

EU, Russia condemn U.S. for ending nuclear waivers **2**

EU designates Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. as World Heritage asset **8**

Rock climber Alipour looks to win Olympics gold **11**

Film Museum of Iran reopens after 3-month coronavirus closure **12**



IRGC gets 112 missile-launching speed boats

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Over \$7.3b allocated for development projects

TEHRAN — Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) has announced an over 310 trillion rials (about \$7.38 billion) budget allocation for development projects across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), IRNA reported.

According to a PBO statement, the mentioned budget has been allocated for

accelerating the implementation of prioritized national and provincial development projects and to fulfill the current year's slogan which is "surge in production".

The resources allocated to the national development projects are going to be 218 trillion rials (\$5.19 billion), while special provincial projects will be given 16.74 trillion rials (\$398.5 million). **→4**

U.S. move to end nuclear sanction waivers are symbolic: Shireen Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that the new U.S. move to end waivers for nuclear cooperation with Iran by countries party to the 2015 nuclear deal is "more symbolic than real".

"Given the already extensive range of sanctions against Iran, most of these measures have been more symbolic than

real. The ending of waivers are in the same vein," Hunter comments.

She also says the goal behind such a move "is not to rescue JCPOA or even to negotiate a new deal."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ The Trump administration ended sanctions waivers that allow Russian, Chinese and European companies to do work at sensitive Iranian nuclear sites. Why did Trump take such a step? **→3**

Iran grants loans to 21 film projects hit by COVID-19 lockdown losses

TEHRAN — The Cinema Organization of Iran announced on Thursday that it has allocated a loan of 3 billion rials (over \$71,000) to each of 21 film projects hit by the coronavirus shutdown.

The loans are being granted to the films to combat the financial losses caused by the COVID-19 shutdown.

Six films that were scheduled to go on screen at Iranian theaters during Noruz, the Iranian New Year celebra-

tion, are among the films.

Mohammad Kart's directorial debut "Butterfly Swimming", which received Crystal Simorghs in six categories, including the audience award, at the 38th Fajr Film Festival, is among the films.

Other highlights of the lineup are Peyman Qasemkhani's comedy movie "Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army" and Mohammad-Hadi Karimi's "Filicide". **→12**

Violent protests over deadly arrest rock U.S.'s Minneapolis

Anger over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man in police custody, spread beyond Minneapolis Thursday, with looting and fires set along a major St. Paul street and protesters returning to a neighborhood already ravaged by violent protest.

It was the third consecutive night of violent protests following Floyd's death Monday. In footage recorded by a bystander, Floyd can be seen pleading that he can't breathe as Officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, kneels on his neck. As minutes pass, Floyd slowly stops talking and moving, AP reported.

Dozens of businesses across the Twin Cities were boarding up their windows and doors Thursday in an effort to prevent looting, with the Minneapolis-based Target announcing it was temporarily closing two dozen area stores. Minneapolis shut down nearly its entire light-rail system and all bus service through Sunday out of safety concerns.

In St. Paul, clouds of smoke hung in the air as police armed with batons and wearing gas masks and body armor kept a watchful eye on protesters along one of the city's main commercial corridors, where firefighters also sprayed water onto a series of small fires. At one point, officers stood in line in front of a Target, trying to keep out looters, who were also smashing windows of other businesses.

Hundreds of demonstrators returned Thursday to the Minneapolis neighborhood at the center of the violence, where the nighttime scene veered between an angry protest and a street party. At one point, a band playing in a parking lot across from the police's 3rd Precinct, the focus of the protests, broke into a punk version of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." Nearby, demonstrators carried clothing mannequins from a looted Target and threw them onto a burning car. Later, a building fire erupted nearby. **→10**

ARTICLE
Mohammad Homaeifar
Tehran Times journalist

Brian Hook raps Washington's echo chamber as voice of Iran

Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran, has strongly criticized the performance of Voice of America's Persian service which he said sounds more like the "Voice of the mullahs" than the "Voice of America."

In a note published by The New York Post on Wednesday, Hook wrote that VOA Persian "needs to do a better job of countering Iranian disinformation and propaganda."

He said he was receiving regular complaints about VOA's Persian service. "Iranian viewers say its American taxpayer funded programming often sounds more like the 'Voice of the mullahs' than the 'Voice of America,'" he added.

Hook said that addressing such complaints was a priority for the Trump administration and urged VOA to give access to "independent and truthful reporting."

This is while many observers consider Voice of America's Persian service to be a form of propaganda tool, aiming to sow discord and dissatisfaction among the Iranian public as part of Washington's age-long policy of overthrowing the Islamic Republic.

VOA Persian is not the first anti-Iran propaganda tool of a hostile country that has been attacked for not being harsh enough toward the Islamic Republic — or as Hook put it, for failing to "effectively communicate" U.S. policies to Persian-speaking audiences.

The UK's BBC Persian channel, which regularly offers politically biased coverage of Iran's affairs, has been called "Ayatollah BBC" for years.

The Mojahedin-e Khalq, an exiled Iranian terrorist group better known as the MEK, has compared the BBC Persian to Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, saying "with its latest drivel against the PMOI/MEK, the BBC has taken a page right of Goebbels' note book."

In an article published in November 2019, the MEK, officially called the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), wrote that the BBC Persian "has never apologized to the Iranian people for assisting Iran's religious dictatorship in repressing the nation." **→3**

Tehran to Washington: We shatter your max pressure with our max resistance

TEHRAN — Tehran says it shatters the United States' maximum pressure campaign with maximum resistance and relying on domestic capabilities.

"We do shatter your max pressure campaign w/ max resistance, stiffening resolve & reliance on the national capabilities," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi tweeted on Thursday night.

"It is you who face a choice: either admit defeat & start respecting the Iranian Nation or further keep being hated, humiliating & isolating

yourselves," Mousavi added.

The tweet came in response to earlier threatening remarks by Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran.

Hook on Wednesday said maximum economic pressure on Iran would prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"Because of our pressure, Iranian leaders have come to a decision: either negotiate with us or manage the economic collapse," he told reporters at a State Department special briefing.

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Angel of Kindness statue unveiled to honor medical staff

A statue dubbed "Angel of Kindness" was unveiled at Tehran's Shohada-ye Tajrish hospital on Thursday in honor of medical staff who are at the forefront of the battle against the coronavirus. The statue memorializes the commitment, dedication and compassion that is demonstrated each and every day by the country's health sector.

On May 19, an official with the Iranian Medical Council has said that 107 healthcare workers have so far lost their lives in the country in fighting the coronavirus.

Mustafa Prize convenes experts to discuss coronavirus

TEHRAN — Prominent Muslim scientists and health experts from over ten countries worldwide met virtually on Thursday within the framework of the 7th Science and Technology Exchange Program (STEP) to address scientific and technological collaboration in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

Organized by Mustafa Prize Foundation, laureates and eminent scientists from countries such as Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Singapore, and Turkey shared their research findings, experiences, and achievements.

Professors Jackie Ying from Singapore and Ugur Sahin from Turkey, as well as Iranian professors Hossein Baharvand and Mohammad Abdolhad delivered keynote speeches.

Meanwhile, Jorge Chediek, the director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, Olzhas Abishev, the vice-minister of healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan, gave inaugural messages.

"We are putting together some of the best minds in the Islamic world to confront the challenges brought about by Coronavirus," Chediek stated.

For his part, Abishev pointed to the necessity of consolidation and solidarity in overcoming this disease, saying "We should work closely together and openly share expertise."

Ying explained about the recent works that she has been conducting along with her research team to develop an effective COVID-19 test kit.

Sahin talked about a vaccine that he and his research team have developed and recently tested on humans. **→9**

IRGC ready to transfer technology to automotive industry: commander

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, has said that the IRGC is prepared to transfer defense technology to automotive industry.

"We have a technological industry and we are prepared to transfer it to the country's automotive industry with no limitation," he said during a visit to Iran Khodro projects.

He also attached great importance to make the most use of domestic capacities to make the United States' sanctions inefficient.

Ending nuclear waivers pulls final plug in violating resolution 2231: Iran envoy

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said that ending sanction waivers for countries remaining in the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, by the United States pulls final plug in violating the resolution 2231.



"Two yrs ago @realDonaldTrump ceased participation in #JCPOA. Now, in further violation of JCPOA & UNSCR 2231 @SecPompeo pulls final plug, imposing penalties for compliance EVEN w/nuclear provisions of 2231," Takht-Ravanchi tweeted on Thursday.

He added, "Claiming US is STILL 'Participant' is not just preposterous; it's FALSE."

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the agreement, negotiated under his predecessor Barack Obama, in May 2018.

But the Trump administration until now had issued waivers to allow companies, primarily from Russia, to keep carrying out the work of the agreement without risking legal ramifications.

However, Washington announced on Wednesday that it was ending the waivers.

Russian Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Thursday the U.S. is acting in a dangerous and unpredictable way.

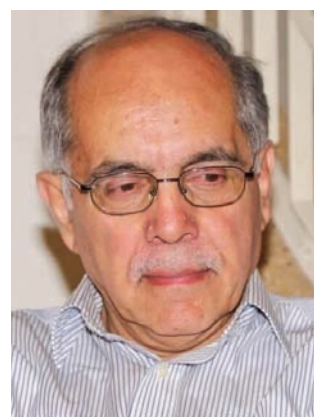
"Washington's actions are becoming more and more dangerous and unpredictable," Zakharova told reporters.

"The nature of this behavior is clearly disruptive," Zakharova said, accusing Washington of undermining international security.

Expert calls Iranian oil tankers' arrival in Venezuela a 'political victory'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Kourosh Ahmadi, an expert on international affairs, has called arrival of oil tankers in Venezuela a "political victory" for Iran.

In an interview with IRNA published on Thursday, Ahmadi said any action by the United States against the tankers could lead to an international crisis.



"Obstructing route of tankers in international waters is contrary to international law which is hard to be done even by Trump's administration which has no respect for international law," the former diplomat noted.

He added, "Any action against these tankers could lead to an international crisis."

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.

Mehdi 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," Sanaei tweeted in Persian.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has hailed the arrival of Iranian tankers to Venezuela amid U.S. threats.

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," the Cuban leader tweeted on Sunday.

So far three of five Iranian fuel tankers have arrived in Venezuela, a show of defiance by two states sanctioned by the U.S.

The second oil tanker of an Iranian tanker flotilla carrying fuel for Venezuela docked on Tuesday at a port serving state-run oil company Petroleos de Venezuela's (PDVSA) second-largest refinery, Cardon, in western Venezuela.

The tanker, part of the flotilla carrying 1.5 million barrels of gasoline from Iran, was escorted by Venezuelan naval frigates and helicopters as it entered the nation's exclusive economic zone. The third of the five-tanker flotilla also entered national waters on Tuesday, according to dw.com.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Tarek El Aissami tweeted pictures of the Iranian-flagged tanker, the Forest, and the crew upon their arrival at the Venezuela port.

The first of Iranian tankers, the Fortune, arrived at a port serving the El Palito refinery, on Monday in a show of defiance by both Tehran and Caracas, which are under U.S. sanctions.

"Thank you, Iran," Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro said on Twitter on Sunday just moments before the Fortune docked. "The end of Ramadan brings us the arrival of the ship Fortune, a sign of the solidarity of the Islamic people of Iran with Venezuela. In times where the supremacist empire intends to impose its rule by force, only the brotherhood of free peoples will save us."

EU, Russia condemn U.S. for ending nuclear waivers

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Both the European Union and Russia have condemned the United States' move to end sanction waivers for countries remaining in the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

Speaking at a United Nations Security Council meeting on Europe-UN relations on Thursday, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell highlighted the "enduring importance" of the deal, AFP reported.

According to EU's website, he said, "Let me reiterate the enduring importance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — the so-called JCPOA — with Iran. As you know, I am the Coordinator of the Joint Commission and I am determined to do everything to ensure full and effective implementation and, in particular, Iran's return to full compliance."

"I have to regret yesterday's decision by the United States not to prolong the waivers for the JCPOA-related nuclear projects," he noted.

The United States announced the end of waivers that allowed countries to cooperate with Iran on civil nuclear projects under the nuclear agreement.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Wednesday that the waivers will end following a 60-day wind-down period that is meant to allow businesses to cease operations.

"I am announcing the end of the sanctions waiver covering all remaining JCPOA-originating nuclear projects in Iran -- the Arak reactor conversion, the provision of enriched uranium for the Tehran Research Reactor, and the export of Iran's spent and scrap research



reactor fuel," Pompeo said in a statement, according to CNN.

Pompeo said that an exception would be made to provide a 90-day extension for the waiver that covers ongoing international support to the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant Unit 1 to ensure safety of operations. "We will continue to closely monitor all developments in Iran's nuclear program and can modify this waiver at any time," Pompeo said.

■ Russia calls U.S. move violation of resolution 2231
Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent

representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, on Friday called the U.S. move a violation of the UN Charter and also the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorsed the JCPOA.

"The US ends sanctions waiver covering #JCPOA-originating (and endorsed by #UNSC) nuclear projects in #Iran. Illegal US sanctions against these projects mean further violations of UN Charter (article 25), UNSC res.2231 and #NPT (art.4). US continues to undermine non-proliferation," Ulyanov tweeted.

Iran's IRGC gets 112 missile-launching speed boats

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy on Thursday received 112 missile-launching speed boats designed and built by Iranian experts.

The new generation of offensive speed boats are of different classes, which were unveiled in a ceremony on Thursday.

Enjoying hydrodynamic functional features, the boats are capable of sailing at a high speed, with a low radar cross-section (RCS) and a high level of offensive power, the Sepah News reported.

A number of top military officials attended the ceremony, including IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami, IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, and

Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami.

During a speech at the ceremony, Salami said, "The Islamic Republic has the determination. We will not give in to enemies. We will not back down. Progress is the nature of our work. Defense is our logic in war but not in the sense of passivity against the enemy. Our operations and tactics are offensive and we have shown it in the battlefield."

He also said that a key portion of Iran's maritime power is still "unknown" to others.

"The most important and dangerous part of this power is unknown. Our enemies will see this power the day when they pursue an evil intention against this land. On that day, they will get to see the real firepower of our forces at the sea and in



the sky, and the battlefield will turn into a hell for the enemies of Iran and Islam," Press TV quoted him as saying.

Ali Larijani named Leader advisor

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appointed Ali Larijani, the former parliament speaker, as his advisor and also a member of the Expediency Council.

"Given the useful experiences you gained during management in various sectors, especially three tenures as the speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, I appoint you as the advisor to the Leader and member of the Expediency Council," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a decree issued on Thursday.

The Leader added, "It is hoped that this responsibility will serve the sublime goals of the system."

Larijani was the speaker of the Iranian Parliament for three consecutive four-year terms. His tenure ended on Wednesday with the end of the 10th parliament's tenure.

Larijani did not run for parliament in the February elections. For the three terms he represented the shrine city of Qom.

Before taking over as parliament speaker, Larijani served as secretary of the Supreme National Security Council in the early years of the Ahmadinejad presidency. In that post, he also served as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator with the West.

Larijani, who holds PhD in philosophy, also acted as the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and culture minister.

It was 'strategic mistake' to allow U.S. enter the region, Iran's defense chief says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Friday that neighbors made a "strategic mistake" by allowing the United States to enter the region.

"Countries in the region are responsible for establishing security in the region and allowing the United States entering the region is a strategic mistake by the neighbors," he told reporters on the sidelines of a visit to a naval industrial facility run by the Defense Ministry in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.

Hatami also noted that security in the Persian Gulf region is a common interest for all the regional countries.

Iran will make any effort to make the Persian Gulf, especially the Strait of Hormuz, safe, the defense minister insisted.

"If the Persian Gulf is safe, all the regional countries will benefit. However, if the Persian Gulf becomes unsafe, all the regional countries will be unsafe," the defense chief remarked.

■ 'Army to receive Saba mine-sweeper soon'

Hatami also said that Saba mine-sweeper will be delivered to the Army in near future.

He said the minesweeper will begin to detect and counter the threat by naval mines in regional waters.

