners and land-grabbers, as both civil and official protection efforts are scaled back for fear of infection.

Against this backdrop, scientists are issuing renewed warnings that ecological disruption can increase the chance of novel infections crossing over to humans - known as "zoonotic" diseases.

"Approximately one in three outbreaks of new and emerging illnesses is linked to changes in land use, like deforestation," Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, told Mongabay.

Dr Daszak was lead author in a vast US government-backed study published in 2019 which noted that HIV, Ebola and Zika virus are all "diseases causally linked to land change use".

Some experts suggest the Amazon is a particularly high-risk location for novel outbreaks.

"Where you have a huge biodiverse zone, the Amazon, and then you have an encroaching human footprint, through urbanisation, road networks, deforestation, extractive industries like logging and mining, you have all of the ingredients for a virus spillover recipe," David Wolkling, of the University of California's One Health Institute told Greenpeace's investigative arm, Unearthed. Wildfires, often caused by slash-and-burn deforestation tactics, can also play a role in the emergence of new diseases.

Notably, some researchers now credit the huge fires in Indonesia in 1998 with the arrival of Nipah virus - with vast smoke clouds forcing fruit bats to search elsewhere for food, settling on trees in Malaysian orchards. Pigs eating the same fruit soon fell ill, with farmers following suit shortly afterwards.

With the Amazon suffering its worst fire season in a decade in 2019, more than a dozen international experts convened to offer a stark warning.

"The Amazon region of Brazil, endemic for many communicable or zoonotic diseases can, after a wildfire, trigger a selection for survival, and with it change the habitat and behaviours of some animal species," they wrote. "These can be reservoirs of zoonotic bacteria, viruses, and parasites."

Amid these warnings, Brazilian congress could soon hold a digital-only vote - using emergency processes introduced to allow more rapid decision-making during the Covid-19 crisis - on enshrining temporary legislation into permanent law, which campaigners warn would legitimise historic land-grabs and facilitate new invasions, paving the way for further deforestation.

As a result, the 120-day Provisional Measure (MP) 910, decreed by Mr Bolsonaro in December, may now be passed as a permanent measure within the next three weeks without being subjected to typical levels of debate and scrutiny, environmentalists allege.

The Bolsonaro administration has said the new land ownership rules will grant legal titles to farmers who have occupied federal lands in a "tame and peaceful way for many years", enabling them to "rise above subsistence farming and improve their income".

It insists the new law in "no way" facilitates land-grabbing or deforestation, arguing that new landowners will be held strictly accountable for the preservation of up to 80 per cent of their land.

But analysts warn that the new legislation allows huge swathes of land illegally cut down and occupied before 2018 - often by criminal gangs - to be legally seized by land-grabbers using evidence of their illegal activities as proof of their occupation.

Meanwhile, a new rule called IN 09, passed last week by the government's indigenous agency Funai, strips yet-to-be-demarcated but indigenous lands of their designation as "indigenous" in the land registry, according to Greenpeace.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Putin and Berlusconi to talk

(August 29, 2003)

President Vladimir Putin of Russia flies from Moscow to the Italian island of Sardinia later today, Friday. He will be spending the weekend there as the house guest of the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi. This report from David Willey:

This summer Mr Berlusconi, currently president of the EU, is using his own luxury seaside **villa** overlooking the **crystal clear waters** of one of the most beautiful bays in the Mediterranean as the setting for a new style of **informal** international diplomacy. The Russian and Italian leaders are expected to discuss informally possible ways of associating Russia more closely with the European Union. Of course not all EU members **look favourably** on this idea.

Mr Berlusconi has created an **exotic** new cactus garden in the **grounds** of his villa to show off to his Russian guest and has invited the Italian tenor, Andrea Bocelli, to sing at an evening party. The billionaire Italian leader **prides himself** on being on intimate terms with many world leaders. Last year he invited President Putin's two teenage daughters to stay at his villa.

By inviting the Russian President into one of his many luxury homes, Mr Berlusconi feels he can create a friendlier and more intimate atmosphere than at any official government guesthouse. Next week the Prime Ministers of France and Spain will receive the same **VIP** treatment at Mr Berlusconi's Sardinian villa.

■ Words

villa: a holiday house of the kind found in southern Europe

crystal clear waters: clean and beautiful sea

informal: relaxed, modern

look favourably on: to agree with something and think it is a good idea

exotic: unusual

in the grounds of: in the area surrounding and belonging to the property

prides himself on...: is proud because of...

on intimate terms: has a close personal relationship

VIP: Very Important Person

(Source: BBC)

UK made contingency plans in case Johnson died in COVID-19 battle

Boris Johnson, the United Kingdom's prime minister, has revealed that the British government made contingency plans for his death as his condition deteriorated while battling COVID-19 in hospital last month.

In an interview with The Sun newspaper on Sunday, Johnson said doctors gave him "litres and litres of oxygen" to keep him alive.

Johnson, 55, returned to work on Monday, a month after testing positive for COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the new coronavirus.

He spent 10 days in isolation in Downing Street from late March, but was then taken to London's St Thomas' Hospital where he received oxygen treatment and spent three nights in intensive care.

"They had a strategy to deal with a 'death of Stalin' -type scenario," Johnson told The Sun. "It was a tough old moment; I won't deny it."

He added: "I was not in particularly brilliant shape, and I was aware there were contingency plans in place."

After Johnson was discharged, St Thomas' said it was glad to have cared for the prime minister, but the hospital has given no details about the gravity of his illness beyond stating that he was treated in intensive care.

Johnson and his fiancée, Carrie Symonds, on Saturday announced the name of their newly born son as Wilfred Lawrie Nicholas, partly as a tribute to two of the intensive care doctors who they said had saved Johnson's life.

"The doctors had all sorts of arrangements for what to do if things went badly wrong," Johnson said of his COVID-19 battle. "The bloody indicators kept going in the wrong direction."

He said doctors discussed invasive ventilation.

"The bad moment came when it was 50-50 whether they were going to have to put a tube down my windpipe," he said.

"That was when it got a bit ... they were starting to think about how to handle it presentationally."

Johnson described feeling "frustrated" as his health worsened and became emotional as he described the ordeal, according to The Sun.

He put down his recovery to "wonderful, wonderful nursing", adding: "it was an extraordinary thing".

The experience made him more determined to fight the disease and get the country back to normal, Johnson said, adding that he would announce a "roadmap" towards easing the lockdown restrictions imposed in late March later this week.

The prime minister's comments came as the government announced 621 more deaths in the outbreak, taking the overall cumulative toll to 28,131 - just behind Europe's worst-hit country, Italy.

Trump tells Netanyahu not to cherry-pick 'deal of century'

U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly told Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accept a recently announced "peace plan" as one package.

Citing senior sources, Israel's TV Channel 13 said the U.S. had informed Netanyahu that he could not cherry-pick certain terms of the "deal of the century" for annexing major parts of the occupied West Bank.

According to the Israeli channel, there are "deep" and "basic" differences between Washington and Tel Aviv regarding the annexation of the Jordan Valley, the North of the Dead Sea and other settlements.

The sources also revealed that the U.S. administration had asked Netanyahu to announce his agreement on the principle of the "two states for two nations". Otherwise, Washington would not okay his annexation plan, they said.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman also informed Netanyahu that Trump wanted Israel to implement his plan, and not anything else.

Defying international outcry, Trump on January 28 announced the general provisions of his long-delayed plan at the White House with Netanyahu by his side.

The U.S. president said his proposed deal would ensure the establishment of a "two-state" solution, but Jerusalem al-Quds would be the "undivided capital" of Israel.

According to Press TV, Palestinian leaders, who severed all ties with Washington in late 2017 after Trump controversially recognized Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel, immediately rejected the plan, with President Mahmoud Abbas saying it "belongs to the dustbin of history."

Trump's Middle East scheme largely meets Israel's demands in the decades-old conflict while creating a Palestinian state with limited control over its own security and borders.

It also enshrines Jerusalem al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the regime to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

The proposal further denies the right of return to their homeland to of Palestinian refugees, among other controversial terms.

UK shadows Italy as worst hit in Europe

The United Kingdom's COVID-19 death toll rose 621 to 28,131 as of May 1, just short of Italy which has so far had the world's second most deadly outbreak of the disease after the United States.

As Britain shadows Italy for the grim status of being the worst hit country in Europe, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is facing criticism from opposition parties who say his government stumbled in the early stages of the outbreak.

Housing minister Robert Jenrick gave the latest U.K. figures at a Downing Street briefing Saturday.

The United States has had 64,740 deaths, followed by Italy with 28,710 and the United Kingdom on 28,131 and then Spain on 25,100, according to a Reuters tally.

Italy, which has a population of 60 million, said its death toll rose 474 as of Saturday. The United Kingdom has a population of about 67 million.

Johnson, 55, initially resisted introducing a lockdown to restrict economic and public activity, but changed course when projections showed a quarter of a million people could die.

Johnson himself battled COVID-19 last month, spending three days in intensive care. He returned to work on Monday, telling the nation that people around the world were looking at the United Kingdom's "apparent success".

(Source: Reuters)

The Observer view on Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia

→ 1 Much of this weaponry has been used in the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen, which entered its sixth murderous year in March. The UN says the war has helped cause the world's worst humanitarian crisis. In June last year, to the government's disgust, the court of appeal halted UK arms sales, citing concerns about a "historic pattern of breaches of international humanitarian law".

If oil and arms are taken out of the equation, what remains to bind Britain to an undemocratic, quasi-feudal regime notorious for its human rights abuses, repression of its Shia Muslim minority, institutionalised discrimination against women and dangerous efforts to draw Britain and the US into confrontation with its arch rival, Iran?

One often-heard justification for turning a blind eye is that the Saudis offer invaluable intelligence in the fight against fanatical Islamist groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaida. It is certainly in Britain's interest that the Saudis continue to cooperate with western counter-terrorism efforts.

But it's a two-way street. The Saudi



regime lacks legitimacy. It faces a region-wide challenge from Iran and threats

of its own from Sunni extremists. It appears unable, despite superficial reforms,

Rival Saudi, UAE-backed militants engage in clashes in Yemen's Socotra

Once-allied rival militants, backed by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have engaged in intense clashes in Yemen's strategic Socotra Island, exposing a deep rift in a Riyadh-led coalition.

Local sources said infighting between Saudi-sponsored mercenaries loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and armed units of the so-called Southern Transitional Council (STC), which is supported by the UAE, over the control of Socotra's provincial capital of Hadibo.

Witnesses also told local media that the UAE-aligned elements had fired artillery shells at residential areas near Hadibo.

Shells struck the mountainous district of Haybat, about 20 kilometers outside Hadibo, said resident Aden al-Ghad.

Yemen's former prime minister Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr tweeted that the UAE-backed militants were trying to take control of Socotra's provincial capital, "using all types of heavy weapons".

Some reports indicated that the STC's military units had seized control of a coast guard battalion of the Saudi



mercenaries and looted weapons and ammunition stores.

Yemen's al-Masirah TV network said Friday's clashes followed the arrival of an Emirati ship loaded with weapons on the coast of Socotra.

Last week, the STC declared a state of emergency and announced "self-administration rule" in Yemen's southern

regions, including the port city of Aden — which has served as the seat of Hadi's regime during the Saudi military aggression.

In August 2018, the UAE deployed more than a hundred troops with artillery and armored vehicles to Socotra. A few months later, a UAE official visiting Socotra said the island would become part of the UAE and its residents would be given Emirati citizenship.

In 2019, the UAE announced a surprise plan to withdraw part of its troops from Yemen in a major blow to its coalition allies.

Both the UAE-sponsored separatists and Saudi-backed Hadi loyalists serve a Riyadh-led military coalition which has been waging a bloody war on Yemeni people since March 2015.

The Western-sponsored bombing campaign has plunged Yemen into what the UN says is the world's worst humanitarian crisis and shattered its health system.

Aid groups have warned that Yemen's health system is ill-equipped to handle the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Trump hails Kim reappearance, but N.Korea denuclearization prospects bleak

U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday welcomed the reemergence of North Korea's Kim Jong Un after weeks of speculation about his health, but prospects for the U.S. efforts to persuade Pyongyang to denuclearize appear as bleak as ever.

