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Over \$700m to be allocated for mining exploration projects

TEHRAN — Iran's Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili says the country's Mining Investment Insurance Corporation (MIIC) is going to allocate 30 trillion rials (over \$714.2 million) for supporting mining exploration projects, IRIB reported.

Speaking to the state TV on Sunday night, Esmaili said the ministry's programs regarding the mining sector should be di-

rected in a way that the exports of mineral raw materials is minimized and limited to situations where it is not possible to process the minerals.

Previously, the export of minerals was exempt from taxes, which encouraged the sale of raw materials, but this exemption is currently eliminated by the parliament and a major step has been taken for preventing such exports, the official said. **→ 4**

Lake Urmia to be fully revived within 7 years

TEHRAN — With the complete implementation of two water transfer projects, Lake Urmia will be completely restored by the Iranian calendar year 1406 (March 2027-March 2028), the Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in West Asia.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells, excessive dam construction, and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in the agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically.

In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. **→ 9**

Tehran Municipality calls on world artists to sculpture contest on Commander Soleimani

TEHRAN — The Beautification Organization of the Tehran Municipality has invited sculptors around the world to participate in a sculpture contest on Commander Qassem Soleimani.

The contest has been launched "to observe the art of martyrdom, sacrifice and patriotism, and to remember the efforts made by Martyr Soleimani in safeguarding the country," the organization said in its announcement published on Monday. The

interested applicants are asked to submit their designs to the organizers before July 5.

The designs must reflect the character and the exact portrait of Martyr Soleimani, while topics such as martyrdom, bravery and sacrifice must be taken into consideration.

The top selected work will later be situated in urban spaces across the city.

IRGC Quds Force chief Lieutenant General Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.



ARTICLE

Faranak Bakhtiari
Tehran Times journalist

World Oceans Day: get united to protect precious waterbodies

Oceans are valuable waterbodies in terms of food supply and climate issues, covering 71 percent of the planet's surface equaling 361 million square kilometers, but they, like other biological components on the planet, have been affected severely due to oxygen depleting factors.

The seas and oceans are known to be home to about 230,000 species of animals, although most of the depths of the oceans have not yet been discovered, and it is estimated that there are more than two million aquatic species.

However, scientists say that the dead zones, waterbodies that do not have sufficient oxygen levels in order to support most marine life, has quadrupled since 1950 and that very low-oxygen areas in coastal waters have increased 10 times.

A research team from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has found that since the mid-twentieth century, the concentration of oxygen in the oceans and coastal waters has been steadily declining and is now expanding. These areas have reached millions of square kilometers and the impact of rivers and other coastal waters has been severely affected by oxygen reduction. There are now 500 very low oxygen or dead zones in the world's coastal areas, while in 1950 the number of these areas was about 50, and the world's oceans have lost about two percent of their 77 trillion tons of oxygen since 1950.

According to the data, research shows that the expansion of these areas is a consequence of climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and pollutants from agricultural and sewage.

Due to the importance of protecting the seas and oceans, Oceans Day was first declared as June 8th, 1992 in Rio de Janeiro at the Global Forum, a parallel event at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

The Declaration was inspired by an event organized on that day by the Oceans Institute of Canada and supported by the Canadian Government. In 2008, led by Canada, the General Assembly resolved that June 8th would be designated by the United Nations as "World Oceans Day". **→ 9**

Venezuela-bound oil tankers tracked by Noor satellite: IRGC

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force Space Division has said the homegrown Noor (light) satellite that was launched into space in April is fully operational and has been used to track the oil tankers that recently carried fuel to Venezuela.

In an exclusive interview with Tasnim, Brigadier General Ali Jafarabadi highlighted the IRGC's success in launching the Noor satellite into space, saying the satellite is working normally and has turned into a "real space laboratory" for Iran.

He said the homegrown satellite has been utilized to track the Iranian oil tankers that recently carried fuel to Venezuela.

"In the Atlantic Ocean, where access (to ships) is normally more difficult, monitoring the position of the oil tankers and the situation in their surroundings was put on the agenda of

the Noor satellite, and was accomplished," the commander added.

Dismissing speculation that the Iranian satellite has gone dead, the commander said, "In the first days, the auxiliary and secondary signals from the satellite were turned on across the world and everybody could receive them, but later, we restricted the signals to our own country's space in order to save the power consumption."

The general said Iran is going to let the satellite transmit signals all over the globe for all countries once or twice a week.

One of the main features of the Iranian satellite launch was the Islamic Republic's success in manufacturing a tactical satellite carrier to launch the device, he said, adding that it allows for the launch of satellites from any part of country and with any given orbital inclination. **→ 3**

Statues of Confederate figures, slave owners come down amid protests

By staff & agencies

After years of civil rights activists calling for the removal of Confederate monuments, they're falling like dominoes amid nationwide protests in the wake of George Floyd's death in police custody.

Politicians announced Confederate monuments will be removed from Indianapolis and from Richmond, Virginia. The news follows removals earlier this week in Alexandria, Virginia, and Birmingham, Alabama, ABC News reported.

The statues, which honor soldiers and leaders on the losing side of the Civil War, are seen by many as symbols of racism and oppression.

That's why the statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee in Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, will be removed, Gov. Ralph Northam said Thursday.

"The legacy of racism continues, not just in isolated incidents," Northam said. "The legacy of racism also continues as part of a system that touches every person and every aspect of our lives."

Those protesting Floyd's death and police brutality had gathered at the statue this week, chanting, "Tear it down!"

Mayor Joe Hogsett also acknowledged the current protests in the decision to remove a monument dedicated to Confederate soldiers who died at a prison camp in Indianapolis.

"Our streets are filled with voices of anger and anguish, testament to centuries of racism directed at Black Americans," he wrote on Twitter Thursday. "We must name these instances of discrimination and never forget our past -- but we should not honor them."

■ Romney marches in Floyd protest
Republican Sen. Mitt Romney on Sunday marched in a Washington, DC, protest after the death of George Floyd in a break from other GOP lawmakers who have largely aligned behind President Donald Trump's militarized response to nationwide unrest. **→ 10**

Hamas warns of massive uprising against Israel's plans to annex West Bank

The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has warned that Israel's plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley, and its plots against the al-Aqsa Mosque will spark a massive uprising against the occupying entity.

"Jerusalem [al-Quds] will remain a Palestinian, Arab and Islamic city and the eternal capital of the Palestinian state, and all powers on this planet will not be able to change its identity, address and history," Hamas's Jerusalem Affairs Office said in a statement on Sunday.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is facing a number of criminal indictments, has repeatedly said that he would commence plans for annexing more areas in the occupied West Bank on July 1, in accordance with American President Donald Trump's peace scheme, further infuriating Palestinians.

Trump officially unveiled his much-condemned Mideast plan, the so-called deal of the century, in January at the White House with Netanyahu on his side, while Palestinian representatives were not invited.

The proposal largely gives in to Israel's demands while creating a Palestinian state with limited control over its own security and borders, enshrining the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allowing the regime to annex settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

The future Palestinian state, according to Trump's scheme, will consist of scattered lands linked together via bridges and tunnels, and furthermore, it will also be demilitarized, meaning that it will be subject to Israeli control over its security. **→ 10**

Bibi's small window for illegal annex

By Salman Parviz

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced that on July 1 he will start the process to annex the illegal Jewish settlements and the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank territory, as he pledged in the campaign.

There is less than a month left until he will apply Israeli sovereignty over large sectors of land the Palestinians have counted on for a future state. The unilateral annexation would break Israel's commitments to the Palestinians under a prior peace agreement and destroy any hope of a conflict ending deal. It is also a reminder for the moderate Palestinians that Israel cannot be trusted.

Opponents to the annexation argue that it would ignite a new wave of violence in the West Bank and force King Abdullah II of Jordan to adopt a hardline stance against Israel, endangering the previous treaty arrangements between Amman and Tel Aviv.

In January, the annexation won the backing of U.S. President Donald Trump administration, with the so-called "Deal of the Century" which allows Israel to keep up to 30 percent of the West Bank, including the Jordan Valley as well as all existing illegal Jewish settlements.

Jewish settlements are illegal under the Geneva Convention. To Israeli nationalist Zionists, however, the West Bank is Judea and Samaria, the biblical homeland of the Jews.

Unilateral annexation would weaken the Zionist regime's support with Democrats in U.S. as well as moderate Arab states, would destabilize Jordan, a country where Palestinians form the majority, and spark the third Intifada movement inciting a new era of resistance. **→ 7**



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Iranian physician arrives in Tehran after release from U.S. prison

TEHRAN — An Iranian physician who had been imprisoned by the United States on alleged charges of violating the country's illegal sanctions on Iran, arrived in Tehran on Monday morning.

After 16 months of detention, Majid Taheri was released through a prisoner swap with American citizen Michael White, who was also imprisoned in Iran.

Taheri was welcomed by Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari at the Imam Khomeini International Airport, according to Mehr. **→ 3**

Ayatollah Khamenei offers condolences over demise of Ramadan Shallah

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has expressed condolences over the demise of former leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement Ramadan Shallah.

In a message published on Monday, Ayatollah Khamenei said the resistance movement lost an "honest" and "valuable" figure. Shallah, who served as secretary general of the resistance group from 1995 to 2018, died at the age of 62 on Saturday night, according to Lebanon's al-Manar television network.

The Gaza-based movement said in a statement that Shallah had been in a coma for more than three years. It didn't say where he died, but he is believed to have been in Lebanon, Press TV reported.

Also in separate messages, Defense Minister Amir Hatami, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri, chief of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations Kamal Kharrazi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi, and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif offered condolences over the death of Shallah.

A professor of economics at the University of Gaza, Shallah was one of the founders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement.

He led the movement for more than 20 years, after its founder, Fathi Shaghghi, was assassinated in Malta in 1995 in an attack widely attributed to the Israeli regime.

Deputy FM hopeful about releasing Iran's assets in U.S., UK, Canada

TEHRAN (FNA) — Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Baharvand has said that Iran's assets in the U.S., the UK and Canada are not "out of reach", but the problem is more with the transfer of money due to the U.S. sanctions imposed on the banking system.

