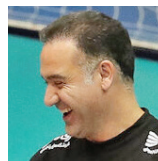




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Nation set to mark demise anniversary of Imam Khomeini



Iran-EAEU trade exceeds \$2b in 7 months

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File photo

Iranian centers in Kazakhstan, Serbia organize photo exhibitions on Imam Khomeini

TEHRAN — Iran's cultural centers in Kazakhstan and Serbia will commemorate the 31st death anniversary of Imam Khomeini by organizing exhibitions of photos of the founder of the Islamic Republic.

Both of the exhibitions will be online on the websites of the cultural centers, Iran's Islamic Cultural Relations Organization (ICRO) announced on Sunday.

The exhibition in Serbia named "Sep-

aration from the Friend" opened on Saturday. The showcase displaying over 100 photos throws the spotlight on his family life, official meetings and funeral.

About 50 pictures have been selected to be put on view at the exhibit in Kazakhstan titled "Hello to the Sun".

The collection shows photos of Imam Khomeini from when he was a teenager to his life in exile in Iraq and France. ➔12

Rouhani says Iran stands beside Afghanistan

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said that Iran will stand beside the Afghan government and people to help them promote peace, stability and security.

In a phone conversation with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Monday, Rouhani said that Iran's policy is to expand relations and cooperation with neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan.

"We consider promotion of stability and security in Afghanistan in line with our own stability and security. We believe that differences can be settled through talks and within a principled framework," Rouhani added in reference to protracted conflict in Afghanistan.

He also said that relations are on the path of progress. ➔2

From London to Berlin, protests over death of African-American go global

By staff & agencies

U.S. protesters rallying against the killing of George Floyd and countless other black Americans are being heard around the world as demonstrators launched their own protests in the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada over the weekend.

■ **Germany**

In Berlin, protesters gathered Sunday at the U.S. Embassy, demonstrating

for a second day.

Hundreds of German demonstrators marched in solidarity with American protesters Saturday and Sunday, and chanted "Stop Killing Us," "Black Lives Matter" and "No Justice, No Peace."

On a former section of the Berlin Wall, in Mauerpark, a memorial popped up over the weekend depicting Floyd and "I can't breathe," some of his last words. ➔10

Peter Jenkins doubts U.S. would 'soften' approach toward China and Iran if Biden is elected president

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Peter Jenkins, the former UK ambassador to the IAEA and UN, says that the effect which the pandemic has had on the U.S. economy will be a very important factor in the November elections.

Jenkins, also a former associate fellow of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, says, "The U.S. unemployment rate will be much higher in November than it was at the start of 2020."

Jenkins also says he doubts the U.S. would soften approach toward Iran and China if Joe Biden is elected president in the November 20 elections.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Unfortunately, the number of victims of Coronavirus in the United States has exceeded 100,000. The Trump administration, meanwhile, predicted the death toll would not rise to this number. How effective do you think Trump's

performance will be in countering the Coronavirus in the U.S. presidential election?

A: A lot can change between now and the presidential elections in November. The signs are, however, that many electors in the South and West of the United States who voted for President Trump in 2016 intend to do so again, despite his mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Less likely is that he will again win the states in the North and East – Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania – that gave him a majority in the electoral college in 2020. He won those states by narrow margins. His mishandling of the pandemic can affect those narrow margins.

■ The effects of the Coronavirus outbreak on the U.S. economy are also among the issues that have pushed Trump to try to lift the quarantine situation sooner. To what extent can this contribute to the deterioration of the situation? ➔2

Wildfire in forests, protected areas put out after five days

TEHRAN — Wildfire which broke out five days ago across several forests and protected areas in four western and southwestern provinces of Khuzestan, Bushehr, Lorestan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, was put out on Monday.

The fire also swept through Khazez protected area, measuring 28,000 hectares, which is one of the main habitats for wild goats in Zagros forests.

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

Fierce winds, high latitude, high vegetation, and the lack of equipment and manpower had made firefighting operations much more difficult.

Raging wildfire also hit western Ilam and Kordestan provinces, causing extensive damage to old oak trees and part of the region's vegetation.

Some 300 hectares of forests and rangelands in Gachsaran county turned into ashes, as well

as 200 hectares of forests in Kohgiluyeh.

The firefighting operation in the protected areas of Khazez left 6 injured.

In January, Fariborz Gheibi, deputy head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization, said a total budget of 5 trillion rials (nearly \$120 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to implement Zagros forest protection plan.

Vast areas of forest are covered with the Brant's oak, and several programs have been prepared to protect the forest plant species in 11 provinces.

Implementation of watershed management plans, identification of smuggling routes, and prohibition of agriculture in forests are among the programs, he said, adding this year, €150 million has been allocated to implement sustainable management of natural resources in over 33,000 watersheds.



ARTICLE

Afshin Majlesi
Tehran Times journalist

Iran's trump cards to kick-start tourism in post-COVID-19 world

As you are well aware, the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has plunged the travel and tourism industry in the global scene, disrupting life in ways that were unimaginable just a few months ago.

The images of the world's lockdown are spooky with amazing alterations; passenger traffic on airlines and hotel occupancy rates have fallen off a cliff compared to the same periods in previous years.

Almost 100 million travel-related jobs have been eliminated or will be. However, many nations are planning to fuel a boom in the battered sector once travel is more feasible. Some experts believe that the world will never be the same once the pandemic finally recedes. But at some point, a large number of travel industries are seeking to reach more customers online and people will start going out again.

A potential world-class destination, Iran is also expected to bounce back quickly once the virus passes because ingredients are all present; pristine natural beauties, magnificent historical sites, and fascinating cultural experiences and above all, welcoming hospitable people.

Trump cards? Well, it doesn't matter the taste, the ancient land can be a top choice of many foreign tourists who are fans of camping and eco-tours or enthusiasts of historical sites. For those who want to experience something completely new and exciting, visiting or staying with nomads is recommended. Accommodation in Iran varies from luxurious five-star hotels to camping in the middle of the jungle!

From another point of view, the cultural legacy of this nation is one of the most mesmerizing on Earth. Iran is a true delight for history buffs as well. If you're drawn to places where echoes of ancient civilizations resonate down through the ages, Iran could be your thing. The UNESCO-tagged Persepolis, an ancient city that served as the Achaemenid Empire's ceremonial capital roughly 2500 years ago, is just a short trip northeast from Shiraz, while the Empire's winter capital, Hamedan is still populated today! ➔8

Israeli forces training U.S. police on large scale: Amnesty

Amnesty International has revealed how police forces from a surprisingly wide expanse of the United States have been receiving training from Israeli forces and services, warning that the violence being exercised by the American law enforcement has come to match Israeli brutality.

The UK-based rights group said the American police members have been either traveling to the occupied territories to receive training or have been trained inside the United States by Israeli forces.

It said Israeli police, military, and intelligence

services have been providing training to American forces on such issues as "crowd control, use of force, and surveillance."

It identified the recipients as "Baltimore law enforcement officials, along with hundreds of others from Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California, Arizona, Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Georgia, Washington state as well as the DC Capitol police."

Besides those traveling to the occupied territories, "thousands of others have received training from

Israeli officials here in the US," the Amnesty noted.

The training is either taxpayer funded or privately funded as in the case of the money that has been offered for the process since 2002 by the international far-right Jewish organization Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee's Project Interchange that arranges for visits to the occupied territories by Americans, and Washington, D.C.-based think tank, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs of America, the rights body reported. ➔10



Hassan Tofiq, cartoonist of popular satirical magazine Tofiq, dies at 95

TEHRAN — Cartoonist Hassan Tofiq, who worked for and presided over Tofiq, Iran's most popular satirical magazine before the Islamic revolution, died of heart failure at a Tehran hospital on Sunday. He was 95.

"Due to a lack of appetite, Mr. Tofiq was admitted to Asia Hospital a few days ago and unfortunately, he passed away from heart failure despite intensive medical care," cartoonist Hadi Heidari said in a press release.

He was the manager of Tofiq Magazine, founded by his brother Hossein in 1923, for 29 years during the third revival of the satirical magazine that was finally shut down for the last time by the government in 1971. ➔12

100 production companies to be listed on stock exchange

TEHRAN — Iran's deputy industry, mining and trade minister said that 100 production companies are projected to be listed on the stock exchange of the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), IRNA reported.

Saeed Zarandi, the deputy industry, mining and trade minister for planning, also said that according to the schedule the stock market will witness one company's initial public offering (IPO) or securities publishing each week.

Making the remarks during a meeting on expanding financial resources for the production sector through capital market, the official noted, "According to the previous years' investigations it was found that the main problem in industry and production sector and also trade sector is lack of liquidity, and it is while the country is facing a high volume of liquidity." ➔4

Condolences

Dear Eshrat Mardi,
We express condolences over the death of your beloved father.
May his soul rest in peace.
Tehran Times staff and management

Dear readers,
The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Saturday, June 6.

Islamic Students Association condemns racism in U.S.

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The the Islamic Students Associations issued a statement on Monday condemning racism in the United States and urged Washington to practice justice over the brutal killing of an African-American man in Minneapolis.

“The Islamic Students Association, as the biggest student society in Iran, expresses regret over the killing of the African-American and condemns racism in the United States and calls for justice in dealing with such murders,” the statement read.



It added that the voice of the protesters must be heard. It also said that the U.S. government’s behavior towards the protesters shows it does not respect international law and human rights.

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.”

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.

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.”

Rouhani says Iran stands beside Afghanistan

1 → For his part, Ghani attached great importance to expansion of relations in various spheres.

Ghani also said that Iran plays a constructive role in regional stability and security, calling for supporting peace process in Afghanistan.



Elsewhere, he wished success for Iran in fighting the coronavirus.

He also praised Iran for providing healthcare support for Afghan migrants.

■ Rouhani praises political agreement in Afghanistan

Rouhani also praised a political agreement in Afghanistan and expressed hope that there would be more stability and security in Afghanistan through efforts by all state bodies.

On May 17, Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah, Afghanistan’s president of the High Council for Peace and National Reconciliation, signed a power-sharing deal to end a months-long political stalemate.

Abdullah had disputed the results of an election in September and announced the formation of a parallel government earlier this year.

Ghani’s spokesman said the agreement is a step that could smooth efforts to end the country’s long-running war.

Peter Jenkins doubts U.S. would ‘soften’ approach toward China and Iran if Biden is elected president

Pandemic effect on U.S. economy will be very important factor in 2020 elections, says ex-UK ambassador to UN

1 → A: My guess is that the effect which the pandemic has had on the U.S. economy will be a very important factor in the 2020 elections. The U.S. unemployment rate will be much higher in November than it was at the start of 2020. The consumer debt burden on ordinary Americans, already heavy in January, will be even heavier by November. I doubt that President Trump can alter this outcome to any great extent, obvious though his interest in doing so seems to be.

■ One of the approaches of the Trump administration in foreign policy, which seems to be from Kissinger’s point of view, is to control and increase pressure on China. Recently, Trump announced that he would pull companies out of Hong Kong if the Chinese government passed the Hong Kong National Security law. Trump, on the other hand, has stepped up operations in the South China Sea. What are the main reasons for the tightening of China’s containment?

A: President Trump is casting around for ways of salvaging his presidency and countering the pandemic’s damaging impact on his re-election prospects. In these circumstances, picking a fight with an external adversary and creating a national cause that enables him to



appeal to the patriotism of the American people is an attractive stratagem. This seems to me the most credible explanation for a marked worsening of U.S. relations with China since the onset of the pandemic.

■ Will Joe Biden change his approach toward China if he is elected president? Also, what will be his approach to the JCPOA (the 2015 nuclear deal) and Iran in general?

A: The worsening of relations with China to which I have just referred has taken place on fertile ground. For several years now the U.S. establishment’s view of China has been hardening. By “U.S. establishment view” I mean a view shared by a large majority of Republicans and Democrats in the political community, and by the bulk of conservatives and liberals in the intellectual community. The

American establishment has come to see China as presenting a threat to the global primacy to which Americans have become attached, and to which it refers euphemistically as “U.S. leadership”. Consequently, I doubt that we can expect a softening of attitude if Joe Biden becomes president. Relations will improve, however. Diplomacy will resume, and a Biden administration will look for negotiated solutions to as many as possible of the concerns that have fuelled U.S. resentment and fear of China.

I expect much the same to be true of the relationship with Iran. Many in the political and intellectual communities will retain hostile feelings towards the Islamic Republic, resentful of the injuries which the Republic has inflicted on the United States since 1979 and forgetful of the injuries that the United States has inflicted on Iran during that same period. But a Biden administration will want to give diplomacy a chance to resolve some of its specific concerns. High among these will be Iran’s nuclear programme. A logical starting-point would be to re-join the JCPOA and to engage in confidence-building by fulfilling the undertakings into which the Obama administration entered in 2015.

Iran dismisses claims of interference in anti-racism protests in U.S.

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has dismissed claims of Iran’s interference in protests against racism in the United States.

His comments came as response to a claim by U.S. National Security Advisor Robert C. O’Brien about Iran’s interference in current protests in the U.S.

“Iran is -- has certainly been active in this -- you know, in this -- in this realm as well. And we’ve got a number of tools in our tool kit,” O’Brien told ABC News aired on Sunday.

Mousavi said, “It is the United States which interferes in other countries’ internal affairs... Such remarks by someone like Trump is not unlikely. He has failed in economy, fight against the coronavirus and his administration practices discrimination.”

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

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

According to Press TV, 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.”

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.

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.

Sirous Asgari who is in U.S. will return to Iran in coming days

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that Iranian scientist Sirous Asgari freed in U.S. captivity will return to Iran in the coming days.

“Mr. Sirous Asgari’s case has been closed and he will probably return to the country in the next two or three days if no issues or obstacles come up,” he said during a press conference.

“Security of the Iranian inmates in the U.S. and Europe, whom we considered being taken as hostages, is very important for us,” he added.

Asgari, a materials science and engineering professor, had visited the U.S. to see her daughters that was arrested under the allegation of violating sanctions against Iran.

The professor, who has a history of respiratory problems, was exonerated in a U.S. sanctions trial last

year, but Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) jail in Louisiana had refused to release him or allow him to return to Iran.

Asgari had tested positive for coronavirus in prison. He broke the story in an interview with the Guardian on April 28.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced on May 11 that Asghari freed in U.S. captivity will soon return to Iran.

Imam Khomeini brings message of hope for Muslim Ummah: Filipino prof.

In an interview with Tehran Times, the Filipino professor, who lived some years in Iran, told of his understandings about the personality of the Late Leader of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini, underlining the message of hope he transmitted to the Muslim world.

Following is the full text of the interview with him:

■ Please introduce yourself to our readers.

I am Dr. Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr, a Filipino, and working as an Associate Professor at the University of the Philippines Asian Center. I am handling graduate courses in West Asian Studies and Foreign Relations. I got my Masters from Shahid Beheshti University and Ph.D. at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, Tehran University. I currently served as President of the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society (Friendship council), Incorporated based in Manila.

■ Would you please let us know if you have ever met Imam Khomeini (ra)?

In my entire life, I have not met Imam Khomeini (ra), except that I was privileged to visit his tomb in Behesht Zahra way back when I was a student, but his idealism, his works, and his vision to have a world far away from injustices and where everyone and every nation has to be respected and treated equally no matter how big or small, no matter what

status they have in life, and no matter what race they belong to, are important lessons I have heard and learn from him. As I always look into this idealism in my venture for a better understanding of complexities of life as a person, a scholar on the Middle East, and as an individual, It seemed therefore that I have met him.

■ How did you find his personality?

Imam Khomeini (ra) is a humble religious scholar who lived in simplicity and who had accepted his fate during his time for the sake of truth and justice for his own nation-Iranian nation. In spite of being politically exile abroad, he maintained his personal composure by helping Iranian people to emancipate them from a corrupt and ugly images of governance and policies which had dominated in the economic, political, security, and socio-cultural well-being of Iran during his time. His call for an Islamic revolution was made not from a conventional way in which tanks and bullets defined people’s protests but that of a soft, bloodless and peaceful one. His use of cassette as a critical mode of informing and teaching his countrymen reverberated in various areas in the country that even people in small villages would be able to listen to his teachings. While he was in exile, Imam Khomeini did not stop from

his traditional role as an Islamic scholar and a clergy. Indeed a significant source of inspiration to his people and to those who followed his works and thoughts.

■ How far do you think his personality impressed the world?

