



New parliament to kick off on Wednesday **3**



Iran-China trade falls 40% in 4 months yr/yr **4**



Some teams plan to cancel the league resumption: Beiranvand **11**



Goethe Museum Düsseldorf next stop for Gunther Uecker's "Tribute to Hafez" **12**



©Tehran Times/ Illustration by Bahman Vakhshour/ Based on The Fall of the US Empire

Rouhani urges Switzerland to be more active in countering U.S. illegal acts

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has urged Switzerland to play a more effective role in countering the United States' illegal actions and economic pressure against Iran.

"In a sensitive situation in which we witness the United States' illegal and inhuman sanctions against Iran, we expect Switzerland to play a more effective role," he told Swiss President Simonetta Sommaruga in a phone conversation on Tuesday.

Rouhani also praised Switzerland for launching a financial mechanism for humanitarian trade with Iran, saying it is essential to make the mechanism more active.

The Bern government has established Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA) to facilitate humanitarian trade with Iran. According to swiss.info, under the SHTA, the Swiss government has created a payment channel with a Swiss bank, through which payments for exports to Iran by Swiss domiciled companies are facilitated. The agreement is open to companies domiciled in Switzerland, including those owned or controlled by third-party persons, in food, pharmaceutical and medical sectors.

Rouhani suggested that it is necessary that Iran's money in other countries is transferred through the SHTA.

"Launching this mechanism can be very effective in this difficult situation. We expect this financial mechanism to become more active and Iran's financial resources in some countries be processed through this route," he said.

Elsewhere, Rouhani attached great importance to preserving the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, as an international agreement.

"It is essential for the European Union, especially the three European countries, to take the necessary steps to create a balance in implementing commitments under the JCPOA, and Switzerland can help strengthen foundation of the JCPOA," he said.

For her part, Sommaruga said that Switzerland will make any effort to encourage the remaining signatories to the JCPOA to be committed to their obligations and preserve the agreement.

She also said that the Swiss government will make efforts to make the financial mechanism more active. **→2**

CBI targets annual inflation rate of 22%

TEHRAN — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in a statement on Tuesday announced that the annual inflation rate for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) is set to be 22 percent.

The statement published on the website of the CBI read, "Given the adopted policies and taken measures and also taking the country's macro-economic factors into account, the CBI believes that based on the realistic scenarios, the inflation rate in the current year will continue its downward trend."

The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on April 19, which marks the end of the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin, stood at 32.2 percent.

The inflation rate has fallen 2.6 percent in the mentioned time span from the twelve-month

period ended in the last day of the previous year.

The center expects the inflation rate to experience a downward trend in the first quarter of this year.

Last year, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had said, "Our goal is curbing inflation rate and no estimation shows an inflation rate of over 20 percent for the next year".

In the Iranian calendar year of 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017), Iran could manage to experience a single-digit inflation rate after 26 years.

The inflation rate stood at 9.8 percent in that year according to the Statistical Center of Iran and at nine percent according to the CBI.

But since June 2018, when the inflation rate stood at 10.2 percent, as announced by the CBI, the country's experiencing double-digit inflation rates again.

Has Wall Street stolen \$100 trillion from the American public? Will Donald Trump get it back?

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW Part 2
By Javad Heirannia

■ How does naked short selling, which is illegal, differ from short selling, which is legal?

A. This is a very important question. Short selling is legal because it incentivizes those who believe they have truthful information about a stock price being over-valued for any number of reasons, and they are allowed to bet what they know on the condition that they actually own or borrow with an

obligation to buy, the stock in question.

Naked short telling is pure counterfeiting or more accurately, the use of "phantom shares" that do not exist. This is like betting in a casino with fake chips that have no value, if you lose you do not pay up, if you win you take everyone's money. Naked short selling is a crime equivalent in scope and impact to profiting from drug sales or trade in women and children.

■ I still don't understand naked short selling. Walk us through a typical case.



©Hamshahrlonline

Following the guidelines of martyr Beheshti **5**

Tehran Times: An audible voice of the oppressed people worldwide **5**

Beheshti newspaper **5**

Revolutionary press should defend truth **11**

JOB VACANCY

The Tehran Times is looking for journalists. Send your C.V. via email address below: recruitment@tehrantimes.com

Required qualifications:

- Adequate knowledge of English
- Relevant experience in media
- Familiarity with the principles of journalism

Garments of Iran's salt mummies to be restored using German expertise

TEHRAN — A team of experts from Iran and Germany will start a project for purifying, cleansing, and restoring garments and personal belongings of ancient salt mummies which were first found in Iran's Chehrabad Salt Mine in 1993.

What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation for science. The first salt mummy, dated to 300 CE, was discovered in 1993, sporting a long white beard, iron knives, and a single gold earring. In 2004 another mummy was discovered only 50 feet away, followed by another in 2005 and a "teenage" boy mummy later that year....

"The discovered objects and clothing of the Salt Men are being restored in collaboration with Iran's Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics in close collaboration with the research institute for the protection and restoration of historical relics from the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and the Archaeological Museum Frankfurt," CHTN quoted Zanzan province's tourism chief Amir Arjmand as saying on Monday.

"According to [academic] studies, their textiles belong to the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods, [(550-330 BC) and ((224 CE-651), respectively)] and in the texture of which different techniques were used in that periods," the official explained.

Arjmand added that the usage of different types of hair, wool, and felt in the texture of fabrics as well as the existence of various striking designs are amongst other prominent features of their garments. **→8**

Venezuelans welcome Iranian tanker

Venezuelans celebrated on Monday as the first of five Iranian gasoline tankers arrived in the country in defiance of U.S. threats. In this photo, a Venezuelan employee is kissing the Iranian flag.

Workers at the El Palito refinery welcomed the docking of Iranian tanker Fortune. Four more tankers are expected over the coming days.

The fuel shipments are arriving in the face of stiff sanctions imposed by the U.S. on both Venezuela and Iran. They mark a new era in the burgeoning relationship between the two countries.

Iranian, Russian diplomats discuss Syrian and Yemeni developments

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ambassador to Moscow **d e s k** Kazem Jalali and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin held a phone conversation on Monday discussing the latest developments in Syria and Yemen.



The diplomats attached great importance to the Astana talks to help settle the Syrian crisis.

In line with their security cooperation, Iran, Turkey, and Russia - three power brokers in Syria - launched the Astana peace talks on the Syrian conflict. The talks were launched in January 2017 with the aim of putting an end to the Syrian war.

Kazakhstan has hosted multiple rounds of talks on Syria since January 2017 most of which involved delegations from the Syrian government and opposition.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in March that the Astana peace process has been "effective".

The presidents of Iran, Russia, and Turkey hold regular summits on Syria.

Iran's chief rabbi lashes out at Netanyahu

By staff and agency

Rabbi Yehuda Gerami, the head rabbi of the Iranian Jewish community, on Friday lashed out at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israelis as Iran marked its annual Quds Day.



He said in a Hebrew message aimed at Israeli occupiers: "You don't represent Judaism. We Iranian Jews want to send this message to the Zionists, and first and foremost to Netanyahu," The Times of Israel reported on Tuesday.

"Know that you Zionists do not represent Judaism and do not represent the Jewish people," Gerami said in a statement broadcast on Iranian television. "You only represent the idea of a political movement whose ideas and values oppose the ideas and values of our holy Torah and the Jewish religion."

"We strongly condemn your aggressive actions and emphasize to the whole world: There is a big difference between Judaism and Zionism," Gerami said.

In a speech marking Quds Day on Friday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stressed that the Zionist regime will be uprooted from the region despite supports by the United States and its minions.

"Without a doubt, the Zionist virus, which is the record holder of human evil, won't last long, and it will be uprooted," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

Rouhani urges Switzerland to be more active in countering U.S. illegal acts

1 → She noted that "Iran's requested loan from the International Monetary Fund for fighting COVID-19 can be done through this financial mechanism."



Iran's central bank wrote in March to the IMF requesting \$5bn from its Rapid Financing Initiative, an emergency program that gives loans to countries facing with sudden shocks such as natural disasters.

It was Tehran's first request for IMF loan since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In early April, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing sources from the White House, that the United States was seeking to prevent the IMF from providing loan to Iran.

Iranian embassy displays solidarity with Brazilian people by distribution of aid packages

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Iranian mission in Brasilia distributed aid packages of foodstuff among the Brazilian people in a show of solidarity amid the coronavirus epidemic in the Latin American country.

The food packages were distributed among the needy people in line with the efforts to help contain the novel coronavirus outbreak in the South American country.

Brazil on Monday announced its death toll from the novel coronavirus climbed to 23,473, following 807 fatalities in a single day.

The total number of people who have tested positive for the deadly disease reached 374,898, with a mortality rate of 6.3 percent, according to the health ministry, as in the past 24 hours, 11,687 new cases of infection were detected.

Iranian tankers' arrival in Venezuelan waters marks end to unipolar system: Zarif advisor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mehdi **d e s k** Sanaei, a top advisor to

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, said on Tuesday that arrival of Iranian oil tankers in the Venezuelan waters in the Caribbean is an end to a unipolar system.

"Iranian oil tankers' arrival in the Caribbean Sea is an important event based on international law and with international dimensions which will remain in history as a main chapter in ending unilateralism. This event rings the bell of end to unipolar system," he tweeted in Persian.

Oil tanker Fortune arrived and docked at its destination in Venezuela, El Palito refinery, to deliver fuel to people who are under the intense sanctions pressure of the United States.

The second tanker, Forest, is also in the Venezuelan territory while three other tankers are on the way.

The five tankers deliver some 1.5 million barrels of fuel to Venezuela that despite having abundant reserves, is facing fuel shortage due to illegal U.S. sanctions.

Tehran's decision to send Iran-flagged tankers to Venezuela amid U.S. sanctions against both countries has infuriated those



in the White House.

Iran has warned to retaliate any aggression against its tankers while noting that it has the inherent right to trade with other countries.

■ Maduro says tankers symbolize Iran-Venezuela 'courage and freedom'

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has hailed the arrival of Iranian tankers to

Venezuela amid U.S. threats.

"The 'Fortune' became this Monday # 25 May a symbol of freedom and courage for two peoples: Venezuela and Iran," tweeted Maduro while posting photos of the Iranian tanker docked in a Venezuelan port.

■ Tehran, Caracas to win fight against U.S. imperialism: Venezuela

On Monday, the Venezuelan Air Force

released a video to praise Iran for sending fuel to the gasoline-starved country in defiance of the sanctions imposed by the "imperialist" U.S. regime, Press TV reported.

"Iran and Venezuela, the two countries fighting against the U.S. imperialism with dignity and courage," reads one of the captions shown in the video released by the Venezuelan Air Force.

"Our fight will prevail and we will win," says another caption, referring to the joint fight against the U.S. imperialism.

"Thanks to the people of Iran for their friendship."

The video shows Venezuelan jet fighters escorting the second Iranian tanker, Forest, as it entered the South American state's territorial waters to deliver its gasoline cargo.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has also said that arrival of Iranian oil tanker in Venezuela breaks the 'United States' "unacceptable" and criminal blockade".

"The first of five Iranian oil tankers arrives in Venezuela breaking unacceptable and criminal blockade. #VivaLaSolidaridad Long live solidarity among the peoples," he tweeted on Sunday.

Rouhani declares law on countering Israel's hostile actions

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President **d e s k** Hassan Rouhani on Tues-

day officially declared a law for countering the hostile actions of the Zionist regime against peace and security.

According to the law, all the executive bodies of the country are duty bound to counter Israel's hostile actions against the country, Palestine and the Islamic countries within the framework of the system's general policies.

Iran's parliament approved the law on May 18.

The Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on May 16 formulated the pros and cons of the plan to counter Israel's hostile moves against peace and security.

Speaking after the parliamentary committee meeting, MP Hossein Naqavi Hossein said according to the plan all state bodies are obliged to use all regional and international capacities to counter the "hostile moves of the Zionist regime".

Naqavi Hosseini, who acts as the parliamentary committee spokesman, enumerated Israel's hostile acts such as starting wars, doing terrorist acts, blockading people, building settlements, displacing Palestinians, occupying other countries' lands, such as the Golan Heights.

Following is main ratifications of the parliamentary committee:

The Majlis (Parliament) supports Palestinians with Quds as their capital.

The government is obliged to fully back the "oppressed Palestinian people".

Using any hard or soft product from a company which has a branch in Israel is banned in the country.

Any cooperation or espionage in favor of the Zionist regime is considered as an example of Moharabeh (enmity against God) and corrupt on the earth.

Any kind of cooperation, interaction and political agreement with institutions or official and unofficial persons aligned to Israel is forbidden.

From next month the entry of all Zionist regime's nationals - including real and legal entities - to Iran is banned.

Accordingly, the visit of Iranian nation-

als to the occupied Palestinian territories is forbidden.

The national general prosecutor, through cooperation with the Foreign Ministry and legal department of the president, is tasked to take action in defense of the Palestinian by filing complaints, trying and punishing the criminals of the Zionist regime by tapping the capacities of local and foreign bodies.

From next month the Foreign Ministry is tasked to follow the national referendum in Palestine which have been registered at the United Nations.

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is also tasked to help produce films to reveal the anti-human crimes of the Zionist regime.

Iranian, Afghan teams hold new talks on incident surrounding some migrants

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian and Afghan political **d e s k** delegations held new talks in Kabul on Tuesday on tragic deaths of a number of Afghan migrants in border area.

The Iranian delegation included Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand and Rasoul Mousavi, an assistant to Iran's foreign minister.

According to ISNA, the talks were inconclusive and the delegations plan to continue the talks.

It was the second time that Iranian and Afghan officials met on the issue.

Afghan news media have reported that about 50 Afghan migrants crossing into Iran illegally had been beaten and thrown into a river. Iranian political and border officials have refuted the claim, saying the incident happened on the Afghan side of the border.

According to some reports, 18 of the migrants, including a 12-year old boy, were drowned.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry announced on May 9 that an inquiry had been launched into the tragedy.



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held a phone conversation with acting Afghan foreign minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar on May 10, discussing the deaths of Afghan migrants.

Humanitarian exemptions in U.S. sanctions on Iran just a claim: expert

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Fatemeh **d e s k** Sharifi, an expert on

international relations, has written an article stating that it is just a claim that humanitarian aid is exempted from U.S. sanctions against Iran.

"The United States has claimed it has implemented exemptions for importation of humanitarian aid by Iran. This claim does not conform to reality, because Iranian companies and hospitals have been facing problems to purchase medicine and medical equipment since 2018 after the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal]," Sharifi wrote, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

In this way, she noted, the U.S. has endangered the lives of the people and violated human rights.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet has urged the United States to lift sanctions on Iran and Venezuela, stressing that the sanitary situation called for such a move in order to save lives.

In an interview with France 24 published on May 15, Bachelet added that the medical exemptions to those sanctions touted by the Trump administration were too narrow

and said only a suspension or a lifting of the sanctions would have a real impact.

She also said on March 24 that "in a context of a global pandemic, impeding medical efforts in one country heightens the risk for all of us."

"At this crucial time, both for global public health reasons, and to support the rights and lives of millions of people in these countries, sectoral sanctions should be eased or suspended," she said in a statement.

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein has said that the United States should provide partial, temporary sanctions relief to Iran when the country is fighting the coronavirus.

"The U.S. should provide partial, temporary sanctions relief to Iran and facilitate efforts by international organizations to provide humanitarian funds and supplies so the country can respond more effectively to its coronavirus outbreak. Doing so would reduce popular resentment in Iran against the U.S. and help contain the spread of the disease throughout the region," she wrote in an article titled, "U.S. and Iran Need a Coronavirus Peace Plan" published by Bloomberg on May 16.

In a letter to the G-20 economic powers on

March 24, Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary general, called for rolling back international sanctions regimes around the world.

Guterres said sanctions are heightening the health risks for millions of people and weakening the global effort to contain the spread of the new coronavirus, Foreign Policy reported.

"I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity, not exclusion," he said.

"Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world," the UN chief said.

Renowned American scholar Noam Chomsky has said it is "sheer sadism" that the United States maintains sanctions on Iran during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The sanctions are illegitimate in the first place, and maintaining them during the pandemic is sheer sadism," Chomsky told IRNA in an interview published on May 2.