Brutal killing of African-American is demonstration of 'systematic racism': Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has said that brutal killing of an African-American man in the United States is a harrowing demonstration of "systematic racism" exercised by the current rulers of the White House.

"Brutal killing of #GeorgeFloyd by Minneapolis' white man in uniform in cold blood is a harrowing demonstration of systematic racism and white supremacy glorified by the current administration," he tweeted on Thursday.

A video has went viral which shows brutal treatment of an unarmed African-American man under the knee of a U.S. police officer

before his death.

George Floyd died on Monday after being pinned down by a white officer despite yelling: "I cannot breathe."

Four Minneapolis police officers were fired on Tuesday, a day after a bystander's cell phone video captured one of them pressing his knee on Floyd's neck.

The white Minneapolis police officer pinned him down with his knee in the U.S. state of Minnesota, which led to his death.

"I stand before you and the city of Minneapolis here to say that our deepest condolences. The vast majority of the men and women who proudly put on this uniform each and every day understand the important

role and relationship that we must have, we must have will all of our community members," said Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arrandondo.

An ambulance took the suspect to the hospital, where he died a short time later. The Iranian Foreign Ministry said via Twitter on Wednesday that the U.S. police's brutality against African-Americans knows no boundaries.

"6 yrs after 'I can't breathe' pleas of Eric Garner, #GeorgeFloyd, another black man, dies after a cruel, inhumane arrest," the ministry tweeted.

"It seems that US #PoliceBrutality against blacks knows no boundaries. And as always,

the response to calls for justice is employing even more force."

U.S. President Donald Trump has lashed out at those protesting in Minneapolis over the death of the unarmed black man in police custody, calling those involved in a third night of street clashes "thugs".

Trump said he would not "stand back and watch this happen to a great American City", adding that he had spoken to Minnesota governor Tim Walz and told him "the military is with him all the way".

"Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts," Trump warned, according to the Independent.

Ghalibaf says Iran-Turkey cooperation needed to establish peace and security

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, newly-elected speaker of the Iranian parliament, said on Friday that cooperation between Iran and Turkey is important to establish and promote long-lasting peace and security in the region.

In a phone conversation with Turkish Parliamentary Speaker Mustafa Sentop, Ghalibaf also said Iran attaches great importance to unity among Islamic countries to counter plots by the Zionist regime of Israel.

He also called for expansion of relations between the two countries, especially in economic area.

The new parliament speaker also highlighted the importance of continuing the Astana talks on Syria.

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.

■ Sentop invites Ghalibaf to visit Turkey
Sentop, for his part, congratulated Ghalibaf on his election as the parliament speaker and invited him to visit Turkey.

He called for expansion of relations in various spheres. In an open session on Thursday, the new Iranian lawmakers elected Ghalibaf, a former mayor of Tehran, as the new speaker of the parliament.

Ghalibaf secured 230 votes out of a total of 264 votes cast to become the speaker, followed by Fereydoon Abbasi-Davani with 17 votes, and Mostafa Mirsalim - a candidate in the 2017 presidential elections - with 12 votes.

The new parliament started its work on Wednesday with President Hassan Rouhani, Judiciary Chief Hojatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi, and Secretary of the Guardian Council Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati in attendance.

MP hails fuel shipments to Venezuela as 'humiliation for America'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A top MP who was reelected in the February parliamentary elections has hailed the arrival of Iranian tankers in Venezuela as a "humiliation" for the United States.

"The arriving and docking of Iranian oil tankers in Venezuela was a firm response to U.S. bullying, avarice and adventures, and it destroyed the empty grandeur of America," Mehr on Friday quoted Mojtaba Zonnour as saying.

Zonnour, who acted as chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, in the previous parliament, said the move showed the Iranian nation's might and dignity to the world.

On Thursday, the Venezuelan navy said it escorted a fourth tanker bringing Iranian fuel through its waters, Reuters reported.

The United States has criticized the shipment, as both OPEC nations are under sanctions. A U.S. official said earlier this month that President Donald Trump's administration was considering responses to the shipment, prompting the Iranian government to warn Washington against military action.

Venezuela's military has escorted each tanker through its exclusive economic zone. The navy on Thursday posted



images of its ships alongside the fourth cargo, on vessel Faxon.

On May 23, 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, Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela

Hojatollah Soltani said on May 25 that 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 wrote in a tweet.

"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.

However, Zonnour said the U.S.'s non-interference with the Iranian tankers were not due to "their decency, but rather, the cost-benefit formula has tied their hands."

"They know that if they undermine our national interests, they will have to pay a heavy price," he explained.

"Therefore, this trend will go on and the Islamic Republic of Iran's ships will continue to depart and arrive at their destination which is Venezuela for now," the top MP added.

Tehran slams U.S. sanctions on nuclear scientists

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has reacted to Washington's decision to blacklist two Iranian nuclear scientists, saying such measures are indicative of the U.S. government's hostile approach towards Iran.

In a statement on Thursday, the AEOI stressed that such hostile measures would by no means undermine the Islamic Republic's nuclear progress.

The "desperate attempt and unwise move" from the decision-makers at the White House to blacklist two Iranian nuclear scientists reveals the continuation of the U.S. government's hostility against Iran, it said according to Tasnim.

Such measures will not disturb the Iranian youths' determination to achieve the Islamic Republic's goals, the AEOI emphasized, reminding the ill-wishers that their



confrontation with Iran that runs counter to international principles and law will only strengthen the Iranian researchers' resolve and will undermine the position and prestige of the enemies of Iran in the world.

The Iranian hardworking researchers, especially those involved in the nuclear industry, consider such futile attempts as a sign of the enemy's failure, the statement added.

It came after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced sanctions against "two leaders of Iran's nuclear enrichment program."

"Today, I am ending the sanctions waiver for JCPOA-related projects in Iran, effective in 60 days," he tweeted. "Iran's continued nuclear escalation makes clear this cooperation must end. Further attempts at nuclear extortion will only bring greater pressure on the regime."

"I am also sanctioning two leaders of Iran's nuclear enrichment program - Majid Agha'i and Amjad Sazgar. Iran's scientists need to make a choice: pursue peaceful work outside of the proliferation realm, or risk being sanctioned."

Tehran to Washington: We shatter your max pressure with our max resistance

I→ "Today, I am ending the sanctions waiver for JCPOA-related projects in Iran, effective in 60 days," he wrote in his Twitter page on Thursday. "Iran's continued nuclear escalation makes clear this cooperation must end. Further attempts at nuclear extortion will only bring greater pressure on the regime."

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally quit the 2015 Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in

history on Iran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran.

Under the nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran had agreed to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

The agreement, endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, was signed



between Iran, the United States, Britain, Germany, France, the European Union, Russia, and China.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

Finally, on January 5 of this year, Iran issued a statement announcing suspension of all limits under the JCPOA.

Why Iran's fuel tankers for Venezuela are sending shudders through Washington

(Pressenza) — The first oil tanker that came from Iran's Bandar Abbas port into the Caribbean is called Fortune. The tanker entered Venezuelan waters on May 24 and was then escorted by the Venezuelan Navy and Air Force to the Puerto Cabello oil terminal; the gasoline will supply the El Palito refinery. A second tanker entered Venezuelan waters on May 25, and three others are on their way. The Venezuelan government paid for the gasoline at market rates; in another world, it would be an ordinary commercial transaction. Not in this world.

In April, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the U.S. Navy to send ships into the Caribbean supposedly on an anti-drug mission. These ships had threatened an embargo of Venezuela. There was worry that as the Iranian tankers approached the Venezuelan coast the U.S. warships would challenge their progress. As it turned out, the U.S. Navy did not intervene. A major internal incident was averted.

Why the United States did not block the Iranian vessels does not have to do with Iran or Venezuela alone. It has to do with the presence of China behind both countries.

China has deep commercial links with Iran, and it has gradually developed such linkages with Venezuela. During the global pandemic, China has flown vital supplies to both countries. But, crucially, at the United Nations China has been outspoken against the regime change policy driven by the United States against both states. It has been this Chinese shield that enabled the tankers to go through what is effectively a U.S. naval blockade of Venezuela.

■ Belligerence

Trump is in a belligerent mood. His language against China has sharpened. The United States military's Indo-Pacific Command released a document called "Regain the Advantage," which breathes fire; it suggests that the United States must do everything to prevent China from taking possession of its own coastline. A suite of new weapons—including the hypersonic cruise missile—threatens that very coastline (when they deploy this missile onto a submarine, it will take less than 15 minutes to hit China from launch). These are disturbing developments.

Nothing in Trump's behavior toward China suggests that he will do anything less than trip the United States into some sort of engagement with that country. And the more Trump threatens China, and the more he builds up U.S. military assets along the Chinese coastline, the greater the chance that China will react toward Taiwan, being provoked—in other words—into a conflict that the world just does not need.

Does Trump use the language of threats and conflict as merely a weapon in the trade war? Is this merely rash talk to enhance the standing of the United States as it tries to

prevent China from establishing itself as an important pillar of world affairs? Or does Trump intend a "limited war"? It is worthwhile to be wary of the actions of the United States government, particularly of the Trump administration.

■ Bipolarity

It is incorrect to see the "rise of China" as a threat to the preeminent power of the United States. There is no appreciable "decline of the United States" in our time, since the United States remains the most powerful military force and remains in charge of the main economic institutions (mainly through the power of the dollar as a world currency and through the control of the International Monetary Fund by the U.S. Treasury). Nonetheless, the United States is not prepared to tolerate the arrival of China as a second major economic pole.

China continues to indicate that it does not want conflict with the United States. The government has said repeatedly that it has no interest in escalation, and that it prizes stability. China's manufacturing sector has grown considerably, and it remains the most powerful industrial country in the world. Attempts by the United States to reorganize the global supply chain in the midst of COVID-19 by cutting out China will not work in the short or medium term; the world economy relies upon Chinese manufacturing, and many countries will not tolerate a long-term embargo on China's factories. It is this reliance upon China's industrial power that has inaugurated a new bipolar—rather than unipolar—world order.

■ China's ties to Iran and Venezuela

Even two decades ago, China resisted any direct confrontation with the United States. In 1999, U.S. bombers—under NATO command—struck the Chinese embassy in Belgrade; the United States and NATO said it was an accidental attack, something that they claim to this day (despite evidence that shows it was a deliberate strike). For four days, the Chinese government permitted anti-U.S. protests in China, but then everything went quiet (the United States paid compensation). Nothing more was said.

No such behavior is present now. If such an incident took place at this time, China would not tolerate it; it would make it an international incident, raise the question in the UN Security Council—where China is a permanent member. China's more visible diplomacy on behalf of the Palestinians—especially when Trump has pushed the Israeli government to strengthen its annexationist policies against the Palestinians—is a sign of Chinese ambitions to be more vocal in defense of those who have been under the heel of U.S. power.

Increasingly, China has supported both Iran and Venezuela against the United States. China has deep economic links to Iran, which is at the heart of the Belt and Road



Initiative. Xu Bu, China's ambassador to Chile, has been outspoken in his criticism of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the anti-China rhetoric that the United States has tried to spawn in Latin America. In the Chilean newspaper La Tercera, Xu Bu called Pompeo a "liar"; these are strong words in the world of diplomacy. China, he wrote, has been actively engaged in South America to the mutual advantage of both China and the individual countries; this is the same argument Chinese diplomats use about Iran.

In both Iran and Venezuela, China has provided assistance to tackle COVID-19; it has sent medical personnel and equipment. There is every indication that China has put its foot down to make it clear to Washington that it stands behind the governments in both these countries.

■ Tankers

The five Iranian tankers left Bandar Abbas with Iranian flags flying high and with their radars on; there was no attempt to say that they were not going directly where they ended. They announced their destination and waited. This is very different from the journey of the Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 through the Mediterranean Sea toward Syria; that ship was held by British forces at Gibraltar in 2019, and it became an international incident. This time nothing like that occurred.

It is unlikely that the United States would have allowed these ships to enter Venezuelan waters if it did not feel that they had the backing of China (and behind it, Russia). There's no question that Washington—despite all its attempts to change the balance of forces in the world—had to come to terms with China's decision to stand with the government in Venezuela and in Iran.

U.S. hybrid wars will continue; U.S. rhetorical belligerence will continue; U.S. expenditure on arms to overshadow the rest of the world in military terms will continue; all this is true. But, at the same time, the United States has had to accept that it cannot act easily if China decides to build a shield around certain countries. Evidence of this came when Fortune sailed into Venezuela.

Ghalibaf takes over as Iran's new parliament speaker

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The new Iranian lawmakers elected Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf as the new speaker of the Parliament.

In an open session on Thursday, Ghalibaf secured 230 votes out of a total of 264 votes cast to become the parliament speaker, followed by Fereydoon Abbasi-Davani with 17 votes, and Mostafa Mirsalim—a candidate in the 2017 presidential elections—with 12 votes, Mehr reported.

Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi and Ali Nikzad, both principlists, were also elected as the first and second vice-speakers.

The new parliament, dominated by principlists, started its work on Wednesday with President Hassan Rouhani, Judiciary Chief Hojatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, and Secretary of the Guardian Council Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati in attendance.

There are 290 seats in the Iranian parliament. The lawmakers are elected for a 4-year term, with no limitation for the incumbent or former parliamentarians to run again.

A number of senior Iranian political and military figures including President Hassan Rouhani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Presidential Chief of Staff Mahmoud Va'ezzi as well as Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri, Defense Minister Amir Hatami, and Police Chief Hossein Ashtari sent congratulatory messages to Ghalibaf.

Ghalibaf, who was Tehran's mayor for more than a decade, is considered a pragmatist politician. Before being elected as the mayor of Tehran in 2005 by the Tehran City Council, Ghalibaf was Iran's police chief.

He ran for president in 2005, 2013, and 2017. In 2013, he came second after Rouhani. In 2017, he faced Rouhani but he withdrew candidacy in favor of Raisi at the end.



Three Iranian border guards martyred in border clash

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Three Iranian border guards have been martyred during a clash with armed thugs, IRNA reported on Friday.

The police said the incident happened in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan and on the border with Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

The guards lost their lives in a gunfight at a border post near the city of Sardasht, some 730 kilometers (453 miles) west of Tehran, on Friday. A number of the armed thugs were also killed in the fighting as well.

U.S. move to end nuclear sanction waivers are symbolic: Shireen Hunter

Georgetown University professor says "Trump is running out of ways to pressure Iran"

I→ A: There are elements within the Trump administration, the Congress, and the Washington Policy Community most of whom are staunch supporters of Israel, that are in favor of even harsher measures against Iran, including possibly even some form of military action. A good example is Senator Tom Cotton. In response to these pressures, the Trump administration has periodically taken new measures against Iran. Given the already extensive range of sanctions against Iran, most of these measures have been more symbolic than real. The ending of waivers are in the same vein. However, it could also be intended to push Iran towards new measures, including higher levels of uranium enrichment. These increased levels then could be used to justify attacks on some of Iran's nuclear facilities.

■ Why did the U.S. refuse to extend waivers at this time?
A: I don't see any special reason for the timing of these new measures. My explanation is that Trump is running out of ways to pressure Iran.

■ The U.S. extended a separate waiver covering international support to the Bushehr nuclear plant. What is the reason behind the decision?
A: I believe the main reason for excluding the Bushehr reactor is concern over environmental safety and the regional ramifications if something goes wrong there. Any incident at the Bushehr plant could be even worse than the Chernobyl incident and, in addition to Iran, cause significant risk to other Persian Gulf states in terms of nuclear contamination. If Bushehr was in central Iran, it might not have been exempted.

■ One of the goals of the JCPOA was to help Iran to develop its peaceful nuclear program. According to the decision, how the other parties can commit their duties?
A: The Trump administrations' approach to JCPOA has been illogical. Trump is counting on Iran's vulnerability and the fact that Tehran has no good options in responding to the U.S. provocation. Any dramatic response from Iran such as withdrawal from the NPT would only be used for further pressures on Iran and would prompt the Iran hawks to push for military action against at least its nuclear facilities. The goal is not to rescue JCPOA or even to negotiate a new deal. The goal is to force Iran accept U.S. conditions or to exacerbate Iran's many domestic crisis from the economy to Covid-19 and other challenges.