On Saturday, North Korean media said Kim cut a ribbon at a ceremony on Friday to mark the completion of a fertilizer plant, Reuters reported.

It had not reported on Kim's whereabouts since he presided over a meeting on April 11, provoking speculation that he was seriously ill and raising concerns about instability in his nuclear-armed country that could affect other North Asian countries and the United States.

Kim was seen in photographs smiling and talking to aides at the ceremony and also touring the plant. The authenticity of the photos could not be verified.

A U.S. government source familiar with intelligence reporting said Washington strongly believes Kim is alive, but has not been able to confirm the photos were taken on Friday, or explain why he had not been seen for weeks.

Trump, who met Kim three times in 2018 and 2019 in unprecedented but unsuccessful personal attempts to persuade him to give up his nuclear weapons, tweeted on Saturday: "I, for one, am glad to see he is back, and well!"

Trump has continued to refer to Kim as a friend, but the mystery of the past three weeks has served to emphasize the limits of that relationship and his lack of progress in persuading North Korea to give up a weapons program that now threatens the United States.

The lack of a clear successor for Kim has raised fears about the security of the program in the event of political turmoil in North Korea, which borders U.S. strategic rival China and U.S. allies South Korea and Japan.

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington was monitoring the situation closely and that the U.S. focus remained on "making sure that country doesn't have nuclear weapons." North Korea has shown no willingness to abandon weapons it sees as vital for defense of the nation and the Kim dynasty.

U.S. using Daesh attacks as pretext to extend its Iraq presence: Asa'ib chief

A senior commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units says the recent Daesh attacks on PMU positions are part of a U.S. plot to extend the American troops' presence in Iraq.

At least 10 members of the PMU — better known by their Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi — were killed in a coordinated attack carried out by Daesh in Iraq's north-central province of Salahuddin, the group said earlier on Saturday.

Speaking to Iraq's Al-Ahad TV, Qais al-Khazali, the leader of Iraq's Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq movement, strongly condemned the attack and described it as an attempt by the U.S. government to bring terrorists back to Iraq and use it as a pretext to prolong its own presence in the Arab country, Press TV reported.

"The recent Daesh attacks are part of the U.S. government's scenario to help the terrorist group resume its activities and presence in Iraq," al-Khazali said.

At this juncture, he added, such attacks are only aimed at providing justification for the U.S. occupation of Iraq, which serves to ensure Israel's security and at the same



time control the Arab country's oil resources.

The top Iraqi leader then drew a connection between the growing number of Daesh terrorist attacks in Iraq and the increase in calls for the continuation of U.S. presence made by certain "mercenaries", and said the attacks might be related to the July negotiations between Baghdad and Washington over the presence of American

Hundreds protest Israel coalition deal before court hearing

Hundreds of Israelis took to the streets in Tel Aviv on Saturday night, demonstrating against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new coalition deal with his chief rival a day before the country's Supreme Court is to begin debating a series of legal challenges to the agreement.

Demonstrators gathered for the third consecutive weekend in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, standing more than six feet apart in organized rows to conform with social-distancing rules to protect against the spread of the coronavirus, al Jazeera reported.

"Shame! Shame!" chanted the protesters. One of the posters showed a picture of Netanyahu and Benny Gantz with the slogan, "We Say No to a Corruption Government".

Protesters are upset that Netanyahu's power-sharing deal with Gantz leaves the prime minister in power as he prepares to go on trial for corruption charges.

Netanyahu was formally charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust in January, becoming the first Israeli prime minister ever indicted in office. His trial was due to open in March but has been postponed until May 24.

Under the deal, Netanyahu and Gantz agreed to share the premiership, with Netanyahu serving as prime minister the next 18 months and Gantz serving the next 18 months.

It also includes a clause to advance plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, including Israeli settlements, starting on July 1. Saturday's protest was organised by the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, one of the advocacy groups that has filed a legal challenge to the country's Supreme Court.

Smaller protests also took place in other cities across Israel.

The groups are asking the high court to ban any indicted politician, including Netanyahu, from being allowed to form a new government. They also say that parts of the coalition deal are illegal.

The Supreme Court will meet for two days from Sunday to consider whether to block the agreement.

If the court strikes down the coalition deal, Israel could be plunged into a fourth consecutive election in just over 12 months.

troops in the Arab country.

Al-Khazali's comments came shortly after the other PMU group Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba warned about a fiendish plot by the United States to transfer members and field commanders of Daesh from neighboring Syria to Iraq.

In a statement, the group expressed serious concerns over latest U.S. military activities in Iraq, among them the transfer and relocation of troops and military hardware.

The group then dismissed the withdrawal of American troops from a number of bases across Iraq as "a smoke screen operation," adding that Washington is hatching a new plot for the Arab country.

Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters have played a major role in the liberation of Daesh-held areas to the south, northeast and north of the Iraqi capital, ever since the terrorists launched an offensive in the country, overrunning vast swathes in lightning attacks.

In November 2016, the Iraqi parliament voted to integrate the PMU, which was formed shortly after the emergence of Daesh in Iraq in 2014, into the military.

Pope says coronavirus vaccine must be shared worldwide

Pope Francis called on Sunday for international scientific cooperation to discover a vaccine for the coronavirus and said any successful vaccine should be made available around the world.

Francis, who has been delivering his Sunday address from the papal library instead of St. Peter's Square because of the lockdown in Italy, thanked all those around the world who were providing essential services.

He encouraged international cooperation to deal with the crisis and combat the virus, which has infected nearly 3.5 million people and killed more than 240,000 people worldwide, Reuters reported.

"In fact, it is important to unite scientific capabilities, in a transparent and impartial way to find vaccines and treatments," he said.

Francis said it was also important to "guarantee universal access to essential

technologies that allow each infected person, in every part of the world, to receive the necessary medical treatment."

World leaders pledged in April to accelerate work on tests, drugs and vaccines against COVID-19 and to share them around the globe, but the United States did not take part in the launch of the World Health Organization (WHO) initiative.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said

the WHO was slow to react to the outbreak and was being "China-centric", and as a consequence has announced a suspension of funding. The WHO has defended its handling of the crisis.

A number of pharmaceutical companies around the world have developed tests to identify antibodies that develop after somebody has come into contact with the virus.

Iranian goalkeeper Mazaheri nominated for best ACL2016 Team

With the current AFC Champions League currently on hiatus, the-AFC.com kicks off a series of articles to determine your best sides from the last four editions of the AFC Champions League.

To select the candidates for each position, we have reflected match data from the tournament to draw up a statistics-based approach to present the outstanding performers.

We begin with five candidates for the all-important number one shirt. Review the nominees and then choose your favorite goalkeeper to helm the rearguard for this all-star XI in the poll below.

■ **Khaled Eisa – Al Ain**

- 14 appearances, 13 goals conceded, 5 clean sheets (#1 tied)
- 18 clearances (#1), 17 catches (#2)
- 70.5% save percentage

At the 2016 AFC Champions League, Al Ain returned to the final for the first time since 2005. While playmaker Omar Abdulrahman took much of the plaudits for his magical play, goalkeeper Khalid Eisa was just as important at the other end of the pitch, marshalling the backline.

Leading several of the goalkeeping categories, Eisa in particular helped Al Ain edge close ties against Zobahan and Lokomotiv in the knockout stage – conceding just once over the four matches – and is the only one of our candidates who went all the way to the tournament's climax.

■ **Mohammad Rashid Mazaheri – Zob Ahan**

- 8 appearances, 5 goals conceded
- 5 clean sheets (#1 tied)
- 85.3% save percentage – (#1 of those with at least 8 appearances in the competition)

Along with Lekhwiya, now known as Al Duhail, Zobahan had the stingiest defence in the group stage, letting in just two goals in six matches, and it was largely thanks to the hugely impressive Mohammad Rashid Mazaheri in goal, who was arguably the



standout custodian of the first phase of the competition.

In the Round of 16, Zobahan were ultimately eliminated by Al Ain, but Mazaheri's impressive shot-stopping had already left a lasting impression.

■ **Ignaty Nesterov – Lokomotiv**

- 10 appearances, 5 goals conceded
- 5 clean sheets (#1 tied)
- 84.9% save percentage – (#2 of those with at least 8 appearances in the competition)

An Uzbekistan legend of the game, it's no surprise to see Ignaty Nesterov among the number of great goalkeepers at the 2016 AFC Champions League.

After masterminding a rearguard that conceded only three times in the group stage, the shot-stopper then impressively blunted heavyweights Al Hilal in Riyadh and Al Ain in the UAE in the knockout stages before a quarter-final exit.

■ **Shusaku Nishikawa – Urawa Red Diamonds**

- 8 appearances, 7 goals conceded, 4 clean sheets
- 20 catches (#1)
- 81.6% save percentage

Just four goals conceded in six group stage ties, Shusaku Nishikawa was as ever the main man between the posts for Urawa Red Diamonds with the Oita-native shining in his second Continental campaign for the Saitama side.

The then 29-year-old blanked FC Seoul in the first leg of the Round of 16, but was unable to keep out the Koreans in the return meeting as the J.League club were eliminated on penalties.

■ **Vedran Janjetovic – Sydney FC**

- 8 appearances, 7 goals conceded, 3 clean sheets
- 3 penalties saved (#1)
- 70.8% save percentage

To save a penalty is rare enough, but to save three is an unique feat indeed and it's the headline stat from Vedran Janjetovic's 2016 AFC Champions League campaign.

The Zagreb-born custodian also conceded just four times in the group stage to help Sydney FC top the standings, including denying Ricardo Goulart from the spot in a win over Guangzhou Evergrande, before saving a penalty in each leg of their Round of 16 elimination on away goals to Shandong Luneng.

Now that you've seen all five great goalkeepers, vote for your best in the poll and secure them a place in the Best XI for the 2016 AFC Champions League. Poll ends at 1600 (UTC 8) on May 9.

The Best XI chosen by fans and the best XI based on the 2016 statistics will be announced at the end of May.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran National Team first match in October

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Dato Windsor John, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) General Secretary, has announced that the proposed time for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers in Asia is October and November.

AFC is determined to resume continental football competitions this year, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, although matches might have to be played behind closed the doors.

The Iran national soccer team has four must-win games ahead in the 2022 World Cup qualifiers against Hong Kong of China, Cambodia, Bahrain, and Iraq.

Iran lost the matches against Bahrain and Iraq in first leg with Marc Wilmots at helm. The four remaining matches are so important to clarify the fate of the Whites in the World Cup qualifier. The competitions were scheduled to be completed by the end of the summer, but the outbreak of the coronavirus halted the games

Now the AFC secretary general has expressed hope that the international games will be held in upcoming months.

In an interview with an Emirati newspaper, Windsor John said that the Asian Football Confederation's proposed time for the World Cup qualifiers is November and October 2020. If these dates are accepted by FIFA, the Iranian national team will play their first official games under the management of Dragan Skocic, as the new head coach, in early autumn.

Iranian blind footballer to release inmate

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Captain of **d e s k** Iran blind football team Behzad Zadaliasghari has decided to release a prisoner with his marriage cost.

The Rio Paralympics silver medalist has shown his generosity as he made decision

to release a debtor.

"After consulting with my wife, we decided to donate our wedding cost to the prisoner and I hope it can solve his problems at the holy month of Ramedan," Zadaliasghari said. Zadaliasghari was a member of Team

Iran who made history in Rio by winning the first-ever medal at the Games. Iran lost to Brazil 1-0 in the final match.

He scored an incredible goal against Morocco team at the Rio 2016 group stage after he dribbled around the entire Morocco team.



Italy gives Serie A clubs hope with training ruling

Italy offered Serie A clubs a glimmer of hope on Sunday after it said footballers could take part in individual training sessions as the strictest coronavirus lockdown measures begin to ease.

The interior ministry's go-ahead for players to attend their club's training facilities offered fans in the football mad country the first sign that the 2019-20 season might yet be saved.

Matches were abandoned on March 9 in the face of a health crisis that has now officially claimed nearly 29,000 lives in Italy and 245,000 worldwide.