"The assets are in the possession of the Islamic Republic of Iran and it is not the case that someone has seized these assets and/or has taken these assets out of Iran's control," Baharvand said.

He stressed that these assets belong to Iran and any damage on them by any country will be prosecuted by international law.

In relevant remarks in late March, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati announced that a part of the country's frozen assets will possibly be released in the near future to help the country in controlling the corona-virus pandemic.

A part of Iran's assets which had been frozen in certain countries due to the U.S. pressures will possibly be released, Hemmati told reporters on March 25.

He expressed the hope that the released assets would be used for providing basic goods, medicine, medical equipment and fundamental needs to fight coronavirus.

His remarks came amid an outcry on national and international levels against U.S. sanctions, with Russia, China, Pakistan, as well as different medical organizations and rights groups urging the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to lift sanctions against Iran.

Defense Ministry to boost police capabilities

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Under a cooperation agreement signed on Monday, Iran's Defense Ministry will improve the operational capabilities of the Police forces.

Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami and Police Commander Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari signed the cooperation agreement to extend the capabilities of the law enforcement forces in carrying out various operations.

Hailing the Police for ensuring security and order in the country, General Hatami said his ministry will spare no effort to support the Police by employing all industrial, scientific and technological capacities.

Iran owes its current exemplary security to the sincere efforts made by the Police personnel, the defense minister added.

For his part, General Ashtari thanked the Defense Ministry for its backing for the Police, saying the top priority at present is to promote advanced technologies for smart Police operations and enhance the capabilities in the fight against drug trafficking and smuggling of commodities and currency.

In October 2019, Brigadier General Hatami had expressed the Defense Ministry's readiness to supply the Police forces with advanced defense products.

"The Defense Ministry, as the organization that supports our country's Armed Forces, will spare no effort to support the dignified Police forces in carrying out critical national missions," he said at the time.

In 2016, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei called on the Police to constantly boost capabilities and match them to rapid advances in science and technology.

The Leader also hailed Police forces as a pillar of security in the country, stressing that security is the origin of personal peace of mind as well as public and social calmness.

Iran's Police Force is in charge of ensuring security in the cities, on the roads and along the borders.

Iran insists it is ready to swap prisoners with U.S.

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei on Monday insisted on Tehran's willingness to swap prisoners with the United States.

"Three Iranian scientists Dr. Soleimani, Dr. Taheri and Dr. Asgari returned to Tehran or are on the way back. We hope the process of returning the Iranian inmates in the United States would continue. Iran is fully prepared to swap prisoners and full responsibility is upon the United States' administration," Rabiei said during a press conference.

Tehran announced on Thursday a prisoner swap between Iran and the United States.

"Pleased that Dr. Majid Taheri and Mr. White [U.S. Navy veteran Michael White] will soon be joining their families," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Thursday. "Prof. Sirous 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."

Taheri, a physician, arrived in Tehran on Monday morning. He was released after 16 months in detention. Taheri was released in exchange for White.



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.

Zarif said in December that Tehran was

ready for a full prisoner exchange with the United States, tweeting: "The ball is in the US' court".

On Sunday, Mousavi repeated Zarif's words for prisoner swap.

"If it is possible to swap prisoners, we are ready to set free the people in the United States' jails and bring them back to the country," Mousavi told IRNA.

He also praised Switzerland's efforts in

a recent prisoners swap, noting that there were no direct talks between Tehran and Washington.

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

■ **'Trump's invitation to talks is just a show'**

Trump has thanked Iran for releasing White, proposing talks.

However, Rabiei said that U.S. President Donald Trump's invitation to talks is just a "show".

In a tweet on Friday, Trump said, "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 quit the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran with the hope of bringing Iran to the negotiating table to write a new deal. Iran has dismissed the proposal and said it is adopting "maximum resistance" in the face of the U.S. "maximum pressure" strategy.

Iran has said the only option for the U.S. is to return to the nuclear deal – JCPOA- and compensate the damages to its economy.

Ayatollah Khamenei praises crew of tankers to Venezuela

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has praised crew of the Iranian tankers that shipped fuel to Venezuela.

"You did a great job. Your move was jihadi. You brought glory to the country," the Leader said in a message published on

Monday.

Five Iranian oil tankers by the names of Petunia, Forest, Faxon, Clavel and Fortune carried fuel to Venezuela despite the United States' sanctions. The last of them entered Venezuelan waters on June 1.

The tankers carried 1,520,000 barrels of gasoline and diesel fuel to Venezuela. There

was also a team of Iranian engineers and specialists from the oil industry on board heading for the country.

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 June 1.

Maduro says Iran is a real friend of Venezuela

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has said that Russia, China, Iran and Cuba are real friends of Venezuela as they provide all-round help to Caracas.

"Humanitarian aid is coming from China, Russia, Iran and Cuba. They are [Venezuela's] true friends," TASS quoted him as saying in a speech broadcast by the state TV on Sunday.

Iran sent oil tankers to Venezuela amid the United States sanctions against both countries. The 5th and last Iranian fuel tanker reached Venezuelan waters on May 31.

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

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".

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 June 1.

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

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".

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 a risk.

Raisi slams West for harboring Iranian financial criminals

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has slammed certain Western countries for harboring criminals and fugitives who have looted public money.

It is against international law to harbor a fugitive criminal with charges of economic corruption, Raisi said during a meeting of the Supreme Judiciary Council.

He tasked the prosecutor general and the deputy Judiciary chief for international affairs to pursue extradition of fugitives charged with economic corruption to the country.

Judiciary has started holding public trials of individuals involved in major economic corruption cases since August 2018.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has permitted the Judiciary to take special measures in order to confront economic corruption and called for "swift and just" legal action against financial crimes.

Mahmoud Reza Khavari, who was chief of Bank Melli Iran, fled to Canada in 2011. He was involved in Iran's biggest embezzlement case of roughly \$2.6 billion. Despite

Tehran's frequent official requests, Canada has refused to extradite him. Interpol had placed him on its red notice wanted list in February 2013 but removed his name in October 2016.

■ **'Anti-racism protests cannot be suppressed by violence'**

Raisi also said that protests against racism in the United States cannot be suppressed by violence exercised by security forces

He also criticized the international community for keeping silence over violence

against U.S. protesters.

Protests have started across the U.S. and some other cities around the world over brutal killing of an African-American man in Minneapolis.

George Floyd died on May 25 after being pinned down by a white officer despite yelling: "I cannot breathe".

Reportedly, the unrest over Floyd's death came to Trump's doorstep as demonstrators circled the White House grounds on May 30, chanting "I can't breathe" and "Black Lives Matter."

Deputy FM: U.S. oppression against Iranians exposed by Taheri's case

TEHRAN (FNA) — Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari said that Dr. Majid Taheri's case disclosed the U.S.'s oppression against Iran, adding that the Iranian citizens are subjected to false accusations.

"We are happy at the release of Dr. Taheri after months of efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in close coordination with different Iranian institutions," said Jaber Ansari while welcoming Majid Taheri at Imam Khomeini International Airport on Monday morning.

He added that a few days ago, Dr. Sirous Asgari returned to Iran after he was acquitted of fake charges.

"One of the main tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to pursue the affairs of Iranian citizens," the diplomat noted, adding, "Unfortunately, due to unilateral and oppressive U.S. sanctions, some Iranian citizens, including Dr. Taheri, were subjected to false charges."

It's our main duty to follow up on the cases of Iranian citizens who have committed no violations but faced special cases within the framework of U.S.

maximum pressure against Iran, he continued.

Iranian Physician Majid Taheri, who had been jailed in the U.S. for 16 months on baseless charges, arrived in Tehran early on Monday.

The United States government had imprisoned Taheri claiming that he had violated U.S. sanctions.

He was released through a prisoner swap with the American national Michael White who had been imprisoned in Iran on security charges.

Upon arrival, he rejected the charges as being wrong and unjust.

Taheri stressed that he was helping Iranian researchers at Tehran University produce an anti-cancer vaccine.

In a relevant event on June 3, Iranian scientist Sirous Asgari, who was illegally imprisoned in the U.S., arrived in Iran.

On June 4, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message expressed pleasure over the release of the country's professor Sirous Asgari, and urged the U.S. to free other Iranians kept hostage by

Washington.

"Prof. Sirous Asgari was happily reunited with his family on Weds. This can happen for all prisoners," Zarif tweeted on Thursday.

"Pleased that Dr. Majid Taheri and Mr. White will soon be joining their families," he added.

"No need for cherry-picking, Iranian hostages held in—and on behalf of—the U.S. should come home," Iran's top diplomat said.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister in an Instagram message had announced that a plane carrying the country's scientist who was illegally jailed in the U.S. was heading towards Tehran.

Asgari, a 59-year-old professor of materials engineering who was acquitted in November 2019 on charges of stealing trade secrets related to his academic activities at Ohio State University, was arrested by the U.S. Immigration Service for revoking his visa.

"Hello friends, good news, the plane carrying Dr. Sirous Askari flew from America," Zarif wrote on his Instagram page.

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TEHRANTIMES

12 Pages | Price: \$6.000 (Iran) 1.000 (EURO) 4.000 (AED) 42nd year | No. 13656 | Monday, MAY 4, 2020 | (ordbehvht 15, 1399 / Ramadan 10, 1441)

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Iran hawks around Trump set to pursue max pressure policy: Jim Lobe

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Anti-Iran **d e s k** hawks around U.S. President Donald Trump are determined to pursue a policy of “maximum pressure” against Iran, said American journalist Jim Lobe in an interview with ILNA published on Monday.

“Anti-Iran hawks, such as Secretary of State Pompeo and National Security Adviser O’Brien, as well as Jared Kushner, Sheldon and Marian Adelson, to name just a few, around Trump are determined to pursue a policy of ‘maximum pressure’ leading to regime change or collapse or negotiation in which Iran is forced to surrender its entire nuclear program, as well as other policies that it has pursued in the past two decades or more,” said Lobe, the editorial director of Responsible Statecraft.

Lobe said the justification offered by the Trump administration is that the more money Iran has to spend on citizens’ health, the less money will be available to its nuclear program and support for allied forces around the region.