The exiles of Imam Khomeini from Iraq to France, his return to Iran and his continued works and opposition to the injustices that many Iranian experiences from the hands of the Pahlavi’s regime as well as that from foreign countries who exploited and exerting influence on Iran’s political, economic, and security wellbeing were few critical selling points of his impressive personality to be given attention not just by his own countrymen but by many scholars and leaders in the world arena.

While Imam personified a living figure that could unite his own nation from decades of mismanagement, he had also brought an important message of hope for the Muslim Ummah as well as non-Muslim nations and communities who suffered the same fate with Iran, such as countries in Africa and Asia. In addition, Imam also carried a serious message to world leaders both in East and the West that the power of the people coupled with their faith to God can shake governments if they continue to remain anti-people and remain blindfolded from the emerging demand for



a change of the majority of the people they govern. Finally, the triumph of the Islamic revolution in 1979 and the succeeding official establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran through peaceful means certainly caught the attention of the world on Imam’s impressive personality.

■ If you have read the books written by him, please share with us your opinion about them.

I have read some of his works especially the one that talks about the Islamic Government and the role of the jurist which I believe is the foundation of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Columnist calls Iranian fuel shipments to Venezuela a crack in wall of sanctions

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Conn Hallinan, a columnist for Foreign Policy In Focus, has said that arrival of Iranian fuel tankers in Venezuelan waters was a crack in wall of the United States’ illegal sanctions against Caracas.

This action is a step in reducing “pressure” on Venezuela, Hallinan said, adding the Venezuelan people were in dire need of fuel.

This shipment brought revenue for Iran and from this point of view it was “a crack in wall of the United States’ illegal sanctions,” he told IRNA in an interview published on Monday.

He noted that the Iranian tankers entered the Western hemisphere despite the U.S. sanctions which was a “thorn in Trump’s side”.

The 5th and last Iranian fuel tanker reached Venezuelan waters on Sunday.

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 demonstrated its “geopolitical power” and its ability to defy the U.S. hegemony by sending fuel tankers to blockaded Venezuela.

“Success in delivery of the fuel shows Iran’s geopolitical power which challenges the United States’ hegemony and shows the capability to create solidarity in international energy market,” the ambassador said.

He said that Iran and Venezuela have challenged the U.S. “imperialism” to defend their right for foreign trade, adding Tehran and Caracas have established strategic ties.

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

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has also said that arrival of Iranian oil tanker in Venezuela breaks the United States’ “unacceptable” and criminal blockade”.

Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela Hojat Soltani has said that the United States’ unilateral sanctions have lost their efficiency.

“The United States’ unilateral sanctions against Venezuela, Iran and a number of other countries have lost efficiency,” IRNA quoted him as saying in an interview with the Al-Alam news network last week.

He also said that arrival of Iranian oil tankers in the Venezuelan waters was an “international victory”. Kouroush Ahmadi, an expert on international affairs, has called arrival of oil tankers in Venezuela a “political victory” for Iran.

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

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

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

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Famous Iranian dissident glorifies violence against American protesters

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — A well-known U.S.-based Iranian dissident has celebrated the U.S. police's violence against protesters as rallies flare around the U.S. over the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"Violence in itself is neither evil nor good," Saeed Ghasseminejad, a senior Iran and financial economics adviser at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), opined in a tweet on Sunday.

"Violence for overthrowing a blood-thirsty dictator or stopping a serial killer is authorized, legitimate and good," Ghasseminejad wrote in Farsi.

"Violence for overthrowing a democratic government which is committed to human rights is unauthorized, illegitimate and evil and it must be confronted with legitimate, authorized and good violence," he added, hinting at the widespread protests across the U.S.

The comments drew sharp criticisms



from Twitter users, who described Ghasseminejad as a White House spin doctor

and a paid apologist.

Protests erupted in various cities across

the United States after a video went viral which showed brutal treatment of George Floyd under the knee of a U.S. police officer before his death.

Floyd's last words were "I cannot breathe".

On Friday, 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.

According to CNN's tally, around 4,000 people have been arrested across the United States during the nationwide protests.

Protesters around the world also took to the streets this week in solidarity with those demonstrating in the U.S. against police brutality and injustice.

Tehran to Washington: Let your people breathe

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has condemned the U.S. government's brutal crackdown on protests over the killing of an unarmed African-American man by the police in Minneapolis, urging Washington to let the American people breathe.

"Stop violence against your people and let them breathe," Mousavi said during a press conference on Monday, pointing to the eruption of demonstrations

in major U.S. cities in protest at the tragedy of death of George Floyd.

"The world has heard your outcry over the state oppression. The world is standing with you," he said, Tasnim reported.

He also censured the U.S. government for its destructive domestic and foreign policies, adding, "The American regime is perusing violence and bullying at home and abroad. We are greatly sad to see, along

with the people across the world, the violence the U.S. police have recently unfolded."

"We deeply regret to see the American people, who seek respect and no more violence, are suppressed and met with outmost violence," Mousavi said.

The demonstrations came as Derek Chauvin, the officer involved in Floyd's death, was arrested and charged with one count each of third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

Who are the secret puppet-masters behind Trump's war on Iran?

(Pressenza) — On May 6th, President Trump vetoed a war powers bill specifying that he must ask Congress for authorization to use military force against Iran. Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign of deadly sanctions and threats of war against Iran has seen no let-up, even as the U.S., Iran and the whole world desperately need to set aside our conflicts to face down the common danger of the Covid-19 pandemic.

So what is it about Iran that makes it such a target of hostility for Trump and the neocons? There are many repressive regimes in the world, and many of them are close U.S. allies, so this policy is clearly not based on an objective assessment that Iran is more repressive than Egypt, Saudi Arabia or other monarchies in the Persian Gulf.

The Trump administration claims that its "maximum pressure" sanctions and threats of war against Iran are based on the danger that Iran will develop nuclear weapons. But after decades of inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and despite the U.S.'s politicization of the IAEA, the Agency has repeatedly confirmed that Iran does not have a nuclear weapons program.

A 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, the IAEA's 2015 "Final Assessment on Past and Present Outstanding Issues" and decades of IAEA inspections have examined and resolved every scrap of false evidence of a nuclear weapons program presented or fabricated by the CIA and its allies.

If, despite all the evidence, U.S. policymakers still fear that Iran could develop nuclear weapons, then adhering to the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA), keeping Iran inside the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and ensuring ongoing access by IAEA inspectors would provide greater security than abandoning the deal.

As with Bush's false WMD claims about Iraq in 2003, Trump's real goal is not nuclear non-proliferation but regime change. After 40 years of failed sanctions and hostility, Trump and a cabal of U.S. warhawks still cling to the vain hope that a tanking economy and widespread suffering in Iran will lead to a popular uprising or make it vulnerable to another U.S.-backed coup or invasion.

United Against a Nuclear Iran and the Counter Extremism Project

One of the key organizations promoting and pushing hostility towards Iran is a shadowy group called United Against a Nuclear Iran (UANI). Founded in 2008, it was expanded and reorganized in 2014 under the umbrella of the Counter Extremism Project United (CEPU) to broaden its attacks on Iran and divert U.S. policymakers' attention away from the role of Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other U.S. allies in spreading violence, extremism and chaos in the greater Middle East.

UANI acts as a private enforcer of U.S. sanctions by keeping a "business registry" of hundreds of companies all over the world—from Adidas to Zurich Financial Services—that trade with or are considering trading with Iran. UANI hounds these companies by naming and shaming them, issuing reports for the media, and urging the Office of Foreign Assets Control to impose fines and sanctions. It also keeps a checklist of companies that have signed a declaration certifying they do not conduct business in or with Iran.

Proving how little they care about the Iranian people, UANI even targets pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical-device corporations—including Bayer, Merck, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, and Abbott Laboratories—that have been granted special U.S. humanitarian aid licenses.

■ Where does UANI get its funds?

UANI was founded by three former U.S. officials, Dennis Ross, Richard Holbrooke and Mark Wallace. In 2013, it still had a modest budget of \$1.7 million, nearly 80% coming from two Jewish-American billionaires with strong ties to Israel and the Republican Party: \$843,000 from precious metals investor Thomas Kaplan and \$500,000 from casino owner Sheldon Adelson. Wallace and other UANI staff have also worked for Kaplan's investment firms, and he remains a key funder and advocate for UANI and its affiliated groups.

In 2014, UANI split into two entities: the original UANI and the Green Light Project, which does business as the Counter Extremism Project. Both entities are under the umbrella of and funded by a third, Counter Extremism Project United (CEPU). This permits the organization to brand its



fundraising as being for the Counter Extremism Project, even though it still regrants a third of its funds to UANI.

CEO Mark Wallace, Executive Director David Ibsen and other staff work for all three groups in their shared offices in Grand Central Tower in New York. In 2018, Wallace drew a combined salary of \$750,000 from all three entities, while Ibsen's combined salary was \$512,126.

In recent years, the revenues for the umbrella group, CEPU, have mushroomed, reaching \$22 million in 2017. CEPU is secretive about the sources of this money. But investigative journalist Eli Clifton, who starting looking into UANI in 2014 when it was sued for defamation by a Greek ship owner it accused of violating sanctions on Iran, has found evidence suggesting financial ties with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

That is certainly what hacked emails between CEPU staff, an Emirati official and a Saudi lobbyist imply. In September 2014, CEPU's president Frances Townsend emailed the UAE Ambassador to the U.S. to solicit the UAE's support and propose that it host and fund a CEPU forum in Abu Dhabi.

Four months later, Townsend emailed again to thank him, writing, "And many thanks for your and Richard Mintz' (UAE lobbyist) ongoing support of the CEP effort!" UANI fundraiser Thomas Kaplan has formed a close relationship with Emirati ruler Bin Zayed, and visited the UAE at least 24 times. In 2019, he gushed to an interviewer that the UAE and its despotic rulers "are my closest partners in more parts of my life than anyone else other than my wife."

Another email from Saudi lobbyist and former Senator Norm Coleman to the Emirati Ambassador about CEPU's tax status implied that the Saudis and Emiratis were both involved in its funding, which would mean that CEPU may be violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act by failing to register as a Saudi or Emirati agent in the U.S.

Ben Freeman of the Center for International Policy has documented the dangerously unaccountable and covert expansion of the influence of foreign governments and military-industrial interests over U.S. foreign policy in recent years, in which registered lobbyists are only the "tip of the iceberg" when it comes to foreign influence. Eli Clifton calls UANI, "a fantastic case study and maybe a microcosm of the ways in which American foreign policy is actually influenced and implemented."

CEPU and UANI's staff and advisory boards are stocked with Republicans, neoconservatives and warhawks, many of whom earn lavish salaries and consulting fees. In the two years before President Trump appointed John Bolton as his National Security Advisor, CEPU paid Bolton \$240,000 in consulting fees. Bolton, who openly advocates war with Iran, was instrumental in getting the Trump administration to withdraw from the nuclear deal.

UANI also enlists Democrats to try to give the group broader, bipartisan credibility. The chair of UANI's board is former Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman, who was known as the most pro-Zionist member of the Senate. A more moderate Democrat on UANI's board is former New Mexico governor and UN ambassador Bill Richardson.

Norman Roule, a CIA veteran who was the National Intelligence Manager for Iran throughout the Obama administration was paid \$366,000 in consulting fees by CEPU in 2018. Soon after the brutal Saudi assassination of journalist Jamal Khassoghi, Roule and UANI fundraiser Thomas Kaplan met with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman in Saudi Arabia,

and Roule then played a leading role in articles and on the talk-show circuit whitewashing Bin Salman's repression and talking up his superficial "reforms" of Saudi society.

More recently, amid a growing outcry from Congress, the UN and the European Union to ease U.S. sanctions on Iran during the pandemic, UANI chairman Joe Lieberman, CEPU president Frances Townsend and CEO Mark Wallace signed a letter to Trump that falsely claimed, "U.S. sanctions neither prevent nor target the supply of food, medicine or medical devices to Iran," and begged him not to relax his murderous sanctions because of COVID-19. This was too much for Norman Roule, who tossed out his UANI script and told the Nation, "the international community should do everything it can to enable the Iranian people to obtain access to medical supplies and equipment."

Two Israeli shell companies to whom CEPU and UANI have paid millions of dollars in "consulting fees" raise even more troubling questions. CEPU has paid over \$500,000 to Darlink, located near Tel Aviv, while UANI paid at least \$1.5 million to Grove Business Consulting in Hod Hasharon, about 10% of its revenues from 2016 to 2018. Neither firm seems to really exist, but Grove's address on UANI's IRS filings appears in the Panama Papers as that of Dr. Gideon Ginossar, an officer of an offshore company registered in the British Virgin Islands that defaulted on its creditors in 2010.

■ Selling a Corrupted Picture to U.S. Policymakers

UANI's parent group, Counter Extremism Project United, presents itself as dedicated to countering all forms of extremism. But in practice, it is predictably selective in its targets, demonizing Iran and its allies while turning a blind eye to other countries with more credible links to extremism and terrorism.

UANI supports accusations by Trump and U.S. warhawks that Iran is "the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism," based mainly on its support for the Lebanese Shiite political party Hezbollah, whose militia defends southern Lebanon against Israel and fights in Syria as an ally of the government.

But Iran placed UANI on its own list of terrorist groups in 2019 after Mark Wallace and UANI hosted a meeting at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York that was mainly attended by supporters of the Mujahedin-e-Kalq (MEK). The MEK is a group that the U.S. government itself listed as a terrorist organization until 2012 and which is still committed to the violent overthrow of the government in Iran – preferably by persuading the U.S. and its allies to do it for them. UANI tried to distance itself from the meeting after the fact, but the published program listed UANI as the event organizer.

On the other hand, there are two countries where CEPU and UANI seem strangely unable to find any links to extremism or terrorism at all, and they are the very countries that appear to be funding their operations, lavish salaries and shadowy "consulting fees": Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Many Americans are still demanding a public investigation into Saudi Arabia's role in the crimes of September 11th. In a court case against Saudi Arabia brought by 9/11 victims' families, the FBI recently revealed that a Saudi Embassy official, Mussaed Ahmed al-Jarrah, provided crucial support to two of the hijackers. Brett Eagleson, a spokesman for the families whose father was killed on September 11th, told Yahoo News, "(This) demonstrates there was a hierarchy of command that's coming from the Saudi Embassy to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs [in Los Angeles] to the hijackers."

The global spread of the Wahhabi version of Islam that unleashed and fueled Al Qaeda, ISIS and other violent Muslim extremist groups has been driven primarily by Saudi Arabia, which has built and funded Wahhabi schools and mosques all over the world. That includes the King Fahd Mosque in Los Angeles that the two 9/11 hijackers attended.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

230 people killed in November protests: MP

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Top MP Mojtaba Zonnour has said 230 people were killed during the protests in November 2019.

"In these incidents, 230 people were killed, while 6 of them were official and security forces," Zonnour said on Monday. IRNA reported.

"20 percent of those who were killed were in the scene as active forces in favor of order and security," he said. "7 percent were killed in face-to-face clashes with security forces. 16 percent were killed as a result of attacking security and military centers."

He continued, "31 percent were killed due to attacking public centers. 26 percent were not agitators but lost their lives in an unknown way. 22 percent had criminal records."

It came immediately after Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli suggested that nearly 200 to 225 people had been killed during the November protests.

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."

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.

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

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.



Tehran criticizes S. Korea for overdue medical shipment

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Abbas Mousavi has criticized South Korea for their submissive conduct toward the United States, saying the Koreans have been waiting to receive a green light from the U.S. government for sending a medical shipment to Iran.

South Korea said last week that it would ship \$500,000 worth of medicine to Iran used to treat a hereditary disease. The cargo is the first of such humanitarian exports to Iran since the United States imposed unilateral sanctions on Tehran in 2018.

Asked to comment on the development, Mousavi said, "Gee, thanks to them for that! We have held two long years of negotiations on this matter; however, the Koreans listen to the Americans, and they have been waiting to receive a green light from the U.S."

He explained that while Iran has had seven billion dollars of assets in South Korea and they were obliged to return it in cash or goods upon Tehran's request, "the Koreans have shown negligence and procrastination" under the pretext of U.S. sanctions, Mehr reported.

Tehran has repeatedly reminded the East Asian country that Iran is not under any international bans, and the U.S.'s unilateral sanctions cannot be the basis for the actions of other countries, including South Korea.

The spokesman underlined that Tehran is seeking to repatriate all its assets from South Korea to remind Seoul that it should not let a third state hamper their longstanding, friendly relations.