Some of the bigger clubs with title aspirations from the less affected regions have been talking about going back to training for weeks.

But Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte only allowed teams to resume organised activities on May 18 -- a date that might push back this season's completion into the start of the next.

Several regions that have avoided the worst of the pandemic have taken matters into their own hands and allowed clubs to open their facilities for players to train on their own.

Teams such as Napoli and Parma have followed the lead of Lazio -- trailing leaders Juventus by just a point -- and gave the nod for players to return.

They insisted that they were not breaking the rules because Conte has allowed all Italians to start exercising in open public places starting Monday.

The interior ministry bowed to the seemingly inevitable

on Sunday and agreed that teams can open their facilities to players for training.

"Athletes, professional or otherwise, of non-individual sports are allowed -- just as every citizen -- to exercise in public or private areas," the interior ministry said.

But players must "respect social distancing rules of at least two meters and the ban on public gatherings."

Italian media read the statement as an encouraging sign for football.

"Serie A clubs (and not only) can return to training," the La Repubblica daily wrote.

Yet Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora has noted that the path for football to return was getting "increasingly narrow".

(source: AFP)

Tehran Times opens up a new world for us

By Shahzad Ramezani Bayani

Ask any Iranian the significance of the autumn of 1998 and they will tell you it was the year everyone's favorite underdogs managed to pull out a victory against the U.S. in the FIFA World Cup nobody could have foreseen.

For me, that was also the year I learnt a harsh but enduring lesson about information availability or lack thereof. Like any other child hoping for their team's victory, my brothers and I would devour any news item regarding our team and favorite players. Nonetheless, even to a youngster's eyes it was easy to see how underrepresented our team was in the local and international press, despite their Cinderella Story. Growing up in Kuwait, before the Internet boom, firsthand information about Iran was hard to come by. Like many expat children whose Farsi literacy leaves little to be admired about, the

Iranian newspapers brought to us by relatives were of no use. However, this frustration caused by scarcity of information changed when an article on the national team cited The Tehran Times, opening up a new world for us. From then on, we had a rich source of information that we could not only rely on for information about sports, but to also give us some never before attainable insight about Iran, itself.

To most millennials and people living in the era of the Internet twenty years on, the role of such newspapers might seem to have lost their relevance. Nevertheless, the calling for such media outlets is now more important than ever. Today, notwithstanding all the advances made in technology, unfortunately, the situation is still as bleak as it was back then. It does not take much to realize how woefully Iran is misrepresented by foreign media. Now more than

ever, the importance of having a voice and an image to fight the propaganda that is constantly being perpetuated, whether it be in the realm of sport or otherwise must not be overlooked.

At a time when demands for freedom of press and freedom of speech resonate louder than ever and the fact that a large portion of all media outlets worldwide are owned by only one company, is overlooked, the need for a divergence of voices becomes even stronger. Whether it be for an expat living abroad or any person whose willing to delve further to find alternative points of view. There are always two sides to every story, sometimes even multiples sides, that is why newspapers like Tehran Times which represent the other and most often untold or ignored side of the story are essential to seeing all aspects of an issue. Theirs is a voice reaching out from

within the heart of the story.

As voices on the other side of the fence get ever louder, it seems imperative that there be a source which reaches the masses from within Iran showcasing the point of view and feeling of Iranians. This can best be achieved when the language is one that most people of the world are familiar with. After all, language should not be barrier for one's voice to be heard, rather it should be a tool to enhance our outreach. When this source holds a position of such authority that other reputable and perhaps more famous outlets cite it, then its effect is all the more powerful. Whether this outreach is in the sphere of sports, celebrity news or current affairs, whether it reaches expat children, like me, or people with real power to enact changes, its presence and unique standing is one that must not be denied or taken for granted, but rather encouraged and fortified.

Bodurov leaves Esteghlal

IRNA — Esteghlal's Bulgarian defender Nikolay Bodurov parted ways with the Iranian team.

The 33-year-old defender signed for the Iranian club in January on a six-month contract until the end of the season, with an option to extend his contract until the end of the 2020–21 season.

After the Iran Professional League (IPL) was postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak, Bodurov returned to Bulgaria.

On Saturday, Esteghlal football club announced that they have parted company with the Bulgarian defender.

Stadiums to reopen in days: Hassan Rouhani

TASNIM — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the stadiums will reopen this week, after they were closed in late February due to novel coronavirus outbreak.

The Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters will announce when teams will be allowed to resume training.

"The stadiums will reopen but without the fans. We will continue the reopening calmly and gradually," Rouhani said.

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus, which as of May 2 has killed more than 241,000 people globally, has affected sporting events across the world.

COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, has infected more than 3.3 million people worldwide.

Iran's death toll from new coronavirus has reached 6,156. Health Ministry spokesman Kianush Jahanpur said in a statement on state TV.

Mesut Ozil makes generous Ramadan donation

Mesut Ozil has shown his generosity once more after donating £80,000 to help Muslims that have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic over Ramadan.

The Arsenal midfielder - who plays for Germany but is of Turkish descent - will help provide food and aid for 16,000 Muslims throughout the holy month which began on April 23.

The Arsenal star - who last month was criticized for failing to agree to a 12.5 pay cut the Gunners were looking to impose on their entire squad during the ongoing coronavirus crisis - made the donation to the Turkish Red Crescent to help Muslims during their holy month.

The money is set to help provide iftar - the meal eaten to end that day's fast - for around 16,000 Muslims across 2,000 families both in Turkey and Syria.

"At the Red Crescent, we stand by those in need 365 days a year. Of course, we do this thanks to donations made by philanthropist friends who follow our work," said Kerem Kinik, the head of the Turkish Red Crescent, via the Daily Sabah.

"As donations increase, we will be able to reach even more people in need.

"Thanks to our brother Mesut, we will be able to deliver packages provided to people in need - delivering them as soon as possible."

(Source: Mirror)

Influential German minister backs Bundesliga restart this month

Germany's minister for the interior and sport said Sunday he supports a resumption of the country's football season this month despite three people testing positive for coronavirus at Bundesliga club Cologne.

"I find the schedule proposed by the German league plausible and I support the restart in May," Horst Seehofer told Bild newspaper, three days before a meeting of German authorities to discuss the issue.

The German Football League (DFL) backs matches resuming without spectators around mid-May, which would make it the first major European championship to make such a move.

The sports ministers of the 16 German states have also approved the DFL's plans.



Seehofer, who plays a key government role on the issue as he holds several portfolios, has emphasised that the teams and players must respect several conditions.

"If there is a case of coronavirus in a team or its management, the club as a whole, and possibly also the team against which it last played, must go into quarantine for two weeks," he said.

"There will continue therefore to be risks for the schedule of matches and for the standings," if there is any contamination.

But he said clubs would not have any special testing privileges denied to the rest of the population. Some sides had suggested carrying out frequent tests of their players as a preventative measure against the virus.

Germany had reported 162,496 cases of COVID-19 as of Sunday, but its death toll of 6,649 remains considerably lower than that of comparable European countries, which are home to the continent's other top football leagues.

In France, Paris Saint-Germain were declared Ligue 1 champions on Thursday after French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced professional sport could not resume before September.

Meanwhile, English Premier League clubs on Friday reconfirmed their commitment to finish the season subject to coronavirus restrictions being lifted.

There are still 92 games remaining. They will be behind closed doors with neutral venues suggested.

(Source: Eurosport)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The world is a snake; its exterior is soft and nice to touch, and its interior contains deadly poison. Stupid and ignorant people are charmed by it but the wise avoid it. *Imam Ali (AS)*

Azerbaijani musicians join teenage Iranian vocalist for debut album

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Top Azerbaijani musicians Shirzad Fataiyev and Shahriar Musaev have collaborated with young adult vocalist Parsa Khaef in his debut album.



Iranian musical prodigy Parsa Khaef in an undated photo.

“Two tracks on Parsa’s album will be Azerbaijani music, therefore, to get close to Azerbaijani music we have had the collaboration of the Azerbaijani musicians,” composer Mahyar Alizadeh said in a press release on Sunday.

“Balaban virtuoso Fataiyev and kamancheh player Musaev both are among the top musicians of Azerbaijan,” he added.

“These two songs are from the venerable Azerbaijani folk music and are also very popular, so I did my best in the arrangement of the pieces,” stated Alizadeh who has collaborated with renowned vocalists such as Homayun Shajarian and Alireza Qorbani.

The musical prodigy Khaef’s performance was highly acclaimed in Asre Jadid, a talent show IRIB Channel 3 broadcast in 2019.

Iran’s IIDCYA sends latest offerings to Bologna book fair

C U L T U R E **A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) has sent its latest offerings to the Bologna Children’s Book Fair which goes online for the first time this year from May 4 to 7.

The institute also offers an English catalog featuring 412 book titles published over the past decades, the institute announced on Sunday.

In addition, a solo exhibition of the Iranian artist Hassan Musavi will be held online at the fair this year.

Musavi won the grand prix of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BiB) in Slovakia for his book “The Boxer” in 2019.

For the first time ever, an online exhibition of illustrations will be held, in which 38 artists will explore the relationship between early childhood and the performing arts with their illustrations.

1500 exhibitors who already registered for the fair to present their titles will make and receive offers as well as conduct video meetings.

The platform will also be made accessible to publishers and literary agents who participated as visitors in 2019 and who have already pre-registered for the 2020 edition.

Russia drops plans for Putin mosaic in military church

M O S C O W (Reuters) — A grandiose mosaic depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin and other high-ranking officials will not be put on display in a new military church after objections from the Kremlin leader, a church official said on Friday.

Russia is building a massive cathedral dedicated to its armed forces just west of Moscow. It had been scheduled to open its doors this month to mark 75 years since the Soviet victory in World War Two, but its inauguration is likely to be postponed because of the coronavirus outbreak.

A picture of the mosaic, which shows Putin alongside Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and other top officials, was first published by the MBKh news website last week.

Iran’s art galleries resume activities as coronavirus curbs eased

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Art galleries across Iran have been allowed to resume activities since April 20 after an over two-month shutdown due to the new coronavirus pandemic, the Visual Arts Office director Hadi Mozaffari has said.

The galleries can reopen provided that they avoid any gatherings, and have registered online with the Health Ministry.

“At the present time, a few galleries are open and some are actively holding online exhibits,” he said.

He added that the government is estimating the loss and damage caused by the coronavirus shutdown to the art business along with other businesses.

“The project began during the Noruz holiday, and the loss that the galleries, the artists and art institutes have suffered was estimated and presented to the government by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance,” he noted.

“The Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare is due to study and estimate the amount of the damage,” he said.

He added that there are plans to hold several national events provided that the condition returns back to normal to compensate for the damage the galleries and artists have suffered.

Mozaffari mentioned that the closing ceremony of the 12th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts, which was also postponed for a later time, will not be held.

“We are planning to announce the winners and give them the awards. The price of the



Art aficionados visit artworks on view at the Dastan Gallery by the Qasemi brothers under the title “Huge Fish” in March 2020.

purchased works by the office will also be given to the artists,” he said.

Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance canceled all the art, cultural and

cinematic events across the country in February in an attempt to stem coronavirus’ spread.

“This Book May Explode” writer says wars never end for mines

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The author of “This Book May Explode”, who wrote the book in 2019 to warn about the threat of land mines pose for children during wars, has said that the wars never end for mines.

Speaking to the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, Reza Mozuni said, “Children are sacrificed in wars around the world and after the end of the wars, the weapons, including land mines, do not know that the wars have finished.”

He is from Gilane Gharb, a city lying near the borderline in western Iran which was adversely affected by the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

“I was born in a city, in which I lived and breathed with



Iranian children’s writer Reza Mozuni in an undated photo.

the war and experienced many bittersweet moments,” Mozuni said.

“The imposed war lasted for eight years and finally ended, and the countries came together to make peace. However, weapons do not know peace; there are still numerous land mines laying on the borderlines claiming victims,” he added.

“In this book, I intended to express the problems of living in the cities situated near the borderlines for children and adults,” he noted.

Samaneh Salavati, the illustrator of “This Book May Explode”, won the International Gold Pen at the 50th Golden Pen of Belgrade awards, and the 15th International Biennial of Illustrations in November 2019.