Given Tehran's lack of viable options in responding to the Trump administration's provocations, the U.S. is not worried that Iran will not stick to its commitments under the JCPOA.

Brian Hook raps Washington's echo chamber as voice of Iran

I→ Although VOA Persian has been much more overt than the BBC Persian in their disinformation campaign against the Iranian government, Hook urged the network to double down and to specially focus on "human rights in Iran, corruption among the Iranian regime and analysis that counters propaganda rather than propagating it."

He then went on to threaten the network with closure if it does not follow the orders. "If it can't meet these standards—and soon—Congress should consider ending its funding and shutting down VOA Persian as a fiduciary duty to American taxpayers," he concluded.

Industry ministry inks trilateral mining MOU with GSI, IMIDRO

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Darius Esmaili signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) and Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) for expansion of the country's mining sector, IRNA reported.



The MOU was signed by Iran's Deputy Industry Mining, and Trade Minister Darius Esmaili, GSI Head Alireza Shahidi and IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour during a meeting between the acting minister of industry, mining and trade and the representatives of the country's mining sector.

Development of cooperation in the fields of exploration, extraction and processing of minerals, utilization of capacities, experiences and abilities of each sector, and attracting more investment from the country's private sector and cooperatives in this industry were reported to be some of the main goals of the signed agreement.

Also, the implementation of exploration projects by Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran and the formation of a joint committee whose task is to review the proposed exploration projects were also among the important subjects mentioned in the MOU.

Back in April, Esmaili had said that the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has provisioned operational targets in the mining sector's three major areas of exploration, extraction and processing, for the current year.

"In the mining industry sector, we have targeted a 25-percent increase in the production of mineral products, and in the exploration sector, we will add about 20 percent to the previous reserves."

The mining sector accounted for 25 percent of the country's non-oil revenues in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), he said.

Earlier that month, IMIDRO had also announced that mining exploration operations were underway in 652,061 square kilometers of land.

IMIDRO also plans to put projects worth \$2.276 billion into operation during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to Gharibpour, IMIDRO and its subsidiaries are going to implement 31 projects in a variety of fields including steel, copper, gold, antimony, nepheline syenite, phosphate and also mining infrastructure in the current year which is named the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Over \$3b allocated to supply basic goods in 2 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati said the bank has managed to supply over \$3 billion foreign currency for importing basic goods in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-April 19).



"In the first two months, we had a big drop in non-oil exports, but fortunately [non-oil] exports were revived and the return of foreign currency to NIMA [Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System] has accelerated," Hemmati said.

"As we move forward, a balance will be reached in providing foreign currency for the imports of basic and essential goods, especially raw materials for factories, and this issue will be seriously pursued," he said.

Hemmati noted that like the previous year, the government is going to provide basic goods and raw materials in the current year too, despite the sanctions pressure against the country.

"We have taken important steps to control and reform the banking system, and recent important decisions regarding the bank mergers and interest rates have been the result of disciplinary actions taken by CBI," he said.

NIMA has been established for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to the domestic forex market. That means it allows exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

In late May 2019, CBI unveiled a directive package that provided the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the new directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into NIMA, and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

The instructions aimed to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through NIMA, mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee to bring back to the country the foreign currency amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

Over \$7.3b allocated for development projects

1 → provincial projects 62 trillion rials (about \$1.47 billion) and miscellaneous projects, including border water projects and tropical project will be allocated 15.2 trillion rials (about \$632 million), according to TPO. Back in October 2019, Nobakht had said that 430 trillion rials (about \$10.2 billion) was going to be allocated for development projects in the current calendar year's budget plan.

"We intend to invest as much as we can in development sector in the next [Iranian calendar] year, so we have increased the budget for this sector by 53 percent to achieve significant growth," Nobakht said last year on the sidelines of the 12th meeting of the budget headquarters on October 14.

PBO had previously announced that the government was going to allocate all revenues



from oil sales to the development projects following structural reforms in the budget bill. According to Nobakht, the revenues gained from elimination of hidden energy subsidies as well as increased tax incomes

would replace oil revenues.

Following the fall in oil prices and the outbreak of coronavirus, the Iranian government has cut some of its budgetary provisions for the current Iranian calendar year.

Monthly agricultural, foodstuff exports at \$336m



ECONOMY TEHRAN — The value of Iran's exports of agricultural products and foodstuffs stood at \$336 million in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-April 19), according to the acting head of Agriculture Ministry's Economic Affairs Department Shahrokh Shajari.

The official said that while the coronavirus pandemic slowed down the process of exporting the mentioned products in the first month of the year, the monthly weight of exports rose 25.8 percent to 680,000 tons compared to the same month in the past year, IRIB reported.

Shajari further put Iran's imports of agricultural products and foodstuffs at 2.078 million tons valued at \$831 million in the first month of this year.

The official has previously put Iran's exports of the mentioned products at

about 7.104 million tons worth \$5.8 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

In the previous year, over 6.941 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff products worth \$6.392 billion were also imported into the country, according to Shajari.

Watermelons, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and shallots were the top five exported products in the previous year in terms of weight, while in terms of value, pistachios, apples, tomatoes, pistachio kernels, and watermelons were the five major export products.

Shajari further pointed to the major imported items in terms of weight, saying, corn, barley, soybean meal, soybean, and untreated sugar were the top five imported items, while in terms of value livestock corn, rice, barley, and soybeans were the top imported products.

Iran's annual tea output expected to rise 10%



ECONOMY TEHRAN — Tea production in Iran is expected to rise 10 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), Head of Iran's Tea Organization (ITO) Habib Jahansaz said.

According to the official, so far 53,251 tons of fresh tea leaves worth 2.36 trillion rials (about \$56.19 million) have been purchased from the country's farmers in the northern Gilan and Mazandaran provinces.

So far 763 billion rials (about \$18.16 million) has been paid to the farmers which is 32 percent of their total money, he added.

Jahansaz stated that 75 percent of the payment to the tea farmers will be made by the tea factories and the other 25 percent is paid by the government.

The official estimated the amount of dried tea production at 12,000 tons so

far and said: "This amount has increased by nine percent compared to the same period last year."

Tea harvest season starts in farmlands across the northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran in early May.

More than 55,000 families grow tea over 28,000 hectares of farmland in the two provinces, accounting for 90 percent of the country's total tea production.

In late December 2019, Jahansaz said Iran exported over 4,000 tons of tea to the neighboring countries, in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

According to Jahansaz, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Afghanistan were among the top destinations for Iranian tea exports.

Iran exports tea to India, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Canada, Australia, Spain, the Czech Republic, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Tehran, Yerevan discuss expansion of customs, trade ties

ECONOMY TEHRAN — During a meeting via video conference between Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Head Hamid Zadboum and Armenia's Deputy Minister of Economy Avag Avanesyan, the two sides explored the ways for boosting bilateral cooperation in the customs and trade areas.

As reported by the TPO, Armenian Ambassador to Iran Artashes Toumanian also participated in the meeting.

While emphasizing the significance of expanding trade ties between the two countries, Zadboum elaborated on the details of the first meeting of Iran-Armenia Industry, Mining and Trade Committee.

The two sides also emphasized the establishment of a taskforce on the industry, mining, and trade relations between Iran and Armenia.

Toumanian for his part said, "Armenia's Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure will take part in the mentioned taskforce, and we will announce the Armenian private companies to participate as well."

Iran and Armenia also discussed the facilitation of trade between the two neighbors in a meeting held via video conference on May 23.

Organized by the international affairs department of the ICCIMA, the meeting was participated by Iranian ambassador to Armenia, ICCIMA vice chairman for the international affairs, the chairmen of ICCIMA's committees of transportation, and non-oil exports development, the head of Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce, and the representatives of Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).



During the meeting, Mohammadreza Karbasi, ICCIMA vice chairman for the international affairs, emphasized that Iran attaches priority to its neighbors for trade, saying, "Iran and Armenia have many cultural commonalities while a positive diplomatic relationship, so, there is no limitation for the expansion of ties with Armenia, especially considering the free trade agreement (FTA) that Iran has signed with the member states of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) which has improved trade condition."

Back in mid-January, the head of Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce said Iran's trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union has had a significant impact on the country's trade relations with Armenia.

Speaking to IRNA, Hervik Yarijanian said: "The two

sides are applying tariff discounts offered based on the agreement and there has been no problem in this regard."

According to the official, the volume of trade between the two countries has witnessed an outstanding rise since the agreement became effective in October 2019.

"Turkey used to dominate the Armenian market, but now the Iranian products are much cheaper than the Turkish ones, which has given Iran a competitive advantage," Yarijanian added.

Iran mainly imports red meat from Armenia, while Armenia imports polymer raw materials, machinery, industrial gases, manufactured artifacts, leather, and leather goods from Iran, he said.

He further noted that Iran has a much greater export capability compared to Armenia, adding that traders have not yet gotten used to the idea of the preferential trade agreement and hopefully with the expansion of this deal, more Iranian traders will be attracted to the Armenian market.

Iran and Armenia have been emphasizing the need for preserving and expanding trade relations between the two countries since the preferential trade deal between Iran and EAEU was implemented.

While the U.S. renewed sanctions on Iran are aimed at isolating the Islamic Republic both politically and economically, Iran's relations, especially in the economic sectors, with its neighbors are seemed not to be affected by the sanctions.

The northwestern neighbor Armenia is one of the countries preserving and expanding its economic relations with Iran regardless of the sanction condition.

TSE witnesses 5% weekly drop of index

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 48,040 points, or five percent, to 938,557 in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on May 29), IRNA reported.

Tehran Stock Exchange, which is Iran's major stock market, had also witnessed a five-percent drop in its index in the week ended on May 22.

TSE managing director said two weeks ago that the country's stock market has attracted 350 trillion rials (about \$8.33 billion) of liquidity since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Highlighting that the stock market is welcoming initial public offering (IPO) of the companies, Ali Sahraei said, "We held the IPO of Shasta although it was a very complicated process."

Iran's stock market witnessed its largest-ever initial public offering on April 15, when Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta)



offered eight billion shares, which account for 10 percent of its stakes, for sales in Tehran Stock Exchange.

Shasta is the investment arm of the Social Security

Organization, which provides healthcare entitlement and pension benefits for a large proportion of Iran's middle and working-class members of the labor force.

Answering to a question about the number of IPOs planned for the current year, Sahraei said, "We try that more IPOs will be held this year compared to the previous year, while it is important that the large and strong companies will offer their shares."

While the past Iranian calendar year was full of success for the TSE, the market is also preserving its successful performance in the current year, and the noticeable point in this due is that the other economic sectors are experiencing some declining trend due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We have been witnessing new record highs continuously posted by the exchange since the year start, and climbing to the peak of one million points, something almost unbelievable just some time ago, has already come true.

Daily gas supply to power plants up 20%

ENERGY TEHRAN — National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Dispatching Director Mehdi Jamshidi Dana says NIGC is currently supplying 240 million cubic meters (mcm) of natural gas to the country's power plants on a daily basis, registering a 20-percent rise.

"The figure stood at 200 mcm last week," Jamshidi Dana told IRNA on Friday.

The official noted that during the peak consumption period in summer, power plants would need 310 mcm of gas per day, a figure that could be easily met by the National Gas Company, given its network capacity.

According to the official, all the fuel needs of the power plants connected to the national gas network are currently met unless they are going through minor repairs in their gas sector.

Currently, 85 power plants across the country are using natural gas as fuel, he said.

He further mentioned gas supply during the cold season, saying: "This winter, gas supply will be better due to increased production as well as the increased gas transmission capacity."



Earlier this month, Jamshidi Dana announced that the transmission capacity of the national gas network was raised to one billion cubic meters per day (bcm/d).

Noting that several projects were carried out last calendar year (ended on March 19) to increase the country's gas network capacity, the official said: "Most of the mentioned projects have been implemented in the ninth national line, most of which will be operational this year."

The official had previously said that 61 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas was supplied to the country's power plants during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Iran is currently producing over 810 mcm of natural gas daily which is mostly used inside the country for the domestic sector and also as fuel for the power plants and a small portion is also exported to the neighboring countries like Iraq.

Currently, about 30,000 villages with 4.6 million households as well as 1,148 cities with over 18 million households are connected to the national gas network in Iran.

Gas is supplied to 97 percent of people in the urban areas and 82 percent of people in the rural regions, according to NIGC's Managing Director Hassan Montazer Torbati.

Huge oil fields could help Iran to seize Saudi market share in China

Given that China's oil demand has now recovered from the COVID-19 outbreak to even higher levels than before, Iran is operating at full tilt to optimize the oil available to key ally Beijing from any and all of its fields, oilprice.com reported.



Principally this involves optimizing output from the cluster of supergiant fields in the West Karoun oil region, attempting to increase the average recovery rate from older fields, and pushing forward on production increases from fields shared with Iraq and Kuwait. All of this is geared to twin objectives: increasing Iran's crude oil production to 5.7 million barrels per day (bpd) by the end of the sixth development plan (ending in 2021/22), and ensuring that it is able to provide China with the steady flow of oil that it requires. Given the variability of Russia's support for Iran over recent years, Tehran believes that China is a better bet for Iran's future. Like Russia, China has one of just five Permanent Member votes in the United Nations Security Council (plus the U.S., U.K., and France) but, unlike Russia, China absolutely needs both Iran in its West Asia client-state line-up, given its multi-generational 'One Belt One Road' strategy.

U.S. crude imports surge as Saudi oil 'armada' arrives

U.S. oil imports surged last week, with almost half of the extra crude arriving from Saudi Arabia, as foreign producers took market share from the struggling American shale patch.

The federal Energy Information Administration on Thursday said Saudi supplies to the US jumped almost 1m barrels a day during the week ending May 22, to 1.6m bpd, while commercial imports from all countries soared to 7.2m bpd, almost 40 percent more than the week before, as reported by Financial Times.

"The armada of ships bringing Saudi crude to the U.S. has arrived," said Amrita Sen, a director at Energy Aspects, a consultancy.

The vessels were launched by the kingdom before it called a halt to the price war on April 12 and agreed new production cuts with Russia. Those supply curbs began in May — but the scale of the kingdom's original assault on the US shale patch is now becoming clear, analysts said.

"The optics for Saudi crude aren't so great in Texas right now," said Bill Farren-Price, director at RS Energy Group, a consultancy. "Despite their huge cuts, the April export surge has just started unloading, with yet another clue for Permian operators as to why U.S. oil prices remain on the floor."

U.S. oil production continues to fall sharply, as operators shut wells and reduce capital expenditures to cope with the worst crude price crash in decades. The EIA said output dropped to 11.4m bpd in the week ending May 22. Many analysts say production has already fallen to as low as 10m bpd, compared with 13m bpd earlier this year.

Last month, West Texas Intermediate, the US benchmark, traded below zero for the first time in history, sending shockwaves through a shale patch where producers need almost \$50 a barrel to make a profit. WTI was up at about \$33.72 on Thursday evening.

The crash has dented hopes that the US could establish self-sufficiency in oil supply. President Donald Trump has repeatedly lauded the U.S.'s "energy independence". But net petroleum imports rose again last week to 1.2m bpd, according to the EIA, well above the level a year ago.

"America's net-exporter vacation is over for now," said Kevin Book, managing director at ClearView Energy Partners, a Washington-based consultancy. "But we'll be showing the photographs for years."

Despite the easing of virus lockdown measures around the country, US oil demand also dropped by about 4 percent against the previous week, the EIA said. At 16m bpd it was a quarter lower than a year earlier.

More than 40m workers claimed unemployment benefits in the U.S. last week, according to the country's labor department.

The extra oil imports pushed U.S. crude inventories sharply higher. This ate into some storage capacity, but utilization rates remain well beneath the high levels that sparked WTI's collapse below zero last month.

Annual petchem output of 100m tons projected

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the country's petrochemical production capacity was planned to cross 100 million tons per year in the current Iranian calendar year which began on March 20, according to Shana.

Speaking to Eqtesad Radio Channel, Zanganeh underlined the most important plans of the Iranian Oil Ministry in the year of "Surge in Production" saying: "We must all take steps in the current difficult situation with interactive and jihadist spirit to solve the problems of the people and ensure the development of the country. Now is not the time to deal with marginal issues."