"We are willing to retake all our assets from South Korea; this is a small but positive step, which comes with procrastination, to remind the Koreans that the long-standing ties between the two countries should not be marred by the interventions of a third country."

Expression of Interest (EOI)

World Health Organization through its country office in Iran is seeking for services of a company to conduct in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education environmental and occupational health assessment in selected public sector hospitals and laboratories around the country (approximately 170 sites) exclusively related to the environmental, occupational health and patient safety aspect of equipment and reagents procured for diagnosis and clinical management of COVID-19 under the emergency response.

We are looking for interested companies, active and expert in environmental and occupational health assessments related to health sector. Interested companies should be in the position to handle the on-site (facility level) assessment of 170 sites within approximately 30 days. It therefore requires work of some 20 assessors working in parallel. The whole contract will be for a period of approximately 11 months, including the preparation and follow up phase. Interested companies should send their letter of interest along with their resume, team composition, and related experiences through email address emacoiraof@who.int by COB 6 June 2020.

The shortlisted companies will be invited to submit their proposals and next steps, based on more detailed information on the project. All communications and document must be submitted in English.

Annual greenhouse fruit, vegetable output of 5,000 tons anticipated

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran is anticipated to produce 5,000 tons of fruits and vegetables in the greenhouses throughout the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), the managing director of Ferdows Pars Agricultural and Livestock Holding announced.



Azim Rajaei also said that 80 percent of Iran's greenhouse fruits and vegetables are exported.

As announced by the managing director of Iran's Agricultural Parks Company (APC), this company plans to create 1,000 hectares of new greenhouses in the country's agricultural parks during the current Iranian calendar year.

According to Ali Ashraf Mansouri, following a plan for developing the country's agricultural parks, so far, over 7,250 hectares of land has been allocated to be developed as agricultural parks, IRNA reported in late April.

Some 1,500 hectares of fishery parks and 600 hectares of livestock, poultry, and aquaculture parks are also planned to be inaugurated this year, the official added.

He further noted that APC has registered a request for 40 trillion rials (about \$952 million) of bank facilities for implementing development projects.

The parks will be awarded to capable companies without any specific limitations and facilities will also be provided for development in three areas of greenhouse, aquaculture, as well as livestock and poultry.

Development of the country's agricultural parks not only is going to create new job opportunities but also increases the country's non-oil exports and helps to preserve the environment and the national water and soil resources.

Back in March, Mansouri had announced that 8.3 trillion rials (about \$197.6 million) of facilities were paid for the development of agricultural parks across the country since the beginning of the past calendar year (March 21, 2019) up to March 11.

According to the official, the mentioned facilities were paid for development or construction of various agricultural parks including greenhouses, fisheries, and aquaculture, as well as livestock and poultry.

100 production companies to be listed on stock exchange

➔ There are various methods in the world to lead the capital toward production, Zarandi stated, adding one of these methods is leading the micro capitals toward production units and the stock market is one of the best ways to do so.

On April 25, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand said the production by the companies listed on the country's stock market increased by 7.1 percent during the 11-month period from March 21, 2019 to February 19, 2020.

Speaking in a meeting with the country's businessmen and directors active in the stock market, Dejjasand noted that this figure is an indication that "we should move toward new strategies to design [economic] mechanisms so that public resources and funds are directed into the capital market."

The economy minister said that the capital market is not exposed to the negative impacts of other markets, adding that this market has a special role in the economy and can quickly fill one of the missing links of the financing of projects in the country.

The official underlined the need for establishing a trust for the country's big companies and organizations to come forward and offer their shares in the stock exchange.

He further noted, "The first offering of the shares of state-owned enterprises in the stock exchange was announced today and the worth of offering is 165 trillion rials (about \$3.9 billion), and two more offerings will be held in near future."

"Along with such government-owned companies, we also saw non-governmental organizations such as Shasta, whose initial public offering took place [on April 15], and the rest have announced both their readiness and their plans," he added.

Earlier on April 15, Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta) offered eight billion shares, which account for 10 percent of its stakes, for sales at the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's major stock market.

Capital increase by the companies listed on Iranian stock market has risen 75 percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to an official with Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO).

Ali Beigzadeh, the SEO's director for supervising the primary market, said his department has issued capital-increase permits for 146 companies in the past year.

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

While materializing this motto requires all-out cooperation between the state-owned and private bodies, the country's stock market is taking some big steps to play a significant role in this due.

The market is trying to attract the liquidity existing in the society toward production and development projects, and many ministries and organizations including Ministry of Transport and Urban Development have already announced that they are planning to fund their development projects through the stock market.

As announced by deputy transport minister for resource planning and management on May 20, the ministry plans to offer 14 infrastructure projects to be financed through the country's stock market.

"Studies have been concluded for 14 infrastructure projects for entering the capital market, and investment companies are assessing various methods and models of offering this projects in the stock market," Amir-Mahmoud Ghaffari has told ILNA.

According to Ghaffari, seven railway projects and seven freeway projects will be offered in the capital market, and the transport ministry is considering which of these projects should be the priority.

"This is the Transport and Urban Development Ministry's first experience in this area and we are designing a model for its implementation", the official explained.

Iran-EAEU trade exceeds \$2b in 7 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trade between Iran and the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) reached \$2.112 billion since the implementation of the preferential trade agreement on October 27, 2019, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said \$1.528 billion of the mentioned figure has been the share of Iran's imports and \$584 million was gained from the exports, IRNA reported on Monday.

The IRICA spokesman said that 53 percent of Iran-EAEU trade has been entitled to the preferential tariffs.

On May 12, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced that the export of the commodities subjected to preferential tariffs from Iran to the Eurasian Economic Union's member states had risen 85 percent since the implementation of the agreement between the two sides.

Hamid Zadboum also said that 13 per-



cent of Iran's imports from the EAEU are subjected to the preferential tariffs, while 49 percent of the country's exports to the

block is subjected to those tariffs.

The official said that Iran's exports to the EAEU member countries are more variable

980 kilometers of freeways to be inaugurated by Mar. 2021



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 980 kilometers of freeways will be inaugurated throughout Iran during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said.

The minister said that there are currently 2,460 km of freeways laid across the country, Mehr news agency reported.

Mentioning Transport and Urban Development Ministry's plans for the current Iranian year, Eslami noted that construction of 1600 km of highways as well as 400,000 affordable housing units is also on the ministry's agenda for the current year.

According to the official, in the current year, the country's railway network is also going to be expanded by 2,400 km, while 29 airport development projects are also going to be completed to increase the passenger transportation capacity of the country's airports by 10 million.

In the rail fleet section, 780 new locally-made locomotives are to be added to the rail transport fleet, Eslami said.

"This year, it is planned to add a total of 2,000 new wagons and locomotives to the

country's railway fleet," he added.

The minister also said that 53,000 trucks will also be renovated in an effort to modernize the cargo and passenger transport fleet, which would save the country 960 million liters of diesel.

Back in January, Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Kheirollah Khademi had announced that six prioritized freeways projects with a total length of 550 kilometers (KM) were planned to be inaugurated by the Iranian Calendar year of 1400 (starts on March 21, 2021).

"With these new freeways going operational, the length of the country's freeways will increase by nearly 25 percent," Khademi, who is also the managing director of Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), said in a press conference.

According to the official, CDTIC has it on the agenda to build 3500 km of new freeways and highways across the country, nearly 1200 of which is currently under construction.

Khademi further noted that of the country's total 38,000 kilometers of arterial roads, about 18,000 kilometers are highways and about 2400 kilometers are freeways.

Nearly 55% of Iran's decorative, facade stone mines operational

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 45 percent of Iran's decorative and building stone mines are currently idle and are considered to be revived under an Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's program for re-opening such mines, IRNA reported on Monday.

According to the Ministry's data, the number of decorative and construction stone mines in the country currently stands at 2,072, of which 1,081 or 55 percent are active.

Iran is currently extracting only one percent of its mineral reserves, while according to international standards, this amount should be about five percent.

Official data show that Iran holds about 60 billion tons of mineral reserves, of which about 40 billion tons are definite reserves.

According to the official statistics from the Ministry of Industry, the country's annual production capacity of decorative and building stones is over 30 million tons.

Iranian mines managed to produce 13.5 million tons of stone in the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019) putting the country among the top five stone-producing countries in the world.

The annual production capacity of processed (facade) stone is also reported to be 180 million square meters and the production is at about 80 to 85 million square meters.

Iran exported \$350 million worth of decorative and facade stones during the Iranian calendar year 1397.



Iranian stone industry has high potential, proper reserves, color variation, and superior quality compared to rivals, but it needs support and incentives to realize these potentials.

■ **Producing 10 tons of gold set on agenda for 6th Five-Year Plan**

Also according to the Industry Ministry's data, cumulative gold production in Iran is set to reach 10 tons during the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

The total explored gold reserves in the country are estimated at about 300 tons, the data suggest.

Iran's gold reserves are located on 10 zones, most of which are located in Takab, Dashkasan, Mouteh, Astaneh and eastern zones of Iran, including Tungsten, Polymetal, Binaloud, copper and gold metallurgy field of Deh-Salam Khosof, the goldfield of Antimoan, and polymetal metallurgy field of Khash - Zahedan.

Over 1.8m tons of livestock feed supplied in 70 days



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Iran's Livestock Affairs Support Company Hassan Abbasi Maroufan says more than 1.8 million tons of raw materials for livestock feed has been supplied to the country's animal feed producers in 70 days since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), IRNA reported.

"Of course, the country's demand during this period was 2.2 million tons, which wasn't met due to the slowness of the transportation system following the coronavirus outbreak," the official said.

Until a month ago, up to 15,000 tons of livestock feed were cleared from the customs every day and transported to the provinces, but now the daily amount of transportation has reached over 40,000 tons, which will soon fill the demand gap, Maroufan explained.

There are currently 2.2 million tons of livestock feed stored in the country's ports and are going through the process of health and standard controls for clearance and they will be on the market soon.

Earlier this year, the outbreak of

compared to its imports from those states, adding exports can be even more expanded.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

The free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran's exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

coronavirus and the closure of trade borders with the neighbors in addition to the economic impacts of the U.S. sanctions resulted in a drastic fall in the country's animal feed imports to a point that the prices of such commodities skyrocketed in the country.

"It was announced that due to sanctions money transfers for about 3 million tons of corn and soybean meal were not carried out on time and so the supply of those goods were affected. As a result, the price of animal feed went up," Majid Movafeq Ghadirli, the chairman of Iran Feed Industry Association, said in early May.

In this regard, Maroufan also noted that Central Bank of Iran (CBI) did not allocate subsidized foreign currency for the first four months of 2020, and that resulted in the price hikes.

However, CBI has resumed the subsidization of livestock and poultry feed imports since early April, according to the official.

Iran imports over 80 percent of raw materials for feed production, according to the Iran Feed Industry Association.

Bushehr Province exports commodities to 28 countries in 2 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Bushehr Province, in southwest of Iran, has exported goods to 28 countries around the world in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), according to the director general of the province's customs administration.

During a provincial meeting on Behrouz Qarehbeigi announced that the commodities have been exported to 18 Asian, six European, and three African countries and a state in South America, IRNA reported.

Last year, about 39 countries were the export destinations of this province, the official added.

During the mentioned period, over 3.7 million tons of goods valued at over \$823 million dollars have been exported from the province, he noted.

He further referred to the petrochemical products, vegetables, minerals, and gas condensate as main goods exported from Bushehr to different world countries.

Despite the unfair sanctions against the country, the volume of exports from different Iranian cities indicates the efforts of the officials at the national economic sectors to develop trade exchanges with other countries, he concluded.

Based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first two months of the current year stood at \$9.341 billion.

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 \$1.07 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.

As reported, China accounted for over 27 percent of Iran's total exports, followed by Iraq, UAE, Afghanistan and Turkey with 25 percent, 15 percent, 8 percent, and four percent respectively.

The top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$1.234 billion, the UAE with \$1.78 billion, Turkey with \$535 million, Russia with \$356 million and India with \$335 million worth of imports.

NISOC introduces new deputy for PIMS affairs

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) announced the establishment of a new department in the company which is tasked to handle all affairs related to Pipeline Integrity Management Systems (PIMS), Shana reported on Monday.

The mentioned office dubbed “Deputy for Planning, Coordination, and Supervision of Pipeline Integrity Management Systems (PIMS)” has officially started operating under the NISOC management, the company’s Managing Director Ahmad Mohammadi announced.

Mohammadi stated that this new office is aimed to establish a PIMS system in NISOC and its subsidiaries, adding: “From now on, all measures related to pipelines including, planning, design, supervision, implementation, and commissioning of new pipelines as well as the management, inspection, maintenance, repair and safety of existing pipelines in the company’s operational areas will be carried out by this deputy in a centralized and cohesive manner.”

Preparing, completing, updating and aligning all types of general and specific



guidelines and protocols regarding pipeline risk assessment and management, formu-

lating pipeline cleaning guidelines, developing safety instructions, as well as preparing

instructions for commissioning, operation, maintenance and temporary or permanent removal of pipelines, are mentioned as some of the duties of this new deputy.

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is a government-owned corporation under the direction of the country’s Oil Ministry and operates as a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company.

The company which contributes to nearly 80 percent of Iran’s crude oil output, is currently developing 28 oil fields in southern Iran.

Back in January, Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) successfully launched the first PIMS in the Iranian oil industry.

According to IOOC, the system was launched in collaboration with a Norwegian company to comply with international and national requirements for the standard, safe, and sustainable operation of the pipelines of Salman field in the Persian Gulf.

The project is dubbed as the first such project in the Iranian offshore oil industry.

A pipeline integrity management system provides a comprehensive and integrated framework for the effective management of pipelines in oil and gas fields.

Iran faces 700,000-ton annual shortage of propylene

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iran has been facing a shortage of propylene for years. The country’s propylene production in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026) will be four percent of its total petrochemical production.

It is while this figure will be 18 percent worldwide, 21 percent in China, 17 percent in the United States, and 16 percent in Saudi Arabia.

Currently, with the production of 985,000 tons of propylene by Iranian refineries and petrochemical plants, there is a shortage of 175,000 tons of this product in the country, Shana has reported.

In the calendar year of 1404, the amount of propylene production will reach 1.95 million tons, while Iran will be facing an annual shortage of about 700,000 tons of the item.

In order to tackle this projected shortage, the first step is to launch projects with methanol and propylene output.

For production of at least 3 to 3.5 million tons of propylene in Iran, two propylene lines have been considered; First, the southern line to the center, from Assaluyeh to Marvdasht, which will be developed by the National Petrochemical Company.

The methanol surplus in Assaluyeh will be used to produce propylene to be injected into the 430-km pipeline to Marvdasht to be stored in a storage hub.

Secondly, the Alborz pipeline, where propylene will be produced from natural gas in Amirabad and transferred from Amirabad-Neka to Damghan, to be distributed later in the provinces of North Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, Semnan and surrounding areas.

On the other hand, the GTTP project of Islamabad West is



being implemented by the National Petrochemical Company in western Iran in order to develop the propylene production chain.

All of these projects will be GTTP (gas to propylene) or MTP (methanol to propylene), both of which being developed for completion of the propylene production chain and eliminate the country’s need for imports.

The technical savvy for building these plants will be provided by the Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC).

Propylene is a colorless fuel gas with a naturally pungent smell. Although similar to propane, it has a double bond which gives it a combustion advantage i.e. it burns hotter. This fuel gas is extremely flammable and non-toxic. Pro-

pylene is obtained during the refining of gasoline

As the second-biggest source of revenue for Iran, the petrochemical industry is one of the most important pillars of the country’s resilient economy and one of the main suppliers of foreign currency especially the euro for the country.

The industry became more significant since the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on the country’s oil industry and since then, the government has been taking serious measures to expand the industry and move toward self-sufficiency.

Cooperating with capable domestic knowledge-based companies and startups is one of the very fruitful steps that the oil ministry has taken in its efforts to reach complete independence from the foreign resources for meeting its equipment needs.

In this regard, the country’s Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC) has played a very significant role in collaborating with such companies for working on innovative research projects for producing various equipment and base-products needed in the industry.

PRTC’s Managing Director Ali Pajouhan has announced that National Petrochemical Company, in collaboration with domestic companies, is planning to indigenize the knowledge for producing nine major catalysts used in the petrochemical industries within the next two years.

Catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction in the process of creating a petrochemical product; the catalyst itself is not consumed in the catalyzed reaction and can continue to act repeatedly. Because of this, only very small amounts of catalyst are required to alter the reaction rate in most cases.

