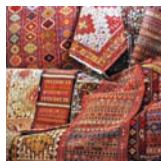




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Parliament believes talks with U.S. are ‘harmful’, says speaker

TEHRAN — Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the newly-elected parliament speaker says talks and compromise with the United States are harmful to the country.

“The 11th Parliament considers anti-arrogance as both an ideological doctrine and as a strategic interest. Negotiations and compromise with the United States, as the axis of global arrogance, are considered fruitless and harmful,” he said while addressing an open session of the parliament on Sunday. This was his first

address to the parliament after he was elected as a speaker on Thursday.

“Our strategy in dealing with terrorist America is to complete the chain of revenge for the blood of martyr Soleimani,” he said, adding, “The work, which began with the unprecedented attack on Ain al-Asad base and continued with the defeat of the U.S.’s empty grandeur in its inability to respond to the Islamic Republic’s measure, will be completed with the expulsion of the U.S. terrorist forces from the region.” **→3**

Photographer Mohammad Rezai snaps pics of volunteers helping fight coronavirus

TEHRAN — Photographer Mohammad Rezai has made his best efforts to record the COVID-19 pandemic at the very beginning by covering the volunteer groups that stepped in to bury the dead bodies and help medical workers on the front line of the campaign against the novel virus.

“I simply took my camera in my hands and went out into the streets in the Iranian northern province of Mazandaran, which

went through difficult days, to record the initial experiences and show reactions of the people during the pandemic,” Rezai said.

At first I tried to find those who were in charge of burying the dead bodies in the hospitals to photograph their trying moments, but I was not given permission. So I located the volunteer groups who did the actual burials and took photos of them while they were at work,” he added. **→12**

Iran’s 2-month non-oil trade exceeds \$9b

TEHRAN — The value of Iran’s non-oil trade during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) stood at \$9.341 billion, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Based on the data released by the Customs Administration, in the mentioned period Iran imported \$5.041 billion worth of goods, while exporting \$4.3 billion.

The volume of traded goods was estimated at 21 million tons, of which 14.5 million

tons were related to exports and about 6.5 million tons were imported goods.

Iran’s top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$1.19 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$1.107 billion, the UAE with \$682 million, and Afghanistan with \$341 million as well as Turkey with \$144 million, so the country’s top five export destinations remained the same in comparison to previous months. **→4**



ARTICLE

Hamid Bayati
Tehran Times journalist

Iran gets admission into Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle elite club

On Thursday, May 28, over 100 new boats were delivered to the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) naval base in Bandar Abbas during a ceremony attended by top Iranian military officials, including Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami, IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami, and IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri.

The newly-joined vessels came in various classes such as ‘Ashura’, ‘Tarogh’, and ‘Zolfaghar’, all manufactured and optimized by Iranian experts working at knowledge-based companies of the Ministry of Defense Marine Industries Group and specialized technical centers of the IRGC Navy.

These vessels, which enjoy high hydro-dynamic capabilities, high speed, suitable maneuverability, very low radar cross-section (RCS), and high offensive power, have a great impact on improving the combat capability of the IRGC Navy in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Among these various classes of vessels, however, there was one in particular that grabbed the attention of foreign news outlets. Based on the published photos, there is an Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle (UUV) among the unveiled vessels with an appearance of Ghadir-class submarine but smaller and without a command bridge.

Western media’s attention drawn to the new Iranian vessel

This new vessel immediately grabbed the attention of Western media. The American magazine Forbes, for example, wrote in an article following Iran’s unveiling of its new vessels that Iran joined “an elite club with only the U.S. Navy and Britain’s Royal Navy having such large UUVs.”

Forbes further added, “A new vessel, shown in public for the first time this week, is either a very small submarine or a very large Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle (UUV). It appears to be the latter. If correct, this will add a new dimension to Iran’s systematic warfare capability. It will also mean that Iran joins an elite club with only the U.S. Navy and Britain’s Royal Navy having such large UUVs.” **→7**

No restrictions for organizing package tours: deputy minister

TEHRAN — Iran’s deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri has said that the ministry sees no restrictions for organizing package tours by travel agencies as far as health protocols to curb the coronavirus are observed.

“There are no restrictions on planning, organizing, and conducting [package] tours by the private sector,” Teymouri said on Sunday.

Earlier this month, the tourism ministry in close collaboration with the ministry of health developed comprehensive guidelines and instructions to improve health standards in hotels, guest houses, eco-lodge units, tourist destinations, transport facilities, recreational centers, and restaurants.

“All processes in the field of tourism are based on a ‘smart’ travel protocol and are in compliance with health regulations,” the official stated.

“The smart travel protocol states what considerations a hotel, agency, or tour guide

should follow. It’s as if accommodation units need to focus more on renting one-bedroom than two-bedroom. Or if the hotel has been closed until now, with what considerations will it start working and under what conditions will it accept passengers. These cases are detailed in the present protocol we should revise its articles using the opinion of the relevant organizations.”

Regarding foreign arrivals, the official noted: “According to the consultations with the national headquarters to fight the spread of the coronavirus, and other relevant cross-sectoral agencies, the specific time and mechanism for the entry of international tourists will be announced soon.”

He believes that international tourism could be recovered soon “because it is mostly relying on potential travelers and pilgrims from the neighboring countries.” **→8**

Charity foundation to implement 218 water supply projects in deprived areas

TEHRAN — Barekat Charity Foundation will implement 218 water supply projects with a budget of 1.1 trillion rials (nearly \$261 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in deprived and rural areas of the country.

Affiliated to the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejraiy-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam, the foundation is implementing the projects in more than 711 villages of the country, of which 186 projects have been put into operation, IRNA quoted Mohammad Mahjouri, deputy head of the foundation, as saying on Sunday.

South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Zanjan, Fars, Mazandaran, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Kerman, Kermanshah, Lorestan, Qom, Markazi, Hormozgan, Kordestan, Ilam, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari and Tehran, are the 17 provinces covered by the foundation’s water supply services, he explained.

Last year, the foundation also implemented 75 water supply projects in 477 villages, based on the policies for providing more services to deprived areas and preventing the migration of villagers, he noted.

He went on to say that in addition to preventing rural migration and various social, cultural, economic and livelihood problems, the supply of drinking water to rural villages, especially in areas suffering from drought, has led to the preservation and survival of the population in the border areas.

Besides, the increase in health and well-being of the villagers and the expansion of social justice, increasing income and helping the livelihood of the villagers by providing the water needed for the livestock and poultry, he added.

Creating sustainable employment for the villagers and providing infrastructure services such as water supply is done in this regard, will help rural population, he noted. **→9**

Syria receives advanced MiG-29 fighter jets from Russia

Syria has received a second batch of advanced MiG-29 fighter jets from Russia as Damascus and its allies are fighting a remaining Daesh pocket in the Arab country.

Syria’s official news agency SANA, citing a military source, said the new fighter jets were handed over to the Syrian Army during a ceremony at Hmeimim airbase in Syria’s western coastal province of Latakia on Saturday.

“In the framework of military and technical co-operation between Russia and Syria, the Russian

side handed over the second batch of advanced and modernized MiG-29 fighter jets to Syria, during a ceremony at Hmeimim base,” the source said.

“The warplanes flew from the Hmeimim Airbase to their deployment areas in Syrian airbases,” the source said.

According to the source, the newly-received fighter jets are “more effective” than their previous generation.

“As of June 1, 2020, Syrian pilots will begin to carry out missions on those planes in Syrian

airspace,” the source said.

Syrian government forces, backed by allied fighters from popular defense groups, continue to score territorial gains in their battle against foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants in the north-western province of Idlib.

Idlib is the only large territory in the hands of terrorists after the Syrian Army managed to undo militant gains across the Arab country.

Russian troops were formally invited to the country by the Syrian government in 2015.



© ISNA / Alireza Mohammadi

Wildfire sweeps through forests, protected areas

Wildfire broke out on Thursday, May 28, in several forests and protected areas in western and southwestern provinces of the country, including Khaeez protected area. The stretch, measuring 28,000 hectares, is one of the main habitats for wild goats.

Being impassable has made any fire-fighting operation almost impossible and only helicopters could reach the area.

ICCIMA criticizes govt. performance in implementing Covid-19 support packages

TEHRAN — Members of the industry committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), in a meeting, criticized the inefficiency of the government’s support packages against the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak.

Lack of a clear strategy for industrial development, lack of adequate monitoring over the implementation of the support programs, and thus the creation of rent and corruption in the process, were among the issues pointed out by the representatives of the private sector.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal on Sunday, the committee believed that like the previous government programs, the support packages announced by the government during the coronavirus outbreak fell short, especially in other provinces, mainly due to the lack of executive guarantees.

The committee members criticized the performance of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Iranian National Tax Admission Organization and Social Security Organization in dealing with the problems of the industry sector, especially during the pandemic recession, and called for the strict implementation of the resolutions of the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters.

According to Abolfazl Roghani, head of the ICCIMA Industry Committee, after the outbreak of the virus and its direct and indirect impacts on various businesses, the expectations of the private sector from the government were sent to all officials in a 30-item statement. **→4**

Boosting combat power is on Army's agenda, says General Abdolrahim Mousavi

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, the chief of Iran's Army, said on Sunday that increasing combat power is always on the Army's agenda.

During a meeting with a number of Army commanders, Mousavi said that all the commanders are duty bound to make efforts in line with this purpose.

Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, the deputy chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, said in February that Iran's current situation in terms of military power is better than any other time.

"Today, the current might of the Islamic establishment is more than ever," Ashtiani said.

He added that the country's power is now sustainable.

'Claims that U.S. is siding with Iranian people is nothing but dishonesty'

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Daniel Lazare, a U.S. author and journalist, has said that the United States' claim of siding with the Iranian people is "specious" and "dishonest".

"U.S. claims to side with the people of Iran against their own government. But the claim is obviously specious and dishonest. The proof is in the twelve demands that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued in May 2018," Lazare told Fars in an interview published on Friday.

Following is full text of the interview:

■ The international banks do not transfer money from the U.S.-sanctioned countries, like Iran, to buy medications and health supplies, such as ICU equipment. Does that make the U.S. sanctions criminal?

A: It certainly does. Remember -- the U.S. imposed economic sanctions after unilaterally withdrawing from 2015 JCPOA. Somehow, it then decided that this gave it the authority to punish Iran for the "crime" of faithfully abiding by the terms of the agreement. Iran has paid an enormous price thanks to such topsy-turvy logic. Oil exports have fallen to near zero while the country has been deprived of vital imports. But the problem is compounded now that Iran has emerged as a major epicenter for the Covid-19 crisis. It needs pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, protective gear, etc. Yet such items are all but unobtainable thanks to U.S.-imposed sanctions. For Iran, it is a matter of life and death. Yet such factors do not enter into the U.S. imperial calculus.

But such policies are short-sighted in the extreme. Not only do they hurt Iran, they also hurt the U.S. As cases mount in one country, it is inevitable that they will flow over the border into others. Hence, U.S. allies like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the other [Persian] Gulf states are directly in the line of fire, as are locally-stationed U.S. troops. They in turn will infect others when they rotate home. The virus will thus spread all the more fiercely. It is a clear case of shooting oneself in the foot.

■ Not only the health, but also the economies of the sanctioned countries are at risk. How do you find the U.S. Administration claim that they back the people of Iran, at the same time they keep the anti-Iran sanctions in place during the pandemic?

A: U.S. claims to side with the people of Iran against their own government. But the claim is obviously specious and dishonest. The proof is in the twelve demands that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued in May 2018. Not only are the demands illogical and at odd with the facts -- they call on Iran to "cease harboring senior al-Qaeda leaders," for example, something it has never done -- but they amount to a requirement that Iran essentially give up the last shred of national sovereignty so that Israel and Saudis can exercise free reign throughout the Middle East. Since this is something the Iranian nation obviously cannot do, it is a formula for endless punishment and isolation.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine what Iran could do to meet U.S. demands. Just about the only thing I can think of would be to bring back the Shah, which is to say an outright U.S. instrument whose function would be to return the country to some sort of neo-colonial status. The results would be disastrous for religious minorities attempting to resist Zionist or Wahhabist oppression. If Iran continues to resist, it is because America effectively gives it no choice.

■ Do you believe the pandemic would make the U.S. Administration reshape its policy against Iran?

A: I think Trump is afraid to go to war with Iran. Americans are tired of endless wars in the Middle East, a part of the world they do not understand and know little about. Hence, a military confrontation would generate immense opposition back home, particularly among core Trump supporters in places like the South and Midwest. These are people who believed him when he promised to stop engaging in pointless military adventures. Hence, they would be furious if he were to go back on his word.

Hence, it is something he will try his best to avoid. This is not to say that Trump will not stumble into a war inadvertently. To the contrary, the risk is ever-present thanks to the sheer recklessness of U.S. behavior. But for the moment he will try to accomplish his goals short of outright by isolating Iran economically and now subjecting it to a form of biological warfare by depriving it of crucial supplies needed to battle the coronavirus epidemic. As I said, the idea that the Trump Administration distinguishes between the government and the people is absurd since its policies are plainly aimed at destroying both.

Last Iranian fuel tanker reaches Venezuelan waters

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The 5th and last Iranian fuel tanker reached Venezuelan waters on Sunday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Gholamreza Ansari has said.

In an interview with the IRIB published on Sunday, Ansari also said Iran is studying Venezuela's request for repairing its oil installations.

He did not give details about the type of installations.

The deputy foreign minister said, "The Iranian oil tankers reached Venezuela and delivered our downstream products without facing any incident and there is good cooperation between the two countries."

"Venezuela is a good market for our downstream products and oil. We can continue cooperation if it [Venezuela] wants," he noted.

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.

Carlos Antonio Alcalá Cordones, the Venezuelan ambassador to Iran, told the Tehran Times on Sunday that Iran has



Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy says Iran is studying Venezuela's request for repairing the country's oil installations.

Iran urges U.S. to listen to its people

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry has urged the United States to listen to its people and change its bankrupt policies.

"Failed to keep its promise of stopping wasting money on foreign adventurism & embattled in a Covid19 crisis of its own making, US regime now employs army, 'vicious dogs & ominous weapons' to intimidate protesters. Instead, US should listen to its ppl & change its bankrupt policies," the Foreign Ministry tweeted on Sunday.

Protests have started across the U.S. over brutal killing of an African-American man.

According to Press TV, the unrest over George Floyd's death came to President Donald Trump's doorstep as dem-

onstrators circled the White House grounds on Saturday, chanting "I can't breathe" and "Black Lives Matter."

George Floyd died on Monday after being pinned down by a white officer despite yelling: "I cannot breathe" under the knee of a U.S. police officer.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has said that brutal killing of the African-American man 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.

Racism in U.S. is systematic: expert

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Foad Izadi, a professor at the University of Tehran, has said that racism in the United States is a "systematic" phenomenon.

"Racism in the United States has been institutionalized to the extent that it is more probable for an African-American person to go to jail compared to a white person," he told ISNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He also said, "[U.S. President Donald] Trump has ordered shooting the protesters. Former governments also adopted similar policies against the African-American people

and Trump publicizes it on Twitter."

The professor added, "The United States' administration has no other way but countering the protesters violently, otherwise it will collapse because of problems and dissatisfaction [of the people]."

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."

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.

Iranian people are victims of Trump's decisions: Colorado University professor

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Sven Steinmo, a professor of political science at the University of Colorado, has said that the Iranian people are victims of U.S. President Donald Trump's decisions and their lives are in danger because of sanctions.

"Sanctions are one of the reasons behind spread of the coronavirus in Iran. In this situation, sanctions are not justified. Now, politics is affecting the people's health and the people of Iran are victims," ILNA quoted him as saying in an interview published on Sunday.

He noted that Trump will never remove sanctions on Iran, because he has no good intention towards the people of Iran.

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

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



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

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

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

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein has said that the United States should provide partial,

temporary sanctions relief to Iran when the country is fighting the coronavirus.

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

In a letter to the G-20 economic powers on March 24, Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary-general, called for rolling back international sanctions regimes around the world.

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

"I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to

food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity, not exclusion," he said.

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

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

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

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

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

Iran's powerful air force able to counter threats: commander

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh, the commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF), said on Sunday that Iran's Air Force is powerful and is capable to respond to threats.

Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony opening the Air Force museum, Nasirzadeh said, "The Air Force's equipment is complicated and advanced."

He added that the Air Force will continue manufacturing equipment. Nasirzadeh said in April that Iran is among the five leading countries in manufacturing drones.