Speaking from his office in self-isolation to Croatian philosopher and author Srećko Horvat in April, Chomsky blasted U.S. President Donald Trump for continuing

sanctions on Iran.

"When the U.S. imposes devastating sanctions – it's the only country that can do that, everyone has to follow ... the master. Or else they are kicked out the financial system," said Chomsky, according to Aljazeera.

Norman Roule, a retired CIA official who served as national intelligence manager for Iran until 2017, told The Nation that the international community should do everything it can to enable the Iranian people to obtain access to medical supplies and equipment partly because "as Iranians travel throughout the region, they will continue to disperse the virus."

Chris Murphy, the U.S. senator from Connecticut, warned on April 13 that the Trump administration could be partially responsible for "the death of innocent people" if it continues its current policies towards Iran amidst the epidemic.

Murphy also wrote on his Twitter page on April 6 that Iranians are dying of coronavirus partly because of U.S. sanctions.

"Innocent civilians are dying there in part because our sanctions are limiting humanitarian aid during coronavirus," he tweeted.

Yemeni intelligence official opens correspondence with Iran intelligence minister

TEHRAN (FNA) — Head of the intelligence Department at the Ministry of Defense of Yemen's National Salvation Government General Abdullah Yahya al-Hakim in a message to Iranian Intelligence Minister Seyed Mahmoud Alawi stressed Iran's capability to confront the U.S. bullying and restrictions.

"The restrictions imposed on Iran by the U.S. government are clear violation of the international charters and human rights," al-Hakim wrote in his message as reported by the Arabic-language al-Masirah news website.

He called on all freedom-seeking people in the world to stand against the U.S. oppressor system and stress the need for removal of the cruel sanctions against the Iranian nation.

"We are certain that the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys the necessary power and competence to confront the U.S. bullying and stand against the enemies..." al-Hakim said.

His remarks came after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that U.S. sanctions have harmed the Iranian nation for the past years, but they yielded great fruits like self-sufficiency.

"Despite the severe conditions of the country and the illegal and unjust sanctions and the harsh American pressures, production in Iran has not halted and today we are witnessing great achievements such as self-sufficiency in wheat and other food and agricultural products," Rouhani said last Tuesday.

"Today we are also self-sufficient in gasoline, gas and diesel production, and infrastructure work carried out in the country for years has made us successful in the battle against coronavirus," he added.

Envoy lauds U.S. abstention from disrupting Iranian tankers

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela Hojatollah Soltani says the U.S. abstention from aggression against Iranian tankers showed that there's still wisdom in the U.S. establishment.

"The U.S. act of non-aggression against Iranian oil tankers showed that wisdom, foresight and tactfulness is still alive at some levels of that country's establishment," Soltani tweeted on Monday.

"Those [individuals] should make the warmongers understand that observing international regulations and treaties by governments, including the U.S. government, will create a safer world for all countries including the U.S.," he added.

The ambassador also said the United States has finally realized that fulfilling its commitments and responsibilities regarding international treaties is a good thing.

"It (the U.S.) should also know that Barjam (Iran nuclear deal), resolution 2231, NPT, not supporting terrorism, etc. are other international commitments which should be observed and implemented," the ambassador added.

In defiance of threats by Washington, the first of five Iranian oil tankers heading to Venezuela entered the country's waters on Saturday.

Reportedly, the second Iranian tanker has



also arrived in Venezuelan waters.

The U.S., which has imposed sanctions on both Venezuela and Iran, says it is monitoring the convoy. Both Caracas and Tehran have warned Washington not to interfere with the delivery.

Amid heightened tensions over what Venezuelan authorities described as threats from the United States, the oil vessel Fortune officially entered Venezuela's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) at about 7:30 pm local time (11:30 GMT), according to the shipping

tracker TankerTracker.

Following the successful delivery, Soltani said relations between Tehran and Caracas are stronger than ever, adding that the two nations care for each other's needs.

Friendly and brotherly ties between Iran and Venezuela are now stronger than ever, Soltani wrote on his Twitter page on Sunday.

He also posted a photo of a meeting between late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, noting, "Two leaders, two countries, and two revolutions that care for each other."

On Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran is always entitled to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and warned that if Iranian oil tankers in the Caribbean or anywhere in the world get into trouble by the Americans, Tehran will definitely retaliate.

"Although some of the U.S. measures have created unacceptable conditions in different parts of the world, we will not be the initiator of tension and clash," Rouhani said in a phone call with the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Referring to the American moves in the Caribbean, he reiterated, "If our oil tankers face problems in the Caribbean Sea or anywhere in the world by the Americans, they will face problems reciprocally."

Twitter closes Iranian embassy's account



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Social media giant Twitter has closed the account of Iran's embassy in Russia without providing any reason, the media department of the embassy announced on Monday night.

Twitter has not yet responded to Iran's request to provide a reason for the act, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Twitter has already blocked accounts of several Iranian news agencies without providing any reason.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) announced recently that the account of Jam-e-Jam newspaper was deactivated by the social media network.

More than a year ago, French news agency had quoted Twitter as claiming that such closure is due to dispatch of messages from Iranian accounts against the U.S. policies.

Two years ago, Twitter and Facebook closed hundreds of accounts linked to Iran. Iran believes that such moves are in violation of freedom of expression, a principle which the West pretends to advocate.

Last month, the U.S. Treasury Department blocked and seized the .com domain of the Iran newspaper and other Iranian media outlets in its latest wave of anti-Iran measures.

The newspaper's .com domain was seized by the Treasury Department's Florida-based "OFAC Holding".

According to Deutsche Welle, the .com domains of some other Iranian websites including the Iran Daily, Al Vefagh, Iran Varzeshi and Iran Sepid have also been blocked and seized by the OFAC Holding.

In response, Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly denounced the U.S. Treasury's

hostile measure, describing it as a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and freedom of expression.

"The [U.S.] regime's act of silencing the alternative media movement has reduced America to the main violator of the law-based international order," it added.

Back in January, the .com domain of Fars news agency went offline worldwide due to U.S. sanctions. In a post on its Twitter account at the time, Fars said access to its .com domain had been blocked upon the U.S. Treasury's order.

Internet users trying to access farsnews.com also found only a blank screen, along with a message stating "farsnews.com's server IP address could not be found."

The news agency said it had received an email from its server company, which "explicitly said that the blockage is due to an order by the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and its inclusion in the list of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)."

However, Fars can still be accessed through its .ir domain.

U.S.-based giant tech companies such as Google, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram also have a history of targeting Iranian accounts, including those belonging to major broadcasters.

Since Donald Trump became the president of the United States in January 2017, Washington has ramped up anti-Iran measures. Trump adopted a "maximum pressure" policy against Iran later on, after withdrawing from the historic 2015 Iran nuclear deal in May 2018.

The U.S. government has since targeted Iranian officials and organizations with vicious sanctions.

Iran and the U.S. 'meet' again over Afghanistan: Atlantic Council



In an administration short on diplomatic talent, Zalmay Khalilzad stands out.

His title is U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation and he is charged with extricating the United States' military presence in that country. Tangentially, Khalilzad's deep background as a multilingual former ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the United Nations—and his nature as an inveterate schmoozer—have put him in a position to revive U.S. diplomatic engagement with Iran and to help de-escalate what had been a dangerous rise in tensions.

Recently, under United Nations (UN) auspices, there was a meeting of something called the "Six Plus Two." Created after the Taliban seized control of most of Afghanistan in 1996, this format brings together the six neighbors of Afghanistan, Russia, and the United States to discuss how to stabilize Afghanistan.

In a digital chat with the Atlantic Council on May 20, Rosemary DiCarlo, UN Undersecretary General for Political and Peace-building Affairs, confirmed that Khalilzad had been present at a recent virtual Six Plus Two meeting, along with diplomats from Russia, Iran, and Afghanistan's neighbors. She noted that this was a "unique" convening of American and Iranian officials at a time when other direct channels appear shut.

In the late 1990s, this format was an important venue for U.S.-Iran interaction in the absence of formal diplomatic relations. Both countries used the meetings to send signals to each other and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright even attended

a session in 1998, hoping to encounter her Iranian counterpart. She eventually did in 2000.

Khalilzad, an Afghan native who went on to become the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the UN, has used his fluent Dari—a close cousin of Persian—to chat with Iranian counterparts in a variety of settings. He recognized then. As now, that Iran has enormous capacity to help or hinder the political stability of its neighbors and, thus, advance or retard U.S. interests in the Middle East.

One of the many flaws of the Trump administration's heavy-handed approach toward Tehran is that it has sacrificed the interests of Iran's neighbors in the pursuit of "maximum pressure." Countries, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, need to trade with their large neighbor in order to be successful. Consequently, sanctions reimposed by the U.S.—after they quit the Iran nuclear deal two years ago—have hurt Iran's neighbors and complicated their relations with the United States.

Furthermore, DiCarlo said Iran had been helpful in convincing squabbling factions in Afghanistan's government to reach an agreement on a joint committee to negotiate with the Taliban, with whom Khalilzad has forged a tentative pact. "Iran is now playing a constructive role regarding the Houthis" in Yemen, DiCarlo added, without providing details.

The Six Plus Two proved useful in that regard two decades ago and could do so, again, especially, with a diplomat like Khalilzad at the table.

New MP: Oil shipment to Venezuela humiliates U.S. like Ein al-Assad

TEHRAN (FNA) — Dispatch of Iran's gasoline to Venezuela was another humiliation for the U.S. like smashing American Ein al-Assad military base, a newly-elected member of parliament said on Tuesday.

Hassan Hemmati told the MNA on Tuesday that the United States has been repeatedly humiliated in the face of the noble Iranian nation and sending gasoline to Venezuela resembled to pounding their military base in Ein al-Assad in Iraq.

He said that Iran's move in sending gasoline to Venezuela was "a correct and fully strategic measure" despite U.S. threats and added, "We should pay no attention to the U.S. threats."

He hailed Iran's policy as very good and principled for shipment of gasoline to the Bolivarian country, adding, "It showed that it [Iran] will stand firmly against any threat and excessive demand."

"Over the past four decades that Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued its policies with authority and is not afraid of U.S. threats," the lawmaker noted. Despite harsh American sanctions imposed against the country, Iran has proved that it has become stronger every day, he said.



Iran's second oil tanker, Forest, arrived in Venezuela on Monday amid the U.S. threats.

Forest entered the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Venezuela early Sunday, met by the country's navy.

It follows the first of five Iranian vessels carrying an estimated total of 1.53 barrels of gasoline between them.

The first vessel, the 'Fortune', successfully reached Ven-

ezuela the day before and was escorted into the port by the Bolivarian Navy.

Three more oil tankers are expected to arrive in Venezuela from Iran. The five vessels are carrying an estimated 1.53 million barrels of gasoline between them.

Iran has warned of repercussions from the potential interception of Iranian tankers by the U.S.

On Saturday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said his country is always entitled to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and warned that if his country's oil tankers in the Caribbean or anywhere in the world get into trouble by the Americans, Tehran will definitely retaliate.

"Although some of the U.S. measures have created unacceptable conditions in different parts of the world, we will not be the initiator of tension and clash," Rouhani said in a phone call with the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Referring to the American moves in the Caribbean, he reiterated, "If our oil tankers face problems in the Caribbean Sea or anywhere in the world by the Americans, they will face problems reciprocally."

New parliament to kick off on Wednesday

President Rouhani to deliver speech at parliament's opening ceremony

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The next 4-year term of the Iranian parliament is set to kick off in a ceremony on Wednesday, according to Tasnim.

President Hassan Rouhani, Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi and Guardian Council Chief Ahmad Jannati are expected to attend the opening ceremony.



Spokesperson for the parliament's presiding board said on Tuesday that the president is going to deliver a speech at the beginning of the Wednesday session.

Asadollah Abbasi said the oldest lawmakers will form a transitional presiding board at the opening session of the new parliament before a speech from the interior minister about the process of the parliamentary elections.

The transitional presiding board will then decide on a date to hold a session to endorse the credentials of the new MPs and elect an official presiding board, he added.

Abbasi also noted that unlike previous parliaments, the new lawmakers will not visit the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini due to the outbreak of coronavirus and the need to observe health regulations.

The parliamentary elections, the 11th of its kind since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, were held on February 21.

The Iranian parliament has 290 members who are elected by the people for four-year terms.

Article 99 of the constitution states that the Guardian Council "is responsible for supervising the elections of the Experts Assembly, the President of the Republic, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and referrals to the public vote and referenda."

Zarif: Iran ready to share coronavirus experience with Africans

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has congratulated African nations on Africa Day, saying Iran is ready to share its coronavirus experience with African countries.



"Congratulations on #AfricaDay2020, reminding us of the brave struggles of Africans against oppression," Zarif said via Twitter on Monday.

"Iran has always been—and will forever be—a reliable partner of all fraternal African nations," he wrote.

"Amid #COVID19 ready to share our experience and expertise to help save lives," the foreign minister added.

Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organization of African Unity on May 25, 1963.

It is celebrated in various countries on the African continent, as well as around the world.

Jahangiri congratulates Georgia on Independence Day

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri has felicitated Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia on the country's Independence Day.

In a Tuesday message, Jahangiri praised the political will of high-ranking officials of the two countries and the historical background of cooperation between the two sides, Mehr reported.

He expressed the hope that relying on mutual capacities, Iran and Georgia would have the chance to expand bilateral economic and political cooperation.

Independence Day is an annual public holiday in Georgia observed on May 26. It commemorates the adoption of the Act of Independence, which established the Democratic Republic of Georgia in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917. It is the national day of Georgia.

Iran and Georgia have conferred on improving customs cooperation under the coronavirus pandemic.

In a trilateral video call among Iran's Ambassador to Georgia Javad Ghavam Shahid, Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi and an official from Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia in mid-May, Mirashrafi referred to the importance of the two countries' position in the North-South Corridor and access to Europe as well as Georgia's role as Iran's gateway to Eurasia.

The Georgian side announced his country's full cooperation with Iran in this regard.

Airport development projects worth \$238m to be implemented by Mar. 2021

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Airports and Air desks Navigation Company Siavash Amirmokri announced that 21 airport development projects worth 10 trillion rials (about \$238 million) are planned to be implemented in the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

The official also said that 13 aviation projects valued at €9.2 million will be carried out by the yearned, ILNA reported.

As previously announced by Iran’s Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami, airport capacity in the country has increased by 10 million passengers since 2013.

Last month, the minister said that various projects had been completed in 15 Iranian airports over the past six years with an investment of around 20 trillion rials (about \$476 million), Press TV reported.



The minister said plans are in place for adding new terminals and runways to the existing airports across Iran to further increase the capacity of the airports by another 10 million passengers per year. “These airport projects include passenger terminal, runway, control tower, radar system and navigation system,” he said, adding that finishing those projects would greatly boost aviation safety in Iran.

Iranian airports currently have a capacity to handle more than 60 million passengers a year.

Annual steel production growth of 20% possible

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran has planned to increase its annual steel production by 20 percent to 33 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

While reaching this amount of growth is difficult considering the annual output of 27.5 million tons in the past year, it’s not impossible given the country’s performance in this sector since the beginning of current year.

The latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA) indicates that Iran has produced 8.49 million tons of steel ingot during the first four months of 2020, which was 4.3 percent higher than 8.139 million tons of output in the same period of time in the past year.

It is while the world’s production of steel ingot registered a drop of 4.1 percent during the first four months of this year compared to the same time span in the previous year.

The country has produced 20.226 million tons of steel ingots during the past Iranian year.

Iran’s annual steel ingot production is planned to increase 3.2 million tons in the current year, as announced by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

IMIDRO has put the value of the projects to boost the steel ingot output in the present year at \$793 million.

Citing the data indicated in the World Steel Association (WSA)’s latest report, IMIDRO has also announced that the production of crude steel in Iran has risen 14.1 percent in March 2020 from March 2019.

The WSA’s report, which is on steel production by 64 countries, put Iran’s steel output at over 2.8 million tons in March.

WSA has previously announced that Iran’s crude steel production climbed 30 percent in 2019 while the average global growth in this sector stood at 3.5 percent.



According to the global organization, Iran produced 31.9 million tons of crude steel in 2019, while the figure was 24 million tons in 2018.

