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## Iranian calligraphy seeks UNESCO status

**TEHRAN** – Iranian calligraphy is seeking to be registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. All documents about the Iranian art have been sent to UNESCO in a file, Mostafa Purali, a senior official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said on Saturday. UNESCO's Intergovernmental Commit-

tee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will announce its decision about the file during its session in 2022. "Iran has safeguarded the art well and there are many programs to promote it nationwide," Purali said. "The writing system in use in Persia since early Islamic times grew out of the Arabic alphabet," Iranica writes. ➔ **12**

## Intelligence Ministry: Michael White freed for humanitarian reasons

**TEHRAN** — An Iranian Intelligence Ministry official has said that U.S. Navy veteran Michael White, who had been in jail in Iran, was released for humanitarian reasons after deterioration of his health condition. "Michael White was a United States' military man who entered the country under cover of a tourist. He sought espionage opportunity through deceptive methods and

connection with Iranian citizens and was identified by anti-espionage department of the Intelligence Ministry and was arrested. At the same time, he faced a private plaintiff. At the end, after two years in prison, he was released for humanitarian reasons after deterioration of his health issues," managing director of the anti-espionage department at Iran's Intelligence Ministry said on Saturday. ➔ **2**

## PSEEZ planning to attract investment in various sectors

**TEHRAN** – The newly appointed managing director of Iran's Pars Special Energy Economic Zone (PSEEZ) says the company is determined to boost investment attraction in the zone during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), Shana reported. "This year we are determined to attract investment in various industrial fields, fortunately many domestic industries are interested in presence and investment in the zone," Iraj Khoramdel said.

With more investment attracted in the South Pars projects, we will see a significant leap both in terms of job creation and in terms of production and national wealth," he added. PSEEZ, which is named Iran's energy hub, is also home to the world's largest gas reserve, South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. The zone is the hub of Iran's exports of major non-oil commodities that are gas condensate and petrochemicals. ➔ **4**



**ARTICLE**  
**Salman Parviz**  
Journalist

## Saudi foreign reserves deplete rapidly

**N**et foreign reserves of Saudi Arabia fell by about \$21 billion in April after Riyadh transferred billions of dollars to its sovereign wealth fund known as Public Investment Fund (PIF) to finance its overseas spending spree, buying aggressively in U.S. and European blue-chip companies. A total of \$40 billion transfer from the country's foreign exchange reserves to PIF took place in March and April.

Saudi Arabia's oil dependent economy has been gradually borrowing, taking tough austerity measures including cutting subsidies, increasing taxes and suspending its generous cost of living allowance in order to stave off budget deficits.

At the same time Riyadh is digging into its savings accounts and foreign exchange reserves to invest overseas to snap up assets cheaply, on stocks beaten down by the coronavirus pandemic. The world's top oil exporter has been battered by the twin shocks of coronavirus and the fall in crude prices.

Analysts believe that risking the sovereign's reserves for uncertain returns is a very high-stakes game rarely done under today's uncharted global economic fallout.

Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority announced late Tuesday its net foreign assets, which include securities such as U.S. Treasuries and foreign deposits, bled fastest in 19 years and stood at \$464 billion in March, a decline of \$27 billion.

Economists estimate that the kingdom needs to keep its reserves above \$300 billion to preserve the Saudi riyal's dollar peg. After the oil decline five years ago, the kingdom's foreign reserves plummeted from \$726 billion to about \$500 billion, reported The Financial Times.

Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan said last week the kingdom would limit its drawdown to a maximum of \$32 billion from reserves to fill a widening budget deficit which it plans to cover instead by increasing borrowing nearly \$60 billion.

Jadaan, who sits on the PIF's board, told the Financial Times last week that the foreign currency transfer would provide dollar liquidity to the \$325 billion PIF to allow it to continue investing overseas. ➔ **7**

## 5 Iranian universities in top 100 of THE ranking

**TEHRAN** – Five Iranian universities were ranked among top 100 universities of Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2020, ISNA reported on Monday.

The Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2020 use the same 13 performance indicators as the THE World University Rankings, but they are recalibrated to reflect the attributes of Asia's institutions.

The universities are judged across all their core missions – teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook – to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons available. China is home to the continent's top two universities for the first time this year, as Tsinghua University holds on to first place and Peking University climbs three places to second.

Meanwhile, Japan is once again the most-represented nation in the list with 110 institutions, up from 103 last years.

Elsewhere, Macau University of Science and Technology is the top new entry in the table, debuting at 32nd place.

The 2020 ranking includes just under 500 universities from 30 territories.

Mohammad Javad Dehghani, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC), said that there are 40 universities from Iran, including Noshirvani University of Technology in Babol, Sharif University of Technology, and Amirkabir University of Technology, ranked the three top universities of Iran.

The number of Iranian universities has risen from 29 in the Asian Times 2019 rankings to 40 in 2020 (the number of universities in the ranking has risen from 417 to 489). In 2019, four universities in the country ranked below 100 in Asia, while in 2020 this number reached five. However, Iran's best ranking in 2019 was 43rd, but this ranking rose to 48th in 2020, he explained. ➔ **9**

## Police pepper spray Black Lives Matter protesters

At least 15,000 people, many wearing masks, gathered in front of Sydney Town Hall on Saturday when the Court of Appeal declared the 'Stop All Black Deaths in Custody' rally an authorized public assembly.

There were about 50 to 100 young protesters, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, inside the gates of Sydney's Central Station banging on the metal and yelling "all cops are bastards".

The small group of demonstrators remain at the station after a day of otherwise peaceful protesting.

We have more images from Herald photographer James Brickwood at Central Station, where police have pepper-sprayed protesters.

The small group of protesters remained at Central Station after the main march dispersed.

➔ **Rallies in Tokyo, Seoul**  
As thousands marched in Australia on Saturday, so too did people in Tokyo and Seoul.

In Tokyo, marchers protested against what they said was police treatment of a Kurdish man who says he was stopped while driving and shoved to the ground, leaving him with bruises.

Organizers invoked the U.S. protests, saying they were also marching in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

➔ **Police ban Paris protest**  
It's currently midday on Saturday in Paris and police have banned a third Black Lives Matter protest.

Protesters were planning to march for the third time in Paris this week to condemn police abuses in the wake of George Floyd's death.

➔ **Defiant DC mayor names plaza 'Black Lives Matter'**

The Washington DC mayor has changed the name of a plaza outside the White House to "Black Lives Matter Plaza" in a rebuke to President Trump. ➔ **10**

## Hegmataneh put on fire once again despite warnings

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

**TEHRAN** — A fire broke out at the ancient Hegmataneh Hill in the west-central Iranian province of Hamedan on Friday, an incident that has occurred frequently despite warnings in recent years.

Although the fire has inflicted no damage to the main parts of the historical site, it seems a matter of concern when the historical value of Hegmataneh is taken into account.

The Hegmataneh Hill, also called Tepe Heg-

mataneh (thought to correspond to the ancient citadel of Ecbatana), has a circumference of 1.4 kilometers with an area of about 40 hectares, which is usually covered with the weeds.

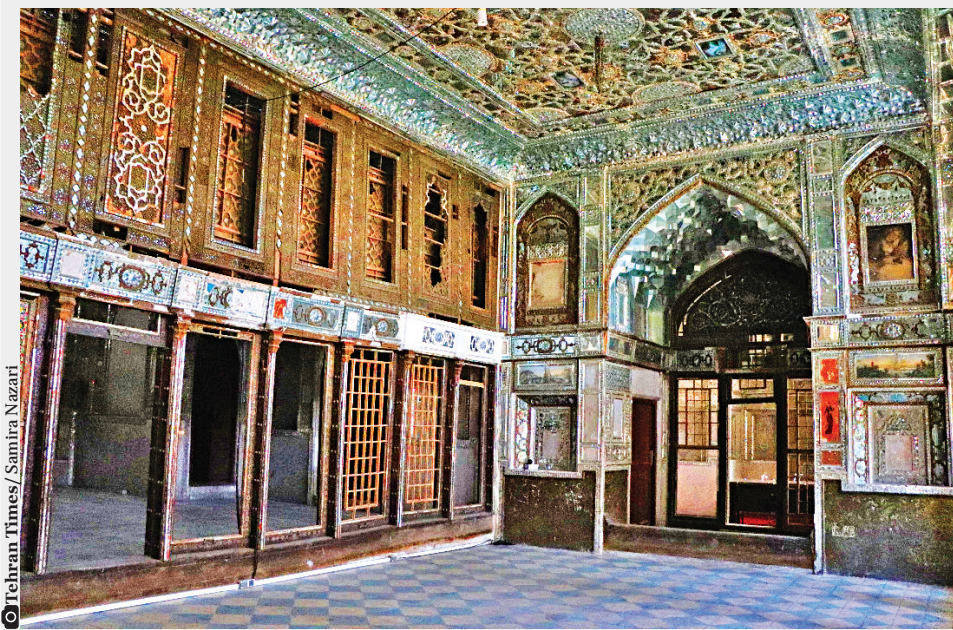
A few weeks earlier, some local media in Hamedan warned about the dry vegetation and the summer heat in the region which can cause the frequent fire in the site.

"We try to organize and weed out parts of Hegmataneh Hill, which is the passage of tourists, to prevent such incidents in the future, but

certainly covering all 40 hectares is impossible," provincial tourism chief Ali Malmir announced on Friday.

However, this time it seems the cause of the fire is different. "Since this part of the complex is the passage of passers-by, it is possible that the fire occurred accidentally or intentionally by a cigarette butt or a light match," he added.

But blaming people and visitors rather than accepting the responsibility wouldn't be a proper way out for the officials. ➔ **8**



© Tehran Times / Samira Nazari

## Visit Imam Jomeh House solely or on tour of 'Old Tehran'

Imam Jomeh House is a magnificent structure and one of the magnificent buildings that stand tall in the historical core of Tehran.

As the name suggests, it was used as the primary residence of Tehran's Friday prayer leader. The building is comprised of numerous halls and chambers decked out with beautiful plaster moldings. A rectangular pond sandwiched between two columns gives the yard a classic Persian look. ➔ **8**

## LIVE FROM AMERICA

By Tehran Times correspondent in Washington

On Friday June 5, 2020, approximately 8,000—10,000 persons of all races and ethnicities marched down Rockville Pike in Rockville Maryland to voice their support in the human rights struggle declaring #BlackLivesMatter. Southbound traffic from that main thoroughfare was held off as protesters proceeded to peacefully but loudly demand accountability in the countless deaths of black men, women and children all across the United States at the hands of police. Following upon the numerous protests in recent years for the deaths of Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice and many, many others, the momentum in the current case of George Floyd's murder has built to international outcry.

The Constitution of the United States of America guarantees the right of citizens to register their complaints against the government, to peacefully gather and protest.

Why, therefore, can so many people expect that such brutality should and will go without notice, unpunished. Why would some dismiss the brutal behaviors of some police, described recently in social media, such as critically injuring a 75 year old man by pushing him forcefully to the ground; firing rubber bullets at protesters and specifically taking aim at reporters; driving police cars into crowds of protesters, and perhaps the most egregious of all—deploying tear gas and flash bangs upon peaceful protesters to make a path for Donald Trump to pass through their ranks to arrive at his photo op in front of the nearby St. John's Episcopal Church. Bishops and other church officials were outraged that, despite Trump's pretense of supporting Christian ideals, he did not pray at the church or offer any words to calm and unify Americans in the midst of the unrest.

This is the same American president who urges the government of Hong Kong to enforce the safety and security of its protestors while at the same back in the USA, he inspires and encourages police brutality and condones all manner of white supremacist thuggery.



## Intelligence Ministry: Michael White freed for humanitarian reasons

**1 →** “This can happen for all prisoners,” Zarif said, adding, “No need for cherry-picking. Iranian hostages held in—and on behalf of—the US should come home.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a statement on Thursday that White, who had been in jail in Iran, was released after being granted Islamic mercy for his crimes.

White was released from jail given the time served and in respect of human rights considerations, and left Iran on Thursday, Mousavi said.

Switzerland which takes care of the U.S. interests in Iran has played a role in the recent prisoner exchange. It has announced that that it is ready to act as a facilitator for more prisoner swaps.

## Talk with Trump equals to talk with ‘murderer’ of Gen. Soleimani: Ali Motahari

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Ali Motahari, a former top lawmaker, has said that talks with U.S. President Donald Trump is synonymous with talks with “murderer” of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.



“Trump has proposed talks with Iran before the United States’ elections. We have to tell him if there was a minimal chance for talks before assassination of General Soleimani, it is ruined by your crime, because it [talks with the U.S.] means talks with murderer of Soleimani,” tweeted Motahari who served as deputy parliament speaker in the previous parliament.

His comments came as response to a Trump’s tweet in which he thanked Iran for releasing U.S. Navy veteran Michael White, proposing talks.

“So great to have Michael home. Just arrived. Very exciting. Thank you to Iran. Don’t wait until after U.S. Election to make the Big deal,” Trump said in his tweet on Friday.

On January 3, Trump ordered airstrikes that martyred General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in Baghdad’s international airport.

In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a military airbase hosting U.S. forces in Iraq as part of its promised “tough revenge” for the U.S. terrorist attack.

Soleimani was recognized internationally as a legendary commander in the war against terrorist groups, especially Daesh (ISIS).

## Iran orders tougher jail sentences for people starting wildfire

Iran has toughened jail sentences for people who deliberately start bushfires amid nationwide efforts to contain blazes that have devastated forests and highlands in several areas of the country.

A senior official in Iran’s Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization (FRW) said on Saturday that long jail sentences of up to 10 years would await people who are convicted of deliberately starting and causing a wildfire.

Reza Aflatouni, FRW’s senior legal officer, said that Iran’s prosecutor general had approved longer jail sentences for those convicts.

The current prison time for people convicted of setting fire on natural sites is two to three years, said Aflatouni, adding that the criminal charges would also apply to people who cause destruction to the nature by setting their private lands ablaze.

Toughening criminal charges against people intentionally setting bushfires comes amid a nationwide effort to contain wildfires that began a week ago in the southern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and later spread to other highlands in southwest and west of Iran.

Aflatouni said the FRW had identified several people who have been accused of initiating the fire in the Zagros mountain range. He said those people had been arrested pending trial.

Local authorities in southern province of Bushehr said on Saturday that they had managed to put out a massive blaze affecting ranges in Dashtestan County.

However, they said a new fire had started in the Behmard region in the same county early on Sunday, causing a fresh mobilization of local efforts to extinguish the blaze.

Hot and dry weather has been blamed for wildfires that have broken out in Bushehr and other provinces in Iran over the past few days, including in areas to the west of the capital Tehran.

# Biden would restore nuclear deal with Iran if he wins Nov. elections: George Washington University professor

‘Please understand that Trump only cares about Trump’

**By Javad Heirannia**

**TEHRAN**—Professor Hossein Askari, an expert on Saudi Arabia who also teaches international business at the George Washington University, if of the opinion that Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden would “restore, or rejoin, the nuclear agreement with Iran” if he wins the presidential election in the November elections.

“Biden would restore, or rejoin, the nuclear agreement with Iran. But now he would want an extension of the time that Iran could resume for nuclear research and have breakout capabilities,” Professor Askari tells the Tehran Times.

Professor Askari, who served as special advisor to Saudi finance minister, also says a Democratic president “would set about undoing Trump’s foreign policy errors.”

Following is the text of the interview:  
**■** Unfortunately, the number of Coronavirus victims in the United States has exceeded 100,000. The Trump administration had predicted the death toll would not rise to that figure. How do you think Trump will try to present his Coronavirus performance in the presidential elections?

A: Trump will resort to the playbook he has used. He will lie. He will bring up conspiracy theories. He will smear his Democratic opponent with personal attacks. He will blame others—China and U.S. governors. And he will boast about his achievements, which to me are almost nothing. He has brought the country to this point and he wants to win another term to avoid his legal troubles that have been on hold. He will do whatever he can, even if it means throwing the country into utter chaos and internal conflict.

**■** The effects of the Coronavirus outbreak

**“He (Trump) will never admit failure or apologize.”**



on U.S. economy are also among the issues that have pushed Trump to try to lift the lockdown soon. To what extent can this contribute to the deterioration of the situation?

A: There is no doubt that the Coronavirus will be with us for years to come. There will be spikes and there will be a second and maybe other waves to come. But with a vaccine and treatment options we can deal with it, much as we do with the flu. But today, the rapid loosening of restrictions will, in my mind, lead to spikes around the United States. These

are more likely to be more in states that have not been affected as much, the so-called Red states that are Republican dominated. I think that when and if these spikes occur matters will deteriorate in the U.S. But then, Trump will blame it all on the governors of states and the mayors of cities and towns. He will never admit failure or apologize.