Oil prices edge up ahead of upcoming OPEC+ meeting

Oil prices rose slightly on Monday, with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) considering meeting as soon as this week to discuss whether to extend record production cuts beyond end-June.

The rises came after front-month Brent and WTI prices posted their strongest monthly gains in years in May. Gains were boosted by OPEC crude production dropping to its lowest in two decades, with demand expected to recover as more nations emerge from coronavirus lockdowns.

“The focus is very much on OPEC+,”

OCBC economist Howie Lee said, referring to OPEC and its allies including Russia. OPEC+ agreed in April to reduce output by an unprecedented 9.7 million barrels per day (bpd) in May and June after the coronavirus pandemic ravaged demand.

“We might see a cautious pullback in (crude) prices given that downstream prices haven’t caught up ... but if OPEC+ does come up with a three-month extension, there’s a possibility that prices may hit the \$40 level,” Lee said.

Still, tensions between the United States and China weighed on global financial

markets, while traders are also keeping an eye on riots over the weekend that have engulfed major U.S. cities.

Saudi Arabia is proposing to extend record cuts from May and June until the end of the year, but has yet to win support from Russia, sources have told Reuters.

Algeria, which currently holds the OPEC presidency, has proposed that an OPEC+ meeting planned for June 9-10 be brought forward to facilitate oil sales for countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. Russia has no objection to the meeting being brought forward to June 4.

OPEC+ set to discuss short extension of oil production cuts

OPEC+ is set to discuss a short extension of its current output cuts, according to a delegate, as the cartel considers bringing forward its next meeting a few days to June 4, Bloomberg reported.

The cartel and its allies are considering extending the current cuts for one to three months, the delegate said. As the situation in the oil market is moving fast, the preference is to take short-term measures and not disrupt the rebalancing of the market, the delegate said.

The existing deal -- struck in April as energy demand and prices collapsed because of the coronavirus pandemic -- calls for output cuts to ease from July. But that’s up for discussion at the next meeting. Russia wants to start easing from July, people familiar with the situation said last week.

Oil prices have rallied as the output cuts coincided with a stronger-than-expected rebound in demand. But with lockdowns easing across the globe, fears that the pandemic could have a second wave make predictions of a recovery perilous. At about \$35 a barrel, prices are below what most producers need for government spending.

West Texas Intermediate crude and Brent, the global benchmark, edged lower in Asian trading on Monday as the protests in the U.S. damped risk sentiment.

The date of the meeting, which will be held by video conference, was still to be confirmed late on Sunday, after people familiar with the situation said OPEC members were close to an agreement to bring it forward to June 4.

An earlier date would give the oil cartel more flexibility to change its current production limits. OPEC members usually decide their plans for shipping oil to customers for July in the first week of June, so an earlier meeting would give them more time to react.

Algerian Energy Minister Mohamed Arkab, who holds the rotating presidency, proposed June 4, instead of June 9-10.

The 23-nation OPEC+ coalition led by Saudi Arabia and Russia is undertaking record oil-production cuts to prop up prices. At the



meeting it will decide whether to keep the existing agreement, or extend the current cuts.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners committed to lowering output by 9.7 million barrels a day, or about 10 percent of global supply, in May and June. In addition, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates made further voluntary cuts of about 1.2 million barrels a day for June, bringing the total OPEC+ curbs to almost 11 million barrels a day.

Production cuts are meant to be eased to about 7.7 million barrels a day in July.

Nigeria and the state oil company of Abu Dhabi, the UAE’s capital, have already announced plans to increase exports in July in line with the OPEC+ deal for April.

If the decision to move the meeting is confirmed, it would mean also shifting committee meetings that normally take place before a ministerial conference to later in the month. OPEC has an Economic Commission Board meeting scheduled for June 2-3, and a Joint Technical Committee to assess implementation of the current supply cuts on June 5.

Plans underway for gas export to neighboring regions

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iran is planning to export gas to the neighboring regions, specially the Kurdistan region of Iraq, the managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) announced.

“Tehran is studying plans to deliver gas to areas bordering Iran in the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan in neighboring Iraq,” Hassan Montazer Torbati said while elaborating on Iran’s plans for gas exports to new regions and countries, Fars news agency reported.

The official noted that the authorities in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region 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.

In relevant remarks in January 2019, Montazer Torbati said that Iran was supplying a total of 800 million cubic meters/day of natural gas or 5 mbd of oil equivalent.



Regarding ongoing gas exports to Iraq, the official said Iran was currently exporting gas to Iraq’s Basra and Baghdad and received its dues accordingly.

He also said that Iran needed no gas imports currently, adding a dispute with Turkmenistan regarding the latter’s disruption of gas flow to Iran’s northern provinces had been taken to international arbitration, adding the case was being pursued through relevant legal channels.

Montazer Torbati also said on Sunday that 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 Torbati 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.

Russian LNG tanker completes ice-covered Northern Sea Route

Russian gas producer Novatek said on Monday that the Christophe de Margerie tanker carrying liquefied natural gas from its Yamal LNG plant has successfully completed the ice-covered eastbound Northern Sea Route.

As Reuters reported, the route across the Arctic Ocean is seen as strategic by Russia, which wants to use it to speed up deliveries of cargoes between Europe and Asia, supplanting the usual route via the Suez Canal. The tanker left the port of Sabetta on May 18 and then met with nuclear icebreaker ‘Yamal’, owned by a subsidiary of state nuclear corporation Rosatom, which escorted it along the route.

Novatek, which is Russia’s largest non-state natural gas producer, said the tanker bound for China reached the Bering Strait between Russia and the United States in 12 days, a voyage of 2,563 nautical miles.

“Eastbound transportation of LNG along the NSR is not normally performed in May, as this represents one of the most difficult months for navigation,” Novatek said.

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9280023

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

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

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

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

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

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FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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1399.1009

Second Announcement



1399.1016

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Trump is unashamedly right-wing: Adib-Moghaddam

‘The U.S. is rocked to its core by race riots’

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, a professor in global thought and comparative philosophies, tells the Tehran Times that “President Trump is unashamedly right-wing”.

The professor also says the protest over the murder of African-American under the banner of “Black Lives Matter” says a lot about the current situation in the United States and “the failed model that President Trump tries to force feed to the people.”

Here is the text of Adib-Moghaddam's exclusive interview with the Tehran Times:

Unfortunately, the number of victims of Coronavirus in the United States has exceeded 100,000. The Trump administration, had predicted the death toll would not rise to that number. How effective do you think Trump's performance will be in countering the virus in the run-up to the November presidential election?

A: As we are conducting this interview, the United States has not only by far the highest number of Covid-19 infections and deaths in the world, the country is rocked to its core by race riots, after the murder of George Floyd. Under the banner of “Black Lives Matter”, this movement tells us a lot about the current situation in the United States and the failed model that President Trump tries to force feed to the people. President Trump is unashamedly right-wing. The core of his voters are people who believe in a particularly divisive form of politics, somewhat comparable to a khodi and ghey-re khodi doctrine that is restrictive and self-defeating. Trump lodged into this right-wing political culture that was fostered by the “neo-conservatives” for decades and pushed it further to the Right. It was only a matter of time until a multi-cultural society such as the United States, would implode. When the sovereignty of a state is based on a formula that does not reflect the reality of the society it intends to rule, it will fail.

This deadly failure is even more apparent when pandemics such as Covid-19 strike because they require science and the truth to be combated. Right-wing politics fosters the exact opposite, however. It is based on hocus pocus, lies, deception, fake news. But you can't cheat death and this is what explains the situation in the USA right now. A government that is based on ideology, will always be hard put to fight a pandemic exactly because of the lack of knowledge that right-wing politics engenders. The tragedy for the citizens of the United States is horrific and I really feel for my friends and colleagues in the country.



The tragedy for the citizens of the United States is horrific

The effects of the Coronavirus outbreak on the U.S. economy are also among the issues that have pushed Trump to try to end the lockdown sooner. To what extent can this contribute to the deterioration of the situation?

A: Again, we can easily analyse any effort by an ideological government as impotent, as it is not based on science and knowledge, but some for of “black magic”, lies and deception that do not yield constructive results. Let's put the apparent disregard for the lives of tens of thousands of US American aside for one moment. The idea that opening up the economy will help the inevitable catastrophe that Covid-19 will unleash on the U.S. economy can be framed as a politics of desperation. President Trump doesn't seem to understand that the real benefit for the economy would have been to control the pandemic in the short run and to gradually open up the economy as other countries have done. China is a good example. Vietnam is another. There are thousands of U.S. Americans who are trying to flee to Canada and to Cuba in order to escape the pandemic, as they rightly believe that it is uncontrollable. I don't think that people understand that at this stage and under

this administration Covid-19 in the United States is exactly that: uncontrollable. The long term economic consequences will be catastrophic, and they will contribute further to the re-ordering of the world. That much is for sure.

One of the approaches of the Trump administration in foreign policy, which seems to be from Kissinger's, is to control China. Recently, Trump announced that he would pull companies out of Hong Kong if the Chinese government passed the Hong Kong National Security law. Trump, on the other hand, has stepped up operations in the South China Sea. What are the main reasons for tightening the screw on Beijing to contain China?

A: Again we have to analyse these policies from a strategic vantage point. The political classes in the United States have known for a while that China will be a global power that the U.S. model is hard-pressed to compete with. This is not only in terms of the economy, but politics too. The United States lost the fundamental asset that made it a special country for many people and for a long time: It's rhetorical commitment to freedom and democracy. It was always rhetorical, as the country was built on rivers of blood. The ex-

“The political culture of the United States is populated by a range of right-wing institutions that will put continuous pressure on any President to follow the international relations that they prescribe which includes confrontation with China and Iran and other geopolitically central countries such as Venezuela.”

inction of Native Americans, and then the abomination of slavery followed by the imperial devastation of many places. But during the Cold War, U.S. society produced inspiring forms of resistance with truly universal appeal: The anti-Vietnam movement, Woodstock, even John Lennon went to New York because of the aura of freedom that existed in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s. But the political establishment slowly destroyed that counterculture and supplanted it with a fundamentalist adherence to capitalism and consumerism. This political culture created Trump and all the corrupt and decadent excesses that his type of politician stands for. Obama was a short panacea to that bigger phenomenon. Simply put: The United States has lost its appeal as a model. So whereas during the Cold War, the U.S. was equipped with that rhetorical freedom discourse, it has lost that appeal today. This explains the desperate efforts to contain China through sanctions and direct political confrontation. In the absence of the appeal of the U.S. model of governance and society, these are the only methods left.

If Joe Biden is elected president in the November elections, will he change approach toward China? Also, what will be his approach to Iran and the 2015 nuclear deal if he wins the polls?

A: There will be nuances. But as I argue in my forthcoming book “What is Iran?": The political culture of the United States is populated by a range of right-wing institutions that will put continuous pressure on any President to follow the international relations that they prescribe which includes confrontation with China and Iran and other geopolitically central countries such as Venezuela. Having said that: If Biden manages this domestic context, then his instinct will tell him that it is better for the United States to engage China constructively with a positive-sum mentality as there is no other way. Obama understood very well that the U.S. has turned into a “normal” country - one amongst many. Biden has a similar appreciation, and he is certainly more intelligent than Trump. When Trump became President, I immediately said that Iran will be targeted. With Biden, Iran will be engaged differently. This repositioning will open up many opportunities for diplomacy. At that point of time, Iran needs to act constructively and move towards a) pacifying the domestic realm through concessions to the mainstream of Iranian society, and b) adopting an open mind about establishing full diplomatic relations with the United States, if Biden creates a supportive environment to that end.

With unrest across the U.S., asks the Twittersphere, where is the ‘Free American Army’?

BY Omar Ahmed

The scenario is all too familiar: the almost casual murder in Minneapolis of an unarmed African American citizen — say his name: George Floyd — by police officers has sparked a wave of social unrest and protests across the country. Since Floyd's killing on 25 May, we have seen what are arguably the worst “race riots” in a generation, following Los Angeles in 1992 and Detroit in 1967, for example. What makes the current protests different, though, is how rapidly they have spread across America helped in part, no doubt, by the availability and use of social media. The events are taking place with the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic in a country with the highest recorded number of cases and deaths.

Yet while numerous cities are burning, stores are being looted and violent clashes are occurring between citizens and law enforcement officers, the framing of these events as “riots” is hypocritical. Commentators and politicians may well be blinded by U.S. exceptionalism as they rush to describe similar protests in the West Asia and Hong Kong, for example, as “uprisings” or “revolutions”, while home-grown unrest is labelled as anything but. With “riots” implying that blame lies with the citizens on the streets, the subtle distinctions are rarely explained.

The world is now watching the U.S. as Black Lives Matter protests spread to over 30 cities, including the capital. Secret Service agents clashed with protestors who knocked down security barricades outside the White House, where Trump and his family were taken to a secure bunker.

We are now witnessing such events in the U.S., with the National Guard fully mobilised in the State of Minnesota and Trump announcing that the left-wing anti-fascist movement Antifa will be designated as a “terrorist” organisation.

The Arab Spring, it is worth recalling, was ignited by the self-immolation of a Tunisian man in protest at the injustice of local police officers. The civil war in Syria was kick-started by the government's brutal response to protests that followed the torturing of some young boys by police officers for spraying graffiti on some walls. George Floyd was killed because of a similarly minor infringement of the law. Indeed, there are numerous examples of black U.S. citizens being shot and killed, or brutalised and abused for traffic offences and other incidents that would warrant a caution or fine in any other democracy.

While in places like Syria the divide is drawn along religious lines, in the U.S. it is most definitely race which is the defining factor, along with the low social status that too many non-whites experience. Foreign states backed armed opposition groups and army defectors during the early days of the conflict in Syria. The U.S. was one of a number of countries financing and arming terrorist groups in the country, often including foreign fighters not even from Syria.

As is usual when governments are faced with any kind of opposition, the spectre of “extremists” was invoked in Syria and now we are hearing the same mantra in the U.S. Attorney General William Barr has said that peaceful protests were “hijacked by violent radical elements”, while the Governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz, blamed the violence and criminal activity on “outsiders” from other states within America.

Although widespread defections from the security forces are very unlikely in the U.S., we have seen footage of at least one Sheriff, Chris Swanson from Flint, Michigan, siding with the protestors. There have also been satirical posts on a Twitter account of the “Free American Army”, reversing the role that the U.S. usually plays when meddling in other countries' affairs.

Another phenomenon in common with the dictatorial regimes and elsewhere are “regime loyalists” and paramilitaries who seek to crush popular dissent by any means. Many Trump supporters are gun-owners and activists. As recently as April, armed Trump supporters, some brandishing Confederate flags, staged protests of their own in response to social-distancing orders intended to curb the coronavirus outbreak. The state and federal responses were muted compared with those facing the Black Lives Matter protesters. In a worst-case scenario, the die is cast for conflict along racial lines, but there is hope: white citizens have also taken to the streets as the #ICantBreathe protests spread.

Nevertheless, the deliberate targeting of journalists in an effort to stifle the media has been seen in the U.S. over the past week. Such crude attempts at press censorship are more associated with non-democracies, but one Denver-based journalist said that her cameraman was hit four times by police with paintballs and his camera was also hit, while a black CNN correspondent was arrested live on air while reporting, despite showing his press ID. Another reporter and her cameraman filming in Louisville were shot at by police using rubber bullets.

What is missing in America at the moment is the overseas funding and arming of protesters. The U.S. has geography on its side, but is already awash with weapons and ammunition in any case. If terrorist groups do emerge as they did and continue to do so in Syria with the help of neighbouring, regional and international actors — including the U.S. — would Washington have a moral leg to stand on?

While it may be argued that at least the U.S. authorities are not bombing their own citizens that has actually happened. On 13 May 1985, Philadelphia police dropped a satchel bomb made up of FBI-supplied C-4 explosives and Tovex, on a largely African-American residential neighbourhood targeting the black liberation group MOVE. Eleven people were killed, including five children, and 61 homes were destroyed; hundreds were left homeless. The scant regard that too many people in power and in uniform have for the human rights of their fellow citizens in America mirrors in many respects the dehumanisation endured by people and states facing U.S. and U.S.-funded aggression and occupation.

At the time of writing, it is unclear where the Black Lives matter protests are going in the U.S., but doubts are already being expressed about whether George Floyd's family and friends can expect justice for him any time soon. Not only did it take days for the police officer involved to be arrested and charged, but his colleagues who stood by and did nothing to stop him are also still at liberty.