Tehran Times deserves close attention



PERSPECTIVE

Mostafa Mousavi Sabet
 Head of the Tehran Times Art & Culture Desk

In October 12, 2018, when I was browsing around on galleryinfo.ir, a major Iranian website that covers art exhibits at art galleries across the country, to find something for Tehran Times’ What’s in Tehran Art Galleries, a showcase named “Tehran Times” attracted my attention.

It was the title of a painting exhibition by Yazdan Saadi, who had used some editions

of the Tehran Times front page as a canvas to illustrate stories from Persian classical literature.

It was interesting that an artist chose our daily’s front page upon which to do his paintings, so I proposed that my colleague Mrs. Rezapoor conduct an interview with him.

“I chose the Tehran Times because of its name and its beautiful graphic fonts” Saadi told my colleague. “It was classic and attractive, so I chose the daily out of several English dailies I came up with.”

There are so many people in our country who still do not know that there is an English daily named Tehran Times. As an artist, Saadi had seen our newspaper and his exhibition

at Seyhun Gallery at least familiarized many art enthusiasts with our daily.

Anyway, for me, as a member of the editorial board, it was interesting that an aesthete had regarded the newspaper albeit from the graphic design viewpoint.

From all its various desks, the Tehran Times has always worked as a foreign ministry to protect the interests of the country in the international arena. But frankly, to date it has received little attention from the relevant organizations and governmental establishments.

Over the past 15 years, the newspaper has worked as a press school for many beginners, who later have gone on from the

daily to work for other Iranian press media that pay more to their staff. Consequently our newspaper has indirectly contributed to the press media in the country. Actually, the core of many press organizations has been formed with the journalists trained at the Tehran Times.

In 1979, the Tehran Times was supported by the revolutionaries to be the voice of the oppressed. The daily seems to have been successful in its mission, however, generally, it has not received the proper respect it deserves.

We should regard the new management’s decision to celebrate the Tehran Times’ 41st anniversary as a good omen for the future.

JK Rowling donates £1m to UK charities during coronavirus outbreak

L O N D O N (Guardian) — JK Rowling is donating £1m to help homeless people and those affected by domestic abuse during the coronavirus pandemic.

Announcing the financial contribution, which will be split between the Crisis and Refuge charities, the Harry Potter author said the money would go towards helping some of those hit hardest by the outbreak and the impact of the lockdown.

The author told of her mixed emotions at having three key workers in her immediate family during the crisis.

In a tweet announcing the donation on Saturday, she wrote: “Today’s the 22nd anniversary of the Battle of Hogwarts, but I’m going to be honest and say that it feels inappropriate to talk about fictional deaths today. Too many people are losing loved ones in the real world.

“So on this anniversary of a great wizarding victory, I’m thinking of the people who’re out there doing their jobs to protect us and our way of life. I have three key workers in my immediate family, and like all such relatives, I’m torn between pride and anxiety.

“As ever in a crisis of this sort, the poorest and most vulnerable are hit hardest, so in honor of the Battle of Hogwarts, I’ll be making a donation of £1m, half of which will go to Crisis, who’re helping the homeless during the pandemic, and half of which will go to Refuge, because we know that domestic abuse has, sadly, increased hugely during the lockdown.”

The charities praised Rowling for her support, with Crisis saying the money would go towards its frontline



JK Rowling

response and Refuge saying it would support the services it provides, which have experienced a surge in demand in recent weeks.

Jon Sparkes, chief executive of Crisis, said: “We are overwhelmed to have the support of JK Rowling and we’d like to say a huge thank you for her incredibly generous donation. People experiencing homelessness during the outbreak have been hit especially hard.

“The money donated by JK Rowling will go towards our frontline response to the pandemic, helping us to carry on supporting people who are homeless across Great Britain at this very difficult time. Together we can protect more people from the worst effects of the outbreak and make sure they are safely housed when it is over.”

Refuge tweeted: “This is wonderful news — and comes at a time when we have seen calls to our already overwhelmed helpline increase by 50% during Covid-19. Our huge thanks, JK Rowling — your support will underpin our frontline specialist services and enable us to reach more abused women who need us.

Nightly show in Swiss block helps beat lockdown blues

G E N E V A (Reuters) — Dressed in a black trench coat and hat, 36-year-old Audrey Lecomte performed “Singing in the Rain” on a drizzly evening to the residents of Geneva’s Round House apartment complex, who twirled umbrellas from balconies to the music.

The nightly 6pm “choir” at the 1920s block, a 6-storey architectural monument built in a semi-circle, has become a way to cheer each other up during Switzerland’s national lockdown to stop the spread of COVID-19, now in its seventh week.

“There is music, it swings, that’s a good thing,” said Daniele Salins, a 75-year-old resident who joined in the dancing. “It feels good, it takes our mind off our problems, otherwise, if you look at the news, it’s very exhausting.”

The tradition started in mid-March when the Swiss lockdown began and residents sing and dance to a handful of songs every night except Sundays, taking turns to choose the music.

Switzerland has reported nearly 30,000 cases of COVID-19 and more than 1,350 deaths, but case loads are easing and Berne has begun to relax measures which were never as strict as in neighboring France or Italy.

The dozens of kids in the building look forward to the evening “show” and passers-by stop and watch with kids and dogs. “The children, who can’t play with each other, they at least get to see each other,” said Tessa, a resident and 39-year-old speech therapist and mother of two young boys.

“There is closure for the day with a feeling of warmth and togetherness.”

One resident danced with a baby in her arms and another family blew



Residents of the St-Jean apartments building take part in their choir session, when they sing to entertain themselves, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Geneva, Switzerland April 28, 2020. (Reuters/Denis Balibouse)

bubbles. They also sang happy birthday to a beaming 11-year-old boy on a balloon-adorned balcony.

The choir is not the building’s only initiative under lockdown. They also held a relay-style marathon this month with each resident running laps around the courtyard to cheers as well as balcony quizzes and movie nights.

It is the spirit sought by late architect Maurice Brillaud who designed the building, shaped like a Roman theatre, to encourage interaction.

“We went from being residents and neighbors to being a big family,” Lecomte told Reuters. “It has become more and more magical as time has passed.”

Residents say they want to continue the choir after lockdown ends. The tentative end date is May 11 when schools resume.

“We are thinking of keeping it as a ritual every Sunday,” said Marion, a resident and mother. “Otherwise, we are afraid we will miss it when confinement ends.”

41st ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

TEHRAN TIMES

4 Pages | 42nd year | Monday | **MAY 4, 2020** | Ordibehesht 15, 1399 | Ramadan 10, 1441



Ali A. Jenabzadeh
Tehran Times editor-in-chief

We are the lucky ones ...

I started my adventure with Tehran Times international daily just a couple of days ago. Despite being short, it's been amazing to feel what many significant figures have felt in here just the way I'm feeling it right now. Every single moment in here feels different. Every single day is surprising in its own way. Every new paper we publish here is like a birthday present for us that we are lucky to unwrap.

Every man and woman must be happy for being here as part of this great adventure, but amongst all, I feel the most fortunate. Not only because I'm part of what once a great

man established, but also because I get to celebrate its 41st birthday right after I stepped in the office.

Tehran Times created to be the perfect tribune for the voiceless. This voice echoes the pain of the poor against the arrogance of the rich. In doing so, we try to project pictures from every corner of the world, which are neglected by mainstream media. We amplify the sound of the suffering of those whose bones are being crushed under the pressure of different inhumane and non-divine schools and worldviews. And we shake the hands of anyone who thinks and feels the same. So may God be with us.

I took over as Tehran Times director upon Beheshti's advice: Mousavian

Seyyed Hossein Mousavian says he accepted to take over as managing director of the Tehran Times upon a suggestion by Ayatollah Mohammad Hossein Beheshti, known as martyr Beheshti, during a meeting in Kashan in 1981.

As the Tehran Times is marking four decades of activity, our correspondent talked to Mousavian, now a Princeton University researcher.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ How did you get to know the Tehran Times?

It was during the Noruz holiday of 1981, when I met martyr Ayatollah Beheshti in Kashan. He was the guest of late Ayatollah Seyyed Mehdi Yasrebi. It was there he asked me to take helm of the Tehran Times. I had begun studying religious sciences in Qom for about 8 months. But he smiled and said, "After 30 years of studying in seminaries, I have spent my entire life on the (Islamic) Revolution, and now your responsibility is to serve the revolution as much as you can." Therefore we wrapped up everything and left to Tehran to run the Tehran Times.

■ How do you evaluate the status of the Tehran Times inside and outside the country?

Basically, Iran has not been able to have an international valid newspaper as good as other world famous newspapers not before the revolution and not after the revolution, however the Tehran Times acts as a worthy dissemination source for foreign embassies, foreign residents in Iran, and for those outside the country.

■ Considering the permanent world pressure on Iran, what are the challenges of an English newspaper in Iran?

The main challenge of an English newspaper in Iran is lack of foreign tourists and residents in the country. If our economic and political relations with the world was normal, at least 10 million foreigners would have been working in Iran, and about 30 million tourists would have visited the country every year, and such great numbers would be sure a good financial support for an English newspaper.

The second challenge for an English newspaper in Iran is that our officials do not either believe in the necessity of world public opinion and diplomacy or they do not do their best to, and that is why we don't have a foreign newspaper suitable for Iranian needs in the field of global dissemination.

■ How did you feel when you first stepped in the office



of the newspaper? How do you interpret this statement of Beheshti about the Tehran Times which says, "The Tehran Times is not the voice of the government, but the voice of the revolution?"

Even though Tehran Times was the only major source of information in English language on post-revolution Iran, it was running into financial trouble.

I visited martyr Beheshti and told him about the situation. He invited Haj Ali Asghar Rokhshefat, a religious well-off figure and an official of the then Islamic Financial Institution and asked him to pay the debts of the daily.

Later, Irfan Parviz was perhaps the only expert left in the daily. He entered my room the very first day I arrived in the office and told me "If you want to fire me please let me resign myself". But I warmly received him and told him you will not only stay but will help me as a senior editor and tell all the employees that nobody would be fired.

He broke into tears and hugged me and worked for the daily with all his heart until the year 1991, the last day of my management in the office. But all the friends in the daily know that he was so in love with the daily and served the best he could. God Bless his soul.

■ When you were the managing director of the daily, what were your plans and programs for the future, and which ones did you achieve?

My first goal was to save the newspaper from bankruptcy and this took two years. The second problem was the newspaper had a daily circulation of 20,000 but had dropped into 1000 and during the first year it got to 10,000.

The third step was to find a proper building for the office

and make it equipped. The office was in a rented apartment but we could manage to relocate it into a four-floor building. My other major goal was to publish the daily in India to cover the East, in Europe to cover the West and in Nigeria or South Africa to cover the Africa. This was not possible without foreign currency. Those years Iran was involved in the (Iran-Iraq) war and the country's treasury was empty. We pursued the idea for five years and could only hire several representatives to distribute the daily outside Iran, however I could not publish the daily in three continents simultaneously after years of efforts.

■ Considering your media experience, what do you think is the difference between journalism in Iran and the West? How can Iranian foreign newspapers have more effect on public diplomacy? Please give us a guideline for the future of the Tehran Times?

The media in the West cannot be compared with the media in Iran. Even the countries like Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates (UAE) have acted better than Iran. The weakness of Iranian media is its "world diplomacy". The media is one of the main tools of world diplomacy in the countries but unfortunately Tehran has been acting very weakly about it. My suggestion to my friends in the daily is to try to publish the newspaper simultaneously in several countries.



The telex room of the Tehran Times in 1981

Tehran Times: An audible voice of the oppressed people worldwide



Morteza Saheb Fasoul
Managing Director:1994-1998

Forty-one years ago on May 4, the first edition of the Tehran Times was published in eight pages. Tehran Times was registered as the first paper that managed to gain publication license after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The founding father, manager-in-charge, chief editor, editorial board's director, head of the public relations and technical department's manager of the newly-established Tehran Time was a young man named Irfan Parviz Ansari Javid.