The data and reports released by Iranian organizations also show that the country’s steel sector is still experiencing growth in output and export despite the U.S. sanctions.

In its outlook plan for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (2025-2026) Iran has envisaged production of 55 million tons of steel per annum, and to achieve this target the country requires to produce 160 million tons of iron ore concentrates.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has announced that production of iron ore concentrate in Iran reached 47.306 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

The country has extracted 64.274 million tons of iron ore during the past year, according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization.

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since September 23, 2019.

Industry Ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

Iran’s export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

As reported, the country’s major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in the previous year.

Iran-China trade falls 40% in 4 months yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s trade with its top trading partner China reached \$5.26 billion in the first four months of 2020, 40 percent less than the same period last year, Tasnim reported.

As reported, the two countries’ trade turnover stood at \$8.76 billion in the last year’s four-month period.

Based on the data released by the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China, Iranian imports from the Asian country reached \$2.92 billion in the January-April period, indicating a three percent rise compared to the same time span in 2019.

The exports to China, however, fell 61 percent to stand at \$2.34 billion.

China mainly imports oil from Iran and the drastic fall in oil prices has been the main reason for the devaluation of Iran’s



exports to China during this period.

The outbreak of coronavirus was also

another major factor that contributed to the significant decline in China’s trade with Iran.

Road transit capacity to rise as govt. plans to renovate fleet

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami says the renovation of the country’s road transportation fleet is going to increase the number of vehicles able to transit goods to other countries to 100,000, IRIB reported.

Speaking in a ceremony for unveiling a portal for registering in the renovation program, Eslami said the government’s program for renovating the country’s road transport fleet is going to reduce the average age of the fleet to 14.5 years.

The official noted that due to the high average age of the road transportation fleet, a large number of the national fleet are not able to transit goods to other countries.

“Currently, the average age of our road transport fleet is 19 years, and we hope that with the implementation of this plan and scraping of the vehicles over 40 years of age, the average life of the fleet will be reduced to 14.5 years,”



Eslami said.

According to Eslami, the modernization of the transportation fleet, in addition to improving the country’s

transit capacity, will save the country 530 million liters of fuel worth nearly \$960 million.

The official noted that in order to accelerate the implementation of the plan, 25 domestic companies are going to participate in the program and foreign vehicles under three-years of age will also be considered to replace the old fleet.

Domestic companies can participate in renovation of up to 1,000 vehicles a year, while large-scale companies are also allowed to purchase and import up to 100 foreign vehicles to renovate their fleet, he said.

Eslami further mentioned an agreement signed between the Transport Ministry and Iran Khodro Diesel Company (IKDC), based on which the owners of 863 trucks with an age over 55 years have been notified to register in this system so that after approval they can immediately change their cars through IKDC.

Oil Ministry set to halt condensate exports to create more valuable products



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Monday that his ministry plans to prevent direct gas condensate exports to create products with more value-added, Shana reported.

Speaking to the state-run radio, Zanganeh said the plan is to process the condensate in the country’s refineries in order to produce products like naphtha and gasoline and to supply feedstock to local refineries.

The program is going to be started during the current Iranian year (ends on March 20, 2021), the minister said.

“All the gas condensate will be refined in the Persian Gulf Star and Siraf refineries ... to gasoline and feedstock for petrochemical units,” Zanganeh said.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery currently receives 420,000 bpd of gas condensate.

The Siraf project, first announced in 2014 but yet to be built, encompasses six units with the total refining capacity of 360,000 bpd of gas condensate. It will be located at the Persian Gulf complex, which is adjacent to petrochemical plants in the region. Naphtha can be used in olefin plants to produce plastic, among other products.

The giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf waters, is Iran’s main source of gas condensate.

Zanganeh said South Pars and other nearby fields can produce up to 1 million bpd of gas condensate.

In early February, the minister said that about 130,000 bpd of the country’s gas condensate are used as feedstock for the country’s petrochemical plants and 80,000 bpd go to domestic refineries, apart from Persian Gulf Star.

Annual copper concentrate output projected to reach 1.4m tons



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In its outlook plan for mining sector in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), Iran plans to produce 1.427 million tons of copper concentrate, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The country had planned to produce 1.198 million tons of copper concentrate in the past year, while the output reached 1.18 million tons.

Meanwhile, the annual copper cathode production is anticipated to hit 250,000 tons in this year. Last year’s projected amount was 220,000 tons, although the country managed to produce 250,000 tons of the product.

Earlier this month, four development projects worth 40 trillion rials (about \$952.3 million) were inaugurated in the copper sector of Kerman Province in the

southeast of Iran.

As reported, President Hassan Rouhani put the projects into operation through video conference.

The projects inaugurated in Khatoon Abad Copper Complex included increasing the capacity of copper smelting in the complex, building a copper concentrate storage, construction of a sulfuric acid production plant, and an oxygen supplying unit.

Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Khodadad Gharibpour has announced that the National Iranian Copper Industry Company has defined copper projects worth 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) to be implemented in the current calendar year.

4m tons of basic goods distributed from ports in 2 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 70 million tons (mt) of goods were transported through roads in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) of which four million tons were distributed from the country’s ports.

“This amount of cargo has been transferred with 4.6 million trips,” Deputy Transport Minister Abdolhashem Hassan-Nia told IRIB.

According to the official, over the past two months, more than 160,000 trucks transported basic goods to different parts of the country from ports, especially the port of Imam Khomeini.

Currently, more than 90 percent of the country’s freight and passenger transportation is carried out through roads, and 1.5 million people work in this sector, he said.

“Nearly 450 million tons of cargo is transported annually in the country by 340,000 trucks, while another 250 million tons is also transported by mini-trucks to shorter distances across the country,” he added.



He further underlined the acceleration of freight transportation, especially in bor-

der terminals, as one of the main priorities of Road Maintenance and Transportation

Organization (RMTO) and thanked the RMTO workforce and staff for doing their best during the coronavirus outbreak to keep the distribution of goods afloat.

Hassan-Nia earlier said that more than 5,000 kilometers (km) of arterial roads across the country are going through maintenance operations.

“The nationwide plan to improve the quality of asphalt coating of the country’s arterial roads with 20 trillion rials of (about \$476 million) of funding is being implemented on 5,000 kilometers of the country’s roads to improve their condition,” he said.

Earlier this month, Head of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad said 4.1 million tons of basic goods were stored at the country’s ports, waiting to be distributed across the country.

According to the official, over 14.3 million tons of basic goods were loaded and unloaded in the country’s ports, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to May 10, 35 percent less than the figure for the last year’s same period.

Rouhani urges completion of semi-finished oil industry projects

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, in a phone conversation with Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, stressed the need for accelerating the completion of the oil industry's semi-finished projects, Shana reported.

As reported, during the conversation, Zanganeh reported on the progress of priority projects in the oil industry, including South Pars projects, Jask oil terminal project, and the 1,000-kilometer Gore-Jask pipeline, as well as petrochemical projects and West Karun development projects.

After hearing the oil minister's report, Rouhani pointed to the direct impact of this sector's performance on the realization of the "Surge in Production" motto and said: "We must try to implement all the industry's projects, especially in the field of petrochemicals, as soon as possible using the power and capacities of our experts."

Mentioning the fact that the country's oil, gas and petrochemical industries suffered the least damage from the coronavirus outbreak, the president thanked all the employees, engineers and workers of the



oil industry who have been present in their fields of work in recent months, despite the

difficult conditions caused by the pandemic, and have tried their best to serve the country

and the people.

The current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) has been called the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Earlier this month, Zanganeh said that the coronavirus outbreak did not have a negative impact on oil production in the country.

Elaborating on the Oil Ministry's measures for containing coronavirus, the official noted that the ministry has made serious efforts to prevent any stoppage in the oil production while protecting the workforce.

He added that all activities of the oil industry have been resumed.

Back in March, Zanganeh and Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Masoud Karbasian had discussed necessary measures for containing the coronavirus in the Iranian oil industry's operational areas.

In the meeting the oil minister also discussed ways of preventing the spread of coronavirus in the oil, gas, refining and petrochemical operational areas with his deputies and managers of operating companies via videoconference.

Iran-Amirkabir drilling platform goes operational after 4 years

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Khazar Exploration and Production Company (KEPCO) has successfully put Iran-Amirkabir drilling platform into operation after four years, despite the U.S. sanctions.

According to KEPCO office of public relations, the commissioning of the platform's monitoring (Drill View) and lift systems along with the necessary tests for the drilling equipment were all carried out by KEPCO engineers and specialists without any help from foreign companies.

The semi-submersible Iran-Amirkabir oil rig has been designed to perform oil and gas exploration drilling operations in the Caspian Sea and its engineering operations and equipment maintenance have been conducted by

Iran Marine Industrial Company (SADRA).

The rig weighs 14,700 tons and is the heaviest marine structure in the country. It is capable of generating over 11 megawatt electricity and has room for 120 workers on its deck.

The rig is capable of drilling in waters with a depth of 1000 meters and also drilling from the sea bottom up to a depth of 6600 meters. It has been stabilized with the help of eight anchors, each weighing 20 tons, and a chain.

Iran-Amirabad is Iran's first drilling platform in the Caspian Sea and can be considered the country's first step for conducting drilling operations in the deep waters.

Currently Iran-Amirkabir drilling platform is 137 air miles (250 km) off the Caspian Sea coastal line.



Oil prices climb as faith in supply cuts grows

Oil prices rose on Tuesday, supported by growing confidence that producers are following through on commitments to cut crude supplies while fuel demand picks up with more cars back on the road as coronavirus lockdowns ease.

Brent crude futures were up nearly 1.4 percent, or 50 cents to \$36.03 a barrel as of 0840 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures was up 2.6 percent, or 86 cents, at \$34.11 a barrel. There was no WTI settlement on Monday because of the U.S. Memorial Day holiday.

The market was buoyed by comments from Russia that its oil output had dropped almost to its target of 8.5 million barrels per day (bpd) for May and June under the supply cut deal agreed by major producers (OPEC+).

OPEC+ countries are set to meet again in early June to discuss maintaining their supply cuts to shore up prices, which



are still down about 45 percent since the start of the year. The world's major producers, including Saudi Arabia

and Russia, agreed in April to cut their collective output by nearly 10 million bpd for May and June.

Russia's energy ministry on Monday quoted minister Alexander Novak as saying a rise in fuel demand should help cut a global surplus of about 7 million to 12 million bpd by June or July.

"Russia is clearly committed to continued cuts also in H2-20 so the upcoming OPEC+ meeting on the 9th of June is unlikely to be a bearish surprise like the one that fell apart on the 6th of March," SEB chief commodities strategist Bjarne Schieldrop said.

Data from energy services firm Baker Hughes (BKR.N), meanwhile, showed the U.S. rig count hit a record low of 318 in the week to May 22, also indicating lower output in the future.

(Source: Reuters)

Global oil demand has yet to peak, energy watchdog predicts



Global oil consumption hasn't peaked, the head of the International Energy Agency warned, throwing cold water on hopes the coronavirus will cap demand and reduce climate-changing emissions.

"In the absence of strong government policies, a sustained economic recovery and low oil prices are likely to take global oil demand back to where it was, and beyond," Fatih Birol said in an interview.

The world consumed last year nearly 100 million barrels a day of oil, and some in the energy industry believe that could mark the peak for global demand. Their hypothesis

is that the coronavirus outbreak will trigger changes, like widespread working-from-home and less overseas travel, reducing consumption permanently.

If true, that would have huge implications for climate change as burning less oil would permanently reduce greenhouse emissions, easing the way to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement. But Birol warned governments that the coronavirus will only reduce oil demand briefly, with consumption dipping in 2020 to about 91 million barrels a day, before rebounding in 2021 and beyond.

"Behavioral changes in response to the pandemic are visible but not all of them are negative for oil use. People are working from home more, but when they do travel, they are more likely to be in cars than public transport," he told Bloomberg News from Paris. "Videoconferencing will not solve our energy and climate challenges, good government policies might."

Birol is urging governments to use their economic recovery packages to fight climate change, spending on green energy to help to achieve the goals set in the 2016 Paris accord.

The more ambitious target set under the Paris climate agreement -- limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius -- will require annual global emissions to be reduced by about half by 2030 and to hit net-zero around the middle of the century. Without deep structural changes, emissions are expected to rise again when economies recover.

The oil industry is making sweeping changes in an effort to adapt itself to the Paris climate goals, with major companies including BP, Royal Dutch Shell Plc and Total SA promising to cut emissions significantly and investing more into renewable energy as they come under pressure from more ecologically conscious shareholders. Still, campaigners warn the cuts are unlikely to be enough to keep temperatures from rising to dangerous levels.

"If there's a strong economic recovery, American business consultants using Zoom will not compensate for 150 million new urban residents in India and Africa traveling, working in factories and buying products transported by trucks," Birol said.

Birol drew parallels with the 2008-09

crisis, when oil demand also suffered a major annual drop, before consumption increased again. The economic recovery packages didn't focus back then on green energy and savings, missing an opportunity to tackle the challenge of climate change.

The IEA, which advises the world's richest countries on energy policy, is sticking to its view that global oil demand will continue to increase over the next decade or so, before reaching a plateau around 2030. In a report published in November 2019, the agency said global petroleum consumption was likely to reach about 105 million barrels a day by 2030 and about 106 million by 2040 in the absence of new government policies.

In its 2019 long-term analysis, the IEA assumed significant oil savings from the sale of new vehicles over the next two decades. The use of more fuel-efficient engines would knock out 9 million barrels a day of demand, while the growth of electric cars would displace about 4 million a day. But the current economic crisis is likely to reduce car sales for a while, keeping less efficient clunkers on the road.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Russia leapfrogs Saudi Arabia as China's top crude oil supplier in April

Russia overtook Saudi Arabia as China's top crude oil supplier in April, customs data showed, with imports rising 18 percent from the same month a year earlier as refiners snapped up cheap raw materials amid a price war between the two producers.

Russian shipments reached 7.2 million tons last month, equivalent to 1.75 million barrels per day (bpd), according to data from the General Administration of Customs released on Tuesday.

That compares with 1.49 million bpd in April 2019 and 1.66 million bpd in March.

Supplies from Saudi Arabia fell to 1.26 million bpd, down from 1.53 million bpd in April 2019 and 1.7 million bpd in March. China's total crude oil imports in April came in at 9.84 mil-

lion bpd, up from 9.68 million bpd in March, but well below 10.64 million bpd in April last year, according to data released earlier this month.

Still, imports during the first four months of the year were up 1.7 percent on a year earlier as Chinese oil refiners take advantage of slumping oil prices.

Analysts have estimated that average utilization rates at independent refineries, known as "teapots", rose to nearly 70 percent in late April - their level before the virus outbreak - but that state-backed refiners will not climb back to their normal level until May.

Refinitiv's oil research team expects China's May imports to hit an all-time high of 53.7 million tons, or 12.7 million bpd,

with record volumes from OPEC producers.

Chinese refiners are also receiving their first crude cargo from the United States in May since November, a shipment booked in March when oil prices started to collapse.

Customs has not reported imports from Venezuela since last October, as China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), Caracas's top oil client, avoided lifting any oil from there to avoid violating secondary U.S. sanctions.

Some of the Venezuelan shipments, however, have been diverted to Malaysia for blending before exports to China, resulting in surge of Malaysian shipments that more than tripled in the first four months.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia sees global oil market balancing in June-July

Russia's energy ministry sees global oil demand and supply balancing in the next two months, it said on its Twitter feed on Monday, citing the minister Alexander Novak.

Leading oil producers are due to hold an online conference in around two weeks on how to further police joint efforts to steady a global oil market hammered by overproduction and a demand drop linked to the coronavirus pandemic.

"For now, the surplus stands at around 7-12 million barrels per day. The energy ministry is counting on the market to balance out in June - July thanks to a consumption increase," the ministry quoted Novak as saying at a state council meeting on energy.

The minister also said supply has already dropped by 14 million to 15 million barrels per day thanks to the OPEC+ deal and output cuts in other countries.

OPEC+ - a group made up of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other leading oil producers including Russia - agreed last month to cut their combined output by almost 10 million bpd, or roughly 10 percent of global production.