“At the same time, the Trump administration insists that medical and humanitarian assistance are exempt from sanctions which is technically true, but, as a practical matter, is far from the truth due to the trouble that humanitarian agencies and medical and pharmaceutical companies have to go through in order to qualify for the exemption,” he stated.

There have been many articles, he continued, including peer-reviewed studies, that have found that sanctions of the kind the U.S. has applied to Iran (and previously Iraq) have a very negative impact on the health of the population



“If there is a free and fair election in November, which is an increase in question, and the Democratic candidate wins, I would expect the U.S. to try to reenter the JCPOA, although whoever wins will probably be interested in seeking a broader agreement regarding regional security.”

that is targeted.

“Various forces in and outside the United States are pursuing a policy of regime change or regime collapse which naturally makes the Iranian people victims,” he argued.

On the future of the Iran nuclear

deal, officially named the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he said, “If there is a free and fair election in November, which is an increase in question, and the Democratic candidate wins, I would expect the U.S. to try to reenter the JCPOA, although whoever

er wins will probably be interested in seeking a broader agreement regarding regional security.”

“If there is no election or Trump is re-elected, my assumption is that the U.S. will continue efforts to destroy the JCPOA in which case much will depend, as it does now, on the EU’s will to preserve it at the cost of worsening trans-Atlantic relations,” Lobe added.

He also predicted that the current trajectory toward increased tensions and confrontation between Tehran and Washington will continue and very probably culminate in some kind of military conflict.

Trump walked away from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018 and introduced a “maximum pressure” policy against Iran in order to force Tehran to negotiate a new deal.

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.

Two years after the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal, the Trump administration is looking to extend a UN ban on conventional arms sales to and from Iran, a strategy designed to kill the deal for good.

In a May 9 statement marking the second anniversary of the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the JCPOA, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pledged to “exercise all diplomatic options” to extend the UN ban on conventional arms sales to and from Iran beyond its current expiry date on October 18.

Iranian physician arrives in Tehran after release from U.S. prison

1→ Upon arrival, he told reporters that charges against him were false and unfair.

Taheri said he was helping Iranian researchers at the University of Tehran to develop an anti-cancer vaccine.

He appreciated the efforts of Iranian officials and the government, especially Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif for securing his release.

Tehran on Thursday confirmed the prisoner swap, urging 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 said via Twitter. “Prof. Sirous 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.”

Meanwhile, Tehran has stressed that there have been

no direct talks between Iran and U.S. governments over the swap. Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Sunday that the Swiss government has facilitated the exchange.

“The swap was implemented due to humanitarian reasons. The U.S. has held a number of our citizens hostage claiming they have violated U.S. sanctions,” said Mousavi.

Noting that the U.S. sanctions are illegal and baseless, he maintained, “During this time with the help of the Swiss government, we have tried our best to utilize all our resources.”

“The Swiss government was responsible for the negotiations and there were no direct talks between Iran and the U.S.,” he added.

The remarks came after U.S. President Donald Trump thanked Iran for releasing White and called for Iran not to “wait until after U.S. Election to make the Big deal.”

Trump added, “I’m going to win. You’ll make a better

deal now!”

His appeal for a new deal with Iran was met with outright rejection by Iran.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf described any settlement with the United States as a weak move, referring to a verse in Quran that says, “Do not be weak hearted and do not appeal for an (unjust) settlement; you have the upper hand. God is with you and He will never reduce the reward for your deeds.”

Other senior officials, including Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani and Secretary of Iran’s Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaee, also dismissed Trump’s appeal for a new deal.

Trump abandoned the JCPOA on May 8, 2018 and introduced a maximum pressure policy in the hope of forcing Iran to come to the negotiating table to reach a new deal. So far, his policy has failed to reach its proclaimed goal.

Safeguarding peace in Libya will serve Muslim world’s interests: ex-diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hos-
d e s k sein Amir Abdollahian, a former Iranian diplomat, says safeguarding peace and stability in Libya would serve the interests of the Muslim world and the region.

“For about a decade, the US/Zionist-led crisis has put #Libya on fire,” Amir Abdollahian tweeted on Sunday.

“Safeguarding national unity, territorial integrity as well as restoring sustainable peace & stability of this key Arab Muslim state would serve the interests of Muslim World & the region,” added Amir Abdollahian who served as Iran’s point man for Arab affairs in the Foreign Ministry.

Libya has been in chaos since 2011

when a popular uprising and a NATO intervention led to the ouster of long-time dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Since 2014, two rival seats of power have emerged in Libya, namely the internationally-recognized government of Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, and another group based in the eastern city of Tobruk, supported militarily by Haftar’s rebels.

Haftar, supported by the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Jordan, launched a deadly offensive to capture Tripoli, the seat of the Government of National Accord (GNA), in April last year. His forces, however, haven’t been able to advance past the city’s outskirts.

Venezuela-bound oil tankers tracked by Noor satellite: IRGC

1→ Brigadier General Jafarabadi said the most remarkable achievement in the launch of the satellite was the use of a new generation of engines with composite shield, gimbaled nozzles, and solid propellant.

The commander further noted that the engine of a new version of the Iranian satellite-carrier, Qassed-2, will be running on solid fuel in the first stage, adding that modifications to the carrier will allow for the launch of heavier and bigger satellites into higher orbits.

The Noor satellite has practically turned into a real space laboratory for Iran, the general noted, saying Iranian scientists check various parameters in the outer space and test different algo-

rithms every day.

The Iranian satellite has a lifespan of some 2.5 years, the commander stated, adding that all of its subsystems are operating normally and the process will go on for two years.

The IRGC successfully put Noor into orbit on April 22. The homegrown satellite was launched with the three-stage satellite carrier Qassed (messenger) from a launch pad in Dasht-e Kavir, a large desert in central Iran.

The satellite has been placed into an orbit 425 kilometers above the Earth.

A few days later, the IRGC Aerospace Force commander unveiled plans for the launch of another satellite into a higher orbit.

Envoy voices Iran’s readiness to cooperate with new Iraqi government

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iran welcomes the promotion of ties with the new Iraqi government, says Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi.

In a Sunday meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Adel Hashush, Masjedi wished success for the new Iraqi Premier Mustafa al-Kadhimi, underscoring Tehran’s resolve to expand relations with the new Iraqi cabinet in all fields.

The two sides also discussed mutual cooperation in the areas of labor and social affairs.

The Iraqi minister highlighted the need for promotion of cooperation between Baghdad and Tehran, as well as benefiting from Tehran’s experience in the field.

Last week Iraj Masjedi and Baghdad’s new Finance Minister Ali Abdul Ameer Allawi in a meeting discussed various ways to bolster economic and trade relations between the two countries.

During the meeting with the Iraqi minister, congratulated on the Iraqi minister’s appointment to the post and handed over to him and an invitation from Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Farhad Djeypasand to pay a visit to Iran.



Allawi, meantime, thanked his Iranian counterpart for the invitation and expressed the hope that he would pay a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran in the near future at the head of a trade and economic delegation.

Economic relations between Iran and Iraq have expanded and the volume of trade has increased in recent years.

In a relevant development in late May, Masjedi in a meeting with Iraqi Minister of Transportation Nasser Hussein Al-Shibli expressed his country’s readiness to exchange experiences in transportation field with Iraq.

Masjedi expressed hope for promotion of mutual cooperation in the transportation field.

Referring to Iran’s successes in transportation, he said the country is ready to present its experience to its friendly neighbor, Iraq.

Al-Shibli, for his part, welcomed Iranian envoy’s suggestion.

He vowed to do his best for enhancement of transportation relations with Iran and to pursue joint projects.

Zarif discusses ties with Iraqi counterpart

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister **d e s k** Mohammad Javad Zarif and the new Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Mohammed Hussein had a phone conversation on Sunday.

During the phone call, Zarif congratulated Hussein on his election as the new foreign minister of Iraq, and expressed pleasure with the formation of the Arab country’s cabinet, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

He further highlighted the significance of the issues being pursued in the field of bilateral relations, and the necessity of implementing the agreements reached between the two sides during the Iranian president’s visit to Baghdad.

President Hassan Rouhani said last month that Iran’s principled policy is expanding relations and cooperation with Iraq in various areas.

In a phone conversation with Iraqi President Barham Salih, Rouhani attached great importance to expansion of economic relations, saying, “Expansion of relations in various areas among the friendly governments and nations can help us pass the problems.”

Elsewhere, he said that Iran attaches great importance to stability in Iraq.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran will stand beside the Iraqi government and people and seeks to maintain Iraq’s sovereignty and prevent foreign intervention,” the president pointed out.

Salih, for his part, said cooperation of friendly countries, such as Iran, is required to establish stability in Iraq.

Russian envoy says nothing ‘positive’ in maximum pressure on Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russia’s permanent representative **d e s k** to the Vienna-based international organizations maintains that Washington’s maximum pressure policy on Iran has increased tensions in the Persian Gulf and caused reduced commitments of Tehran under the Iran nuclear deal.

“US claims that its maximum pressure policy on Iran is effective,” Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted on Monday. “Yes, results are very clear: increased tension in the P. Gulf, suffering of people in #Iran, reduced commitments of Tehran under #JCPOA, weakened non- proliferation regime.”

He added, “But is there anything positive? No answer.”

On May 8, 2019, Iran started to remove curbs on its nuclear program exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the nuclear deal and imposed the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in line with the Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” campaign on Tehran.

From the very beginning that Iran started to remove ban on its nuclear program, officials in Tehran announced if the European Union, especially its big trio (Germany, France, and Britain which are signatory the deal), takes steps to compensate the sanctions’ effect it will immediately reverse its decision.

Sticking to JCPOA sole way to tackle nuclear issue: China

TEHRAN (MNA) — China has criticized the U.S. policies toward the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) as the main reason behind the nuclear crisis, saying that fulfilling commitments under the historic pact is the sole way to tackle the situation.

“The U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and maximum pressure on Iran lies at the root of the Iranian nuclear crisis,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying tweeted on Monday.

She stressed that “upholding and implementing the JCPOA is the only right way out of the Iranian nuclear issue.”

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump took an illegal and unilateral decision to end Washington’s participation in the nuclear deal and re-impose the sanctions that the agreement had lifted, in defiance of the fact that the accord has been endorsed by the UN Security Council in the form of Resolution 2231.