He was born in the central Indian city of Bhopal. Parviz left his homeland in 1969 to join a number of his relatives who were living in Iran. Parviz began his career in journalism in Tehran as a reporter for the Tehran Journal, one of Iran's two English language newspapers at that time.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution all English language newspapers were shut down. Parviz, in line with the revolution's nature, had come to the conclusion that the nations' independence, the nations' access to the God-gifted resources, cutting the hegemonic world powers' hands from other nations' wealth, the fight against oppression and discrimination, living within the moral-based framework, paving the ground for the entire nations to take giant strides towards growth and glory, liberating the mankind from the jail of fruitlessness, libido and drunkenness, believing in the God as the creator of the mankind and the nature, and obeying the almighty God,

all together were capable of enabling the human being to enjoy the entire material and spiritual capacities which would lead the mankind towards utilizing his or her own dignities as well as the surrounding world's privileges.

Parviz's sense and feelings impacted his family members too. Perhaps, they could not analyze those days' developments in Tehran based on their previous memories, but the character and stances of Late Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, were very interesting for Parviz and his family members.

Parviz was proud of his son, Aman. He was among the first people who became Imam Khomeini's translator in an interview conducted by the CBS news network in the first weeks of the Imam's stay in Qom city. At the end of the interview, Imam Khomeini had warmly encouraged Aman, had asked his name and had called on Aman to talk about his activities.

Tehran Times resumed its mission based on the belief that it would reflect Iran's point of views and stances amid the unique situation in the country following the Islamic Revolution's victory.

Post-revolution viewpoints were clearly

differently from before which were tainted with pro-U.S. news outlets. As a result the media was faced with a void which needed to be filled with alternatives to inform the world about the developments in the post-revolutionary Iran.

Those days, the foreign embassies in Tehran were the only sources of transmission of news and developments abroad. The audience overseas was receiving Iran's news via the embassies' translators who had collected news and reports, publishing them via telex.

The emergence of the Tehran Times was very timely, especially for the English language audience. The newly-established daily found rapidly its own audience across the globe.

Running the affairs of such an important daily was not an easy task. Responsibilities included managing all the affairs of the daily, including distribution, training of staff and handling of the monetary affairs, etc. were handled by Parviz.

Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, who was one of the main leaders of the Islamic Revolution, came to know that certain people were trying to gain influence in the daily. Martyr Beheshti managed a meeting with Parviz and called on him to resist against



The Tehran Times managing director and staff pose for a photo in 1996

the problems and meantime expressed the hope to save Tehran Times from a shutdown and possible deviation.

Ayatollah Beheshti further called on Ayatollah Ahmad Janati, the then head of the Islamic Development Organization, to provide financial and administrative supports for the Tehran Times.

In the meantime, Beheshti initiated a weekly meeting with Parviz to set guidelines for the daily's policy analysis.

Parviz was regularly praising Beheshti's accurate analysis and viewpoints in the mentioned meetings. At first, the meetings were attended only by Parviz but later chief editor of the Islamic Republic daily joined the meetings.

Ayatollah Beheshti knew well that if the newly-established Islamic Republic wanted to stand on its own feet and protect itself against the problems and difficulties posed by the enemies and that it would face long term inefficiencies inherited from the past. He knew that the officials who had been employed by the new government would not be the ultimate representatives of the country's self-sacrificing people. Therefore, the government's officials and representatives would not reflect a complete image of the people's ideals in the media.

That is why, Beheshti underlined, "Tehran Times must manifest the original intentions (of people) on its pages, it should not be turned into the government's noticeboard or advertisement bill.

"The Tehran Times must not become the government's spokesperson, but it must be the loud voice of the world oppressed people," Beheshti told Parviz in a meeting.

Now, Tehran Times daily should pay required attention to its current and past records as it is turning 41 years old. If Tehran Times has been honest to Beheshti's strategy from the viewpoints of its audience, then it is entitled to be proud of its records. We hope so.

It should be mentioned that Irfan Parviz died at his home in Tehran in May 2015. He was 85.



The front page of the first issue of the Tehran Times published on May 5, 1979



Mohsen Mohammadi
Public Relations Director (1994 - 2020)

A tireless 'diplomat' made of paper!

One: A sign attached to the exterior wall of an old house, which was partly hidden under the branches of a jasmine tree, came to my attention when I first entered Bimeh Alley, Ostad Nejatollahi Street. It led me to Iran's first English language newspaper established after the victory of the Islamic Revolution: The Tehran Times.

And now, it is for the 28th years that I enter the same alley almost every day.

Two: In 1979, the Tehran Times newspaper was born to convey the message of the Islamic Revolution beyond the borders.

The general policy of the newspaper was formed from the very beginning with the valuable guidance of Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti (May God have mercy upon his soul), who said: "The Tehran Times is not the newspaper of the government. It must be a loud voice of the Islamic Revolution and the loud-speaker of the oppressed people of the world".

This stunning expression still adorns the newspaper's editorial office so that it will never be forgotten as a clear guideline.

Three - Someone like me who has spent almost half of his life in this newspaper, experiencing different periods with different political tastes, knows better than anyone else that the Tehran Times is like a "paper diplomat", who has been involved tirelessly in almost all international scenes.

The daily has been influential in setting up a new school of journalism in the country. Forty one years of continuous publication without a break, even during the most difficult times and crises, proves the claim.

Four - After four decades, the Tehran Times has now been turned into a sturdy tree, the fruit of which is readers from over 80 different countries. Every day, the newspaper's hardworking staff come together from different neighborhoods of Tehran to present their work in 12 pages at the newsstands.

Five - Here I would like to grasp the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to my colleagues in various sections of the newspaper (even those I have never seen) from managing directors, chief editors, editors, journalists, translators, publishing staff, to you - dear readers of the Tehran Times.



Alexis Bandrich Vega
Cuban Ambassador to Tehran

Revolutionary press should defend truth

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Tehran Times, I have the honor to extend a warm message of congratulations and support for the essential exercise of the revolutionary press, from a country that, like ours, faces lying media campaigns and operations on a daily basis, under the joint supervision of the White House, the State Department of the United States of America and its allies, which pursue the futile objective of poisoning our peoples and manipulating world public opinion.

The so-called "freedom of the press", based on the free market and the private ownership of the media, constitutes one of the greatest lies of imperialism.

Their use of these media and social networks have even led to meaningless and illegitimate wars, in a blatant practice of media terrorism.

As we congratulate Tehran Times, we urge that the revolutionary press continue to show the highest exercise in defense of truth, worship of freedom and full dignity of man.

Beheshti newspaper



Parviz Esmaili
Managing Director: 2001-2010

Making judgment on anything entails a consideration of many things. In the case of the Tehran Times, one should first look at the goals behind its founding. This gets special importance as the Tehran Times was founded by leading and unrivaled figure Ayatollah Mohammad Hossein Beheshti, also known as Shahid Beheshti.

The most important point that why this newspaper hit newsstands requires an assessment of the history of the paper in different times. One should also have a view of the path the newspaper should continue unabatedly.

Dr. Beheshti was a religious figure and a theoretician in classical humanities. He had a knowledge about world affairs. Undoubtedly, he had a more comprehensive view in comparison to most other prominent figures of his time in the Islamic Revolution.

Beheshti's valuable cultural activities outside Iran, especially in the Islamic Center in Hamburg, and promotion of Shia Islam through a scientific, rational dialogue is still recognized as an effective and inspiring

cultural school in inter-religious dialogue.

According to Beheshti, the Tehran Times was established with such a vision to be "the loud voice of the Islamic Revolution and the oppressed in the world."

That was because the Islamic Revolution needed to establish a convincing communication with the outside world through a common language. This need still exists.

The Tehran Times was not a tool for political rivalry at home. Rather, it was created to challenge the hegemony of the media run by arrogant states who seek domination in the world.

It was also established to reveal the realities in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the larger world to those who are longing for truth with a focus on injustice against the oppressed people in the Islamic world.

This goal has become more paramount due to certain reasons:

-The development of communication technology and physical disappearance of time and place between the audience and media.

-The culmination of hostile policies against the Islamic Revolution under the strategy of "maximum pressure".

-Sudden generational and dialogue changes at home and abroad.

- And finally, the scientific and technological progress of Iran and the rise of the strategic status of the Islamic Republic of Iran in regional and international relations.

In its forty years of age, probably I was the only person who was running the newspaper for about a decade. My years in the paper coincided with the suspicious and shocking incident of the September 11 attacks as well as bitter and sweet events inside and outside Iran. However, the newspaper not only did not stop its mission, it also tried to become more analytical, more productive and more appealing.

It is glorified with memorable and valuable inter-

views with dignitaries such as Mahathir Mohammad, the Malaysian prime minister.

After ten years, the Tehran Time gave birth to a new news agency called Mehr. In a close contact, Mehr could produce more content for the newspaper as a complementary with the same stated goals but with a wider range in terms of language diversity.

However, this ten-year period should be assessed based on the primary goals behind the establishment of the Tehran Times and its influence on readers coupled with the views of the colleagues.

It is no time to complain about the shortages and difficulties. One should talk more about achievements made due to efforts by all the staff which is a great legacy.

I cherish all colleagues at the Tehran Times. I should remember all those dear ones who worked for the success of the newspaper but they are no longer alive.

I should mention late Irfan Parviz who had an undisputable role for the accomplishment of the newspaper as editor-in-chief. Likewise, I like to remember Hamid Golpira, who showed an exemplary dedication while editing headlines and the newspaper content in his small room in the afternoons.

I should also remember the noble and professional photojournalist Mojtaba Takin who said a goodbye to this world along with his family.

Also, I like to remember Reza Moghadassi, a principled and ethical managing director.

Every day that I entered the Tehran Times a look at the mural of Shahid Beheshti on the front wall inspired me to work more energetically. For me, the Tehran Times was the newspaper of Shahid Beheshti. I hope during my management years I will not be shameful of that great martyr.

I like to congratulate the 40th anniversary of the Tehran Times - which came into existence immediately after the revolution - to all the managers and staff during all these years.



Ali Kushi
Ex-journalist : 2015-2017

On the 41st anniversary of The Tehran Times

It is a blistering summer day in 2015. I'm receiving a call from a pal of mine while driving toward the capital Tehran. "Are you still job-hunting?" he enquires passionately. "Yes, I am", I reply. "The Tehran Times is hiring if the world of media intrigues you enough", he continues saying, knowing that I used to teach media courses to college undergrads.

It was not just the summer heat lashing at me viciously, turning this road trip into a wearisome, endless succession of mirages. For a freshly minted English language graduate, the uncertainty over landing a decent job had lately been hollowing me from inside just like a tree trunk eaten by a worm. Worst off, I had just lost my significant other to all craziness in my life. That said, I grew up believing the Persian saying that paddling in turbulent waters renders a sailor stronger.

A week after the call, I took a written test at the Tehran Times, having to translate and put flesh on the bones of a story about the Castro brothers. This was followed by two interviews. Mr. Saki, the first interviewer, seemed to be as standoffish and unsmiling as the Castro brothers. "All we expect is commitment and discipline", he told me, looking at his computer while pounding hard on the keyboard. God knows what he was typing! Before long, I realized first impressions were not always a reliable source of judgment as we got to know one another more. He had a great sense of humor and was easy to get along with. Then editor-in-chief Mr. Lasjerdi, the second interviewer, was more amiable, making me feel at home by frontloading a serious conversation with some cordial small talk. In hindsight, the second interview was akin to having an orange juice after an uphill run!

The wait before hearing back from the Tehran Times, two or three weeks, killed almost all my hopes. By the end of the same summer, however, I was eventually hired. That hot summer ended up in one of the coolest breezes in my entire life by then.

The two-year journalism stint at the Tehran Times injected so much meaning into me. The great minds and souls I was privileged to work with uplifted me intellectually and professionally, cultivated in me a sense of belongingness, and walked me through the uncharted waters of factual journalism. Although I no longer work with the news service, I have tried to keep the friendships going. I did not imagine those serious faces would one day become the most companionable and approachable faces in my life. I cannot thank them enough for all they have taught me. It is these wonderful people who have earned the newspaper trustworthiness, steadiness of character, and authenticity domestically and overseas. When I started living with an American family in 2019, I was not surprised to learn they knew the Tehran Times.