"We are among the top regional countries in manufacturing drones and using unmanned aircrafts," Nasirzadeh told a press conference.

He added, "We are moving on this path, conforming to updated standards in the world."

Iranian military spokesman: Suppression of protestors reveals U.S. false democracy

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi has said the brutal suppression of American protestors shows the hollow nature of the U.S. claims about democracy.

"The U.S. government, despite its false human rights chants, has these days displayed its ugly and inhumane face in confrontation against the popular protests more than ever and it has destabilized the bases of its false democracy by resorting to the most violent methods," General

Shekarchi said on Sunday.

He added that the White House leaders who have always created many abnormalities in the region and the world by their interfering policies are now facing unrest in the U.S.

General Shekarchi said that the U.S. hollow awe is falling and the sound of breaking its bones is being heard more than ever, adding that expansion of unrest in all U.S. states and divergence of Washington's traditional allies display this very reality.

Earlier today, the Iranian foreign ministry had called on the White House to stop intimidation of protestors and listen to the American people's voice.

"Failed to keep its promise of stopping wasting money on foreign adventurism and embattled in a Covid-19 crisis of its own making, U.S. regime now employs army, vicious dogs and ominous weapons to intimidate protesters," the Iranian foreign ministry wrote on its official twitter page.

It underlined the need for the U.S. to "listen to its people and change its bankrupt policies".

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Zarif urges world to wage war against racism

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has urged the entire world to wage a war against racism, making a reference to the recent killing of a Black American by the U.S. police.

“Some don’t think #BlackLivesMatter,” Zarif tweeted on Saturday.

“To those of us who do: it is long overdue for the entire world to wage war against racism,” he wrote. “Time for a #WorldAgainstRacism.”

Zarif also attached an image of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s press statement on “recent protests in Iran.” However, the foreign minister photoshopped some parts to make the statement look like it was written about the recent U.S. protests in order to draw attention to the international community’s double standards.

It came as protests erupted in cities across the United States over the deadly arrest of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, who was pinned to the ground by the knee of a white officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The fired officer who knelt on Floyd’s



neck for several minutes, as Floyd pleaded “I can’t breathe”, has been charged with murder and manslaughter.

On Friday, in the midst of the protests, U.S. President Donald Trump described

the protesters as “thugs”.

In a tweet, he also said “when the looting starts, the shooting starts.”

Trump’s tweet was widely interpreted as threatening those protesting Floyd’s

death and prompted further outrage.

Twitter decided to hide the tweet, saying it violates rules about glorifying violence.

Iran has condemned the murder of black Americans, blaming the U.S. regime for its deadly racial profiling against African-Americans.

“Iran regrets the tragic murder of black Americans, denounces deadly racial profiling in the United States & urges authorities to do justice for every case,” the Foreign Ministry wrote in a tweet on Friday night.

“The protestors’ voice must be heard,” the ministry stated. “In doing so, suppressing the suffering Americans & #PressFreedom must URGENTLY be stopped.”

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday that the brutal killing was 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,” Mousavi tweeted.

Tehran slams ‘irresponsible’ U.S. regime for WHO exit

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Tehran has censured the “irresponsible” U.S. regime for ending its relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO) in the middle of the worldwide fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic.

“In the new chapter of its Withdrawal series, & amid a pandemic that has rattled the world, the US terminates its relationship w/@WHO,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi wrote in a tweet on Saturday.

“After failing its ppl, this irresponsible regime has been seeking a scapegoat to hide its debacle. But blame games didn’t & won’t fool the world,” he added.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump accused the WHO of becoming essentially a “puppet” organization of China and announced his decision to end relationship with the UN health body over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

“Because they have failed to make the requested and greatly needed reforms, we will be today terminating our relationship with the World Health Organization and redirecting those funds to other worldwide and deserving, urgent global public health needs,” Trump



said.

On May 19, Trump sent a four-page letter to the WHO director general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, warning he would permanently cut U.S. funding of the WHO and reconsider U.S. membership if the organization did “not commit to major substantive improvements within the next 30 days”.

He announced U.S. withdrawal on Friday, only 10

days after the letter, according to The Guardian.

After that ultimatum was announced, a few U.S. health officials urged the WHO to signal its willingness to change to the Trump administration in the hope it would change the president’s mind, but U.S. sources said there was no concerted dialogue between the administration and the WHO over reform.

Earlier this month, the World Health Assembly (WHA) of member states agreed there should be a thorough review of the organization’s response to the pandemic.

The U.S. had lobbied to have Taiwan invited to the assembly as an observer, and had significant western support for the proposal. But European diplomats said the U.S. was half-hearted in its campaign and lost the tussle with China.

“What’s interesting, looking at the last WHA meeting for me, was a very clear sign that American influence has diminished significantly,” said Abraham Denmark, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia. “It was embarrassing that we weren’t able to wrangle international support for our policy goals in that meeting, and that China was able to really get what they needed out of that.”

Parliament believes talks with U.S. are ‘harmful’, says speaker

1→ He stressed that this parliament believes ties with foreign countries should be focused on neighbors and major powers that have remained alongside Iran during hard days.

“The 11th parliament supports the expansion of ties with the international community but considers trusting governments that have a dark history as a strategic mistake.”

Ghalibaf also reaffirmed the parliament’s commitment to supporting the Palestinian nation, the Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, the oppressed people of Yemen, as well as the Iraqi government, nation and religious authorities.

Tensions started to build up between

the U.S. and Iran after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018, and imposed sanctions against Tehran in a bid to put maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic.

The Trump administration has also made

empty calls for talks, but the Islamic Republic maintains that as long as the sanctions are in place and the U.S. refuses to return to the JCPOA, negotiations will be meaningless.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ruled out the notion that “settlement of Iran’s problems hinges on rapprochement with the United States.”

“The 11th parliament supports the expansion of ties with the international community but considers trusting governments that have a dark history as a strategic mistake.”



U.S. tankers in Persian Gulf will not be safe if Iranian oil shipments seized: analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A Canadian political analyst said the U.S. is well aware that its oil tankers that are freely moving in the Persian Gulf would be exposed to retaliation if it attempts to seize Iranian oil shipments carrying fuel to Venezuela.

“The fact that Iran militarily responded to the Trump administration’s murder of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and the murder of Iraqi officials showed that Iran would protect its rights if the American’s seized the oil shipments. The United States has many oil tankers that transit the Persian Gulf and they would be exposed to retaliation. The Americans also realize that their military bases in the Middle East (West Asia) are exposed and not welcome by many host countries in the Middle East. They are vulnerable,” Edward Corrigan from Ontario told Tasnim.

Edward C. Corrigan is certified as a specialist by the Law Society of Ontario, Canada in Citizenship, Immigration and Immigration and Refugee Law. He is also an analyst and commentator for a number of media outlets around the world.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Iran is providing Venezuela with 1.53 million barrels of gasoline and refining components defying U.S. sanctions against both nations. The 4th cargo of an Iranian tanker flotilla carrying fuel for Venezuela reached the South American nation’s exclusive economic zone on Wednesday Refinitiv Eikon data showed. What are your thoughts on this?

A: These sanctions are unilaterally imposed by the American Trump Administration. They are not imposed by the United Nations’ Security Council. Accordingly, they are not legally binding on Iran or Venezuela. The United States cannot unilaterally impose its sanctions on other countries to stop legal trade between Iran and Venezuela or any other country. The American unilateral sanctions are illegal under International law and Maritime law. To impose unilateral sanctions



on another country and to enforce them by military means is seen as an act of war.

■ The United States has criticized the shipment, as both OPEC nations are under unilateral U.S. sanctions. A Washington 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. Why do you think the vessels did not appear to encounter interference?

A: Apparently saner and cooler heads prevailed. The United States would look like a bully and also foolish in the eyes of World opinion. Venezuela and or Iran could go to the International High Court of Justice for a ruling. The United States would lose. Iran and Venezuela could also go to the UN General Assembly for a symbolic vote and again the United States would lose. In my opinion, the Europeans would not support unilateral sanctions by one country that would jeopardize free trade and break International law and accepted principles of Maritime law.

The fact that Iran militarily responded to the Trump administration’s murder of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and the murder of Iraqi officials showed that Iran would protect its rights if the American’s seized the oil shipments. The United States has many oil tankers that transit the Persian Gulf and they would be exposed to retaliation. The Americans also realize that their military bases in the Middle East are exposed and not welcome by many host countries in the Middle East. They are vulnerable. The fact that Venezuela sent ships and fighter aircraft to escort and protect the Iranian oil tankers also showed Venezuela’s resolve to not be intimidated by American sanctions. The fact that there are Russian troops in Venezuela also would give a strong reason for the Americans to not to come into direct conflict with the Russian military.

■ President Nicolas Maduro has expressed gratitude to the Iranian leadership, government, and nation from “the bottom of my heart.” He said Iran and Venezuela had a right just like any other nation in the world to engage in trade. We are “two revolutionary nations that will never kneel down before U.S. imperialism. Venezuela has friends in this world, and brave friends at that”, he said. What is your take on this?

A: I agree with President Maduro. Under International law and Maritime law, free trade and free transit are protected. The United States cannot use the argument for free navigation in the South China Sea against China and then turn around and not allow free trade in the Atlantic Ocean and in the Caribbean Sea. It would show that the American administration was being hypocritical and would look foolish. This episode is a clear victory for Iran and Venezuela. It is also a victory for the principle of free trade, Maritime Law, and International law and supports the view that no country can unilaterally impose its law on a third country and impose sanctions on other countries.

Nearly 200 to 225 people killed in November protests, minister suggests

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli has suggested that nearly 200 to 225 people were killed during the widespread protests in November 2019.

In remarks on national television on Saturday night, Rahmani-Fazli said the death toll will be announced in the coming days, but explained that “some 40 or 45 people, meaning about 20 percent of the death toll, were people who were killed by non-governmental weapons.”

They were named martyrs, he said.

Protests erupted in Iran on November 15 after the government announced an increase in the price of gasoline, a subsidized commodity that is still cheaper in Iran than other countries in the world.

The proceeds from the price increase are paid in the form of cash subsidies to 60 million Iranians, who account for about 75 percent of the population.

During the protests, public and private properties were damaged and banks, gas stations, and state buildings were put on fire.

To control the situation, Iran blocked access to the internet for days.

In a report in December, Reuters claimed that about 1,500 people were killed during less than two weeks of unrest across Iran.

“The toll, provided to Reuters by three Iranian Interior Ministry officials, included at least 17 teenagers and about 400 women as well as some members of the security forces and police,” the London-based news outlet claimed.

An official at Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) denied Reuters’ claim at the time.

Alireza Zarifian Yeganeh, head of the SNSC Information and Communications Secretariat, said such claims were part of the anti-Iran disinformation campaign.

“Such news producing and leveling accusations is basically very easy,” he said, describing the act as a psychological operation against the Islamic Republic.

“When asked to offer sources or documents, the media outlet would refer you to invisible creatures,” he added.

Elsewhere in his Sunday night remarks, Rahmani-Fazli said during the November protests, there were no armed confrontation with people, and police forces were advised to observe tolerance.

“However, when they (rioters) attack a police station, they should be confronted, because if the law enforcement does not defend, people become the victim,” he stated.

“The country’s security is valuable to us, and it must be protected within the framework of law,” the interior minister added.

Interior Minister Rahmani-Fazli says: “Some 40 or 45 people, meaning about 20 percent of the death toll, were people who were killed by non-governmental weapons.”

Iran, Pakistan discuss bilateral ties, regional developments

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf and Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a phone conversation reviewed expansion of mutual cooperation and the latest developments in the region.

During the phone talk on Saturday, Ghalibaf and Sanjrani underlined the need for the unity of Asian parliamentary leaders to ensure collective welfare and the latest situation of global anti-coronavirus campaign.



Noting that the outbreak of coronavirus in Iran has caused some problems for the country, Sanjrani stressed the need to lift sanctions against Iran.

He also reiterated that the people, parliament, and government of Pakistan are calling for the lifting of sanctions on Iran.

He stressed the need to develop relations and expand cooperation in various fields, including parliament.

Sanjrani and Ghalibaf called for strengthening ties between Iran and Pakistan.

The two sides discussed ways to widen relations, specially the development of border exchanges between the two countries.

In a relevant development in late April, Vice-Speaker of Pakistan’s National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri said that his country was resolved to enhance trade with neighboring Iran, specially in border areas, despite the unilateral U.S. sanctions.

Suri made the remarks during a farewell meeting of Iranian Consul General in the Southwestern city of Quetta Mohammad Rafiei and members of Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI).

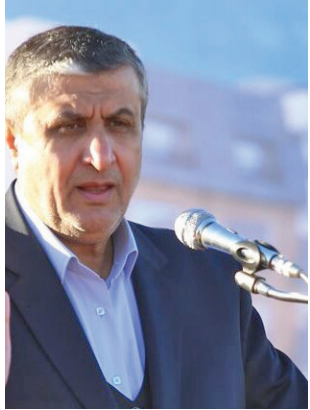
The Pakistani traders in the meeting highlighted the problems being faced by them due to the closure of Pakistan-Iran border saying that more than 1,800 commercial trucks both from Iran and Pakistan are waiting for the border opening.

Suri assured the traders about raising the matter with federal government to quickly solve the problem.

He said the current Pakistani government is determined to strengthen relations with countries around the world, specially the Islamic Republic of Iran, and seeks to open a new chapter in trade and commerce between the two countries.

100,000 housing units to be constructed for workers of industrial parks

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said the government has it on the agenda to construct 100,000 housing units for the workers of the industrial parks across the country in collaboration with Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC).



As reported by IRNA, Transport Ministry signed a memorandum of undersetting (MOU) with ICC, on Sunday, for cooperating in the construction of the mentioned units.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Eslami said his ministry will fully support the program.

"It is hoped that with the implementation of this project, the working community and also managers at the country's industrial parks will be able to

live in these homes and benefit from them," the minister said.

ICCIMA calls government's coronavirus support package 'inefficient'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Kheirollah Khademi, the managing director of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), announced that seven prioritized railway projects with a total length of 1,660 kilometers will be inaugurated by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2022).

The priority is to complete the Chabahar-Zahedan railway, which is fortunately well underway, given that its financial resources have been provided, Khademi told ILNA.

Yazd-Eghlid, Bostanabad-Tabriz, and Khaf-Herat railways are also among the top prioritized projects for the next two years, according to the official.

"Yazd-Eghlid and Khaf-Herat projects with a total length of 66 km, as well as Bostanabad-Tabriz with a length of 44 km will be put into operation by the end of the current calendar year (March 2021)," he said.

Back in April, the Iranian transport minister said 1,200 kilometers of railroads are going to be constructed across the country

during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 19).

Speaking in a ceremony for adding new domestically-made wagons and locomotives to the country's railway fleet on April 29, Mohammad Eslami said rail transport will become more efficient and safer in the current year.

Earlier this month, Deputy Head of Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce Amanollah Shahnavazi said that the two countries' border bazaars are gradually resuming activities following the reopening of the border crossings.

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

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Iran's 2-month non-oil trade exceeds \$9b

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1,660km of new railroads to be inaugurated by Mar. 2022

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Railway transports 6,300 wagons of goods between Iran, Turkey in 70 days

ECONOMY TEHRAN — As announced by the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran and Turkey exchanged 6,300 wagons of commodities via railway during a 70-day period from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), ILNA reported.

According to Rouhollah Latifi, Iran's exports to Turkey via railway stood at 3,072 wagons of goods and its imports from the neighboring country reached 3,228 wagons during the mentioned period of time.

The official further said, "Turkey has closed Bazargan border with Iran since February 20, so the only way for transportation of goods is via railway, and we hope that the air path and land borders between the two countries will be reopened following a telephone conversation between the presidents of Iran and Turkey in the coming days."

IRICA Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi held a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Riza Tuna Turagay, via video conference on May 5, to discuss reopening of trade borders with the implementation of health and safety protocols.

Readiness to exchange health protocols



for reopening trade borders, importing goods from Sarisu trans-boundary market, implementation of the third phase of e-Tir electronic project in all customs offices of the two countries, online exchange of information and X-ray in shared borders were among the important topics of discussion in the said meeting.

Mir-Ashrafi urged Turagay to take all the necessary measures to ensure the reopening of the two countries' borders since the Turkish borders with its other neighbors are already open.

"The World Trade Organization (WTO) stated that trade borders between countries should not be closed under any circumstance.

es, but due to the coronavirus outbreak the two countries' largest border, Bazargan, has been closed and we expect the two sides to take necessary measures to reopen the borders in accordance with health protocols", he stressed.