Tehran maintains that its nuclear program is merely peaceful as also asserted by other signatories of the JCPOA.

Ever since withdrawing from the agreement, Washington has launched a so-called maximum pressure campaign against Tehran, seeking to pressure it with a growing list of widespread sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic.

Trump has been trying to bring Iran to the negotiation table for a new deal.

Iran, however, has reiterated that it will not enter into negotiations with the United States unless Washington returns to the 2015 nuclear deal that it has unilaterally quit.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

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

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

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

Aluminum ingot output up 47% in 2 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN-** Production of aluminum ingot in Iran rose 47 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 19) compared to the same period of time in the past year. IRIB reported citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

As reported, Iran produced 60,677 tons of aluminum ingot in the two-month period of this year, while the figure was 41,367 tons in the same time span of the previous year.

The country's aluminum ingot output stood at 30,647 tons in the second Iranian month Ordibehesht (April 20-May 19), while the figure was 20,862 tons in the same month of the past year.



Production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase 63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Iran's major aluminum producers produced 275,716 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The country's aluminum ingot production in the past year fell eight percent in comparison to the figure for its preceding year.

IME's weekly worth of trades at over \$880m

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) hit over \$880 million during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IME public relations department reported.

As reported, over 673,518 tons of commodities were traded at this market in the previous week.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 223,904 tons of various products worth \$446 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 212,616 tons of steel, 3,880 tons of copper, 7,240 tons of aluminum, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 20 kg of gold bullion were traded by the customers.

The report declared that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 449,914 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$435 million were traded.

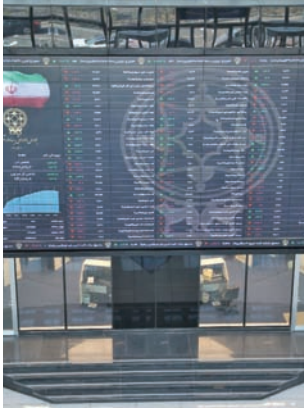
On this trading floor, 71,060 tons of bitumen, 159,000 tons of VB feed stock, 79,119 tons of polymer products, 43,000 tons of lube cut oil, 30,391 tons of chemical products, 1,550 tons of base oil, 3,000 tons of slaps waxes, 1,074 tons of insulation as well as 61,420 tons of sulfur were traded.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

On April 21, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

35 knowledge-based companies join stock market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's vice presidency for science and technology announced that 35 local knowledge-based companies have been recently listed on the country's stock market and the number is expected to increase in the future.



According to the reports by the vice presidency office, the value of the shares of the mentioned companies is estimated at 1.5 quadrillion rials (over \$35.7 billion).

The figure stood at 280 trillion rials (about \$6.66 billion) in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) which shows a significant growth in this field, so the vice presidency is trying to bring five to 10 new knowledge-based companies into the capital market this year.

Also in the current year, a new index called Knowledge-Based Index is going to be introduced in the Iranian Stock Exchange, for which initial measures have been taken.

This action makes the activities of knowledge-based companies in the stock market more tangible.

The Vice President for Science and Technology is following several programs to help funding knowledge-based companies by utilizing the capacities of the capital market since currently offering company shares at the stock exchange is one of the best financing methods in the world with high stability.

Collective financing is another measure pursued by the said vice presidency to finance the knowledge-based projects.

In this regard, a platform is going to be established to direct small investments toward knowledge-based projects.

Many people have small amounts of money that they cannot invest directly in large projects. It is possible to set up platforms that collect these micro-assets and direct them toward investing in specific knowledge-based projects through collective funding, the vice president stated.

As reported, so far, licenses have been issued for six companies, and four platforms will be unveiled soon and begin attracting investments.

Over \$700m to be allocated for mining exploration projects

ECONOMY **TEHRAN-** He further noted that the ministry has it on the agenda to increase the country's discovered mineral reserves by 25 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

Esmaili stated that one of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's main programs in the current year is to provide the necessary equipment for the mining sector, saying: "Three projects have been defined in this sector, one of which is equipping and renovating mines."

"In this regard, we have had meetings with manufacturers and importers of mining machinery, however our priority is domestically-made machinery," he added.

According to the deputy minister, up to 150 iron ore mines are currently idle across the country, most of which have been shut down due to the equipment shortage or financial issues.

He noted that over 20 million tons of iron ore have been exported from the country in the past ten years but the figure has fallen significantly in the recent years.

"This figure fell to less than six million



tons in [the previous Iranian calendar] year 1398 (ended on March 19), most of which was exported in the first six months."

Back in May, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Ge-

Govt. to pay \$223m for supporting passenger rail transport companies

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) says 9.4 trillion rials (about \$223.8 million) has been allocated for compensating the damages caused by the coronavirus outbreak for passenger rail transport companies.

Speaking in a press conference on Monday, Saeed Rasouli said the mentioned companies will be offered facilities with low-interest rates as of the said day.

According to Rasouli, the government has provided the facilities for these companies to compensate for the damage caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus, especially the decline in the passenger traffic.

"63 companies are going to benefit from the mentioned facilities," the official said.

He further noted that all suburban and intercity trains are currently operating in accordance with the health protocols and social distancing standards.

Rasouli also announced that railway borders will be opened on new routes in the coming days, adding that the borders of Razi, Turkey, and Astara are open and the borders of Sarakhs and Incheh Borun will be opened soon.

Mentioning his organization's plans for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), the official said 2,000 new locally-made wagons and locomotives are going to be added to the country's railway fleet by the end of the current year.

According to the deputy minister, 144 different types of domestically-made wagons and locomotives worth 2.69 trillion rials (about \$64 million) were put into



operation in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), which shows a 138 percent increase compared to the previous year's same period, in terms of value.

Of the said 144 units 56 were added to the railway fleet in late April in a ceremony attended by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami.

Last year, a total of 788 wagons and locomotives worth \$12.7 trillion (about \$302 million) were added to the railway fleet, 74 percent more than its preceding year.

Currently, 2,260 different types of locomotive parts and equipment are being produced in the country, according to Rasouli.

The information related to these parts and the companies that are manufacturing them are registered in a comprehensive system which is called "Integrated System of Surge in Production", and rail companies can use this system to supply their required locomotive parts.

GTC transport over 3m tons of basic goods in 80 days

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Director General of Business Services Coordination at Government Trading Corporation of Iran (GTC) said the company has managed to transport 3.36 million tons of basic goods during 80 days since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year until May 7, IRIB reported.

"Currently, there are no basic goods stored in the country's customs and all the cargoes are transported to the provincial destinations as soon as they are cleared," Hassan Fallahnejad said.

According to the official, GTC has been in planning to prevent the storage of goods in the ports and this goal has been realized in the mentioned time span.

In early April, Fallahnejad said the direct transportation of goods from the vessels to the freight wagons has saved the country 40 billion rials (about



\$952,000) in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 20-April 20).

In this new method, cargo shipping operations in ports will be carried out directly by the freight wagons of the rail transportation system, which will significantly reduce the costs of transportation," Fallahnejad said.

According to the official, GTC has set a great record in the transportation of goods in the country's southern and northern ports.

Exports from Gilan Province increase 16%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Iran's northern Gilan Province during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) rose 16 percent compared to the same period of time in the previous year, according to a provincial official.

Farhad Dalq-Poush, the director-general of Gilan Province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department told IRNA that 166,000 tons of commodities worth \$80 million have been exported from the province during the mentioned two-month period, showing 33 percent growth in terms of weight.

With a share of 180 tons of goods valued at \$33,000, Astara County accounted for the biggest part of the province's two-month exports, the official said, adding Astara has special trading capacities and can operate as Iran's export center in the north of the country.

Astara Port is the westernmost Iranian city on the southern coasts of the Caspian Sea with a population of 91,000 people. The city also borders the Azerbaijan Republic.

As previously announced by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year stood at \$9.341 billion.

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

The volume of traded goods was estimated at 21 million tons, of which 14.5 million tons were related to exports and about 6.5 million tons were imported goods.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations

ological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) and Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) for expansion of the country's mining sector.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

In the first month of the year (March 20-April 20), India was the fifth largest exporter to Iran and the Netherlands was the fourth.

Like all other countries around the world, Iran's trade with its foreign partners has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's Mehran border crossing with Iraq reopened

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Mehran crossing on the border with Iraq, which had been closed since early March due to the outbreak of coronavirus, was reopened on Monday, ISNA reported, quoting the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA).

The border crossing resumed operation following several rounds of talks with Iraqi officials, according to Ruhollah Latifi.

Latifi said the border is not going to be open every day, and for the current week it will be open only on Monday and Wednesday and as of the next week cargoes will be allowed to cross on Sundays and Wednesdays every week.

According to the official, 250 trucks carrying export goods to Iraq are scheduled to cross this border each day, so a total of 500 trucks will cross the border every week.

Health protocols are strictly applied on Mehran crossing, having all workers use protective equipment and the area and cargo



continually disinfected, according to Latifi.

Mehran border crossing was closed in early March due to coronavirus outbreak. Iranian officials were continually talking to Iraqi counterparts to reopen the crossing under health protocols.

Mehran is a major border between Iran and Iraq, and is among the most significant crossings, especially due to its proximity to holy cities in Iraq. Between 500,000 and 600,000 people cross the border at this terminal every year.

12 freeway, railway projects to be listed for stock market financing

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's transport and urban development minister announced that his ministry's planning to offer 12 freeway and railway projects to be financed through the country's stock market, IRNA reported.

Mohammad Eslami made the announcement in a meeting with the members of the country's road building companies association on Sunday.

As announced last month by the deputy transport minister for resource planning and management, Transport and Urban Development Ministry plans to offer 14 infrastructure projects to be financed through the country's stock market.

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



ILNA on May 20.

According to Ghaffari, seven railway projects and seven freeway projects will be offered in the capital market, and

the transport ministry is considering which of these projects should be the priority.

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

He further noted that the ministry is holding several meetings with the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to plan the model and approach for these projects to enter the market, adding that investment companies are developing a proposal for the stock exchange which will be finalized within the next month.

Referring to the schedule for the offerings, the deputy minister said, "We are trying to offer the projects in the capital market in the first half of the current [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 20)."

"At the first stage, two projects will be listed," he added.