In the Persian culture, forty is the number of maturity. As the Tehran Times nears its 41st anniversary, I am so thrilled to see it come of age. For all the financial hardships the newspaper has experienced, it has never stopped feeding truth to its audience. In the unique fabric of Iran, the daily has been a leading moderate voice for the entirety of its forty-year history. This would have been impossible to accomplish had it not been for the commitment and sacrifice of the daily's journalists and staff, some of whom there for nearly three decades.

Reaching maturity in the world of media brings higher expectations than ever, too. Living up to these logical expectations requires ongoing training, supporting investigative journalism, establishing exclusive sources of news and analysis, expanding international collaboration, hiring young, energetic minds, increasing online presence, and of course paying fatter payrolls. There is always room for improvement in these areas, and the Tehran Times is no exception.

Never mind where the daily stands in relation to these, I feel honored to have been part of the journey to maturity with the Tehran Times, though my meager contributions pale in comparison to those who have spent their entire journalism career at the daily.

When I started living with an American family in 2019, I was not surprised to learn they knew The Tehran Times.



A file photo of the Tehran Times staff



Sadroddin Moosavi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief: 1996-2001

Journalism is a very sensitive job, particularly in our country, for one has to take many issues into consideration while working at a newspaper. Journalists grasp many opportunities

I Miss Those Days

to serve the nation. I believe that the current honorable Managing Director, Editor-in-Chief and the staff of the Tehran Times are committed to serve our nation through their hard work and professionalism.

I had the honor of joining the Tehran Times in 1975 first as a part-time editor when His Excellency Hojjatoleslam Mr. Morteza Sahebfoosol was the Managing Director. After a short time, I was invited by His Excellency to join the paper as its Editor-in-Chief, which I accepted delightfully.

Mr. Sahebfoosol is one of the most efficient and committed managers I have ever worked with. He worked more than anybody else in the organization. He taught me several

lessons through his deeds, though his words were as effective as his deeds because he never uttered a word before he had already practiced it. I remain indebted to him throughout my life. I also enjoyed working with his successor Mr. Abbas Salimi Namin. He is a professional journalist. He was a very serious manager and insisted on what he thought was necessary to publish for the public information. I learned much from him. I also had the honor of working with Mr. Parviz Esmaili. He was not only a good manager but also a very intimate friend. I really enjoyed working with him.

I am proud of having worked with all my colleagues and the staff of the time. If Tehran Times prospered

when I was in charge, it was because of the keen interest of its managers and hard work and commitment of my colleagues. I am certainly responsible for the shortcomings of those days. It is pertinent here to remember two colleagues: The late Mr. Erfan Parviz, who was the executive editor when I was working there; and, the late Mr. Mojtaba Takin. He was a professional photographer, who loved his job. Unfortunately, he lost his life in a car accident (May their souls rest in peace).

The Tehran Times is very well promoting the cause of the nation in these hard days and I am sure will do so in the years to come.

I miss the days I was working at the Tehran Times.



Hassan Lasjerdi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief: 2015-2017

The Tehran Times enjoys the capability to be among the world-class media outlets and to attain such a goal entails motivated staff and talented managers.

I got acquainted with the Tehran Times when I was a university student in the 1980s. I found the paper as a daily which was trying hard to manifest the Islamic Republic of Iran's policies and approaches within a logical framework.

Shortly after graduation, I found myself interested in working in Iran's media sector. I still believe that media are among key tools that can affect positively the human being to enjoy a peaceful life.

I believe that the Tehran Times, as it is mentioned in its title, can effectively serve as an international paper. To do so, the daily needs a manager who can understand deeply the international developments. It needs a manager who can materialize such an ambitious plan.

If somebody asks me why I have raised such a claim, I will refer to martyr Ayatollah Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti who has said that the Tehran Times should be the "loud voice of the oppressed people". With such a wise viewpoint, the Tehran Times will continue to exist.

I still believe that the Tehran Times should air a sensible view of the Islamic Republic establishment. It is

The path towards a world-class outlet

worthy to say that the mentioned explanation should be provided as a theory in order to enable people around the world to grasp the message of the Islamic establishment easier. The audience, in some cases, should resort to intellectual identification to feel more proximity and familiarity to the proposed theory.

Also, since we are living in communications era, the Tehran Times should pay due attention cutting-edge digital information to air voices.

I have always been insisting on a reality that a professional journalist's geographical coverage and field of activities must partly be greater than managers' mentality and thoughts. However, some problems, including shortage of income, lack of professional journalists and in certain cases contradiction between politics and media have restricted journalists from fulfilling their mission efficiently.

The growing trend of digitalization of media activities is now a smart choice which seems to turn into a mandatory organizational issue in the coming years, therefore, the future will be owned by those who decide and act correctly today.

As the last word by a person who has always been monitoring the Tehran Times' activities, this daily should be managed by those who have the correct understanding and dynamic mentality about international developments and Iran's standing in the world in order to safeguard the heritage of the first generation of the Islamic Revolution and in order to enable the Tehran Times to remain the loud voice of the oppressed and deprived people around the world.



Morad Enadi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief: 2014-2015

In the past four decades, a harsh media war has been waged against the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to paint an unreal picture of Iran for the world public opinion. In such circumstances, the media outlets of the Islamic Republic of Iran have tried to present the true face of the Islamic Iran to the world in an asymmetrical media warfare. The Tehran Times has a special place among Iran's visual, audio and written media outlets. This newspaper, which was founded according to the idea of Martyr Dr. Beheshti, is a tribune which reflects clear and truthful news reports and analyses provided by a professional staff. What has helped strengthen the position and authority of the Tehran Times in competition with other media outlets is continuation of the publication of the newspaper in the past four decades despite all the ups and downs that the written media outlets have faced. The obstacles and problems have never been able to thwart the Tehran Times to move forward. The continuation of the publication of the newspaper on the one hand and production of professional, evidence-based reports on the other hand have led the Tehran Times to continue to be noteworthy among embassies and other media outlets and to be regarded among professional international newspapers. The interesting point about the Tehran Times is its comprehensive outlook in covering Iran's news and events. At first glance, it might be interpreted that the Tehran Times is merely a media outlet to reflect

The Tehran Times: A tribune for peace and friendship

the political happenings of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but with a closer look, one would realize that it strives to analyze and review the economic, social, cultural and sporting events of the Islamic Iran. From this perspective, the Tehran Times has played an undeniable role in introducing and expanding Iran's soft power through its comprehensive outlook. Everyone knows that Iran, with its ancient civilizational culture, has always been at the forefront of peace, friendship and fair relationship with states and nations throughout history. Such a view has been institutionalized in Iran's culture and history, and this is exactly the same important and pivotal matter that some countries and foreign media outlets are trying to demonstrate upside down. Such countries and their affiliated media outlets are trying to depict Iran as a warlike country that seeks to disrupt stability and tranquility in the region. Given such an atmosphere, the Tehran Times, with its comprehensive outlook and introduction of Iran's rich cultural and civilizational elements has been pushing for friendship among nations.

It has been striving to show to the world that the Islamic Iran has always been a promoter of peace and friendship in international relations and is against any aggression and inequality. Through such approach, the Tehran times is a media outlet that makes use of Iran's rich cultural elements. It is regarded as Iran's cultural attaché and such achievement has come out of the tireless efforts by the editorial board of the Tehran Times, which continue uninterrupted.

Happy the fortieth anniversary of the Tehran Times.

Educational passage through Tehran Times

Transition to digital media revolution



Salman Parviz
Tehran Times Journalist

The first message over a telegraph line was sent in 1844 by inventor Samuel F.B. Morse from Washington to Baltimore: "What hath God wrought?"

Communication industry has evolved during the digital revolution, making print media more and more a member of endangered species.

Prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution there were two English language newspapers published from Tehran: The Tehran Journal published by the Ettela'at Institution group and Kayhan International by the Kayhan Institute. After the revolution both papers seized to exist and there was a void of news from Tehran in English language for the world.

Irfan Parviz migrated to Iran in 1969 from his native town of Bhopal in India. Tehran Times was founded some two months after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The first license

holder and editor-in-chief of the newspaper was my father Irfan Parviz. Abbas Barazandeh was Mr. Irfan's partner and friend and was one of the co-founders of the daily.

I was sixteen years old at the time and due to the revolution all public schools were closed and I had to put my high school diploma project on hold and join my pioneer father. Indeed all members of Mr. Irfan's family were involved with the daily at one point or another.

When I walked in the first office of the Tehran Times on Fatemi St. the office atmosphere was electrifying, buzzing with the sound of manual typewriters with so many people working to produce the first edition.

There were four mechanical telex machines clicking away 24/7 for the four news agencies: AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP. The noisy telex room was managed by one person who would select and sort the news and classify according to category.

I had the privilege to visit Ettela'at printing press typesetting division in 1976 with Mr. Irfan. The mechanical typesetting machines almost the size of an automobile where the typographer would sit and input information character by character manually. It was very time and space consuming procedure.

Tehran Times first edition was printed on May 4, 1979. By then the typesetting procedures had been revolutionized by IBM electronic composer machines. These machines were a fusion of mechanical and electronic innovation. With a series of impressive choice in typefaces and a memory of about 500

words the IBM composer machines were an extension of electronic typewriter but with memory. Electronic typewriters eventually made manual machines an antique item.

IBM composers were limited by the size of the typeface (max size 12 point) and memory capacity. So the headlines with larger typefaces were done by hand using lettraset types.

Writing procedure was done on a manual/electric typewriter, where editing and rewriting is not possible. Once a report had been written and typed, it went to the sub-editor for a lookover and then sent to the typesetters using IBM composers. The print out from the first version would be proofread and when final corrections were done a final printout was sent to the graphic artists for paste up.

The graphic artist would paste the news print on a thick paper using cutters and scissors and glue. The final product would go to the printing press.

As the printing industry digitized many professions in the print industry became obsolete.

When the newspaper moved two its third location (Khosrow St. and Villa St.) the devastating Iraq-Iran had started in 1980 and the whole city of Tehran would be faced with frequent blackouts due to aerial attacks. However, many of the newspaper's work wouldn't stop as the writers would turn to manual typewriters, graphic artists would use candles or lanterns and the work would go on.

During Tehran Times' early years Mr. Irfan would have regular meetings with Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti regarding the policies of the daily. At one point martyr Beheshti's statement about the daily: "The Tehran Times is not the newspaper of the government. It must be a loud voice of the Islamic Revolution and the loudspeaker of the oppressed people of the world".

Just as today we are faced with the coronavirus pandemic, the early years of the revolution the Islamic Republic was faced with another virus called "terrorism". Ayatollah Beheshti fell victim to this type of virus when he was assassinated along with more than 70 members of the Islamic Republic Party on June 28, 1981.

By 1982 the internet revolution had already started and Seyed Hussain Mousavian was the first Managing Director under the Tablighat-e Islami. There were plans of publishing the Tehran Times from India and several trips were made by Messrs Irfan and Mousavian to India to check out the prospects of publishing from New Delhi. The internet revolution changed all that.

Working for Tehran Times so early on is one of my best experiences as a teenager. Those years I didn't miss school. Seeing the post-revolutionary era through the eyes of Tehran Times was itself an education.

On behalf of my family: Many happy returns of the day to the Tehran Times.



Mohammad Khoddadi
Deputy Culture Minister for Press Affairs

We praise Tehran Times for sending voice of Islamic Revolution beyond borders

In the very first months following the victory of the Islamic Revolution and as the world was eying on the country, it was extremely felt that Iran needs something to outline the lofty ideals of the revolution beyond the borders.

The revolution, which overthrew the foreign-backed monarchical regime of the Pahlavi dynasty, started to demonstrate a true democracy to the whole world in the context of pure Islam.

The world, at that time, was waiting to see what the new revolution has brought about. They wanted to see what gift Imam Khomeini, the founder of Islamic Revolution, and the revolutionary youth have brought for the West and the East.

At a time when there were no traces of digital media and Internet, a newspaper named "Tehran Times" made its debut to become a loudspeaker to convey the voice of the Islamic Revolution beyond the borders.