**■** One of the foreign policy approaches of the Trump administration, which seems to be from Kissinger’s, is to reinforce pressure on Beijing to contain China. Recently, Trump

**“He (Trump) will do whatever he can, even if it means throwing the country into utter chaos and internal conflict.”**

## Iranians ‘know well’ terrorists in White House: Amir Abdollahian

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, has said that the Iranian people “know well” the terrorist leaders in the White House.

“Trump [U.S. President Donald Trump] cannot order assassination of international hero of the fight against terrorism (Dear General Soleimani) with one hand and with the other hand ask for shaking hands and holding talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Abdollahian said in a message posted on his Instagram page.

In a tweet on Friday, Trump reiterated request for negotiation with Iran.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Friday that Trump’s advisors, that now most of them have been dismissed, made a “dumb bet” by encouraging him to quit the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known



as JCPOA.

“Your advisors—most fired by now—made a dumb bet,” Zarif tweeted.

Zarif added, “Up to you to decide \*when\* you want to fix it.”

The Iranian foreign minister told Trump that the JCPOA was working when he entered the White House.

“And we had a deal when you entered office. Iran & other JCPOA participants never left the table,” Zarif stated.

## U.S. drops Iran sanctions case

*By staff and agency*

In a rare move, federal prosecutors are seeking to withdraw a criminal case against an Iranian banker who was convicted of violating U.S. sanctions, Bloomberg reported on Saturday.

Ali Sadr Hashemi Nejad, 40, was found guilty in March of helping to funnel \$115 million through the U.S. financial system to Iranian entities from a construction project in Venezuela.

In a filing on Friday in Manhattan federal court, prosecutors asked a judge for permission to drop the case, citing the likelihood of continued litigation over suppression of evidence. Given the resources that would be required to address all the evidentiary issues, continuing to pursue the case “would not be in the interest of justice,” they said. Sadr’s lawyer, Reid Weingarten,

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 China?

A: Trump is searching for the one thing that will resonate with the U.S. electorate. He is trying to find the best scapegoats. China, governors, the Democratic Party, etc. Si with China, if he can make China look evil to the American people, then he could pile on to say that they are totally responsible for the Coronavirus. But to succeed, he has to paint China as evil and to be seen as tough in dealing with them. So what could follow is stepped up trade restrictions. Possibly sanctions. And yes, a limited skirmish on the high seas with the Chinese. Please understand that Trump only cares about Trump.

**■** If Joe Biden is elected the next president of the United States, will he change his approach toward China? Also, what would be his approach to Iran and the nuclear deal in general?

A: I think a Biden, or for that matter any Democratic President, would set about undoing Trump’s foreign policy errors. Yes, he would try to chart a new course with China. Tough but with a plan that is step by step to restore workable relations. Not a series of disjointed reactions to the moment in time. He would restore, or rejoin, the nuclear agreement with Iran. But now he would want an extension of the time that Iran could resume for nuclear research and have breakout capabilities. In this way, he would appear as tough but at the same time reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf and America’s military exposure around the world.

## California University professor says fuel delivery to Venezuela is Iran’s right

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Ronnie Lipschutz, a professor at the University of California, has said that Iran and Venezuela are independent countries and that Tehran has right to ship fuel to Venezuela.

The two countries have the right to send and receive fuel and the only way for the United States to prevent shipments is to directly intervene by using its Navy which will be considered an act of war, Lipschutz told ILNA in an interview published on Saturday.

However, the professor said, U.S. President Donald Trump is not willing to take such action.

The 5th and last Iranian fuel tanker reached Venezuelan waters on May 31.

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 had warned to retaliate any

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

Carlos Antonio Alcala Cordones, the Venezuelan ambassador to Iran, told the Tehran Times in an interview that Iran has demonstrated its “geopolitical power” and its ability to defy 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,” he said.

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.”

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

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

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.

He also said that arrival of Iranian oil tankers in the Venezuelan waters was an “international victory”.

## Resistance economy required to reform economy: security chief

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Saturday that belief in resistance economy is needed to reform economy.

“Believing in resistance economy and Jihadist management are required to move on the path of reforming the country’s economy,” he said in a tweet. The top security official also attached importance to fighting economic

corruption.

Resistance economy, as ordered by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is aimed at reducing Iran’s dependence on oil money and promoting economic stability in the face of United States’ sanctions.

Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi issued a directive on implementing the general policies of resistance economy in July 2019.

## President: Iran top Muslim country in scientific research on coronavirus

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)**—Iran is the number one country in the region and the Islamic world in carrying out research and scientific activities in the battle with COVID-19, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said.

In comments at a Saturday session of the Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters, Rouhani highlighted the successful research and scientific programs the country has launched to contain and cure the novel coronavirus.

Apart from the great efforts that Iran’s medical society has made for the treatment of patients,

the Islamic Republic ranks 15th in the world and is the number one country in the region and the Islamic world in the scientific field in the battle with COVID-19, the president added.

He further warned that the epidemic will possibly last long, stressing the need to observe the health regulations until a vaccine is made available to the public.

“We do not exactly know when it (coronavirus epidemic) will end, so the (health) instructions must be observed for a long time,” Rouhani added.

He also said that Iran has made such great progress in the medical sphere that many Iranian expatriates or foreigners are on waiting list to receive treatment inside Iran.

Last month, Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki said the country has outperformed the most powerful countries in tackling the novel coronavirus pandemic despite financial problems.

The Health Ministry has already announced that 80 percent of the coronavirus positive cases in the country have fully recovered from the infectious disease and left the hospital.

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# JOB VACANCY



# Ghalibaf rejects as weak any settlement with Washington

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has strongly rejected any settlement with the United States as a weak move hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said a big deal between the two countries is possible.

"Do not be weak hearted and do not appeal for an (unjust) settlement; you have the upper hand," Ghalibaf tweeted a verse of the Quran, which was written in both Arabic and Farsi. "God is with you and He will never reduce the reward for your deeds."

He also attached a photo of Trump's tweet that read, "So great to have Michael home. Just arrived. Very exciting. Thank you to Iran. Don't wait until after U.S. Election to make the Big deal. I'm going to win. You'll make a better deal now!"

On Thursday, Tehran confirmed a prisoner swap between Iran and the United States and urged Washington to release all Iranian hostages held by the U.S. government.

"Pleased that Dr. Majid Taheri and Mr. White will soon be joining their families," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Thursday. "Prof. Siros Asgari was happily reunited with his family on Weds."

"This can happen for all prisoners," Zarif said, adding, "No need for cherry picking. Iranian hostages held in—and on behalf of—the US should come home."

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also confirmed on Thursday that Dr. Majid Taheri, an Iranian scientist who had been imprisoned in the U.S., was released from jail.

Taheri spent 16 months in prison for allegedly violating U.S. sanctions on Iran.

In his statement, Mousavi also said U.S. Navy veteran Michael White, who had been in jail in Iran, was released after being granted Islamic mercy for his crimes.

Mr. White was released from jail given the



time served and in respect of human rights considerations, and left Iran on Thursday, Mousavi said.

Trump's appeal for talks with Iran comes while his re-election chances are sinking fast — in part because of his administration's poor performance in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and the police killing of an unarmed African-American man, named George Floyd, which drew nationwide protests.

Mahmood Monshipouri, a professor of international relations at San Francisco State University and a lecturer at UC-Berkeley, tells the Tehran Times that "Trump's policies have been consistently unsuccessful both at home and abroad."

According to the CNN, Trump is now a "decided underdog" to reach the 270 electoral

votes he needs to win a second term in the fall.

"How bad are those [polling] numbers for Trump? To put a fine point on it: Really bad," CNN Editor-at-large Chris Cillizza wrote in a piece published on Friday.

In what appeared to be another desperate appeal on Thursday, Trump tweeted: "We have now brought more than 40 American hostages and detainees back home since I took office. Thank you to Iran, it shows a deal is possible!"

**■ We had a deal when you entered office, says Zarif**

Responding to Trump's tweets, Zarif said via Twitter that "We achieved humanitarian swap \*despite\* your subordinates' efforts."

"And we had a deal when you entered office," he said, referring to the 2015 Iran

nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), that Iran signed with six world powers including the United States.

"Iran & other JCPOA participants never left the table. Your advisors—most fired by now—made a dumb bet. Up to you to decide "when\* you want to fix it."

Other Iranian authorities were also quick to dismiss Trump's call for talks.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), described Trump's circumstances as disastrous given his coronavirus management and the "racist arson inside the U.S."

"His team has no choice but to portray false successes for him," Shamkhani tweeted on Friday. "The exchange of prisoners is not the result of negotiations & no talks will happen in future."

**■ Trump is in self-induced quagmire: Rezaee**

Secretary of Iran's Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaee also rejected the notion of talks, saying Trump has created a quagmire for himself.

"Trump has said that come and negotiate with me now," Rezaee wrote in a tweet on Friday. "Even if you come out of your self-induced quagmire, negotiation with you is poison. Let alone now that you are in the quagmire."

Trump abandoned the JCPOA, which was signed during the Obama administration, on May 8, 2018 and introduced a maximum pressure policy in the hope of forcing Iran to come to the negotiating table to write a new deal with his own name on it.

So far, Trump's maximum pressure policy has failed. Iran waited a year until it began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals. Finally, on January 5 of this year, Iran issued a statement announcing suspension of all limits under the JCPOA.

## IAEA report leakage aimed to create unhealthy atmosphere around Iran: Russia



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, says the leaks of confidential IAEA reports on Iran is the fault of individual member states that hope to create unhealthy atmosphere around Iran.

"I am absolutely sure that the leaks of confidential #IAEA reports on #Iran isn't the fault of Secretariat of the Agency," Ulyanov tweeted on Saturday.

"This is the responsibility of some individual Member States who leak the reports to #US media in a hope that they will create unhealthy atmosphere around Iran," he added.

On Friday, Western news agencies published a confidential IAEA report on nuclear inspections in Iran.

According to an AFP article, Iran's enriched uranium stockpiles were almost eight times the limit permitted by the 2015 nuclear deal.

According to Reuters, the report contains a call on Iran to "immediately cooperate fully with the agency, including by providing prompt access to the locations specified."

On March 3, 2020, Western media also released a similar confidential report on Iran, with similar conclusions, Tass reported.

In an earlier tweet, Ulyanov said the leak of the IAEA's confidential report is

outrageous but it may have one positive implication.

"It is clear from the content that the issue is of no immediate proliferation concern," he wrote. "Events (if any) took place 20 years ago. The problem lies in a different dimension."

According to the Russian envoy, the report was intended for members of the IAEA Board of Governors. However, minutes after being handed over to them, the report leaked to Western news agencies, which published excerpts from it.

"This means that the regime of confidentiality in the agency's work is absolutely not working," Ulyanov said.

In 2015, Iran and six major powers, including the United States, Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom and Germany, reached a nuclear agreement, officially referred to as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which included removal of sanctions imposed on Tehran in exchange for some limits on Tehran's nuclear program.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. He restored old sanctions on Iran and added new ones as part of its maximum pressure policy on the Islamic Republic.

Other signatories defied the U.S. move. But Tehran believes they — particularly the three European countries — have failed to fulfill their economic obligations under the deal.

## IAEA report confirms verification activities in Iran, envoy asserts



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, says the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s most recent report proves continuation of the agency's verification activities in Iran.

In comments on Friday night, Gharibabadi said the report also shows a suspension of Tehran's commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

On technical nuclear issues, the IAEA report says Iran's stockpile of heavy water has surpassed the limit of 130 tons and reached 132.6 tons, he remarked, according to Tasnim.

The report also shows that Iran has installed new centrifuge machines, such as IR-4, IR-5, IR-6, IR-S, IR-S6, and IR-2M, for research and development purposes, the Iranian ambassador to the IAEA said.

According to Gharibabadi, the report also confirms that Iran is enriching uranium up to the purity level of 4.5 percent — above the limit specified in the JCPOA — and that the Islamic Republic has produced 1,571.6 kilograms of enriched uranium, some 550 kg more than the figures in the March report, including 1,356.5 kg of uranium with 4.5 percent purity.

On the verification activities, the new

report has pointed to the continuation of monitoring and verification activities under the special conditions after the outbreak of the coronavirus and Iran's proper cooperation with the IAEA, the ambassador added.

The report also maintains that Iran is carrying out the Additional Protocol temporarily and voluntarily and also verifies the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran, he added.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump officially announced the unilateral and illegal withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and re-imposed all sanctions lifted in connection with the deal and ordered new ones.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Tehran began to gradually reduce its commitments under the pact to both retaliate for Washington's departure and Europeans' failure to honor their commitments.

On January 5 of this year, Iran took a fifth and last step in reducing its commitments and said it would no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear industry, whether concerning the capacity and level of uranium enrichment, the volume of stockpiled uranium or research and development. However, Iran has insisted if the Europeans honor their obligations it will immediately reverse its decisions.

## Facebook to add state media labels on Iranian, Russian, Chinese outlets

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Facebook Inc has said it will start labeling Iranian, Russian, Chinese, and other state-controlled media organizations, and later this summer will block any ads from such outlets that target U.S. users.

The world's biggest social network will apply the label to Russia's Sputnik, Iran's Press TV and China's Xinhua News Agency, according to a partial list that Facebook provided. The company will apply the label to about 200 pages at the outset, Reuters reported.



Facebook will not label any U.S.-based news organizations for now, as it determined that even U.S. government-run outlets have editorial independence, Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook's head of cybersecurity policy, said in an interview.

Facebook, which has acknowledged its failure to stop the so-called Russian use of its platforms to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, has since stepped up its defenses and imposed greater transparency requirements for pages and ads on its platforms.

The company announced plans last year to create a state media label, but is introducing it amid criticism over its hands-off treatment of misleading and racially charged posts by United States President Donald Trump.

The new measure comes just months ahead of the November U.S. presidential election.

Under the move, Facebook will not use the label for media outlets affiliated with individual political figures or parties, which Gleicher said could push "boundaries that are very, very slippery."

"What we want to do here is start with the most critical case," he said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters during a daily briefing in Beijing on Friday that social media companies should not selectively create obstacles for media agencies.

"We hope that the relevant social media platform can put aside the ideological bias and hold an open and accepting attitude towards each country's media role," he said.

Sputnik in a statement urged governments "to regulate Facebook when it tries to impose U.S.-inspired suppression of the freedom of speech".

Facebook is not the first company to take such an action.

YouTube, owned by Alphabet Inc's Google, in 2018 started identifying video channels that predominantly carry news items and are funded by governments. But critics charge YouTube has failed to label some state news outlets, allowing them to earn ad revenue from videos with misinformation and propaganda.

In a blog post, Facebook said its label would appear on pages globally, as well as on News Feed posts within the U.S.

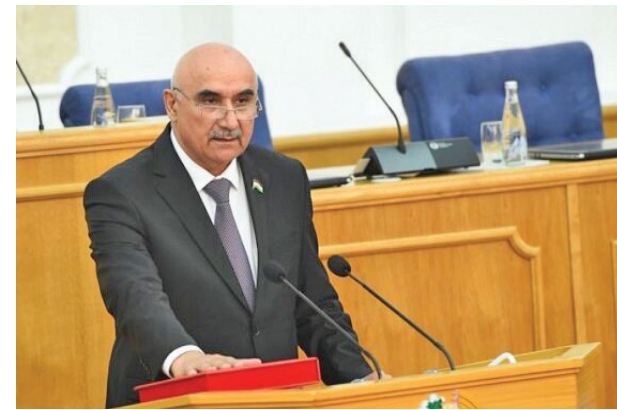
Facebook also said it would ban U.S.-targeted ads from state-controlled entities "out of an abundance of caution" ahead of the November presidential election. Elsewhere, the ads will receive a label.

## Tajik parliament speaker underlines ties with Iran

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — In a message to new Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on Saturday, the Chairman of the Majlisi Namoyandagon of Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan has underscored the significance of tightening his country's relations with Iran.

In the message, Mahmadoir Zokirzoda congratulated Ghalibaf on his election as the new Iranian parliament Speaker, hoping that under his chairmanship mutual cultural and parliamentary ties will grow.

He also pointed to enhancing brotherhood, peace, and stability in the region, saying the two countries are seeking common goals for the future.



Iran and Tajikistan have been working to expand ties in various sectors even under the pandemic.