Floyd's murder could be an era-defining moment, with the Trump administration's disastrous response to Covid-19, mass unemployment and a devastated economy all thrown into the mix. Far from “making America great again”, Trump is presiding over a country whose standing in the world has never been lower. China's GDP is on course to overtake that of the U.S. by the end of the decade and the declining power of the petro-dollar means that Americans face tough times ahead. They need to get a grip on the racism that blights their society before it is too late; it could be the factor that tips the balance.

Virus-related economic fallout could mean 54 million Americans hungry: Analysis

Latest official figures have shown that a record number of Americans will face hunger this year as the economic fallout due to the new coronavirus pandemic is expected to leave tens of millions of people unable to afford daily meals.

About 54 million people across the U.S. could starve this year without help from food banks, food stamps and other aid following the virus-related economy fallout, according to an analysis by Feeding America — the national food bank network.

The analysis underlined that demand for aid at food banks has soared since the flu-like pathogen forced the U.S. economy to close and resulted in more than 40 million new unemployment benefit claims.

An estimated one in four children, the equivalent of 18 million minors, could need food aid this year as a result of the epidemiological crisis — a 63-percent increase compared to 2018.

The analysis by Feeding America said the pandemic is taking its toll as the food insecurity in the U.S. is already in a critical state, with at least 37 million living in households without adequate resources and consistent access to enough food for a healthy life.

Stressing that the economic impact and food insecurity would probably penetrate deepest in the southern U.S. states, the analysis said more than 11 million people in Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, New Mexico,



Texas and Tennessee are projected to suffer food insecurity in 2020.

In Mississippi, proportionately the worst-affected state before and since the pandemic, almost three-quarters of a million people could need food aid this year, including one in every three children.

“This pandemic continues to impact the lives and livelihoods of our neighbors nationwide, putting millions of additional people at risk of hunger while continuing to hurt people already familiar with hardship,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America.

The projections by Feeding America indicated that a national annual unemployment rate would stand at 11.5 percent, 7.6 percentage points higher than 2018, and a national annual poverty rate at 16.6 percent — 4.8 points higher than 2018.

According to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University, more than 100,000 people in the U.S. have lost their lives as a result of the new coronavirus less than four months after the contagion was first reported in the country.

On average, about 1,400 people have died each day in the country this month, according to the tally of state and county data.

The viral disease, COVID-19, has killed more Americans than during the U.S. Korean War, Vietnam War and the U.S. war in Iraq from 2003 to 2011 combined.

The first coronavirus infection was reported in the state of Washington in late January and the first known death happened in early February.

Almost all 50 U.S. states continue to reopen their frozen economy and emerge from more than two months of lockdowns under pressure from President Donald Trump, who is seeking reelection in November.

A report said last week that thousands of lives could have been saved if the Trump administration, which is under fire over mishandling the viral outbreak, had implemented lockdowns and social distancing measures just two weeks earlier.

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9136110

1399.1014

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

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

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

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

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

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Six forgotten crafts revived in Ilam

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Six handicraft fields, which had been fallen into oblivion, have been revived in western Ilam province, Mehr reported on Monday.

While there are 33 fields of handicraft being practiced across the province, more six obsolete fields have been brought back to life in collaboration with the private sector, provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh announced.



Making Siah-Chador (nomadic black tents), Chit-Bafi (a kind of nomadic wicker work), Namad-Mali (literally meaning felt beating), making traditional costumes, wicker works and Giveh-Bafi (making a kind of traditional footwear) are the revived handicrafts in the province.

Handicrafts as an independent and indigenous industry, considering current economic conditions of the country, can play a vital role in the region by generating jobs with the least amount of investment, Shanbehzadeh said.

He also noted that by improving the quantitative and qualitative level of the products, the opportunity for the development of investment in these fields will be provided.

Last month the official announced that Ilam has exported more than \$50 million of handicrafts to neighboring Iraq through Mehran border since last Iranian year 1398 (started March 21, 2019).

Embossed kilim, wooden products, traditional glassware, zilou floor coverings, ceramics, and wool felt products constituted the lion's share of the exports, of which embossed kilim is the most sought-after.

Dozens of Iranian handicrafts have gained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence during the past couple of years and some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women.

15 sites of prehistoric petroglyphs identified in northwest Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of fifteen archaeological sites, which embrace a wide variety of prehistoric petroglyphs and rock-carved arts, have been identified in the plains of Meshginshahr county, northwest of the country.



"The newly-discovered historical sites contain over 100,000 petroglyphs, which are rare in their kinds in north-western Iran," IRNA quoted Meshginshahr's tourism chief Emamali Imani as saying on Monday.

"The discovered objects bear depictions of human beings in archery, cavalry in rhythmic and magical themes... Some of those date back to 40,000 years ago," the official noted.

In November 2018, Imani announced that new traces of prehistoric relics and petroglyphs were detected through an archeological survey in Meshginshahr county.

Some petroglyphs depict mountain goats, boat anchors, shooting and scenes of war, and scenes of deer hunting in individual and collective forms, the official stated.

The rock art can be seen in some mountainous regions across the country, offering good clues to help shed light on daily life in the distant past, though some of which bear figurative figures.

Lohondor projected to be named national village of Hinji-Duzi

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Lohondor, a small village in the northern province of Golestan, is planned to be named as the national village of Hinji-Duzi, a traditional type of beadwork.



Over 150 women are working in this field, which has the potential to become popular and recognized in the country, provincial tourism chief Maryam Hajiebrahimi said, CHTN reported on Monday.

Being recognized as a national hub of Hinji-Duzi can make Lohondor a center for the production and training the art, which can lead to more job opportunities as well as better income, she added.

However, the first step in the development of this field is marketing and advertising in order to attract more customer, she stated.

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

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

Iran's trump cards to kick-start tourism in post-COVID-19 world

→ 1 There's a truly massive array of activities available throughout the country - visitors can go skiing in various resorts northward the capital Tehran; Sunbathe on white-sand beaches in southern Hormozgan province, and explore lush forests in its northern provinces, or wandering through labyrinthine bazaars, captivating mosques, and Zoroastrian temples that are dotted in abundance throughout the country.

Iran is a treasure house for some of the most gorgeous Islamic architecture on the planet. Seemingly at every turn, Islam's historical commitment to aesthetic beauty and exquisite architecture reigns supreme. The sublime, turquoise-tiled domes and minarets of Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan (Imam) Square gets so many appreciative gasps of wonder, and rightly so, but there are utterly magnificent rivals elsewhere, in Yazd and Shiraz among others.

Regarding its people, Iranians are world-famous for being courteous, warm, friendly, welcoming, and eager to show off their country to foreigners. Foreign travelers are continuously astounded by the warmth of Iranians, treated with nothing but sparkling smiles and offers of help of any kind.

Being wallet-friendly? Last year, the World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked Iran first in the world as a pocket-friendly destination. "Iran ranks 1st globally [in the category of Price Competitiveness], thanks to low ticket taxes and airport charges (7th), fuel prices (5th), and high purchasing power (5th)," according to WEF's Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019.

A safe country to visit; the matter of security is essentially considered as a complex question for many foreigners willing to visit a host country.

When it comes to media outlets, in particular, some Western ones, Iran is a country that is often portrayed as unwelcoming. However, many visitors to the Islamic Republic describe it as one of the safest countries they've ever been to. The 2019 Travel Risk Map, which shows the risk level around the world, puts Iran among countries with "insignificant risk", a category where the UK, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Finland are placed in.



Travelers sit overlooking the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan, central Iran.

Iran embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mau-

soleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

More Sacred Defense museums to be inaugurated

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Eleven museums dedicated to the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war, which is called Sacred Defense in the Islamic Republic, will be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2021), IRNA reported.

Nine museums will come on stream during the Sacred Defense Week in late September, while two more museums will begin working by the year-end, said the head of the Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values during the inauguration ceremony of Iran's Aviation Museum on Sunday.

Pointing to the role of the museums in recording the memories and raising people's awareness, Brigadier General Bahman Kargar stated that Iranian armed forces have always fought for their people and they stood by the people since the beginning of Iraq's war



A view of Tehran's Sacred Defense Museum

against Iran.

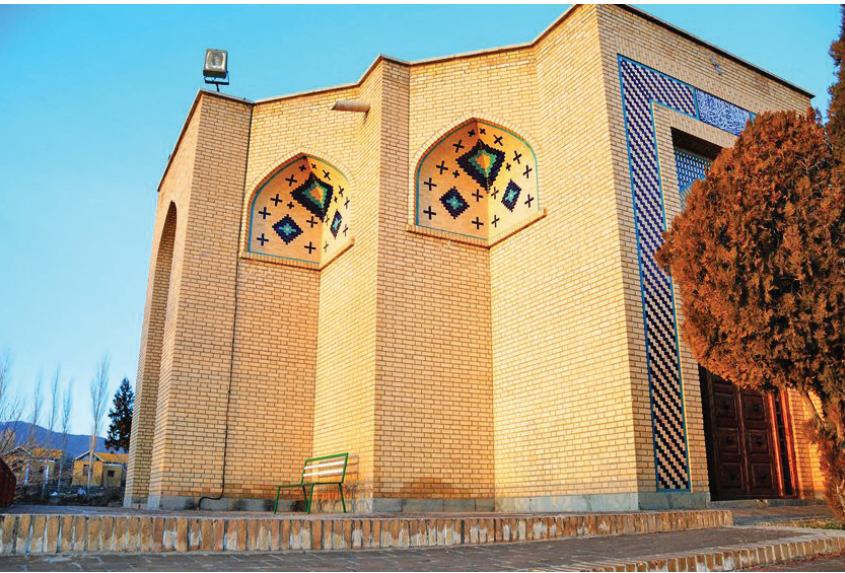
Currently 14 museums related to the Sacred Defense are active across the country, of which Tehran's Sacred Defense Museum is the most popular.

Covering a landscaped site of 21 hectares in north-central Tehran, the Sacred Defense Museum is a gigantic war memorial with its collections concentrated heavily on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The Sacred Defense Museum is equipped with a state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contributes to its charm.

The complex has vast garden areas, water features and children's play areas. Outside, a patchwork of domestically-manufactured armaments such as rockets, tanks, and artillery pieces are on show.

Shahroud, the land of five climates



A view of the mausoleum of Sheikh Abolhassan Kharaqani in Shahroud

By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig

(Part 3/3)

■ Tomb of Sheikh Abolhassan Kharaqani

The mausoleum of this famous mystic of the fourth and fifth centuries AH is located 34 km north of Shahroud city and in Qaleh Now- Kharqan town.

The beautiful altar of this building, which belongs to the Ilkhanid period, is one of the most important parts of the current building of the tomb.

■ Waterfall Tangeh Dastan

The city of Mojen is located 35 km northwest of Shahroud in a mountainous area. The famous Strait (Dastan) is located 10 km from the city of Mojen and 45 km from Shahroud. Due to its location in a mountainous area and at an altitude of about 2000 meters above sea level, the climate of the region is favorable for tourists in spring, summer and early autumn.

■ Farahzad Tash and Haft Rang Spring (Seven colors spring)

Farahzad Tash area and Haft Rang spring are located in the protected area of Shahroud city and the central Alborz mountain range in the foothills of Shahvar Peak.

Due to the abundance of water and lush pastures, and also Pir-e-Mishi fountain, agriculture, and animal husbandry are the main occupations of the people. Haft Rang spring has been considered by the locals for its beauty and healing properties in the past.

Farahzad's name is due to the greenery of the fields and gardens of the region, and the name of Haft Rang spring is also due to the springs that are seen in different colors by passing through various minerals.

■ Qale Bala, a mountain village in the heart of the desert

Qale Bala is one of the tourist destinations in Shahroud County. Due to the mountainous nature of this village, a special area

has been created in the heart of the desert, which is spectacular. Residential buildings, farmland, and village gardens are built-in steps. This, along with the use of traditional and indigenous materials in the construction of houses with a mountainous climate over the desert, has created a beautiful landscape that is currently considered by tourists as an eco-tourism village.

Adjacent to the village is the Turan Wildlife

havens. Adjacent to Turan National Park and the presence of wild animals and birds such as the Asian cheetah, the Asian zebra, and the golden raven, etc. attract many tourists and nature lovers to this village.

■ Cloud Forest (Abr Forest)

A forest where clouds and trees meet, and walking through the clouds become an achievable dream. This is where mountains and clouds come together. The Shahroud Cloud Forest is part of the oldest and most beautiful Hyrcanian forests, with rare plant and animal species that still live in the forest.

The cloud forest is one of the most beautiful places in Iran. The reason for naming this forest is that it is often surrounded by an ocean of clouds. In this forest, the clouds are so close to the trees that it seems that the forest is riding on clouds and can be traversed among the clouds.

Many mountaineers and tourists believe that the Clouds Forest is one of the most beautiful landscapes in Iran. So don't miss the opportunity to see this rare phenomenon in the world.

As a good ending, I close this article with this statement: During his visit to Shahroud, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei described it as a tranquil city with a purity of people. Religion is one of the prominent cultural and moral characteristics of the people of this city, which in addition to the residents, is also felt by non-native students and tourists.

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

Visit Iran's cultural heritages in 360 virtual tours while you're in quarantine

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's gifted with a lot of tangible and intangible cultural heritages and every year, when the spring blossoms on green branches during April and May and wraps them in tiny flowers, the streets among the historical and cultural heritages in Iran go crazy with a great number of tourists from different countries.

Iranians, being famous for their hospitality, also do their best in hosting and welcoming travelers. Unfortunately, the pandemic has restricted tourism all around the world and everyone is under lockdown this year. However, people are trying to keep their spirits up by coming up with alternatives they can simply enjoy in their houses. With the industry of tourism under the same effect of Coronavirus, travel companies are trying to provide a comfy space for travelers who cannot take the risk to enjoy the outer world like before.

In the meantime, virtual tours and online visits are a good

opportunity to inject life to both traveling in general and travel lovers. There are blog posts that provide you with a virtual environment in which you can travel although you're lying on your couch and not stepping out of your house. In these virtual tours, you'll get a taste of Iran utilizing your imagination and a little help of blue-sky experience in which you will find yourself trapped at the center of high-quality 360° photo-panoramas.

Iran is loaded with amazing treasures all around its vast territories, but 'Visit Our Iran' has selected several historical and cultural heritages for you so that you can relive your experiences if you have already visited places like Pasargadae or the Nasir al-Molk Mosque, also known as the "Pink Mosque". On the other hand, if you have not visited Iran so far and you have no idea what it has to offer, you will get a chance to capture a glimpse of the beauty that it embraces in its heart

and decide if it's worth an authentic expedition.

In Iran virtual cultural tour, you will be transported on your neurons to the unknown land of your imagination, you would observe both the famous and lesser-known legacies of time in Iran only within some clicks and a scroll which takes about 30 minutes. It's as if you fly between cities that are hundreds of kilometers away from each other and the passage of time has written different signatures on them. The signatures in Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Square depict the evolution of Islamic architecture in Iran while the ones on wind catchers and qanats in Yazd tell us the tale of how the culture was developed in the context of such an arid land. This is the way to escape reality until life goes back to normal and we will be able to share the real experience with you again in Visit Our Iran, to revive the spirit of sustainable tourism with your help.

WHO lauds Iran's "Each Home a Health Center" scheme

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Christoph Hamelmann, World Health Organization's representative to Iran, has praised a scheme called "Each Home a Health Center" launched in Iran to promote public health literacy and improve health culture in the society.

The national self-care program was prepared by the Ministry of Health to educate volunteers from each family, neighborhood, and training center as health ambassadors.

Under the scheme, one person in each family is selected as a household health ambassador (a volunteer passed at least school's 8th grade) and is trained by a health team that includes a physician, midwife, health care provider, and health worker to take care of their health, family, peers and community.

The dramatic decline in Covid-19 new cases in Iran indicates that the measures taken to combat the virus were desirable, Hamelmann stated, Tasnim reported on Monday.

Of course, the significant decrease in new infections in Iran does not indicate coronavirus eradication, and the fight against this disease is not over, he noted.

He went on to say that observance of health guidelines should still be considered because



the virus still exists and it can be widespread again if health principles are not considered.

The reopening of various places in other parts of the world, such as Iran, is underway, and it is noteworthy that despite the closure

of various places and centers in other parts of the world, the infection has increased, while this issue has been controlled in Iran, he explained.