Gradually, the newspaper grew, got stronger, and, like its twin, the Islamic Revolution, it has now entered its fifth decade of its life.

Undoubtedly, guidance from a revolutionary character played a very important role in the birth of the Tehran Times, and that person was Ayatollah Seyed Mohammad Beheshti (May God have mercy upon his soul).

The daily's general policy was based on martyr Beheshti's statement who said: "The Tehran Times is not the newspaper of the government. It must be a loud voice of the Islamic Revolution and the loudspeaker of the oppressed people of the world".

Years have passed since then. However, the Tehran Times still keeps its originality within its initial goals. It went through eight years of the war that Iraq started against Iran in the 1980s, portrayed the post-war reconstruction and development in Iran. The daily has also covered years of nuclear negotiations which finally produced the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, but the U.S. finally withdrew from it.

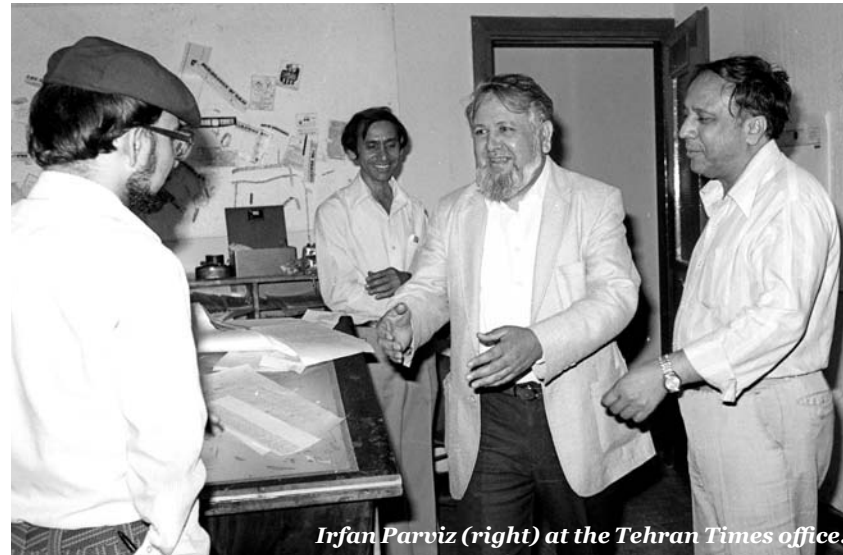
Now, on the eve of its 41st birthday, while the daily has reached full maturity, it conveys the injustice against Iran in the face of unfair U.S. sanctions.

We are experiencing days when social media, with all its benefits and harms, is in fierce competition with the media of the previous generations, i.e. newspapers.

We all know that our newspapers are going through difficult times for a number of reasons, but don't forget that the Tehran Times is the international voice of the Islamic Revolution and should respond to any suspicions raised or accusations made by the foreign-based opposition media.



Inauguration ceremony introducing Sattar Namin as the managing director of the Tehran Times in 1998.



Irfan Parviz (right) at the Tehran Times office.

Tehran Times plays important role in deepening Iran-India connections



Gaddam Dharmendra
Indian Ambassador to Tehran

In the 40 years since its founding, the Tehran Times has been an important part of the Islamic Republic. This well known newspaper began its journey in 1979 to "air the voice of the Islamic Revolution". It soon became an important window on Iran and a useful source of news for the country's foreign observers.

Congratulations to Tehran Times and to all members and staff, past and present, on achieving the important milestone of 40th years of publishing. The world of news reporting is undergoing fundamental and radical changes due mainly to the advent of the internet and the rise of social media. In these times, the differentiator will be that news agency or publication which can compete with social media which is fast redefining how news is generated, disseminated and consumed. My best wishes to the staff and readers of Tehran Times, towards a future that is exciting and challenging.

The year 2020 also marks another important anniversary – it is the 70th anniversary since signing of the India-Iran Friendship Treaty. The India-Iran relationship is unique and historic. The centuries-old relationship between two of the world's great civilizations endures to this day. A shared history and heritage, ranging from the arts and culture to literature and architecture, has moved seamlessly into the 21st century.

Iran is not only our neighbor but it is an important partner. Our relations are marked by characteristic warmth. They are now moving in ever newer directions. This is illustrated by the medical relief assistance extended by

India to the friendly people of Iran. The items include high-tech equipment for setting up a COVID-19 testing laboratory as also personal protection equipment.

The recent years have witnessed frequent high level meetings and exchange of visits which have expanded the scope and depth of bilateral relations. Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani have held four meetings in as many years including on margins of international multilateral sessions. India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar was in Tehran in December 2019 for the 19th Joint Commission Meeting. And, in January this year, Foreign Minister Zarif was in New Delhi and addressed India's annual flagship strategic forum, the Raisina Dialogue.

While our shared history, culture and close people-to-people contacts are well known visible markers, the India-Iran relationship is sufficiently dynamic and nimble. It is adapting to the rapid and deep-seated changes that are underway in both countries. A new generation of Indians and Iranians are reaching out to each other including through the universal and shared medium of cinema. Indian films are just as popular in Iran as are Iranian movies in India. Both sides are also committed to promote parliamentary exchanges. All of these exchanges and visits are being facilitated by the decision to establish, in May 2018, a electronic visa arrangement system for citizens of both countries.

As we enter into the third decade of this century, trade and economic relations are expanding to encompass an ever widening trade basket, beyond the traditional items of agricultural produce. Basmati rice and tea remain ever popular in Iran just as Iranian pistachio and saffron are in India. But now, the chambers of commerce in both countries are exploring expanding trade into new areas such as light engineering items, paper and paper products and, pharmaceuticals, to name but a few of the sectors. Both sides are working towards concluding a bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) which would boost trade.

People to people contact has been

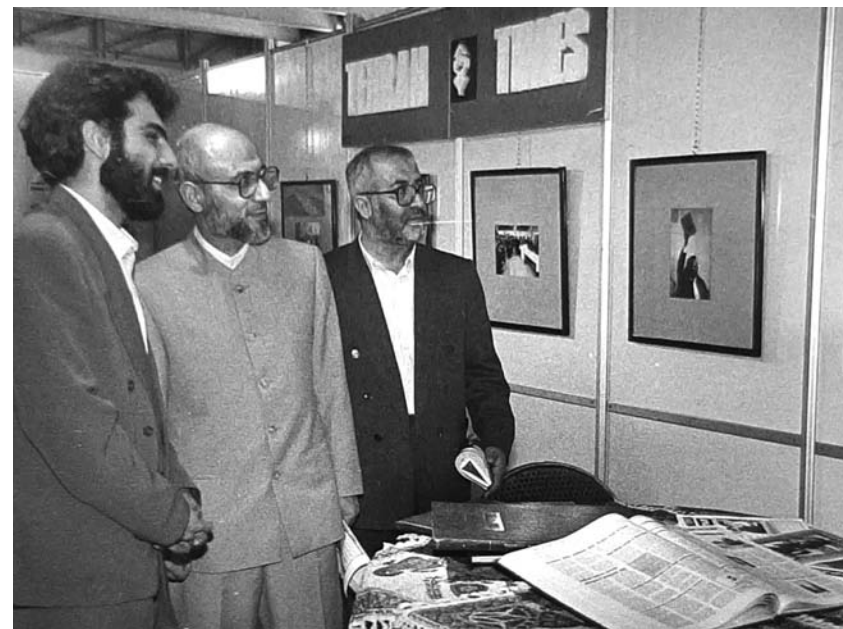
identified as an important dimension of the relationship. There is a rise in the number of Indians undertaking pilgrimage in Iran. The number of visitors now numbers around 80,000 each year. Higher education is yet another dimension linking our two countries. Iran's medical universities host over 250 students from India while Iranian students are increasingly looking towards India as an attractive destination for undertaking studies in advanced engineering and software programmes institutes. The Sushma Swaraj Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi organized an Indology course for young Iranian diplomats under the rubric "Understanding Contemporary India". Discussions are underway to take this programme forward this year. Both sides are also working on establishing an Indian Studies Centre in Tehran University.

The areas enlisted above are a lesser known facet of a multidimensional and multi-sectoral partnership. They add on to an already strong foundation of bilateral relations and a shared commitment towards deepening our

engagement in the areas of connectivity projects (Chabahar Shahid Beheshti Port and the Chabahar-Zahidan rail line) and, the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The Chabahar project is especially unique in that it is a trilateral project involving Afghanistan.

Institutes such as the Tehran Times play an important role in fostering and deepening bilateral connections, in explaining a complex globalised world to its readers. This requires objectivity and sensitivity, and a careful understanding of the deep socio-political complexities that are intrinsic to any modern nation state. India is no exception. It is a vast country of over a billion people, each of who is proud to be an Indian. This was most recently evident in the outpouring of national grief at the untimely loss of the world renowned actor Irfan Khan.

In closing, I once again extend my warm congratulations to all staff and members of Tehran on your 40th birthday.



Mostafa Mirsalim, the then culture minister, visits a photo exhibition of the Tehran Times in 1994.



Daroush Sajadi
Ex-journalist: 1992-1995

Home! Vivid memories may be deemed as bricks of our dream homes standing upon!

A home is shaped by our reminiscences, memories, and recalls rather than concrete blocks and clay bricks.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that an editorial office is the primary home of a journalist and their private ones are just a place to sleep! In other words, authors and reporters are kinds of vagabonds!

On the eve of the 41st anniversary of the "Tehran Times", a dear staff of the English-language daily sent me a message that I would respectfully write something on the honor of my previous presence at the newspaper.

The Tehran Times also was my home. Some 26 years ago, I had the honor to be a member of this family.

I left Iran 21 years ago but Iran did not leave me alone. My "houses" and memories of Iran is still with me.

One of those sweet memories that will live with me forever evokes from the Tehran Times that still stays with me in a mutual manner.

Turbah [a small piece of soil or clay used during Islamic daily prayers to symbolize Earth] of an editorial office for a journalist equals the flooring of a Zerkhaneh [which literally means 'strength house' in Persian, a special traditional place where men practice heroic sports] for an athlete; for both you may kiss upon your arrival!

It's my pleasure to sincerely congratulate the 41st anniversary of the Tehran Times to all my dear colleagues at the daily as I plant a kiss on its soil.

We go and we die! But our homes won't. They will remain standing!

My body left Iran and the Tehran Times 21 years ago, but my soul and spirit never left the land and the sanctity of that family.

I desire my home, the Tehran Times, to be stronger than ever. Good luck and tons of best wishes. More power on your elbow my beloved fellows.



A heart full of affection for Iran beats in U.S.

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

What words and phrases can describe the kindness of a man who has begun his every day over the past 12 years after his namaz by editing articles for the Tehran Times fi sabillillah – for the sake of Allah? He is Brother Yuram Abdullah Weiler, a man with a heart full of love for Iran, who lives with his kind wife, Batyah, in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

He has shared his experiences of contributing to the daily with the readers in an email interview on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Tehran Time.

■ Brother Yuram, you commenced your collaboration with the Tehran Times over 12 years ago by writing articles and news editing and the daily now turns 41. Do you have an idea about this fact that you have played a role as much as 12 years in this 41-year history?

A. Congratulations to everyone at Tehran Times on this occasion of the 41st anniversary of the founding of the “voice of the Islamic Revolution”. It is hard to believe that 12 years have passed since the start of my association with you, and that, for the most part, every morning I am still editing news items for a newspaper located some 7,000 miles away, while assisting my colleagues who have actually become more like close friends and family. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to be of help, taarof nemikonam.

I still have a printout of Brother Hamid Golpira’s email of June 21, 2008 asking me to do some editing, because my “English seems good.” Of course, my college majors were mathematics and physics, and quite candidly, I did not take any English courses beyond the usual undergraduate curriculum. However, my mother was a stickler for good English, so perhaps some of her instruction has remained with me over the years.

When I edit a news item, I try to infer what is happening from the text and make any changes accordingly using English vocabulary that seems appropriate for the context. Most often, the changes are minimal: an article “a” or “the” here and there, and perhaps a comma or two. By the way, take it from a linguistically-challenged person, for the most part, the English I see for editing is very, very good. I wish my Farsi was that good!