They also expected other large oil producers, such as the United States, Canada and Norway, to make additional cuts.

The RIA news agency, citing an unnamed source familiar with the minister's speech at the state council meeting, reported that the energy ministry considers non-OPEC+ countries to have already cut output by 3.5 million to 4 million bpd.

RIA also said Russian oil production volumes were near the country's target of 8.5 million bpd for May and June.

The energy ministry declined to comment on output volumes. Sources have told Reuters that OPEC and its allies want to maintain existing oil supply cuts beyond June, when the OPEC+ group is due to meet next.



(Source: Reuters)

U.S. to become LNG swing producer as capacity utilization declines

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) capacity utilization in the U.S., the world's largest producer for gas, declined to 65 per cent by mid-May, pushing the country into becoming a swing producer, according to IHS Markit.

A swing producer is a supplier of a commodity, with significant spare capacity and hence the ability to respond to price volatility by increasing or decreasing supply rapidly in response to market conditions.

Deliveries of feed gas to liquefaction plants in the U.S. fell to 6 billion cubic feet per day in mid-May from 9.5 bcf/d in late March, the consultancy said.

U.S. LNG facilities were fully utilized prior to the pandemic, which led to a fall in energy demand as many countries enforced lockdowns.

"The inevitable has happened. U.S. LNG capacity utilization has begun a turnaround in response to market forces exacerbated by Covid-19. We are witnessing an historic event where U.S. LNG is taking on the new role of swing supplier," said Terrell Benke, executive director at IHS Markit.



Before U.S. oil plunged into negative territory in April, gas prices were trading in the negative in recent months. Gas prices fell below zero as infrastructure development such as pipeline capacity has been unable to catch up with the surge in output. The U.S. shale boom has propelled the country to become the world's top producer in hydrocarbons, with some of the cheapest available gas in the market. However, with prices falling, there is little economic viability in transporting gas to liquefy at a plant and then ship it to a far-off destination at such low prices.

Gas prices also dropped after U.S. oil prices fell nearly 80 per cent in April from their recent peak in January. That had an impact on associated gas as drillers shut production to prevent further losses.

Some U.S. LNG cargoes have been cancelled but production at liquefaction facilities continues due to the high cost of restarting a closed plant.

"The outlook for U.S. LNG exports this summer is bearish. Current forward prices indicate that U.S. LNG is out of the money through [to] at least September," said Matthew Shruhan, senior analyst at IHS Markit.

"Additional cargo cancellations will follow. It all adds up to continued pressure and a new source of supply flexibility in the global gas market," he added.

Utilization of U.S. LNG capacity is expected to fall below 50 per cent given summer price differentials, which could result in losses for the producers on a short-term basis as prices fall lower than costs, the consultancy said.

Cancellations of U.S. LNG cargoes are expected to provoke greater price volatility as the market looks to balance supply and demand.

There is potential for cargo cancellations to overshoot, putting upward pressure on spot LNG prices and eventually putting U.S. LNG back in the money at certain times, the report said.

(Source: The National)

Second Announcement
Call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One Stages retender

N.I.O.C
1399.788

National Iranian Drilling Company

Subject of Tender:

Tender No.	Description
FP/12-99/016	P/F "CAMERON" TANDEM BOOSTER FOR B.O.P TYPE "U", 13-5/8 5000 10000 & PSI
FP/12-99/017	P/F CORE BARREL ADJUSTABLE HEAD

• **Tender descriptions:**

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,543,973	Tender No.: FP/12-99/016 Indent No.: 08-22-9845098	6,594,000,000
	3,543,976	Tender No.: FP/12-98/017 Indent No.: 08-22-9845163	12,909,958,800

• **Qualitative evaluation of tenderers**

Method	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.
--------	--

• **Purchasing & Submitting**

The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof **6 JUNE 2020**

Tender Document Distribution by Company	Distribution Place
	Hall No.: 113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148660

Documents Receiving Method	Submitting Method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 52010004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.

Documents Receiving Method	Closing date
	35 Days after the last time of Purchasing 13 JULY 2020 The envelopes will be opened At 10:15 a.m On 2020 JULY-14

Documents Receiving Method	Address
	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

• **Tender Guarantee**

Value of guarantee	330,000,000 Rial / 2.292 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/12-99/016
	646,000,000 Rial / 4.487 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/12-99/017

• **Type of guarantee**

- Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 35010004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.

• **Duration of credit & quotation**

Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_ir
تهران تایمز نوبت دوم ۹۹/۲/۷

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily

Advertising Dept



Tel:

021-430 51 430

Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



TEHRANTIMES 430 51 430
Iran's Leading International Daily
Advertising Dept: times1979@gmail.com

Catch up with the latest news in Iran and beyond with



Mehr News English

English page of Mehr News provides you with great opportunity to advertise.

Get in touch
www.mehrnews.com

MEHR NEWS AGENCY

Home All News Iran World Politics Economy Culture Technology Sports Photo Video Opinion

Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output

TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) - Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone conversation with the Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak on Thursday regarding the cooperation of the two countries within the framework of OPEC Plus.

Iranian manufacturers indigenize strategic petchem equipment

Parl. commission approves slicing off 4 zeros from national currency

Iran starts mass production of drilling bit

Most Viewed

Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output

Other News

Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output

TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) - Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone

TOP 10

- Iranians to give no value to US, its sanctions: spox...
- Iranian people to disappoint enemies more than before...
- Senior Iranian officials cast vote in ballot box
- All countries except 3 terrorist regimes in favor of...
- Islamic Revolution Leader casts his vote in ballot...
- Polls open across Iran
- CAO rejects rumors on continuation of Iran-China flights
- Hatami hails Iran aviation efforts to neutralize sanctions
- Iran's envoy, OPEC secretary-general discuss oil market
- Three more patients tested positive for coronavirus...

Interview

Iran's enemies more scared of 'the nation'...

MP urges quick evacuation of US troops from...

en.mehrnews.com

@Mehrnewscom

Has Wall Street stolen \$100 trillion from the American public? Will Donald Trump get it back?

1 → Naked short selling today largely occurs at lower levels, with small and emerging companies desperate for funding. What they do not know is that the placement firms – HCWainwright comes to mind – are often in league with the naked short sellers. So here is the sequence.

- Promising new company seeks additional funding, hires a firm to place its offering
- Placement firm provides insider information to naked short sellers – this is illegal
- Millions of counterfeit shares are offered, often many more shares than have been issued
- Complicit law firms issue notices of class action lawsuits, completely unfounded
- Complicit journalists write about the firm “cooking its books” or being “under investigation”
- Complicit SEC officials file public demands for information.
- Price is driven down.
- Placement is made, shares are bought up at the lower price, naked short sellers cover their illegal bets, and the company is left with very expensive money and it devalued – they had to issue many more shares to cover the placement target amount, than they planned.

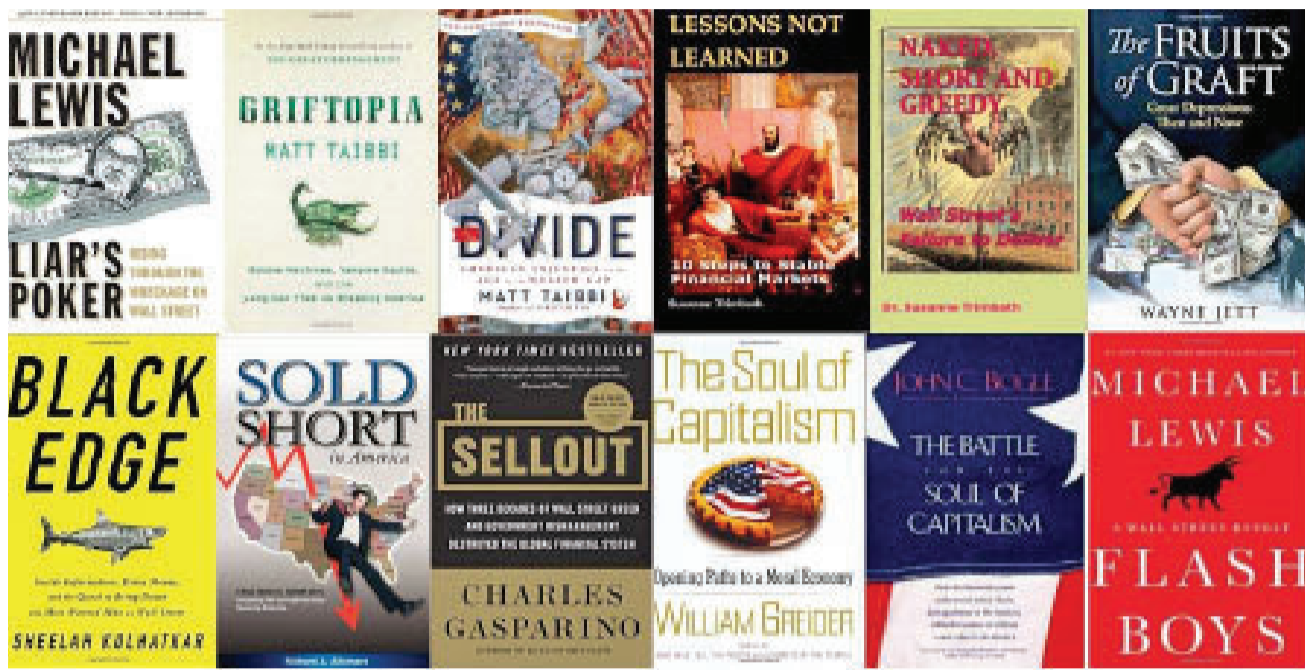
+ Now the price can be driven up, the criminal shareholders sell high, and repeat. An alternative scenario is that the naked short sellers simply pick a company at random and start spreading false stories and instigating investigations from Singapore to Berlin – Wirecard is a recent example – while offering ten times the number of shares normally traded, meaning that non-existent shares are being sold. In the Wirecard case a journalist with the Financial Times (UK) is being investigated for maliciously defaming the company. You also have “market research firms” that are complete frauds, they spew lies and post to social media, these people are called “bashers.” Government have not caught up with the need to police cyber-space in real time, it is too easy to commit the crimes of defamation and tortious interference across social media, with impunity, at the same time that social media, controlled by the ADL on behalf of its clients on Wall Street, censors truthful reporting about Wall Street crimes.

■ In an earlier conversation you said that naked short selling is the perfect crime. What did you mean by this?

A. In US law – I imagine most other countries follow in some fashion – when a company is completely destroyed and goes out of business, every one of its shareholders loses standing with the courts – they have no right to bring a lawsuit against the people who destroyed the company. This is one reason why naked short sellers – criminals – strive to completely destroy a company rather than just manipulate a stock for a time: because with full destruction they are achieving perfect immunity.

■ Is there anything companies can do to defend themselves?

A. Let me answer that by first saying that the leaders of most companies are failing in their responsibility to their stakeholders (managers, employees, inventors and share-holders) by not being attentive to the obvious signs of attack (when a company has only issued 10 million shares of stock and suddenly 50 million shares



Wall Street financial crime has been well-known since the 1980's. What has been lacking to date is a President willing to defend the 99% against the 1%. "The system is rigged." Indeed.

are being traded, this is a clear indicator of naked short selling). Alan Pollack, a Partner at Warshaw Burstein in New York City, speaks to fiduciary responsibilities in his video interview with me.

Now, for those companies whose leaders do wish to protect themselves against naked short sellers, I have both advice and a caution.

The advice: immediately hire Tom Ronk at BuyIns.net and David Wenger at ShareIntel. Both services are complimentary and provide meaningful and actionable intelligence (decision-support) to help combat illegal naked short selling. Consider filing lawsuits against those who are defaming the company and carrying out tortious interference with its operations by lying about it – this includes the law firms announcing class action shareholder lawsuits, the journalists spreading false rumors, and the “market research” firms that are nothing more than libel machines for hire.

The caution: the SEC is the enemy. The senior officers at the SEC are in absolute collusion with the naked short sellers and will do whatever it takes to squash complaints. In my readings I have seen too many instances documented where the SEC, instead of taking a whistleblower seriously, immediately accuses the victim CEO of financial improprieties, and effectively adds momentum to the naked short selling campaign to destroy the company. I am totally disgusted by both the SEC and the Senate Banking Committee – former Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and current Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) have in my view disgraced the Senate and betrayed the public trust in enabling naked short selling, money laundering, and all manner of other financial crimes, over decades. In my view both should be subject to a complete NSA lay-down of all of their communications with Wall Street leaders. Indeed, instead of using NSA to blackmail Senators to allow dishonesty, we should be using NSA to monitor the criminal misbehavior of Members of Congress as well as senior executives in the Administration, and deal with these

individual extra-judicially. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) merits special scrutiny now, in my opinion. By extra-judicial I mean we offer them a chance to resign rather than go to public trial.

■ Are solutions emerging?
A. A great deal of the problem could be eliminated by placing the DTCC under federal control and eliminating the concealment of Failure to Settle transactions. There are good laws on the books, they are simply not enforced, in part because every Member of Congress, and every state and federal executive, has been bribed or blackmailed – some with pedophilia entrapment videos created by Jeffrey Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell and the Mossad with CIA and FBI complicity – or they are turning a blind eye with the expectation of a lucrative job offer from Wall Street at salaries five times greater than their government salary.

Blockchain solutions are also emerging, tZero by Patrick Byrne whose firm Overstock was nearly destroyed by naked short selling, is one. Some companies are choosing to delist. Others are joining exchanges that forbid high frequency trading where the house always had an insider trading advantage and the government can never catch up. Others are refusing to go public.

For me the primary solution is this: we must re-criminalize financial crime, overturn the Holder Memorandum, and start putting at least one hundred major figures into jail for their crimes against the American public and the American economy.

I have just completed a video interview with Professor G. Robert Blakey, an utterly brilliant man with experience across Congress, the Executive, at the state level, and as a professor of law, and I am persuaded that half the problem is the failure to hold Wall Street accountable under a federal RICO process that both criminalizes financial crime and also demands total forfeiture of ill-gotten gain as well as triple damages; and the other half of the problem is lazy judges and prosecutors who don't have the commitment needed

to protect the public from very wealthy predators. Wall Street has in my opinion bribed the US Senate Banking Committee to make it impossible to sue Wall Street financial criminals (to have “standing” and to demand “discovery” while also blocking the use of federal RICO against financial crimes by Wall Street (it still applies to black collar criminals on the street).

I was also interviewed by Stephen E. Arnold, that six-minute video summarizes the three conclusions, the bottom line is that we can use NSA to put Wall Street criminals in jail, and should do so.

■ Do you have anything positive to say about Wall Street?

A. Yes. We need honest capital markets to fund innovation and the re-invention of the American economy in the aftermath of a global economy melt-down rooted in lies. As I wrote here in *Tehran Times*, in “Interview: A Counterintelligence Perspective on the Wuhan Virus – A Zionist Bio-War False Flag Attack?”, this entire COVID-19 has been a false flag operation led by the Zionists with the collaboration of rogue elements of the US and UK and perhaps German governments, and it was not about an infectious disease, it was about insider trading in complicity with a global media fear-mongering campaign.

It is not possible for President Trump to buy the rebuilding of America, even if he has \$50 trillion to spend, even if the Chinese forgive US debt as part of a grand bargain. Without the money that can be raised from the population at large, innovation and rapid reinstatement of economic prosperity are not possible.

We need Wall Street. We also need integrity – honesty – in every aspect of our economy.

No need to print below but for the record, Tehran Times has full permissions.

IMAGE CREDITS:

Cartoons by Ben Garrison, re-printed with permission.

Graphic by Robert Steele, re-printed with permission.

Photograph by Robert Steele, re-printed with permission

Americans say NO to Israel's plan to annex Palestinian lands

BY Mohammad Jafari

Outcomes of the IRmep representative poll of 1,639 American adults on May 10-12, 2020 has proved that the percentage of participants, who opposed Washington's support for Tel Aviv's plan to annex more Palestinian lands in the West Bank, is higher than the yes votes to the move.

Grant F. Smith, the director of the Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy (IRmep) in Washington which is co-organizer of the 2021 Transcending the Israel Lobby at Home and Abroad conference at the National Press Club, explained in his article published by Antiwar that how Gallup Inc. which is an American analytics and advisory company based in Washington, D.C. founded by George Gallup in 1935 and known for its public opinion polls conducted worldwide, have been formulating a strategy to adjust polling to yield accurate results.