Turagay for his part expressed hope that the two countries' borders will be open soon and the trade between the two sides is going to get back to normal soon.

"We are constantly pursuing the reopening of the borders, however the ministries of health and interior should also approve, but we will do our best," Turagay said.

In late February, Turkey closed its border with Iran as a preventative measure against the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

On May 1, Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) hosted a meeting to explore new health and transportation protocols for trade with Turkey.

According to TPO office of public relations, the meeting was attended by the organization's head, Hamid Zadboum, along with representatives of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee, as well as the ministries of health; transport and urban development; and foreign affairs.

TPO, IRISL discuss co-op for improving maritime transportation

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran says Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL) accounts for 22 percent of the country's cargo transportation, adding that TPO is ready to cooperate with IRISL to increase this share in order to develop non-oil exports.

Speaking in a meeting with the IRISL head on Saturday, Hamid Zadboum noted that establishment of shipping lines to the target export destinations and especially to the Eurasian region is one of the important expectations of exporters.

The government, in its support package for the non-oil exports in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), has provisioned some measures to reduce the costs of sea transportation for exporters, Zadboum said, asking the IRISL Head Mohammadreza

Modares Khiabani, to outline his organization's plans to realize the mentioned support package.

Zadboum underlined the cooperation between TPO and IRISL for establishing regular shipping lines in the Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf and East Africa, as very important and said TPO's Commercial Services Development Office has been tasked to make necessary preparations for signing new agreements with IRISL in this regard.

Welcoming the idea of extensive cooperation with TPO, Modares Khiabani also announced the readiness of IRISL for accepting the brokerage of various goods, especially in the Eurasian region.

Modares Khiabani pointed to the IRISL representative offices in many countries and the presence of Iran's commercial attachés in most of the target countries as the best opportunity for developing the country's foreign trade, and called for more cooperation between the two organizations to this end.

The two sides also stressed the need for establishing a maritime transport working group with the aim of exploring the problems in the field of maritime transportation and to provide practical solutions in this regard.

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Coronavirus pandemic rises freight rate between Iran, Qatar by 3 folds

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The freight rate between Iran and Qatar has risen by three folds as a result of the coronavirus pandemic that caused a serious halt to the trade in West Asia, Press TV reported.

Adnan Mousapour, the head of Iran-Qatar Joint Chamber of Commerce, said on Saturday that the pandemic had caused a serious decline in a once booming trade exchange between the two countries.

Trade between Iran and Qatar started to thrive when the Arab country came under a blockade by Saudi Arabia and allies in June 2017.

Iranian exporters have supplied various agricultural products as well as construction materials to Qatar, bringing in over \$335 million in revenues over the past calendar year that ended March 19.

Iran's imports from Qatar topped \$30 million over the same period, said Mousapour who insisted that trade balance between the two countries could have further been in Iran's favor if the pandemic had not caused a closure of shipping lines.

Mousapour said that the spread of the disease in Iran had also affected tourism activities between Iran and Qatar as well as a suitcase trade which normally accounts for a major share of exchanges between the

two countries.

The businessman said that many Iranian companies have been facing payment settlement issues with Qatari partners because of the pandemic closures.

Qatar, a gas-producing giant, has been spared of a recent crisis in international oil markets where historically low prices have caused a major decline in revenues for oil exporting nations.

The small country was among the fewest in the region that maintained its flights to Iran even at the height of the pandemic.

Reports in recent months have suggested that Iran and Qatar have plans to increase the size of joint investment projects, especially those in the energy sector.

In mid-April, Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari agreed on cooperation in energy and investment spheres between the two countries during a video conference.

As the next meeting of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee, which was scheduled to be held in Iran's Isfahan City in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 20-April 19), was canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak, the two ministers, who are the co-chairmen of the committee, discussed areas of bilateral cooperation through video

conference.

The two sides also stressed that the meeting of the joint economic committee will be held as soon as the coronavirus pandemic ends and then seriously follow up the objectives of bilateral trade.

Meanwhile, they decided that until then both sides pursue the discussed issues through more video conferences.

In a joint press conference with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Tehran in January, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that Iran has stood and will stand beside Qatar in the future.

"At a juncture of time, certain regional countries imposed restrictions on Qatar, but Iran stood beside Qatar and will stand based on its duties as a neighbor," Rouhani added.

He said that the two countries have a very good relationship in various areas of economy, science, and culture.

For his part, the Qatari emir said that Doha will never forget Tehran's help in difficult days.

SP 6th refinery feedstock to increase 42% by Mar. 2021

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — The feedstock supplied to the sixth refinery of South Pars gas field will be increased by 42 percent by the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2021), IRNA reported.

Director of the sixth refinery said on Saturday that by growing operational output and accessibility of the refinery by 2021, its feedstock will augment by 42 percent.

Ahmad Valipour said that the refinery pursues its strategic plans in two axes: supplying the feedstock through marine pipeline of the South Pars phase 16 of development which will materialize 42 percent increase in the feedstock and output, and implementation of plans to lower gas flares that would be beneficial for both environment and refinery output.

He said that the refinery made strategic plans last year to maximize, stabilize and improve the production from the joint reserve in South Pars field.

South Pars is the world's largest gas field, covering an area of 3,700 square kilometers of Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

The giant field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

The field is divided into 24 standard phases that send the extracted gas to 14 refineries on the shore.

On May 19, the operator of phase 19 of South Pars said overhaul operations for the field's 10th refinery, which processes the gas from phase 19, are going to be started on



June 9.

The mentioned operations are expected to take 23 days to be completed, Soheil Rafiei said.

According to the official, the field's offshore facilities overhaul program is aimed to maintain the production levels in the current year which has been called the year of "Surge in Production" by Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Ali Khamenei.

The official noted that changing the catalytic bed of the first gas train, repairing the interior cover, and inspecting the pre-flash drum are among the activities planned for this period.

"Inspection and cleaning of the re-boilers of the regeneration tower, inspection and minor repairs of the burners, internal repair of

the sulfur tank, elimination of leaks from the header steam lines, and solving mechanical problems of various valves are also planned for this year's overhaul program," he added.

Rafiei also mentioned cleaning and inspection of various types of drums as another important part of the overhaul program and said: repairing the internal cover and inspection of DSO separator, inspection of heat exchangers, preventive repairs of electrical items and precision instruments that cannot be done in normal condition are also some of the most important activities that will be carried out in the major repairs of the current year in collaboration with exploitation, overhaul, engineering, technical inspection and safety units.

Meanwhile on May 2, director of the 3rd

South Pars refinery which receives natural gas from phases 4 and 5 said the refinery is working with one of the country's science and technology parks on a project to increase the quality of the refinery's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) product.

"Implementing this project will increase the quality and value of the product [LPG], reduce the residues and environmental pollutants, and create a new way to purify LPG," Mohammad-Shafi Moazeni said.

LPG is made up of butane, propane or a mixture of both gases. It is second-best after natural gas delivered via trunk lines in terms of efficiency and is eco-friendlier compared to diesel or fuel oil.

Pointing to the refinery's major programs in the current Iranian year, the official noted that in the current year, all efforts will be made to use domestic equipment and services needed for the refinery.

"Cooperation with knowledge-based companies is underway for solving the refinery's problems and optimizing production processes," he added.

In this regard, a project for reducing the total sulfur of the refinery's produced LPG is being carried out with one of the country's science and technology parks, the output of which will increase the quality and value of the product, Moazeni said.

According to the official, the refinery is going to take serious measures based on the goals set for this year, to reduce emergency and planned shutdowns, optimize process conditions, and increase ethane production at the refinery, which will increase the refinery's total production.

Iran's daily electricity consumption exceeds 53 GW

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 53,502 megawatts (53.5 gigawatts) on Saturday to register a new record high, IRNA reported, citing data released by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC).

As reported, the country's electricity consumption stood at 42,185 MW on the same date last year, which means the consumption has increased by 11,317 MW.

As the temperature continues to rise in different parts of the country, the electricity consumption is also following the same upward pattern toward an unprecedented summer peak.

Earlier on Saturday, the spokesman for the electricity industry said the average temperature had risen which has led to an increase in the use of cooling devices and an upward trend in electricity consumption.

Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi noted that the upward trend of the temperature is expected to continue into the current week, adding: "Each degree of increase in temperature will add about 1,350 MW to 1,500 MW to the country's electricity consumption."

The country's electricity consumption is expected to even exceed 53,000 MW this week,



which is an unprecedented figure, he said.

Based on the IGMC data, electricity consumption by the industry sector also exceeded 4,000 megawatts (MW) and reached 4,293 MW on the mentioned day.

In the mentioned date, the power storage of the country's power plants fell to its lowest in the current Iranian calendar year (started

on March 20) to stand at 552 MW.

On May 7, Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR) announced that the electricity consumption, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to May 6 increased by five percent compared to the same period last year.

Iranian fuel reaches Venezuelan stations as prices set to rise

Fuel shipped from Iran began arriving at Venezuela's gasoline stations on Saturday, just hours before President Nicolas Maduro announced higher prices at the pump that are set to end more than two decades of almost-free gasoline, Reuters reported.

As authorities in the country with the world's cheapest gasoline got ready to expand retail sales under a system combining subsidies and international prices, the fifth cargo of an Iranian flotilla approached the Caribbean Sea and is expected to reach Venezuelan waters on Sunday, according to Refinitiv Eikon.

Of 1,800 stations in Venezuela, about 240 have remained working since Maduro announced coronavirus-related lockdown measures in March, which included restrictions on fuel sales due to very low inventories.

More than 1,500 stations nationwide are expected to work in the coming days under the new system, which includes monthly quotas for vehicles and motorcycles, automated sales and monitoring equipment. Despite the price increases, it will cost about \$1 to fill a whole tank of a vehicle under the subsidy.

After reaching the quotas, drivers will have to pay internationally indexed prices.

The remaining 200 stations will be supplied by independent companies, so drivers buying at those sites will be charged \$0.50 per liter of gasoline and will have to pay in foreign currency.

Lines of drivers began forming at stations on Saturday in cities including Maracay, Valencia and Caracas in anticipation of the gasoline distribution.

Gasoline has been heavily subsidized in Venezuela, which coupled with hyperinfla-



tion in recent years has made it almost free, but acute scarcity has recently encouraged a black market that has forced people to pay at least \$2 per liter.

Venezuela's refineries, which can produce more than 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) of fuel, have worked at less than 20 percent of their capacity in 2020 mainly due to power outages and lack of spare parts.

As U.S. sanctions imposed on Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA have also limited the sources and types of products Venezuela can import, Venezuel turned to Iran for refining parts and fuel.

The supply has been criticized by the United States as both nations are under sanctions.

"Venezuela has the right to buy in the world whatever it wants to buy," Maduro said. "Fortunately, Venezuela has more friends than what people can imagine."

Washington has warned governments, seaports, shipping firms and insurers that they could face sanctions if they aid the Iranian supply, U.S. special envoy for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, said on Friday. Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, said his government will use Abrams' comments as proof in an international case against sanctions.

Oil now faces demand uncertainty after record rebound from crash

Oil posted its biggest monthly advance on record, just a few weeks after prices made a dramatic plunge below zero.

According to Bloomberg, crude surged about 88 percent in May, with U.S. futures on Friday rising above \$35 a barrel for the first time since March, driven by massive supply curbs by producers across the world. Still, prices are well below levels at the start of the year, and demand that was crushed by the coronavirus crisis may need to show a sustained improvement for the rally to extend further.

For now, the outlook for consumption looks bleak, though it's on the mend. While virus-related lockdowns are easing, demand isn't yet roaring back in the U.S. Fuel sales that were clobbered in European nations such as Spain and Italy will take time to recover. China is a bright spot, but the rest of Asia is still struggling.

The number of rigs drilling for oil in the U.S. fell for the eleventh week, stemming the massive glut of crude that flooded the market. Yet there's a risk that oil's advance could tempt producers to turn on their taps again.

"At the end of the day, what is driving everything is fuel demand," said Tom O'Connor, senior director of petroleum markets at global consultancy ICF. "There is going to be an underlying depression in demand that is going to be there for some time."

U.S. crude futures fluctuated Friday, as Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell defended aggressive action to shield the economy as the coronavirus pandemic took hold. Prices surged at the



close, with West Texas Intermediate oil settling 5.3 percent higher at \$35.49 a barrel, after falling as much as 4 percent earlier in the day. Futures posted the biggest monthly jump in data going back to 1983.

Brent crude for July, which expires Friday, rose 4 cents to \$35.33, closing below WTI for the first time since 2016. The global benchmark has rallied almost 40 percent this month. The more active August contract rose 5 percent to settle at \$37.84.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump is poised to sign a measure that would punish Chinese officials for imprisoning more than one million Muslims in internment camps, as he looks to rebuke Beijing over its crackdown in Hong Kong and its response to the coronavirus. He has also discussed putting targeted sanctions and trade measures on China's financial sector.

"It's a bit of a potentially volatile environment right now," O'Connor said regarding tensions between the world's two largest economies. "If it affects relationships to the point that the Chinese aren't going to take crude exports from the U.S., that would have a negative effect."

'Iran's gas export deals may see essential changes after pandemic'

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hossein Montazer Torbati says the conditions governing Iran's long-term gas contracts probably undergo essential changes after the coronavirus pandemic, Press TV reported.

The comments come after reports in recent days suggested that Turkey, a main customer of Iran's natural gas, is unwilling to repair a pipeline damaged in an explosion in late March as it seeks lower prices in the light of a recent fall in international crude prices.

Gas export deals designate oil prices as a benchmark for determining gas prices although any price change would need at least six months to take effect.

Montazer told the semi-official ILNA news agency that Iran would introduce new pricing mechanisms in gas export deals in future, without elaborating on how they would work.



He said Iran would also start negotiating with Turkey about an extension to the current gas export deal beyond 2025.

The NIGC chief said Iran would always remain a reliable supplier of natural gas to Turkey despite changes that are taking place in the country's energy market where the government is allowing more activity for the private-sector suppliers.

On Iran's plans for gas exports to new regions and countries, Torbati said Tehran is studying plans to deliver gas to areas bordering Iran in the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan in neighboring Iraq.

The official said authorities in the Iraqi Kurdistan have submitted several requests for start of gas supply from Iran to the bordering regions.

He also said that the Iranian Oil Ministry's department for international affairs is currently working on a contract for launching gas exports to Oman.

Iran exports gas to its neighbor Iraq as well.

In late April, NIGC Dispatching Director Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana said the country is exporting 32 million cubic meters (mcm) of natural gas to Iraq on a daily basis.

Iraq inked a deal in late 2017 to import gas from Iran to the eastern border province of Diyala, increasing purchases of the Iranian fuel, which started in June that year after several years of delay.

As per the deal, Iran committed itself to export gas to the Iraqi capital Baghdad and the southern Iraqi city of Basra.

Thanks to renewables and machine learning, Google now forecasts the wind

Wind farms have traditionally made less money for the electricity they produce because they have been unable to predict how windy it will be tomorrow.

"The way a lot of power markets work is you have to schedule your assets a day ahead," Forbes quoted Michael Terrell, the head of energy market strategy at Google, as saying. "And you tend to get compensated higher when you do that than if you sell into the market real-time."

"Well, how do variable assets like wind schedule a day ahead when you don't know the wind is going to blow?" Terrell asked. "And how can you actually reserve your place in line?" "We're not getting the full benefit and the full value of that power."

Here's how: Google and the Google-owned Artificial Intelligence firm DeepMind combined weather data with power data from 700 megawatts of wind energy that Google sources in the Central United States. Using machine learning, they have been able to better predict wind production, better predict electricity supply and demand, and as a result, reduce operating costs.

"What we've been doing is working in partnership with the DeepMind team to use machine learning to take the weather data that's available publicly, actually forecast what we think the wind production will be the next day, and bid that wind into the day-ahead markets," Terrell said in a recent seminar hosted by the Stanford Precourt Institute of Energy. Stanford University posted video of the seminar last week.

The result has been a 20 percent increase in revenue for wind farms, Terrell said.

The Department of Energy listed improved wind forecasting as a first priority in its 2015 Wind Vision report, largely to improve reliability: "Improve Wind Resource Characterization," the report said at the top of its list of goals. "Collect data and develop models to improve wind forecasting at multiple temporal scales—e.g., minutes, hours, days, months, years."

Google's goal has been more sweeping: to scrub carbon entirely from its energy portfolio, which consumes as much power as two San Franciscos.