■ What was your motivation for this collaboration and what inspires you to continue it?

A. There were a number of events leading to a realization that I had to do something about the injustices being perpetrated in and by the United States. Certainly the illegal and immoral U.S. invasion of Iraq was one critical point. For reasons only Allah (swt) knows, I became outraged by the wanton and unprovoked U.S. assault and occupation of Iraq, and felt compelled to do whatever I could to try to prevent the same thing from happening to Iran, which at that time seemed like a very real possibility, and, with the lunatic fringe running Washington, still does.

So I began to write letters critical of U.S. actions to editors, first to local newspapers and later to national news outlets but without success. I began to broaden my efforts and happened to connect with Tehran Times and the late editor and my good friend, Hamid Golpira, who encouraged



Journalist and senior editor Yuram Abdullah Weiler poses at his home in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

be where I am today without his friendship and guidance.

As far as inspiration to continue, I really can’t imagine not continuing to edit for as long as I can. This has been the most intellectually broadening experience in my life, and I am grateful for the opportunity to connect personally with people, culture and country literally half way around the world.

■ The articles you have written for the Tehran Times are mostly anti-imperialist and in support of the oppressed. What’s the feedback you have received about the articles whether from your Iranian friends in the U.S. or other friends and people across the world?

A. Of course, I have received a fair amount of negative feedback, mostly from Americans. I remember one in particular who insisted that he knew all about Islam because he had read a long list of books, all written by authors who had extremely unfavorable views of the religion. After one interview in which I was highly critical of the Israeli apartheid regime, I received feedback in the form of a rock thrown through a window of our home. The other extreme are those friends that I have made over the years who not only have agreed with my perspectives but also have asked me to write articles on specific topics or to give presentations.

What surprises me is hearing from individuals from the Middle East [West Asia] who hold favorable views of U.S. imperial policy in the region. There is one Pakistani who read one of my articles years ago and I am still in contact with him despite differences on Islam and Iran. Nevertheless, he has always been respectful to me as a brother in Islam while disagreeing with his more positive views of the U.S. and its policies. Like most Americans, he seems to view Washington’s hegemonic escapades as motivated by the best of intentions, but occasionally causing unintended, harmful consequences.

■ What are the problems in working with the Tehran Times?

A. Of course, the time difference between Tehran and Las Cruces, New Mexico sometimes creates a difficulty. Often by the time I have finished namaz in the morning and sit down to edit, it is already late in the afternoon or early evening in

Seyyed Ali Khamenei, President Rouhani, Foreign Minister Zarif and other officials. At the same time, I avoid using English language idioms that would make Iranians sound too much like Americans when their statements are read.

■ You along with your kind wife, Sister Batyah, visited in 2012. You have many Iranian friends in the U.S. and Iran. As much as I know, you try to live an Iranian style. You try Iranian cuisine; you spread Haft-Seen and many other things. What pushes you toward Iran?

A. How could anyone, who claims to believe in justice and fairness, not be pushed toward a country, which has made such a valiant stand against U.S. imperialism? The history of Iran over the past two centuries has been a history of fighting against British, Russian and then American domination, and emerging victoriously by the Islamic Revolution in 1979 as a rightfully proud nation led by Imam Khomeini (ra).

My initial attraction to Iran was amplified after reading Steven Kinzer’s “All The Shah’s Men”, which details the U.S. role in the August 1953 overthrow of the government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. Since that time, I have studied numerous books on Iran and the Islamic Revolution, and with each one, I feel my love for the country grows.

Likewise, I am stunned by the Iranian people’s sacrifices and steadfastness during the Jang-e Tahrill, the 8-year-long, U.S.-backed war waged by Iraqi dictator Saddam against the fledgling Islamic Republic. Who would fail to be awed and inspired after hearing the story of the martyrdom of the 13-year-old Basiji, Hossein Fahmideh, who threw himself under an enemy tank while holding several grenades in order to halt its advance?

So yes, I have fallen in love with Iran and have tried my best to learn as much as I can about this special country, and to the extent possible, adopt Iranian customs, traditions and cuisine, not to mention struggling to learn Farsi. But I’m not the first American to be Iranstruck, if I may coin a word; Howard Baskerville, who was killed leading a group of Iranians during the Constitutional Revolution over a hundred years ago and was buried in Tabriz, also fell in love with Iran and Iranians.

■ We have regretted that your wish to live in Iran remains unfulfilled. How have you dealt with it?

A. This is clearly the most difficult question, since yes, I very much wanted to live in Iran, even more so since my wife and I visited in 2012. To some extent, I suppose living in Las Cruces, New Mexico is one way I have dealt with this disappointment, since living here is somewhat like being outside of the U.S. and the desert landscape reminds me of parts of Iran.

Another way is simply trying to live as much of an Islamic-Iranian lifestyle as is possible and continue to maintain my contacts with Iranians both here in the U.S. and in Iran. Let me be blunt: while I was born in America, I consider that to have been a geographical accident and do not consider myself to be American; I simply happen to live here. This statement holds even more so since my wife and I have visited Iran and have seen what a beautiful country it is and personally experienced the world-renowned Iranian hospitality.



Ryu Jeong-Hyun
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Tehran

On the Occasion of the 41st Anniversary of Tehran Times

My congratulations on the 41st Anniversary of Tehran Times! As Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Islamic Republic of Iran, I have had the privilege of meeting and having interviews with Tehran Times on many occasions, and it was always a pleasure to be able to introduce to the Iranian people what important issues are going on between Korea and Iran, and to be reminded of the Iranian people’s deep interest in the friendly relations of our two countries, love for K-pop and K-drama, and passion for learning the Korean language.

As the “Tehran Street” in the bustling center of Seoul and the “Seoul Boulevard” in Tehran vividly shows, Korea and Iran have continued close and friendly relations for many decades. In addition to the close cooperation in the economic, political and cultural areas, our concerted efforts to fight against COVID19 are binding us even closer together. While Korea was one of the countries that was hit by the pandemic earlier than others, Korea could effectively control the disease by preemptively and rigorously Testing, Tracing and Treating it, which was later labeled as “3T”. The efforts and measures of the Korean Government to combat COVID19 are characterized into our “TRUST campaign”, which stands for Transparency, Responsibility, United action, Science and Together in solidarity. The world is a diverse place with many different cultures and values but we believe that “TRUST” can be a universal guiding principle that other countries can apply in their fight against COVID-19.

Since pandemic requires global alliance and close cooperation of every country, Korea and Iran are also working together to fight against COVID-19. Korea has recently committed to make 2 million USD worth of in-kind contribution to the Iranian government, and is making various efforts in order to continue and boost trade with Iran.

As Tehran Times celebrates the 41st anniversary of its establishment, I would also like to thank all the men and women who are committed to their journalistic values at this esteemed media. Reading Tehran Times is an integral part of me and my colleagues’ daily routine, since we feel confident that the news shows prudent editorial judgement of the paper with decades of valuable experience in journalism. Due to the political, economic and cultural significance Iran has in the international arena, it is important for the audiences outside of Iran to learn the facts and viewpoints regarding what is happening in Iran and understand the underlying reasons behind those events. As a leading English-language daily, Tehran Times has played a key role in bridging the language gap between the news in Iran and audiences outside this country. While the print media are faced with growing challenges from development of digital technology, I believe that the role and significance of the newspaper will not abate, and that the contribution Tehran Times makes to the world will continue.

I would like to thank Tehran Times again for playing an important role in helping the Korean Embassy communicate with the Iranian people on many issues in a timely manner. I look forward to having further interactions with Tehran Times and its respected journalists in the future as well. Happy 41st Anniversary of Tehran Times!

A great mind and a grandmaster of journalism



All of us who had the honor of working with and learning from him believe that his signature at the top of the page meant a certification for possessing highest possible qualifications or standards.

Although he had not any academic journalism degree, his wonderful knowledge of different issues turned him into a grandmaster who generously passed his knowledge and his gigantic experience on to his colleagues.

Through his contributions, the Tehran Times became one of the most reliable English newspapers in the region. He wrote many insightful articles for the newspaper.

Sorrowfully, he died in July 2015 at the age of 55.

Hamid Golpira was a great mind and a grandmaster of journalism. We at the Tehran Times all owe a lot to him. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



Irfan Parviz, founder of the Tehran Times, attends a press conference by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the then president.

and guided me, and published my first article, “Unbalanced U.S. policy on Palestine” in June of 2006. At that time, I suppose I thought maybe I would write five or ten articles at most, never dreaming that I would have over 200 articles published.

A crucial event in my life was the chance meeting in November 2003 of Hajj Agha Ibrahim Kazerooni, who was born in Najaf, Iraq and studied in Qom and Tehran. Sheikh Ibrahim, as I refer to him, has been my guide, mentor and a dear friend for 17 years, and is currently an imam at the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan. I found him to be an invaluable resource not only for learning about Islam, but also about Middle East [West Asia] history. Additionally, I have learned such diverse subjects from him as how to cook chelo rice and how to blend loose-leaf tea. He also has reviewed many of my articles and provided many valuable insights and comments. I doubt seriously that I would

Tehran. Yet somehow everyone has managed to be patient with me; I do appreciate that very much.

As far as technical issues, perhaps the biggest one is my not having a sufficient command of Farsi to be able to clarify meanings of words or phrases, which may be idioms in Farsi that have been translated literally into English. When I have a question about a word or a phrase, I send an email asking for clarification, and since I insist on communicating in Farsi, sometimes I simply don’t have the vocabulary to properly ask my question or express my concern.

Lastly, I am well aware that my editing and writing takes place in the context of an ongoing 40-year-plus propaganda campaign by the U.S. against Iran, so the last thing I want to do is allow anything to pass my scrutiny that could be embarrassing to the Islamic Republic. I am especially cautious when editing statements by Leader of the Islamic Revolution

■ I remember that you once asked Sister Batyah to edit our articles when you were away from home for couple of weeks due to your trip to Iraq. What does she think about your collaboration with our daily?

A. As did I, my wife has fallen in love with Iran and continues to stay in contact with our enchanting Iranian tour guide, Fam Shah Hosseini. I asked my wife for her thoughts on all these years of collaboration with the Tehran Times, and she said she views it as a precious connection with reality. Life here in the U.S., even before the ascent of Trump, is a distortion of reality and, to a degree, surreal, especially these chaotic days of the coronavirus pandemic. She, like me, feels that Iran is a very special place — like a diamond in the midst of a region of rhinestones — with warm, caring people and a rich history and culture dating back thousands of years. So even if we can’t live there, we could never sever our connection with our Iranian family and friends.

Tribute to Tehran Times senior editor Hamid Golpira



Manijeh Rezapoor
Tehran Times Journalist

I clearly remember when I first met our late senior editor Hamid Golpira for the first time in the editorial board of the Tehran Times English Daily.

It was a summer day in 2001, the very first day I had begun to work for the daily. I was new and had neither a seat nor a computer

in the office.

There were going to be changes in the decoration of the office and the new comers were still wandering around to find a seat and a pc to do their job.

Therefore, I got an empty seat right inside the editors’ room. Hamid entered the room and sat down next to me and began to talk.

An Iranian-American journalist and author, Hamid was very concerned and committed to his job.

He lived alone and had nobody around to talk to, so he used to converse with his colleagues, and with those he felt more comfortable with. So we began to talk. It was a pleasant conversation and we became friends.

He always expected the best from us. Most of his complaints were about the types of news and their English translations, the every-day situation of the country, the future of the younger generation, and many other things.

He always tried his best to produce the best work he could. I never saw him ignore a word, even a single character in sentences. I sometime saw him forget his food on his desk for hours working on an article. All his love was to recreate the most fluent text out of the news he worked on.

I gradually found out more about him. I think he was a genius, no matter what the text of the news was, it was as if his fingers acted like the wand of a magician, producing a beautiful article.

Hamid was very kind and personable as well, but he used to get angry on occasion. And what made others angry about him was that he was often late for work. Of course, his not being on time is something that developed gradually over the years.

Later on, I got my own seat and pc but we remained good friends and he used to talk to us expressing his feelings whether he was angry or even happy.