He said continued development of West Karoun fields, operation of the second petrochemical industry leap projects, completion of South Pars offshore sector and implementation of phase II operations, implementation of crude oil transfer pipeline from Goreh to Jask and the completion of rural gas supply projects were among the main plans of the Oil Ministry in the year.

West Karoun holds great importance for the country's oil industry since according to the latest studies, its in-situ deposit is estimated to be 67 billion barrels containing both light and heavy crude oils, and therefore it could have a big impact on Iran's oil output increases in the future.

With the fields fully operational, their output could add 1.2 million bpd to the country's oil production capacity.

Having an estimated 67 billion barrels of in-situ oil, West Karoun fields definitely deserve the spotlight which has been put on them recently.

For the second leap in the petrochemical production, by realization of the second leap,



62 million tons per year of feedstock (equal to 1.4 million bpd of crude oil) will be supplied to the sector by 2021.

And about the phase II of developing South Pars gas field (which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf), Petropars is developing the phase II project after its partners, Total and CNPC, pulled out of the project due to the U.S. sanctions.

The project aims to generate 2 billion cubic feet of rich gas, and transfer it to existing South Pars refineries and use the refinery's processing capacity.

Zanganeh also said that Iran's petrochemical revenues were projected to reach 25 billion dollars in the calendar year of 1399 which began on March 20.

He said: "One of the other programs of this

ministry is that gas condensate should not be placed directly on the export track and according to the plans made, it should be refined and turned into products in Persian Gulf Star and Siraf refineries."

Zanganeh said that the Siraf refinery produces products such as naphtha that are again used to feed petrochemical units. "Siraf refinery is a refinery that can produce valuable products at the lowest cost. Other refineries typically need an investment of \$30,000 per barrel of oil, while Siraf needs only \$7,000 to \$8,000 of investment if it is to produce gasoline. If the refinery just produces naphtha, it doesn't need more than \$5,000 to \$6,000 in investment."

Iran ready to repair Turkish gas pipeline

Regarding the situation of Iranian gas ex-

ports to Turkey, he said: "Iran's gas pipeline to Turkey, which was damaged due to an explosion in the Turkish soil earlier this year, has not been repaired, while no more than a few days is needed for repairing the line. Iran has said it is ready to help repair the gas pipeline, but the offer has not been welcomed by the other side."

Currently, Iran is exporting one million cubic meters per day of gas to Armenia and Iraq through two gas routes. Moreover, a small amount of gas is being swapped with Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan, he added.

Asked whether Iran may extend gas exports in Basra pipeline to Laodicea ad Mare in Syria, Zanganeh said there had so far been no such plans in this regard but Iran had no problem supplying the gas to Laodicea ad Mare if needed.

U.S. treatment of Iran; Example of a crime against humanity

In response to another question about whether oil prices could be predicted in the current situation, Zanganeh said: "No one can predict oil prices in the current situation, because oil prices are subject to supply and demand. The fact is that the demand side is very vague, because it is not clear when the global economy will be activated. Economic growth in the world's largest economies is currently negative."

Zanganeh said: "The situation in which the country is currently languishing in is much more difficult than the eight years of the imposed war; the difference is that the casualties and the wounded are not as tangible and noticeable."

He described the U.S. treatment of Iran a crime against humanity, and said: "Had there been an order in the world, the Americans must have been tried for committing these crimes."

Oil refiners snap up distressed cargoes and pull crude from storage at sea

Asian buyers are snapping up distressed cargoes of oil from Africa to the West Asia in another sign that demand is coming back in the world's biggest crude-importing region, according to Bloomberg.

Indian, Chinese and South Korean refiners have been purchasing the so-called distressed shipments, or crude that's set to load in around a month or less, according to traders and refinery executives. Some of the oil was already being stored at

sea near Singapore, while other cargoes were purchased just days before they were scheduled to load in June, they said.

Indian Oil Corp., the country's biggest refiner, has been perhaps the most aggressive buyer of prompt cargoes, releasing a slew of tenders for African, West Asian and U.S. crude. While IOC is ramping up fuel output to meet rising domestic consumption, other Asian processors are seeking to make up for steep allocation cuts by OPEC+ producers such as Saudi

Arabia and Iraq, the traders and refiners said.

The return of prompt demand is occurring as lockdown restrictions around the region are eased and as consumption of some oil products recovers. It's helping to chip away at the overhang of unsold crude that was built up during the unprecedented supply-demand shock earlier in the year and may provide more support to the rally in oil prices that's been underway since late April.

Deja vu: OPEC's recurring oil production dilemma

Two conflicting reports about OPEC's plans for oil production surfaced earlier this week—both citing unnamed sources. One set of sources claimed that Russia was considering an extension of the current oil production cuts beyond the end of June. The other set of sources said that Russia was planning to ease the cuts starting in July. This is a perfect illustration of the uncertainty reigning over oil markets. This uncertainty, however, needs to be mitigated, and the most likely one to do it would be the OPEC+ club, together accounting for more than a third of global oil production, oilprice.com reported.

How? By strategizing how to increase oil production in such a way as to not crash prices again—but also in a way that will keep U.S. shale from stripping away all the benefits from higher prices. It's a tough conundrum.

Reuters' John Kemp wrote this week that OPEC+ needs to think about its exit strategy even if we are now just in the first month of actual production cuts. OPEC already has a questionable track record in reversing production cuts to its own benefit, Kemp noted, so the cartel might want to consider changing things, such as swiftly reacting to rising prices—as swiftly as it reacts to falling prices.

This would be difficult, however, especially with the wider OPEC+ group. The reason it would be difficult is the substantial difference between breakeven prices for, say, Saudi and Russian oil. This difference needs to be narrowed so the two can be more equal partners, with a larger shared interest.

Right now, Russia is comfy with cheaper oil than the Kingdom. This means it can reverse production cuts earlier without suffering too much, to prevent U.S. shale—the ultimate adversary of the OPEC+ group—from getting too bold with its own production plans.

Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, the de facto leader of the Persian Gulf producers, needs much higher oil prices, which puts it in the difficult position of pressing for extended cuts, often at its own expense, as John Kemp notes.

"Saudi Arabia tried to keep prices above \$100 per barrel during the first shale boom (2012-2014) and then above \$70 per barrel during the second shale boom (2017-2019)," Kemp wrote. "Both times, informal targets were too high and led to an unsustainable increase in U.S. shale as well as limiting global oil consumption growth, creating conditions for a subsequent price crash."

So, something fundamental needs to

change—namely, the Saudi oil breakeven price. This, in turn, means economic reforms to make the country more resilient to oil price shocks. Riyadh has already been forced by the oil price crash to implement some austerity—from its perspective—measures. Perhaps it might be a good idea to keep these in place even after prices stabilize.

Indeed, this seems to be the plan.

"These measures that have been undertaken today, as tough as they are, are necessary and beneficial to maintain comprehensive financial and economic stability on the medium and long-term for the interest of the country and its citizens," Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al Jadaan said at the announcement of a 10-percentage-point VAT increase, the cancellation or delay of a number of public spending projects, and the discontinuing of cost-of-living allowances for public servants, which make up the majority of the Saudi population.

This is why U.S. shale was so successful in growing so fast so soon, at the expense of the former ruler of oil markets: it achieved much lower breakeven prices. If there is one lesson OPEC should learn from its experiences with shale, it is to lower breakevens, even if it causes some discomfort among the population.

First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN
TENDER NO. : 01-31-9280023

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
38	PARTS FOR "RUSTON" GAS TURBINETA 1750	909NOS

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,940 EURO or 255,035,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender Conditions material technical thorough specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
E.MAIL: KALA.F.P@nisoc.ir Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir

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1399.1009

First Announcement



1399.1016

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN
TENDER NO. : 01-31-9450269

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
23	PARTS FOR "RUSTON" GAS TURBINE TYPE TA 1500	178NOS

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 7,238 EURO or 1,005,929,438 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender Conditions material technical thorough specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material_procurement_management_tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL

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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 Thu. with regards to the cooperation of the two countries within the framework of OPEC Plus.

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

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Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and its internal crises

By Fatemeh Salehi

The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council nowadays, instead of focusing on 'cooperation', has turned into a hotbed of tension among Arab countries.

The Council has so far failed to settle any disputes among its member states, the most important example of which is the crisis in Qatar which involves the four Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

The Council consists of six countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain. It was formed on May 25, 1981, at a meeting in Riyadh and the initiative of Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait at the time. Al-Sabah made the proposal to fill the so-called "vacuum" left in the wake of Britain's withdrawal from the Persian Gulf.

The primary purpose of the Council was to strengthen unity and establish joint coordination among member states in all fields. Although Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt have cut ties with Qatar and imposed a siege on the country for nearly three years under the pretext of Doha's support for terrorism, the Council has failed to take any positive steps in this regard.

It is a matter of great surprise to see this level of dispute among countries that otherwise share such deep roots in their language, race, religion, income, resources, as well as familial and social ties.

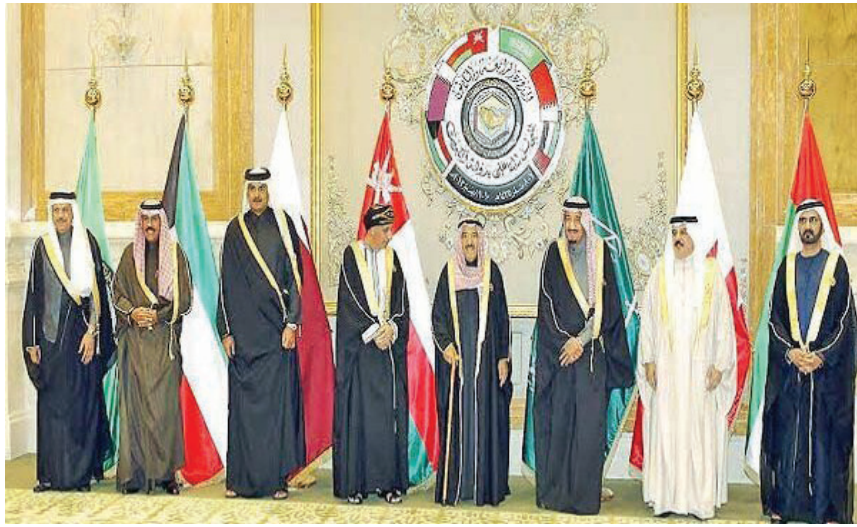
■ The Qatar Crisis and No Hopeful Prospect for Its Settlement

The Qatar crisis is one of the worst crises to be ever presented to the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council since its establishment.

The Council, then headed by Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani, (who was recently succeeded by former Kuwaiti Finance Minister Nayef al-Hajraf after 10 years), announced in November 2017, five months after the siege of Qatar, that it was unable to settle the crisis and the solution was in the hands of the leaders of the member states.

In the early days of the Qatar crisis, U.S. President Donald Trump sought to resolve the crisis as soon as possible by holding talks with Qatari and Arab officials, because he considered tension and conflict in the camp of his Arab allies in the region as detrimental to Washington. Yet, despite all these consultations, as well as exerting pressure and leveling threats, nothing special happened to resolve the Qatar crisis.

It is safe to say that one reason for the continued persistence of disputes among the Council's member states is that while the disputes remained between the Arab leaders and concerning their political consultations in the past, today these differences have reached among nations and concern the way they treat the so-called 'enemy country.' Regarding the crisis in Qatar, although many



of the involved countries have deep-seated social, cultural, and family ties with Qatar, these political disputes have overshadowed these ties.

Of course, the serious dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain did not originate in 2017. It was on March 5, 2014, when these Arab countries summoned their ambassadors from Doha and then, eight months later, announced an end to the disputes during a meeting in the Qatari capital.

However, about three years later, the countries resumed their disputes, which have persisted to this day. This shows that the disputes between these countries are not a superficial issue that could be settled through meetings or the signing of a reconciliation document.

This is while the Cooperation Council did not take any steps to end the Arab conflicts in 2014, and only Kuwait held the said meeting through diplomatic efforts.

■ The Cooperation Council and A New Crisis

In addition to the failure of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in reaching a political solution to the disputes among the member states, the Council may soon come to its end in the face of a new crisis.

Recently, Saudi Arabia has increased its value-added tax (VAT) rate to 15 percent from 5 percent in response to its financial crisis and as part of its austerity measures. This would mean the end of economic development and political coordination in the region, as the topic of economic measures and the adoption of unilateral trade policies between the member states is one of the main pillars of this Council.

Of course, in the past, there were more areas for economic cooperation between these countries than there were for joint security cooperation. The majority of member states believe that it is better to focus on joint economic cooperation rather than on foreign

affairs or military issues because they have not been able to achieve any significant results in the latter.

For this reason, the Council member states have taken steps to further develop economic cooperation, from signing a free trade agreement to establishing a customs union and a common market, but these measures have faced some problems due to lack of production and services. The volume of trade transactions between the member states amounts to only 10% of the total volume of their non-oil trade. What's more is the Council's failure to join efforts to create an integrated monetary policy for the member states.

Even now, after Saudi Arabia's move to raise taxes, the idea of coordinated customs measures seems highly unlikely. The future of the Council's economic policy is wrapped in a veil of ambiguity in the face of the members' competition in the fields of taxes, foreign investments, and the granting of citizenship to foreign nationals.

■ Other Disputes among the Member States

It is true that the Qatar crisis is the main point of dispute among the member states, but that is by no means the only difference worth talking about.

Oman has long been unhappy about Saudi Arabia's military presence in al-Muhra province on Oman's and Yemen's shared borders. Furthermore, the Omani people were critical of the UAE's acts of espionage against their country, and in 2019, Oman sentenced 5 Emirati people to prison on spying charges.

Meanwhile, Kuwait is trying to stay neutral on disputed cases but is being pressured by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to take their side.

As for Yemen, we saw that some Arab countries, which were originally members of the aggressive Saudi-led coalition, gradually left the coalition after several years when the war and invasion of Yemen dragged on.

Their withdrawal from the coalition angered Riyadh in some cases.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are also at loggerheads over Yemen. The issue of southern Yemen and the growing influence of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in this area have caused the elements backed by both countries in southern Yemen to clash violently.

■ Saudi Arabia's Dominance over the Cooperation Council

It is no secret to anyone that the Cooperation Council is ultimately under the control and dominance of Saudi Arabia, and any country that opposes Riyadh will be put under pressure from the Council.

When Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani was in power, he did not observe the principle of impartiality regarding the crisis in Qatar, and he always raised criticism against this country. The move was not unexpected given Saudi Arabia's control of the Cooperation Council.

In his remarks, he always praised Saudi Arabia and its policies and ignored Riyadh's efforts to create divisions and discord among the member states.

Al-Hajraf, Al-Zayani's successor, seems to have followed suit. In his first comment on the Qatar crisis, he downgraded the enormity of the crisis to mere disputes between Arab countries. The move was faced with opposition from Qatar's adviser on political affairs, who said that Al-Hajraf expresses the views of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the Cooperation Council and he should not reduce the crisis in Qatar and the siege of this country to mere disputes among Arab countries.

Saudi Arabia's interference in the decisions of the Cooperation Council reached its peak when, in an unprecedented move, it prevented a Qatari minister from attending one of the Council's meetings. According to the predictions of U.S.-based National Interest newspaper, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait are unlikely to need Saudi Arabia's presence in the Council's next term, as the country has a long history of having adopted immature policies in light of its own turbulent domestic situation.

Saudi Arabia's adventurous policies, in the wake of the rise of Muhammad bin Salman as a young and inexperienced prince, have cost the country its former position among the members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

Finally, it could be said that both the Arab League in Egypt and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in Saudi Arabia appear to have lost their place and effectiveness among the Arab nations, as they have made no progress in resolving the many Arab crises in recent years. The disputes among the Arab countries, in light of the policies of their leaders, will not be resolved except by a fundamental change in these policies.