Google achieved an initial milestone by matching its annual energy use with its annual renewable-energy procurement, Terrell said. But the company has not been carbon-free in every location at every hour, which is now its new goal—what Terrell calls its "24x7 carbon-free" goal.

"We're really starting to turn our efforts in this direction, and we're finding that it's not something that's easy to do. It's arguably a moon shot, especially in places where the renewable resources of today are not as cost effective as they are in other places."

The scientists at London-based DeepMind have demonstrated that artificial intelligence can help by increasing the market viability of renewables at Google and beyond.

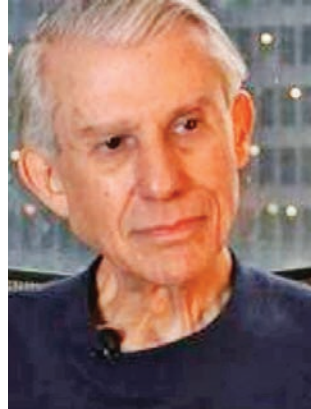
"Our hope is that this kind of machine learning approach can strengthen the business case for wind power and drive further adoption of carbon-free energy on electric grids worldwide," said DeepMind program manager Sims Witherspoon and Google software engineer Carl Elkin.

Black man's murder was no isolated incident: Lendman

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — U.S. columnist Stephen Lendman says "African-American George Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis cop was no isolated incident."

"In U.S. inner city minority communities, what goes on is much like how apartheid Israel grievously abuses defenseless Palestinians — operating with impunity," Lendman tells the Tehran Times.



Following is the text of the interview with Stephen Lendman.

■ After a Black man was killed in Minneapolis, we witnessed popular protests against this violent act. What are the reasons for these clashes between police and people of color, especially the Blacks?

A: African-American George Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis cop was no isolated incident, far from it.

On average in the U.S., cops nationwide kill around 3 victims daily, over 1,000 times annually, nearly always with impunity.

Nonthreatening Black male youths are their favorite target — most often over nothing. Claims otherwise like threatening an officer or resisting arrest are Big Lies.

What time and again state and local police call "justifiable homicides" is cold-blooded/state-permitted murder.

The rule of law and rights under it don't exist for ordinary Americans, especially not for people of color, while privileged ones get away with murder, grand theft, and much more.

In U.S. inner city minority communities, what goes on is much like how apartheid Israel grievously abuses defenseless Palestinians — operating with impunity.

With the rarest of rare exceptions, no matter how often U.S. cops kill defenseless victims, nearly always they remain free to kill again, accountability rarely ever forthcoming, the rule of law unenforced.

Belatedly charging killer cop Derek Chauvin with 3rd-degree murder and 2nd degree manslaughter is no assurance of conviction.

Rarely ever are U.S. cops convicted of crimes, especially not when committed against Black Americans.

Other Minneapolis cops involved in Floyd's murder remain free uncharged — even though they were accomplices to his murder.

Street protests and violence in Minneapolis and around two dozen other U.S. cities go way beyond the killing of a Black male by a cop.

They represent generations of built up rage over state-sponsored injustice against America's most vulnerable, notably its Black population.

From colonial America to today, they've gone from chattel to wage slavery, Jim Crow to its modern-day version, and mid-19th century emancipation to mass incarceration in the world's largest gulag prison system — operating globally.

■ As president, Trump angered protesters with a tweet following the incident, to the point that Twitter was forced to hide his tweet. What is the reason for Trump's racist approach?

A: Trump is a racist. He was hostile to people of color as a businessman, the same way as president, but he's not alone.

The vast majority in Congress are the same way. Judge them by their policies — waging war on humanity at home and abroad by hot and other means, against Muslims and people of color.

U.S. policy is all about serving privileged interests exclusively, largely white males benefitting.

They benefit by exploiting others, the vast majority at home and abroad, especially the most vulnerable, mostly people of color.

■ Given that the ballot box is important for Trump, it seems that he feels that racist rhetoric can attract whites who also have racial approaches. What is your assessment?

A: Trump is in a tough reelection battle for a 2nd term. The latest U.S. polls show public sentiment against him by around 53% negative - 43% positive.

If that holds to election day in November, he'll be a one-term president.

Virtually everything he does is politicized, the same true for other U.S. politicians.

Key above current protests nationwide over Floyd's killing is the U.S. economy in collapse.

Around half of U.S. working-age Americans are either unemployed or working reduced hours at less pay and fewer or no benefits.

Millions lost their health insurance. The dismal state of the economy causing widespread human suffering will defeat Trump if continues to November.

■ One of the dangers facing the United States is the multiculturalism that is dominant in the country, for which liberalism has not been able to find a solution. Why has the country not been able to find a way to this multiculturalism and attract immigrants as well as linguistic, racial and religious minorities?

A: The U.S. is a neoliberal society, not a liberal one. It's based on the principle that Americans can have whatever they want - based on the ability to pay.

Social justice in America is eroding, heading toward elimination altogether to free up maximum revenue for militarism, endless wars, and handouts to corporate America.

Ordinary Americans are increasingly on their own. Dems are as dismissive of peace, equity, and justice as Republicans. They just sound different.

The U.S. is a one-party state with two right wings - the war party.

In U.S. inner city minority communities, what goes on is much like how apartheid Israel grievously abuses defenseless Palestinians — operating with impunity.

Trump is a racist. He was hostile to people of color as a businessman, the same way as president, but he's not alone.

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Thomas M. Scanlon, Alford professor of natural religion, moral philosophy, and civil polity at Harvard University, tells the Tehran Times that "police violence especially against Blacks and other minorities is not a new phenomenon."

Professor Scanlon says violence against Blacks "has been true for many years and was even worse in the past."

According to abc.net.au, violent protests have broken out across the U.S. sparked by outrage over the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was filmed crying out for help as a white policeman pinned him to the ground in Minneapolis last Monday.

Scanlon says, "Mass protests of the kind we are seeing have been much more frequent since the 1960s."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ After a Black man was killed in Minneapolis, protests were sparked against this violent act. What are the reasons for clashes between American police and people of color, especially the blacks?

A: Members of minority communities, especially Blacks, believe, very reasonably and correctly, that the police do not take their rights sufficiently seriously, treat them with disrespect, and use violence against them when this is not justified and would not be used against whites in similar circumstances. What you say raises two questions: Why does this kind of behavior by police occur and persist? And why are we seeing these protests now? The answer to the first question is that because of the groups from which police are recruited and the internal culture of police departments, police see the residents of minority neighborhoods as people they are to control rather than as people they are to protect. They see Black men, in particular, as more likely than whites to be criminals or to be a threat to them, and are therefore, partly for reasons of self-protection, feel justified in using violence first. But they also are particularly sensitive to having their authority questioned by Blacks, particularly Black men. This may in part be self-protection: they see willingness to obey their commands as important to their safety. But is also a matter of status: they feel superior to Blacks and resist any questioning of that superiority. This was shown, for example, in an incident here in Cambridge at which police confronted a Black Harvard professor who

"They (white police forces) feel superior to Blacks and resist any questioning of that superiority."



was returning from a trip in his own house, accusing him of having broken in. They were extremely disrespectful, demanding the he leave the house and so on, and became very angry when he refused to do this.

Police violence especially against Blacks and other minorities is not a new phenomenon. It has been true for many years and was even worse in the past. Mass protests of the kind we are seeing have been much more frequent since the 1960s. In one way, this reflects a kind of progress. Blacks are more encouraged to think that they do not have to stand for this kind of mistreatment, and that protests will receive a sympathetic hearing in the national press and in many sections of American society. But this progress itself fuels resentment on the part of the police and members of society who identify with

them, at having their status and authority called into question.

■ As president of the United States, Trump also angered protesters with a tweet following the incident, to the point that Twitter was forced to hide his tweet. What is the reason for Trump's racist approach?

A: This resentment is encouraged by politicians such as President Trump and the members of his party (going back to Nixon's "southern strategy" in the 1960s), who cynically want to exploit it for political gain. Many whites, like white members of the police force, do not want to have their superior status questioned, and do not want to accept the charge, made explicit in the protests and echoed in the more liberal press, that Blacks still suffer from widespread discrimination, in their treatment by police and in other

"Blacks are more encouraged to think that they do not have to stand for this kind of mistreatment, and that protests will receive a sympathetic hearing in the national press and in many sections of American society."

Chaos in Minneapolis: Why Trump is guilty

By Amir Miri

Racism in the United States has a long story. From the first days of exploring the America continent up to Independence Day, racism has been existing in the American culture.

Slavery was the cornerstone of the U.S. economy. Millions of African workers were abducted from African continent and brought to America. They had to work on the farms as slaves. After decades, they reached this idea that their problems would be solved if the United States becomes independent from Britain.

They had imagined that Britain was the problem. After Independence Day nothing changed. In the new system they found out that they were still slaves.

In 1864, something happened. The Thirteenth amendment to the U.S. constitution

opened the new gate from hell to heaven. According to the constitution, all slaves were free. But this picture was a very big mirage. Millions of the white nationalists started to torture them. Kukulsklans (KKK) stood up everywhere. They only wanted to exterminate all African Americans. In the south, things were worse.

The African Americas were free but they became second citizens. They had to go to specific schools. In front of the white people they should have behaved like a servant. On the bus, they had nowhere to sit. There are other examples.

100 years after the abolition of slavery, Martin Luther King Jr with hundreds of thousands of people marched and orated a very exciting speech about his dream about real freedom. In 1965, Congress passed a legislation that gave the right of vote to African Americans. After this, from 1964 to

1970, some chaos and insurgency in the black neighborhoods caused many white people to reduce their support for the African Americans movement. After this time the world started to change. Internet caused millions of people to promote their awareness of the conception of race. This did not permit racists to show their desires until Obama was elected as first black American president.

After Obama was elected president, some Republican leaders gathered in a hotel in Washington and decided to do everything possible to stop this black president and not let him to succeed. They provoked white people and did sabotage acts.

Also, more than 100,000 white Americans signed an online petition to secede from the United States. Millions of white people were angry and eight years later they voted to the whitest man that had much rumor about his racist behavior. Trump won the election

ways. So a lot of what we are seeing is the product of progress made in the 1960s, and the backlash against it.

■ Which moral schools pay more attention to the fight against racism and the rights of minorities?

A: I am not sure what you mean by "schools of philosophy." As myself a member of what might be called the school of egalitarian liberalism, of which the work of John Rawls is a leading example, I believe that this school provides a solid basis for condemning discrimination against Blacks in the treatment by police, in the provision of public services such as education and public health, and in economic opportunity.

■ One of the dangers facing the United States is multiculturalism that prevails in the country, for which liberalism has not been able to find a solution. Why has the country not been able to find a way to adapt to multiculturalism, for example attracting immigrants, especially racial and religious minorities?

A: The term, 'Multiculturalism', generally refers to a view in political philosophy that a society consisting of different cultural groups is possible and even desirable. But I take it that by 'the multiculturalism that prevails' you may mean simply the social phenomenon of cultural diversity. Multiculturalism in the former sense includes the idea that in order to have a peaceful and desirable society it is not necessary for members of distinct cultural groups to adopt the "dominant culture" of the society. This idea is an important part of what "liberalism" means in the U.S. I think that this idea is widely accepted in American society. As in the case of racism discussed earlier, I think that what we are seeing is in part a by-product of this progress. Significant sectors of American society, particularly away from the coasts and the large cities, see the erosion of the idea that everyone must accept the "dominant culture" as a threat to their status, as the only, "real Americans." Cynical politicians such as our current president and many members of his party, are trying to foster and exploit this resentment for their own political gain. So the problems we are seeing are not a failure of liberalism except in the sense of illustrating that liberalism is not as widely accepted as one would like it to be. And this is true in no small part because of the actions of cynical political leaders.

and started to destroy the legacy of Obama.

Kukulskluns and racists support Trump and he needs their votes. He encouraged them by his acts like pardoning guilty soldiers who killed innocents around the world. He insults people who do not stand while the national anthem is being played. Most of them are black and they have demands.

Trump is famous for his tweets. He made many somber remarks and in his recent tweets, he wrote, "When the looting starts, the shooting starts." This sentence was first used by the racist Florida governor in 1967. Now he proved that everything that his opponents say about him is true.

He is like a 12-year-old boy who has no knowledge of politics.

Henry Kissinger has said dealing with politics is different from a business. Somebody in the White House should remind the president, first learn how to speak to people.

What does Trump's handling of protests tell us Iranians?

By Tehran Times editorial board

When thousands of Iranian demonstrators took to the streets to vent outrage at surprise hikes in gasoline price in major cities in December and January, the White House masked its evil face under an angelic language to support vandalism and terror inside the country.

"To the leaders of Iran - DO NOT KILL YOUR PROTESTERS. Thousands have already been killed or imprisoned by you, and the World is watching. More importantly, the USA is watching. Turn your internet back on and let reporters roam free! Stop the killing of your great Iranian people!" U.S. President Trump twitted in January.

Similarly, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a speech at the State Department in December, "The faces of the victims will not be forgotten... Iran's human rights violations are worse than unacceptable. They're evil and they're wrong."

These comments were made in reaction to Iranian authority condemning vandalism and looting during demonstrations as the act of organized groups and thugs.

In a turn of events five months after the protests in Iran, the viral video of a Black man, George Floyd, grasping for breath as a white Minneapolis policeman kneeling on his neck has sparked nationwide rage across the country.

Floyd's death comes on the heels of Ahmaud Aubrey's murder at the hands of two white men in Georgia.

What is interesting is President Trump's reaction to the righteous protests. On Saturday, he commended the Secret Service for its handling of the protestors, who he said in tweets were "professionally managed" and "organized group". He warned them that they would have been "greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons"



if they had breached the security cordon and managed to enter the premises.

Trump had earlier called the protestors "thugs" and warned them, deploying a controversial phrase used by a Miami mayor against civil rights activists in the 1960s, and later by a segregationist — "When the looting starts, shooting starts". For the Iranians who yet to see the dark side of White House

officials and their true intentions, the handling of the protests should serve as a cautionary tale. A reminder of the fact that it is not just African Americans who "can't breathe" under the systematic racism and dictatorship of the U.S. There are millions of human beings across the globe who have suffered and continue to suffer from under the tyrannical boots of the U.S., including 80 millions of Iranians.

Israel's China ties scrutinized by U.S.

At the heart of the matter is China's opposition to the illegal annexation plans and alliance with Iran

Economic tensions between the two global superpowers was amplified by political outrage in the U.S. over China's role of spreading the new coronavirus and concerns over espionage in the technology, research and development sector resulting in the revival of the trade war between the two nations.

As a result of the tensions, Israel's bilateral trade, investment and academic ties with China have come under the U.S. radar.

At the heart of the matter is China's rejection of Israel's illegal annexation plans to be implemented from July during the fifth term of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a statement on May 21, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, expressed deep concerns about reports of Israel's plan to annex part of the occupied Palestinian territory. He was quoted by CGTN that the two-state solution is the only viable way forward to solve the Palestinian question and urged the relevant parties to stop unilateral action and refrain from escalating tension.

The envoy urged the Security Council to do its part to prevent such a dangerous move, and promote early resumption of Palestinian-Israeli peace talks in accordance with relevant UN resolutions.

He emphasized that the Palestinian question is at the root of the turbulence in the Middle East and that independent statehood is the inalienable national right of the Palestinian people, with East Jerusalem as their capital and it is not something for trading.

Of another concern for U.S. President Donald Trump's administration is China's close ties with the Islamic Republic and Russia. On December 27, 2019, China, Russia and Iran began joint naval drills in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman. This unprecedented military cooperation among the three powers, all under U.S. sanctions, is said to be an emergence of "counter-coalition" to confront the U.S. It is a matter of concern for Trump administration and a point of contention for the Zionist state.

Chinese investment blocked

On May 26, Israel rejected Chinese



Zhang Jun, China's ambassador to the UN, has told the UN Security Council that a two-state solution is the only way forward. (Photo: EPA-EFE)

investment bid by C.K. Hutchison Holdings, controlled by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing, to build \$1.5 billion Sorek2 project, which could supply one third of Israel's water. The project was instead handed over to a consortium led by local company IDE Technologies and financed by Israel's Bank Leumi and two European banks.

Decision comes amid U.S. opposition to any Chinese involved on the plant's construction which became a key issue during U.S. Foreign Secretary Mike Pompeo's lightning trip to Israel in May.

Trump's opposition has pressured Israel after it allowed a Shanghai-based company to operate a port in Haifa and telecom equipment group Huawei and ZTE expressed interest in expanding in the Zionist state.