Public opinion polls soliciting the views of American voting age adults on timely policy matters impacting Israel and its U.S. lobby are scarce. Americans are only rarely asked about whether they approve of the U.S. having given the lion's share of the foreign aid budget to Israel over the last seven decades. Perhaps that is because they do not approve. Few Americans have been polled on whether they would personally accept the economic incentives of the Trump Middle East “Deal of the Century.” In fact, they would not. They have also nearly never been asked about whether they support campus bans on free speech rights to boycott Israel over its human rights record. It turns out Americans like free speech rights.

Instead, what should be a vibrant and expansive polling ecosystem, is instead a void periodically filled with data and assertions that seem to paint a picture of broad, widespread support for institutionalized U.S. policies favoring Israel. Some of the polls are so deeply flawed and misleading they must now carry warning labels. Gallup's annual poll asking Americans whether they sympathize more with Israelis or more with Palestinians is one case in point.

In 2019 Gallup finally admitted that its sympathy question had deep systemic flaws that tended to trigger higher response rates for Israel over Palestine. But the poll question – and decades of data – have been used by the Israel lobby to assert that most Americans back Israel. The Congressional Research Service also used the poll as a proxy for claiming Americans support U.S. aid to Israel. And, whenever it is released – usually right before AIPAC's annual policy conference in Washington – Gallup's poll is immediately regurgitated across the spectrum of pro-Israel scribes.

Gallup was late in releasing its flawed poll results in 2020. The moment it did, the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies used it to claim that data and analysis of surveys of American public...reveal that from 2000 to 2020, Americans have consistently viewed Israel favorably and the Palestinian Authority unfavorably and shown much more sympathy for Israelis than for Palestinians.

The IRmep debunked Gallup's “sympathy” poll question results in 2018 and 2019. The majority of Americans consistently have “no opinion” on which group merits more “sympathy.” But rather than ditch the question or formulate a strategy to adjust polling to yield accurate results, in 2020 Gallup is taking care of the inaccuracy problem with a footnote.

“Gallup's Mideast sympathies trend documents important changes in Americans' reactions toward the Palestinian-Israeli dispute; however, the precise percentage sympathizing more with Israel can vary, depending on survey context. Recent Gallup research found that the standard question order used on Gallup's annual World Affairs Survey, where this question follows the favorable ratings of countries, produces a higher percentage of Americans – 11 percentage points higher in 2019 – sympathizing with Israel than when the question is asked on surveys where it does not follow the favorability question.”

So, Gallup is still delivering flawed product – much the way it did nearly a decade ago to government clients resulting in heavy False Claims Act fines – only now with an open admission that the polling product is flawed.

However, the question Gallup, or more accurately uncompromised American pollsters, should now be asking is whether Americans support their government recognizing an impending Israeli annexation of some or all of the Palestinian West Bank. Such an annexation and simultaneous U.S. recognition could have enormous negative consequences for Americans, triggering future war, instability, and mass casualties. They even might make grassroots moves to oppose it, if asked or given more information.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu campaigned on a promise to annex portions of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Annexation is even included in the unity agreement between the Likud and Blue and White parties in their governing coalition. Netanyahu is battling serious corruption charges – related to his old nuclear trigger smuggling ring associate Arnon Milchan – and due to hand over power to his unity government partner Benny Gantz in October of 2021. Netanyahu plans to bring up the annexation initiative in parliament this summer. The Trump administration, which rubber stamped Israel land grabs in Jerusalem and Syria after taking office, has continuously signaled that it will support West Bank annexation.

Of course, most of the rest of the world views Israel's longstanding occupation of Palestinian lands and imminent annexation plans as violations of international law and Palestinian human rights. A plurality of Americans, now that they have finally been asked in a representative poll, also oppose it.

When asked, 37.3 percent responded that the U.S. should not recognize Israeli annexation, while 34.2 percent said that it should. Other responses offered by the remaining 28.5 percent revealed many saying they had insufficient information to state an opinion.

That expressed lack of information should be no surprise. On this, as in other key questions of U.S. Middle East foreign policy such as the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, or Iran nuclear deal, Americans are being deluged in waves of disinformation and obfuscation. As the Trump administration and Israeli government operatives plot behind the scenes, shutting out the public and pretending they back all things Israel could once again have extremely negative consequences for Americans and the rest of the world.

Tehran's political, diplomatic move sends clear signal to the world: Entessar

By Payman Yazdani

The first of five Iranian tankers loaded with gasoline has reached Venezuela, expected to ease the South American nation's fuel crunch while defying Trump administration sanctions targeting the two U.S. foes.

The oil tanker Fortune encountered no signs of U.S. interference as it eased through Caribbean waters toward the Venezuelan coast late on Saturday. Venezuelan officials celebrated the arrival.

“Iran and Venezuela have always supported each other in times of difficulty,” Venezuelan foreign minister Jorge Arreaza tweeted. “Today, the first ship with gasoline arrives for our people.”

The Iranian officials had earlier warned of retaliatory measures against the U.S. if Washington causes problems for tankers carrying Iranian fuel to Venezuela.

The issue was discussed with Nader Entessar, Professor Emeritus of Political Science from the University of South Alabama.

Here is full text of our interview with him:
■ U.S. has unilaterally withdrawn from the nuclear deal with Iran, imposing illegal sanctions against the country, violating the

UN Security Council Resolution 2231. It is also threatening other countries not to trade with Iran and hence, forcing others to violate the same UN resolution. Legally speaking, does Washington have any right to ban bilateral trades of Iran with other countries?

No. The U.S. is no longer a party to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). When President Trump withdrew from the JCPOA via executive order, he clearly stated that the United States is withdrawing as a participant in the Iran nuclear deal. Thereafter, the Trump administration has been forcing other JCPOA signatories to violate the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, and under threat of punishment has succeeded to prevent several other countries from conducting normal bilateral trade with Iran. Of course, every country has the legal right to sanction another country and not to trade with it. However, threatening other countries with punitive actions if they do not follow the unilateral sanctions of another country is generally an illegal act.

■ Iran has recently dispatched five tankers laden with fuel to Venezuela, despite U.S. threats of intercepting the cargo. Can



Washington seize the Iranian tankers according to international law?

No, the United States does not have any legal right to seize Iranian oil tankers that are engaged in bilateral trade with Venezuela. International law does not prohibit legal bilateral trade between two sovereign nation-states. On the contrary, seizing commercial ships or legal cargo of one state by another state is tantamount to piracy under international maritime law.

■ Iran has warned that any aggression against its tankers will not be left unanswered. What do you think would be the repercussions of any possible U.S. move regarding the

tankers?

At this time, it appears that the United States has not interfered with the movement of the Iranian oil tankers and that the ships have reached their destination in Venezuela. But if the United States had violated international maritime laws against commercial shipping, Iran could have resorted to a range of options, including taking reciprocal actions against U.S. commercial targets in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere.

■ What is the political significance of Iran's move? what will be the message of Iran's actions to other countries under U.S. illegal sanctions?

Beyond any legal maneuvering and legal ramifications, Tehran's political and diplomatic moves sent a clear and unambiguous signal that maritime piracy is not only a challenge to the international legal order but it also threatens Iran's commercial and political rights as a sovereign nation-state that could redound to the detriment of rights and obligations of other states. In other words, if the international community tolerates piracy in legal commercial trade, the principles of the Law of the Seas will be rendered meaningless.

IranAir to resume flights to Milan after a halt over Covid-19

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran's flag carrier Homa, known internationally as IranAir, is scheduled to resume flights to the Italian city of Milan, following a temporary suspension over the outbreak of the coronavirus.



These flights are scheduled weekly on Fridays from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport to Milan Malpensa Airport by closely observing healthcare protocols, IRIB reported on Tuesday.

Over the past couple of months, many countries, including the Islamic Republic, imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, incoming and outgoing flights have been suspended, and road travels restricted to a great extent.

Some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Waqf inscriptions of Rey's historic bazaar to be restored

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Two religious endowment (waqf) inscriptions of the historic bazaar of the city of Rey, southeast of Tehran, will be restored in the near future.

The inscriptions, dating back to the Qajar-era (1789–1925), are written in nastaliq, describing the endowment properties dedicated to the bazaar.

A waqf or mortmain property, is an inalienable charitable endowment under Islamic law, which typically involves donating a building, plot of land or other assets for Muslim religious or charitable purposes with no intention of reclaiming the assets.



A budget of 250 million rials (about \$6,000) is needed for the restoration project, Mehr quoted Rey's cultural heritage department director Amir Mosayeb Rahimzadeh as saying on Tuesday.

Although the inscriptions have been maintained by the local people so far, better preservation should be planned for the future, he added.

According to the act for endowment kept in the museum of Abd-ul-Azim (AS) holy shrine, the bazaar was built in Safavid era as commanded by Shah Tahmasb in order to facilitate purchasing foodstuffs by the people of the region.

Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire (3rd century BC–3rd century CE) and it was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivaled in western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Islamic writers described it as a city of extraordinary beauty, built largely of fired brick and brilliantly ornamented with blue faience (glazed earthenware).

It continued to be an important city and was briefly a capital under the rule of the Seljuqs, but in the 12th century, it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects.

In 1220 the city was almost entirely destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

About 40 out of 197 historical sites of Rey are inscribed on the National Cultural Heritage list.

Lorestan villagers, nomads active in handicraft industry

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Some 20,000 rural and nomadic people in the western province of Lorestan are working in different fields of handicrafts, provincial tourism chief has said.

Rural handicrafts are small and home-based businesses, which are mostly used for personal use and the surplus is offered in the local markets, CHTN quoted Seyyed Amin Qasemi as saying on Tuesday.

Referring to the widespread migration of villagers as one of the social harms, he also noted that promoting handicrafts products in rural areas can prevent the migration as well as generate job opportunities.

He also stated that due to their artistic aspects, handicrafts products can promote the region's culture in the country and even beyond the borders.

Lorestan is one of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran, and mainly acts as a gateway to the neighboring Khuzestan province which hosts UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.

Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring, living with a nomad or rural family.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmericians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Bisheh Waterfall, Snow Tunnel, Poldokhtar ponds, Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, Soltani Mosque of Borujerd, Shapouri Bridge, and Shirez Canyon are amongst tourist sites of the mountainous province.

Garments of Iran's salt mummies to be restored using German expertise

→ 1 “The collection of tools and objects discovered from the Chehrabad salt mine in Zanjan province is also very unique, and these findings are one of the strongest documents in the field of historical textiles in the country.”

Briefing on the project, the official explained: “The extent and type of damage, the stages of restoration, including the extent of corrosion and sedimentation, the materials used for cleaning, desalination, strength, control, reconstruction and, ultimately, the final stabilization of the objects are being investigated.”

In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan province, accidentally came across a mummified head. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and the mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another “saltman”, which was followed by further excavation unearthing remains of a human body along with a large number of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery. The archaeological investigation involved several international research organizations; Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research (ICAR); Ruhr-Universität Bochum; Universität Zürich; University of Oxford, (RLAHA Oxford), Research Laboratory for Archaeology & the History of Art; York University, Institute of Archaeology; Tehran University, The Institute of Parasitology and Mycology; Zanjan University, Institute of Geomorphology; and University of Franche-Comte, Faculty of Sciences & Techniques.

In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ, due to lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy, dubbed the “Saltman”, is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular “saltman” was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, “before present” or 1750 years ago), the height of the Sasanian Empire. The second “saltman” was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first “saltman”, the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and the fifth “saltmen” were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The isotopic analysis of the human remains revealed where these miners were from. Some of them were from the Tehran-Qazvin plain, which is relatively local to the mine's locality, while others were from north-eastern Iran and the coastal areas around the Caspian Sea, and a few from as far away as Central Asia.

Furthermore, the archaeozoological finds, such as animal bones found within the context of the saltmen, showed that the miners might have eaten sheep, goats, and probably pigs and cattle, as well. The archaeobotanical finds recorded showed different cultivated plants were eaten, indicating an agricultural establishment in the vicinity of the mine.

The wealth of fabric and other organic material (leather)



Left shoe with lower leg of “Salt Man 1” on display at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran.

worn by the saltmen have allowed a thorough analysis to be undertaken, detailing the resources used to make the fabrics, the processing, the dyes used to color the fibers of the garments, and not least they offer an excellent overview of the changes in cloth types, patterns of weaving, and the changes of the fibers through time.

During the Achaemenid phase, the mining area was accessed from areas further away, indicated by the lack of settlement in the vicinity of the mine, and the presence of foreign miners as indicated by the DNA results from some of the salt mummies. The high number of ceramic vessels and goods supplied also suggest access from further away, while the Sasanian phase shows that the mining was established within the local landscape, and the isotopic data indicates that the supplies were organized on a regional basis.

It is also very interesting to take the lack of any archaeological evidence of any form of a mining settlement within the vicinity of the mine into account, which indicates that the mining was seasonal rather than highly organized. For instance, if we look at the contemporary Greek mining

practice by contrast, this was often a task done by slaves and was highly organized.

The individual “Saltmen” have a few secrets of their own, for instance the first “saltman” that was discovered had the blood type B+, and 3D imaging of his skull revealed fractures around his eye and other damage that occurred before death by a hard blow to the head. His clothing (the impressive leather boot) and his gold earring, show a person of some rank; the reason for his presence in the mine still remains a mystery. Was he murdered and dumped there, or was he mining salt and fell victim to a cave in?

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the Taenia sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the saltmen is Saltman No. 4. A sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan province, accidentally came across a mummified head. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and the mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot.

Sadeh, the ancient festival of mid-winter, added to national heritage list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Jashn-e Sadeh has been registered on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage list in a bid to preserve the ancient festival of mid-winter.

In a decree issued to all governor generals, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan has underlined the need to preserve the time-honored festival, which usually falls on January 30.

“Any measure that helps this heritage be safeguarded and preserved is supported,” part of the decree reads, CHTN reported.

Named after the number one hundred (Sad in Farsi), the event marks 50 days and 50 nights before Noruz (the beginning of Iranian calendar year on March 21). The common belief emphasizes that it is a mid-winter ritual to celebrate the date when the earth starts warming up.

The festivity is nowadays more popular among Iranian Zoroastrians in the cities of Yazd, Tehran, Shiraz, and Kerman. Narratives say that the feast is to remember the mythical discovery of fire. That's why they set fire to a big pile of wood when the event reaches its climax.



File photo depicts Zoroastrian followers observing Sadeh festival to recall the mythical discovery of fire.

The origins of the festival is somewhat ambiguous and there is no trace of this ceremony in the Zoroastrian holy texts.

However, some historians suggest the ceremony existed even before Zoroastrianism, the world's oldest monotheistic religion.

Longest in West Asia: Tehran's Vali-e Asr Street eyes World Heritage tag

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran is following up on possible inscription of the historical Vali-e Asr Street in Tehran on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The street, which was built during 1920s, is the longest street in West Asia and is considered as one of the longest in the world.

The possible registration is being pursued during the current Iranian year 1399 (started on March 20) and necessary steps are being taken in this regard, Tehran mayor Pirouz Hanachi announced on Monday, ISNA reported.

Vali-e Asr Street, which is registered on Iran's National Heritage list, was added to the UNESCO's temporary list in 2019.

The street runs for over 17 kilometers from Tehran's railway station in the south of the city to the Tajrish square in the north.

It is lined with many shops, restaurants, parks, cinemas and cultural centers.

“Vali-e Asr Street is the best example which witnesses the persistent exercises of creating the concept of Garden-Street as a destination of an urban area form Safavid era up to the modern time. Variety of Architectural styles from traditional to modern and eclectic is a representation of eastern and western values synthesis in a specific geographical point, which carries a true definition of an architectural and spatial place,” according to UNESCO website.



Learning from each other – Iran's COVID-19 experiences should be shared: WHO's Hamelmann

➔ At that time, we were aware of only a few symptoms and ways to stop the transmission, for instance, we knew that diagnostic tests must be conducted at a large scale to detect infected people very early because hospital capacities were limited and there would have been medical equipment shortages, he explained.

So, one of the very important early achievements in Iran was the rapid establishment of a decentralized laboratory testing for Covid-19," he explained.