U.S. police kill blacks with brutality matching Israeli military's

BY Robert Inlakesh

Disturbing footage of a black man being choked to death by a Minneapolis police officer in the United States has sparked online outrage and street protests over what is being described as the lynching of an unarmed black man by armed police. The reaction to this now opens up a wider conversation about why these incidents happen and how the follow-up to the crime is so similar to when Palestinians are killed by Israeli troops.

At around 8.P.M, Monday morning, Minneapolis police officers were called to a Cup Foods' store on the 3700 block of Chicago Avenue South. The suspect was a black man, named George Floyd, who was allegedly attempting to use forged documents. Police spokesperson John Elders claimed that George Floyd had resisted arrest and then went on to say, "Officers were able to get the suspect into handcuffs and officers noticed that the man was going into medical distress."

However, the alleged "medical distress," which the police were having the public believe and caused the death of George Floyd, was caught on camera. The video footage shot by a bystander and released onto Facebook this Tuesday, shows 10 minutes, in which the alleged "criminal" was indeed the victim of police brutality. The video shows an officer, allegedly identified as Derek Chauvin (badge number: #1087), pressing his knee into the victim's neck for at least seven minutes as the victim screamed, "I cannot breathe" and "my neck hurts," whilst pleading for his life. Bystanders also scream at the three officers present, which intensifies as the victim passes out unconscious, at which point the officer's knee is still planted firmly into the victim's neck.

The officers present have now been placed on paid leave and the FBI has been called to deal with the situation, which many pundits have pointed out may have to do with the reaction to this case.

■ The reaction to such a murder

This is far from the first incident of its kind in the United States, where white police officers have choked to death unarmed black men begging for their lives, with the most infamous case being the killing of Eric Garner, which did not result in the conviction of any officer.

So, what routinely happens when a case like this appears, especially such a clear cut case. First of all, we see the police statements assuming no responsibility for the death, which occurred in their custody. We see armies of social media warriors coming out to defend the officers and claim that the black man killed was a criminal and ultimately the media follows suit by reporting on all the previous allegations against the victim.

The reactions from the public on the opposite side of the argument are usually to condemn and demand justice, usually resulting in protests and even riots.

However, the arguments coming from the African American community are rarely ever aired and real discussions about what enables a police officer to use such violence is also not discussed even nearly enough.

As usual as with other places in the world where oppressed communities are attacked, like in occupied Palestine, we see a similar campaign of victim blaming online by the privileged community (the Israelis and their supporters). It does not matter how horrendous the crime, nor whether the videos posted online show the entire incident, Israelis will jump to conclusions and will claim that all the information has not yet surfaced and claim that the Palestinian victim was some sort of terrorist or criminal.

We also see that the Israeli military and police -- if the murder is committed in Jerusalem al-Quds or elsewhere inside the Israeli-occupied territory -- will instantly claim that its troops had been under instant threat and that the death of the Palestinian was some sort of dramatic accident. It does not matter how many thousands of Palestinians are killed by the Israeli occupation forces, every time the privileged Israeli community will largely jump to defend the killing and even laugh at it. This is especially the case as in Israel, the regime behind the occupation forces and illegal settlers, who kill Palestinians, consistently propagate ethnic supremacy and ultra-nationalism.

The fact of the matter is that being able to kill someone with such ease and be fine with lying and justifying your actions, speaks to the lack of humanity in the murder. That lack of humanity may come from many sources, whether it be the psychology of some fake superiority complex of those in uniform or whether it be both societal and systematic hatred perpetuated against those policed. In order to kill so easily and so brutally, first you must find a justification; whether that be through dehumanizing the victim or carrying around hatred which enables the rage to commit such an act.

When people speak of racist police murders in the United States, to pass this by and claim that race does not play as a factor, is utter lunacy. The way black people are viewed in the United States, presented in mainstream media, and the poor socio-economic conditions under which large portions of the African American community suffer are not to be ignored. There is also on top of this, the racism prevalent inside the police, the lack of transparency from the police, the history of racism against African Americans, and the deep-rooted stereotypes about black people in the U.S. and throughout the Western world. This is of course only emboldened by the likes of Donald Trump, sitting in the White House, who consistently uses language that can often be interpreted in two ways -- that many US voters do see as racist and do identify with.

This sort of racism is on a larger (percentage wise) and more obvious scale, prevalent inside of Israeli society and promoted by the Israeli regime, against the indigenous population of Palestine. Where daily shootings of Palestinians is justified in the eyes of Israelis over "security" concerns for the Israeli forces, with the assumption that the Palestinian must have been involved in a crime -- a racist notion -- and that, therefore, the murder or severe injury of the victim is somehow justified.

Just as a black man was choked to death yesterday, by what could be described as thugs in uniforms, three Palestinians were also shot this Monday by Israeli forces. If you are to look online at the responses to these two cases, you will see the same thing with both. On one side there are those outraged and then there are those working to justify the act by any means necessary, even if that means ignoring the video and eye-witness testimony evidence.

According to Press TV, Robert Inlakesh is a journalist, writer and political analyst, who has lived in and reported from the occupied Palestinian West Bank. He has written for publications such as Mint Press, Mondoweiss, MEMO, and various other outlets. He specializes in analysis of the West Asia, in particular Palestine-Israel. He also works for Press TV as a European correspondent.

Hong Kong gov't warns U.S. on special status China parliament approves Hong Kong security bill as tensions with U.S. rise

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam tried to rally people behind China's new national security on Friday, as the government warned the United States to stop interfering in its internal affairs, saying the withdrawal of the territory's special status could be a "double-edged sword".

The statement came as U.S. President Donald Trump prepared to announce later on Friday his response to

the Chinese parliament's approval of national security legislation for Hong Kong, which critics say will erode the freedoms agreed on its return to Chinese rule in 1997.

The former British colony enjoys a high degree of autonomy under the "one country, two systems" framework that ended more than a century of colonial rule.

"Any sanctions are a double-edged sword that will



not only harm the interests of Hong Kong but also significantly those of the U.S.," the city's government said late on Thursday.

It added that from 2009 to 2018, the U.S. trade surplus with Hong Kong was the biggest among all its trading partners, totalling \$297bn of merchandise with 1,300 American firms are based in the city.

The legislation will allow Chinese intelligence agencies to set up bases in the territory. Beijing argues the new legislation is necessary to tackle secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign interference.

Hong Kong has been convulsed by sometimes violent protests since the local government attempted to introduce an extradition bill that would have allowed people to be sent to mainland China for trial. While the scale of the opposition forced the government to abandon the plan, the protests have evolved into broader calls for democracy amid concerns about China's encroachment into Hong Kong's affairs.

After a coronavirus lull, the national security bill has ignited the first big protests in Hong Kong for months. Police moved to disperse crowds in the heart of the city's business district with pepper pellets and hundreds were arrested. Social media showed mainly young people, including schoolchildren, being escorted onto police buses.

The U.S. Department of State said in a report on Thursday it could "no longer certify that Hong Kong continues to warrant (differential) treatment" from Beijing.

Trump's top economic adviser Larry Kudlow warned that Hong Kong, which has enjoyed special privileges under U.S. law based on its high degree of autonomy from Beijing, may now need to be treated like China on trade and other financial matters.

First Announcement



1399.1014

N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9136110

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
27	PARTS FOR "DRESSER FRANCE" GAS TURBINE TYPE TA 1500	850NOS

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 46,786 EURO or 6,501,935,700 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender Conditions material technical thorough specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

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FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۹/۳/۱۰ نوبت دوم ۹۹/۳/۱۳

Over 5,000 ancient relics confiscated from antique dealer

TOURISM TEHRAN – Some 5,415 ancient relics have recently been confiscated from a smuggler in Gonbad-e Kavus, northern Golestan province.

The accused was traced and arrested in his home after police received reports from cultural heritage aficionados about him dealing relics, said provincial tourism chief Ahmad Tajari, CHTN reported on Friday.



Recovered objects include 5,120 coins, 291 metal fittings and 22 bronze utensils, he added.

He also noted that the authenticity of the discovered objects will be announced later after the examination by cultural heritage experts.

Gonbad-e Kavus is home to a UNESCO-inscribed brick tower of the same name that is of high architectural importance as an exemplar design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Package unveiled to create over 400 jobs for crafters

TOURISM TEHRAN – A new package aimed at creating more than 400 jobs in the field of handicraft has been unveiled in the northeastern North Khorasan province.

Currently, over 15,000 artisans and craftspeople are active in 61 handicrafts fields in the province, provincial tourism chief Mohammadreza Qahremanian said, CHTN reported on Friday.



The plan is projected to be completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2021), he added.

He also noted that four of the province's handicrafts have gained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence.

The presence of different ethnicities with diverse cultures has provided an attractive and admirable companionship for handicraft products. Different motifs and techniques have spread from one ethnic group to another, which lead to eye catching handicraft products.

Traditional footwear, embroidery, traditional dyeing and sewing of local costumes, felt products and pottery are among the handicrafts fields active in the province.

Adimi to be named national city of Khameh-Duzi

TOURISM TEHRAN – Adimi, a small city in Nimruz County, southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, is planned to be named as the national city of Khameh-Duzi, a traditional type of embroidery.

Being recognized as a national hub of Khameh-Duzi will help craftspeople active in this field promote their works more properly. CHTN quoted deputy provincial tourism chief Mohammad-Behrouz Isazehi as saying on Thursday.



This field of handicraft was becoming obsolete, however careful planning and great efforts have revived it in the region, he added.

Khameh-Duzi is done with the raw silk thread. It is popular in some small cities in southern Iran and is used for decorating traditional costumes, scarves, prayer mats, tablecloths and bedspreads.

Various Iranian cities and villages have been named as national hubs of handicrafts.

Zanjan for filigree, Kashan for traditional textile, Iranshahr for needlework, Abadeh for wood carving as well as the village of Fash for crafting indigenous musical instruments are among them.

EU designates Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. as World Heritage asset

HERITAGE TEHRAN – The Horizon 2020, which is a massive EU research and innovation program, has recently registered the 17th-century Naghsh-e Jahan Square in the city of Isfahan as a World Heritage asset with the goal of making world-firsts more known and lucrative, IRNA reported on Friday.

Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. was laid out in the very early 17th century under the reign of the Safavid ruler, Shah Abbas the Great, to signal the importance of Isfahan as a capital of a powerful empire.

According to the Horizon 2020, the Naghsh-e Jahan Square (locally called "Meidan Emam" and literary meaning "Image of the World") is an open-air educational hub, oriented to preserve tradition and know-how about cultural heritage conservation while promoting entrepreneurship and employment.

"The square is public plaza and group of historic buildings, a UNESCO World Heritage site [since 1979], and it is home to various creative enterprises such as handicraft shops, restaurants, galleries, in addition to mosques and bazaars."

The monumental square has been registered and introduced in the form of a research project as a wealth (asset) of cultural heritage in the world in order to attract more investment for its optimal use, Iran Press reported.

Sayyed Komeil Tayyebi, the director of the Office of International Scientific Cooperation of the University of Isfahan, announced on Friday that Naghsh-e Jahan Square, over its unique heritage, historical, economic and urban features, has been selected and introduced as an international cultural heritage asset for international organizations in a research project conducted by the European Union.

The square is hemmed on four sides by magnificent buildings: to the east, the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque; to the west, the palace of Ali Qapu; to the north, the portico of Qeyssariyeh; and to the south, the eminent Imam Mosque.

The sizeable open space has changed little since it was



built, the only modern additions are some fountains added during the Pahlavi era.

According to UNESCO, the square was at the heart of the Safavid capital's culture, economy, religion, social power, government, and politics. Its vast sandy esplanade was used for celebrations, promenades, and public executions, for

playing polo and for assembling troops.

Imam Square is perhaps at its best in late afternoon when the encircling blue-tiled domes and minarets are lit up by the last rays of the sun while the mountains beyond turn red. It's when local families, domestic travelers and foreigners make the entire space a pedestrian zone.

Easing lockdown, Iran reopens UNESCO-registered Persepolis, other tourist destinations

TOURISM TEHRAN – Iran has recently reopened the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, which was once the ceremonial capital of the mighty Achaemenid Empire, as well as many other tourist destinations to sightseers and history buffs, marking another phase in the easing of one of the world's restrictions over the coronavirus outbreak.

The UNESCO-registered Dome of Soltanieh, the mausoleum of Shah-e Cheragh ("King of Light"), the mausoleum of Sadi, and the National Museum of Iran were amongst destinations being reopened over the past couple of days.

Persepolis lies just only an hour's drive from north-east of Shiraz, itself a major tourist destination of the country. The ancient city boasts extensive structures, including monumental staircases, exquisite reliefs, and imposing gateways as one of the great wonders



of the ancient world.

Earlier this month, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and

Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced that open-air recreation centers and natural landscapes could be reopened in Iran under the condition of observing health protocols to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

"We requested the Ministry of Interior, provincial authorities, police, and security guards to collaborate with us and prepare the ground for people to visit natural landscapes and use open-air recreation centers during a time when a lot of mental pressure is imposed on the society as a result of coronavirus pandemic."

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Official rejects selling Bugatti, once belonged to the last Shah of Iran, after Islamic Revolution

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Kia Parsa, the director of the Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex, has rejected social media reports that a 57C Bugatti, once belonged to Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran, has been sold after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in the country.

"This is fake news because the car did not belong to the Sa'dabad Museum at all and it had been sold before the Islamic Revolution," CHTN quoted Parsa as saying on Tuesday.

The dramatic body of the car was constructed by Vanvooren of Paris in the style of Figoni et Falaschi, one of the most progressive coachbuilders of the day. Advanced features include fully skirted fenders, a top that conceals beneath a metal panel when down, and a windshield that can be lowered into the cowl.

Briefing the history of the classical vehicle, Parsa noted: "In 1939 (1318 in the Iranian calendar), the Bugatti was presented to the Prince Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the soon-to-be Shah of Iran at the time, as a wedding gift from the French government."

"Due to the low quality of Iran's roads at



the time, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi did not use the car much until 1959, when a man named Houshang Jalili paid 2,000 rials (\$275) to own the second-hand, abandoned Bugatti...."

"For many years, the car remained hidden from the public and traded among Bugatti enthusiasts until after a full overhaul, it was

unveiled at a classic car show in the United States in 1984, attracting the attention of classic car experts, winning many awards."

"One of the interesting points about this car is the preservation of the Iranian license plate (registration plate), which of course is different from the first license plate that was installed on it during the ownership of

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, but in any case, it is a symbol of its history in Iran."

"The car was later sold for \$760,000 at an auction and is currently being kept in an excellent condition at the Patterson Museum in California, and occasionally appears in classic car shows."

Therefore, it is clear that this car was shipped out of Iran before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and it was not part of Sa'dabad's property to be sold, and such news is fake and unreliable.

Automobiles Ettore Bugatti was a French car manufacturer of high-performance automobiles, founded in 1909 in the then-German city of Molsheim, Alsace by the Italian-born industrial designer Ettore Bugatti. The cars were known for their design beauty and their many race victories. Famous Bugattis include the Type 35 Grand Prix cars, the Type 41 "Royale", the Type 57 "Atlantic" and the Type 55 sports car.

Sprawled on about 110 hectares of a mountain-side parkland, the Sa'dabad complex was once a royal summer residence during the Qajar era (1789–1925) and its subsequent Pahlavi epoch (1925–1979).

Qeshm Geopark could lose UNESCO tag

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Iran's southern Qeshm Geopark could lose its UNESCO status due to years of large-scale shrimp hatchery operations that could be referred to as an example of environmental mismanagement in the country.

In January, Alireza Amiri-Kazemi, the deputy director of Qeshm Trade and Industrial Free Zone, said that extensive shrimp hatchery operations could cause the Qeshm Island Global Geopark to lose its UNESCO status.

"According to officials at Iran Fisheries Organization, two [aquatic farming] companies have received business licenses to operate on the Qeshm Island Global Geopark," Amiri-Kazemi said, Kayhan Life reported.

"Qeshm Trade and Industrial Free Zone has, however, issued no business operating licenses. Permits issued by other organizations are not valid. It is also illegal to set up such operations on the Qeshm Island Global Geopark, particularly near the Salt Cave, which is a protected natural reserve."