Israel and China trade has grown about 400 percent in the past decade to more than \$14 billion, reported the Financial Times. According to another report by Bloomberg, China is Israel's second largest trading part, behind the U.S., with an annual turnover of \$11.5 billion. The figure more than doubled over

the past decade, as Netanyahu singled out commerce with China as a major target for expansion.

However, U.S. is by far Israel's most important trading partner, with \$31.8 billion in annual bilateral trade. Washington also provides an unrivaled \$3.8 billion in annual defense funding, security cooperation and close technological collaboration.

The rare point of discord between U.S. and Israel comes as Trump administration ramped up trade war with China for its role in the spread of new coronavirus pandemic.

Israeli security officials also argued any financial saving promised by C.K. Hutchison were outweighed by concerns that the plant, one of the largest in the world, would allow Chinese nationals to surveil a weapons program being developed with U.S. aid in the vicinity.

Academic ties

Israel's academic ties with China are under the U.S.'s radar amid projects involving technology research and development, according to informed sources who spoke under the condition of anonymity, adding that U.S. is Israel's

top benefactor and cannot be ignored.

Efforts to root out economic espionage in academic institutions escalated sharply in January when a Harvard University chemistry professor was arrested for allegedly lying to investigators about his role in recruiting people to pass along scientific research to the Chinese government. The two countries have exchange programs and research cooperation agreements. The U.S. hasn't raised Israel-Chinese academic ties as an issue.

In 2015, the two countries set up scholarship funding between seven universities each from the two countries. Today, about 1,000 Chinese citizens study in Israeli universities each year, most in technology, science and engineering, according to Emma Afterman, head of international policy of Israel's official Council for Higher Education. A few hundred Israeli students study in China annually.

Circling back to the economic ties, legislation passed by the Senate and now introduced to the House is intended to discourage Chinese companies' listings in U.S. stock exchanges. The qualm that Chinese companies have been avoiding accounting-quality checks that other public firms endure.

"China has no intention to change, still less replace the United States," China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi said on Sunday. The foreign ministry has accused the Trump administration of interfering in China's affairs by adding eight companies of playing a role in a crackdown on its Muslim northwestern region of Xinjiang to an export blacklist.

On Monday China demanded U.S. withdraw export sanctions on 33 more Chinese tech companies and government entities in the latest round of a worsening conflict.

Now with the approval of the Hong Kong national security law, Beijing has vowed more countermeasures against the UK and the U.S. for their defiance of the law. In the near future expect a worsening of ties and trade war between Washington and Beijing, and with that a worsening of Chinese relations with the Zionist state.

U.S.-China strategic rivalry has entered 'high-risk period': top Chinese officer

A Chinese top military official says the strategic rivalry between his country and the United States has entered a "high-risk period," with Washington having intensified "the suppression and containment" of China since the coronavirus pandemic hit the globe.

China's Defense Minister Wei Fenghe told a gathering of top military officials that China needed to further bolster its fighting spirit as "the Sino-U.S. strategic confrontation has entered a period of high risk."

"The United States has intensified the suppression and containment of our side since the [coronavirus] outbreak, and the Sino-U.S. strategic confrontation has entered a period of high risk," Wei said.

"We must strengthen our fighting spirit, be daring to fight and be good at fighting, and use fighting to promote stability," he added.

During the session, Zhu Cheng, head of the Chinese Air Force's armament department, also said that rivalry between China and the West was intensifying in different fields, including the cyber, space, deep sea and biological spheres.

He said that China needs to speed up "the application of home-grown innovative and revolutionary technologies."

"We need to avoid the strategic vulnerabilities caused by generation lapse with the United States and the West," he said.

A navy officer told the session, "In the face of the U.S.'s dogged confrontation and the sudden blow of the coronavirus pandemic, Chairman Xi [Jinping] has led us to overcome the difficulties and turn danger into opportunities."

On Wednesday, President Xi ordered the armed forces to "comprehensively" strengthen the training of troops and be prepared for war.

Beijing said it would boost defense spending by 6.6% this year, for the first time since such records were introduced in 1992.

Relations between the two world powers have hit the lowest level in decades amid an escalation of the war of words over the pandemic, the Taiwan sovereignty and Hong Kong security law.

In February, Pentagon chief Mark Esper described China as a rising threat to the world order during the Munich Security Conference, calling on the participants to side with Washington in getting prepared for "high intensity conflict against China."

China to use force against Taiwan as last resort

Head of China's parliament, Li Zhanshu said on Friday that Beijing will use force against Taiwan, "if the possibility for peaceful reunification is lost."

He said China will "take all necessary steps to resolutely smash any separatist plots or actions" in the self-ruled island.

Li, who is also the ruling Communist Party's third most senior leader, said Beijing does "not promise to abandon the use of force... to stabilize and control the situation in the Taiwan Strait."

Taiwan broke away from the mainland during a civil war in 1949, but China considers the self-ruled island part of its territory under the globally-recognized "One China" policy.

Almost all world countries recognize Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan, including the United States.

Washington, however, has been courting Taipei, in the form of extensive military cooperation, in an affront to Beijing.

China has repeatedly warned against such U.S. interactions with Taiwan.

The Trump administration announced earlier this month that it had approved a potential \$180 million arms sale to Taiwan.

Iran gets admission into Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle elite club



UUV is similar to Ghadir-class submarines, which have been developed for use in the depths of the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman.

The Persian Gulf becoming more unsafe for enemies

Although there is not much information about the new Iranian UUV, what can be said for sure is that the IRGC's submarine program has successfully passed the design and the evaluation stage on computers and scientific hypotheses, and has now reached marine experiments.

With such systems coming on stream, the Islamic Republic, in addition to adding an important option to its defense structure, will join an elite club whose members could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

In addition to increasing the country's defense capabilities, this new development also carries an important message: Despite all efforts to keep the Islamic Republic away from modern sciences and scientific progress, the Iranian youth, by relying on their own knowledge and capabilities, have been able to reach a position that even the largest weapons manufacturers of the world have not been able to reach yet.

As such, the invading and aggressive Western countries, which have deployed their warships in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman under the pretext of providing security, will have another concern in addition to speedboats, and that is Iran's uncrewed underwater vehicles.

Iran and Western countries, especially the United States and Britain, have had many confrontations in the Persian Gulf, and now, with the addition of the new vessels to Iran's defensive forces, the developments in the region will definitely change, and it is even possible that the current level of presence of Western countries in the region will also go through some changes.

Furthermore, the Western countries, in particular the United States, which has repeatedly tasted defeat at the hands of Iran's indigenous knowledge, especially in the field of drones, will now have another unmanned defense system to deal with.

According to the article, the Iranian UUV is comparable to the Boeing Orca extra-large uncrewed underwater vehicle (XLUUV), which is being developed for the U.S. Navy.

The Boeing Orca XLUUV, named after the killer whale, is described as Extra Large Unmanned Undersea Vehicles that could be used for mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, electronic warfare, and strike missions.

Uncrewed underwater vehicles such as Orca will revolutionize naval battles and provide naval forces with low-cost, semi-disposable combat systems that can cover the gaps on the battlefield or easily navigate to locations that are impossible or dangerous for ships and crewed submarines.

Interpreting the motto 'We Can Do It' Mashregh News wrote in an article about the Iranian UUV, which it described as IRGC's military surprise, that "given the size of the UUV, it could be predicted that the vessel could be used to carry a torpedo or used as a remote control platform to launch attacks from depths of the sea and create a tremendous explosion to sink heavy vessels.

The IRGC's first try at developing uncrewed underwater vehicles was the 'Ya-

Mahdi' speed boat, which according to the information stated in documentaries aired on national TV, was equipped with three rocket launchers and could also serve as a moving bomb at sea by carrying explosives and hitting the bodies of enemy ships.

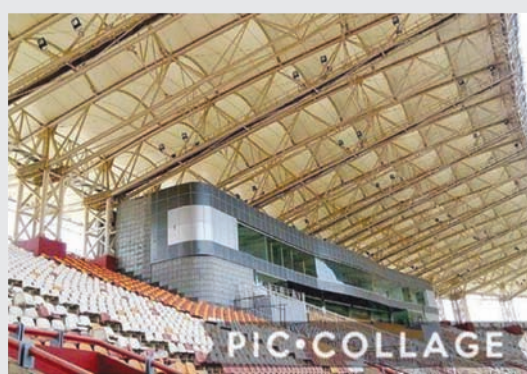
In 2015, in an interview with Rear Admiral Sardar Fadavi, the then commander of the IRGC Navy (NEDSA), regarding the delivery of submarines into the Navy's combat units, he said, "Hopefully by the end of the fifth five-year plan, which is nearly at its end, we will have finished the basic stages of this underwater vessel and have something ready to display."

An image released at the delivery of high-speed vessels to the IRGC navy revealed that the IRGC has taken important steps in the field of submarines and it seems that the development of an uncrewed underwater vehicle that had been on the agenda has reached acceptable and operational results.

IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami had said in October 2019 that the country should take steps toward manufacturing uncrewed vessels, adding "making that achievement is possible given the knowledge we have."

It should be noted that the new Iranian

Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



Khorasan Razavi exports \$11.1m of handicrafts

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Some 9,000 tons of handicrafts valued at \$11.1 million were exported from northeastern Khorasan Razavi province during the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended March 19), CHTN reported. Woodwork, jewelry, kilim, zilou floor coverings, ceramics, traditional glassware, copper products and precious and semiprecious stones constituted majority of the exports, of which kilim and zilou floor coverings are the most sought-after, provincial tourism chief Abolfazl Mokarramifar said on Sunday.



Handicrafts exports from Iran reached some \$146 million during the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year, while exports amounted to \$289 million in the year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019), according to data announced by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Dozens of Iranian handicrafts have gained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence during the past couple of years. Some 75 percent of Iranian handicrafts are produced by females, Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, said in April 2018.

Aran-Bidgol has potential to become cultural tourism hub

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – The city of Aran-Bidgol in central Isfahan province has the potential to become one of the cultural tourism hubs of the country thanks to its history of human social life which dates back to more than 40,000 years ago, governor of the city has said.

The city enjoys numerous valuable historical monuments belonging to different historical eras, as well as various natural attractions, Esmail Baybordi said on Saturday, CHTN reported.



He also noted that the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting the city rose by 20 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19), before the outbreak of coronavirus, compared to the year earlier.

Aran-Bidgol is the gateway to Maranjab desert and caravan-sary, which also draws thousands of domestic travelers each year. The desert, which is a top destination for off-roaders, lead to salt lake from the north, Band-e Rig and Desert National Park from the east, Masileh Desert, Hoz-e sultan and Moreh Lakes from the west and eventually Aran and Bidgol from the south.

Situated in Isfahan province, the town is surrounded by desert from the north and east, and thus it has a typical climate of hot and dry in summer, cold and dry in winter, and very little rainfall during the year.

Last year, a team of Iranian archaeologists found remnants of a centuries-old network, which used to supply water to the underground city of Nushabad, located in the central district of Aran-Bidgol county.

Water taxi design contest aims to promote maritime tourism

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A water taxi design contest will be held in Tehran in order to develop maritime tourism, ISNA reported.



Organized by Baadban Marine Accelerator, the contest aims at creating an efficient infrastructure for the expansion of educational and technological activities in the field of maritime tourism as well as promoting Iran's capacities in this branch of tourism.

For further information, applicants are requested to refer to Baadban official website and submit their works before July 21. Iran regards tourism a fountain of wealth to make a strong alternative for petrodollars despite falling oil prices and the U.S. sanctions targeting to cripple its national economy.

Over the past couple of years, the Islamic Republic has made various efforts to exploit maritime tourism potential by developing hospitality infrastructures, diversifying sea routes, and drawing private sector investors along its vast southern coasts.

Prosperous maritime tourism could help the county to meet its ambitious target of attracting 20 million annual tourists by 2025. It also keeps an eye on tourism developments in the Caspian Sea in the north.

No restrictions for organizing package tours: deputy minister

→ 1 Talking to the Tehran Times, Teymouri said the tourism industry of Iran will get back on the right track sooner than expected thanks to measures taken to tackle the spread of coronavirus.

"I believe that tourism industry of the country will get back on the right track far sooner than generally expected thanks to the measures taken to deal with the spread of coronavirus in tourist destinations, hotels, stopovers, and all the centers which are affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts."

Titled 'The Smart Travel Protocol (Travel + Health)', it has been widely welcomed by travel professionals and tourism stakeholders for being very effective in recovering and stimulating domestic tourism, Teymouri explained.

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

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. The latest available data show eight million

tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Discover how pinnacle of art, genius of ancient architects turned natural arch into full-fledged stronghold

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A good amalgam of natural landscape and human genius has created what modern visitors witness at Sepahbod Khorshid Cave, which was once a unique defensive architecture during the Sassanid era (224–651 CE).

Situated on Savad Kooh highlands, northern Mazandaran province, the cave was used as a shelter by Khorshid ("The sun"), the last ruler of Tabarestan, then surrounded by Arab invaders for several months and seized after poisoning its drinking water supply. Some consider this cave as the latest Persian stronghold against the Arab conquerors. Access to the cave needs climbing gear and also expertise in alpinism.

Measuring 80 by 100 meters, its arched entrance is said to be the largest natural one in the world. On the left side of the cave, a four-story-high castle was built; made of stones and mortar, it is the masterpiece of architecture of its time. On the right side, numerous trenches and defensive buildings were built, all of which remained firm and intact after centuries.

These two parts were connected through a road made of stones and mortar. Two meters wide, this road was built 50 meters above ground level. Today only traces of



A general view of the Sepahbod Khorshid Cave, once a unique defensive architecture during the Sassanid era (224–651 CE), on Savad Kooh highlands, Mazandaran province, northern Iran.

Shahroud, the land of five climates

By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig

(Part 2/3)

■ Shahroud souvenirs

Apart from handicrafts, the most important souvenirs of Shahroud are dried apricots or Qeysi, which contain their kernels, and grape products. Due to the quality and variety, it is not only considered by travelers, but also its export is remarkable.

Another unique souvenir of Shahroud is the salted apricot kernel or Shahroudi pistachio made in the mountainous village of Tash. Because the apricot kernels are poured into a large copper container after complete washing and placed in the yard on cold winter nights, the kernels are half open due to the extreme cold.

If you travel to Shahroud, you can spend a few hours in the recreational area of the waterfall and in the middle of a beautiful nature to relax to forget about traveling on a desert road. The Desert Bride is not just a name, but a combination of lush nature, historical and mystical places, and hospitable people.

■ Good places for urban tourism

Urban tourism in the city center of Shahroud is a fun program. One of the places you can go for a walk in the heart of history is Shahroud Bazaar. The architecture of Shahroud Bazaar is like many traditional markets in Iran. Works such as Sheikh Ali Akbar Mosque, castle or Qaleh seminary, public bathhouse, cistern, Aqa Mosque, and its Bazaar Tekyeh or chapel are spectacular.

Shahroud Bazaar has been renovated in recent years and has become a tourist attraction for the travelers.

Following the city tour in Shahroud, you can visit the Shahroud Museum on Ferdowsi Street. In the past, the building of Shahroud Museum was a municipality and the governorate and after rehabilitation, it has been turned into a city museum, which



A view of Sheikh Ali Akbar Mosque in Shahroud

has two sections: anthropology and archeology.

■ Bazaar

Shahroud Bazaar is one of the historical and large bazaars of the province, which is located in the center of Shahroud city. This Bazaar dates back to the Qajar period.

In addition to the main corridor, Shahroud Bazaar has three side corridors with many shops and several caravanserais, cistern, public bath, and seminary, and has a special economic status in Shahroud.

■ Sheikh Ali Akbar Mosque

This mosque, which belongs to the Qajar period, was built by the late Sheikh Ali Akbar Muijtahed, one of the Ayatollahs and high-ranking clerics of the city. This 170-year-old building is one of the most beautiful and complete mosques in Shahroud.

The area of this building is about 750 square meters and its infrastructure is 500 square meters and it includes spaces such as Dome, nave, dormitories, and cistern. The mosque has

it remain. The remains of a cistern, several silos, and numerous defensive monuments are located outside the cave.

According to Saman Towfiq, the head of archeological studies on the cave, the structure is the pinnacle of art and genius of the Iranian architects who have turned a natural arch into a full-fledged stronghold.

Towfiq believes that it was the most specific stronghold in terms of form, dimensions, and historical age and was the most important military stronghold throughout the entire history of Iran, the last shelter and the hidden symbol of Iranian resistance against the Arabs and the remotest corner of Iran which deceitfully collapsed after two centuries of the fall of Nahavand and the central government.