In a message on May 26, Iran's Ambassador to Dushanbe Mohammad Taghi Saberi expressed condolences over the death of a number of prominent Tajik scientific and literary figures in recent weeks amid the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus.

Iran's embassy in Tajikistan announced that as of February 3, Iranian Varesheh airline started direct flights to Dushanbe and then to Bishkek.

Also, back on November 10 and 11, 2019, the fourth joint consular meeting of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tajikistan was held in Tehran.

On February 27, in a statement, Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry rejected rumors that Tajik diplomats had left Iran and the embassy has been closed due to the spread of coronavirus in Iran.

## Iran, Spain stress police diplomacy

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Iran's NAJA International Police Chief Second Brigadier General Hadi Shirzad and the Spanish Ambassador to Tehran Eduardo López Busquets held talks on police diplomacy between the two countries.

The police of the Islamic Republic of Iran, known as NAJA in its Persian acronyms, has always emphasized the need to speed up the demands of compatriots abroad, especially

in countries which are member to Interpol, said Shirzad.

He also explained the goals and missions of NAJA in the international arena and the expansion of joint interactions and police activities in different countries.

Busquets, for his part, announced his readiness to create suitable opportunities and remove possible obstacles in order to achieve the goals.





## Border trade resumed between Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Iraq's Kurdistan region resumed trade via land border, which had been stopped for several weeks due to the coronavirus outbreak, IRNA reported on Saturday.

As announced by the deputy governor-general of Iran's western Kordestan Province, Bashmaq border market between Iran and Iraq's Kurdistan region resumed working after several weeks.

Khaled Jafari said that delegations from both sides met in the western Iranian city of Marivan last week and decided to open the border market observing the health protocols.

The trucks have to pass sanitizing tunnels at both sides of the border, the official noted.

Last December, the heads of Iran and the Iraqi Kurdistan region's customs administrations had expressed the two sides' eagerness for the expansion of bilateral customs cooperation.

They made the remarks during a meeting on the sidelines of a workshop held by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) to train 27 employees of Iraqi Kurdistan's customs administration in Tehran.

A memorandum of understanding was also inked by Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, the head of IRICA, and Samal Abdulrahman Aziz, the head of the Iraqi Kurdistan region's customs administration, in the same day.

## 150 Iranian trucks enter Turkey as borders reopen

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — On the first day of reopening land borders between Iran and Turkey after more than three months, 150 Iranian trucks entered Turkey, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced on Saturday.

Rouhollah Latifi said that the mentioned trucks entered Turkey via three land borders of Bazargan, Sero, and Razi, IRIB reported.

Also, 35 Turkish trucks entered Iran as the borders reopened, Latifi announced.

Turkish Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan had announced that the main trade gate between Iran and Turkey, which has been closed for three months due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be reopened this week.

The Turkish minister had said that Ankara would order a reopening of the Gurbulak border gate, known on the Iranian side of the border as Bazargan, to help boost trade between the two neighbors, Press TV reported.

The long-awaited measure came more than a week after Iranian and Turkish presidents discussed the reopening of air and land borders between the two countries now that the pandemic has slowed down.

Iran sees trade with Turkey as key in efforts to confront the U.S. sanctions that have sought to undermine Tehran's oil exports. Petrochemical products account for a major share of Iran's exports to Turkey although the U.S. bans have made it difficult to settle payments between businesses in the two countries.



Turkey also relies on Iran as a major market for its manufacturing goods, including industrial machinery and garment, while it also sends to Iran some sizable shipments of crops and fruits that are not cultivated in the country.

As announced last week by the IRIC spokesman, Iran and Turkey exchanged 6,300 wagons of commodities via railway during a 70-day period from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

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

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

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

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

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

"The World Trade Organization (WTO) stated that trade borders between countries should not be closed under any circumstances, but due to the coronavirus outbreak the two countries' largest border, Bazargan, has been closed and we expect the two sides to take necessary measures to reopen the borders in accordance with health protocols", he stressed.

## PSEEZ planning to attract investment in various sectors

**1 →** Back in January, National Petrochemical Company (NPC) projects Manager Ali-Mohammad Bosazqadeh said the company was planning on inaugurating 23 petrochemical projects in PSEEZ.

Emphasizing the need to accelerate the completion of development projects by utilizing the existing capacities in the country, the official said: "Currently, various projects are being developed throughout the country and having 23 major projects under development, Pars Special Economic Energy Zone has a special place in this regard."

Located in the port city of Assaluyeh, PSEEZ is home to a number of petrochemical complexes that receive gas and gas condensate feedstock from the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

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

The giant field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.

# 'Pandemic didn't halt production in Iran'

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Acting Industry, Mining and Trade Minister said the country's production was not halted by the coronavirus outbreak and despite the difficult situation the sector continued operating in compliance with health protocols, IRNA reported.

"Big industrial units in Iran managed to protect their work environment and manpower from the virus in compliance with all health protocols, and in addition to timely supply of needs in the domestic market, did not stop exporting to target markets," Hossein Modares Khiabani said on Friday.

At the beginning of the outbreak, Iran needed to import N95 masks to meet the needs of medical staff, but now, using great domestic potentials and careful planning on domestic production, not only all the country's needs have been met, exports are also underway, Khiabani said on the sidelines of a visit to a dairy production unit in Tehran.

In this visit, the acting minister stressed the need for promoting the presence of Iranian dairy products in the export markets of Eurasia, saying: "Exports of dairy products



to Eurasia should be improved, especially since Iran has a preferential trade agreement with the union, which will pave the way for more Iranian exporters to compete in their markets."

## Iran, UAE restart maritime trade



**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and United Arab Emirates (UAE) resumed bilateral trade exchange via sea, Fars news agency reported quoting the ports affairs director of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO).

Ravanbakhsh Behzadian said that maritime trade between Iran and the UAE had been halted since the outbreak of coronavirus epidemic.

"According to the new health guidelines and protocols, these business communications have resumed between two countries," he added.

Acting Minister of Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Hossein Modares Khiabani has said on Wednesday that Iran's exports at borders have been three times more than imports and there are no road-blocks for exports.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government is pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20).

Last month, First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri called for developing non-oil exports as the only way for realizing the motto of the surge in production.

"The Foreign Affairs Ministry should provide the necessary bases for the development of [non-oil] exports by expanding and strengthening economic diplomacy," he said in a meeting on reviewing ways of boosting economic relations with the neighboring countries and supporting non-oil exporters.

Iran shares border with fifteen countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait,

Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

Emphasizing that 15 neighboring countries and countries such as China and India and Eurasian members should be targeted as the most important export destinations of the country, Jahangiri called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant agencies to strengthen economic diplomacy and focus on these export destination countries to provide the necessary infrastructure for the development of exports to these nations.

As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Custom Administration (IRICA), despite the U.S. sanctions Iran managed to export commodities to 128 countries in the past Iranian calendar year.

According to Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, Asian countries account for over 70 percent of Iran's foreign trade and Europe is the Islamic Republic's second-biggest trade partner.

Iran exported non-oil commodities to 40 European countries, 21 Asian countries, 28 African countries, and 12 American countries, while importing from 41 European countries, 31 Asian countries, 12 American countries, and 11 countries in Africa.

The IRICA has put the country's total foreign trade in the past year at \$85.107 billion, noting that of the mentioned total figure the share of Iran's exports was \$41.37 billion while the imports stood at \$43.737 billion.

The total weight of the country's foreign trade was reported to be 169.302 million tons.

According to Mir-Ashrafi, Iran's exports to Asia were more than \$30 billion while the imports from the Asian trade partners exceeded \$27.73 billion.

## TPO head appointed chairman of Foreign Trade Council



**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum was appointed as the chairman of Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's "Foreign Trade Council" which has been established to promote non-oil trade, the portal of TPO reported on Saturday.

As reported, in a decree, Acting Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Hossein Modares Khiabani appointed Zadboum as the head of the "Foreign Trade Council" of the ministry's affiliated organizations and bodies active in the field of non-oil exports.

Head of the foreign trade council is going to be in charge of coordination among the mentioned bodies including the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran, Export Development Bank, Iran International Exhibitions Company, Export and Import Regulation Office and National Carpet Center, in order to facilitate non-oil trade.

The mentioned council has been introduced by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry following a comprehensive fourfold program defined by the ministry in order to realize "Surge in Production", "Completing semi-finished projects", "Export development and import control" and "Market management and regulation" in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

Holding joint meetings, integrated decision-making and implementation, using domestic potentials and knowledge, exchanging views, sharing facilities, optimal utilization of capacity and capability of responsible organizations and agencies, focusing on provinces especially export-oriented ones, tapping on the potentials

Back in April, the Industry Ministry had outlined the main programs for supporting the domestic production in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

Developing technology and promoting knowledge-based industries, development of domestic production in line with the Leader's stresses on surge in production, managing imports and development of non-oil exports, improving the business environment, development of financing and investment and finally development of logistics were reported to be the seven major axes of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's works in the current year, which is named "Surge in Production" by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Former Industry Minister Reza Rahmani had announce later that month that his ministry was taking all the measures under the protocols adopted by the Health Ministry and is acting in coordination with the national headquarters for the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

The minister also said that the country's production was not stopped by the coronavirus outbreak.

## Govt. introduces corona support package for exhibition industry

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) says the government has allocated a support package for compensating the damages caused by coronavirus outbreak in the country's exhibition industry.

After several rounds of discussion and follow-ups by the Acting Industry, Mining and Trade Minister the exhibition industry and its subsidiaries were considered among the job categories severely affected by the pandemic, Bahman Hosseinzadeh said.

According to the official, businessmen and companies active in this area can receive support facilities in near future.

The allocation of government support packages could help revive the businesses of 33,000 exhibitors, 450 booth builders and more than 100 organizers.

The exhibition industry and related jobs have been shut down in Iran since late Feb-



ruary, following the coronavirus outbreak.

Back in March, Hosseinzadeh had outlined the company's plans and programs to materialize the motto of this Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), which is

named the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Stressing that exhibitions are the major places to showcase domestic products, Hos-

seinzadeh said, "Given it into consideration, Iran International Exhibition Company will offer facilities to the exhibitors in the current [Iranian calendar] year in line with better introduction of domestic products to the people and traders."

The official further mentioned his company's supports to Iranian producers who want to participate in the foreign exhibitions and said, "We will offer them some facilities so that they can easily participate in those exhibitions and in this way Iranian products will be introduced to the world more and more."

Hosseinzadeh also highlighted the role that the customs office of Iran International Exhibitions plays in facilitating presence of the exhibitors.

He, next, reiterated supporting presence of start-ups in the exhibitions and announced that the pavilion of start-ups will be more equipped at the exhibitions.



# Over 1,000 industrial units connected to gas network in northern Iran

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Over 1,000 production and industrial units in Mazandaran Province in northern Iran are currently using the natural gas provided through the national gas network, Shana reported, quoting the managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Mazandaran department.

"So far, a total of 1,125 major production and industrial units in the province have been connected to the natural gas network," Jafar Ahmadpour said.

According to the official, the company has the capacity to provide all the production and industrial units across the province with natural gas.

"Conditions and infrastructure are provided for gas supply to all the active [units] or the newly built production and industrial units in the province, and there are no restrictions in this regard," Ahmadpour said.

Mentioning the gas-related procedures for establishing new industrial units, the



official noted that according to the instructions provided by the Oil, Agriculture and Industry, Mining and Trade ministries, from the Iranian calendar year of 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) onwards, those who intend to set up a production and industrial unit, should inquire from their provincial gas company in order to determine the closest areas to the gas network for establishing their units.

He further called for the establishment of industrial units near the province's gas network and said: "If these units are created a short distance from the [gas] lines and the network, gas supply will be done easily and at a lower cost."

According to the official, currently, 32 industrial parks in the province enjoy natural gas and also in line with the government policies in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) which has been called the year of surge in production by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, three more industrial parks will be connected to the gas network.

## Water consumption in Iran rises 35% following coronavirus outbreak

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Water consumption in Iran has increased by 35 percent following the coronavirus outbreak in the country, IRNA reported, quoting Deputy Energy Minister for Water and Wastewater Affairs.

"The outbreak of coronavirus has changed the pattern of household water consumption, increasing drinking water consumption in the country by 35 percent," Ghasem Taqizadeh Khamesi said.

According to the official, in the first few weeks of the pandemic, due to the high sensitivity toward the issue and also the lockdowns water consumption by households increased significantly.

"However, this situation did not last for long and gradually the families got used to the new situation and water consumption became more balanced in many provinces of the country," Khamesi explained.

He further mentioned the increase in

water consumption in Tehran in recent weeks, saying: "This week, with the beginning of the hot season and the increase in using air conditioners, water consumption in Tehran province has increased by 21 percent."

Regarding the water storage of the country's dams, the deputy minister said: "This year, although the rainfalls across the country decreased by about seven percent compared to the previous year, but water reserves are in a good condition."

Khamsi expressed hope that following the Energy Ministry's planning and measures, and the cooperation of citizens in optimizing water consumption, there won't be a shortage of drinking water in different provinces of the country during summer.

According to IRNA, per capita water consumption in Iran is higher than world standards and currently each person consumes 350 liters of water per day.



## Oil market heading for months of deficit

The oil market is set for a deficit from August onwards, even after OPEC+ eases the current cuts that are up for a tentative extension through July, Rystad Energy analysts said on Friday.

Assuming that global demand recovery continues in the coming months, the oil market will still be in deficit even after the OPEC+ group relaxes the current cuts from 9.7 million bpd to 7.7 million bpd, as currently planned, Rystad Energy's Head of Oil Markets, Bjornar Tonhaugen, said, as carried by Oilfield Technology.

"That will ensure a fundamental support for prices, while also spurring a quicker reactivation of curtailed U.S. oil production, and eventually frac crews ending their holidays early," Tonhaugen said in a note.

"Indications show that a bit more than 300 000 bpd from shut U.S. production is actually coming back online already from June as a result of the current price levels," he said.

Some U.S. producers have already restarted some curtailed production as prices have rallied in recent weeks and

as they need the cash from operations, regardless of how little.

The market deficit coming this summer, however, doesn't mean that there will be a global oil supply crunch, because inventories and floating storage have yet to begin depleting.

"So, even if demand exceeds supply for a while, that does not mean that we really have a problem to source oil. Oil is there, lots of it, waiting to be drawn from storage facilities," Rystad Energy's Tonhaugen said.

Improving global oil demand and faster-than-expected production curtailments from outside the OPEC+ pact are set to push the oil market into deficit in June, according to Goldman Sachs. Yet, there is little room for an oil price rally in the near term because of the still sizeable oversupply of crude oil and refined products, Goldman Sachs said in a note in the middle of May.

Earlier this week, Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak said he expected a shortage in the oil market in July.

## Offshore oil's \$105 billion hangover adding to industry woes

Aging offshore oil wells that once brought market prominence to Europe, the U.S. Gulf and Brazil are increasingly money losers that companies want shut down amid low oil prices and a struggling global economy. But the effort won't be cheap.

The cost worldwide: An estimated \$104.5 billion by 2030, according to Wood Mackenzie Ltd. At least 23 platforms a year could be retired in the North Sea alone, Rystad Energy Inc. reported in May, while the national oil company in Brazil has said it's planning to spend \$6 billion to retire 18 platforms, pipelines and other infrastructure by 2025.

According to Bloomberg, companies can't just abandon aging offshore wells. In most cases, regulators who approved them required pricey guarantees to make sure they're properly sealed, and there are environmental issues involved in their upkeep. That can mean the use of divers or robot submarines to plug wells and pipelines on the ocean floor, an expensive proposition, as well as cutting apart and moving steel platforms that can weigh as much as 17,000 tons.

"Abandonment costs will haunt the industry in the years to come, especially if governments get tougher with parent company guarantees," said Marcelo de Assis, the head of Latin American upstream research at Wood Mackenzie Ltd. "The crisis fast forwarded the situation."

The spectacular decline in North Sea production since it peaked in the 1990s has left so much equipment unused that by 2025, oil companies will spend more on removing redundant equipment than developing new fields, according to Wood Mackenzie.

### Costly cleanup

Deepwater production was a new frontier for the oil industry in the 1980s and 1990s, and many of these projects are now reaching the end of their lives.

But the push to close offshore wells comes as the oil industry has suffered some major blows. They include a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia that flooded the world with crude, a pandemic that destroyed demand and skepticism from investors who want less money spent on exploration and more returned to them. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies will meet Saturday by video conference and, according to a delegate, are set to extend output cuts to prop up the oil market.