A good experience

On the other hand, Iran, to a certain degree, is a good experience to learn from by other countries due to the strong primary health care system, which focuses on promoting healthcare in rural areas, he added.

The second strength of Iran was a surge in the production of essential commodities needed for the Covid-19 response, as well as all protective tools for health workers in clinics, while the global market is still dealing with shortages, he highlighted.

Thanks to the experience of dealing with the sanctions Iran has made a very early decision on production of the needed items trying to be self-sustained and resilient in the health sector, he stated, adding, the country has rapidly identified how to scale up existing products and produce new ones.

Hamelmann further emphasized that Iran was one of the few countries in the world which developed test kits as soon as possible despite problems such as licensing and evaluation. The government also had a really strong focus on increasing production and innovation.

The multi-sectoral response was another strength of Iran, as the government increased the health ministry's authority, all the ministries got involved, and armed forces supported certain areas and communities, he noted.

Iran's health system a great strength

Setting up health houses in villages [with two Behvarz (healthcare providers) for each who were tasked with tracking the population, providing health services, and also vaccinating the people and newborns, as well as offering postpartum care], made a difference, Hamelmann said.

Many other countries in the region or even some high-income countries do not necessarily have a well-coordinated and structured primarily healthcare system, he added.

Iran has established a national electronic health record (EHR) system in which every citizen is registered with the national ID number, he highlighted.

So, the PHC system, health houses, environmental health offices (responsible for environmental safety in the community), and all related organizations were involved as soon as the epidemic started, he said.

The health networks started early detection of infected cases by calling the citizens and questioning them about the symptoms, and the vast majority of community members with a focus on the most vulnerable were screened and prevented from referring to the hospital in cities, he added.

Iran could soon control transmission

"Although comparing the countries is always complex because all the aspects including different timing of epidemic phases must be considered, Iran did very well compared to some other countries in establishing a comprehensive national plan and campaign to control the epidemic.

Italy was very close to Iran in terms of new cases and mortality in the early days, other countries like Russia are still fighting to flatten



Iran was one of the few countries in the world which developed test kits as soon as possible despite problems such as licensing and evaluation. The government also had a really strong focus on increasing production and innovation.

the curve; so there was a lot to learn from each other, also from some of the intensive experiences in Iran," Hamelmann noted.

Emphasizing that each country has its own health system and tackling program, he said that China, in comparison to Iran, announced a lot more quarantining, isolation and restrictive measures, and for a longer period than Iran.

Countries like Sweden had hardly announced any restrictive measures, only social distancing, but not full-scale lockdown measures. Therefore, differences in crisis response allow us to learn and enrich our knowledge.

He further pointed out that many of the public health measures taken are not simply the final solution, so it is essential to stay very close to the data, and to check how efficient were the previous measures, then take the next step, or even go backwards to more restrictions if necessary.

He went on to note that these days we have many meetings with ministries of health from various countries through video conferencing to exchange experience, so countries should be collaborative and friendly to overcome the pandemic, he added.

Iran could efficiently adapt despite sanctions

Referring to the unilateral U.S. sanctions, Dr. Hamelmann said that it has been two years that we are working with the ministry of health to first identify and quantify the impact of sanctions on the health sector.

"Although it has been repeatedly said by all parties that there are no direct sanctions on health commodities, we are all aware in practice that there is an impact, particularly on banking transactions, to import essential items. Certain medicines were not available in sufficient volume and some laboratory equipment has been difficult to maintain.

Besides, some of the suppliers are refusing to continue business with Iran, which to a certain degree is over compliance on their side, he said, adding, so when Covid-19 started, the health system in Iran was already

stressed through this impact.

So, it affected the treatment and diagnosis processes, but on the other hand, some improvements can be seen during emergency situations such as the coronavirus crisis in terms of the urgent need for collaboration and solidarity, and the strategy of further strengthening a resilient health system in Iran plays also a very important role.

Covid-19 may accompany us for years

Pointing to the virus eradication possibility, Dr. Hamelmann said: "Initially the assumptions was that the virus is preventable and manageable but after a while, more experts concluded that things may never return to the same normality as before the COVID-19 pandemic started.

So, there is a probability that the virus will not be eliminated. At the moment and in addition to all the preventive public health measures, we should pay great attention to reduce its impact through medicines with proven effectiveness and by developing a vaccine that can be provided to everybody on a global scale.

Usually, a vaccine development and mass application takes 4-5 years or longer

"We have witnessed long periods for a vaccine to be developed, but usually the vaccines were made to prevent particular diseases for a certain target population, for example, children, or the elderly.

However, the Covid-19 vaccine will not only be used for a certain part of the population, but eventually all susceptible populations in the whole world should most likely be vaccinated, and mass-production of the vaccine on such a great scale and distribution of it in the world is very time-consuming in itself, he said.

We may face vaccine shortages in the beginning, and also there will be difficulties to determine who gets the vaccine first.

WHO and other key international bodies have started already with great effort to develop and agree on concepts how to distribute a vaccine when it is available very fast among the most vulnerable groups and in the most

equitable way to the broader public, within countries and globally," he stated.

He went on to highlight that the whole process takes a considerable amount of time and money, but the positive aspect is that we are not only working on one single candidate for the vaccine, but a multitude on different approaches and basic research and trials are already ongoing in a number of countries.

Usually, the development of a vaccine and mass-vaccination can take 4-5 years or even longer, sometimes without success like in the search for an HIV vaccine which is ongoing since decades, he added. Or sometimes the vaccine is not of high efficacy, provides only partial immunity against infection or reduces the likelihood of severe disease or death.

But in an optimistic forecast, in such an emergency situation, there is a very high commitment to fasten processes and to invest substantial amounts for the vaccine development. Nevertheless, it is very unlikely that this year we can have a vaccine that can already be used on a larger scale, he suggested.

World must prepare for new viruses

Referring to the risk of newly-emerging viruses in the world, Dr. Hamelmann said facing the risk of newly emerging infections is not a new threat at all. What needs to be new is that we take preparations to face new epidemics much more serious, including much better implementation of the International Health Regulations.

"After the peak of the emergency, we need to take stock and should look back and see what went well or what went wrong to prepare and protect ourselves better in the future, to determine how much money from national budget should be earmarked for preparedness against the threat of the newly-emerging diseases, what hospital capacities we need, what do we need to have on stock of essential commodities, what capacities for immediate scale up of production of essential commodities is needed, how to improve national health information systems and what coordinating structures with other sectors dealing with health crisis management are needed – these are only some of the points that need to be reviewed and decided on. And very importantly: What can we do more and better for the many frontline workers in epidemic situations, in the hospitals, but not only there. Many of them are our heroes today – but we should not forget it tomorrow and also keep in mind that we acted too late and too little to protect them, that is one of the most unifying lessons learnt in all countries. And we will this stocktaking with a much better understanding that a health crisis impacts on all parts of life, on the whole social and economic fabric of countries and during pandemics of the whole world.

No evidence yet to discover coronavirus origin

In my professional career, most of the things I have read about the origins of new infectious agents were just theories, like HIV for which it is still not clear where it comes from, Dr. Hamelmann lamented.

"Most likely we will never be 100 percent sure about the exact origin of the COVID-19 coronavirus although many research centers are working on it and might publish their theories.

WHO is communicating with member states, and of course especially with China where the virus was first discovered. I am sure we will hear many stories, some more interesting than others, until the very details about the origin of the virus have been fully brought to light," he concluded.

UNDP supports empowerment of Iranian women headed households amid COVID-19

SOCIETY TEHRAN

— The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is supporting women's economic empowerment to help Iran deal with the broader socio-economic and human development impact of COVID-19.

Iranian people are currently witnessing some of the most extraordinary times in recent history, not only due to the unilateral sanctions being imposed on the country, but also because of the COVID-19 outbreak which hit home just before the Iranian New Year (Nowruz).



A time to celebrate, and generally a period of intense economic activity, has turned into a period of uncertainty and stress for many. These extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, and apart from helping with the immediate health needs in the country, UNDP is supporting Iran to deal with the broader socio-economic and human development impact of COVID-19.

In Iran, there are 3 million Women Headed Households (WHH), out of a total of 22 million families, and most of the WHH can be found in less developed areas of the country. The labor market structure indicates that most women in Iran, especially those in rural and less developed areas, are keen to start micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME). As in many other countries, WHH is most likely to re-invest their earning in the children's wellbeing. However, women face many barriers in accessing the market and developing viable MSMEs, in particular with access to finance, awareness of competitive value chains, and untapped local economic potential in their geographic area.

UNDP's aim is to support the Iranian WHH in working towards building stories of resilience, change, and achievement. This is done through a partnership with the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs, Vice Presidency for Rural Development and Deprived Areas, and other UN entities in Iran including UNICEF and UNFPA, according to the UNDP.

The UN in Iran has developed a Technical Assistance Package (TAP) as a concrete response to the COVID-19 sanctions with the objectives to both protect development gains with a focus on vulnerable groups and identify innovative solutions to respond to the current context. To collectively overcome challenges faced by WHH, the mission is to support government efforts to improve the livelihood and well-being of WHH, facilitate better access to available resources, build critical awareness on the responsibilities and social status of WHH and increase women's control over the decision-making process on all levels.

COVID-19 adds additional challenges for economically empowering WHH in Iran, meaning that innovative strategies are needed. By focusing on analysis and knowledge exchange, UNDP can support the government in the assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and can facilitate the exchange of best practices from other countries on combatting the impact of COVID-19, with a focus on groups such as WHH. UNDP also focuses on policy, advocacy, and network development through assisting in the development of policies to address systemic issues, establishing and strengthening community-based groups, and making sure there is access to information and resources when it comes to decision-making that affects WHH. Finally, through programming UNDP can ensure the implementation of technical and management skills to enhance the economic participation of WHH in the country.

In the past couple of years, the ever-growing number of WHH in Iran has brought women and their families to the center of attention of policymakers. Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards inclusive economic growth and achieving sustainable development. Therefore, in times of uncertainty, whether caused by sanctions or the COVID-19 pandemic, there must be a focus on WHH in Iran to ensure that no one is left behind.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Sumatra floods

(November 03, 2003)

Dozens of people are believed to have been killed by a flash flood in a popular tourist area on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The **flash flood** hit early on Monday morning after a night of heavy rain swelled the river Boharok in northern Sumatra. The flood brought down telephone lines in the area and local authorities are still trying to **establish the true scale** of the tragedy and the nationalities of those involved. Fatal floods and **landslides are a regular feature** of the wet season in Indonesia, but they are becoming more common and more deadly as population pressure and illegal **logging strip** the land of the cover which used to absorb much of the rains.

This year's rains follow a particularly dry period and environmentalists have been warning of **correspondingly heavy floods**. Attempts to preserve the environment have been only partially successful. Illegal logging is a **lucrative** business that enriches many of the country's most **entrenched interests** including the army and influential politicians. Monday's flood is unlikely to be the last such tragedy.

Words

flash flood: a sudden and violent flood

to establish the true scale: to find out the actual size

landslides: large amounts of earth moving or collapsing on a hillside

are a regular feature: happen often

logging: cutting down trees to sell the wood

strip: if you strip something you leave it bare

correspondingly heavy floods: floods which will be equally extreme

lucrative: very profitable

entrenched: firmly established

interests: here people who make a profit from logging

(Source: BBC)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Afghanistan thanks Iran for free services to refugees during COVID-19

Afghanistan has appreciated Iran for offering health and treatment services to Afghan refugees infected with coronavirus free of charge.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry in a statement on Saturday announced its gratitude and appreciation to Iran for its humanitarian efforts to address the issue of Afghan refugees in the country.

All measures, especially the recent decree by the Iranian president to provide free medical treatment to Afghan refugees in Iranian public hospitals, have assured the Afghan government, IRNA reported on Sunday.

افغانستان از همکاری ایران برای مداوای مهاجران مبتلا به کرونا قدردانی کرد

وزارت امور خارجه افغانستان از کمک و همکاری جمهوری اسلامی ایران به مهاجران افغانی مبتلا به ویروس کرونا و مداوای رایگان آنها قدردانی کرد.

وزارت امور خارجه افغانستان روز شنبه در اطلاعیه‌ای اعلام کرد: مراتب امتنان و سپاسگزاری خود را از جمهوری اسلامی ایران در رابطه به اقدامات بشردوستانه آن کشور درباره رسیدگی به مهاجران افغان در آن کشور ابراز می‌دارد.

در این اطلاعیه آمده است: تمام اقدامات به ویژه صدور حکم اخیر رئیس جمهوری ایران برای درمان رایگان مهاجران افغان در بیمارستان های دولتی ایران موجب خاطر جمعی رهبری دولت افغانستان شد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“cerebro-, cerebr-”

■ **Meaning:** brain

■ **For example:** Passive smoking is considered a major cause of **cerebrovascular** disease, which causes strokes.

PHRASAL VERB

Think something up

■ **Meaning:** to produce a new idea, name etc. by thinking

■ **For example:** She was trying to think up an excuse.

IDIOM

Give somebody a (good) run for their money

■ **Explanation:** to make your opponent in a competition use all their skill and effort to defeat you

■ **For example:** They've given some of the top teams a run for their money this season.

The fall of U.S-led order: Borrell

The European Union is acknowledging the “end of an American-led system” suggesting that Europe should take an independent stance.

EU Foreign Affairs Chief Josep Borrell made the comments among a group of German diplomats on Monday.

“Analysts have long talked about the end of an American-led system and the arrival of an Asian century. This is now happening in front of our eyes,” he said.



The EU’s top diplomat further indicated that the “pressure to choose sides is growing” on Brussels.

“We need a more robust strategy for China, which also requires better relations with the rest of democratic Asia,” he added.

Borrell previously pushed for a more collective discipline towards China in an article published in many European newspapers earlier this month.

According to The Guardian, “daily EU imports from China amount to €1bn (£895m), but economists say there are already signs that some trade is not returning.”

As put by Andrew Small, an associate senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank, the bloc “benefited from the contrast that many Europeans drew between China and Russia. In this view, whereas Russia was actively hostile to the EU, China only sought to stymie European unity on a set of narrowly Sinocentric issues; whereas Russia thrived on chaos, China could be relied on as a status quo actor during crises; and whereas Russia pumped out disinformation, targeted European citizens, and sought to bring populists to power, China focused on positive image management and behind-the-scenes elite capture.”

Margrethe Vestager, the EU competition commissioner, has also stressed the need for Europe “to be more assertive and confident about who we are.”

“In the part of west Denmark in which I grew up, we were taught that if you invite a guest to dinner and they do not invite you back, you stop inviting them,” she said.

This is while under President Donald Trump, the U.S. has been taking on China amid the covid-19 pandemic, pushing the two superpowers towards and imminent cold war.

Russia begins construction of the first PAK DA strategic bomber

Russia has commenced construction of its first strategic stealth bomber within the Perspective Aviation Complex for Long-Range Aviation (PAK DA) program, also known as “Product 80” and “Courier”, a source in the military-industrial complex told TASS.

“The production of airframe elements will be handled by one of the United Aircraft Corporation (UAC)’s plants; development of working design documentation is complete, material shipping has commenced,” the source said.

Another source told TASS that construction of the plane’s cockpit is already underway.

“The final assembly of the entire machine should be complete in 2021,” he noted. The Tupolev Design Bureau’s press service refrained from commenting on construction of the first PAK DA.

In December 2019, Deputy Minister of Defense Alexey Krivoruchko told the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper that the draft project of the plane had been approved and that the Tupolev Design Bureau began development of the working design documentation, began creation of parts and elements of the test PAK DA units. In February 2020, Krivoruchko announced that the first engine for the plane will begin stand trials this year.

■ The new plane

It is known that the PAK DA is designed using the flying wing scheme. The machine will feature technologies and materials that reduce its radar visibility (stealth technology). The plane will be subsonic, and will be able to carry current and future cruise missiles, precision bombs and hypersonic weapons, it will be provided with the newest communications and jamming equipment.

WHO warns of ‘second peak’ in areas where COVID-19 declining

Countries where coronavirus infections are declining could still face an “immediate second peak” if they let up too soon on measures to halt the outbreak, the World Health Organization said.