According to the archaeologist, the spatial strategic position of the stronghold, its strength, and specific architectural structure made it an unattainable refuge for Tabarestan commanders.

Describing the structure of the cave, Towfiq referred to its outer structure, the royal seat, the middle part, and the arg (citadel) and said in this establishment maximum advantage has been taken from the minimum possibilities.

two entrances, one connected to Shahid Sadouqi Street and the other to Sheikh Ali Akbar Mosque Alley. This building has been inscribed on Iran's National Heritage list.

■ The house of Yaghmaeis

This house, which is a remnant of the beautiful houses of old Shahroud, is located on 8th Shahrivar Street (Bahram) and was built in the early Pahlavi period.

This building is unique in terms of traditional architectural features in the city. The form of the plan is in the form of a central courtyard, the entrance to the house in the southern part is connected to the courtyard by a corridor. The attic is located on the corridor and can be reached by a spiral staircase from the corridor.

In the western part of the courtyard, there is a windbreak and a little pool and guest rooms, a veranda, and a cistern. On the north side, there are the winter rooms. Among the features of this house, there is the city's only windbreak and the pool's skylight, the symmetries in the plan, and the facade, as well as the brick decorations of the plinths around the yard.

■ Bayazid Bastami collection

This large complex is located only six kilometers from Shahroud, in the city of Bastam. It includes works from the Seljuk period onwards, and next to it, the shrine and monastery belonging to Bayazid Bastami, one of the famous mystics of Iran in the third century AH.

The shrine itself is nothing more than a simple tomb in the south corner, adjacent to the dome and porch of Ghazan Khan.

Bayazid Bastami Complex includes: 1. Bayazid Monastery 2. Safavid Porch 3. Bastam Minaret 4. Bayazid Bastami Mosque 5. Bastam Mosque 6. Imamzadeh Mohammad mausoleum 7. Kashaneh Tower 8. Ghazan Khan Dome 9. Shahrokhieh Seminary

Dr. Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig is a faculty member at the Islamic Azad University

Rice planting starts at paddy fields in Mazandaran



TOURISM d e s k Photos depict rice seedlings freshly planted at paddy fields, which are sandwiched between green hills in Zirab county, northern Mazandaran province, May 24, 2020.

Iranian farmers start planting rice on southern Cas-

pian-Sea fields in the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (April-May).

Some 2.9 million tons of rice were harvested in the country during the past Iranian calendar year of 1398 (ended on March 19), according to the Agriculture Ministry.

The fragrance of Iranian rice is distinct worldwide. The Iranian method of rice cooking is very different from those of other countries across the globe. It may seem to be a bit long and detailed, but the key tradition in the Iranian culinary is patience as many Iranians believe that making good food is an art.

Rice cooking in Iran also has a few tricks that you won't find in other rice-loving nations. There are washing, boiling, draining, and finally steaming methods to cook your rice perfectly. For example, Iranians generally cover their rice with a damkoni (a fitted fabric pot-lid cover) when steaming it to prevent the vapor from escaping. Persian rice is best served immediately right out of the pot when it is still hot



and buttery.

The average area under rice cultivation in the country in the past three years was about 605,000 hectares, of which 70 percent is concentrated in northern Gilan and Mazandaran provinces.

Charity foundation to implement 218 water supply projects in deprived areas

➔ According to Mahjouri, the foundation has put into operation about 35,000 construction and infrastructure projects in deprived and less developed areas of the country.

"Barekat foundation has allocated more than 2.3 trillion rials (around \$547 million) for the implementation of these projects," he concluded.

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

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



Spectacular creatures to keep an eye out for when you tour Iran

The wild frontiers of Iran are actually home to some incredible animals, some that you may not even have heard of before. Iran has roughly 20 national parks and 100 nature reserves containing and preserving some rare and interesting species that are excellent places to visit in Iran on your vacation. So if you travel to Iran, make sure that you keep an eye out for some of these beastly beauties.

As you tour Iran, you will notice lots of different critters, some rare, some running all over the place. Iran has a couple of endangered big cats along with 8 different owl species, over 70 different kinds of snakes, camels, deer, wild boar, and more. Here are some examples of the wildlife you might clasp eyes on when you visit Iran, according to Silk Road Explore website.

■ Asiatic Cheetah, the bullet



This subspecies of cheetah now lives only in Iran. They are a bit shorter, slimmer, and paler than the African cheetah, but are not short on speed. Just like its African cousins, the Asiatic cheetah can go from 0 to 96 kph in under 3 seconds! Sadly, this relative of the African cheetah only has a population of between 50-100 that continue to live in the wild.

Khar Turan National Park is the best place to visit in Iran if you want to catch a miraculous glimpse of this antisocial speedster, as the largest number of Asiatic cheetahs can be found here.

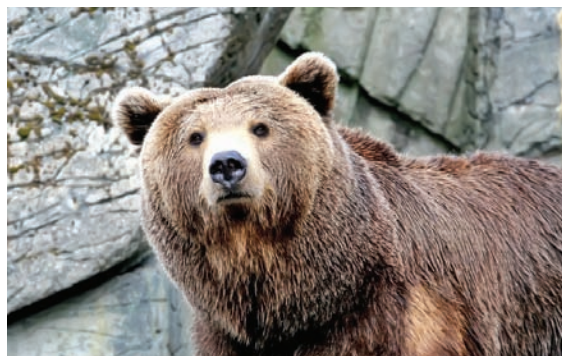
■ Afghan Pika, cute snackage



This fluffy little rodent masquerading as a hamster can be found frolicking all over Iran's mountainous and rocky terrain. Unfortunately for these little guys, they are quite numerous and on the bottom on the food chain (aka – the universal snack food for predators in Iran). They weigh anywhere from 125-400 grams, do not hibernate in winter, and are active night and day, so you are sure to see them

when you travel to Iran as long as you keep an eye out.

■ Persian Brown Bear, a soldier's best friend



The Persian brown bear is similar to European brown bears except they are larger. Nowadays there are only 500-1000 of these bears living in Iran and they are a protected species in the country. An interesting tidbit you may not know is that during World War 2, a Persian brown bear actually became famous the world round. Orphaned as a cub, a Persian brown bear was found by a young Iranian boy who then sold it to some Polish soldiers traveling through Iran. The soldiers raised the bear, whom they named Wojtek, almost as one of them and during battle, this fully grown 200+ kg bear actually hauled ammunition to Polish soldiers during the heat of battle. The bear became so famous that statues were even erected in his honor!

■ Greater Flaminge, Pale Giant



Greater flamingos are actually the largest species of flamingo as well as the palest. Its legs are long and pink, its wing tips black, but their body is not a vibrant pink color. The average Greater flamingo reaches a height of 1.5 meters and weighs about 4 kilograms. Their flocks are usually quite large and they are a beautiful sight to behold, flying in droves over the tranquil lake surfaces of Iran, so do not miss the opportunity to capture some shots of them when you visit Iran's wild frontiers.

■ Persian Leopard, Golden Feline

Persian leopards are bigger than African leopards and today, about 800 of them can be found in Iran. Persian leopards prefer to roam around Iran's mountain ranges and close to the Caspian Sea in its forested areas. These beautiful creatures have golden colored fur and often get very close to their prey before attacking, about 3-10 meters.

■ Persian onager, world's most elegant donkey



Ok, usually donkeys are not that aesthetically appealing, but that is because you have not seen a Persian wild ass! Would you believe that these animals are actually quite beautiful and elegant looking? Creamy brown on top and a soft pale underneath with smooth coats, the Persian wild ass is quite rare. Today there are only about 400-600 left in the wild, all in Iran. If you want to try to get a picture of one as you tour Iran, the largest number of them can be found in Khar Turan National Park.

■ Wildlife tour of Iran



Even if you do not go on a tour of Iran that is focused solely on wildlife, make sure you incorporate at least a bit of photo hunting for Iran's beautiful and unique animals. Whether it is birds, big cats, or bears, a glimpse of these rare creatures is sure to add a special dimension to your trip. Enjoy the wide expanses of nature in Iran and see a world that few people have ventured into: Iran's wild frontiers.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ع

Iran starts smart screening program to contain coronavirus

The second phase of the social distancing plan in Iran started on Tuesday within the framework of a screening program to curb the spread of coronavirus. "Under the program, we will conduct tests on the asymptomatic people who are transmitting the virus to the community without awareness," Health Minister Saeed Namaki said explained, IRNA reported. "With the help of knowledge-based companies, we are moving to centers that have no symptoms, and for this we need an extensive diagnosis," he added.

آغاز طرح فاصله گذاری هوشمند در ایران برای مقابله با کرونا

اجرای گام دوم طرح غربالگری و مقابله با کرونا در کشور روز سه شنبه آغاز شد. به گزارش ایرنا، سعید نمکی، وزیر بهداشت، در تشریح این طرح گفت: در این مرحله سراغ افراد بدون علامت که منشأ عفونت هستند می‌رویم و برای این اقدام به آزمایش‌های گسترده نیاز داریم. او افزود: با کمک شرکت‌های دانش بنیان، سراغ کانون‌هایی می‌رویم که علامت ندارند، اما ویروس را در سطح جامعه جابه‌جا می‌کنند.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“mal-, male-”

■ **Meaning:** bad, evil

■ **For example:** nearly 67% of the country's population suffers from **malnutrition**.

PHRASAL VERB

Rely on

■ **Meaning:** to count on, depend on; trust

■ **For example:** Don't worry. You can rely on me. I can keep a secret.

IDIOM

Do a good turn

■ **Explanation:** If you do someone a good turn, you act in a helpful way

■ **For example:** Mike is a great guy - always ready to do a good turn.

Antarctic ice shelves melted at 50m a day at end of last Ice Age, scientists warn

At the end of the last Ice Age, ice shelves surrounding Antarctica's coastline retreated at speeds of up to 50 meters a day — much faster than any observed rates today, polar scientists have discovered, the Independent reported.

The study, led by the Scott Polar Research Institute at the University of Cambridge, used patterns of delicate wave-like ridges on the Antarctic seafloor to calculate how quickly the ice retreated roughly 12,000 years ago during regional deglaciation.

The ridges were produced where the ice sheet began to float, and were caused by the ice squeezing the sediment on the seafloor as it moved up and down with the movement of the tides.

The work reveals that at its fastest, the ice melt during this period of deglaciation was 10 times faster than the maximum observed rate over the last few decades.

"By examining the past footprint of the ice sheet and looking at sets of ridges on the seafloor, we were able to obtain new evidence on maximum past ice retreat rates, which are very much faster than those observed in even the most sensitive parts of Antarctica today," said lead author of the research, Professor Julian Dowdeswell, Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute. Scientists struggle to explain strangely shaped Antarctic ozone hole

The study was carried out as part of the Weddell Sea Expedition, which set out in early 2019 to undertake a science programme to find Sir Ernest Shackleton's doomed ship Endurance.

Shackleton's ship became frozen in pack ice during his 1914-15 expedition to the Antarctic and due to the treacherous conditions, has never been pinpointed or seen since it went down over a hundred years ago.

Although sea ice conditions during the 2019 trip prevented the team from acquiring imagery of the legendary wreck, they were able to continue with their scientific work, including mapping of the seafloor close to the Larsen Ice Shelf, east of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Using drones, satellites and AUVs (autonomous unmanned vehicles), the researchers were able to study ice conditions in the Weddell Sea in unprecedented detail.

The team examined the shape and extent of the enormous ice shelves, which skirt about 75 per cent of the Antarctic coastline, where they act as a buttress against ice flow from glaciers inland.

But due to the climate crisis, warming water and air temperatures mean these buttresses are weakening in some parts of Antarctica.

This was witnessed most dramatically at the Larsen A and B ice shelves, which collapsed rapidly in 1998 and 2002, when roughly 1250 square miles of ice fragmented and collapsed in little over a month.

These huge ice shelves are thinning because relatively warm water currents are eating away at them from below, but they're also melting from the top as summer air temperatures rise.

Both these effects thin and weaken the ice shelves and, as they do, the glaciers they are holding back are now flowing faster to the sea.

"By examining landforms on the seafloor, we were able to make determinations about how the ice behaved in the past," said Professor Dowdeswell, who was chief scientist on the Weddell Sea Expedition.

"We knew these features were there, but we've never been able to examine them in such great detail before."

Using the AUVs the team identified a series of "delicate wave-like ridges" on the seafloor, each only about one metre high and spaced 20 to 25 metres apart, dating to the end of the last great deglaciation of the Antarctic continental shelf, roughly 12,000 years ago.

The scientists have interpreted these ridges as being caused by what was formerly the grounding line — the place where a grounded ice sheet would begin to lift off the seabed as an ice shelf.

They believe the small ridges were caused by the ice moving up and down with the tides, squeezing the sediment into well-preserved geological patterns, looking a little like the rungs of a ladder, as the ice retreated.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Vietnam Trial

(November 17, 2003)

The trial has started in Vietnam of two former ministers charged with corruption. The men, Nguyen Thien Luan and Nguyen Quang Ha, are accused of embezzling about seven-and-a-half million dollars in state funds. This report from Fiona Werge:

The two men are the **latest** senior government officials to be **implicated** in a major **corruption** scandal. If found guilty, they face up to twelve years in prison. They're accused, along with six other government employees, of **embezzlement**, **abusing power** and intentional wrongdoing.

The case **centres** on the director of a company, La Thi Kim Oanh, run by the agriculture ministry. She's accused of using bank loans for **bribery** and personal expenses. The two former ministers are charged with signing documents helping her to obtain the money. She then **defaulted** on nearly five million dollars worth of loans.

The opening of the trial was broadcast live on national television, the second time this year that a corruption case against senior officials has been televised. The ruling Communist party has made fighting corruption one of its **top priorities** in an effort to win the confidence of foreign investors. Many say **red tape** and officials who take bribes are major obstacles to doing business in Vietnam.

■ Words

latest: most recent

implicated: involved

corruption: dishonest and illegal behaviour by people in positions of power or authority

embezzlement: stealing of money; taking or using money illegally for yourself, when the money does not belong to you, but to a company or an organisation that you work for

abusing power: using power in the wrong way, for a bad purpose

centres on: concentrates on; if something centres on a person, that person is the main subject of attention

bribery: giving someone, often a person in a position of authority, a sum of money or something valuable in order to persuade them to do something

defaulted: failed to make a payment that she was legally supposed to make

top priorities: something that is a priority must be done as soon as possible - a top priority is the most important of the tasks to be done

red tape: rules and procedures which seem unnecessary and cause delay

(Source: BBC)

Jordan warns UK, U.S. of ‘unprecedented danger’ of Israel’s land grab bid

Jordan’s Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi has cautioned Britain and the United States against the “unprecedented danger” posed by an Israeli scheme to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, urging the international community to step in.

In a telephone conversation with his British counterpart Dominic Raab, Safadi said the Tel Aviv regime’s plan to impose its “sovereignty” over West Bank settlements and the Jordan Valley is “an unprecedented danger that threatens the chance of peace.”

The top Jordanian diplomat called on Raab to prevent Israel from moving forward with the annexation plan. He further stressed the significance of “urgent and active interference” by the international community to “protect the chances of peace.”

In a separate conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Safadi expressed Jordan’s strong opposition to Israel’s push for consolidating its occupation of Palestinian lands.

The annexation scheme “undermines all peace prospects,” he noted.

A deal underlying Israel’s new coalition administration, sworn in earlier this month, allows the regime to initiate the annexation legislation from July 1.

U.S. President Donald Trump gave Tel Aviv the green light for the annexation in his self-proclaimed “deal of the century,” which was unveiled in January with the aim of legitimizing Israel’s occupation and re-drawing the West Asia map.

The U.S. plot calls for the creation of a Palestinian state with limited control over its own security and borders. It also bars Palestinian refugees from returning to their homeland, enshrines Jerusalem al-Quds as “Israel’s undivided capital” and allows the regime to annex settlements and the Jordan Valley.

■ Netanyahu vows to annex 30% of West Bank

Speaking to the Israeli newspaper Makor Rishon, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Tel Aviv’s “sovereignty” would be applied to 30 percent of the West Bank, which is the equivalent of 50 percent of Area C.

Asked whether the mapping process of the would-be annexed area was complete, Netanyahu replied, “Not yet, we are still working on it.”

According to Press TV, Netanyahu’s pledge to go through with the annexation has sparked condemnations from Palestinians as well as Israeli allies in Europe and across the Arab world.