"The Qeshm Trade and Industrial Free Zone used several legal channels to warn the companies before the start of the project a few months ago," he explained. "They have, however, resumed construction, despite verbal and written warnings from the Judiciary. The project involves digging the ground, removing soil, and setting up shrimp hatcheries,

which will deface the protected natural reserve."

Initially added to the coveted network in 2006, Qeshm Geopark was dropped from the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) in 2013 due to the authorities' failure to address the site's problems, such as underdeveloped infrastructure and unenforced environmental regulations.

After years of back and forth and discussions with UNESCO experts, Iranian authorities submitted the geopark's dossier for review last year and it received the provisional approval during the Seventh International Conference on UNESCO's Global Geoparks Network in Torquay, England.

In 2017, the geopark managed to reclaim its global status, after 10 days of deliberation by UNESCO's Executive Board in Paris. Seven other geological sites were also added to the list, according to a press release on GGN's website.

UNESCO announced that the Qeshm Geopark will be a UNESCO site until 2020 when its members will be reviewed.

Describing Qeshm as "an island shaped like a dolphin in the Strait of Hormuz, off the southern coast of Iran", the press release on GGN's website points to the island's geological formations that have been shaped by erosion that created "a range of spectacular landscapes and beautiful rock deserts".

One of Iran's seven free zones, Qeshm Island is a top holiday destination and a treasure trove of natural and ecological



attractions in the Persian Gulf. The island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines.

Aside from the geopark, sun and sandy beaches, the island's famed mangrove forests in the Hara Protected Area attract a large number of domestic and foreign tourists. Hara Protected Area is one of the five forests in Hormozgan Province and arguably the most important feature of Qeshm Geopark. With an area of 85,686 hectares, Hara is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The ecological importance of the forests has compelled local officials to build a new museum dedicated to showcasing the woodland's ecological features.

Sanctions a barrier to sustainable development goals, Iran says

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The U.S. sanctions has acted as a barrier to achieve the sustainable development goals, deputy director of the Department of Environment (DOE) said, noting that global solidarity is needed in moving towards sustainable development regardless of the abuse of political power to put pressure on others.

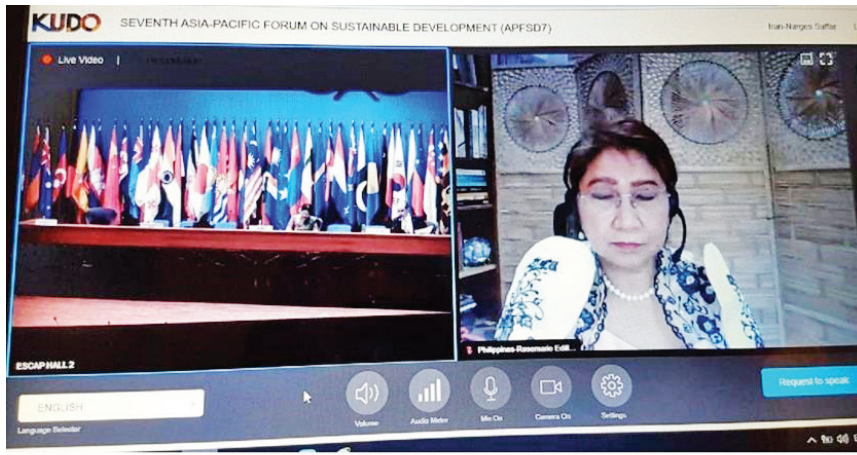
Narges Saffar, chief of the DOE's international affairs department, made the abovementioned remarks in a statement to the Seventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD7) which was held online on May 20.

The statement reads as follows:

We all pledge the international social solidarity as a morality factor for achieving the SDGs. We also hope no potential political leverage could result in any attempt to flout the fundamental principle of the SDGs "leaving no one behind".

As far as we all aware, Covid-19 pandemic is interconnected with degradation of biodiversity and manifests how human health is associated with planet's health. Furthermore, its dire consequences on achieving the SDGs are indisputable that a call on global strategic recovery seems inevitable. Also, we should attend in creating green jobs, greening fiscal and financial packages so to achieve SDGs.

As APFSD7 aims to support countries of the region through casting around for solutions on transformative change based on considering the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR 2019) and tries to develop a regional roadmap for implementing SDGs in Asia and Pacific beyond the national and



subnational achievements, we are certain, it will, as a regional platform, play a critical role in this period also.

According to levers for transformational change, we believe financial and techno-

logical gap can minimize the effects of any attempt to harness the synergies on transformative change needed for implementing SDGs that comprise a complex interplay with the governance.

Also, referring to the paragraph 17 of Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2016 session of the ECOSOC, Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) can promote our efforts to ensure that no one is left behind and emphasize the importance of building national capacities for follow-up and review. Iran not only supports VNR's preparation but also emphasizes that it should be prepared in regional level because of different consequences in different regions for implementation of SDGs.

Concerning our national progress, Iran has invested above the regional average in providing well-being for the public and has improved the HDI, maternal and child mortality rate, agricultural index, adolescent literacy rate in the past years despite all the economic challenges and sanctions.

Iran, also, has to grapple with its highly complex environmental issues such as severe land degradation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, waste management, SDSs and climate change. Besides, ceaseless conflicts in West Asia which eventuates insecurity and impurified decision-making, exacerbates the impacts of the common environmental challenges we encounter especially SDSs, transboundary river and water management and new pest attacks across the borders which threatens our biosecurity.

At the end, we express our hopes that we all pledge the international social solidarity as a morality factor for achieving the SDGs. We also hope no potential political leverage could result in any attempt to flout the fundamental principle of the SDGs "leaving no one behind".

Over 18,000 multiple births occurred in Iran last year



SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 1,196,135 infants have been born during the past Iranian calendar year (Mach 2019-March 2020), more than 18,000 of which were multiple births.

Some 524 triplet births and 18 higher order multiple births happened in the country last year, IRNA quoted Seifollah Aboutorabi, the National Organization for Civil Registration spokesman, as saying on Friday.

Last year, some 616,494 of the infants were boys and 579,641 were girls.

A year before (Mach 2018-March 2019), there were 1,366,509 registered births across the country, of whom 704,054 were baby boys and 662,455 were girls.

The average age of the fathers and mothers at the time of the child's birth was 33.8 years and 29.1 years, respectively.

On May 20, deputy health minister Seyed Hamed Barakati said that the country's population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

At the beginning of the Islamic revolution (in 1979), the country's population grew by 2.5 percent annually, however, suddenly, population growth reached about 1.5 percent in the 1970s, he highlighted.

According to the data released by the National Organization for Civil Registration, comparing past three years shows some 1,196,135 infants were born in the country whose births were registered last year, while 1,366,509 births occurred a year before it, and 1,487,913 births have been recorded in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), a difference of roughly over 100,000 per year.

S. Korea sends humanitarian medical aid worth \$500,000 to Iran



SOCIETY TEHRAN — South Korea sent by air a shipment of medical supplies and medicine worth \$500,000 needed for genetic diseases to Iran on Friday.

The government of the Republic of Korea continued close consultations with the United States and Iran in order to facilitate humanitarian trade with Iran with won-currency deposits made by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) at banks in the ROK. As a result of such consultations, the ROK government resumed humanitarian trade with Iran on April 6, which was suspended after the U.S. tightened sanctions on the CBI in September 2019.

The shipment of treatments for genetic diseases to Iran on May 29 will mark the first case of shipment of goods for the recently resumed humanitarian trade and is expected to be followed by exports of medicine and medical equipment worth

about 2 million U.S. dollars in June.

In a bid to expand humanitarian trade with Iran, the ROK government has actively carried out activities, including two briefings for Korean exporters, consultations with Iran through such diplomatic channels as the Iranian Embassy in the ROK, meetings with Iranian importers through the Tehran office of the Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), and acting as a bridge between importers and exporters of the two countries.

Building on the resumption of exports of humanitarian items, the ROK government will continue consultations with the U.S. and Iran on ways to broaden the scope of trade items to include not only medicine and medical equipment, which are currently the main trade items, but also foods and agricultural products, according to the Relief Web website.

Special police force to be formed for children, adolescents

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The formation of a "special police force for children and adolescents" has been put on the government's agenda in order to reduce the exposure of children and adolescents to dangerous situations.

Child and young delinquents face the police before any authority in the trial system, and this highlights the importance of a committed, experienced, and trained police force.

The police force is obliged to form a special police force within the next 6 months, IRNA news agency reported.

Mustafa Prize convenes experts to discuss coronavirus

I → He also announced that the first results of this study are expected by the end of June/early July.

Baharvand noted that infusions of stem cells are safe and well-tolerated in patients with acute or chronic respiratory conditions.

Abdolhad for his part talked about a detector that he and his team designed that selectively detects the intensity of reactive oxygen species in the sputum sample just in 30 seconds.

Mustafa Prize, the Iranian version of the Nobel Peace Prize, was launched in 2013 with the mission to promote science and technology in the Islamic world.

More people killed by climate change than death records show

Climate change is a killer - and a new study has found "substantial underreporting" in the numbers of deaths caused by environmental crises, the Independent reported.

The research, published in journal The Lancet Planetary Health this month, revealed that over the past 11 years, the number of deaths attributed to excessive natural heat is at least 50 times greater than is recorded on death certificates in Australia.

During that time some 340 deaths in Australia were recorded as excessive heat but experts from The Australian National University (ANU) found that 36,765 could be attributed to the environmental conditions, following statistical analysis. The study indicates that the heat-related mortality rate in Australia is actually around 2 per cent.

The doctors noted that the intense summer bushfires in the country not only killed some of those directly fighting the blazes but also those who died prematurely from smoke exposure.

Dr Arnagretta Hunter, of ANU Medical School who co-authored the study, said in a statement: "Climate change is a killer, but we don't acknowledge it on death certificates."

She pointed to the inclusion on death certificates of pre-existing conditions and other factors.

"If you have an asthma attack and die during heavy smoke exposure from bushfires, the death certificate should include that information. We can make a diagnosis of disease like coronavirus, but we are less literate in environmental determinants like hot weather or bushfire smoke."

The researchers said modernization of death certification is required to account for the impact of large environmental disasters. Other countries are exploring ways of modernizing death records and the researchers say that it is imperative in order to get a true picture of the consequences of climate change.

"Understanding the degree to which environmental factors affect human health is important if the impact of climate change is to be fully appreciated," the study noted.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Fresh fruit and vegetables for good health

(November 10, 2003)

A new campaign aimed at encouraging people to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables is being launched by the WHO and the UN. It's part of their Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. This report from Ania Lichtarowicz.

An unhealthy diet together with little exercise and smoking are the key preventable risks of **non-communicable diseases** and it's estimated that **low fruit and vegetable intake** alone causes more than two and a half million deaths each year.

Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day ensures an adequate supply of **m micronutrients** like vitamins but it can also reduce the amount of fatty and salty food we eat which isn't good for us. Evidence is growing about other benefits of fruit and **veg.** - they can help prevent heart disease, some types of cancer, the most common form of **diabetes** and **obesity**.

The WHO and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, who are behind the scheme, want to increase **consumption** in developing countries - which grow a lot of the global supply of fruit and vegetables - and also hope to encourage it in the developed world, where the popularity of **convenience foods** means that many people no longer eat enough fresh **produce**.

Words

key: main, most important

non-communicable diseases: illnesses that are not infectious - not able to be transferred from one person to another

low fruit and vegetable intake: the eating of a small amount of fruit and vegetables - a smaller amount than recommended

m micronutrients: small substances that help people to grow and remain healthy - for example, vitamins

veg.: a short form of the word "vegetables", often heard in in

diabetes: a medical condition in which a person's body is not able to control the level of sugar in the blood

obesity: a condition in which a person is very fat, very overweight, so that it is dangerous to their health

consumption: the eating or drinking of something. This is a formal word

convenience foods: food that can be cooked quickly without any preparation - for example, tinned, dried or frozen food

produce: food that is grown or farmed, often in large quantities to be sold

(Source: BBC)



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

40,000 flood-stricken families received appliance packages

Iran Red Crescent Society (IRCS) volunteer organization provided some 40,000 packages consisting of household appliances to the families affected by flood, head of IRCS volunteer organization Mohammad Nasiri has stated.

Each family receives a package consisting of a refrigerator, oven, TV, blankets and carpets, he added, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

اعطای لوازم خانگی به ۴۰ هزار خانوار سیلزده از سوی سازمان داوطلبان

رئیس سازمان داوطلبان هلال احمر از اعطای بسته های لوازم خانگی شامل ۵ قلم اصلی خانوارها به حدود ۴۰ هزار خانواده آسیب دیده در سیل اخیر خبر داد.

محمد نصیری رئیس سازمان داوطلبان هلال احمر در گفتگو با خبرنگار درباره جزئیات این بستهها نیز توضیح داد: بستههای لوازم خانگی که قرار است میان خانوادههای سیل زده توزیع شود شامل ۵ قلم از جمله یک تخته فرس، گاز، تلویزیون، یخچال و پتو خواهد بود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"by-, bye-"

Meaning: near or past

For example: I took a pleasant **byroad** which follows the coast.

PHRASAL VERB

Open out

Meaning: if a road, path, or passage opens out, it becomes wider

For example: Beyond the forest the path opened out into a track.

IDIOM

Cross someone's path

Explanation: to meet somebody, usually unexpectedly or by chance

For example: Ms. Bridgewater was my English teacher but haven't crossed her path since I left school.

Reports of Qatar leaving Persian Gulf bloc 'incorrect and baseless'

Qatar has denied reports that it plans to quit the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) as it prepares to mark three years of a blockade imposed by its neighbors Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt.

However, the gas-rich state cautioned that the effort by three of the PGCC's six members to isolate Qatar economically and politically meant people in the region were "doubting and questioning" the organization.

"Reports claiming that Qatar is considering leaving the PGCC are wholly incorrect and baseless," Qatar's assistant foreign minister Lolwah al-Khatir told AFP news agency on Thursday.

"Such rumors must have originated from people's despair and disappointment with a fractured PGCC, which used to be a source of hope and aspiration for the people of the six member countries," she said.

"As we are reaching the third year of the illegal blockade on Qatar by Saudi, UAE and Bahrain, there is no wonder why the people of the PGCC are doubting and questioning the PGCC as an institution. Qatar hopes the PGCC will once again be a platform of cooperation and coordination. An effective PGCC is needed now more than ever, given the challenges facing our region."

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, along with non-PGCC member Egypt, cut diplomatic, economic and travel ties with Qatar in June 2017 over their insistence that Qatar was too close to Iran and backing hardline movements.

Qatar rejected the charge and refused to budge on the 13 demands made by the blockading nations. The demands included the closure of the Doha-based Al Jazeera Media Network, and shutting a Turkish base in Qatar.

The dispute will enter its third year on June 5. "Qataris are asking themselves what benefit a membership in the PGCC still has, as the organization has been usurped by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to coerce the smaller states into followership, while no initiative is being made to bring the Persian Gulf crisis to an end," said King's College assistant professor Andreas Krieg.

Oman and Kuwait are the other two members of the body, which oversees regional economic and military coordination, along with Qatar and its regional rivals.

Meanwhile, Qatar has reiterated to the United Nations Security Council the blockade affects security and stability of the region.

The meeting on Protection of civilians in armed conflict was held virtually on Thursday and was attended by Qatar's permanent representative to the UN, Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani.

Ex-Malaysia PM Mahathir Mohamad expelled from own political party

Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has been sacked by the political party he co-founded after sitting on opposition benches during a May 18 parliamentary session.

A statement on Thursday from the United Indigenous Party of Malaysia, known by its Malay acronym Bersatu, said Mahathir's membership had been "revoked with immediate effect".



Mahathir, who was party chairman, was fired for not supporting Malaysia's government, which is headed by Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, the Bersatu president.

According to al Jazeera, in a letter circulated widely on social media, the party stated that Mahathir automatically ceased to be a member after he made a show of rejecting Muhyiddin's leadership as prime minister and party president by sitting with the opposition when parliament met last week.

An aide to Muhyiddin confirmed the letters were authentic. Mahathir's office declined an immediate response to a request for comment as it had not yet seen the letter itself, an aide said. Muhyiddin's move is being widely seen as an attempt to consolidate power as he faces a possible challenge to his nascent premiership.