The world is still in the middle of the first wave of the coronavirus outbreak, WHO emergencies head Dr Mike Ryan told an online briefing, noting that while cases are declining in many countries they are still increasing in Central and South America, South Asia and Africa.

Ryan said epidemics often come in waves, which means that outbreaks could come back later this year in places where the first wave has subsided. There was also a chance that infection rates could rise again more quickly if measures to halt the first wave were lifted too soon, Reuters reported.

“When we speak about a second wave classically what we often mean is there will be a first wave of the disease by itself, and then it recurs months later. And that may be a reality for many countries in a number of months’ time,” Ryan said.

“But we need also to be cognizant of the fact that the disease can jump up at any time. We cannot make assumptions that just because the disease is on the way down now it is going to keep going down and we are get a number of months to get ready for a second wave. We may get a second peak in this wave.”

He said countries in Europe and North America should “continue to put in place the public health and social measures, the surveillance measures, the testing measures and a comprehensive strategy to ensure that we continue on a downwards trajectory and we don’t have an immediate second peak.”

Liberation of southern Lebanon shattered Israel’s invincibility myth: Hezbollah

The second-in-command of Lebanon’s Hezbollah resistance movement has hailed the 2000 liberation of southern Lebanon from the Israeli occupation as a “turning point” in the history of the West Asia, saying the victory shattered the Israeli military’s invincibility myth.

Hezbollah Deputy Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem made the remarks on Monday as Lebanon was celebrating the 20th anniversary of the end of Israel’s occupation, Lebanon’s Arabic-language al-Manar television network reported.

The official said thanks to the blow dealt to the Israeli military two decades ago, “we have moved from the stage of despair to hope, from surrender to resistance, from humiliation to honor, and from defeat to victory.”

Qassem said the liberation of southern Lebanon opened the door to more consecutive victories for Lebanon, Palestine and the entire region against the Zionist regime and American plots, including the creation of the Daesh terror group.

The historic triumph, he added, put an end to the Israeli military’s invincibility myth and helped strengthen the faith of



the young generations in resistance and struggles towards liberating Palestine from the Israeli occupiers.

The developments that unfolded in the region over the past years proved that pro-Israel world powers and the solutions

that they offer for regional conflicts cannot be trusted, he added.

“We are currently in the midst of a war and there is still a need for resistance,” said the Hezbollah official, emphasizing the necessity for the resistance front to stay fully

ready for any future scenario.

■ ‘Lebanon’s liberation deepened Israel’s existential crisis’

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement likewise described Israel’s expulsion from southern Lebanon as a major “turning point,” saying the defeat deepened the regime’s existential crisis.

The Gaza-based movement said “resistance is the choice of the Palestinian nation in [its struggles] to take back its homeland.”

The statement said that Palestinians have no option but resistance in the pursuit of their cause.

Lebanon marks the Resistance and Liberation Day on May 25 each year. In May 2000, the Israeli regime was forced by Hezbollah to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, ending nearly two decades of occupation of the country’s south.

Hezbollah was established following the 1982 Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon.

Since then, the movement has grown into a powerful military force, dealing repeated blows to the Israeli military, including during a 33-day war in July 2006.

Kidnapping family members is Bin Salman’s tactic to intimidate Saudi dissidents

Details are emerging about the kidnapping of two young people within Saudi Arabia which appears to be the latest desperate move by Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman to exert pressure on one of the Kingdom’s highest profile dissidents. Dr Saad Al-Jabri, once the gatekeeper of Saudi intelligence and security, has broken his silence about the astonishing kidnap of two of his children in a dawn raid on his family home in the Saudi capital, which reveals the unprecedented level that an increasingly paranoid Bin Salman is prepared to go in order to maintain his iron grip on the country and force Al-Jabri to return to Riyadh from his exile in Canada.

“Omar and Sarah were kidnapped at dawn on 16 March and taken out of their beds by about 50 state security officers who arrived in 20 cars,” explained their eldest brother, Khalid Al-Jabri, to BBC security correspondent Frank Gardner. “We don’t even know if they are alive or dead.” During the raid, all evidence including CCTV footage was taken along with the siblings aged 21 and 20 respectively.

Because of his closeness to the Muslim Brotherhood, Saad Al-Jabri has often been viewed with suspicion by a

government which is mired in paranoia and suspicion. Predictably, Saudi officials are remaining tight-lipped about this latest crisis to hit the secretive regime.

Al-Jabri’s doctorate is from the University of Edinburgh, and he is widely credited with being the key figure for links between Saudi Arabia and the so-called Five Eyes intelligence agencies in the US, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. His decision to go to the media will infuriate Bin Salman and his cronies in Riyadh.

Credited as the mastermind behind the demise of Al-Qaida within the Kingdom, Al-Jabri also played a key role in foiling a bomb plot by the terrorist group’s branch in Yemen when it smuggled a powerful bomb on-board a cargo plane bound for Chicago. Counterterrorism police found the deadly device disguised as a printer ink toner cartridge in November 2010 and defused it with “minutes to spare” during an unscheduled refueling stop at Britain’s East Midlands Airport.

In a dysfunctional regime where promotion depends on blind loyalty rather than ability, Al-Jabri stood head and shoulders above many as a man of intellect. He was a cabinet minister and held a very senior rank in the interior ministry.

By 2015, though, when the late King Abdullah’s half-brother Salman took to the throne, he was viewed with suspicion.

According to Middle east Monitor, The appointment of Salman’s son Mohammad as Defense Minister put the two on a collision course when Saudi forces intervened in Yemen’s brutal civil war. The move was opposed by Al-Jabri, who feared – rightly, as it turned out – that Saudi Arabia would be sucked into a costly and ill-fated conflict.

After the bloodless palace coup in which Bin Salman emerged as Crown Prince and de facto ruler in 2017, Al-Jabri fled to Canada. Like anyone and everyone suspected of opposing the prince, he was immediately viewed as a threat. Ever since the October 2018 murder of Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Kingdom’s Consulate in Istanbul, there are fears that Bin Salman has ordered the covert tracking of all Saudi exiles.

The implied threats to their families at home and abroad has so far guaranteed exiles’ silence. However, as Khalid Al-Jabri put it this week, “We are patriots, we love our country, we don’t want to embarrass Saudi Arabia but kidnapping Omar and Sarah like this, it is daylight thuggery by a state.”

UN aid in Yemen near breaking point



The U.N. refugee agency said Tuesday its work in Yemen was near a “potential breaking point” as coronavirus spreads in the war-damaged country, with rising numbers of families resorting to begging, child labor and marrying of children.

Around 80 percent of Yemen’s malnourished population relies on humanitarian assistance, making it the world’s biggest humanitarian crisis even before coronavirus, Reuters reported.

Last week, the United Nations said its health care system “has in effect collapsed”, with the virus thought to be spreading throughout the country, and appealed for urgent funding.

“We are reaching a potential breaking point in our program where if we don’t receive further funding soon, many of our program and particularly our cash assistance program to internally displaced Yemenis may

have to stop,” said Charlie Yaxley, UNHCR spokesman, at a virtual briefing.

“We are seeing a growing number of families resorting to harmful coping mechanisms such as begging, child labor and marrying of children to survive,” he added.

UNHCR provides cash assistance program to some 1 million people who are internally displaced and rely on the money for food, medicines and shelter, he said.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing back to power the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

The military campaign, coupled with a Saudi naval blockade, have killed hundreds of thousands of people and plunged Yemen into the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

Afghanistan to free 900 more Taliban prisoners: Government



Afghan authorities plan to release 900 more Taliban prisoners, as a rare ceasefire announced by the armed group entered its third and last day.

“There is a decision to release 900 today,” National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal told AFP news agency on Tuesday. But the exact number could vary subject to legal procedures, he added.

The Afghan government also urged the Taliban to extend the three-day ceasefire which is due to expire at midnight on Tuesday (19:30 GMT).

“It is important to extend the ceasefire and, to avoid bloodshed, the Afghan government is ready to extend it,” Javid Faisal, the spokesman for the Afghan national security adviser, told a news conference.

The pause in fighting, which came into effect on Sunday to mark the Muslim festi-

val of Eid al-Fitr, and the prisoner release offer hope of peace for the South Asian country ravaged by nearly 20 years of war.

According to al Jazeera, a U.S.-Taliban agreement signed in February in Qatar’s capital, Doha, stipulated that the Afghan government would release up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners while the Taliban would free about 1,000 Afghan security forces personnel.

But the prisoner swap has been delayed as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani refused to release all 5,000 Taliban prisoners at once. So far, Kabul has freed about 1,000 Taliban inmates, while the armed group had released about 300 Afghan security forces it held captive.

On Sunday, President Ghani’s spokesman responded to the Taliban’s ceasefire offer by announcing plans to release up to 2,000 Taliban prisoners.

U.S. military presence in Iraq aimed at protecting Israel’s security, interests: PMU leader

A high-ranking official with Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha’abi, has strongly denounced U.S. military presence in his country, saying such a deployment is meant to safeguard the security and interests of the Israeli regime.

“There is a national and courageous will, which rejects the presence of any foreign troops on Iraqi soil. There have been talks of U.S. intentions to withdraw from Iraq, but we doubt them,” Qais al-Khazali, leader of Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq, which is part of the PMU, was quoted as saying by Iraq’s Arabic-language al-Ahad TV network.

He added, “The U.S. [military] presence in Iraq is meant to protect the security and interests of the Israeli regime. Neither are we warlords nor thirsty for blood, but rather patriots looking for the dignity and sovereignty of the Iraqi nation.”

“If the withdrawal [of U.S. troops] does not take place, the foreign occupier must know that Iraqis will not accept

the presence of its forces. The Americans, who will open negotiations [on the extension of their presence] in June, must remember the centenary of the Great Iraqi Revolution of 1920 against British forces,” Khazali pointed out.

According to Press TV, he also praised the sacrifices made by Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of PMU, who were assassinated along with their companions in a U.S. airstrike authorized by President Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport early on January 3.

Iraqi lawmakers unanimously approved a bill two days later, demanding the withdrawal of all foreign military forces led by the United States from the country following the targeted killings.

Later on January 9, former Iraqi prime minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi called on the United States to dispatch a

delegation to Baghdad tasked with formulating a mechanism for the move.

The 78-year-old politician said Iraq rejected any violation of its sovereignty, particularly the U.S. military’s violation of Iraqi airspace in the assassination airstrike.

■ Iraqi MP urges roadmap for withdrawal of U.S. forces

Meanwhile, a member of the Iraqi parliament’s security and defense committee has stressed the need for drawing up a roadmap aimed at the pullout of U.S. military forces.

“American forces view Iraq and its military bases from a strategic perspective, which best serves their interests in the entire West Asia region. There have also been remarks by a number of U.S. officials to increase the number of American troops in Iraq within the coming days. This is further proof that the U.S. military deployment has a wide and varied agenda,” Karim Allawi said in an exclusive interview with Arabic-language Baghdad Today news website on Monday.

Coronavirus has taught us all humans are equal: Branko Ivankovic

1 → In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, the man known as “the Professor”, talked about the life post coronavirus, what he has done during the lockdown and about Persepolis and their fans.

Tehran Times: Your photos with a completely white beard that was shared on social media, caught the attention of many people in Iran. Is it for handsomeness or just a sign of aging?

Ivankovic: Since the whole world, including my country Croatia and my hometown Varazdin, were quarantined during the pandemic coronavirus outbreak, I also decided to take a break and stay at home as much as possible, except for emergency matters. So, I didn't go to a barbershop and even didn't shave my beard off. That's the only reason.

Tehran Times: How do you see football after coronavirus?

Ivankovic: For more than two months there were no matches and no group training for any football player around the world. All the competitions including international, continental, and domestic matches were suspended. Because there is no training, problems appear for footballers and they may lose some of their qualities for a short-time period. If I don't want to say chaos, I have to say it will create a kind of disorder in the football world. All the athletes, including football players and coaches, try to find the best way to get rid of this situation. This, of course, is possible when this pandemic disappears or diminishes. Unfortunately, people in all countries are affected by this pandemic now and they feel it in their life.



Tehran Times: What was the main lesson you learned from the coronavirus crisis?

Ivankovic: Generally speaking, everyone understood that the global community, regardless of color, race, gender, national origin, religion, and political beliefs should join hands in fighting Covid-19, not only verbally, but also practically, and even emotionally, to help each other. All humans are equal. People must still practice social distancing and protect vulnerable groups. The death toll rate must decrease. The coronavirus crisis showed that we



need solidarity, and this global solidarity was finally created. Therefore, the most important lesson was that this solidarity must always be maintained and continued.

Tehran Times: As a professor of football, what's your solution for the resumption of football in a way that avoids endangering players' and staff's health and at the same time to keep football as beautiful and exciting as before?

Ivankovic: From my point of view, during the outbreak of the virus, the most affected people in sports and football are the spectators and football fans. This is a reality. So, when we want to hold the competitions, our number one priority must be the health and safety of the fans and to remove the danger from them. Football is played to delight supporters and they are the first and foremost motivation of holding football matches around the world. With their joys, encouragement, and sometimes their anger and unhappiness, they build momentum in the stadiums. But it must be accepted that in the upcoming days and months, the football matches will be held without spectators, in the empty stadiums. This can create a sad situation for the whole football family. Regarding

the players and technical staff, they must follow the necessary health guidelines as much as possible to avoid creating danger for themselves or for other players on the field.

Tehran Times: What have you done personally during lockdown days?

Ivankovic: I had the chance to launch a sports medicine center in my hometown a few years ago. This center had reached its peak before the coronavirus outbreak suspending all the sports activities. So, we were forced to close it for a while. But I took the opportunity to repair and complete this center along with my son. At the same time, we used the facilities there to strengthen our physical condition and keep our body and our morale strong through sports. I also spent the rest of my time studying the latest development in modern football, in terms of sports medicine, coaching, and structure. I tried to make the most of this time.

Tehran Times: And finally, if you would like, please talk about the problem with Persepolis regarding your unpaid money.

Ivankovic: For four and a half years, I had a very beautiful and memorable time

with the Persepolis fans. They gave passion and excitement to me and my staff, and we tried to respond to their kindness with our efforts and the trophies we won. This cooperation was so beautiful that it brought almost all the good things to Persepolis and their unique fans. But at the same time, we were four and a half years away from our families, and that created a lot of hardship for us. We gave up many of our personal activities in our country, Croatia, so that with all our focus and energy on Persepolis, we could achieve such successes in Iran. We hoped that what was signed in the contract between us and the managers of Persepolis would be observed, as it happens all over the world. But unfortunately, we noticed that the club was suffering from financial indiscipline, and the officials could not implement the things they had promised on paper. Unfortunately, they did not provide any conditions for paying their financial obligations. They either didn't want to or couldn't pay, and we had to file a complaint at FIFA to receive our wages. I had to do that. I love Persepolis and always wish them success in domestic and international competitions.

Jahanbakhsh opens up on his Chelsea's goal

Brighton winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh has talked about his bicycle goal against Chelsea in January.

Talking an interviewer through his January goal of the month-winning strike, Jahanbakhsh's eyes lit up as if he were a joyful child showing off his favorite new toy.

Yet the player's celebration immediately after the goal portrayed a deeper feeling of desperation and relief. As soon as the ball nestled into the net, Jahanbakhsh fell to his knees, his hands clutched his face as he tried to fight the tears in his eyes, Sports Mole wrote.

He said: “For me it was a different feeling because I hadn't played a long time and to score twice in a row is a big relief for me mentally and also physically to get back my confidence.”

“I'm very glad to help the team win points. I couldn't start the year any better. We did a great job. It's a great performance,” he added.

The moment that everyone at Brighton had been waiting 18 months for had fi-



nally arrived, and in spectacular fashion. Even Graham Potter couldn't hide his surprise – an indication that he had not been fully aware of the caliber of player at his disposal.

“I didn't predict that quality of strike but it was a fantastic goal and everyone is delighted for him,” Potter admitted.

“He hasn't been involved as much as he would like but he has been fantastic around the place, he has worked hard, he has improved and he is getting his chance.”

(Source: Sports Mole)

Jalal Hosseini's last-minute winner picked the best

Persepolis defender Jalal Hosseini's winner against UAE's Al Jazira was chosen as the Best Last-minute Winners of the AFC Champions League.