Anonymous declares WAR on Minneapolis Police in video message attributed to hacker group

Hacker collective Anonymous has purportedly begun to target the Minneapolis Police Department, accusing the force of systemic violence and corruption while serving as an instrument for “the ruling class.”

A video message posted to an Anonymous Facebook page with 11 million followers accused the Minneapolis Police of condoning behavior that led to the death of George Floyd, RT reported.

“People have had enough of this corruption and violence from an organization that promises to keep them safe,” the masked narrator says.

The group claimed that the police force exists to “carry out the will of the criminal ruling class.”

Protests in Minneapolis against Floyd’s killing have spread across the United States, despite the fact that Derek Chauvin, the Minneapolis police officer filmed pinning his knee on Floyd’s neck, was arrested on Friday and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. However, other officers who witnessed the event have not been charged.

People more important than the economy, pope says about Covid crisis

Pope Francis said on Sunday that people are more important than the economy, as countries decide how quickly to reopen their countries from coronavirus lockdowns.

Francis made his comments, departing from a prepared script, at the first noon address from his window overlooking St. Peter’s Square in three months as Italy’s lockdown drew to an end.



“Healing people, not saving (money) to help the economy (is important), healing people, who are more important than the economy,” Francis said.

“We people are temples of the Holy Spirit, the economy is not,” he said.

According to Reuters, Francis did not mention any countries. Many governments are deciding whether to reopen their economies to save jobs and living standards, or whether to maintain lockdowns until they are sure the virus is fully under control.

The pope’s words were met with applause by hundreds of people in the square, many of whom wore masks and kept several meters from each other. The square was reopened to the public last Monday. Normally tens of thousands attend on a Sunday.

The last time the pope delivered his message and blessing from the window was March 1, before Italy, where more than 33,000 people have died from the virus, imposed a lockdown. The last restrictions will be lifted on Wednesday.

Francis led the crowd in silent prayer for medical workers who lost their lives by helping others.

He said he hoped the world would come out of the crisis more united, rather than divided.

“People do not come out of a crisis like this the same as before. We will come out either better or worse than before. Let’s have the courage to emerge better than before in order to build the post-crisis period of the pandemic positively,” he said.

25 cities across 16 states in the United States imposed curfews

Trump says protesters would meet ‘vicious dogs’

INTERNATIONAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — As protests continue across the United States into the early hours of Sunday morning, at least 25 cities across 16 states have imposed curfews. The National Guard has also been activated in around a dozen states and the District of Columbia.

The Pentagon said Saturday that it was ready to provide military help to authorities scrambling to contain unrest in Minneapolis, where George Floyd’s death has sparked widespread protests, but Governor Tim Walz has not requested federal troops.

Jonathan Rath Hoffman, the chief Pentagon spokesman, said several military units have been placed on higher alert “as a prudent planning measure” in case Walz asks for help. The Associated Press first reported on the potential deployments and, citing sources with direct knowledge of the orders, named four locations from which soldiers would be drawn.

Hoffman did not identify the units, but other officials said they are mainly military police. Hoffman said these are units normally on 48-hour recall to support state authorities in the event of crises like natural disasters. They are now on four-hour alert, Hoffman said.

Defense officials said there was no intent by the Pentagon to deploy any federal forces to Minnesota unless Walz asked for help. If he did make such a request, federal units such as military police could provide logistical and other kinds of support to the Minnesota National Guard or state law enforcement, but would not get directly involved in law enforcement under current plans, the officials said. They were not authorized to discuss the planning publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Hoffman said Defense Secretary Mark Esper and General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had spoken to Walz twice in the past 24 hours and told him the



Police and protesters across the U.S. are clashing again on the fifth straight day of unrest as anger intensifies over the death of George Floyd.

Pentagon was prepared to help if needed.

Protests flared late into the night in many cities in the United States over the death of George Floyd, a black man who died this week after being pinned down by the neck by a white police officer in Minneapolis.

The sometimes violent demonstrations hit cities from New York to Atlanta in a tide of anger over the treatment of minorities by law enforcement.

■ Protesters circle White House grounds

Hundreds of outraged US protesters have clashed with the Secret Service and police outside the White House for the second successive day over the police brutal killing of an African American earlier this week.

The unrest over George Floyd’s death came to President Donald Trump’s doorstep as demonstrators circled the White House grounds

on Saturday, chanting “I can’t breathe” and “Black Lives Matter.”

Earlier in the day, Trump threatened that if the demonstrators who had gathered the night before in Lafayette Square, across from the White House, had breached the fence, “they would have been greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons, I have ever seen.”

On Saturday, some protesters stayed near the president’s residence, while others marched through the streets chanting, “No justice and no peace” and “Say his name: George Floyd.”

Armored Secret Service, along with District of Columbia police and park police Saturday formed a barricade in front of the protesters as Trump returned to the White House from a trip to Florida.

Although some demonstrators overcame the barriers and entered the park in front

of the White House, police wielding shields, batons and pepper spray drove them out.

Protesters caused serious damage to several Secret Service vehicles and threw themselves against officers’ riot shields, according to the Washington Post.

Mass protests have been held during the past four days with several cities being the scene of chaos.

■ ‘Vicious dogs’

Meanwhile, Trump said Saturday that demonstrators protesting the death of a black man who died after a white police officer knelt on his neck would have been “greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons, I have ever seen” had they breached the White House fence.

In a series of Twitter posts, Trump also appeared to call his supporters to rally outside the executive mansion Saturday evening, saying, “TONIGHT, I UNDERSTAND IS MAGA NIGHT AT THE WHITE HOUSE???” MAGA stands for Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again.”

Trump accused Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser of refusing to send police to help the U.S. Secret Service, although the Washington Post reported that city officers did help control the later gathering.

The mayor’s office and the D.C. police did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Trump drew a warning Friday from Twitter and condemnation from Democrats after posting a comment that “looting leads to shooting,” suggesting protesters who turned to looting could be fired upon.

■ Three people killed in Indianapolis

Three people were killed and two others were injured as police worked multiple shootings Saturday night and early Sunday morning in the city of Indianapolis.

Officers responded to multiple shooting scenes throughout the night with five people confirmed to be shot.

Trump postpones G7 summit, seeks to add countries to invitation list

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would postpone a Group of Seven summit he had hoped to hold next month until September or later and expand the list of invitees to include Australia, Russia, South Korea and India.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One during his return to Washington from Cape Canaveral in Florida, Trump said the G7, which groups the world’s most advanced economies, was a “very outdated group of countries” in its current format, Reuters reported.

“I’m postponing it because I don’t feel that as a G7 it properly represents what’s going on in the world,” Trump said.

Most European countries offered no immediate comment on the proposal, with a spokesman for the German government saying Berlin was “waiting for further information”.

It was unclear whether Trump’s desire to invite the additional countries was a bid to permanently expand the G7. On several previous occasions, he suggested Russia be added, given what he called Moscow’s global strategic importance.

Russia was expelled from what was then the G8 in 2014 when Trump’s predecessor, Barack Obama, was U.S. president, after Moscow annexed the Crimea region from Ukraine. Russia still holds the territory, and various G7 governments



have rebuffed previous calls from Trump to readmit Moscow.

White House spokeswoman Alyssa Farah said Trump wants the countries to discuss China at the summit.

Trump has criticized Beijing over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which began in China, and on Friday he ordered his administration to begin the process of ending special U.S. treatment for Hong Kong in retaliation for China’s decision to impose a new security law on the

Al-Aqsa Mosque reopens after more than 2 months

Al-Aqsa Mosque compound has reopened to worshippers and visitors after more than two months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Council of Islamic Waqf, which oversees Muslim sites on the complex, cited the virus’s slowed local spread in lifting entry restrictions on Sunday.

But the Jordan-appointed council also imposed some precautionary measures to reduce the risk of contagion at Islam’s third-holiest site. Worshippers must wear face masks and bring personal prayer rugs should they wish to pray in the mosque or on the grounds.

Chanting “God is greatest, we will protect Al-Aqsa with our soul and blood”, tens of Muslims gathered in front of the large wooden doors, where they were welcomed by mosque director Omar al-Kiswani, who thanked them for their patience.

“After they opened the mosque, I feel

like I can breathe again. Thanks be to God,” Jerusalem resident Umm Hisham said through a face mask, her eyes tearing up, after entering the compound for dawn prayers.

The resumption of prayers capped a sombre period for Jerusalem’s Muslims, who this year marked the fasting month of Ramadan and the Eid al-Fitr holiday without their usual daily visits to Al-Aqsa Mosque and the adjoining Dome of the Rock.

It also followed a fraught day in occupied East Jerusalem. Israeli police on Saturday shot dead a disabled Palestinian, saying they suspected he had been carrying a pistol. He had been unarmed.

The killing - which happened in the walled Old City near Lions’ Gate, an access point mainly used by Palestinians - prompted furious condemnation from Palestinians.

Israeli forces fatally shoot unarmed Palestinian man with special needs in al-Quds

Israeli military forces have shot dead an unarmed Palestinian man with special needs in the Old City of Jerusalem al-Quds, as tensions continue to mount in the occupied territories amid the Tel Aviv regime’s contentious plan to annex parts of the West Bank.

The Israeli police alleged in a statement on Saturday that the 32-year-old man, identified as Iyad Halak, was “holding a suspicious object that appeared to be a gun.”

The statement added that the man was asked to stop by Israeli officers stationed near the Lion’s Gate, a main entrance to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, but ran away when ordered to stop.

Israeli forces then briefly chased him on foot and opened fire.

Palestinians said Halak, a resident of Wadi al-Joz neighborhood in East Jerusalem al-Quds, had been on his way

to a special needs educational institute in the Old City where he studied.

They added several bullets had been fired towards the ill-fated, mentally-challenged Palestinian man, and that he was left on the ground bleeding for a while until he died.

His father said Israeli forces searched the family home after the shooting, despite the fact there was no evidence Iyad was armed.

According to Press TV, an initial investigation has reportedly been opened into the matter and two Israeli police officers were questioned over the shooting.

Ofer Cassif, a member of the predominantly-Arab Joint List party at the Knesset (Israeli parliament) said the man’s death was “murder by police” as a result of the Israeli regime’s incitement.

Russian space agency calls Trump’s reaction to SpaceX launch “hysteria”

Russia’s space agency criticized U.S. President Donald Trump’s “hysteria” about the first spaceflight of NASA astronauts from U.S. soil in nine years, but also said Sunday it was pleased there was now another way to travel into space.

SpaceX, the private rocket company of billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk, on Saturday launched two Americans into orbit from Florida en route to the International Space Station (ISS), a landmark mission that ended Russia’s monopoly on flights there, DailyStar reported.

Trump, who observed the launch, said the United States had regained its place as the world’s leader in space, that U.S. astronauts would soon land on Mars, and that Washington would soon have “the greatest weapons ever imagined in history.”

NASA had had to rely on Roscosmos, Russia’s space agency, to get to the ISS since its final space shuttle flight in



2011, and Trump hailed what he said was the end of being at the mercy of foreign nations.

The U.S. success will potentially deprive Roscosmos, which has suffered corruption scandals and a number of

malfunctions, of the lucrative fees it charged to take U.S. astronauts to the ISS.

“The hysteria raised after the successful launch of the Crew Dragon spacecraft is hard to understand,” Vladimir Ustimenko, spokesman for Roscosmos, wrote on Twitter after citing Trump’s statement.

“What has happened should have happened long ago. Now it’s not only the Russians flying to the ISS, but also the Americans. Well that’s wonderful!”

Moscow has said previously that it is also deeply worried about what it fears are U.S. plans to deploy weapons in space. Moscow would not be sitting idly by, Ustimenko said.

“...We are not going to rest on our laurels either. We will test two new rockets this year, and next year we will resume our lunar program. It will be interesting,” said Ustimenko.

Winning the title is in Persepolis's DNA: coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis coach Hamid Motahari says that they have good chance to win the Iran Professional League (IPL) title since the winning trophy is in the team's DNA.

Persepolis sit first in the league table, nine points ahead of Sepahan with nine matches remaining.

IPL will resume on June 18 and the teams are preparing for the competition.

"We have nine matches left and we are going to prepare ourselves to win the trophy once again. We have to thank Branko Ivankovic and Gabriel Calderon who trained the players well to be a winner," Motahari said.

"Our players' readiness is better than we expected. It shows that they've trained individually when they were forced to stay at home. We had arranged a warm-up match but the health ministry officials canceled it, unfortunately," he added.

Persepolis announced that they have canceled Anthony Stokes's deal after the Irish striker went AWOL from training in February but the team's other three foreign players have no problem to join them.

"Bozidar Radosevic has already returned to Tehran and Bashar Resan will be added to our training in the current week. Chris-



tian Osaguona has some problem to enter the country but he will join us as soon as possible," Motahari stated.

"We have good chance of winning the title but as you know football is unpredictable. We have a difficult task ahead

but are determined to win the title for the fourth time in a row," the Persepolis coach concluded.

Iran handball goalkeeper Babasafari signs for Buzau



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national handball team goalkeeper Mohsen Babasafari has joined Romanian handball club Buzau.

The 32-year-old goalie has joined the Romanian top-flight team on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Babasafari has joined Buzau from Politehnica Timișoara.

Iranian handball players Allahkaram

Esteki and Shahoo Nosrati have already joined the Romanian team.

Handball Club Buzau, commonly known as HC Buzau, founded in 2012 and promoted for the first time in its history in the Liga Națională at the end of the 2017–18 Divizia A season.

The club is nicknamed as The Buzau Wolves and play their home matches in Sala Sporturilor "Romeo Iamandi" from Buzau, a sports hall with a capacity of 1,868 people.

Davoud Azizi elected as Iran tennis chief



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Davoud Azizi has been elected as new head of Iran Tennis Federation on Sunday.

In the presidential elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Azizi was elected for a four-year term till 2024 by receiving 34 votes out of 43 votes.

Peyman Jafari, Kamyar Kimiaei and Alireza Poursalmani were competing in

the elections.

Azizi replaced Ahmad Nameni who had been appointed as the federation's acting president.

"Federation's door is open to all since we have to return to our original position. We have a lot of work to do and I hope we can achieve our goals step by step," Azizi said after he being appointed as tennis chief.

The return of La Liga: What's at stake?

La Liga resumes on June 11 after a three-month absence due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Real Madrid and Barcelona have been unable to pull away from each other at the top of the table while Atletico Madrid are involved in what looks like a four-way fight for Champions League qualification.

■ Turbulent title race

When Real Madrid beat Barcelona 2-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu on March 1, it seemed they had halted a dip in form and seized control of the title race.

But a week later, they handed the initiative back as Barca regained first place by beating Real Sociedad and Madrid lost away at Real Betis.

A three-month break means a fresh start but Barcelona's two-point lead reflects badly on their challengers, given Barca's own problems off the pitch, including the switch to Quique Setien as coach in January.

Both sides' imperfections mean there will be more slip-ups to come but if this Barca make it five league titles in six years, Madrid will only have themselves to blame.

■ Unfamiliar homes

Real Madrid have been given permission by La Liga to play their remaining home games at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium at their training ground to allow planned construction

work to go ahead at the Santiago Bernabeu this summer.

With games being held behind closed doors there would have been little advantage to playing at their usual home and the players might even be better off avoiding an empty 81,000-seater stadium that they are used to being almost full.

■ Unexpected returns

Neither Eden Hazard nor Luis Suarez expected to play much, or perhaps any, part in the run-in after Hazard underwent surgery on a broken foot in March and Suarez had an operation on his right knee in January.

The break has allowed both players to recover and the question now is whether either can find peak form and fitness in time to make an impact in the remaining 11 games.

Suarez's return could be particularly helpful for Barcelona but Setien has said the Uruguayan, who has often taken time to regain sharpness, is not yet ready.

Real Madrid's Hazard, plagued by injuries in recent months, has had a nightmare first year in Spain but has an unexpected chance to turn things around.

■ Fight for Atletico

Atletico Madrid's momentous win over Liverpool in the Champions League offered Diego Simeone some relief after what has been a disappointing season in La Liga.

His team sit sixth in the table, having long fallen out of

the reckoning for the title and facing a fight even to make the top four.

Ahead of them between fifth and third are Getafe, Real Sociedad and Sevilla, and with only two points between the four, Atletico could still scrape in.

But the resilient Getafe and free-flowing Real will both be eager to finish off brilliant campaigns while Sevilla appeared to be hitting their stride before games were suspended. Atletico cannot afford to be complacent.