In Iran, good measures have been taken

to inform and educate the people at home about the epidemic, he added.

Referring to the implementation of "Each Home a Health Center" scheme, he concluded that "This plan is very effective in increasing the health knowledge of families and promoting people's awareness."

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times published on May 26, Hamelmann said that Iran is benefiting from strengths in fighting against the coronavirus epidemic, including strong primary health care system, production surge in a reasonable time, and multisector response.

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

On the other hand, Iran, to a certain degree, is a good experience to learn from by other countries, he added.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 154,445 on Monday, of whom 7,878 have died and 121,004 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,979 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 81 died, Deputy Health Minister Kianoush Jahanpour said.

Sanctions hinder GEF to finance environmental projects in Iran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Unfair and unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States has hindered the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to finance environmental projects in Iran.

In line with the continued health and safety measures being applied in most countries in response to COVID-19, the 58th Council Meeting of the GEF will be held virtually on June 2 and 3.

The GEF was established in 1992 aiming to help tackle most pressing environmental problems around the world.

Iran got the GEF membership in 1994. Ms. Narges Saffar, head of the international affairs unit of the Department of Environment represents the country. Currently the GEF has 183 participants.

The Council, the GEF's main governing body, comprises 32 Members appointed by constituencies of GEF member countries (14 from developed countries, 16 from developing countries, and 2 from economies in transition). Council Members rotate every three years



or until the constituency appoints a new Member. The Council, which meets twice annually, develops, adopts and evaluates the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves

the work program (projects submitted for approval), making decisions by consensus.

In a statement to the Seventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD7) which was held online on May 20, Ms. Saffar said that the U.S. sanctions have acted as a barrier to achieve the sustainable development goals. She noted that global solidarity is needed in moving towards sustainable development regardless of the abuse of political power to put pressure on others.

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

Microplastic pollution in oceans vastly underestimated – study

The abundance of microplastic pollution in the oceans is likely to have been vastly underestimated, according to research that suggests there are at least double the number of particles as previously thought, the Guardian reported.

Scientists trawled waters off the coasts of the UK and US and found many more particles using nets with a fine mesh size than when using coarser ones usually used to filter microplastics. The addition of these smaller particles to global estimates of surface microplastics increases the range from between 5tn and 50tn particles to 12tn-125tn particles, the scientists say.

Plastic pollution is known to harm the fertility, growth and survival of marine life. Smaller particles are especially concerning because they are the same size as the food eaten by zooplankton, which underpin the marine food chain and play an important role in regulating the global climate. The new data suggests there may be more microplastic particles than zooplankton in some waters.

"The estimate of marine microplastic concentration could currently be vastly un-

derestimated," said Prof Pennie Lindeque, of the Plymouth Marine Laboratory in the UK, who led the research.

She said there may well be even smaller particles than those caught by the fine mesh nets, meaning the numbers "could be even larger again".

Another new study shows how microplastics have entered the food chain in rivers, with birds found to be consuming hundreds of particles a day via the aquatic insects on which they feed.

Microplastic pollution has contaminated the whole planet, from Arctic snow and mountain soils to many rivers and the deepest oceans. It is also being consumed and inhaled by people, and the health impacts are as yet unknown.

Research published in the last month has found microplastics in greater quantities than ever before on the seabed and suggested that hundreds of thousands of tonnes of microplastics could be blowing ashore on the ocean breeze every year.

The research by Lindeque's team, published in the Journal Environmental Pollution, used nets with mesh sizes of 100 microns

(0.1mm), 333 microns and 500 microns. They found 2.5 times more particles in the finest net than in the 333 micron net, which is the kind usually used to filter microplastics, and 10 times more than in the 500 micron net.

The surface trawls off the coast of Plymouth in the UK and the coast of Maine in the US showed similar results, suggesting they are representative of waters near populated land. The particles were dominated by fibres from textiles such as ropes, nets and clothing.

"Using an extrapolation, we suggest microplastic concentrations could exceed 3,700 particles per cubic meter – that's far more than the number of zooplankton you would find," Lindeque said. These tiny animals are among the most abundant species on the planet.

Dr Ceri Lewis, a marine biologist at Exeter University, who was part of the team, said: "Understanding more about the smaller microplastics is important as it is these smaller particles that are more likely to be ingested by the zooplankton that form the basis of marine food webs."

The research on microplastics in riv-

ers, published in the journal Global Change Biology, analysed the droppings and regurgitated pellets of white-throated dippers at 15 river sites in south Wales. The scientists said the results were startling.

They found that the birds, which feed on river insects, were eating about 200 pieces of plastic a day. These were mostly fibres, and a quarter were larger than 500 microns.

The team also found that the dippers were feeding thousands of plastic fibres to their nest-bound chicks during their development. Previous research by the scientists had shown that half of the river insects contain microplastic fragments.

Prof Steve Ormerod, of Cardiff University, who led the work, said: "In almost 40 years of researching rivers and dippers, I never imagined that one day our work would reveal these spectacular birds to be at risk from the ingestion of plastics. It is a measure of how this pollution problem has crept up on us.

"Dippers are the world's only songbirds able to dive and feed on river insects, but that wonderful adaptation also means they have no escape from this pollution."

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ع

'City-friendly schools' scheme launched in Tehran

The "city-friendly schools" scheme was launched in the capital to promote environmental protection and urban development issues among students, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Mojtaba Daneshvar, director general of citizenship education at Tehran Municipality, said that the project covers more than 550 schools, consisting of 160,000 students.

It aims to familiarize students with the rights and duties of citizens, the environment, waste, transportation and traffic, safety and security, crisis management, he explained.

The training programs will be in the form of workshops, role plays, cultural and educational camps, production of educational content such as books, brochures and posters, he concluded.

آغاز طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» در تهران

طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» با هدف آشنا کردن دانش آموزان با حقوق و تکالیف شهروندی، محیط زیست و پسماند، حمل و نقل و ترافیک، و ایمنی و مدیریت بحران در مدارس منتخب شهر تهران آغاز شد.

به گزارش ایسنا مجتبی دانشور، مدیرکل آموزش‌های شهروندی شهرداری تهران، گفت این طرح بیش از ۵۵۰ مدرسه شامل ۱۶۰ هزار دانش‌آموز را در بر می‌گیرد.

برنامه‌های آموزشی این طرح در قالب برگزاری کارگاه‌های آموزشی، تولید محتوای آموزشی در قالب کتاب، بروشور و پوستر، اجرای نمایش و برگزاری اردوهای فرهنگی و آموزشی خواهد بود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“agro-, agri-, agr-”

■ **Meaning:** soil or field

■ **For example:** The workshop presents information on sustainable **agricultural** systems.

PHRASAL VERB

Hand something down

■ **Meaning:** to give or leave something to people who will live after you

■ **For example:** The ring was handed down to her from her grandmother.

IDIOM

Broad strokes

■ **Explanation:** if something is described or defined with/in broad strokes, it is outlined in a very general way, without any details

■ **For example:** “In a few broad strokes he summed up the situation.”

World health leaders urge green recovery from coronavirus crisis

Doctors and medical professionals from around the globe have called on world leaders to ensure a green recovery from the coronavirus crisis that takes account of air pollution and climate breakdown.

More than 200 organisations representing at least 40 million health workers – making up about half of the global medical workforce – have signed an open letter to the G20 leaders and their chief medical advisers, pointing to the 7 million premature deaths to which air pollution contributes each year around the world.

Chief medical officers and chief scientific advisers must be directly involved in designing the stimulus packages now under way, the letter urges, in order to ensure they include considerations of public health and environmental concerns. They say public health systems should be strengthened, and they warn of how environmental degradation could help to unleash future diseases.

The signatories also want reforms to fossil fuel subsidies, with public support shifted towards renewable energy, which they say would make for cleaner air, cut greenhouse gas emissions and help to spur economic growth of nearly \$100tn in the next three decades.

In the letter, the health professionals link air pollution and fragile public health systems with the impacts of the virus, saying air pollution “was already weakening our bodies”, exacerbating the impact of the disease.

“We have witnessed first-hand how fragile communities can be when their health, food security and freedom to work are interrupted by a common threat. The layers of this ongoing tragedy are many and magnified by inequality and under-investment in public health systems. We have witnessed death, disease and mental distress at levels not seen for decades,” they write.

Better preparation could have reduced the impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the letter. “We must learn from these mistakes and come back stronger, healthier and more resilient,” they write.

Studies have suggested that air pollution may play a role in worsening Covid-19 symptoms or increasing mortality, though scientists also say it is too early to draw hard conclusions about the full impacts. The clearing skies that have accompanied lockdown in many countries are under threat, however, as industrial activity resumes without new safeguards.

Last week a comprehensive study found daily carbon dioxide emissions around the world had fallen by about 17% as a result of the lockdowns, and that if normal activity resumed there would be only about a 4% fall for the full year, compared with last year. Such a fall would make little difference in the climate crisis.

Some countries are considering a green recovery from the crisis by attaching stern conditions to any bailouts for fossil fuel-dependent industries, such as aviation, and by pumping money into infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gases, from broadband for remote working to better cycle lanes and electric vehicle charging points. A recent study from Oxford University found this would yield more jobs and a better return on public investment than returning to business as usual.

“Health professionals are at the frontlines of this emergency, and we are seeing the immense loss of lives because of acting too late,” said Miguel Jorge, the president of the World Medical Association. “We know now more than ever that healthy lives depend on a healthy planet. As we walk on the road to recovery, we need to build a system that will protect us from further damage. We need a healthy and green recovery.”

Health professionals are concerned that the world will resume its unhealthy practices as the immediate impacts of the coronavirus fade, without learning the lessons needed to put us on a healthier path that would reduce the likelihood of such devastating pandemics in future, as well as reducing illness from other causes and staving off climate breakdown, the Guardian reported.

“Covid-19 has forced the world to pause and take stock, providing us with a unique opportunity to make changes that will benefit the planet and all the people on it,” said Annette Kennedy, president of the International Council of Nurses. “Climate change poses an imminent and serious threat to the health of the world's population. We are calling on governments to make sure that pollution levels do not return to previous levels, so that our children and grandchildren will be able to grow up healthily in a liveable and sustainable climate. Only by investing in both healthcare and the environment can we create a sustainable future.”

WORDS IN THE NEWS

President of Georgia resigns

(November 24, 2003)

The speaker of the Georgian parliament, Nino Burdzhnashvili, has taken over as head of state following the dramatic resignation of the President, Eduard Shevardnadze, on Sunday. Speaking on national television, Miss Burdzhnashvili appealed for calm and stability in the coming days. This report from Chloe Arnold: A tired but happy Nino Burdzhnashvili addressed the nation on television, saying Georgia had overcome its **gravest** crisis in recent history. The task now was to restore the country to **its usual rhythm of life**, she said.

Georgia's President, Eduard Shevardnadze, handed in his resignation on Sunday evening following **massive** pressure for him to **step aside**. After talks at his home with opposition leaders and the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, he told the nation he was **leaving office** to prevent **bloodshed**.

Earlier army units **abandoned ranks**, saying they were joining forces with the opposition. There was almost no violence during the campaign to **oust** the President which opposition leaders are calling a **velvet revolution**.

Thousands of Georgians celebrated on the streets of the capital for most of the night. They cheered and waved the red and white cross of St. George, **the patron saint** and the symbol adopted to represent the new Georgia.

New elections are expected to be called within the next two months to choose a parliament and a President.

■ **Words**

gravest: most serious

its usual rhythm of life: its normal way of life

massive: very great, very strong

to step aside: to resign from an important position of authority, allowing someone else to take over

leaving office: here - resigning from his position as President

bloodshed: violence in which people are killed or wounded

abandoned ranks: left their military positions

to oust: to force someone to leave a job or a place - in this case, to force the President to give up his job

a velvet revolution: a change to the political system of a country brought about by a large group of people by peaceful means

the patron saint: a saint who is regarded as the spiritual guardian of a country, person, or group of people

(Source: BBC)

From London to Berlin, protests over death of African-American go global

➔ **1** Beyond protests that gathered thousands at the capital over the weekend, four soccer players in Germany's Bundesliga league addressed Floyd's killing during games. One player took a knee on the field. Another exposed a shirt underneath a jersey that read "Justice for George Floyd."

■ **UK**
Thousands demonstrated on Sunday in London, according to the BBC, to protest Floyd's death and police brutality. Britons concentrated their protest in central London, with hundreds taking a knee in Trafalgar Square for nine minutes, signifying the amount of time the former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pinned George Floyd to the ground.

They marched along the Thames and to the U.S. Embassy, chanting "Black Lives Matter" and carrying signs with slogans such as, "How Many More?" "Racism is a Global Issue" and "Your Silence Is Deafening."

According to the Metropolitan Police 23 demonstrators were arrested in central London on Sunday.

Elsewhere in the U.K., demonstrations also took place in Manchester and Cardiff.

■ **Canada**
In Canada, Toronto citizens gathered in protest against injustice towards black people globally and against the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a 29-year-old black woman who lived in Toronto, and the circumstances surrounding her death.

Korchinski-Paquet fell from her balcony while police officers were responding to a "domestic incident" in her home.

■ **Denmark**
Around 2,000 people have gathered on the streets of Copenhagen to protest against the killing of African American George Floyd by U.S. police.

The demonstration in Copenhagen started outside the U.S. Embassy in Østerbro and ended at Christiansborg, the seat of the Danish parliament. The demonstrators held signs saying "Justice for George Floyd".

?According to the Copenhagen Police, the demonstration was peaceful. Copenhagen Police Chief Henrik Svejstrup estimates that the demonstration reached its peak at Christiansborg with about 2,000 participants, in what has been described as the biggest turnout since the 2009 climate conference held in the Danish capital. Nevertheless, the demonstration was described as "quiet and peaceful".

A U.S. Embassy spokesperson in Denmark told TV2: "Our Justice Department has made it clear that responsibility for [George Floyd's] death is being addressed through the legal system, both at the state and federal levels. We will always stand by the rights for all people to peacefully demonstrate and to have their voices heard, but we will also oppose anyone who exploits this tragedy to loot, rob, attack, and threaten".

Saudi among Arab states who back Israel annexation plans

At least three Arab states have greenlighted Israel's planned annexation of large parts of the occupied Palestinian West Bank, Israel Hayom revealed on Monday.

According to the daily, at least three Arab states, including Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have given the go ahead for Israel's annexation of the occupied West Bank and Jordan Valley while they continue to publicly oppose the plan.

A Saudi official was reported by the Israeli newspaper saying that the kingdom would not undermine its relationship with the United States for the sake of "hundreds" of Palestinians.

Since Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman was named heir to the Saudi throne, the oil-rich Gulf state has been accused of normalizing relations with Israel and ramping up anti-Palestinian rhetoric.

China says U.S. 'addicted to quitting' over plan to withdraw from WHO

China said on Monday the United States was "addicted to quitting" following Washington's decision to leave the World Health Organization (WHO) and said the withdrawal reveals a pursuit of power politics and unilateralism.

Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters during a daily briefing that the international community disagreed with what he said was the selfish behaviour of the United States.

Kremlin says Putin 'supports dialogue' after Trump's proposed G7 invite

The Kremlin said on Monday it needed more details before responding to U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to invite Russia to attend a Group of Seven nations summit, but that President Vladimir Putin supported dialogue on the issue.

Trump said on Saturday he would postpone a G7 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.

"President Putin is a supporter of dialogue in all directions, but in this case, in order to respond to such initiatives, we need to receive more information, which we unfortunately do not have," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

"We don't know the details of this proposal yet, we don't know if it is official," he said, adding that Moscow needed to know what might be on the agenda of the proposed meeting and its format, before responding.

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.

Peskov said other formats such as the G20 gave Russia a platform to discuss international issues with other countries.

Trump took shelter in White House bunker as protests raged



Secret Service agents rushed President Trump to a White House bunker on Friday night as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the executive mansion, some of them throwing rocks and tugging at police barricades.

Trump spent nearly an hour in the bunker, which was designed for use in emergencies like terrorist attacks, according to a Republican close to the White House who was not authorized to publicly discuss private matters and spoke on condition of anonymity. The account was confirmed by an administration official who also spoke on condition of anonymity.

The abrupt decision by the agents underscored the rattled mood inside the White House, where the chants from protesters in Lafayette Park could be heard all weekend and Secret Service agents and law enforcement officers struggled to contain the crowds.