Mahathir, now nearly 95, was the world's oldest government leader until he unexpectedly quit in February, sparking a frantic weeklong power struggle.

The crisis ended with Muhyiddin, who founded Bersatu with Mahathir before joining a four-party alliance that won 2018 elections, being nominated as the prime minister.

Muhyiddin heads a new coalition backed by the United Malays National Organization, the party once led by Najib Razak, who is on trial over corruption charges dating to his tenure as prime minister up to 2018.

Mahathir, who decided shortly after resigning that he wanted to be prime minister again, bitterly opposed the new government and denounced his former ally as a traitor.

Syrian civilians block U.S. military convoys seeking to enter two villages in Hasakah

The residents of two small villages in the northern countryside of Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah have blocked U.S. military convoys attempting to pass through their areas, forcing them to return to their bases.

Syria's official news agency SANA reported that the U.S. convoys were confronted by local residents in the villages of al-Qahirah and al-Dushaisha, who chanted slogans against the forces and threw stones at them.

SANA added that the convoys were forced to "go back to where they came from." No one was hurt in the confrontations, according to the report.

Since late October 2019, the United States has been redeploying troops to the oil fields controlled by Kurdish forces in eastern Syria, in a reversal of President Donald Trump's earlier order to withdraw all troops from the Arab country.

Violent protests over deadly arrest rock U.S.'s Minneapolis

But elsewhere in Minneapolis, thousands of peaceful demonstrators marched through the streets calling for justice.

Earlier Thursday, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz called in the National Guard to try to stem the violence.

Floyd's death has deeply shaken Minneapolis and sparked protests in cities across the U.S. Local leaders have repeatedly urged demonstrators to avoid violence.

"Please stay home. Please do not come here to protest. Please keep the focus on George Floyd, on advancing our movement and on preventing this from ever happening again," tweeted St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, who is black.

Erika Atson, 20, was among thousands of people who gathered outside government offices in downtown Minneapolis, where organizers had called a peaceful protest. Many protesters wore masks because of the coronavirus pandemic, but there were few attempts at social distancing.

Atson, who is black, described seeing her 14- and 11-year-old brothers tackled by Minneapolis police years ago because officers mistakenly presumed the boys had guns. She said she had been at "every single protest" since Floyd's death and worried



about raising children who could be vulnerable in police encounters.

"We don't want to be here fighting against anyone. We don't want anyone to be hurt. We don't want to cause any damages," she said. "We just want the police

officer to be held accountable."

Hennepin County Sheriff David Hutchinson said the rally had been peaceful and there had been no arrests by late evening.

The governor's order did not say how

many Guard members were mobilized or whether they would be in service Thursday night. After calling in the Guard, Walz urged widespread changes in the wake of Floyd's death.

"It is time to rebuild. Rebuild the city, rebuild our justice system and rebuild the relationship between law enforcement and those they're charged to protect," Walz said.

Much of the Minneapolis violence occurred in the Longfellow neighborhood, where protesters converged on the precinct station of the police who arrested Floyd. In a strip mall across the street from the 3rd Precinct station, the windows in nearly every business had been smashed, from the large Target department store at one end to the Planet Fitness gym at the other. Only the 24-hour laundromat appeared to have escaped unscathed.

"WHY US?" demanded a large expanse of red graffiti scrawled on the wall of the Target. A Wendy's restaurant across the street was charred almost beyond recognition.

Among the casualties of the overnight fires: a six-story building under construction that was to provide nearly 200 apartments of affordable housing.

Twitter conceals Trump tweet for 'glorifying violence,' ramping up dispute

Twitter concealed one of Donald Trump's tweets Friday for "glorifying violence," ramping up a dispute with the U.S. president who says social media companies censor conservative voices like his.

In a move bound to infuriate one of the platform's most followed users, Twitter said it was placing a "public interest notice" on a Trump tweet about violent protests in Minneapolis over the death of an unarmed black man at the hands of the police, AFP reported.

In a late night tweet, Trump wrote: "These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!"

Hours later, the micro-messaging platform hid the tweet behind a message that said it "violates our policies regarding the glorification of violence based on the historical context of the last line, its connection to violence, and the risk it could inspire similar actions today."



"As is standard with this notice, engagements with the Tweet will be limited. People will be able to Retweet with Comment, but will not be able to Like, Reply or Retweet it."

Users could still click through and view the full unedited tweet.

Trump, who has more than 80 million followers on Twitter, lashed out at the platform Thursday, signing an executive order seeking to strip social media giants of legal immunity for content on their platforms.

The order calls on government regulators to evaluate if online platforms should be eligible for liability protection for content posted by their millions of users.

The move, which was slammed by critics as a legally dubious act of political revenge, came after Twitter labelled two earlier Trump tweets - on the increasingly contentious topic of mail-in voting - as misleading.

If enforced, the action would open decades of precedent and treat internet platforms as "publishers" potentially liable for user-generated content.

Trump told reporters at the White House he acted because big tech firms "have had unchecked power to censor, restrict, edit, shape, hide, alter any form of communication between private citizens or large public audiences."

"We can't let this continue to happen," Trump said.

Syria decries European Union's hypocrisy after sanctions prolonged for another year



Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates has censured the European Union (EU) over prolonging its sanctions against the war-ravaged Arab country for another year, stating such measures expose the hypocrisy of the bloc and spurious statements of its officials.

"These sanctions are a flagrant violation of the most basic humanitarian principles and the international law... They are a crime against humanity," Syria's official news agency SANA quoted an unnamed source at the ministry as saying late on Thursday.

He added, "It was no surprise for the EU to renew its sanctions on Syria, particularly as the United States had earlier taken the same step. The measure underlines that the EU has lost its independence in terms of decision-making,

and is subjugated to U.S. policies."

"The decision reconfirms the EU's deep involvement in the war on Syria and its unrelenting support for terrorist groups. The union is, therefore, fully responsible for Syrian bloodshed, and exacerbation of people's sufferings due to cruel and unjust sanctions," the source pointed out.

According to press TV, earlier in the day, the European Council, headquarters of the 27 EU countries, announced in a statement the renewal of its sanctions against Syrian President Bashar Assad and other top political officials, military officers and business people for another year.

The sanctions would be extended until June 1, 2021, more than a decade after the Syrian conflict began.

Afghan forces killed as gov't urges Taliban to extend ceasefire



At least 14 members of the Afghan army have been killed in a Taliban attack as the Afghan government said the Eid ceasefire was not over yet.

The Ministry of Defense said on Friday members of the Afghan army were killed in the province of Pakiya. Three others were also wounded in the attack that was also confirmed by the Taliban, al Jazeera reported.

A day earlier, the Taliban killed at least 14 people from the security forces in northern Parwan and western Farah provinces.

Afghanistan's National Security Adviser (NSA) spokesperson Javid Faisal nevertheless wrote in a tweet on Friday that the "detente" which started during the Eid holiday, marking the end of Ramadan,

was continuing.

"The ceasefire is not over yet; there have been violations because it is a complicated technical process that requires good coordination between both sides," Faisal said.

Earlier, Faisal had urged the Taliban to extend the three-day ceasefire, which came into effect on Sunday to mark the Muslim festival of Eid al-Fitr.

"It is important to extend the ceasefire and, to avoid bloodshed, the Afghan government is ready to extend it," the NSA spokesman told a news conference on Tuesday.

Despite the violence, a prisoner swap crucial to the start of peace talks between the warring sides in Afghanistan has continued.

Germany confronts Russian ambassador over cyber attack

Germany said it is seeking EU sanctions against a Russian man over his alleged role in the hacking of the German parliament at a time when evidence shows he was working for Russian intelligence.

Germany's Foreign Ministry said it called in Russian ambassador Sergei Nechayev to inform him in person of the move, AP reported.

Senior German diplomat Miguel Berger "strongly condemned the attack on Germany's parliament in the name of the German government" while meeting with Nechayev, the ministry said.

Berger told Nechayev that Germany would be pursuing EU sanctions against Russian citizen Dmitriy Badin, and possibly others, under a new regime established last year

to respond to cyberattacks, the ministry said.

He referred to a warrant issued May 5 by federal German prosecutors for Badin, an alleged officer with Russia's GRU military intelligence agency. Badin was already being sought by U.S. authorities and is believed to be part of the hacker group known as APT28, or Fancy Bear.

German prosecutors allege that Badin, "acting jointly with other persons not yet identified," had "undertaken an intelligence operation against Germany for the intelligence service of a foreign power," the ministry said.

"The accused is suspected of being responsible for the hacker attack on the German parliament in April/May 2015 as a member of the APT28 group," the ministry said. "There is reliable evidence that he was a

member of the GRU military intelligence agency at the time of the attack."

Chancellor Angela Merkel said earlier this month there was "hard evidence" that correspondence from her parliamentary office was among the documents targeted in the attack.

Russian officials have repeatedly denied any involvement by Moscow in the 2015 hacking attack on the German parliament, calling the German accusations groundless. They have similarly dismissed charges of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and alleged cyberattacks on other Western nations and institutions.

The Russian Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Erdogan blasts U.S. police killing as 'fascist'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan denounced Friday the U.S. police killing of an unarmed black man as «racist» and «fascist».

Erdogan's comments are likely to ir-

ritate Turkey's NATO ally, with relations between the two countries already strained over their differing stances on the Syria conflict, AFP reported.

George Floyd died Monday night after being arrested on suspicion of using a counterfeit banknote, a video of the incident showing an officer kneeling on his neck as

he is pinned to the ground.

Rioting has broken out in several U.S. cities over this incident and several others where police have killed black men.

Rock climber Alipour looks to win Olympics gold

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian rock climber Reza Alipour says that he is going to win a gold medal at the 2024 Olympic Games.

Alipour, known as Usain Bolt of speed climbing, is titled the Asiatic cheetah and the "Vertical World's Fastest Man."

The men's world record for that height is 5.48 seconds, held by Alipour and he wants to keep it.

"I broke my own record at the 2017 IFSC Climbing World Cup but I have not better my own best during the previous years. Now, I am ready to register a new world record in the first international competition. I have to compete with myself," Alipour said.

Sports activities around the country and world were canceled, suspended or adjusted in some way due to the coronavirus spread but Alipour says that he has continued his training and is completely ready to compete.

"In my hometown, Qazvin, the national heroes were permitted to go to the gym. I kept going to the gym with karate world champion Bahman Askari Ghoncheh and I am very happy about that because my gold medal helped me to stay fit," he added.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has voted unanimously in favor of including sport climbing in the summer Olympic Games in Paris. If sport climbing does make it to Paris 2024, the competition format is likely to be different, allowing more athletes to compete and offering more chances to win medals.

"I want to win a gold medal in the 2024 Olympics. I will keep my own record in Asian and the world and winning gold in all events will be my priority," Alipour concluded.



Football teams must learn to live with coronavirus, Persepolis sporting director says

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Afshin Peyrovani, the sporting director of Persepolis, believes that people have to learn to live with coronavirus as football is set to return in Iran.

Iran Professional League (IPL) is set to restart on 18 June with Esteghlal against Foolad match.

Football has been shut down for the past three months because of coronavirus pandemic but now the authorities of Iranian football intend to complete the football leagues.

All of the season's remaining matches could be played behind closed doors but some clubs want the suspension will be further extended due to the fact that coronavirus pandemic still continues.

However, Peyrovani believes that football must resume. "We can't say that the danger of coronavirus is only in football. We have to learn to live with coronavirus as it is



evident that the virus is not going away in a hurry," he said. "Is there any guarantee that coronavirus will be removed completely? If we force to shut down the leagues, will we find a vaccine for COVID-19 in a few months to start the next season? Will we all be completely safe?"

"What is the difference between a football player and a normal person in society, like taxi driver, baker and other people who have returned to their jobs? The experts and those responsible for controlling the pandemic in the country have come to the conclusion that the games must resume. So, we should follow the rules and back to our business," Peyrovani continued.

"I would like my team to win the league onto the football field. It is unfair if Persepolis are not awarded the IPL title if the season is cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic," the ex-Persepolis and national team captain concluded.

Ehsan Hadadi not happy to be named Olympics silver medalist



The London 2012 silver medalist is back training for his fourth Games and this time hopes to be crowned Olympic champion.

As the number of positive coronavirus cases soared in Iran in March, Ehsan Hadadi felt that as an active athlete he was not particularly at risk of contracting the virus.

"How can corona attack this big body?", the discus thrower quipped just weeks before he developed symptoms and was confirmed as one of over 120,000 positive cases in his country.

But as he and his dad experienced the pandemic first hand and fought the virus, the dark period helped him put his career plans into perspective.

Hadadi lost nearly six weeks of training, due to both confinement in the capital Tehran and the illness, but the time away also made him eager to prove his prowess.

"I had good training this season but the crazy corona erased all our plans. This was hard for me, but I learnt that you don't always have to be chasing after achievements.

"The most important thing is to always be a good person, value life and appreciate good health," the 2004 world junior champion told Olympic Channel in an exclusive interview from his hometown Tehran.

■ 'The big man has corona'
The six-time Asian champion had just wrapped up weeks of intensive training at his preferred training base on Kish Island, off the southern coast of the country.

He had giant hopes for the season ahead and mainly the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Weighing around 135 kilograms and 1.93m [6 ft 4 in] in height, the big man remained upbeat as the virus spread in Iran.

"When I was in Kish Island, people were telling me to watch out for the corona. I kept asking them, 'How can I get corona? I will eat the corona with Iranian rice. How can corona attack this big body? Never!'"

But when the 35-year-old struggled to get out of bed in late March, he knew something was amiss.

"It started with my parents, they were not feeling so well around March 20, we assumed it's the normal flu. I cooked for them, made them soups, orange juice, and

tried to nurse them back to good health," he recalled.

"Then after two days, one morning I just couldn't get out of bed. My whole body was in pain, my head throbbing. I thought it was just a small knock and in two days I would be able to resume training. But sadly with each passing day, I got worse and worse. By the third day, I was feeling very, very bad.

"My [athletics] federation called and I told them, 'I don't feel well'. They sent a team from the coronavirus department to our house, who took tests from all of us. The next day my dad and I returned positive tests.

"I couldn't believe it! It was actually funny. The big man has corona!"

Iran's gentle giant was down but not out.

"I remember one night when I couldn't breathe. I was gasping for air, and I wondered, 'could this be my last day?' "That was hard for me but I shook off that thought and told myself, 'no way this is just a small virus, I'll be fine,'" he said.

■ Bouncing back from setbacks
He compared that low moment to how he had conquered the many challenges he's faced in his 20-year career.

"You might be big, rich, driving a good car, own big parcels of land, but when you are not healthy you have nothing. The most important thing is to always be a good person, value life and appreciate good health."

As a 'thin and small boy,' Hadadi defied the odds to win his country's first-ever international athletics title when he clinched gold with a throw of 62.14m at the 2004 World Juniors in Italy.

In 2008 as he readied for his Olympic debut he picked up an injury on his throwing hand, his first major knock. The excruciating pain forced him to have surgery.

It was the first of several surgeries he has had.

"I've had seven surgeries. On my hand, knee, back, shoulder... No matter how tough they have been, I recover and I'm always back again competing," Hadadi said.

"I am now back training after beating corona. I believe I'm like a white horse. Because the horse always has an injury but they come back to action."

The Asian Games record holder's relaxed demeanor and never-say-die attitude has helped him to become an outstanding thrower. His continental area record of 69.32m has stood since 2008.

"I am a happy guy. I laugh a lot. I don't dwell on bad news. I forget it as fast as I can," the 2011 world bronze medalist declared.

"At the 2008 Olympics I lost because of an injury but I forgot about it. I focused on training and I went to London and picked up the silver medal.

"After London, I was always injured. At Rio 2016, I struggled, same in 2017 at the Worlds. 2018 I was in the world's top list at number three. 2019 the World Championships wasn't good for me."

■ The fourth attempt
It has been a long career for one of Iran's most recog-

nized track and field athletes.

He was picked out as a good thrower during a handball match when he was only 11. His powerful shot at goal broke the goalpost, bounced and the ball then knocked over the goalkeeper.