At the same time, the U.S. shale boom has drastically lowered the cost of opening and operating a well on land, as well as closing one, compared with the price tag tied to wells offshore.



Despite a recent uptick in oil prices, they remain too low and volatile to lure buyers to the aging and small-producing fields Brazil's Petroleo Brasileiro SA and other deep-water operators are walking away from. The small- to mid-sized producers with low enough costs to turn a profit from exhausted oil fields are protecting their balance sheets, and banks are reluctant to provide funding.

A Queiroz Galvao SA offshore oil platform stands in the Guanabara Bay near Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil. In the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, which generates about 15% of the nation's output, explorers are expected to spend about \$1 billion a year over the next half decade to decommission hundreds of wells, according to Wood Mackenzie.

While the collapse in oil prices is having an effect on more offshore wells permanently shut, there's also a push in the Gulf to extend the lives of some aging infrastructure. The key: Drilling new wells near existing platforms that can be fed by undersea pipelines as a way to cut costs.

"Companies are doing everything they can to avoid abandoning facilities because that's very expensive," Justin Rostant, principal analyst at Wood Mackenzie, said in a phone interview. "They're just bringing in third-party production wherever they can to extend the life of these facilities."

It costs an average of \$10 million per well in deepwater and about \$500,000 a well in shallow waters to plug and abandon a well in the Gulf of Mexico, Rostant said. Most wells shut down in the U.S. Gulf are coming from shallow waters, where the wells are the oldest and have lost their ability to make money.

### UK payout

Meanwhile, the U.K. will be the leader in North Sea decommissioning, followed by Norway and Denmark. The

U.K. is forecast to pay out more than 20 billion pounds (\$26 billion) to close its platforms in the region by 2030.

Removing offshore platforms can be controversial. Royal Dutch Shell Plc has sought permission to leave the giant concrete "legs" of its iconic Brent field in the North Sea because it says removing them would pose a greater environmental risk. However, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as environmental group Greenpeace, have raised concerns over leaving the structures in the sea.

### Brazil's goal

The goal in Brazil is to restore the environment as close to its original state as possible, Raphael Neves Moura, a superintendent at ANP, Brazil's national petroleum agency, said during a web conference held by the Brazilian Petroleum Institute, an industry group.

ANP introduced regulation in April to handle the influx of deserted equipment due to fallout from the pandemic. The agency will seek to find buyers for discarded fields before moving to abandonment, Moura said.

In a statement, Petrobras said it continues to seek buyers to take on assets it's written off. Petrobras is planning to auction three Campos Basin platforms that date back to the 1980s for scrap metal in July. These platforms have been off line since 2015 or so, so weren't part of the 62 shut since the pandemic.

In the first quarter, Petrobras wrote off 62 shallow water platforms, or about 75% of its fleet, as part of a 65 billion real (\$12.5 billion) impairment. The wells to be closed only produced a combined 23,000 barrels a day, less than half of Petrobras's top wells in the so-called pre-salt region.

### 'Stress tests'

In Brazil, the Campos basin has been eclipsed by larger discoveries with higher-quality oil even deeper in the Atlantic, where Rio de Janeiro-based Petrobras is focusing its investments. As a result production has plummeted at these fields, and Petrobras is carrying out "stress tests" at its remaining projects to weed out others that can't survive. Rystad expects low service costs to encourage operators worldwide to clear out old equipment now that low oil prices have undermined incentives to extend them.

No matter how the millions of tons of steel and pipes are removed, governments are likely to step in to make sure tax payers aren't the ones paying, said Wood Mackenzie's Assis.

"There is a push from regulators. There will be more pressure for financial guarantees," he said.

## OPEC output curbs spur U.S. shale to ramp up production

U.S. oil production is set to shoot higher, as shale producers eyeing OPEC's move to support prices are poised to reactivate wells only a few weeks after shutting them.

As reported by Financial Times, output could rise about 2m barrels a day, or 20 per cent, between now and the end of August as the bulk of the supply shut down during the recent price crash is brought back on stream, according to analysts.



But the rise in output will be shortlived as operators' deep spending cuts hit drilling activity later in the year. It will nonetheless trigger alarm among OPEC and its allies such as Russia, which are expected on Saturday to extend supply cuts agreed in April.

"In its bid to balance the market, Opec has perhaps again forgotten that shale plays by its own rules," said Jamie Webster, a director at the BCG Center for Energy Impact.

This week, large independent producers in Texas's Permian shale field including EOG, Parsley Energy and WPX Energy indicated they were bringing curtailed volumes back online.

Matt Gallagher, Parsley's chief executive, said his company was adapting to "changing market dynamics" and would restore most of the 26,000 barrels a day it cut in May. But he said new drilling would remain suspended.

WPX and EOG have shut in 30,000 and 85,000 bpd of output respectively, but both said they had begun bringing some of this back online.

Saudi Arabia and Russia agreed to curb output under pressure from U.S. president Donald Trump, after a price war between them threatened to destroy the U.S. shale sector. The cuts, which began in May, were made on the understanding that U.S. production would fall steeply.

It has done so — and more quickly than expected. On Wednesday, the federal Energy Information Administration said production dropped again last week to 11.2m bpd (though some consultants estimate the true figure to be roughly 1m bpd lower). It was 13m bpd in March.

However, with U.S. oil marker West Texas Intermediate trading around \$39 a barrel, almost four times its level six weeks ago, analysts say OPEC's price-supportive cuts mean producers are ready to restore most lost output — at least for now.

"OPEC's cuts provided that medicine U.S. shale so desperately needed," said Ian Nieboer, a director at RS Energy Group, a consultancy. "With WTI back above \$35, most of the U.S. shut-ins will be reversed."

But the swing back into production has left some operators worried how Opec+ might react. Speaking on Bloomberg television, Scott Sheffield, chief executive of Pioneer Natural Resources, said there was "concern" in the industry. "I'm sure that's going to have some kind of effect on the Opec+ meeting," he said.

The U.S. oil sector started the year under pressure, but the collapse in global demand during the coronavirus lockdowns and the Saudi-Russia price war exacerbated the situation, forcing shale operators to sack thousands of workers.

However, the imminent supply uptick has reinforced a sense that the worst oil crash in decades may have reached its bottom, with lockdowns easing and OPEC expected to extend production cuts through the summer.

Saudi Arabia is expected to restart the extra 1m bpd it cut from supply in June in addition to the Opec+ deal. But the cartel's core supply reduction of 9.7m bpd, or almost 10 per cent of global production, is expected to be maintained.

Shares in oil and gas producers have rebounded sharply, with the S&P 500 energy sector up more than 80 per cent since mid-March, outperforming the wider benchmark that has risen just over 30 per cent.

Of the up to 2.9m bpd of production that may currently be shut-in, about 2m bpd could be restored by August, according to Paul Horsnell, head of commodities research at Standard Chartered. The bottom of the production drop has probably been reached for now, he said.

Nieboer said the shut-in volumes currently amounted to about 1.8m bpd, but at today's prices the bulk would be restored by August.

But analysts agreed that the longer-term supply outlook was still for a steady drift lower, as depressed drilling activity failed to replenish the stock of producing wells.

"You're going to start getting most of the shut-in production coming back, and then you get hit by the lack of drilling and completions," said Horsnell.

For now, OPEC will be left watching Texas, with some concern that U.S. production is about to rise sharply again, even if only for a while, just as the cartel is about to extend its cuts.

"There is a disconnect between what OPEC understands and what shale will do," said Webster.

## Nigeria ready to compensate for overproduction in May-June

Nigeria said on Saturday it was ready to make additional oil output cuts from July to September to compensate for producing more than its quota in May and June, when OPEC and its allies implemented a deal to curb supply by record amounts, Reuters reported.

"Nigeria reconfirms our commitment under the existing agreement," Nigeria's Ministry of Petroleum Resources said in a statement on Twitter ahead of talks between OPEC and its allies.

It said it also "subscribes to the concept of compensation by countries who are unable to attain full conformity (100 per cent) in May and June to accommodate it in July, August and September."





National Iranian Oil Company  
IRANIAN OFFSHORE OIL COMPANY  
INITIATION TO COMMON BID

Renouncement TENDER NO. MS/98/098 Pre-Qualification  
1399.1120

Iranian Offshore Oil Company [IOOC] intends to tender for "Conceptual Study & Basic Engineering for Development Plan and Gas Transportation of Forozan Field"

**The required services include the following:**

Conceptual study & Basic Engineering for Development Plan and Gas Transportation of Forozan Field

**Location:**

Forozan Field in Persian Gulf

**Performance Period:**

6 months

**Provision:**

A: Iranian consultant with Grade No. 1 in oil & gas studies group Joint-Venture with foreign companies with previous experience in similar projects development surface processing.

B: Foreign companies with previous experience in similar projects Joint-Venture with Iranian consultant companies.

C: Bidders should have at least one completion certificate for a project similar to subject tender and submit the same to Company.

D: Company shall reserve the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals or part(s) thereof without giving any reason or explanation whatsoever.

E: Bid proposals should be submitted with no qualification, condition, provision, specification or stipulation of the Bid Package.

F: Articles of Association of company perusal

G: Bidders who have ability and are willing to participate in the Pre-Qualification are requested to submit a written request enclosing their company's resume, experience and Articles of Association to the Contract Department, within 7 days from the Second Announcement.

II. Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] Foreign companies with Iranian consultant companies

**Note 1: Closing Date for the submission of the Bids shall be up to about 21 days after the second Announcement.**

**Note 2: Bidders shall submit their Bids to IOOC Contract Department at: 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, #13, Touraj St., Khakzad St., Vali-e Asr Ave., after Balal Mosque, before Modarres Crossroad, Tehran, IRAN**

Telephone: +98 21 23 94 25 26

Fax: +98 21 22 66 42 34

Additional Information is available at: IOOC Website address: [WWW.IOOC.CO.IR](http://WWW.IOOC.CO.IR)

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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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# U.S. prof. asks Iranian friends to assist Americans in abolishing culture of slavery

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

African-American historian Gerald Horne says that despite the end of the slavery era in the U.S. its culture still is alive, adding "I call upon our Iranian friends and comrades to come to our defense."

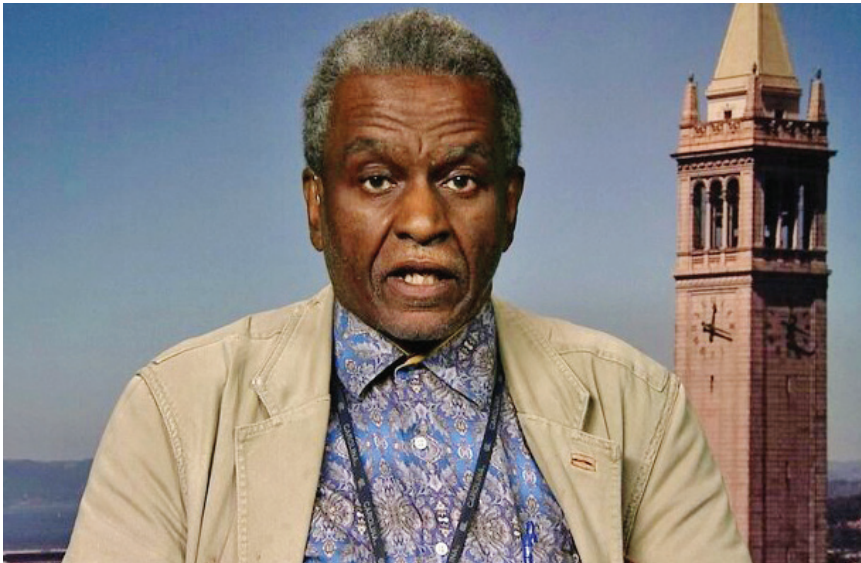
People across the U.S. have taken to streets to express their anger over police violence against African Americans. The last and controversial confrontation between a white police officer and a black man occurred last week when an officer in Minneapolis killed African American George Floyd by putting his knee on the victim's neck for more than eight minutes despite Floyd's call that he 'can't breathe'.

The inhumane action of the police came as people were filming the incident, pleading for the release of pressure on Floyd's neck.

To shed more light on the issue, we reached out to Gerald Horne, professor of African American Studies at the University of Houston and author of several books on the history of African Americans.

Here is the full text of Horne's interview with Mehr News Agency:

■ Historically speaking, black people were brought to the U.S. for slavery and, as this has been against their will, these people have been involved in constant rebellion while the U.S. security forces have been seeing them as a threat. Why the U.S. policies have



failed to change this perspective since the era of slavery has long passed as we are still seeing violence against African Americans?

The policy has not changed not least because though slavery was abolished, cheap labor has not and Black people are over-represented in this category. Besides, the culture that grew out of slavery that meant subordination and maltreatment of Africans has yet to disappear.

■ Where do you think these protests across the U.S. will eventually lead to? Do you see any hope for a change of behavior towards African Americans?

It will take global pressure for things to change and, therefore, I call upon our Iranian friends and comrades to come to our defense, not least in the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

■ President Trump has threatened

protestors to deploy Army in the streets to control the unrest. How do you assess Trump's response to what goes on in U.S. as records show his tendency towards white supremacy and many believe his tweets are fueling the protests?

Yes, Trump is fueling the protests. He is a cornered beast right now and a beast is most dangerous when it is cornered.

■ How can these developments affect the upcoming Presidential election in the U.S.? Impact on elections? Unclear. Too soon to tell.

Gerald Horne received his PhD from Columbia University and a J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. Horne is Moores Professor of History and African-American Studies at the University of Houston where he holds the John J. and Rebecca Moores Chair of History and African American Studies. His books include "The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America", "The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in 17th Century North America and the Caribbean", "Confronting Black Jacobins: The U.S., the Haitian Revolution, and the Origins of the Dominican Republic", and "The Dawning of the Apocalypse: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and Capitalism in the Long Sixteenth Century" among others.

## Civil unrest could influence Biden's search for running mate

Joe Biden's search for a running mate could be reshaped by the police killing of George Floyd and the unrest it has ignited across the country, raising questions about contenders with law-and-order backgrounds and intensifying pressure on the presumptive Democratic nominee to select a black woman.

Biden, who has already pledged to pick a woman, has cast a wide net in his search. Some of the women on his list have drawn national praise amid the protests over Floyd's death, including Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, who delivered an impassioned appeal for calm in her city on Friday night. But the outcry over police brutality against minorities has complicated the prospects of Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who had a controversial record addressing police violence as a prosecutor in the city where Floyd died.

Biden's choice of a running mate will be among the most consequential decisions he makes in the campaign, particularly given that the 77-year-old is already talking about himself as a "transition" candidate to a new generation of Democratic leaders. His pick will also be viewed as a signal both of his values and who he believes should have representation at the highest level of the American government.

Even before the outcry over Floyd's death, some Biden allies were already urging him to put a black woman on the ticket given the critical role African Americans played in his path to the Democratic nomination. Those calls have gotten louder in recent days.

"The more we see this level of hatred, the more I think it's important to confront it with symbolic acts, including potentially the selection of an African American woman as vice president," said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers and one of the labor leaders who's been asked for input by Biden's team on the selection process.

Bottoms is one of several black women under consideration by Biden's campaign. Others Biden is believed to be considering include California Sen. Kamala Harris, Florida Rep. Val Demings and Stacey Abrams, the Georgia Democrat and voting rights activist.

Demings didn't answer directly when asked if the events of the past week increased pressure on Biden to choose a black woman in an interview with The Associated Press Sunday.

"Well, we've never seen a black woman selected as a vice presidential candidate. But I think the American people want someone who cares about their issues and are willing to move the ball forward."

Asked if she believes race should be left out of the conversation, she was careful to defer to Biden.

"It doesn't really matter what I think," she said. "What matters is what Americans think, and what Joe Biden thinks."



Demings, a former Orlando police chief, wrote a high-profile editorial Friday challenging her former colleagues in law enforcement.

"As a former woman in blue, let me begin with my brothers and sisters in blue: What in the hell are you doing?" Demings wrote in The Washington Post.

Politicians with law-and-order backgrounds have been viewed skeptically by some in the Democratic Party given the high-profile instances of police brutality against minorities and other inequities in the criminal justice system. In an interview Sunday, Demings defended herself and other potential contenders with such backgrounds, declaring "you're either gonna be part of the problem or part of the solution."

"And I think the community wants people who understand the system from the inside out in order to bring real life necessary reforms," she said.