Energy Ministry set to implement 20 major power-related programs

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Ministry has it on the agenda to implement 20 major programs in the electricity sector under the framework of the A-B-Iran scheme, by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), IRNA reported.

As reported, the programs include the complete implementation of the "99 program" (a plan aiming for zero power outages in the summer of the current Iranian calendar year 1399), implementing an advanced national dispatching system, using gas condensate as the fuel for gas power plants, reducing the losses in the distribution sector down to 9.2 percent, increasing the average annual efficiency in thermal power plants up to more than 39 percent, putting Sirik power plant in southern Hormozgan Province into operation and finally inaugurating the first national power plant with 60 percent efficiency.

Completion of the third Iran-Armenia transmission line, putting the country's first geothermal power plant into operation, utilizing fiber optic technology in the national grid using the capacity of domestic knowledge-based companies and in collaboration with the Ministry of



Communications and Information Technology, increasing electricity exports to neighboring countries, completing the research project for synchronization of Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan electricity networks are also among the programs that the energy ministry is going to realize in the current year.

Some other programs in this sector include digitalization of the distribution sector by integration of technical and non-technical systems, increasing the share of renewables in the country's power generation capacity to at least two percent, standardization and implementation of energy standards for domestically-made air

conditioners in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Based on the A-B-Iran scheme [the acronyms A and B stand for water, electricity in Persian], the Energy Ministry plans to inaugurate some water, electricity projects across the country every week.

Following this scheme, the ministry is going to inaugurate 250 major projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) during the current Iranian calendar year.

The mentioned programs was also conducted by the ministry in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), during which 227 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion) went operational across the country.

According to Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, during the 20 weeks of the mentioned program in the previous year, the minister made 31 trips to various provinces for inaugurating energy projects.

The official also announced that three power plants and 40 new projects worth 60 trillion rials (about \$1.4 billion) will be inaugurated during the first quarter of the current calendar year.

Turkey committed to gas deal with Iran: official

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — An official with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) says that Turkey has so far adhered to its gas deal with Iran.

In an interview conducted by Shana, Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana, the former dispatching director of NIGC who is now the managing director of Iranian Gas Transmission Company, said Turkey's gas imports from Iran were suspended on March 31 due to a pipeline explosion on Turkish soil. The incident took place on the Iran-Turkey Bazargan border and Turkey was responsible for repairing the pipeline.

But now, after about two months, Iran's gas exports to Turkey have remained stalled, spurring rumors regarding the incident.

Jamshidi-Dana further elaborated on the situation of Iran's gas exports to Turkey, the reasons for the delay in repairing the damaged pipeline and the future of the gas contract.

He said: "Turkey's plan is always to reduce its gas imports in the first half of the year, due to the onset of the hot season. This is what this country has been doing for years."

He added: "However, Turkey has reduced its imports in such a manner that it does not incur fines for the country."

■ Turkey's energy mix is diverse

Jamshidi-Dana further stated: "Turkey's energy mix is diverse. It receives natural gas from pipelines and liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments, so it is natural for it to use different resources at any given time depending on its economic situation."

The official said that the outbreak of the coronavirus and the fall in oil prices also exacerbated the situation. "On the other hand, the explosion of the Iranian gas export pipeline to Turkey on March 31 made things worse, so maybe Turkey is also interested in the quick



repair of this pipeline."

Jamshidi-Dana stressed: "This incident took place in Turkey, and the country also announced the conditions of force majeure in this regard, that is, it is in a situation that is beyond its control. But as soon as the country announced the status of force majeure, we corresponded several times with them and requested a visit, because we cannot accept that this is a force majeure situation."

"However, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, they said any representatives from Iran would need to stay in quarantine for two weeks, so we introduced a third-party inspector who also knew Turkish and stayed in Turkey to do the visit and sent us his report."

Referring to the report on the visit to the damaged pipeline in Turkey, the official said: "According to the report, Iran has written to Turkey stating that it does not accept the conditions of force majeure and in several

correspondences it was announced that Iran is ready to build this pipeline in eight days. However, Turkish side has not welcomed this offer that in our opinion this non-acceptance is natural, because the increase in temperature and the reduction of energy consumption do also play a part in here."

■ No problem caused by sanctions in Iran's gas exports to Turkey

"Another important point is that Iran has a contract with Turkey until 2025, and this country has worked according to all the provisions of the contract so far, and if it insists on the conditions of force majeure, Iran can follow up on this issue from the relevant authorities. Because we have documents and information that prove that the situation is not a matter of force majeure and it is very likely that the authorities will vote in our favor, and finally Turkey must pay for gas according to the take or pay law," he added.

Wind energy investment to overtake oil & gas in 2022 in Europe

The oil market collapse caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is set to delay several oil and gas developments in Western Europe, putting capital expenditure in the offshore sector on a continued downwards trajectory through 2022. In light of the postponement of multiple final investment decisions (FIDs) on projects and lower investments in offshore oil and gas, coupled with increasing activity in the offshore wind sector, Rystad Energy expects that the two markets will reach parity as soon as next year. We anticipate that capital expenditure (capex) on offshore wind will surpass upstream O&G spending in Europe in 2022.

Capex towards offshore wind in Europe surpassed the \$10 billion mark in 2015 and has since hovered in the range of \$10 billion to \$15 billion per year, according to oilprice.com Annual capex levels are expected to rise from around \$11.1 billion in 2019 to around \$13.8 billion in 2020, \$18.2 billion in 2021 and more than \$22 billion in 2022.

The abundant oil supply and reduced demand have taken their toll on the oil price, and consequently annual capex towards upstream offshore oil and gas in Europe is expected to decline from more than \$25 billion in 2019 to less than \$17 billion in 2022.

"Offshore wind development in Europe is expected to flourish in the coming years as countries strive to reach their ambitious 2030 targets – and large investments will be required," says Alexander Flore, Rystad Energy's project manager for offshore wind.

"Commissioning activity is expected to increase towards 2025, and projects expected to be operational in 2023-2025 are already driving up capital expenditure in 2020. This trend will continue in the coming years," Flore adds.



Historically, Europe has been the key market for offshore wind development, accounting for almost 80 percent of global installed capacity at the end of 2019. While strong growth is expected in China, South East Asia and the U.S. in the years to come, Europe is expected to maintain its number one position through 2025 in terms of installed capacity.

From an installed base of 21.9 gigawatts (GW) in 2019, European capacity is expected to increase to more than 53 GW by 2025, constituting an annual growth rate of 16 percent. While Europe's ambitious plans for 2030 will require new tender rounds in the coming years, most of the commissioning activity towards 2025 is expected to come from projects that have already been approved.

The UK is the largest country in Europe in terms of offshore wind capacity and is expected to drive a big portion of the growth towards 2025, with mega-projects such as Dogger Bank, Sofia and additional Hornsea phases currently on the cards, among others. Other established countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Denmark are also expected to contribute to the increased spending levels, while newcomers such as France and Poland will add to the growth in the 2023 to 2025 period.

Saudis make biggest oil price hike in 20 years after OPEC+ cuts

Saudi Arabia made some of the biggest price increases for crude exports in at least two decades, doubling down on its strategy to bolster the oil market after OPEC+ producers extended historic output cuts, Bloomberg reported.

The steepest jump will hit July exports to Asia, state producer Saudi Aramco's largest regional market, according to a pricing list seen by Bloomberg. Overall, the increases for Saudi crude erase almost all of the discounts the kingdom made during its brief price war with Russia.

The sharp price increases show that Saudi Arabia is using all the tools at its disposal to turn around the oil market after prices plunged into negative territory in April. As the price setter in the West Asia, the increases in its official prices may be followed by other producers.

Tighter crude supply is helping repair an oil market battered by the coronavirus. Unprecedented output cuts led by the Saudis and Russia boosted prices in May, and the OPEC+ group decided Saturday to extend those limits through July. Brent crude, down 36% this year, has clawed back some of its losses and ended trading on Friday at more than \$40 a barrel.

But the profits that oil refiners make from processing crude into fuel are struggling to keep up with the rising market, and the sharp Saudi price hikes are likely to exacerbate that problem. Representatives for refineries from Europe and Asia expressed concern and said the pricing would crush margins.

■ Price war

Saudi Arabia unleashed a price war in March when it slashed official selling prices by the most in three decades. The kingdom took that drastic step after failing to reach an agreement with Russia to extend production cuts in the face of the pandemic's destruction



of oil demand.

After Tweets, phone calls and top-level consultations, OPEC+ returned to negotiations and hammered out the biggest output curbs in history, pledging to take nearly 10 million barrels a day off the market. U.S. production plunged by roughly 2 million barrels daily as low prices drove producers to shut wells.

OPEC+ chose on Saturday to renew production limits at almost the same level, instead of tapering them as planned at the end of June. Aramco, which typically announces pricing on the fifth day of each month, had delayed its July numbers until after OPEC+ members made their decision.

Saudi Arabia sells its crude at a differential to oil benchmarks, announcing every month the discount or premium it's charging to global refiners. The so-called official selling prices help set the tone in the physical oil market, where actual barrels change hands.

With China's demand for crude now rising, the Saudis are raising prices. The month-on-month increase in the official selling price for flagship Arab Light crude to Asia, which accounts for more than half of Saudi oil sales, is the largest in at least 20 years. Aramco raised Arab Light to Asia by \$6.10 a barrel to a premium of 20 cents over the benchmark.

Bloated: OPEC's latest move is not a cure for the global oil glut

By Stephen Bartholomeusz

OPEC has, at least for the moment, managed to stabilize the oil market. It has, however, come at a heavy and continuing cost to the cartel and its associates.

On the weekend, OPEC and its partners agreed to extend the production cuts they implemented in April until at least the end of July.

In April, as the oil price cratered, falling below \$US20 (\$28.70) a barrel as the production surge and price war the Saudis initiated (after failing to agree production constraints with Russia) coincided with the global coronavirus lockdowns, OPEC+ agreed to cut production by about 9.7 million barrels a day.



That was equivalent to about 10 percent of pre-pandemic global oil production, or about 100 million barrels a day.

That agreement helped stabilize the price, pushing it up above \$US30 a barrel by mid-May. That was still a long way short of the price at the start of the year, when oil was trading at just under \$US70 a barrel.