And it is the same intensity and passion for his sport that he hopes will carry him to his fourth Olympic Games in Tokyo, and possibly Paris 2024.

"Four Olympics for me is a lot after 16 years competing at the top but I hope and wish that I get the gold medal in Tokyo. Then I will say I have four Olympics and two medals.

"Four Olympics and one medal is not good enough. Maybe also the fifth Olympics I could go to, why not? I'm still in good shape and a young boy."

They are lofty ambitions for a self-sponsored athlete who runs businesses to fund his passion.

"I am still an Olympic silver medalist, not an Olympic champion. I am always thinking of my fifth throw that I fouled at London 2012. I always feel like if I had got that throw right, I could now be an Olympic champion.

"I like the sound of the Olympic champion, I don't like the sound of, 'this guy is the Olympic silver medalist.'"

■ More mental than physical
With his strong arms and athletic abilities, Hadadi has indispensable qualities to achieve what he calls his 'biggest dream' – winning Olympic gold.

He has lived up to his surname, which means a person who works with iron.

The Iranian has a physical presence on the field. But he feels it's his mind game that will get him to his goal.

"In my 20 years in the sport, I have seen a lot of people bigger, stronger than me but they can't throw far," he said.

"The problem is always in their mind. They panic and overthink during competition. I control my mind. I always tell myself I can do, I need to do and I know that I will do it."

The four-time Asian Games gold medalist is surrounding himself with good company in the form of his trainer and compatriot Hossein Tavakkoli, the weightlifting Sydney Olympics gold medalist, and Mac Wilkins, the American discus Olympic champion from Montreal 1976 and former world record holder.

Wilkins, who has coached several Olympic discus throwers, helps him with his drills and technique and has also been instrumental in getting Hadadi to have the right feeling in the ring.

"For me, a competition was like a war. But Mac taught me that I should always have fun while competing. He told me it's like hanging out with friends and I am just competing against them.

"It's now a lot easier and fun. I'm having some of the best training years now than when I was in my 20s. It's enjoyable."

(Source: Olympic Channel)

Amirhossein Toukhteh joins Ach Volley

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran international middle blocker Amirhossein Toukhteh has joined Slovenian team Ach Volley.



The 19-year-old player has penned a one-year contract with the team for an undisclosed fee.

Toukhteh has most recently played for Saipa. Furthermore, Mohammad Mousavi has signed a one-year contract with Iranian volleyball team Saipa.

The middle blocker was a member of Indykpol AZS Olsztyn team last season.

Mohammad Javad Manavinejad had already joined Saipa from Italian volleyball club BluVolley Verona.

Iran futsal remain best Asian team

The Iranian national futsal still are sixth in the world and the first team in Asia.

In the latest Futsal World Ranking, Iran sit sixth with 1603 points.

Brazil and Spain are first and second with 1810 and 1801 points, respectively.

Argentina remain third with 1694 points.

Russia and Portugal are fourth and fifth with 1642 and 1639 points, respectively.

Japan are 16th in the ranking and the second best Asian team with 1368 points.

Iran national futsal team prepare for the 2020 AFC Futsal Championship in August, where they have been drawn along with South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Thailand in Group D.

(Source: World Futsal Ranking)

Heidarirad chosen best keeper of Romanian Handball League

IRNA — Saeid Heidarirad from Iran was chosen as the best goalkeeper of the Romanian Handball League in the 2019-20 season.

The 29-year-old player currently plays at HC Dinamo Bucuresti.

The Romanian Handball League, commonly known as Liga Națională or more recently as Liga Zimbrilor, is the men's top Romanian professional handball league.

It comprises fourteen teams.

Pouya Norouzinejad joins HSC 2000 Coburg handball team

TASNIM — Iranian handball player Pouya Norouzinejad has joined German club HSC 2000 Coburg.

The 25-year-old center back has penned a two-year contract with the team.

The details of the fee contract have not been revealed.

Norouzinejad has most recently played for German club Frisch Auf Göppingen.

He is a member of Iran national handball team.

Iran's Rezaei nominated for Asia's Greatest Serie A player

Former Iran international defender Rahman Rezaei has been shortlisted for the Asia's Greatest Serie A Players.

Long considered one of Europe's, and the world's, premier domestic competitions, Italy's Serie A has featured some of football's most decorated names.

But beyond the likes of Maldini and Maradona, several Asian players have thrived in the competition, with players from all over the continent turning out for Italian clubs.

Italy's top league, cup and super cup titles have all been won by Asian players, who have now been a regular fixture in the race for the Scudetto for more than a quarter of a century.

But who is the greatest of them all? Which player has earned the title of Asia's Calcio king?

Considered one of the best Iranian defenders of the modern era, Rezaei was tasked with keeping clean sheets at a time when several world class strikers called Serie A home.

After joining Perugia from Zob Ahan in 2001, Rezaei had some of his best memories at Messina, first helping them earn promotion from Serie B, then playing 36 of 38 matches as they finished seventh in the top division in 2004-05, beating both AC Milan and Inter in the process.

In a period where several Team Melli stars were plying their trade in Germany's Bundesliga, Rezaei performed with distinction in Italy, where he remains the league's most successful Iranian import.

Rezaei will compete with Ali Adnan (Iraq), Yuto Nagatomo (Japan), Mark Bresciano (Australia), Keisuke Honda (Japan), Ahn Jung-hwan (Korea Republic), Takayuki Morimoto (Japan), Vince Grella (Australia) and Shunsuke Nakamura (Japan) in the poll.

(Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

O God, You know me better than I know myself,
and I know myself better than others. O God,
raise us above what others suppose us, and
pardon our sins of which they are unaware,
and cover up our wickedness.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iran grants loans to 21 film projects hit by COVID-19 lockdown losses

→1 "Laminor" by veteran filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui, children's movie "Bazivoo" by Amir-Hossein Qahraei and "Women Are Angels 2" by Mohammad-Hossein Farahbakhsh are also among the projects.



A scene from director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's drama "Walnut Tree".

"Walnut Tree", director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian drama, will also receive a loan. Mahdavian won the Crystal Simorgh for best director for the movie that portrays the true story of the profound tragedy of Iraq's chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987.

Earlier in March, Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami organized a meeting urging his colleagues to establish a committee to evaluate the financial losses caused by the shutdown of movie theaters and film projects due to the coronavirus epidemic.

The committee was tasked with finding ways to support cineastes and theater owners impacted by the coronavirus.

The meeting also discussed ways to combat the financial losses and to stop the projects under production.

Alireza Qorbani calls online concert new experience under shadow of coronavirus

TEHRAN — Vocalist Alireza Qorbani gave an online concert at Vahdat Hall in Tehran on Thursday, calling it a new experience under the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic.

In his brief speech before the beginning of the concert, Qorbani said, "Today we are forced to be far from all those individuals that we love in the world, this is definitely a different experience in our lives and I assume this concert also a new experience. A big team has made great efforts to hold this concert and I express my thanks to all of them."

Addressing those who were watching his concert online, he added, "I am happy to have this chance to be with you through an online performance. Although this new virus has been a huge catastrophe for the people in the world, it has made many activities possible in the virtual world."

He also said that he had promised to give an online concert for free and expressed thanks to the Tehran Municipality and the Rudaki Foundation for their great help.

Qorbani in his new concert, which went live on stream for free, performed a selection of compositions from his different albums performing pieces such as "Zero Degree Orbit", "Bridge", "Arghavan" and "Smell of the Ringlets".

During the pandemic, Qorbani in collaboration with several Italian singers and overseas musicians released a music video inspired by Persian poet Sadi's famous poem "The Sons of Adam Are Limbs of Each Other" last week.

The music video was released to promote the message of peace and friendship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Qorbani has collaborated with numerous musicians during concerts around the world. He gave a concert at WOMEX – the World Music Expo in October 2017.

Composer Saman Samimi, tar player Milad Mohammadi and percussionist Hossein Zahavi accompanied him in the performance. Music ensembles from Ukraine, Greece, India, Colombia, Sweden, Germany, the U.S., France and several other countries also gave performances at the expo.

Film Museum of Iran reopens after 3-month coronavirus closure

TEHRAN — The Film Museum of Iran reopened on Thursday after over a three-month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The museum resumed activities after obtaining a permit from the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters, the museum announced.

In the announcement, the museum has asked visitors to wear face masks and gloves.

Earlier last week, the Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) announced that the movie theaters in the so-called "white areas" or regions with no coronavirus hospitalizations in the past two weeks are allowed to reopen.

The cinemagoers were told to observe social distancing, while the employees were asked to wear face masks and plastic gloves.

Fever test before entering the cinemas, frequent sanitization of the halls and public restrooms, as well as the screening of a video on how to protect oneself from the coronavirus before the feature film are also among the regulations required by the headquarters.

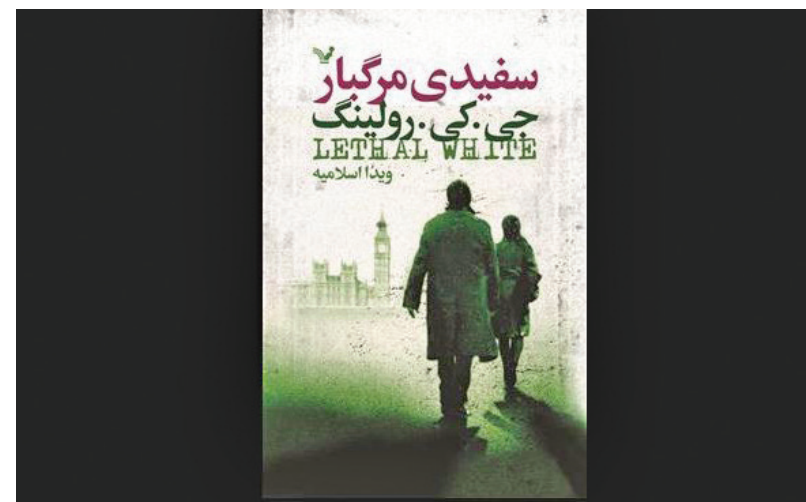
In a letter earlier sent to President Hassan Rouhani, the Association of Iranian Theater Owners asked to lift the coronavirus restriction on cinemas, calling for reopening of the theaters across the country based on the health protocols during the pandemic.

In addition, the Cinema Organization of Iran has recently announced that Iranian cineastes can resume their activities in the near future.



This file photo shows a couple entering the Film Museum of Iran in Tehran. (IRNA/Ahmad Moeinijam)

J.K. Rowling's "Lethal White" appears in Iranian bookstores



Front cover of the Persian translation of J.K. Rowling's book "Lethal White".

TEHRAN — A Persian translation of "Lethal White", the fourth book by J.K. Rowling, the bestselling author of the Harry Potter series, has been published by Tandis Publishing House in Tehran.

Translator Vida Eslamieh, who has rendered the previous books by Rowling into Persian, has translated this book as well.

"Lethal White" is both a gripping mystery and a page-turning next installment in the ongoing story of Cormoran Strike and Robin Ellacott.

The book is about Billy, a troubled young man, who comes to private eye Cormoran Strike's office to ask for his help investigating a crime that he thinks he witnessed as a child, and Strike is left deeply unsettled.

While Billy is obviously mentally

distressed, and cannot remember many concrete details, there is something sincere about him and his story. But before Strike can question him further, Billy bolts from his office in a panic.

Trying to get to the bottom of Billy's story, Strike and Robin Ellacott—once his assistant, now a friend in the agency—set off on a twisting trail, which leads them through the backstreets of London to a secretive inner sanctum within Parliament, and to a beautiful but sinister manor house deep in the countryside.

And during this labyrinthine investigation, Strike's own life is far from straightforward: his newfound fame as a private eye means he can no longer operate behind the scenes as he once did.

Installment in Giles Milton's series History's Unknown Chapters published in Persian

TEHRAN — "When Churchill Slaughtered Sheep and Stalin Robbed a Bank", the second installment in British writer Giles Milton's entertaining series, History's Unknown Chapters, has recently been published in Persian.

In the book translated into Persian by Simin Mahbub, Milton shows his customary historical flair as he delves into the little-known stories from history, like when Stalin was actually assassinated with poison by one of his inner circle; the Russian scientist, dubbed the "Red Frankenstein", who attempted to produce a human-ape hybrid through ethically dubious means; the family who

survived thirty-eight days at sea with almost no water or supplies after their ship was destroyed by a killer whale; or the plot that served as a template for 9/11 in which four Algerian terrorists attempted to hijack a plane and fly it into the Eiffel Tower.

The Persian version of "When Churchill Slaughtered Sheep and Stalin Robbed a Bank" has been published by Chatrang in Tehran.

"When Hitler Took Cocaine and Lenin Lost His Brain" is another book of Milton's series History's Unknown Chapters.

The book was originally published by Picador Paper in November 2016.



This file photo shows the sculpture "Porter" located at the entrance to Tehran's Marvi Bazaar.

IIDCYA announces winners of art competition on Martyr Soleimani



A poster for IIDCYA's painting and calligraphy contest "Like Father, Kind".

TEHRAN — Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) has announced winners of a painting and calligraphy contest named "Like Father, Kind" on martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

The institute launched the contest in mid-January after the Quds Force chief Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Over 2000 paintings and 1000 calligraphy works were submitted to the organizers of the contest by interested children and young adults, IIDCYA announced in a press release published on Friday.

Calligraphy works were judged by Atieh Rostamzadeh, Afsaneh Mahdizadeh and Masumeh Khosroabadi, while Saber Soleimani, Manijeh Nurbakhsh and Neda Mohaqeq were the judges for the painting contest.

Ali Sadeqi, Behrad Hajiasgari, Mohammad-

Javad Mehrabi and Kosar Nurzadeh were the winners in the scriptwriting section.

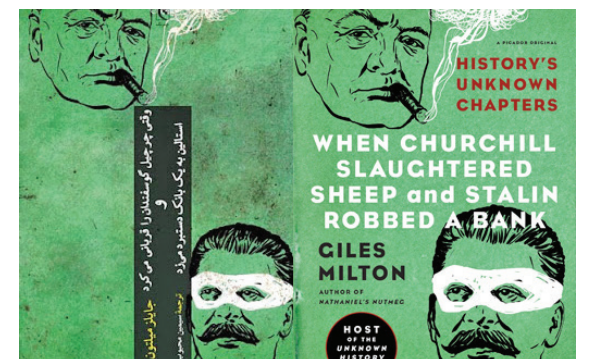
In the nastaliq calligraphy section, the winners were Ali Sadeqi, Melika Jokar, Masiha Jahani, Mohamadreza Shahmohammadi, Ali Ranjbar, Abbas Rahimi and Ashkan Ashayeri.

In the painting category, the winners were Mohammad Hassani, Kiarash Samimitabar, Mohammad-Taha Ebrahimi, Mahmud Motallebi, Zahra Hassanpur, Nazanin-Zahra Hojjatinejad, Mahdieh Esmaeili, Fatemeh Bakhshipur and Fatemeh Mirzalu.

Children and young adults were asked to create their calligraphy works inscribing the name of the martyr or phrases or sentences that narrate the bravery and different aspects of the commander's character.

Drawings on his funeral ceremony and the bravery and different aspects of his character were also considered in the painting section.

There are plans to set up an exhibition of the selected works at the IIDCYA.



Front covers the Persian version and an original copy of British writer Giles Milton's book "When Churchill Slaughtered Sheep and Stalin Robbed a Bank".

Tehran Municipality launches sculpture contest to promote reading

TEHRAN — The Beautification Organization of the Tehran Municipality has launched a sculpture contest to promote the culture of book reading in the country.

Interested individuals are asked to make sculptures with the central themes of books, children and books, city and library, as well as book reading to promote the need to study and read books.

A team of sculptors will be judging the final works that fit the main theme while considering their locations

and their surrounding environment.

The materials used and the methods observing environmental issues will also fall under consideration.

Interested applicants are asked to keep in contact with the organizers of the contest before June 20.

The Beautification Organization organizes the Tehran International Sculpture Symposium every year, seeking to help beautify the urban environment of the city and familiarize citizens with the process of making new designs.