Harris faced criticism throughout her Democratic primary campaign for her record as a prosecutor and attorney general in California, when she resisted reforms that would have required her office to investigate killings by police and established statewide standards for body cameras.

Former Senate Majority Leader Reid said a resume as a prosecutor could be problematic for potential contenders.

"Prosecutors are not very popular, especially among young people now," he said. "I've got a granddaughter who is graduating from law school and she wants to be a public defender. She doesn't want to be a prosecutor. And I think a lot of younger people feel the same."

Klobuchar, who also sought the Democratic nomination, has faced questions about her eight years as prosecutor for Minnesota's largest county during the primary. Most of the more than two dozen people who died during police encounters in

her tenure were people of color, according to data compiled by Communities United Against Police Brutality and news articles reviewed by the AP.

An officer involved in one of those past fatal incidents was Derek Chauvin, who was arrested and charged Friday with Floyd's murder.

Since ending her campaign, Klobuchar has emerged as a key Biden surrogate and some Democrats see her as a running mate who could help him appeal to some of the white, working-class voters who turned against the party in the 2016 election. Yet some Democrats say the renewed focus on police brutality could complicate her path.

"This is very tough timing for her," said Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C., a top Biden ally.

Klobuchar has said that she is confident Biden will make the right choice and that she's not thinking about politics right now.

Biden has said he will announce a running mate by Aug. 1, a timeline that leaves plenty of time for the national mood to shift again, particularly as the coronavirus pandemic and resulting economic collapse pressed on.

Those twin crises have already led to increased scrutiny for others in the mix to become Biden's running mate.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a frequent Trump target during the pandemic for her resistance to lifting stay at home orders, faced questions after her husband allegedly tried to skip the line with a dock company and get his boat in the water ahead of other patrons over Memorial Day weekend.

And Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico was criticized by Republicans in her state following a report that she purchased jewelry from a local business just days after she ordered non-essential businesses to shut down and told residents to stay home.

Former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who was vetted as a potential vice presidential pick in 2004, said the scrutiny contenders are facing now has "proliferated."

"The scrutiny compared to when I was vetted is so much more intense and potentially troublesome for a VP candidate," he said.

Biden's search process is still in a relatively early phase. A search committee has been meeting with power players on the left, with special attention to Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill and across organized labor. Biden, who has largely been cloistered at his home in Delaware during the pandemic, would also like to conduct in person meetings with finalists.

"It's important for him to see the candidate, talk to the candidate, get body language from the candidate. And I don't mean one time. I think it needs to be several times," said Cedric Richmond, a Louisiana congressman and campaign co-chair. (Source: AP)

## Saudi foreign reserves deplete rapidly

Drop of \$21b in Forex after PIF invests overseas in a high-stakes game

➔ Oil prices have shed around two-thirds of value since the start of the year with Brent trading around \$21 a barrel, at the same time as measures to fight the pandemic are likely to curb the pace and scale of economic reforms, the so-called Vision 2030 development plan, launched by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who also chairs the PIF.

Listing Aramco, known officially as Saudi Arabian Oil Co., last year was one of the pillars of the plan. Aramco listing on an international exchange was supposed to inject up to \$100 billion into PIF's coffers for foreign acquisitions. After repeated delays, Aramco went public in December by floating 1.5 percent stake on the local stock exchange (Riyadh bourse) with plans to go international. The shares generated \$30 billion. An example of another high stakes game that MBS orchestrated with bad timing and poor results.

Brent is oil extracted in the North Sea and it has greater and faster access to large markets. Its counterpart is a mixture of different light and sweet America crude oil called the Western Texas Intermediate (WTI) fell 40 percent into a historic negative zone in April trading at negative \$37.63 for the first time.

Last Wednesday, the finance ministry reported a first quarter budget deficit of \$9 billion compared to a first quarter surplus of \$7.4 billion in 2019. Oil revenues in the first quarter posted a decline of two percent.

Oil prices collapsed to more than 60 percent since the beginning of 2020, helping pave the way for Saudi Arabia, Russia and other large producers recently to cut output by almost 10 million barrels a day for the months of May and June, in an attempt to balance the plunging prices. However, even with such historic output cuts, crude prices kept plunging amid the pandemic lockdowns and loss in business confidence.

Saudi Arabia has already cut its 2020 budget by nearly five percent, and further spending cuts are likely. In March Riyadh raised its debt ceiling to 50 percent of GDP from 30 percent. It has already borrowed \$12 billion in international bonds this year.

The kingdom has registered more than 20,000 coronavirus cases as of Tuesday with 152 deaths.

The kingdom had originally projected a \$50 billion deficit this year, or 6.4 percent of GDP, widening from around \$35 billion last year.

Saudi Arabia's oil industry accounts for 70 percent of the country's export earning, about half of GDP. In order to balance the budget Riyadh needs crude price of \$80 per barrel. However, oil prices are hovering around only one quarter of that amount. Riyadh will have to dig deeper into savings as well as make into effect further austerity measures, such as reducing fuel subsidies and tripling Value Added Tax (VAT) from five to 15 percent to support its coronavirus-hit economy.

IMF predicts West Asian economies to contract this year. "Vulnerabilities are high in certain countries" with "high levels of unemployment and low growth," said Jihad Azour, IMF's Middle East and Central Asia director.

Most oil producing nations are turning to their state-owned SWF investment vehicles designed to buffer oil price shocks. Today's situation shows the need for economic diversification among oil-producing nations. A lesson that the Islamic Republic had to learn during the last 42 years since the sanction's regime was imposed on the nation.

Amidst the global economic fallout, Iran is also facing her own economic woes. Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnasser Hem-

mami was cited by ILNA that the treasury will be selling debt securities to the capital market in coming days to provide for the country's budget deficit of between 30 to 50 percent for this coming fiscal year. Hemmati announced the plan is waiting for a final approval of the Supreme Council for Economic Coordination.

The "maximum pressure" campaign by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has only strengthened the country's "Resistance Economy" and as a result today we have record exports in the non-oil sector. Based on a data by the Customs Administration during the first two month of Iranian calendar period (March 20 - May 20, 2020) Iran's non-oil trade exceeded \$9 billion, IRNA reported Sunday.

President Hassan Rouhani has said that Iran will not suffer as much as other countries from the oil price plunge as it is less reliant on crude exports. "The more countries rely on oil, the greater they suffer. But as our reliance on oil income has decreased, willingly or unwillingly, either by our own will or by the imposition of the enemy, our losses will certainly be less," Rouhani said during a television message recently.

## My skin color is not a crime, but your racism should be

By Marjohn Sheikhi

The U.S. is now going through widespread racial unrest following the killing of a 46-year-old black man George Floyd, whose repeated 'I can't breathe' minutes before he died under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020, has sparked worldwide in protest against the U.S. systemic racism and police brutality.

The brutal killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man suspected of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill, under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020, has sparked worldwide rallies in solidarity with anti-racism protests currently underway in the United States.



Caught on a phone's camera by onlookers, the viral video shows a white police officer, Derek Chauvin, pressing his knee to Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes while Floyd was handcuffed face down in the street. "I can't breathe," Floyd says repeatedly while three other officers watch. "Please. Please. Please. I can't breathe. Please, man." According to the complaint submitted to the court, during the final three minutes, Floyd was unresponsive and had no pulse, but officers made no attempt to revive him and Chauvin kept his knee on Floyd's neck even as arriving emergency medical technicians attempted to treat him.

The incident in itself is harrowing enough to invoke such worldwide outrage and abhorrence over the loss of innocent life at the hands of what is actually sworn to protect the said innocent lives, but that doesn't even begin to cover the actual extent of the systemic racism and carnage against the African-Americans that have been in place in the United States for hundreds of years.

A quick, simple search online will bring up over 100 names of African-Americans who have been killed by the police or in police custody while unarmed. In fact, Floyd's 'I can't breathe' was a haunting echo of what Eric Garner had repeated 11 times before losing consciousness while lying face down on the sidewalk. Garner, a 44-year-old African-American man, died on July 17, 2014, after an NYPD officer, Daniel Pantaleo, put him in a chokehold while arresting him on the suspicion of selling single cigarettes from packs without tax stamps. The hashtag '#ICantBreathe' gained worldwide support with over 1.3 million tweets in December 2014 after the officer was acquitted from any charges. Pantaleo did not face any indictment and was fired over five years after Garner's death.

Associated with the Black Lives Matter movement, 'I Can't Breathe' has now become a slogan chanted by protesters against police brutality and institutional racism in the U.S.

The U.S. national security adviser Robert O'Brien may wish to look the other way by saying that he doesn't believe in systemic racism in policing and talk all he wants about some 'bad apples' in the law enforcement, but that doesn't change the glaring statistical facts that African-Americans, despite making up only 13% of the U.S. population, are two-and-a-half times more likely than white Americans to be killed by the police. Black teenagers are also 21 times more likely than white teenagers to be killed by police.

A truly tragic case in point, which is credited as one of the several police killings of black Americans which sparked the Black Lives Matter movement, is the death of twelve-year-old Tamir Rice, who was playing with a toy gun in a Cleveland park when police officer Timothy Loehmann got out of his cruiser and immediately shot the boy, who died in hospital the next day. The officer was not charged in the killing, which incited public protests over police brutality against black people, further intensified after a grand jury decision to not indict the police officer who fatally shot Michael Brown, an 18-year-old black man, who, according to eyewitnesses, was unarmed and had his hands up before he was shot. The "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" then became a defining slogan of the protests in Ferguson.

According to a study by researchers from Northeastern and Harvard University, which analyzed fatal shootings by police in 27 U.S. states from 2014-15, it was revealed that among those who were "unarmed and appeared to show no objective threat to police, nearly two-thirds of the victims were Hispanic or Black."

Also, a 2019 study by the U.S. census bureau and Statista.com shows that African-Americans are more likely to get fatally shot by police than other ethnic groups.

The U.S. is now going through the most widespread racial unrest in its history since Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated by a white supremacist in 1968.

The visceral protests, mainly peaceful, have been calling for an end to racism and discrimination while expressing anger and frustration over the continued acts of the police killing of black Americans, which, in many cases, do not even face indictment.

The U.S. President Donald Trump, whose racist remarks and stances have been numerous enough to have a Wikipedia page of its own, took a hard line on the protests, even going so far as to threaten to send in the military to quell unrest.

According to the latest reports, at least 9,300 people have been arrested across the United States amid the ongoing protests. Curfews have been put in place and the U.S. National Guard has been stationed in some cities, yet the protesters have largely remained undeterred. Not even the coronavirus pandemic could keep the protesters at home.

Racism has taken on many ugly faces during the colonial era and afterward, rearing them at its most extreme in genocides and slavery, and in its more subtle but no less dangerous forms like segregation and immigration laws. It took the African-Americans many decades to move past the segregation law on buses, to finally having an African-American as a president. But Racism has its vicious claws dug in too deep and as long as white supremacy is touted at the governmental and institutional levels, George Floyd will not be the last African-American victim of police killings.



## No harm to Ilam historical sites by quake

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A medium-sized 4.9 magnitude earthquake that struck Salehabad city in western province of Ilam on Wednesday caused no damage to historical sites across the province.



Based on field visits by experts of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, no serious damage to historical relics and monuments has been reported, provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh announced on Saturday, CHTN reported.

Due to the possible occurrence of aftershocks, experts are on standby to inspect the possible harms to historical sites of the province, he added.

The name "Ilam" comes from "Elam", the pre-historic civilization that ruled the area in modern southwest Iran from 2700 BC to 539 BC. Archaeological findings dates human settlement of the area to around 5000 BC.

## Rask holds potential to become a tourism hub

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Rask city in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan has the potential to become one of the tourism hubs of the country, governor of the city has said.



Considering the city's existing capacities such as its pristine nature, the quantitative level of tourism in the province can be improved, which can help secure sustainable employment for the locals, Salim Kadkhoda said, CHTN reported on Friday.

The private sector is also expected to collaborate in this section by investing in eco-lodge units and welfare complexes, he added.

For mainstream Iranians, the name of Sistan-Baluchestan conjures up stories of drought, desiccated wetlands, and dust storms. On the international scale foreigners may consider it a reminiscent of the big red blot on the Iran safety map.

In ancient times, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, the Baluchistan region provided a land route to the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations. The armies of Alexander the Great marched through Baluchistan in 326 BC on their way to the Hindu Kush and on their return march in 325 experienced great hardships in the region's barren wastes.

## Awe-inspiring ancient sites of wild western Iran: Takht-e Soleiman

**(Lonely Planet)** — Leave the bright lights and tourist delights of Isfahan and Shiraz far behind to track down astonishing millennia-old relics among the dusty wilds of ancient Persia. From snow-tipped northern crags to scorching southern deserts, you'll traverse eroded volcanic plateaus, explore ancient river valleys and pass under the mournful gaze of long-abandoned castles on this intrepid quest for these far-flung treasures (many of which are UNESCO listed). An Indiana Jones-inspired hat is optional.



Volcanic pools bubble up near Solomon's Prison (Steve Waters / Lonely Planet)

Achingly remote, this atmospheric collection of 1500-year-old ruins lie scattered across a volcanic rim on the desolate badlands west of Zanjan, near the small town of Takab. Once an important Zoroastrian fire temple, Solomon's Throne was so-named as a local ruse to protect the site from 7th-century Arab invaders.

The grounds include a large thermal pond, more evidence of the area's volcanism, as well as random stone structures in various stages of restoration. The nearby spiky Zendan-e Soleiman (Solomon's Prison) rewards climbers with a view of a sulphurous crater, and a handful of tiny hot pools simmer in the vicinity.

# Applying health protocols is a priority for tourism recovery, Rouhani says

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has emphasized the need for formulating health protocols as a top priority to get the tourism and handicrafts industry back on the right track as the sector is suffering from a grave recession amid a coronavirus lockdown.

"Given the successful return of many economic sectors to act in compliance with health protocols, officials and managers of the tourism industry must closely work with the Coronavirus Combat Operations Headquarters to design and implement the necessary health guidelines in a manner that would work accurately and effectively," Rouhani said.

The president made the remarks on Friday in a phone call with Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, CHTN reported.

New protocols are expected to make tourism destinations, hotels, recreation centers, and restaurants to comply with the health criteria required under the new normal scenario implementation. The stride came a couple of months ago when the novel coronavirus pandemic, opened for change of global tourism trend to a paradigm which puts health, hygiene, safety, and security on the top priority during traveling.

"People should be able to make their trips while they are adapting with coronavirus measures. That would lead to the tourism industry being flourished again, and related businesses to come out of recession."

Rouhani also referred to craftspeople and their economic hardships caused by the pandemic, saying "Handicraft productions are important as they constitute an essential area of economic activity in people's lives, especially in rural areas, yet handicrafts bear one of the important elements of cultural identity."

Thrive in handicrafts along with other economic sectors helps sooner to materialize the national goal of 'Surge in Production', he noted.

"Considering the domestic market and the export share of handicrafts, we must accelerate, using a carefully-designed plan, to lay the ground for activists in this field, along with other industries, to realize the



A couple wearing protective face masks, following the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), walks on the street opposite a congregational mosque in Qom, Iran, March 24, 2020. (Photo: WANA)

'Surge in Production' with the participation of the people."

Iran's tourism ministry has forecast that the country will start hosting foreign travelers as of mid-summer with the priority given to travelers from the neighboring countries.

"We are constantly monitoring [our target] countries and we have decided, in the first phase, to resume tourism interactions with the neighboring countries," ISNA quoted Mohammad-Ebrahim Larijani, the director of the ministry's advertising and marketing office, as saying on Friday.

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has plunged the travel and tourism industry and economy in the global scene over that past couple of months as passenger traffic

on airlines and hotel occupancy rates have fallen off a cliff compared to the same periods previous years.

Deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri said earlier in May that Iran's tourism industry will get back on the right track sooner than expected thanks to measures taken to tackle the spread of coronavirus.

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

the Tehran Times.

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

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

## Hegmataneh put on fire once again despite warnings

➔ 1 It seems that the officials are accustomed to weeding out this historic site with a fire and that's why they do not feel the need to address the issue or take seriously any of the warnings of archaeologists.

Malmir also noted that the fire couldn't harm the historical relics in the site as most of them are located at a depth of more than three meters.

Even if, according to the officials, the fire doesn't cause any damage to the historical site, as a tourist destination, the visual beauty of this area will definitely be damaged. At the same time, reporting the news of the burning of a historic site - every year - may not be a good thing for the tourism industry of the province.

Last year archaeologist Mohammad Rahim Sarraf, in an interview with ISNA, warned that these continuous fires gradually damage some of the areas in



the site, which haven't yet been studied archaeologically.