Coming into the weekend's virtual meeting of OPEC+ members the cartel faced two issues. One is that, despite the production cuts, the heavily-reduced demand as a result of the pandemic has resulted in a massive increase in oil inventories, with global storage capacity stressed.

That surge in oil stocks was one of the factors in the meltdown in the May futures market that saw the oil price, bizarrely, fall to minus \$37.63 a barrel. This year has seen close to a billion barrels of oil added to global inventories.

Beyond that overhang of stocks, the Saudis, to compensate for some producers that had failed to live up to their April commitments, had made additional cuts of their own. That non-compliance is not unusual – "cheating" on their OPEC agreements is the norm for some producers.

Iraq, Nigeria, Angola and Kazakhstan were the major miscreants, so much of the focus of the weekend "meeting" was to gain commitments from them to not only make good on their renewed promises but to cut even more deeply to make up for their previous failures to deliver as big an output reduction as they had agreed to.

By maintaining the existing production cuts OPEC is hopeful that, with demand starting to pick up – particularly from China – as large parts of the developed world start to reopen their economies, supply and demand will come into balance.

Second waves of the pandemic as social and business activity picks up would be the obvious threat but there's also another factor beyond OPEC's control.

When the co-operation between the Saudis and Russians, which had been in place since about 2016, fell apart earlier this year, part of the Russian explanation for not wanting to cut output further was that the beneficiary of production cuts was the U.S. shale oil sector.

The Saudi response to the breakdown of the talks with Russia was to flood the market with oil to drive the price down (which was only too effective) and drive U.S. volumes from the market.

The U.S. sector is experiencing some distress. A large part of the funding for U.S. onshore oil and gas companies comes from the junk bond market and the combination of the slump in oil and gas prices and the impact of the coronavirus on the risk appetite of investors in riskier, highly-leveraged assets has destabilized the sector.

One of the hallmarks of the U.S. producers is their flexibility. They respond very quickly to price signals. When the price plummeted there was a near-immediate response, with production of up to about 2 million barrels a day shut in.

Now that the price has stabilized at levels that enables some producers to be, if not profitable then at least cashflow-positive, there is an expectation that most of that output will come back into the market over the next couple of months.

The effectiveness of the OPEC+ efforts to bring supply into balance with demand may also be threatened by a ceasefire in Libya's civil war, which could bring hundreds of thousands of barrels per day of production back into the market. The civil war had reduced Libya's out by more than a million barrels a day.

If OPEC is to regain some semblance of control over the market the cuts will probably have to remain in place beyond July; those producers that fell short on their commitments previously will have to deliver on their promise to compensate for the shortfalls over the next three months; the recovery in U.S. production will need to be relatively weak and the post-pandemic economic recovery will need to be relatively strong.

To start to make inroads into the vast inventory levels – the world's storage capacity was essentially fully utilized as supply overwhelmed the rapidly-shrinking demand as the coronavirus spread earlier this year – supply is going to have to be kept below the recovering demand for quite some time.

How much of the oil in storage overhangs the market isn't clear, given that some of the excess inventories have been added the national strategic reserves of the U.S., China, India and others and therefore may not come back into the market.

Nevertheless, it is probable that the production constraints will remain in place well beyond the current agreement, which will be reviewed beyond July.

The bloated inventories will weigh on the price until well into next year, if not longer, and an oil price that has traditionally provided a signal of the health of the global economy will remain muted and distorted until those inventories start to shrink and will continue to export distress into the already-destabilized oil and gas sectors.

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

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KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE
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Mn	65 %	Min
S	0.03 %	Max
C	2.0 %	Max
P	0.25 %	Max
Size Of Pieces	20-60 mm	Min 90 % <20 mm Max 10 %
Packing	Bulk in Container	
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2019	(4000 MT)	(4000 MT)
	October	(4000 MT)

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- ACCOUNT No.1902-750-4019644-1 AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ SHARIATI BRANCH" OR

Rials 5,000,000 "FIVE MILLION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

- ACCOUNT No.0102513186002 AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"
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AHVAZ – IRAN

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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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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

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Bibi's small window for illegal annex

Trump only supporter of annexation, bound to be a one-term president

➔ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced that on July 1 he will start the process to annex the illegal Jewish settlements and the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank territory, as he pledged in the campaign.

There is less than a month left until he will apply Israeli sovereignty over large sectors of land the Palestinians have counted on for a future state. The unilateral annexation would break Israel's commitments to the Palestinians under a prior peace agreement and destroy any hope of a conflict ending deal. It is also a reminder for the moderate Palestinians that Israel cannot be trusted.

Opponents to the annexation argue that it would ignite a new wave of violence in the West Bank and force King Abdullah II of Jordan to adopt a hardline stance against Israel, endangering the previous treaty arrangements between Amman and Tel Aviv.

In January, the annexation won the backing of U.S. President Donald Trump administration, with the so-called "Deal of the Century" which allows Israel to keep up to 30 percent of the West Bank, including the Jordan Valley as well as all existing illegal Jewish settlements.

Jewish settlements are illegal under the Geneva Convention. To Israeli nationalist Zionists, however, the West Bank is Judea and Samaria, the biblical homeland of the Jews.

Unilateral annexation would weaken the Zionist regime's support with Democrats in U.S. as well as moderate Arab states, would destabilize Jordan, a country where Palestinians form the majority, and spark the third Intifada movement inciting a new era of resistance.

Mahmoud Abbas's tenure is nearing an end. His successor would most likely be more militant.

European Union Foreign Policy Chief Joseph Borrell has called on Netanyahu to back off from annexation and said he



A protest against Trump's "Middle East plan" in the West Bank city of Ramallah in February. (Photo: Alaa Badarneh/EPA)

will launch a diplomatic push in opposing Israel's plan.

Netanyahu's power sharing deal with Gantz gives him the first 18 months in power. His long-awaited corruption trial opened on May 24 in Jerusalem when the judges rejected his request to stay home. He became the first serving prime minister to face criminal prosecution.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, thousands of Israeli protesters demonstrated in Tel Aviv against Netanyahu's plan. The demonstrators gathered under the banner "no to annexation, no to occupation, yes to peace and democracy."

Now the pressure is on Netanyahu to act swiftly as American November 3rd elections could replace Trump with former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who has spoken out against unilateral annexation. Biden formally won the Democratic Party nomination on Friday to challenge Trump in upcoming presidential election.

The 77-year-old Biden has warned that Trump will try to push back the November election: "Mark my words, I think he is going to try to kick back the election somehow, come up with some rationale why it can't be held."

Due to Trump's lethargic and ineffective response to the new coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. became the world epicenter of the global coronavirus pandemic.

The American public are bound to feel the pinch of the economic fallout once pandemic restrictions ease in the near future, along their long road to economic recovery prior to the November elections.

To make things worse, the Trump administration has lost the black vote in the upcoming U.S. elections due to lack of leadership and poor response in the cruel death of George Floyd, a black man in police custody, who was choked at the hands (rather knees) of the police.

The incident has sparked unprece-

ented demonstrations as protesters persevered for 13 straight days in virtually every American state, in small towns and major cities.

As "Black Lives Matter" so do black votes today – it has never mattered more. Black voters constitute 12 percent of American national electorate, are set to pick the next president. Joe Biden was set to retire if it was not for the black votes. His service as vice president to America's first black president certainly helps his campaign.

Expect a larger turnout of black people in this year's U.S. elections. In 2016, while the white turnout went up, "the black voter turnout rate declined for the first time in 20 years", according to the Pew Research Center.

Apart from the black vote, Trump is expected to lose support of young people in the polls, as was evident by their presence in the recent anti-racist demonstrations across the U.S.

In his desperation Trump urged Tehran on Friday to "make the Big deal" on the nuclear program, an invitation to an adversary to give him a diplomatic win to help return him to office.

"Thank you to Iran," Trump wrote in a tweet about the release of a U.S. Navy veteran detained in Tehran, Michael R. White. "Don't wait until after U.S. elections to make the Big deal. I'm going to win. You'll make a better deal now!" It sounds like Trump's back in his real estate dealing days.

The offer was promptly rejected by Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif in a tweet pointing out that all the other signatories of the deal "never left the table," adding that "Your advisers – most fired by now – made a dumb bet. Up to you to decide when you want to fix it."

As Trump's chances for reelection diminish expect Netanyahu to expedite his annexation plans, giving it all he's got before November. This is another reason why this plan is unwinnable.

Is This the Trump Tipping Point?

By Jennifer Senior

You never want to say that you've reached a tipping point with this administration. Donald J. Trump has proved to be the Nosferatu of American politics: heartless, partial to Slavs, beneath grace and thus far impervious to destruction.

Even when I read my colleague Jonathan Martin's fine piece on Saturday, about how some high-profile Republicans refuse to vote for Trump or are struggling with publicly lending him their support, I thought: yes, but. They're just a handful. They're the usual suspects. Too few of them have coattails.

Yet something right now really is different. I think.

Before diving into the more entrancing developments, I'll start with the obvious: Trump's old tactics, once so reliable, are starting to fail him, utterly.

It was a winning strategy to crow about a border wall with Mexico, but it's a loser — and a sign of pure cowardice — to build one around your own White House. He once basked in the reflected glow of "his generals"; now those generals are laying waste to him, with James Mattis, his former defense secretary, explicitly condemning Trump's immature and divisive leadership, and John Kelly, the president's former chief of staff, saying yep, sounds about right.



Maybe there was a time when religious conservatives would have applauded a photo of Trump standing in front of St. John's Episcopal Church, Bible in hand. But using pepper balls and flash-bang grenades to clear anguished protesters out of the way backfired. The Episcopal bishop of Washington reacted in horror; Trump's support among white Catholics slipped 11 points between April and May.

Maybe there was a time when stigmatizing all progressive protesters as invading marauders would have worked — bigotry, it gets the job done — but not now. His proposal to suppress the tumult with the military was greeted with disapproval by his current secretary of defense, Mark Esper, and disgust by Mattis; the Black Lives Matter movement now polls at an all-time high, with 66 percent of Americans disapproving of how Trump has handled the response to George Floyd's death.