■ Pressure at the bottom

At the other end of the table, Espanyol look doomed, sitting in last place, six points adrift of safety. Leganes, who still have to play away at Barcelona before hosting Real Madrid on the final day, are only three points better off.

One point then separates Mallorca, Celta Vigo and Eibar, whose players have expressed concerns about the safety of football returning too quickly. Real Valladolid in 15th have a four-point cushion over the bottom three but two wins in their last 10 games suggests they could easily be pulled in too.

The economic hit from the coronavirus pandemic means the stakes are even higher for these clubs, as they battle to avoid the considerable financial blow of relegation. For all of them, the pressure is on.

(Source: AFP)

No positive results in latest Premier League coronavirus tests

The Premier League's planned restart on June 17 received a further boost on Saturday when the latest batch of novel coronavirus tests produced no positive results.

The tests were carried out on Thursday and Friday. "The Premier League can today confirm that on Thursday 28 May and Friday 29 May, 1,130 players and club staff were tested for COVID-19. Of these, zero have tested positive," the league said in a statement.

In the three previous rounds of testing since players resumed training there were 12 positives.

No Premier League matches have been played since March but the league said on Thursday that the season will restart on June 17 provided all safety requirements have been met.

Earlier on Saturday the government gave the green light for the resumption of elite sport in England from Monday, provided that strict safety guidelines outlined in its Stage Three protocol were adhered to.

The Premier League's Chief Executive

Richard Masters said he welcomed the government's announcement but said there was still work to be done to "ensure the safety of everyone involved".

"All major sports, including the Premier League, have been working together with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to produce this Stage Three protocol," he said.

"We could not have reached this point without the full support of the Government, especially DCMS, Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer's team.

"If all goes well, we will be thrilled to resume the 2019/20 season in just over two weeks' time."

There are 92 fixtures remaining, all of which will be played without fans, although the Premier League said every game will be broadcast live in the UK by its existing broadcast partners: Sky Sports, BT Sport, BBC Sport and Amazon Prime.

(Source: Reuters)

Atalanta coach Gasperini reveals he had coronavirus at Valencia game

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini revealed Sunday he thought he would die as he suffered coronavirus symptoms when the Italian team played their Champions League match against Valencia in March.

Gasperini told Gazzetta Dello Sport that he was sick when Atalanta beat Valencia 4-3 behind closed doors at the Mestalla on March 10, to reach the quarter-finals with an 8-4 aggregate victory.

"The day before the Valencia game I was sick, the afternoon of the game worse. I didn't look good on the bench," said Gasperini.

"It was March 10th. The following two nights in Zingonia (Atalanta's training centre) I slept little. I didn't have a fever, but I felt shattered, like I had one of 40.

"An ambulance passed every two minutes. There is a hospital nearby. It seemed like a war zone. At night I thought: 'if I go in there, what happens to me?'"

"I can't go now, I have so many things

to do ... I was saying it jokingly, to lighten things. But I really thought so."

The 62-year-old Gasperini said he was never swabbed as he had not suffered from a fever, but 10 days ago serological tests confirmed he had COVID-19.

"I have antibodies, which does not mean that I am now immune," he added.

Gasperini said that four days after the Valencia game he felt the worst was over, after a workout like he hadn't had in years and running 10km on the treadmill, but he then lost his sense of taste.

A celebratory meal and vintage 2008 Dom Perignon sent by a Michelin-starred chef and Atalanta fan, tasted like "water and bread", Gasperini said.

"I stayed at the Zingonia training ground for three weeks," he continued. "When I did get back to my home in Turin, I always respected social distancing with my wife and children."

(Source: Eurosport)

Iranian veteran journalist Fathi dies

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran veteran journalist Fatollah d e s k Fathi passed away at the age of 58 on Sunday.

Fathi, who was suffering from a liver disease, died at his hometown Tehran. He was struggling with his illness for one year.

He was a martial arts journalist about 30 years.

Fathi was working in Iranian sports newspaper Khabar Varzeshi. He will be laid to rest at Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery on Monday.

Tehran Times offers its heartfelt condolence to his bereaved family.

FIFA, WHO, football stakeholders draft medical considerations, risk assessment tool

FIFA is sharing a football risk assessment tool with its 211 Member Associations, the six Continental Confederations and other stakeholders in order to facilitate the planning of the resumption of football activities by competition and match organizers, as soon as health authorities and governments consider it safe.

It has been developed in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO), UEFA, the European Club Association (ECA), FIFPRO, the World Leagues Forum and European Leagues, includes a list of mitigation measures that aim to reduce the overall risk of mass gatherings contributing to the spread of COVID-19, as well as indications for individual and group training by football teams.

The risk assessment tool is being shared together with the FIFA medical recommendations document, which is a first result of the FIFA COVID-19 Medical Working Group that was established on 16 April 2020 and which comprises the two FIFA medical leads, a medical/scientific representative of each of the six Confederations, and external consultants. The WHO and the FIFA Medical Committee also contributed to the document.

The aim of this joint effort is to consider the health of all participants in footballing activities, the risk assessments and the factors that need to be in place in order for football, both at a professional and at an amateur level, to resume safely. The recommendations of the group are meant to be implemented in conjunction with international and national guidance on public health and mass gatherings.

Football governing bodies are encouraged to liaise with the relevant public health authorities and to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to determine whether it is safe to proceed.

The important guiding principle is that the resumption of footballing activities should not compromise the health of individuals or the community. Furthermore, the return to play should be based on objective health information to ensure that activities are conducted safely and do not risk increased local COVID-19 transmission rates.

(Source: the-afc)

PSG sign Icardi from Inte

Paris Saint-Germain have signed Mauro Icardi from Inter Milan on a permanent four-year deal, the French club have announced.

The striker spent the 2019-20 season in Paris on loan and the French champions have taken their option to sign the Argentine permanently, keeping him in Paris until 2024.

Sources had previously told ESPN the deal would be worth €50 million euros plus €7m euros in potential add-ons, which is significantly less than the €70m release clause included in his loan agreement.

Inter recognised that due to the current situation with the coronavirus pandemic, it was fair to lower their asking price. Inter have long wanted to sell the striker, who joined the Nerazzurri seven years ago from Sampdoria.

In a statement on Inter's website, the club thanked the striker for his contribution to the team during the six seasons he spent with them.

Icardi made his mark on PSG last season, making 31 appearances in the 2019-20 season. He scored 20 goals and provided 4 assists on the team's road to picking up the Ligue 1 title.

PSG had a 12 point lead on nearest rivals Marseille when the league was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

(Source: ESPN)

Triple Olympic sprint champion Morrow passes away aged 84

Sprinting great Bobby Joe Morrow, who won three gold medals at the Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games, has passed away at the age of 84.

Morrow won the 100 meters, 200m and 4x100m relay titles for the United States, running the anchor leg in the relay as the American team set a new world record of 39.5 seconds.

Morrow's time in the 200m final - 20.6 sec - tied the world record at the time.

He was only the second man to win an Olympic sprint triple crown, following Jesse Owens, and only two have done it since - Carl Lewis and Jamaica's Usain Bolt.

Like Morrow, Owens and Lewis represented the US.

Born and raised in Texas, 20-year-old Morrow was a student at Abilene Christian University (ACU) at the time of his Olympic glory and had shortly before swept the sprint races at the national collegiate championships.

His heroics in 1956 saw him win Sports Illustrated's Sportsman of the Year award.

Morrow set more records in the two years that followed but retired in 1958, focusing instead on farming and woodwork.

He finished with a record of 80 wins from 88 individual races at ACU as is credited by World Athletics with setting 11 ratified world records.

Despite a brief comeback attempt in 1960, he never again competed at an Olympic Games.

Morrow was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1975 and the US Olympic and Paralympic Hall of Fame in 1989.

San Benito High School, which Morrow attended, previously named an 11,000-seat sports facility after him.

(Source: Insidethegames)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Being well-off in exile is like home, and
poverty at home is like being in exile.

Imam Ali (AS)

Persian sci-fi “Monster Hunt” on capture of U.S. RQ-170 spy drone by Iran published

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian science fiction d e s k recounting the story of a U.S. RQ-170 spy drone captured by Iran in 2011 has been published.

“Monster Hunt” written by Mohammad Sarshar for young adults was unveiled during a special meeting on Saturday at Patoqe Ketab, a bookstore in Tehran.



Writer Mohammad Sarshar autographs a copy of his novel “Monster Hunt” for a reader during the unveiling ceremony of the book at Patoqe Ketab in Tehran on May 30, 2020. (Mehr/Shahab Qayyumi)

Sarshar and writers Vajiheh Samani, Davud Amirian and Vahid Yaminpur attended the meeting. IRGC General Mehdi Lotfi Niasar’s family, who was martyred during an Israeli attack on the T4 airbase in Homs, Syria in 2018, were in attendance at the meeting.

The book tells the story of the CIA RQ-170 spy plane, which was designed to be the most advanced drone in the world. Its successful operation in Afghanistan causes General Hercules to choose it for a top-secret reconnaissance flight over the Natanz Uranium Enrichment Plant in Iran. The mission is so complex that it heightens the political tensions between the two countries.

In his speech at the meeting, Sarshar pointed out his allusion to Lotfi Niasar in his preface to the book and said, “I hope Israel will be wiped out soon to pave the way so we can be familiar with the great martyrs.”

Amirian praised the novel for its compelling story and also criticized Sarshar for entering top Iranian personalities to the story.

Samani, for her part, lamented the lack of “good Persian novels” to replace foreign stories translated into Persian and said, “However, Iranian writers have begun a new movement over the past few years, and I hope we will have an increase in the number of stories by Persian writers for children and young adults to replace the foreign books such as ‘Lord of the Rings’.”

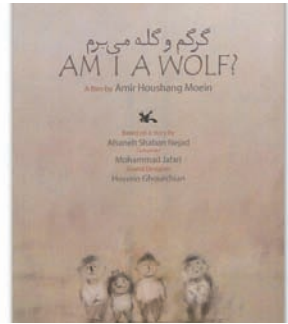
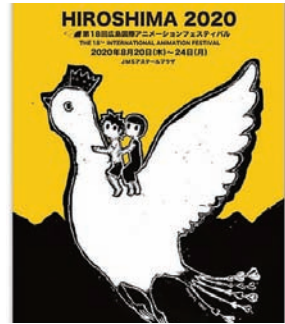
In addition, Yaminpur said that he is happy that writers such as Sarshar are working in the field of Iranian children’s literature.

Sarshar autographed some copies of the book published by the Maaref Publishing Company for the children attending the meeting.

Hiroshima animation festival picks “Am I a Wolf?” from Iran

CULTURE TEHRAN — The 18th Hiroshima International Animation Festival will screen the acclaimed short “Am I a Wolf?” from Iranian director Amir-Hushang Moin.

Produced at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the movie tells the story of a group of children who perform the familiar story of the wolf and the yearlings in school as a puppet show. The nanny goat grieving for his yearlings and the angry wolf in its solitude face each other.



A combination photo show posters for the 18th Hiroshima International Animation Festival and the Iranian short movie “Am I a Wolf?”.

Love and peace are the central themes of the festival, which will take place in the Japanese city from August 20 to 24.

“Am I a Wolf?” received several awards in Iranian and international events, including the Grand Prix at the 12th Paris International Animation Film Festival and the Light of Asia Grand Prize at the 15th Indie-AniFest Korea Independent Animation Film Festival in September 2019.

The film also won the Golden Dove for best animated film at the 62nd DOK Leipzig in Germany in November 2019.

Photographer Mohammad Rezai snaps pics of volunteers helping fight coronavirus

➔1 Rezai said that he tested positive while taking photos, but his encounter with Covid-19 disease was a mild one and he recovered a few days later and resumed his activity.

“This was the first time we saw people stepping outside wearing face masks. People were afraid to take a taxi or even stand in lines to buy bread. I mostly tried to reflect the uncertain atmosphere and the suspense dominating the city,” he added.

“I used my Instagram to stay in touch with my friends and began to take photos in different districts of the city of Sari and divided our duties. Each one of us began to disinfect the handles of the doors and the door phones in the streets during day and night, however, people became worried upon hearing about the increasing number of dead,” he explained.

“People were also concerned about how their loved ones were being buried, since some were even buried at night and I felt I should reflect those moments. There were many clergymen who voluntarily helped bury the dead bodies and I took some photos to show that relatives could attend the funeral ceremonies if they observed social distancing,” he said.

He called the difficult days of coronavirus a crisis and added, “However, it was different since I was worried for my family members and they were also afraid I would become a carrier of the virus. As a result, I was forced to rent a place for about a month to distance myself from them



Volunteers carry the coffin of a deceased coronavirus victim for burial in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran. (Mohammad Rezai)

and spent my time there during the recovery process.”

He said that he believes the media can help overcome the problem and

manage the crisis and help control the pandemic.

IIDCYA to screen naqqali performances on Instagram



Mohammadreza Majuni gives a naqqali performance in an undated photo.

A R T TEHRAN — d e s k Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) plans to publish several naqqali performances on its Instagram in the near future.

Naqqali is a dramatic style of storytelling dedicated to stories from Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh and other epic Persian stories, and someone who performs naqqali is called a morshed or naqqal.

The institute has invited the naqqals Mohammadreza Majuni, Amir-Hossein Ensafi and Fahimeh Barutchi to narrate stories from the classical Persian literature.

“Bijan and Manijeh” from Shahnameh, “The Merchant and the Parrot” from Rumi’s Masnavi-ye Manavi, as well as the story of Timur, the Turkic ruler of Central Asia who lived from 1336 until 1405, and his battle with Iran, are among the stories to be narrated.

Iranian center buys rights for Persian translation of “Jau” about Bahrain prison



Copies of the Arabic version of “Jau” about Jau Prison in Bahrain.

CULTURE TEHRAN — The d e s k Dayereye Mina (Blue Circle) Literary Agency has purchased the rights for a Persian translation of “Jau” from the Arabic publisher of the book that explores stories about political activists from Jau Prison in Bahrain.

The book recounts the diary of an anonymous prisoner wrote under pseudonym “Jihad” during his captivity

in 2015.

He met Abbas Al-Samea, a young Bahraini activist who was executed along with two other victims tortured by the Bahrain government in 2017.

The book originally published by Merat al-Bahrain will be published in Persian by Ketabestan in Tehran in the near future.

The book soon became a bestseller after its release in 2016.

Online life is our ultimate fate during pandemic: filmmaker Sirus Alv nad

A R T TEHRAN — d e s k Filmmaker Sirus Alv nad has said that the extensive use of internet services during the pandemic makes online life part and parcel of people’s ultimate fate this year.

“Perhaps we will soon witness online wedding ceremonies in the near future,” Alv nad joked.

Alv nad who is preparing his latest movie “There at the Same Time” for online screening, added, “Many online funeral ceremonies have been held these days. I gave an online speech at the funeral ceremony of filmmaker Siamak Shayeqi, so why not online film screenings or even online weddings?” he remarked.

“All over the world, a number of film, music and opera programs are all viewed online; this is our ultimate fate this year,” he noted.

He said that online screening programs help many films, which are ready for public screenings, to have the chance to be watched.

“I personally have experienced that if one film waits too long for a public screening, it will lose its chance to be seen, because it has to deal with so many



Filmmaker Sirus Alv nad in an undated photo.

other onscreen films,” he said.

“So if a series of films is screened online, other films will have greater opportunity to go on screen,” he said.

“As long as people realize that a film, which goes online, is the product of a large team that has worked on it for at

least a year, they will not choose to watch films illegally,” he explained.

“There at the Same Time” tells the story of Rana and Amir who have begun their life in an old district in the suburban area.

“People may like or dislike the film,

but the film enjoys a new story. Parviz Parastui plays the role of an Iranian-Armenian Christian and my daughter Mahur is acting in my film for the first time,” he said.

Alv nad said that he is spending his time during the pandemic reading books and working on two screenplays.

“I also watched again some of the old classics I keep in my archive and I wanted to see how I felt towards them after all these years,” he said.

“I watched films by Hitchcock and several foreign filmmakers as well as some Iranian films by Masud Kimiai and Dariush Mehrjui, and I discovered that they are powerful films and are still interesting for me to watch,” he added.

“I also watched my own film ‘Underwater Scream’ and I found it was still interesting,” he said.

Alv nad said that he is planning to resume his online screenwriting and acting classes soon.

“Once for Ever”, “The Intruder”, “Cargo” and “Corrupt Hands” are among films by Alv nad.

Sirus Alv nad received a lifetime achievement award at the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration in August 2019.