In a poll conducted by the-afc.com, 91 percent of participants voted for the Iranian player.

It's hard to beat the feeling of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat at the very last, and this week's '5 of the Best' highlights some of the most dramatic climaxes ever seen in the AFC Champions League.

From elation in Osaka to joy in Jeddah and fantastic finishes in Dubai, Sydney and Tehran, the-afc latest edition shines the spotlight on the magical moments that help make the beautiful game the most watched sport in the world.

Persepolis brought plenty of drama to the 2018 AFC Champions League as the Iranian side's never-say-die attitude helped them advance all the way to the final.

In the last 16 against the UAE's Al Jazira, it was a case of 'cometh the hour, cometh the man'.

Having seen their second-half goal



cancelled out, the Tehran side was heading for the exit door with 89 minutes gone, only for captain Jalal Hosseini to come up with a finish any striker would be proud of as the center-back volleyed home to send the 80,000 inside Azadi Stadium into raptures.

Koki Yonekura (Gamba Osaka), Hao Junmin (Shandong Luneng), Abdulrahman Ghareeb (Al Ahli Saudi) and Kwon Kyung-won (Al Ahli Dubai) were competing Hosseini in the poll.

(Source: the-afc)

FIVB launches athletes' relief support fund

Lausanne, Switzerland, May 26, 2020 – The FIVB on Tuesday launched its Athletes' Relief Support fund to provide short-term assistance to professional volleyball and beach volleyball players who have been affected financially by the global coronavirus pandemic.

An initiative, of the FIVB President Ary S. Graça F° and the FIVB Athletes' Commission, approved by the FIVB Executive Committee, will offer support to those athletes who are in financial hardship due to the postponement and cancellation of FIVB events. The Athletes' Relief Support fund is aimed at those who are currently unable to afford the basic necessities including, but not limited to, food, family care and housing. In light of the global nature of the current situation, all assistance will be determined by a thorough analysis of each individual case.

An initiative, of the FIVB President Ary S. Graça F° and

the FIVB Athletes' Commission, approved by the FIVB Executive Committee, will offer support to those athletes who are in financial hardship due to the postponement and cancellation of FIVB events. The Athletes' Relief Support fund is aimed at those who are currently unable to afford the basic necessities including, but not limited to, food, family care and housing. In light of the global nature of the current situation, all assistance will be determined by a thorough analysis of each individual case.

In order to ensure that the Athletes' Relief Support fund is distributed fairly, the online application process will be transparent and led by a dedicated Task Force, which includes the leadership of the FIVB, the FIVB Athletes' Commission and the FIVB Team. This Task Force will be responsible for evaluating applications, conducting eligibility checks, and ensuring that this fund assists those

who cannot currently meet their basic needs. Athletes applying for the FIVB Athletes' Relief Support fund will need to meet set eligibility requirements for their application to be considered for further evaluation. The eligibility criteria include, but are not limited to, being clear from sanctions on international and national levels, having no anti-doping rules violations, and having participated in the minimum required number of FIVB events during the 2018-2019 season along with several other requirements.

In addition, in consideration of the ongoing global coronavirus crisis, and in order to allow athletes a suitable amount of time to apply for funding, applications will remain open for a one-month period from 26 May 2020 to 23 June 2020.

(Source: FIVB)

Some teams plan to cancel the league resumption: Beiranvand

S P O R T S **TEHRAN**— Persepolis and Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand believes that some teams in Iran Professional League (IPL) plan to cancel the league without naming the champion.

While most football leagues around the world make decisions to continue their seasons, disagreement between some teams (namely four teams so far) has not been solved and they resist to return to the competition.

“Unfortunately, some people plan to declare the league null and void,” said Beiranvand on Thursday.

Recently, four IPL team has sent a letter to the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) and the Ministry of Sport and Youth, not only demanding the cancellation of league matches but also threatening to withdraw from the tournament if it resumes.

Biranvand predicted that the number of these teams will increase as they get closer to the reopening of the league. The goalie believes that they somehow pretend to be infected with coronavirus.

“I think these teams have threatened very soon about withdrawing from the league. However, I'm sure that by the start of the league, the number of such teams will rise, even to 10 teams! Before the tournament starts again many of the staff and players of these teams may be tested positive for coronavirus. Then there will be a situation that there is no time for isolation the teams and their staff and consequently they force the league to be canceled completely. Some people are planning to shut down the league in anyway possible,” added the 27-year-old goalkeeper.

The Iran Professional League will resume on June 18, the Iran Football League Organization announced last week.



Four Gol Gohar players tested positive for Coronavirus

PLDC — Iranian media have reported that four Gol Gohar players have been tested for Coronavirus.

Godwin Mensha, former striker of Persepolis and Esteghlal, is one of the player who was tested positive.

Reza Aliari, Mehrdad Abdi and Ahmad Mousavi are the other three players.

The players must spend two weeks in quarantine.

According to the Iran League Football Organization, Iran Professional League will resume on June 18.

Furthermore, five members of Iranian football club Foolad have been tested positive for coronavirus in the latest round of the tests.

Two players and three club staff have been tested positive for Covid-19, the Iranian club announced.

The players and staff must spend two weeks in quarantine.

Iran Professional League will resume on June 18.

Esteghlal parts way with Lekic

TASNIM — Iranian football club Esteghlal have parted company with Nebojsa Milicic Lekic.

The Serbian coach was confirmed as assistant coach in Esteghlal in January.

The 60-year-old coach, who has worked as coach at Real Madrid U-19, RM Castilla and Kairat Almaty, was named as Farhad Majidi's assistant until the end of the season but was forced to leave Iran due to coronavirus outbreak.

Now, Esteghlal General Manager Ahmad Saadatmand has announced that the coach will not return to Iran.

Esteghlal are going to win Iran Professional League after seven years.

Shahram Mahmoudi undergoes surgery

TASNIM — Iran international opposite spiker Shahram Mahmoudi underwent spinal surgery.

The 31-year-old player will be sidelined for first two months of the regular season.

Mahmoudi was a member of Shahr-dari Oroum-iyeh last season.

He has been named MVP three times in Asian Club Championship in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

World Youth Chess Championships postponed

World chess governing body FIDE announced that the 2020 World Youth Chess Championships will be postponed.

The competition was originally slated for September 2020 in Romania.

“The FIDE Management Board received and duly examined a request from the World Youth Chess Championship 2020 organizers; and there still exists a large degree of uncertainty in the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” wrote the FIDE on its website.

FIDE announced that the championship will be postponed to a later date, with the new schedule to be announced no later than four months before the start of the event.

(Source: Xinhua)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com
 ■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
 ■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» **Editorial Dept.:** Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
 editor@tehrantimes.com
 » **Switchboard Operator:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
 » **Advertisements Dept.:** Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
 » **Public Relations Office:** Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
 » **Subscription & Distribution Dept.:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
 » **Webmaster:** webmaster@tehrantimes.com
 » **Printed at:** Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
 P.O. Box: 14155-4843
 Zip Code: 1599814713



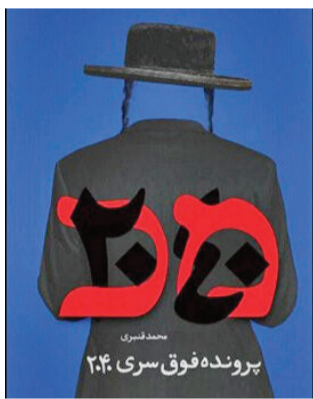

Beware, beware of sinfulness. By God, He has veiled His servants' guilt so much as if He has forgiven them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Persian novel reveals Mossad's top-secret meeting

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian novel that has recently been published in Tehran discloses a large meeting of Mossad, an Israeli intelligence community, and high-ranking Jewish officials from across the world after the creation of the Zionist regime in 1948.

"Top-Secret File 2040" written by Mohammad Qanbari has been published by Shahid Kazemi Publications in Tehran.



Front cover of the Persian novel "Top-Secret File 2040" by Mohammad Qanbari.

The book tells a story about Israel's crimes against humanity, the publisher has said and added that it gives the readers a real insight into the Zionist regime's role in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists, bioterrorist battles and kidnapping famous revolutionary figures.

The writer has used real historical documents to narrate his story so that most of the characters have their real names.

"The central office of the Mossad chief was in tumult. All influential people of Jewish origin and Zionist figures, Mossad top agents and high-ranking Jewish officials have been called on to attend a large top-secret meeting. Personalities along with their families have been invited to the Jerusalem meeting: Invitation to a large meeting after 1948 when Israel was officially recognized at the United Nations," Qanbari wrote in an introduction to the book.

Golestan Gallery announces winners of children's corona painting competition

A R T **TEHRAN** — Golestan Gallery announced the winners of its children's painting competition on coronavirus on Tuesday.

Three winners have been honored in two categories of the contest, which was organized for children aged under 10 during the home quarantine in March.

Siavash Vasei took first prize among the children above six and Arad Eskandari won second prize. Third prize went to Ramtin Najmi.

In the children under six, Yarta Emami won first prize, while Parsa Zeineddini stood second and Aneli Emkani received third prize.



Two winning works in the children's painting competition of Golestan Gallery on coronavirus.

The submissions were judged by illustrator Farshid Mesqali, cartoonist Kambiz Derambakhsh and painter Tara Behbahani. All the six winning paintings are scheduled to be drawn on walls across Tehran by the Tehran Municipality, which has contributed to the event.

"I have thought children under 10 enjoy stronger imaginations and can produce more interesting works, and that is why I decided to work with little children," Lili Golestan, the owner of the gallery, said earlier in April.

"I was surprised to see this great number of paintings. I never thought the topic would be that interesting for children and their families. And although this was a difficult task to do all alone, I enjoyed the experience and I am happy with it," she added.

About 450 works were sent to the competition and Golestan personally selected 180 works as finalists.

Face mask paintings depict Shahnameh character fighting corona monster

→ **1** All the masks show different stories inspired by the last story of 'The Seven Adventures of Rustam'. They tell stories of the fight of Rustam with the white monster, however, the white monster is the coronavirus this time which appears in different shapes in each painting," he explained.

"I have assumed that the dragon is the symbol of the new virus, which is coming from China into our country Iran, and that Rustam is fighting with it once with his bludgeon, once with a spear and once with a sword, and in all the battles, Rustam conquers it and is the winner," he said.

"Actually in most stories, Rustam conquers the corona monsters. And even where he is fighting the female evil he is still the winner," he remarked.

Saadi further noted that the works are all in small sizes and that he could not make long stories but he has tried to add different elements like shapes of buildings or trees in the background with different day and night times to make slight changes.

"Each work has its own story. For example, Zakhak is sitting instead of the coronavirus, and when Rustam is holding the snakes on the shoulders of Zakhak in his hands, two more snakes are coming out of Zakhak's mouth, and it means whatever we try to conquer this new virus, it still comes out in other forms," he added.

In Persian legend, Zakhak is the name of an Arab king who conquered and ruled over ancient Iran. The story is recounted in the Shahnameh. Kaveh is the hero in this particular story, who rescues his Kurdish people in Iran from Zakhak's control.

"All these concepts and paintings are made based on the news I receive and hear every day," Saadi said.

The other one is the fight of Rustam with a woman who is evil.

"In this story, we don't see a battle in its real meaning; it is as if they both have the same power, also mentioning that overcoming the new virus is hard," he said.

He explained that in simple words he has tried to say the new virus will not fade away in a short time and it needs more time and people still have to fight with it.

He also explained why he chose face masks for his new collection.

"In the process of my artistic career, this was not something unusual. I always pay great attention to the materials I use in my works. The idea was not strange for me. We didn't have the habit to live with face masks and only doctors and craftsmen used them in their jobs, and



A painting on a face mask by Iranian graphic designer Yazdan Saadi.

this was a new thing added to our life, something to wear outdoors which was annoying at first," he explained.

"Although I was in quarantine, I used to wear a face mask for shopping and it was something extra which we were not used to and of course, still not used to. Perhaps it is one way to tell the story of an additional outdoor wear we must wear in addition to our previous clothes," he added.

"Although the new virus has captured and influenced our lifestyle, I decided to conquer the idea of wearing a face mask as I thought this must be a concept of battle and fighting," he said.

"In our culture, we still do not have the habit of wearing a mask and not many are using face masks. Perhaps masks can protect us from the new virus, and these two ideas were combined in this new collection," he said.

"I have displayed my works on my Instagram. The collection was seen on my Instagram and many liked the idea, and even some from other countries liked my paintings and shared them," he remarked.

"A friend asked me to display my works at the Los Angeles branch of Seyhun Gallery, however, I would prefer to display my works in a gallery in Iran too, when there will be a chance," he said.

Goethe Museum Düsseldorf next stop for Gunther Uecker's "Tribute to Hafez"

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran's Visual Arts Office director Hadi Mozaffari has said that the Goethe Museum Düsseldorf will be the next place to host German sculptor and op artist Gunther Uecker's exhibition "Tribute to Hafez".

The exhibition is scheduled to open on May 28, and will also showcase sculptures and sets of installation by Iranian artists Mohammadreza Yazdi, Ali Mahbubi, Morteza Tavassoli, Shahriar Rezaei, Babak Montazeri, Arefeh Arad, Farzad Dashti and Neda Ayati.

The artists are from the Iranian cities of Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Kerman, Bushehr, Kish, Mashhad and Rasht, which have hosted the exhibition since 2016.

The 89-year-old Uecker and the artists were first scheduled to attend the opening ceremony, which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mozaffari said that media in Germany, Austria and Switzerland are scheduled to organize a virtual tour of the exhibition.

"Tribute to Hafez" has been inspired by the ghazals of Persian poet Hafez. Uecker has created a collection of graphical works in which the ghazals



German op artist Gunther Uecker attends the opening of his exhibit "Tribute to Hafez" in the Mausoleum of Hafez in Shiraz on May 1, 2016. (IRNA/Reza Qaderi)

are transformed into colors and the sound of the poems into written images.

This method to translate spoken language into

pictorial expressions has characterized the artist's oeuvre since the 1970s.

In 2016, Uecker first displayed his collection in Shiraz where the Mausoleum of Hafez lies. The Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum in Tehran, Isfahan Museum of Contemporary Art and Kerman Museum of Contemporary Art hosted the exhibition afterwards.

Uecker is a member of the ZERO movement, best known for his signature use of nails arranged into tactile, sculptural paintings.

His oeuvre includes paintings, art objects and installations as well as stage designs and films. He is mainly interested in the Eastern European avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s, but he is likewise fascinated by Asian cultures and their ideas.

Uecker's works can be seen in collections and at large fairs in both the West and the East. His artistic creativity reached a climax in 2000 with the prayer room he designed for the rebuilt Reichstag building in Berlin.

The Goethe Museum Düsseldorf is one of the three major Goethe archive and research centers.

Adel Bozdudeh plans to restage "An Accident in the City of Puppets" after pandemic

A R T **TEHRAN** — Puppeteer Adel Bozdudeh plans to restage his puppet show "An Accident in the City of Puppets" nearly fifty years after its premiere in Tehran.

"The play was first staged in 1971 for children as Iran's first modern puppet show, and then was restaged in the period from 1972 to 1977 at different branches of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) and its mobile theaters in cities with no libraries," Bozdudeh said in a press release published by the IIDCYA on Tuesday.

"This is the third time this puppet show will be reproduced with the same technique of glove puppetry. I actually aim to showcase its significance and introduce the power and ability of puppet shows to those individuals interested in theater," he said.

"This play is full of interesting events, good advice and attractive situations for children that make the audience get involved with the play, and I am sure the

children of today will also like it," he said.

"In the city of puppets, everybody is happy except for one who does not like to get up early and go to work. The puppet disturbs the peace of the city with its bad temper and ignores discipline. Little by little, its behaviors lead to some events in the city and the puppets decide to ask for help from the puppet maker and the story ends with the participation of the audience and the decisions the children make in the theater," he adds.

He emphasized that the play has not undergone any changes compared with its original form in the past, adding, "Even some of the original puppets and accessories of the original versions are preserved and we can use them for the new performance."

"I hope we can restage the play after the pandemic is over," he concluded.

The play is scheduled to go on stage at the IIDCYA located in the Laleh Park in Tehran.



Stage director Adel Bozdudeh in an undated photo.