Friday's protests were triggered by the death of George Floyd, a black man who died after he was pinned at the neck by a white Minneapolis police officer. The

demonstrations in Washington turned violent and appeared to catch officers by surprise. They sparked one of the highest alerts on the White House complex since

the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001.

"The White House does not comment on security protocols and decisions," said White House spokesman Judd Deere. The

Indonesia, Malaysia warn of Israel's West Bank annexation

Indonesia has warned that Israeli regime's planned annexation of the occupied West Bank is a "clear violation of international law" that threatens regional peace and stability.

In a letter to international leaders and world organizations on Sunday, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi voiced her country's rejection of Israel's controversial plan and described it as "illegal and in grave breach of the international law".

The top Indonesian diplomat said the annexation will not only threaten peace and stability in the region but also undermine all efforts to achieve a two-state solution.

Separately, Malaysia's ministry of foreign affairs in a press release voiced concern over Israel's intent to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian lands and denounced its disregard for international law.

The ministry urged the international community, in particular the UN Security Council, not to remain "indifferent and silent over plan and "to fulfill without delay its Charter responsibility towards the Palestinians."

"The Security Council must condemn and reject the Israeli annexation plan and must ensure that the plan will never be implemented."

"Any annexation of the Palestinian Territory by Israel as the Occupying Power constitutes outright violation of the international laws, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, as well as United Nations Resolutions, in particular United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016)," the ministry underlined.

"The action by Israel blatantly violates the peace agreement



it signed with Palestine, namely the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995. The Israeli action clearly calls into question its sincerity towards a peaceful and lasting solution to the long standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It further diminishes the prospect of a two-State solution, which is supported by the international community," it added.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Sunday also 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.

U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled his controversial deal during an event at the White House alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in January, without the presence of the Palestinians.

The so-called 'Vision for Peace' — which all Palestinian

groups have unanimously rejected — bars Palestinian refugees from returning to their homeland while enshrines the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the regime to annex settlements and the Jordan Valley.

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

Netanyahu had already set July 1 for the start of cabinet discussions on extending Israeli appropriation to settlements in the West Bank and annexing the Jordan Valley.

In May 2018, two-thirds of the 15 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member states raised alarm over the non-implementation of a 2016 resolution which urges the Israeli regime to stop its settlement expansion on occupied Palestinian territory.

According to Press TV, Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds during the Six-Day War in 1967. It later annexed East Jerusalem al-Quds in a move not recognized by the international community.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was Israel's continued settlement expansion on Palestinian territories.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

India expels Pakistani officials for alleged espionage

Two officials of the High Commission of Pakistan in India's capital New Delhi were apprehended Sunday by law enforcement for alleged espionage activities, said India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"The Government has declared both these officials persona non grata for indulging in activities incompatible with their status as members of a diplomatic mission and asked them to leave the country within twenty-four hours," said an official statement by the ministry.

Pakistan's charge de affaires was issued a demarche in which a strong protest was lodged over the alleged activities of the two officials against India's national security.

"Pakistan's charge de affaires was asked to ensure that no member of its diplomatic

mission should indulge in activities inimical to India or behave in a manner incompatible with their diplomatic status," the statement said.

■ **Pakistan condemns move**

The move -- another sign of escalating tensions between the two South Asian nuclear-armed rivals -- follows almost daily clashes between forces of the two sides along the Line of Control, a de facto border that divides the disputed Kashmir valley between the two neighbors.

Pakistan for its part condemned New Delhi's move, terming it "part of persistent anti-Pakistan propaganda."

"Two staff members of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi were lifted by the Indian authorities today (Sunday) on

false and unsubstantiated charges. They were, however, released on intervention by the High Commission," said a statement by the Foreign Ministry.

"We condemn the detention and torture as well as threatening and pressuring of the diplomatic officials to accept false charges," it added.

"Pakistan strongly rejects the baseless Indian allegations and deplores the Indian action, which is in clear violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations as well as the norms of diplomatic conduct, especially in an already vitiated atmosphere," the statement went on to say.

The High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi, it further said, had always worked within the parameters of international law

and diplomatic norms.

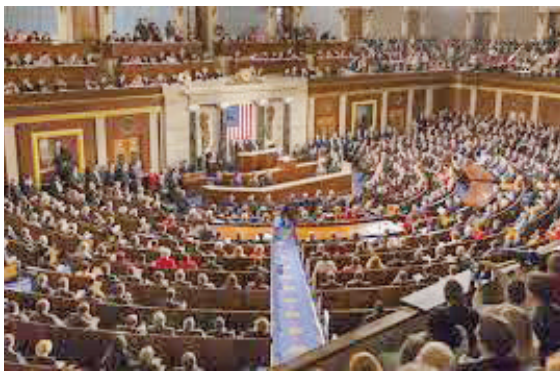
The Indian action, it added was clearly aimed at shrinking diplomatic space for the working of the Pakistan High Commission.

"The Indian attempts to escalate the tensions will not succeed in diverting attention either from the ongoing internal and external issues faced by the BJP government or from the worsening situation and gross human rights violations being perpetrated by the Indian occupation forces in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K)."

Islamabad urged the international community to take notice of the "Indian designs" and a play its role in ensuring peace and security in South Asia.

(Source: Anadolu)

U.S. lawmakers to unveil bill banning investment in firms tied to China's military



A group of Republican lawmakers plans to unveil legislation this week to keep Americans from investing in foreign defense companies with ties to China's military, according to a document seen by Reuters, the latest in a string of measures aimed at curbing U.S. funding for China-based firms.

Representatives Mike Gallagher, Jim Banks and Doug LaMalfa plan to introduce the bill, which would require Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin to submit a report to Congress listing foreign defense companies that have "substantial contracts with, ties to, or support from" the Chinese military, Reuters reported.

Six months after the report is issued, American companies and citizens would be required to divest from those firms and would be banned from making new investments in them.

"On one hand, Congress is asking taxpayers to help grow our military so we can compete with China. On the

other hand, large U.S. investment funds are dumping U.S. dollars into China's military industrial base," Banks said in a statement. "We need to end our cognitive dissonance

Israeli forces training U.S. police on large scale: Amnesty

➔ **1** The training process, it regretted, puts members of the U.S. police "in the hands of [the Israeli] military, security, and police systems that have racked up documented human rights violations for years."

The Amnesty cautioned that the U.S.

police's abuses had now come to "parallel violations by Israeli military, security and police officials."

It cited some of Israeli forces' atrocities as extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, the use of ill-treatment and torture

even against children, suppression of freedom of expression and association, and excessive use of force against peaceful protesters.

According to Press TV, the Amnesty finally advised that the U.S. police be instead trained on de-escalation techniques, how to

handle mentally challenged or ill citizens, and how to appropriately respond to those using non-violent protest.

"The people of Baltimore deserve better. The American public deserves better," the body said.

Two Iranian coaches shortlisted for volleyball hotseat

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Peyman Akbari and Behrouz Ataei have been nominated to take charge of Iran national volleyball team.

The Iranian federation had implicitly admitted that it was going to hire a foreign coach but it seems the federation has changed its mind.

According to the Iranian media, the federation will also hire a foreign consultant to help the Iranian coach.

Iran Volleyball Federation parted ways with Igor Kolakovic in late March following cancelation of 2020 Olympic Games due to the pandemic coronavirus (COVID-19).

Akbari has worked as Kolakovic's assistant in the recent years. He currently heads Iranian club Shahrdari Urmia.

Ataei, who has been recently named as head coach of Iranian club Haraz, led Iran to win the 2019 FIVB Volleyball U21 World Championship in Bahrain.

In a meeting held in Tehran's Olympic Academy in early May, the most experts were unanimous on appointing an Iranian coach for the National Volleyball Team.

"It will be a great honor for us to appoint an Iranian coach for the national team but we are going to win a medal at the Olympics and should consider all aspects. We have to meet expectations," Mohammadreza Davarzani, head of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF), had said in the meeting. Iran debuted in 2016 Olympic Games and



finished in fifth place behind Brazil, Italy, the U.S. and Russia.

In Tokyo, Iran will meet Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela in Pool A, while

Pool B consists of Brazil, the U.S., Russia, Argentina, France, and Tunisia.

Ex-Iran forward Karim Bavi fights cancer



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Iran national football team and Persepolis striker Karim Bavi has been hospitalized at a hospital in the city of Karaj, west of Tehran.

Bavi, who has scored 10 goals in 23 matches for Iran, is suffering from a kidney disease.

Bavi, 55, is considered as one of the most influential strikers of the Iran national football team despite his short

playing career.

He was known for his heading accuracy and ability in the air. Bavi's nickname was 'golden head' due to his skill.

Akbar Yousefi, former Iran and Pas midfielder, says Bavi has to remove his kidney and needs a kidney transplant to survive.

Karim Bavi debuted for Iran on May 28, 1986 against China.

IPL schedule will be announced after teleconference with AFC



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Acting head of the Iran Football League Organization's competition committee has said that the schedule for the remaining fixtures of the Iran Professional League (IPL) will be announced after a teleconference with AFC officials.

"We have prepared the full schedule for the competition, but on Wednesday, June 3rd, we will attend a teleconference set by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in

which they are going to ask questions about the procedures for conducting the tournament and also about the health condition in the Iranian football league," Mahdi said.

"Based on the feedback that we will get from the meeting, our schedule might be affected, so we will not announce the league schedule until after the online meeting with AFC officials," he added. According to the league organization, Iran Professional League will resume on June 18.

Brazilian coach Vieira reveals how Iran qualified for 1998 World Cup

Brazilian coach Valdeir 'Badu' Vieira has disclosed how the Iran national football team booked their place at the 1998 FIFA World Cup.

The focal point of Iran's qualification for France 98 has often been the climax against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the 2-2 draw that broke Australian hearts, when goals from Karim Bagheri and Khodadad Azizi earned the Iranians a 3-3 aggregate tie and a ticket for the FIFA World Cup on the away goals rule.

The Iranians had looked set to secure one of the continent's two automatic places at the Finals until a late collapse in qualifying saw Iran pick up just one point from their last three group games and cede top spot – and a place in France - to Saudi Arabia.

And while their hopes of a FIFA World Cup spot remained alive, an already lengthy road to the Finals grew longer still. The first hurdle was a one-off play-off against Japan, runners-up behind Korea Republic in the second of Asia's two qualifying groups.

Emotionally frazzled and missing talismanic midfielder Bagheri due to suspension, the Iranians travelled to Johor Bahru in Malaysia to take on Takeshi Okada's side knowing victory would see their dreams of France come true, while defeat would prolong the agony via a home-and-away clash with Oceania qualification winners Australia.

"Officially I had five days before the match with Japan," Badu tells the-AFC.com from his home in Germany. "It was always going to be tough because we were going to play the fastest team in the world.

"And they told me, without Karim Bagheri you are only going to have half of the team. I knew that the players thought without Karim they would only be half as good."

"The preparation was a catastrophe because we had to travel for 32 hours...and we knew Japan had been in Johor Bahru for a week. We also knew watching us would be Terry Venables and Australia to get ready for the next game.

"It was a situation that was not normal. From the moment we got, finally, to Johor Bahru, we had two days to prepare for the match."

Iran lost 3-2 to Japan in the extra time and the dramatic loss meant a two-legged clash with Australia – a squad led by former England coach Venables and featuring top class talent such as Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka, Ned Zelic and Mark Bosnich – over the next two weeks, with the prospect of Bagheri returning to the team for the second meeting in Melbourne.

The first leg was played out at a full-to-capacity Azadi Stadium, where the home fans were left disappointed by a

1-1 draw - Azizi equalized following Kewell's early opener – after Iran had dominated the first 90 minutes.

"We could have won the match in Iran," says Badu. "We made the game in Tehran, but we did not score the goals."

And so, on to the long trek to Melbourne for the fateful clash on November 27 and both nations' final chance to qualify for France 98. A packed out MCG awaited, with 98,000 fans in attendance and the vast majority ready – they presumed – to cheer the Socceroos to their first FIFA World Cup appearance since 1974.

"The night we went to see the stadium, 24 hours before the match, we went there and the moment my players saw the ground I saw in their eyes the joy to be able to play football there," says Badu.

"I saw this and I didn't let the players have the balls to train, I waited and let them first enjoy the ground."

Perhaps the Iranian players were a little too impressed by their surroundings because throughout the opening 45 minutes, Badu's team were second best to an Australia side that threatened to be out of sight before the break.

With 32 minutes on the clock the Socceroos took a deserved lead through Kewell, the 19-year-old beating Abedzadeh at his near post with the Iranian defence incapable of clearing Aurelio Vidmar's in-swinging cross from the left.

Fortunate to only be one down, Iran went further behind three minutes into the second half. Vidmar made up for his first half misses when he pounced at close range having seen Craig Foster's header come back off the crossbar. Australia looked destined to qualify for the World Cup, but Badu refused to panic.

"At halftime I had my time with the players and I said to them: 'You all said to me here, on this ground, you were going to play the match of your lives. I can understand that Australia were not letting us play because they are running a lot, but when we have the ball we can play our football."

"This is a ground where you want to play football. We are going to have the ball, we have to play. Keep the ball, you don't have to run and enjoy it.' I believe that might have helped. But my finest moment was to see Australia go to 2-0, because at 2-0 we had nothing to lose now."

With 20 minutes remaining, the Brazilian introduced winger Ebrahim Tahami, a player Venables had aired his concerns over following the first leg in Tehran and, within five minutes of his introduction, the Iranians had halved the deficit.

Bagheri, restored to the midfield after his suspension but not at his influential best, side-footed the ball into the empty net after Azizi's driving run into the penalty area

caused panic amongst the Australians. Iran were back in the game, now needing to score just once to advance on the away goals rule.

Three minutes later, the MCG was stunned, silence sweeping around the cavernous oval stadium save for the small band of Iranian fans gathered behind Bosnich's goal.

The Aston Villa goalkeeper's punt forward had found its way back into the Australian half and in a flash Daei threaded a perfect pass into Azizi's path, leaving the reigning Asian Player of the Year to use a solitary touch to steer the ball low into the bottom corner, beyond the advancing Bosnich.

"When I saw this, the execution from Ali Daei and the touch from Khodadad Azizi I thought we were going to win this game 3- or 4-2 because I saw us at the top of the mountain," says Badu.

"If up to that moment Australia were running like crazy, by this result they can't do anything else but try to run more. And when you run too much you forget the ball, this is the problem with European-style football."

After all the drama, the Iranians held on and, as Hungarian referee Sandor Puhl blew for full time, the celebrations started in Melbourne and back in Tehran, where millions poured onto the streets in scenes not witnessed since the Islamic Revolution.

At the MCG, the Iranian players streamed towards the small band of fans in jubilation as various Socceroos collapsed – disbelieving and distraught – on the turf.

After a celebratory dinner, Badu and his players returned to Iran, where tens of thousands descended upon the Azadi Stadium as the team landed on the pitch in a military helicopter to a rapturous welcome.

"I lost my glasses because people wanted a souvenir," says Badu. "It was unbelievable, but beautiful. People were very grateful and there were a lot of positive feelings."

The joy for the Brazilians was to be shortlived, however. Rather than leading the Iranians to the Finals of the FIFA World Cup in mid-June, Badu's contract was terminated six months before the tournament in France as first Tomislav Ivic and then Jalal Talebi took the reins of Iran. Almost 23 years later, though, he remains happy to have played a part.

"In my eyes, the World Cup was that day in Melbourne," he says. "That day you had everybody happy and that is what counts. What I'm happy about is that the goals that we scored - and it was the same against Japan - they were academic examples because you can show people that this is how you set somebody free, this is how you score. They were perfect."

(Source: the-afc)

Club Brugge want to sell Kaveh Rezaei

Club Brugge only want to sell Iranian striker Kaveh Rezaei. Rezaei plays at Charleroi on loan and must return to Brugge at the end of the season.

The Belgian site have reported that Charleroi are not going to buy the forward and it also opens the door for Antwerp. Rezaei has scored 14 goals and provided five assists in 25 games for Charleroi in the current season.

voetbal24.be has also reported that Club Brugge have received offers from non-Belgian teams for the forward. (Source: Voetbal24.be)

Iran volleyball to resume domestic competitions

Tasnim — The Iran Volleyball Federation wants to resume all its domestic competitions.

This comes after sporting restrictions were eased on non-contact sport including volleyball.

Football competitions will also resume on June 18. The 2020–21 Iranian Volleyball Super League will be the 33rd season of the Iranian Volleyball Super League, the highest professional volleyball league in Iran.