Small sections of this ancient Median and Achaemenid city have

been excavated over the last century, most extensively in the 1990s. There's a smart museum nearby, as well as two Armenian churches, now part of Hamadan University.

Ecbatana was first excavated in 1913 by the French Assyriologist Charles Fossey. Excavations have been limited due to the modern town covering most of the ancient site.

In 2006, excavations in a limited area of Hegmataneh Hill failed to discover anything older than the Parthian period (247 BC – 224 CE), but this does not rule out older archaeological layers existing elsewhere within the vast site.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. It was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

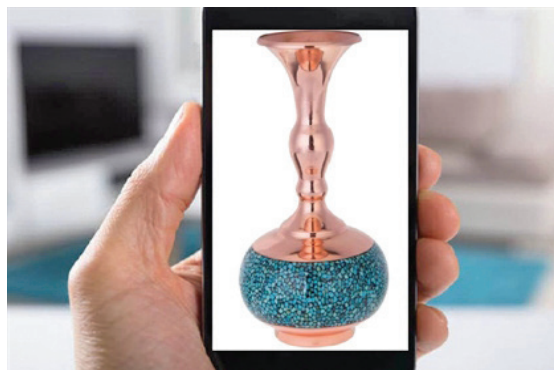
## Digital marketing workshop aims to promote tourism, handicrafts

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Tehran department of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts will host an online educational workshop on digital marketing management on June 9-16.

The event is aimed at exploring ways to increase sales of handicrafts and buttress the country's tourism and hospitality industry, Tehran province's tourism chief Parham Janfeshan said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

"Live performances in various fields of handicrafts, competitions in cutting precious and semi-precious stones, holding exhibitions of handicrafts, meeting with veterans and activists of handicrafts and honoring selected artists are among the programs scheduled for the week of handicrafts."

Regarding to novel coronavirus pandemic, the official



noted "Meetings and workshops will be held virtually according to the recommendations from the Coronavirus Combat Operations Headquarters."

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian.

"Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages," she said.

## Visit Imam Jomeh House solely or on tour of 'Old Tehran'



© Tehran Times/Samira Nazari

➔ 1 Constructed in the 19th century, the house was originally the residence of Aqa Khan Nuri (nicknamed

E'temad-al Dowleh) (born 1807 – died 1865), who was a politician in Qajar court. Nuri served as prime minister (Sadr-e a'zam) between 1851-58 during the reign of king Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848–1896)

Building later was used to be the residence of Imam Jomeh or the Friday Praying Leader before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The house is adjacent to Golestan Palace, which is a UNESCO world heritage site, was built during the Qajar era and embodies the successful integration of earlier Persian architecture with the European influence.

Dar ul-Funun, which translates to 'polytechnic college', the grand bazaar of Tehran, the National Museum of Iran, which explores 30,000 years of habitation in the region through primitive art, tools from the Stone Age, pottery, coins, remnants of Persepolis, and other excavated treasures, are amongst adjacent



destinations you may visit to solely or on a tour of 'Old Tehran'.



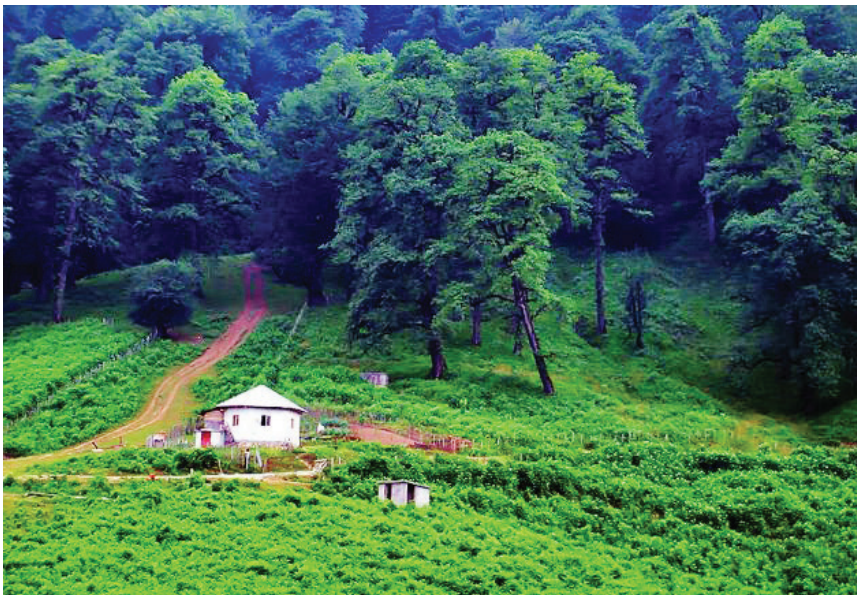
# Reforestation twice deforestation

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Annually, about 25,000 hectares of land undergo reforestation in Iran, which is more than twice the annual deforestation. However, the reforested land may not have the same biodiversity and vegetation as the original forests.

Reforestation is the natural or intentional restocking of existing forests and woodlands (forestation) that have been depleted, usually through deforestation. Reforestation can be used to rectify or improve the quality of human life by soaking up pollution and dust from the air, rebuild natural habitats and ecosystems, mitigate global warming since forests facilitate biosequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide, and harvest for resources, particularly timber, but also non-timber forest products.

Nonetheless, the reestablishment of forests is not just simple tree planting. Forests are made up of a community of species and they build dead organic matter into soils over time.

Between 2015 and 2020, approximately 12,000 hectares of forests across the country wiped out annually, IRNA quoted Reza



Bayani an official with Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization, saying,

He went on to say that the country's forests are estimated at 14.3 million hectares, lamenting, deforestation occurs for a variety

of reasons, including dam construction, road construction, fire, and wood smuggling.

Over the past two years, some 25,000 hectares were replanted per year, thus it will take about 15 years for a reforested area to reach a natural forest function, he highlighted.

Certainly, a long period of time should be spent in order to ensure that the reforested areas will function as the natural forests, for example, carbon sequestration, water penetration, soil stabilization, erosion prevention and water production will decide whether or not they are functioning, he further explained.

He went on to say that the country's northern forests have been estimated at 2,080,000 million hectares about 60 years ago, and today it is stretching to 2,004,000 hectares taking replanted areas into account.

Yousefali Ebrahimpour, commander of the protection unit of natural resources and watershed management department of West Azarbaijan province earlier said that shortage of forest protection units, not enforcing laws and low fines are among the factors exacerbating deforestation.

## Persian fallow deer breeding site operating in northern Iran



**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A breeding site in the northern province of Mazandaran is host to 53 endangered Persian fallow deer, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

A 55-hectare site in Sari city has been set up for breeding Persian fallow deer since 40 years ago. Currently, 53 male and female yellow deer are kept in this center.

So far, the center has sent over 400 Persian fallow deer to 10 endangered species maintenance sites.

The Persian fallow deer (Dama dama mesopotamica) is a rare ruminant mammal belonging to the family Cervidae.

Persian fallow deer are physically larger than fallow deer, and their antlers are bigger and less palmate. They are nearly extinct today, inhabiting only a small habitat in Khuzestan, southern Iran, two rather small protected areas in Mazandaran, an island in Lake Urmia, and in some parts of Iraq.

They were formerly found from Mesopotamia and Egypt to the Cyrenaica and Cyprus. Their preferred habitat is open woodland.

The overall population of the Persian fallow deer lingered around 250 individuals in 2005, and registered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2015.



## 5 Iranian universities in top 100 of THE ranking

**1 →** In 2020, Iran had 40 universities among the top Asian universities, which was 29 in 2019, 18 in 2018, and 14 universities in 2017, he highlighted.

Although Iran has grown significantly in terms of

the number of universities compared to the previous years, the growth in terms of rank is seen in only a number of universities, including Sharif University of Technology, University of Science and Technology,

Tehran Medical Sciences, Mashhad Medical Sciences, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University.

## Coronavirus is an ‘SOS signal for the human enterprise’

The coronavirus pandemic is an “SOS signal for the human enterprise”, according to a leading economist and the United Nations environment chief, who warn that current economic thinking does not recognize that human wealth depends on nature's health.

“The language of economics is failing us [and] the result is that we miss the message,” said Prof Sir Partha Dasgupta and the UN's Inger Andersen in an article published on Friday. “Our economies, livelihoods and wellbeing all rely on nature, from the food we eat, to controlling our climate, regulating disease and providing spiritual fulfillment. Without nature, there would be no life.”

The ongoing destruction of nature has

been blamed as the fundamental driver of diseases that cross from wildlife into humans. In April, the world's leading biodiversity experts said even more deadly disease outbreaks were likely unless the destruction is halted.

Dasgupta is leading a major review on the economics of biodiversity for the UK government, due to be published later in 2020, and Anderson is an adviser. A similar UK government review on climate change led by Lord Nicholas Stern was highly influential in making the economic case for environmental action.

“Covid-19 is an SOS signal for the human enterprise, bringing into sharp focus the need to live within the planet's ‘safe operating space’, and the disastrous environmental,

health and economic consequences of failing to do so,” said Dasgupta and Anderson. “A key problem is the mismatch between the artificial ‘economic grammar’ which drives public and private policy and ‘nature's syntax’ which determines how the real world operates.”

They said ‘natural capital’ – the planet's stock of natural resources, like plants, soils and minerals – should be valued alongside the values of produced capital, such as roads, and human capital, such as skills. Together, these form a measure of a country's true wealth, they said.

Data from the UN Environment Programme shows that the global stock of natural capital per capita has declined nearly 40%

since the early 1990s, while produced capital has doubled and human capital has increased by 13%. “Unlike standard models of economic growth and development, placing ourselves and our economies within nature helps us to accept that our prosperity is ultimately bounded by that of our planet,” Dasgupta and Anderson said.

“The importance of taking decisions guided by the science has become all the more apparent in recent months,” they said. “As discussions about the recovery gather pace, economic and finance decisions must be guided by the science too. From now on, protecting and enhancing our environment must be at the heart of how we achieve economic prosperity.”

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

### Iran suspends China flights due to coronavirus

Iran has restricted all flights and recreational travels to and from China due to coronavirus outbreak, IRIB news agency reported on Saturday. Health Minister Saeed Namaki said that screening and surveillance is underway across all the country's air and sea borders, and no cases of coronavirus have been reported so far.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of the health ministry's center for infectious diseases, told IRNA that rumors that the novel coronavirus has reached Iran's neighborhood are untrue, according to reports by the World Health Organization.

Gooya went on to say that the novel coronavirus has not been reported in Iraq, Kurdistan of Iraq, Pakistan or any of the neighboring countries and the only country in the region which has confirmed the virus, is the UAE.

### لغو پروازهای ایران – چین برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس کرونا

ایران تمام پروازهای به مقصد چین و بالعکس را برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس کرونا بطور موقت لغو کرده است.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما، سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت، گفت غربالگری و مراقبت‌ها در همه مرزهای زمینی، هوایی و دریایی کشور در حال انجام است و هیچ موردی در خصوص ابتلا به ویروس کرونا مشاهده و گزارش نشده است.

در همین حال، به گزارش ایرنا، محمد مهدی گویا رییس مرکز مدیریت بیماری‌های واگیر وزارت بهداشت اعلام کرد آنچه شایعه شده که ویروس کرونای جدید به همسایگی ایران رسیده، بر اساس گزارش‌های سازمان جهانی بهداشت صحت ندارد.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “zoo-”

■ **Meaning:** animal

■ **For example:** Nor did he want botany and **zoology**, he'd be no good at them.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Ring back

■ **Meaning:** To call someone again, usually after failing to reach the desired person the first time.

■ **For example:** Can you ask him to ring me back when he gets home?

### IDIOM

#### Do more harm than good

■ **Explanation:** If the effect of an action is more damaging than helpful

■ **For example:** Giving him money did more harm than good - he spent it on drug.

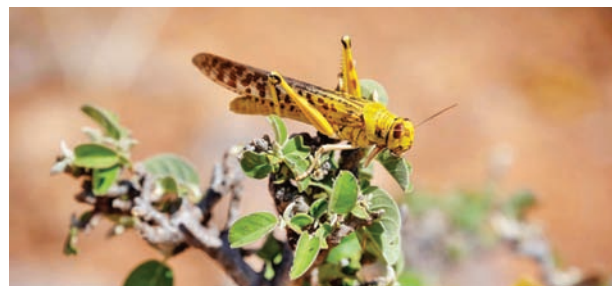
## FAO warns impact of COVID-19, desert locust to fuel hunger in Asia, the Pacific

While the world fights to slow the spread of COVID-19, the worst pandemic experienced in a century, countries in South and Southwest Asia are simultaneously responding to plagues of pests which threaten to worsen hunger and the livelihoods of millions of people, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warned today.

Swarms of Desert Locust, over the last couple of months, have moved swiftly into west Asia attacking vegetation in parts of Iran and Pakistan, and are now threatening crops in India. These swarms are the worst experienced in more than a generation.

Fall armyworm, a maize-destroying pest that migrated to Asia from Africa in 2018, has also spread across the continent and has arrived in Australia.

■ **Multiple challenges for an already challenged region**



While the lockdowns of countries across the Asia-Pacific Region in response to COVID-19 have taken their toll on the economies, lives and livelihoods of millions of people, the convergence of these plant pests will only add to the suffering.

“We cannot and must not under-estimate the damage to lives and livelihoods that the convergence of these crises will have on food security and hunger in this part of the world, already home to most of its undernourished people,” said Jong-Jin Kim, FAO Deputy Regional Representative and Head of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. “While we continue the battle to save lives and contain the spread of COVID-19, we must now fight a war that has multiple fronts and various enemies here in the Asia-Pacific region,” Kim added.

■ **Desert Locust – world's most destructive pest**

Desert Locusts can devour huge amounts of vegetation, including wild plants, trees and grasslands, but they also attack vegetable crops and fruit trees.

A single swarm of Desert Locust can cover an entire square kilometre and contain some 80 million insects. FAO experts estimate the number of locusts could grow twenty-fold in the upcoming rainy season in South Asia unless extra measures to counter the swarms are put in place. FAO is tracking the movements across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

■ **Fall armyworm marches on across Asia**

In many countries affected by Fall armyworm (FAW), COVID-19 lockdowns have resulted in pest management activities being reduced or ceased entirely. FAO has published a guidance note for responding to outbreaks of FAW during the simultaneous challenges faced by countries' responses to COVID-19.

Farmers need significant support to manage FAW sustainably in their cropping systems through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) activities. FAO has launched a Global Action for FAW Control as a response to the international threat that FAW is posing for food security and the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers.

■ **FAO continues to support member nations in Asia and the Pacific**

“FAO continues to support our member countries in response to these and other threats in these very challenging times,” said Kim. “Together we'll get through this, for our own sake, and for the sake of future generations.”

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Domestic violence conference

(December 03, 2003)

An international conference on domestic violence against women took place in London on Tuesday 2nd December. Experts and policy makers from twenty different countries hope to share ideas on how to deal with the problem. This report from Rachel Ellison:

**Domestic violence** is a worldwide problem, which **cuts across** social, economic and class **barriers**. Social workers, magistrates and women's agencies from around the world have been invited by the British government to share their knowledge and experience of how to reduce violence in the home. One project in Zimbabwe takes drama workshops into primary and secondary schools. These have helped to change cultural attitudes.

In many countries, domestic violence is seen as a private matter that should remain **behind closed doors**. Another scheme in Ghana - where according to non governmental organisation statistics, one in three women suffer **domestic violence** - has succeeded in changing the lives of women in three rural communities. A **pilot study** has seen tribal chiefs agree to the training of local community teams, who **counsel** women and have their violent husbands arrested.

These are **models** British policy makers hope to learn from. Here, one in four women are likely to be physically or psychologically **abused** by their current or ex-partners. According to the charity Womankind, by the time a woman goes to the police, she'll have been hit, on average, 35 times. Last year there were more than 6 million reported **incidences** of violence in the home in Britain. The British government is **tabling new legislation** which aims to prevent domestic violence, and offer women better protection within the legal system, to help them if they are attacked.