Trump is flailing like an overturned turtle. A historic health crisis, an economic crisis and a social crisis all at once — it's far too much for a reality TV star to handle, no more manageable than it'd be for him to land an airplane. What this moment may have revealed, ironically enough, is that only in a time of stability and outrageous decadence could the United States have had the luxury of picking such a dark and divisive candidate with the intellectual firepower of a water gun. When Trump asked voters "What have you got to lose?" most never dreamed that the answer could be: Everything.

But now for the subterranean tremors that most beguile me — a suggestion that something deeper is afoot.

Trump, right now, is trying to stoke white fears about protests in the street. But he's having little luck. On Wednesday, Lara Putnam, the chairman of the history department at the University of Pittsburgh, tweeted a modest but persuasive thread highlighting the easy victory by Summer Lee, a progressive African-American woman elected to the Pennsylvania statehouse in 2018, in the Democratic primary on Tuesday.

"Based on the history of the district — and the range of voters I've talked to there myself — it seemed entirely plausible that there would be white backlash against her in this moment," Putnam told me.

If ever there were a moment for a backlash, she pointed out, this would have been it: Images of social unrest were all over Pittsburgh television the weekend before the primary, and Lee had been an outspoken proponent of the protesters. Voters could have selected her primary opponent, a moderate white borough councilman who had the backing of the county's most powerful Democrat — and its Democratic Party.

Instead, voters doubled down. Lee was already winning on Election Day — we now know this, based on mail-in ballots — and as the ballot counting continued, she pulled even further ahead. Her victory suggested that the white suburban women and retirees in her district were unsaved by Trump's demonizing and dog-whistling.

In these protests, it is possible we are seeing the rumblings of a new Democratic coalition. On Saturday, Putnam and two of her colleagues wrote that the scale and geographic diversity of these demonstrations were without American precedent.

We already know that Trump's support among white women is sliding in the polls, both with college degrees and without; it's probably not an accident that the first Senate Republican to endorse Mattis' views of Trump was Lisa Murkowski, a white woman from Alaska. (And perhaps, as Jonathan Martin's piece hinted, other Republican senators will start to follow, and refrain from giving him their support.) As Barack Obama pointed out in his recent town hall, "a far more representative cross-section of America" is out protesting in the streets than in the 1960s.

At a time of genuine crisis, Americans aren't pining for Darth Vader. They're pining for a healer. It's healing words of empathy that have thus far won the day. Trump may have been fumbling with his Bible, but it was Nancy Pelosi who read aloud from Ecclesiastes, and it was Joe Biden who said in a heartfelt, 24-minute speech that he wished the president would open it every once in a while.

It's probably too much to hope for. But for the first time in three years, change is not.

Jennifer Senior has been an Op-Ed columnist since September 2018. She had been a daily book critic for The Times; before that, she spent many years as a staff writer for New York magazine. Her best-selling book, "All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood," has been translated into 12 languages.

Correction

In our Monday issue on page 7, the word "Movement" in the headline was wrongly typed "moment". The mistake is regretted.

Canadian politician hopes that world can finally see backside of Trump, applaud his exit

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan & Payman Yazdani

George Floyd, an unarmed American black man died on May 25, 2020, after a police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes even after he stopped moving and pleading for air.

His death by the U.S. police has caused a ripple of protests throughout the U.S., turning the country into a battlefield between police and demonstrators. Rallies have turned violent in some U.S. cities, where the police have fired tear gas and rubber bullets against the demonstrators.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened the use of force in dealing with protests against the death of George Floyd, referring to participants as "thugs" in a tweet that was later hidden by Twitter for "glorifying violence."

But the former President Barack Obama issued a statement on Floyd's killing via Twitter and pleaded for Americans to open their eyes to the ongoing racial injustice that plagues the country.

Growing unrest against police brutality across the country, Obama said to demonstrators that this moment is politically advantageous for protesters who are calling for widespread police reforms and large-scale institutional change.

Simultaneously with all the protests in the U.S., thousands of people of all colors, creeds, ages, and walks of life took to the streets across the world to show their anger over the racism and police brutality.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Celina R. Caesar-Chavannes, a Canadian politician and former Member of Parliament for the riding of Whitby in the House of Commons of Canada from 2015 to 2019, shared her views on the racial violence and police brutality in light of the brutal killing of George Floyd.

Following is the text of our interview with her:

■ 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?

In my opinion, U.S. policies have failed, as they have in Canada, because of the structural and systemic nature of racism. Eradicating, through policy, as a racist structure that was supported by the policy in the first place, is tough. Especially when those in power want to remain in power. The dehumanization of Black bodies has roots in the historical context that persists today. If Americans or Canadians are not willing to take new, and perhaps extraordinary measures to fix this problem, we will be protesting 30 years from now.

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

If nothing, there will be an awareness of the frus-

tration and hurt of Black communities across North America and around the world. The protest will also allow those in power to see the power and strength of the community, and the power and strength of those willing to work with us. I hope to see a change in institutions, like policing that continue to disregard Black and Indigenous people, especially here in Canada. But I am also hoping to see other institutions change, like education, justice, and housing in which systemic racism plays a role in negative outcomes for Black communities.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes, former Whitby MP and parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, shook hands with former U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington, D.C. on March 10, 2016

■ Former President Obama asked American people to continue protests until changes happen. What do you think of his viewpoint? We know racism has been institutionalized in the U.S. so can this be useful to achieve the goals?

We can continue to protest, but we are also very tired. We have been fighting as Black communities for over 400 years. When does that stop? Continuing to protest will not get us the outcomes we want. It will draw attention to some of the demands, but protesting isn't everything. We need political will, where those representing us in political systems have the strength of conviction and support from the community to advocate and create change. We need courage in our school systems to change the outcomes for Black students. We need to prioritize budget to give adequate resources to programs and institutions that save our lives and remove money from institutions, like policing that destroy them.

■ Can these developments in the U.S. affect Trump's political fate in the upcoming Presidential election in the U.S.?

I would hope so. I hope that Americans finally see their leader as the racist, inflammatory, bigot that he has always been. I hope the world can finally see the backside of Trump and applaud his exit. It's about time.

White House, Pentagon tensions near breaking point

Tensions between the White House and Pentagon have stretched to near a breaking point over President Donald Trump's threat to use military force against street protests triggered by George Floyd's death.

Friction in this relationship, historically, is not unusual. But in recent days, and for the second time in Trump's term, it has raised a prospect of high-level resignations and the risk of lasting damage to the military's reputation.

Calm may return, both in the crisis over Floyd's death and in Pentagon leaders' angst over Trump's threats to use federal troops to put down protesters. But it could leave a residue of resentment and unease about this president's approach to the military, whose leaders welcome his push for bigger budgets but chafe at being seen as political tools.

The nub of the problem is that Trump sees no constraint on his authority to use what he

calls the "unlimited power" of the military even against U.S. citizens if he believes it necessary. Military leaders generally take a far different view. They believe that active-duty troops, trained to hunt and kill an enemy, should be used to enforce the law only in the most extreme emergency, such as an attempted actual rebellion. That limit exists, they argue, to keep the public's trust.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper, a West Point graduate who served 10 years on active duty, argued against bringing federal troops into Washington. In a contentious Oval Office meeting with Trump and others on Monday, the president demanded 10,000 federal troops be sent to the capital city, according to a senior defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Esper then pushed for governors from several states to send National Guardsmen as

a way of steering Trump away from a buildup of federal forces in Washington, the senior defense official said.

Vincent K. Brooks, a recently retired Army four-star general, says the military's "sacred trust" with the public has been breached by Trump's threat to use federal troops for law enforcement in states where he deems a governor has not tough enough against protesters.

"It is a trust that the military, especially the active-duty military - 'the regulars' - possessing great physical power and holding many levers that could end freedom in our society and could shut down our government, would never, never apply that power for domestic political purposes," Brooks wrote in an essay for Harvard University's Belfer Center, where he is a senior fellow.

Esper has made known his regret at having accompanied Trump to a presidential photo opportunity in front of a church near the White

House. He has said he did not see it coming - a blind spot that cost him in the eyes of critics who saw a supposedly apolitical Pentagon chief implicitly endorsing a political agenda.

Esper two days later risked Trump's ire when he stepped before reporters at the Pentagon to declare his opposition to Trump invoking the two-centuries-old Insurrection Act. That law allows a president to use the armed forces "as he considers necessary" when "unlawful obstructions ... or rebellion against the authority of the United States" make it impractical to enforce U.S. laws in any state by normal means.

Esper said plainly that he saw no need for such an extreme measure, a clear counterpoint to Trump's threat to use force. Almost immediately, word came from the White House that Trump was unhappy with his defense secretary.

(Source: AP)

Ancient stones unearthed at construction site

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Some 11 historical stones were discovered during the construction of a rural road in Dashtestan county, southwestern Bushehr province, ISNA reported on Monday.



According to the cultural heritage experts, the stones belonged to a historical water mill in the region, known as Khashm Kohneh, the report added.

With over 5,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid eras, Bushehr Province is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include

Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Once public bathhouse now an anthropological museum

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Once a hammam (public bathhouse) in the town of Jajarm, northeast Iran, the monument has lost its original usage as pile water is ubiquitous in almost every corner of the ancient land. The bathhouse is now an anthropological and cultural heritage museum depicting scenes of the lives of people in the past.

Covering 700 square meters in area, the bathhouse stands adjacent to an ancient fort in the historical texture of the town that is situated in North Khorasan province.



Wax figures, centuries-old objects, and personal belongings, as well as the various architecture of the bathhouse, which was traditionally a place for socializing, where people talked with each other about their daily life, and shared rumors and news.

Some cities had separate bathhouses for men and women. They were usually built next to each other. However, there were some bathhouses, which were used by men and women at different times of the day.

There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a longhorn (boooq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak till the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses since then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to women.

A taste of Iran: Khoresh-e Bademjoon

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Food is a wonderful vehicle for discovering Iran, with its fabulous regional produce featuring in stews, rice dishes, kebabs and desserts.

Bademjoon, sometimes spelled bademjan or bademjaan, is a quintessential summer dish in Iran. It is also served during wintertime using frozen ones! Khoresh-e Bademjoon is an eggplant stew with meltingly tender meat in a thick, tomato based sauce and perfect served with some rice. Find suggestions could also be found for a vegetarian version.