Ali Daei: The story of the Iranian who scored 109 international goals

Born in Ardabil, Iran in 1969, Ali Daei is Iran's most decorated footballer. No footballer, past or present, has been able to touch his record. From 1993 until his retirement in 2007, Daei plundered an astonishing 109 goals for his country, making him the only player to break the century mark at international level.

Daei was one of those special breeds of players, like Gheorghe Hagi, Diego Maradona, who grew in stature the moment they donned their country's colors. Incredibly, while Daei scored those 109 goals in 149 international matches, he only scored three more in 287 league matches for his various clubs.

Unlike many Asian players of that era, Daei was not afraid to try his luck in Europe – even if he did not hit the heights in Germany – but most of his domestic goals were scored in the relative familiarity of his nation's grounds.

The short spells set the tone for the rest of his career. Curiously, Daei never racked up too many appearances in a single season, very often due to prioritizing internationals.

It was only in 1994, that year he scored an incredible 22 goals in 18 internationals, which later earned him a move to Qatar's Al Sadd. Eight of those goals came in December's AFC Asian Cup in the UAE, including four in the match of the tournament, a famous 6-2 win over South Korea.

Iran lost the semi-final on penalties to Saudi Arabia, but his standout performances earned him the runner-up spot in the Asian Footballer of the Year award, behind teammate Khodadad Azizi.

As Iran eyed the 1994 World Cup in the U.S., Daei scored seven goals in 25 Bundesliga matches, but as usual, he saved his real heroics for his country.

Daei scored nine in 17 in 1997, as Iran progressed to a winner-takes-all two-legged tie against OFC qualifiers Australia, with a place at France 1998 up for grabs. Iran managed only a 1-1 draw with Terry Venables' men.

The real drama, however, came in the second leg as Iran pulled off one of their greatest ever results in Melbourne storming back from two goals down to qualify on away goals.



Daei, Azizi, Mahdavia and the rest of the squad earned hero status in Iran. In France, Jalal Talebi's team exited at the group stage but still managed to record a win against the U.S. which was arguably the most politically charged game ever to be played in the World Cup stage.

Daei was at the peak of his career, and that summer Bayern Munich came calling. In Bavaria, he won a Bundesliga title but was an unused substitute in the heartbreaking Champions League final loss to Manchester United at the Camp Nou. Still, Daei was named Asian Player of the Year for the only time in his career.

The year 2000 saw another remarkable haul of 20 goals in 19 internationals, including three at the AFC Asian Cup in Lebanon. In 2003 against Lebanon he surpassed Ferenc Puskás' 84-goal record, and the following year scored his 100th against Laos in a four-goal performance. In a race only with himself, he eventually hit his 109th against Costa Rica in March 2006.

By the time the World Cup in Germany came around, Daei was 36 and clearly past his best, with critics claiming he had no right to make the Iranian squad.

Daei, though, did get the support of Franz Beckenbauer who called him "a great ambassador and one of the best players Bayern Munich had". But there would be no fairy-tale ending in Germany. Iran exited the group stages with a single point, and with that Daei's amazing international journey came to an end.

Today, Iranians still look up to Ali Daei as the country's greatest player, while international forwards will likely be looking up to his goalscoring record for years to come.

(Source: Sports Nova)

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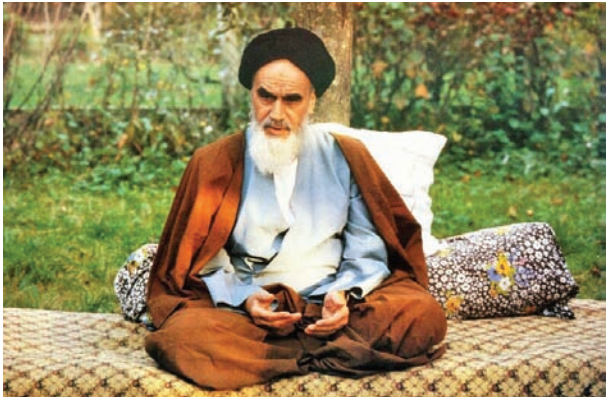
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If you fail to attain your desire, do not blame others, and accept your fate in any case.
Imam Ali (AS)

Iran's cultural centers in Kazakhstan, Serbia organize photo exhibitions on Imam Khomeini

→1 The exhibition, which opens on Tuesday, will also showcase pictures of his return to Iran in 1979, his meetings with foreign personalities, his family life and finally his large funeral in June 1989.



Founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini in an undated photo.

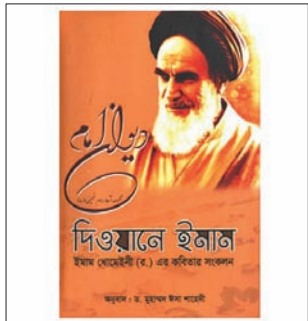
The death anniversary of Imam Khomeini, which falls on June 3 this year, will be observed in numerous cultural events across the country.

The Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality has organized book fairs across the capital to commemorate the 31st anniversary of the passing of Imam Khomeini.

Twenty-five book fairs underway at Tehran's libraries and cultural centers are offering a large, well-chosen selection of books, which are mostly about Imam Khomeini and the Islamic revolution.

Imam Khomeini's poetry published in Bengali

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A book containing a selection of poetry by Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, has been published in the Bengali language, Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) has announced.



A poster for Iranian animator Ravanbakhsh Sadeqi's 3D movie "Thief of Dreams".

The book translated by researcher Muhammad Isa Shahedi has been published by the ICRO to commemorate the 31st anniversary of the passing of Imam Khomeini, which falls on Thursday this year.

"Everybody knows Imam Khomeini as a political and religious figure, but he has also been a poet, being a unique leader among the world leaders," writes the translator in an introduction to the book.

A short biography of Imam Khomeini has also been added to the book.

Iranian animator blends Persian, Western folk tales for "Thief of Dreams"

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Ravanbakhsh Sadeqi has blended folk stories from Iran and the West to make his 3D movie named "Thief of Dreams".

The movie, whose screenplay has been written by Hamidreza Hafezi, is scheduled to be released next summer, said Sadeqi who is also the producer of the project.

"The screenplay has been approved by the Farabi Cinema Foundation," he noted.

"A good animation is one that attracts both children and adults. However, making an animation for Iranian cinema is very hard and requires a big budget," he said.

He said that they are planning to negotiate with several international film companies, however, the sanctions on Iran have made it difficult for Iran to attract foreign investors.

"We also negotiated with a Chinese company for collaboration but the project was halted due to the coronavirus outbreak," he said.

Mexican magazine spotlights health workers with cartoon by Alireza Pakdel

A R T **TEHRAN** — Central, a magazine on art, entertainment and health based in Mexico City, has spotlighted the medical workers on the front line of the campaign against COVID-19 by publishing a cartoon by Iranian artist Alireza Pakdel on the front cover of its June-July edition.

The cartoon portrays the value of the work done by the medical staff in confronting the new virus pandemic.

"The medical, nursing and other related personnel fight daily in conditions and shifts that take them to the limit, exposing their own health and that of their families. Great health heroes who are undoubtedly a great pride and the best that Mexico has right now," the magazine wrote beneath the cartoon.

Cartoonist Pakdel has created his new collection to heal the mental wounds

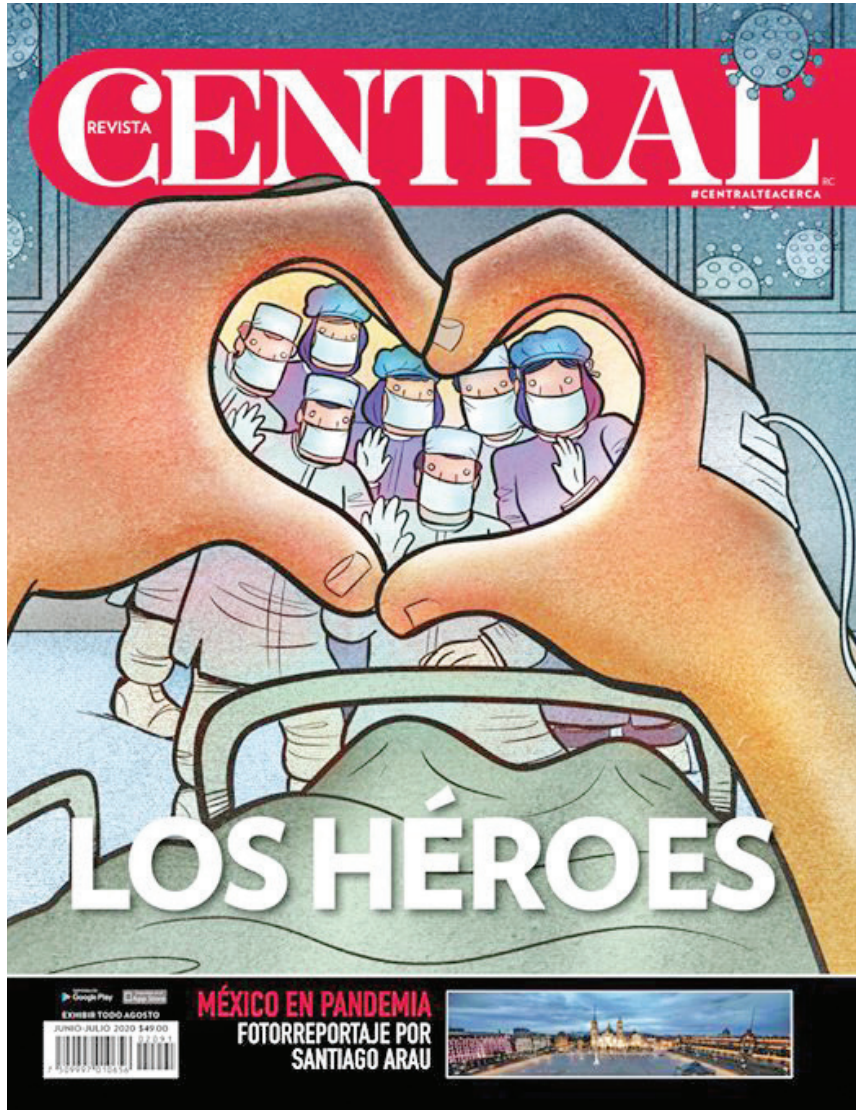
inflicted by the coronavirus epidemic in the country.

He has been active during the coronavirus outbreak and the collection has been highly praised on Iranian and international social media.

"Social, political and cultural concerns of the cartoonists help them form a strong, enduring relation with society since the artists are born from within the heart of the society and are familiar with the current situation of the country," Pakdel earlier said.

"The artists can remind the society of its ultimate condition through their art, by criticizing, enlightening and clarifying," he said.

He added that he decided to produce artworks giving hope and good feelings to people in the current situation that people are dealing with due to the coronavirus



Front cover of the Mexican magazine Central features a cartoon by Iranian artist Alireza Pakdel.

pandemic.

"The world is battling the fears of COVID-19 and the loss and damages are almost the same throughout the world. I thought I would produce works to give hope and express thanks to the medical staff, and to help reduce the fear and anxiety, which have been overwhelming in the society," he explained.

He added that he would continue

producing cartoons these days because they have been hailed the world over, and have also been seen on social media and the media of many countries including Spain, Italy, Brazil, China, Russia and Colombia.

"I have received many kind messages from the viewers giving me more energy and motivation to continue," he concluded.

Hassan Tofiq, cartoonist of popular satirical magazine Tofiq, dies at 95

→1 In 1939, when Hossein Tofiq died, the magazine was closed, but after a brief hiatus, it resumed activities under the leadership of his son Mohammad-Ali.

Due to its criticism of Iran's last monarch Mohammad Reza Pahlavi during the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, the magazine was shut down by the

government.

After a four-year closure, the magazine was allowed to reopen. It worked under government censorship until the last edition was released in 1971.

Hassan Tofiq's attempts to reopen the magazine were in vain, therefore he left Iran to live in the United

States. However, he returned to his homeland years after living in self-imposed exile in the country.

Gol Aqa, Iran's foremost post-revolution satirical magazine established by the late Kiumars Saberi in 1990 was considered as an ideal replacement for Tofiq Magazine by cartoonists and satirists.

Culture Ministry honors radio host Behruz Razavi with lifetime achievement award

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Veteran Artists Institute at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance honored Behruz Razavi, the prominent host of art and cultural programs on radio, with a lifetime achievement award during a ceremony held at the Shohadaye Radio Building in Tehran on Sunday.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) deputy director Hamid Shahabadi, Veteran Artists Institute director Mohammad Tabatabai, and a number of officials from Radio Iran and Radio Farhang attended the ceremony.

In his brief speech, Shahabadi called paying tribute to one of its respected figures like Razavi a great honor for the radio.

"If we look at the 80-year-old presence of radio in our country, there are only a few who have had this great honor and radio is proud to have produced such a figure as Razavi.

"We have this honor today to be beside the precious figures who have spent their lives, knowledge and wisdom on Iranian culture and have helped develop radio," he added.

"If the radio has played a role in the formation of the lifestyle of people, helped to raise their knowledge, acted as a medium to entertain and increased skills of the people, it is only because of the knowledge of prominent figures like



Radio host Behruz Razavi (2nd R) receives an award for his lifetime achievement in a ceremony at the Shohadaye Radio Building in Tehran on May 31, 2020. (IRNA)

Behruz Razavi," he added.

"We hereby express our thanks to him for all his time spent over all these years, and we hope we will have the honor to make use of the presence of masters like Razavi," he said.

Former director of Radio Farhang and an old friend of Razavi, Sadeq

Rahmanian, said that Razavi was working in radio before and after the Islamic Revolution, and he has never forgotten radio all these years.

The director of Radio Farhang, Alireza Habibi, also attending the ceremony, said that Razavi's love for radio has always been respected by people. "He is a poet,

an actor, a songwriter and a journalist."

Maryam Nashiba, the veteran storyteller who has been telling bedtime stories for kids on the radio program "Good Night Kids" since 1990, also attending the ceremony, said that once she had gone to the studio to read news for the first time and Razavi took a minute from the producer to introduce her to people, and he did it in a way that she will never forget.

Poet and songwriter Rashid Kakavand in his brief words called it a great honor to talk about someone with such a high culture.

"And now when I think of a person who likes to present great thoughts, I remember the voice of Razavi. We need to respect his voice and show the youth how one voice can have its own culture and knowledge," Kakavand said.

For his part, Razavi said that he has made his best efforts to put all his feelings on the texts he has read so far and he is happy his efforts have been seen by both managers and the people.

"I have been working for IRIB for over 50 years, but my love for radio has only increased. My love of radio is deep and I think it is the warmest and most sincere medium," he said.

"I am indebted to the radio. Radio is a warm medium, you let your ears feel free and hear things and they do not bother you. For me, radio is not a job it is a matter of concern," he added.

2nd volume of Thai version of "A 250-Year-Old Person" published

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The second volume of the Thai version of "A 250-Year-Old Person", a book containing a collection of speeches and writings of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei about the household of Prophet Muhammad (S), has been published in Bangkok.

The book has been translated and published in a joint collaboration between a publishing house in Bangkok and the Iranian Cultural Center, Iran's Islamic Cultural Relations Organization (ICRO) announced on Sunday.

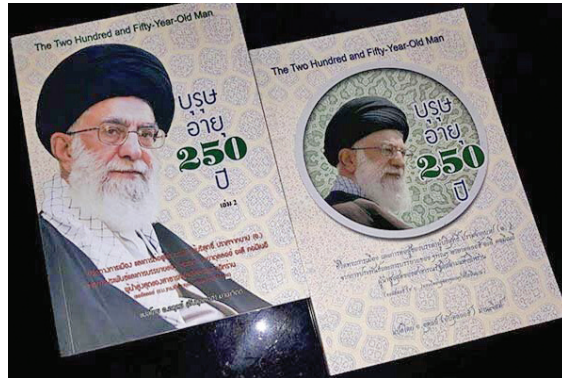
The first volume of the book was published in 2019. Earlier in September 2019, Eslamica, a publishing

house based in the German city of Bremen, released the book under the title of "Der 250-jährige Mensch".

An English version of "A 250-Year-Old Person" has previously been published by Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly.

The book arranged in 17 chapters also gives a chronological account of the lives of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the Shia Imams (AS).

In 2016, the ICRO announced a plan that Asgharia Pakistan, a major Shia Muslim organization of students in Pakistan, and the Cultural Center of Iran in Karachi would translate the book into Sindhi.



Copies of the Thai translation of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's "A 250-Year-Old Person".