■ **Words**

**domestic violence:** behaviour within the home and family which is intended to hurt, injure or kill people  
**cuts across:** here, not restricted by; is not stopped by; is not affected by; pays no attention to  
**barriers:** obstructions; obstacles; something that stops progress  
**behind closed doors:** here, private; not discussed in public  
**a pilot study:** a project which is done as a test on a small scale in order to see whether it will be successful on a larger scale  
**counsel:** give careful advice to  
**models:** good examples  
**abused:** treated cruelly  
**incidences:** occurrences  
**tabling new legislation:** putting forward proposals for new laws

(Source: BBC)



## N. Korea threatens to shut liaison office with South

In the latest blow for inter-Korean cooperation, North Korea threatened to permanently shut a liaison office with South Korea as it continued to condemn its rival for failing to prevent activists from sending anti-North Korean leaflets across the border.



The statement by North Korea's ruling Workers' Party late Friday came a day after the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un said her country would end a military agreement reached with South Korea in 2018 to reduce tensions if Seoul fails to stop the activists, AP reported.

Kim Yo Jong also said North Korea could permanently shut the liaison office and a joint factory park in the border town of Kaesong, which have been symbols of reconciliation between the two countries.

Desperate to save a faltering diplomacy, South Korea in response said it would push new laws to ban activists from flying leaflets by balloon to the North, which triggered a debate over freedom of speech.

But an unidentified spokesman of the Workers' Party's United Front Department said Seoul's promise lacked sincerity, and the scrapping of the liaison office will be the first in a series of North Korean steps that would cause extreme suffering for the South.

The statement also confirmed an elevated status for Kim Yo Jong, who was described as her brother's top official for inter-Korean affairs.

## France denies giving refuge to Venezuela's Guaidó

France denied that Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó had been given refuge at its mission in Caracas, after Venezuela's foreign minister claimed he was hiding at the embassy.

"Mr. Juan Guaidó is not at the French residency in Caracas. We have confirmed this to the Venezuelan authorities several times," ministry spokeswoman Agnes von der Muhll said.

According to AFP, France is among more than 50 countries that recognize Guaidó as the interim president of Venezuela, after the country's opposition-controlled parliament branded President Nicolás Maduro a usurper over his 2018 re-election in a poll widely derided as rigged.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza had made the claim Thursday, three days after Maduro hinted that his rival was "hiding" at a diplomatic location.

"We cannot enter the premises of any country's embassy whatsoever, in this case Spain or France," Arreaza said during a radio interview, adding that an arrest by force therefore "is not possible."

He made the comments when asked by a journalist about Guaidó's supposed presence at the embassy, and another leading opposition figure, Leopoldo López, at the Spanish ambassador's residence, where he has remained for more than a year.

"We hope that these governments will change their mind... and deliver those who wish to escape Venezuelan justice," Arreaza said.

Calling the situation "deeply irregular" he added: "It is a shame for Spain's diplomacy, it is a shame for France's diplomacy what has happened and it will take its toll very, very soon."

Maduro hinted Monday that Guaidó was "hiding in an embassy" in a statement that the opposition leader immediately denied.

## Palestinians come out in force to protest U.S.-backed Israel plan

Hundreds of Palestinians have rallied in the city of al-Khalil (Hebron) in southern West Bank against a United States-backed Israeli plan to annex huge swathes of the occupied territory.

The rallies were held on Friday on the anniversary of Israel's 1967 occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The regime occupied the territories during a Western-backed war that year. It was forced to leave Gaza in 2005 but keeps the coastal sliver under a crippling siege. Across the West Bank, Tel Aviv has illegally built over 230 settlements that house more than 600,000 Israelis.

The rallies that had been called by West Bank-based Palestinian political factions took place in protest against a plan announced by Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to annex the areas where the settlements have been built and the Jordan Valley. The areas that are targeted by the regime's scheme comprise 30 percent of the West Bank.

Netanyahu announced the plan emboldened by a hugely-controversial plot that was detailed and backed by U.S. President Donald Trump on January 28.

The protesters on Friday chanted anti-Tel Aviv and anti-Washington slogans, waved Palestinian flags, and held up banners some of which read, "No to the policy of annexation of the West Bank. No to division of al-Khalil."

"Today is a day for general mobilization in all of the country's governorates against the annexation deal, which was announced by Netanyahu, and in rejection to Trump's 'deal of the century,'" one demonstrator said, referring to the U.S. plot by the ironic name that has been assigned to it by the U.S. president.

The participants, the protester said, were seeking "to send a message to the world, especially Israel, that the people will not accept any solution less than a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem (al-Quds) to be the capital."

Another participant said the protest was one that "rejects and condemns all Israeli measures and is against the American administration's bias in favor of Israel."

According to Press TV, The U.S. plot also re-endorsed Washington's incendiary recognition of al-Quds as Israel's "capital." The recognition that came during Trump's presidency flies in the face of Palestinians' age-old demand that the city's eastern part serve as the capital of their future state.

Since the U.S.'s unveiling of the plot, Palestinians have stopped recognizing any intermediary role by Washington in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

# Arab League: Israel's annexation plan amounts to war crime against Palestinians

The Arab League has reaffirmed its opposition to the Israeli regime's looming controversial plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, saying the "repensible and illegal" move amounts to a war crime against Palestinians.

The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital is the primary goal of the entire Arab world, and the region would never enjoy stability if such an ideal is not achieved, the 22-member regional organization said in a statement on the 53rd anniversary of Naksa (Setback) Day, which is commemorated every year on June 5 and marks the displacement of Palestinian people after Israel prevailed in the 1967 Six-Day War.

The Arab League also lambasted the U.S. administration of President Donald Trump for providing unprecedented support to the Tel Aviv regime, and allowing it to press ahead with its settlement expansion policies and acts of aggression in the occupied Palestinian land.

It warned that Israel's annexation plan poses a threat to international peace and security, stressing the need for effective measures to force the Tel Aviv regime to abide by the international law.



■ 'All peace-loving states call for end of Israeli occupation'

Separately, the secretary general of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Saeb Erekat, said peace-loving coun-

tries all agree on the need for an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, describing the cessation of such aggression as an "international responsibility."

"We talked about the urgency to stop

annexation to save the peace prospects. Respect for international law and ending the occupation remain a consensus among peace-loving countries," Erekat wrote in a series of posts published on his official Twitter page following separate meetings with UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Susan-na Terstal and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin.

He added, "We have documented every crime the Israeli occupying power committed against the Palestinian people. We shall overcome."

According to Press TV, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was sworn into office for another term on May 17, has set July 1 for the start of cabinet discussions on extending Israeli sovereignty over settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

In response to Israel's decision, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared the end of all agreements signed with Israel and the United States on May 19.

## Twitter, Facebook disable Trump video tribute to Floyd

Twitter Inc, Facebook Inc and Instagram disabled U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign tribute video to George Floyd on their platforms Friday, citing copyright complaints.

The clip, which shows photos and videos of protest marches and instances of violence in the aftermath of Floyd's death, has Trump speaking in the background, Reuters reported.

Floyd's death last week after a fatal encounter with a police officer has led to nationwide protests. In widely circulated video footage, a white officer was seen kneeling on Floyd's neck as the African American gasped for air and repeatedly groaned, "I can't breathe," before passing out.

"We respond to valid copyright complaints sent to us by a copyright owner or their authorized representatives," a Twitter representative said.

Facebook, which owns photo and video-sharing network Instagram, said it removed the post after receiving the creator's copyright complaint under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.



"Organizations that use original art shared on Instagram are expected to have the right to do so," it said in a statement.

## Libya: GNA forces regain control of strategic Bani Walid town



Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) has recaptured the strategic town of Bani Walid in the country's northwest from the forces of renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar.

The latest development comes a day after the UN-recognized government seized the city of Tarhuna, Haftar's last stronghold in northwestern Libya, which was used as the main launchpad against the capital, Tripoli. Friday's defeat inflicts serious blows to Haftar's 14-month offensive to capture Tripoli.

Al Jazeera's Mahmoud Abdelwahed said Bani Walid was handed over to the GNA peacefully.

"Life to a great extent is normal in Bani Walid," he said, speaking from Tripoli. "The government forces entered the town without any fighting because of the cooperation of the elder's council, the mayor and the civilians with the government forces."

Haftar's forces, he added, left the town before the GNA forces approached the northern borders of the town.

The GNA is now setting its sights on Sirte, the hometown of former dictator Muammar Gaddafi, and has announced a new offensive to recapture the city by deploying reinforcements around the Abu Grein area, Abdelwahed said.

## France says its army killed al-Qaeda's Abdelmalek Droukdel



France said on Friday that its military has killed al-Qaeda's North Africa chief Abdelmalek Droukdel, a key fighter who its forces had been hunting for more than seven years, during an operation in Mali.

"On June 3, French army forces, with the support of their local partners, killed the emir of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Abdelmalek Droukdel, and several of his closest collaborators, during an operation in northern Mali," French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly wrote on Twitter.

There was no immediate confirmation

of his death from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, known as AQIM.

Droukdel's reported death comes almost six months after French President Emmanuel Macron and the leaders of the G5 Sahel group - Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad - launched a new plan combining their military forces under one command structure to fight armed groups linked to al-Qaeda and the ISIL (ISIS) terrorist group.

France, a former colonial power in the region, deployed 600 additional soldiers to its Barkhane force, raising the number of troops there to 5,100.

## Joe Biden wins enough delegates to secure Democratic nomination

Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden has earned enough delegates to officially secure the Democratic nomination for president, CNN reported on Saturday.

Biden has been the presumptive Democratic nominee since April, when Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders dropped out of the primary. His electoral victory in Guam on Saturday allowed him to surpass the necessary 1,991 delegates to claim the nomination on the first ballot of the party's convention, set to be held in August. Biden currently has 1,992 delegates, according to CNN's tally.

"A little more than three months ago I stood on stage in South Carolina and told the American people that ours was a campaign for everyone who has been knocked down, counted out, and left behind. Those words take on an ever greater resonance today, at a time when so many Americans

are hurting and have suffered so much loss," Biden said in a statement. "So many feel knocked down by the public health and economic crisis we are weathering. So many feel counted out and left behind by a society that has for too long viewed them as less than equal, their lives as less than precious."

He added, "It was an honor to compete alongside one of the most talented groups of candidates the Democratic party has ever fielded — and I am proud to say that we are going into this general election a united party. I am going to spend every day between now and November 3rd fighting to earn the votes of Americans all across this great country so that, together, we can win the battle for the soul of this nation, and make sure that as we rebuild our economy, everyone comes along."

## Police pepper spray Black Lives Matter protesters

➔ Mayor Muriel Bowser, a Democrat, also unveiled a two-block long mural painted onto the street leading up to the White House declaring "Black Lives Matter".

She also demanded that Trump remove federal soldiers from Washington.

The mayor's defiant, but largely symbolic, acts come as more protests are expected in DC at the weekend.

The demonstrations staged over the past week in Washington drew draconian responses from the White House, with Trump ordering thousands of federal troops into the city.

The president was criticised for ordering authorities to forcibly remove peaceful protesters from a square outside the White House so he could cross the street to take a photo in front of a church.

Marking the square in front of St John's Church with the new "Black Lives Matter Plaza" sign on Friday, Ms. Bowser said: "As Washingtonians, we simply all want to be here together in peace to demonstrate that in America, you can peacefully assemble, you can bring grievances to your government, and you can demand change."

The mayor also tweeted a video clip of the giant "Black Lives Matter" street mural

emblazoned on the road in front of the White House in bright yellow paint.

"There was a dispute this week about whose street this is," the mayor's chief of staff John Falcichio tweeted as the mural was unveiled.

"Mayor Bowser wanted to make it abundantly clear that this is DC's street and honor demonstrators who were peacefully protesting on Monday evening."



# It's difficult but Iran can reach World Cup: Igor Panadic

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Persepolis coach Igor Panadic says that Iran have a tough task to book a place at the 2022 World Cup but they are capable of winning a place at the prestigious event.

Panadic was Persepolis goalkeeping coach before parting company with the Iranian giants to join Oman national football team.

He played a big role in Persepolis's success in the previous years, helping the Reds win Iran Professional League three times as well as Hazfi Cup. He also won a silver medal with Persepolis in the 2018 AFC Champions League, where the Iranian team lost to Japan's Kashima Antlers 2-0 on aggregate in the final match.

Now, Panadic has supported his countryman Dragan Skocic who takes charge of Iran national football team.

"Skocic is an excellent coach and knows the mentality of the Iranian players. Iran have an excellent team and can reach the World Cup," Panadic said in an interview with Tehran Times.

Iran sit five points behind leaders Iraq in Group C but having played one game fewer.

"It is clear the Persians have a slightly more difficult, but I believe that they can do it. Iran have already shown that how strong they are," the Croatian coach continued.

Panadic has filed a complaint against Persepolis after the Iranian team didn't pay his salary and FIFA has ordered the team to pay his payment. Now, Persepolis are going to lodge an appeal against the penalty with the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) immediately.

"I don't want to compromise with Persepolis. They have a right to go to CAS. I have no problem if they want to. I can wait,"



Panadic added.

Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand will leave the team on Wednesday to join Belgian team Antwerp and it gives an opportunity to Bozidar Radosevic to wear the No.1 jersey. Panadic believes that Rado has potential to be No. 1 keeper at Persepolis.

"Radosevic is a quality goalkeeper and there

is no doubt that he can be a great replacement for Beiranvand, but I think Persepolis need another goalkeeper at the same level. Sepahan goalkeeper Payam Niazmand is the best Iranian keeper in the league at the moment," he said.

The Croatian coach also lauded the Iranian fans, saying they were his main reason to stay in the country.

"I spent four years in Iran and I have to say the big reason for my stay in Iran was the fans. They created unforgettable moments for us because without them there would be no success. On this occasion, I greet them all from the bottom of my heart and let them remain the best fans in the world," Panadic concluded.

## My plan is to compete at the 2024 Olympics: Hasan Yazdani

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Hasan Yazdani, an Olympic gold medalist and two-time world champion in freestyle, who is one of the world's biggest stars in international wrestling, is going to participate at the 2024 Olympic Games.

After winning a junior world title in 2014, Yazdani made his mark at the senior level in 2015 by earning a silver medal at the World Championships at 70kg. The following year, Yazdani moved up a weight category to 74kg and captured a gold medal at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. In 2017, Yazdani moved up another weight category to 86kg and won a world championship in Paris. He added a world bronze medal in 2018 before claiming his second world title at the 2019 World Championships in Nur-Sultan.

"The Greatest" joined United World Wrestling's website to discuss his rivalry with David TAYLOR (USA), his epic comeback in the Rio Olympic finals, and whether or not he plans on moving up another weight category.

■ How did you start in the sport of wrestling?

A: I started wrestling at 12. In our country, wrestling, especially in my town, is a popular sport. We also have popular traditional wrestling and as a child, I used to go watch. I became interested early in life and eventually participate and stayed with it. So here we are!

■ Who was your wrestling hero growing up?

A: I try to look up to all champions and learn from them, especially their best techniques. So, I really can't say one person on the mat. But, from the character perspective, I learned a lot from Gholamreza Takhti, though again there are so many champions I respect.

■ You're coming back from knee surgery. Can you tell us how your recovery has gone and are you back on the mat now or not?

A: It's been about two months since my surgery I am back training hard, but not like the competition training. For the first month after surgery, I did therapy only and then slowly returned to the mat. Right now, during the



pause, I am working on bodybuilding, weights, and slowly training. Overall, my knee is good and not bothering me.

■ Do you have any desire to go up to 97kg?

A: The truth is that my natural weight has made me change weight classes. I used to lose 6-7 kilos, but when the new rules came out, I knew I needed to move up closer to my natural weight of 89kg. So really, 86kg is ideal for me, but if my weight goes up, I will go up, too. I like to enter new weight classes, but for now, 86kg is perfect for me.

■ In the 2015 World Championship final that you lose to Magomedrasul Gazimagomedov and took the silver medal. What did you learn from that match that you took into the 2016 Rio Olympic games?

A: After each loss, you learn. You learn about the mistakes from technique and mindset. After I lose matches, I work on my weakness and try to get better. In 2015, it was my first appearance at the senior level and I made some mistakes. When I came back home I retrained and learned from my mistakes and I got ready for the Olympic Games.

■ Down 6-0 against Aniuar Geduev from Russia in the final match of the 2016 Olympic, no panic you came back

and won the Olympic gold medal. What was on your mind?

A: I was thinking positive and I was thinking of winning, not even one percent of the time on the mat did I think of losing. My mind was clear, I wasn't concerned about injuries. I had my coaches and God by my side, which helped me to stay focus and earn the win.

■ Where does the respect between you and your opponents like David Taylor come from? He wishes you speedy recover when you were injured and you did the same for him.

A: For athletes, respect comes from seeing each other's character and their culture. I always think about respecting all my opponents and I always wish them the best in health and personal success. No matter if they are my direct opponent or not, I wish they are in great situation so we can put on a great show for fans. Wrestling is a way for us to show our character and that is what the sport is about for me and my countrymen.

■ You are a man of many nicknames; The Greatest, The King, Fearless. Is there one that you like more than others?

A: The truth is that I hope I am worthy of these nicknames. Each one is valuable for me and so I hope I can live up to the nicknames and the expectations of my great fans. I always want to keep their hope, so I accept them all and just hope that I am worthy.

■ What are you going to do when you retire from the sport of wrestling?

A: I haven't thought about retirement. Perhaps after I'm done competing, I will still be involved in wrestling, or maybe in business. Right now, I am just thinking about wrestling. All the financial stuff is the responsibility of my dad, so I do not get distracted. This way I can focus on wrestling.

■ How many Olympic medals do you hope to win?

A: I hope I can achieve the best medals during my wrestling career for as long as my body allows me. Ideally, I want to have the most medals, both Olympic medals, and world medals. My plan is to compete at the 2024 Olympics if my body allows it.

## Persepolis defender Ansari misses rest of season

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian football club Persepolis defender Mohammad Ansari missed the rest of the 2019-20 Iran Professional League (IPL) season.



Ansari suffered a torn ACL during the training on Friday. He was injured in a knee-on-knee collision with his teammate Siamak Nemati.

MRI scan on Sunday will show the extent of his injury, the club said.

In November 2018, Ansari suffered a torn ACL in the last minutes of the match against Japan's Kashima Antlers in the AFC Champions League final in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

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

IPL will resume on June 18.

## Iran to send female kabaddi team to Asian Beach Games

**IRNA** — Iran will send female kabaddi team to the sixth edition of the Asian Beach Games, the country's kabaddi federation President Abbas Ursaji said.

"We are going to send the female team to the competition. The male team will also participate at the event. It's for the first time Iran's female team will compete at the games," Ursaji said.

Iran had already announced that it will send a beach handball and athletic teams to the Games.

The competition is scheduled to take place in Sanya, China from November 28 to December 5.

## Foolad handed three-window transfer ban

**Tasnim** — Foolad football club of Iran have been banned by world governing body FIFA from signing players for the next three transfer windows.

The Iranian club were found guilty for failing to pay salary of Brazilian players Vinicius Silva Soares and Vinicius "Neguete" Lopes Laurindo.

Foolad sit sixth in the Iran Professional League (IPL) table, 14 points adrift of leaders Persepolis.

The Iranian clubs have problem to transfer money because of the U.S. sanctions.

Machine Sazi have already had problem to pay salary of their Brazilian player.

## It's 2021 or never for Tokyo, confirms senior Olympic official

High-ranking Olympic official Pierre-Olivier Beckers on Saturday made plain that the delayed Tokyo Olympics "will be held in 2021 or not at all".

The Belgian was reiterating the stance put forward by Japan and International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach that next year was the last chance to hold the Games postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today everyone is sure that they will start on July 23, 2021," he told Belgian newspaper L'Avenir.

"We are convinced that the Games will take place in 2021 or they won't take place.

"It's unthinkable to keep such a project on the go for any longer considering the enormous costs and all the thousands of people involved."

Beckers suggested it was "essential" that the traditional sporting calendar emerges from its COVID-19 lockdown before allowing major sporting events like the Olympics to be staged.

"All the sporting federations have to adapt to the Games' postponement.

"We can't envisage a similar upheaval a second time," stressed the president of Belgium's Olympic Committee.

According to Beckers a final decision on Tokyo "will be taken in the spring if questions (over the global health crisis) persist."

He said he was optimistic over the staging of the Games, rejecting any notion that it would be held behind closed doors.

In March, Tokyo 2020 was postponed one year over the coronavirus, which has killed hundreds of thousands around the world and halted international sport and travel.

Beckers heads the IOC's coordinating commission for the 2024 Games and he said he wanted Paris "to be different" to past editions.

"We want to stage Games that are economically responsible, inclusive, sustainable and useful for society.

"The IOC's desire is that the Games adapt to the needs of cities, countries, and vice versa. Paris will be the first edition that will fully fit into this vision."

"We must fight against gigantism," he continued.

"In Paris, we will return to a budget lower than that of previous editions: 3.8 billion euros for operations and around three billion for all infrastructure."

(Source: AFP)

## Magical Moments: Ali Daei vs Korea Republic (1996 AFC Asian Cup)

There are certain football matches that, despite the ravages of time, are destined to be remembered by supporters no matter how many years have passed.

These permanent fixtures in a fan's memory bank can be lodged there thanks to a glorious last-minute winner, a sterling come-from-behind victory or – in the case of Islamic Republic of Iran icon Ali Daei – a superb virtuoso display.

Midway through 1996 Daei, then aged 27, had only scored seven of his eventual 109 goals for his country, but the next six months would produce 22 international goals, including one of the greatest individual performances in the history of Asian football.

Iran arrived at that year's AFC Asian Cup in the United Arab Emirates with an enviable squad, one which featured Daei, who had bagged 12 goals in qualifying, as well as the precocious talents of Khodadad Azizi, Karim Bagheri and future star Mehdi Mahdavi.

Despite an indifferent start to the tournament – Mohammad Mayeli Kohan's charges lost 2-1 to neighbors Iraq in their first match – Iran hit back with commanding wins over Thailand and Saudi Arabia, with Daei scoring in all three of the Group B matches.

Meanwhile, and chasing their first AFC Asian Cup since 1960, Korea Republic were having a much tougher time in Group A.

Following a 1-1 draw against hosts United Arab Emirates, the Taeguk Warriors secured

a 4-2 win over Indonesia. In their final group stage match the Koreans suffered a 2-0 loss to a semi-final bound Kuwait, and only qualified to meet Iran in the quarter-finals as one of the two highest ranked third-placed sides.

Of the two, Iran were clearly the team in form and, under the beaming Emirati sun, nearly went ahead against their East Asian opponents when a superb Daei effort forced an excellent near post save from Kim Byung-ji after 10 minutes at the Al Maktoum Stadium.

But less than a minute later Iran found themselves defensively exposed, and a goal behind after Kim Do-hoon finished off a move that saw the ball go from one end of the pitch to the other within 20 seconds. 1-0 Korea Republic.

Iran equalized on the stroke of the half-hour, when a lofted corner found an unmarked Bagheri, whose powerful header clipped a Korean foot, and deflected into the net.

Iran's hard work was, though, undone within three minutes when a speculative cross wasn't properly dealt with, allowing future AFC Champions League winning coach Shin Tae-yong to volley home some 10 minutes before the break.

When the teams emerged for the second half, Iran were immediately on the front foot; Azizi had a shot blocked on the goal line in less than three minutes, and Bagheri should have doubled his tally two minutes later.

Such was Iran's pressure that it came

as no surprise when 1996 Asian Footballer of the Year Azizi finally equalized in the 52nd minute after latching on to Daei's measured pass.

At 2-2, and with elimination looming for the losers, the game was already a dramatic, high-quality affair, but Daei was about to turn the contest from entertaining to unforgettable with 23 minutes of magic.

In the 66th minute, with Iran's talented playmakers growing in confidence after repeated raids at the Korean penalty area, the Daei show began.

Daei received the ball 35 yards from goal, brushed off a defender, dribbled into the penalty area and hammered the ball into the far corner from 15 yards, before wheeling away in delight and being mobbed by teammates and coaching staff.

Daei had scored for the fourth consecutive match in the tournament and put his country in front for the first time in the quarter-final, but he was just getting started.

Ten minutes later Daei scored one of the greatest goals in the history of AFC competition, when he was able to perfectly control a 30 yard cross with the inside of his right foot, before instantly shifting his body into a position where he could hammer a half volley into the top right-hand corner from just outside the box.

It was a remarkable, unstoppable goal, and one that realistically took the game away from Korea Republic.

(Source: the-afc)



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■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian  
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com  
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430  
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
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Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Joy and pleasure which are followed  
by hell-fire are not joy and misery  
and discomfort which are followed  
by heaven are not misery.

Imam Ali (AS)

## “Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead” published in Persian

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — A Persian translation of “Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead”, a novel by Polish novelist Olga Tokarczuk has been published by Morvarid Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Denis Ajiri.



Front cover of a Persian translation of “Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead” by Polish novelist Olga Tokarczuk.

“In a remote Polish village, Janina devotes the dark winter days to studying astrology, translating the poetry of William Blake, and taking care of the summer homes of wealthy Warsaw residents,” writes Amazon on its introduction about the book.

“Her reputation as a crank and a recluse is amplified by her not-so-secret preference for the company of animals over humans. Then a neighbor, Big Foot, turns up dead. Soon other bodies are discovered, in increasingly strange circumstances. As suspicions mount, Janina inserts herself into the investigation, certain that she knows whodunit. If only anyone would pay her mind,” it adds.

A deeply satisfying thriller cum fairy tale, “Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead” is a provocative exploration of the murky borderland between sanity and madness, justice and tradition, autonomy and fate.

Olga Tokarczuk is known for her complex novels that leap between centuries, places, perspectives, and mythologies. She received the 2018 Nobel Prize for Literature (awarded belatedly in 2019), lauded for her “narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life.” A best-selling author in Poland for decades, Tokarczuk was not well known outside her homeland until she became the country’s first author to win the Man Booker International Prize in 2018 for “Flights” (2017), an English translation of her sixth novel “Bieguni” (2007).

## Iranian calligraphy seeks UNESCO status

→1 “Comparison of some of the scripts developed on Persian soil, particularly Persian-style Kufic with the Pahlavi and Avestan scripts, reveals a number of similarities between them, and this has led certain modern researchers to surmise



Calligraphy by the titan of the nastaliq script, Mohammad ibn Seyfi Qazvini (1553-1615) known as Mir Emad.

that when the Persians adopted the Arabic writing system, they may have made changes in the letter shapes and style of writing under the influence of their old national scripts and inherited tastes.

“Distinctive Persian features appear mainly in the taliq, shekasteh-taliq, nastaliq and shekasteh-nastaliq scripts.”

# Movie theaters, concert halls to resume activities after virus shutdown

**A R T** TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said that the movie theaters and concert halls will resume activities with 50 percent of their capacity on June 21 after an over three-month-long closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He made the remarks in a meeting held at the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters on Saturday, adding that it is necessary to observe healthcare protocols.

However, the president did not mention anything about reopening the halls dedicated to theater performances.

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

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

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

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



A file photo shows a movie theater in Tehran.

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

The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi announced

that the coronavirus outbreak in Iran would cause an estimated loss of over 9.700 billion rials (Over \$230 million) in the art and culture sectors by April 19, the end of the first month of the Iranian calendar year.

He had made the remarks in a report sent to

President Hassan Rouhani and several other high-ranking officials, including the head of the Planning and Budget Organization, having asked for urgent support for people working in numerous vulnerable jobs in the various sectors.

## “Empire of One Voice” explores artistic career of voice actor Nasrollah Medqalchi



Voice actor Nasrollah Medqalchi acts in a scene from documentary “Empire of One Voice” by director Hossein Rahmati.

**A R T** TEHRAN — The artistic career of veteran voice actor Nasrollah Medqalchi, famous for his voice of Abu Sufyan in Moustapha Akkad’s “The Message”, has been documented in “Empire of One Voice”.

“In this documentary, Medqalchi has talked about his life and his concerns, which are being heard for the first time,” director Hossein Rahmati has said.

“I have been making documentaries for 20 years, some of which have been narrated by Medqalchi,” Rahmati said.

Documentaries “Voice of Water”, “Contrast”, “Fresh Air”, “Water Migrants” and “Nest in the Way” are some of Rahmati’s documentaries narrated by Medqalchi.

“While collaborating with Medqalchi, I got to know the master better and I was interested in making a documentary on his life. I actually wanted to have a documentary as a portrait of the master,” Rahmati added.

“However, it was about 9 years ago when I asked the master to make a documentary but it was only last year that I was finally able to convince him for the documentary,” he said.

“The documentary was shot last year and it took over two months to be completed. We faced some problems at the end of the documentary which coincided with the coronavirus pandemic and the beginning of the quarantine. However it was completed,” he noted.

He added that he wantss the documentary to be screened first at the Cinema Verite as well as the art and experience cinema halls and later, if supported, on television.

Medqalchi has lent his voice to Anthony Hopkins in “Silence of Lambs”, Eli Wallach in “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” and “Captain Haddock” in “The Adventures of Tintin”.

## 8 Iranian films to compete in Athens Marathon Intl. Film Festival



A scene from “Weightlessness” by Iranian director Mehdi Fardqaderi.

**A R T** TEHRAN — A line up of 8 Iranian films will be competing in the Athens Marathon International Film Festival running online in the Greek city from June 12 to 21, 2020, the organizers have announced.

Iranian director Mehdi Fardqaderi’s drama “Weightlessness” is the only Iranian feature competing in the festival while the other seven are shorts.

“Weightlessness” tells the story of a groom who has gone missing the day after his glittering wedding ceremony. The bride, the groom’s mother, the groom’s sister, and his lover who attends the wedding uninvited, are all looking for him.

“Weightlessness” was crowned best at the 3rd Insolito International Horror and Fantasy Film Festival in the Peruvian capital of Lima in March.

The Iranian shorts are “Crusher” by

Arshia Zeinali, “Azadeh” by Mirabbas Khosravinejad, “Game” by Ali Haddadi, “Hearing” by Saeed Rezai, and “Limit” by Javad Darai.

Also included are “Look at Me for a Moment” by Mohammad Gharibi and Reza Sheykhlani, as well as “Under the Blade” by Javid Farahani.

“Limit” tells the story of a desperate man who frantically pleads with strangers to accompany him to his home, without being clear on his intentions.

“Limit” has been screened at numerous international events and has won awards at some of them, including the award for best short fiction at the 10th Southampton Film Week and the Bleeding Horror Short Film Festival, as well as the award for best drama at the NCCC (Niagara County Community College) Film and Animation Festival in the U.S. state of New York.

## Palm Springs ShortFest to screen movies from Iran



“Funfair” directed by Kaveh Mazaheri will be screened in the official competition of the Palm Springs International ShortFest.

**A R T** TEHRAN — Three Iranian movies will be competing in the various sections of the Palm Springs International ShortFest, which will take place in the U.S. city east of Los Angeles in California from June 16 to 22.

“Funfair” directed by Kaveh Mazaheri will be screened in the official competition. The film is about Majid, a young financially struggling man who comes up with a ploy in order to better the life of his wife Sarah.

Two films by Iranian filmmakers have been selected to be screened in the competition for the Young Cineastes Award.

“Tattoo” by Farhad Delaram is one of the movies, which won the best short film award at the 8th Persian Film Festival

in the Australian city of Sydney in 2019.

The film is about a young woman who wants to renew her driver’s license but she is sent to the traffic police center because of a scar on her wrist and her tattoo.

“Exam” directed by Sonia Haddad is the other film. The film is about a teenage girl who gets involved in the process of delivering a pack of cocaine to a client, and gets stuck in a weird cycle of occurrences.

The movie won the Grand Jury Award - Live-Action Short at the American Film Institute - AFI FEST in November 2019.

The winners will be presented with awards and cash prizes worth \$25,000 including five Academy Award qualifying awards.

## “The Golden Collars” director summoned to court for alleged accusation against Rouhani



Director Abolqasem Talebi in an undated photo.

**A R T** TEHRAN — Abolqasem Talebi, the director of the political drama “The Golden Collars”, said on Friday that he has been summoned to court over an alleged accusation against President Hassan Rouhani.

Speaking to the Persian service of the MNA, Talebi said that the summons came as a result of an announcement in 2018 about his plan to make a film about Rouhani’s meeting with an Israeli official in 1986.

He said that he is free on bail and lamented, “I don’t know why I should answer about a film that I have not made yet. Why are they making an inquisition? Isn’t the inquisition age over?”

“I have been summoned for a film that has never been made; for a screenplay that has never been penned; for something that has only been in my mind. This is actually an inquisition,” he added.

Talebi is an old hand at making political movies. In 2012, he made “The Golden Collars” about a conspiracy orchestrated by the British intelligence service to instigate riots in the aftermath of the 2009 Iran presidential elections with the help of a group of Iranian expatriates recruited mainly from Mojahedin-e-Khalq terrorist organization.

He also directed “The Orphanage” in 2016 about the Invasion of Iran in World War I and the Persian famine of 1917–1919.