Fresh lemon juice and ghooreh, or unripe grapes, lighten the stew and lend a particularly tart punch. Those sharp flavors contrast nicely with the soft, comforting texture of the eggplant and tomatoes, which grow silky as they cook down.



This dish is particularly delicious with a piece of crunchy tahdig (the pan-fried layer of crust at the bottom of the rice pot and, in fact, it literally translates as "the bottom of the pot" in Persian). Rice, or polo is, however, the cornerstone of every Persian meal.

No Persian meal is complete without an abundance of herbs. Every table is usually set with sabzi khordan, a basket of fresh herbs, radishes and scallions, which are eaten raw and by the handful. Persian cuisine is, above all, about balance — of tastes and flavors, textures and temperatures.

Ingredients

- 1 pound boneless lamb shoulder, trimmed and cut into 5cm cubes
- 1 heaped tsp ground turmeric
- fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 to 8 Japanese eggplants
- 5 tbsp olive oil, plus ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 4 small or 2 medium tomatoes (about 1kg)
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- ¼ tsp crumbled saffron threads
- ¼ to ½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice (from 2 to 4 limes)
- ¼ cup fresh or frozen unripe grapes (ghooreh), optional

Ancient glazed tiles discovered beneath congregational mosque

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A number of ancient glazed tiles have recently been discovered while a team of restorers was digging into the mihrab of a congregational mosque in Rasht, the capital of Gilan province, northern Iran.

Mihrab is a semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque that points out the qibla, the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca and hence the direction that Muslims should face when praying.

"A number of tiled frames have been unearthed in an archeological and restoration project, which is underway in the Safi Mosque of Rasht. The objects were found beneath concrete layers attaching the marble covering of the mihrab of the mosque," CHTN quoted provincial deputy tourism chief Vali Jahani as saying on Sunday.

These tiled frames consist of square tiles with dimensions of 19 cm by 19 cm, which are engraved on the white background with hand-made methods, Islamic motifs and themes of flowers and plants with turquoise glaze, and they bear a turquoise ribbon on the side covering the tile frame, he explained.

Talking about the discovery, the official noted "During the restoration studies on Safi Mosque, which is aimed to realize the evolutionary process of its structure and to shed new light on additional sections to the original structure."

"Earlier in the month of Farvardin (Mach 20 – April 19) a trench measuring 1.5 m by 1.5 m was carved in the mosque's shabestan, which resulted in recognizing some additional sections."

A shabestan is an underground space that can be usually found in the traditional



One of ancient glazed tiles discovered in the Safi Mosque in Rasht, northern Iran.

architecture of mosques, houses, and schools in ancient Iran.

The official also referred to the history of the mosque, saying "Safi Mosque, also

known as Sefid and Shahidiyeh Mosque, was established before Shah Ismail, the Safavid monarch, assumed power (in 1501). The mosque is

"The mosque is the oldest standing monuments in Rasht. Archaeological evidence such as pottery pieces, interior ornamentations, and tiles suggest that the mosque was operational in time between 8th to 10th centuries AH. It shows that the first part of the mosque was built during the Ilkhanid period."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official noted that the restoration plan is aimed to eliminate contemporary parts attached to the mosque, adding that its interior decoration will be restored based on archaeological data of the original form of the mosque.

"It is possible that more extensive archeological excavations to be carried out in the southern parts of the mosque's Shabestan the restoration plan comes to an end."

Generally, a mosque differs from a church in many respects. Ceremonies and services connected with marriages and births are not usually performed in mosques, and the rites that are an important and integral function of many churches, such as confession, penitence, and confirmation, do not exist there. Prayer is performed by bows and prostrations, with no chairs or seats of any kind. Men stand in rows, barefooted, behind the imam and follow his movements.

Rich and poor, prominent and ordinary people, all stand and bow together in the same rows. Women may participate in the prayers, but they must occupy a separate space or chamber in the mosque. No statues, ritual objects, or pictures are used in mosques; the only decorations permitted are inscriptions of Quranic verses and the names of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions.

Ardebil museum displaying 5,000 years of life in Iranian plateau

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Ardebil Archeology Museum offers the enthusiastic visitors a tour of 5,000 years of history and culture.

Located in northwest of the country, the magnificent 1,700-square-meter building of the museum is situated near the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The museum, which was built in the style of Safavid era (1501-1736) architecture in two floors in 2008, houses relics and works from Bronze Age to Qajar period (1789–1925).

The pottery, glassware and metal works on display in the museum, depict the evolution of the history of Ardabil in different historical eras.

The museum is also a research institute, which has carried out several research projects, as well as the restoration of



the discovered historical objects, CHTN quoted the director of the museum Omid Yazdani as saying on Monday.

Two new sections will also be added to the museum in the near future, he added.

He also noted that the new sections will showcase collections of coins and exquisite documents related to the province.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people and its silk and carpet trade tradition.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

Aliabad caravanserai in Kerman under restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The second phase of a restoration project has recently been commenced on Aliabad caravanserai in a village of the same name near Mahan city in Kerman province, southeastern Iran.

The restoration project involves covering and strengthening walls using cob material as well as repairing rooftop and arches, ILNA quoted provincial tourism chief Mojtaba Shafiei as saying on Monday.

The Qajar-era (1789–1925) caravanserai has been inscribed on the National Heritage List.

Caravanserai is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara". The first stand for a group of travelers and sara means the building.

They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed round the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.



Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power form 1588 – to 1629, he ordered construction of network caravanserais across the country.

For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a wide experience as they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age.

Izadkhast fortress to undergo urgent restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Izadkhast fortress, a Sassanid era (224–651) fortification in southern province of Fars, will undergo some rehabilitation works in the near future, CHTN reported.

A budget of 2 billion rials (some \$50,000) has been allocated to the project, which includes reinforcement of foundation and exterior walls as well as covering parts of the fortress with cob material, provincial tourism official Abdolreza Nasiri said on Monday.

Izadkhast fortress, which was built on the ancient Silk Road between Isfahan and Shiraz, is the first fortress in the world that is made of adobe. It is also the second largest adobe building in the world after Arg-e Bam (Bam Citadel) in the southeastern province of Kerman.

From very early history to modern times, defensive walls have often been



necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortifications in antiquity were designed primarily to defeat attempts at escalate, and to defense of territories in warfare, and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists.

Smell of life: Rose harvest offers jobs to women



TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Farmers, including women and young adults, are harvesting delicate purple petals of damask rose flowers in a garden field in Iran's Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, June 4, 2020. They work quickly to gather petals as much as they can before the sun gets too hot.

Cultivating, harvesting and processing of damask roses has paved the way for local women to find jobs.

Every year, by late May, tens of festivals of rose and rosewater starts to take the center stage in the southwestern province. The distillation ceremonies, which are commonly known as "Golab-giri", usually attract visitors to witness the time-honored tradition.

Golab or rosewater is a fragrant distillate of the roses which is used nationwide in diverse traditional dishes to flavor them or consumed as a religious perfume as well.

Similar festivals are usually running through mid-June in central Iranian towns and villages such as Kashan, Qamsar, Joshagan Qali, Barzak and Niasar.

The province has various unique traditions and rituals relative to the 'tribal' lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has a considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.



World Oceans Day: get united to protect precious waterbodies

1 → In the interim, observation of Oceans Day had broadened and deepened. The need and scope for this were reflected in the broad range of concerns expressed in 2008 by the UN Secretary-General, including implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, maritime space, international shipping, maritime security, marine science and technology, marine biological diversity, the marine environment and sustainable development, climate change, and regional and international cooperation.

In Iran, this day is also celebrated, and considering that Iran is a sea-oriented country and is bounded on the north and south by the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, so it is very important to pay attention to marine basins. The National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science has implemented a variety of programs in this area.

■ Persian Gulf, Sea of Oman undergo explorations

Behrooz Abtahi, head of the National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science, said that the institute has outstanding research and development programs, one of which is a research exploration in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman that provides an overview of the biological, physical, chemical, and geological conditions of these water areas.

So far, six explorations have been conducted in the Persian Gulf, and important findings have been achieved, including identifying more low-oxygen layers in the depth of the Oman Sea, which are increasing, he said, adding, to give them a basic idea, these layers are called dead zones that are gradually expanding, he explained.

Dead zones are not new, but recent findings show that these areas are gradually increasing and their layers are gradually approaching water surface, which can affect aquatic species, he lamented.

He went on to say that some of these dead zones are natural, and some may be due to the effects of human activities, but the gradual increase is the result of the direct impact of human activities, and climate change to some extent.

■ Coasts, coastal waters to be monitored

Referring to the scientific program of monitoring the coasts and coastal waters, he



noted that under the program, the situation of coastal waters and especially sensitive ecosystems such as mangroves and corals of Chabahar Bay will be continuously evaluated.

Also, the situation of Gorgan Bay will be monitored as one of the areas that are highly subject to climate change, so that programs can be proposed to improve its situation, he added.

He went on to explain that we have focused on oceanographic research and have found findings, and according to the routine of such research, this information is carefully analyzed after harvest, and a large part of it is published in the form of scientific research articles and will be available to domestic and foreign applicants.

■ Comprehensive data collection essential

Noting that we are trying to continuously increase the center's information, he stressed: that «One of the requirements

for the development of the data center is to increase cooperation between us and other institutions that work in the field of marine science in the country.

“Our relationship on maritime issues with global scientific centers is fine. Part of this is organizational and administrative communication, and given that our research institute represents Iran in maritime activities related to UNESCO, we are in constant contact with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

In addition, we are in contact with 14 regional and international authorities, some of which are related to the Indian Ocean, some others to the promotion and development of ocean culture, in which we are obliged to conduct regional and international courses,” he also explained.

■ Ocean acidification needs more attention

Pointing to ocean acidification, he

said that over the past century, with the development of industrial activities, we have seen an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere, and this increase has had an undeniable effect on the chemical composition of the oceans and seas.

As a result, marine biodiversity has been affected, as evidenced by coral bleaching, so the issue of ocean acidification is of particular importance, and using the experiences of other countries like West Asian countries is very important, he added.

In one of its programs, the Institute has launched a network to monitor the acidification of the country's seas, according to which the water samples of the seas are evaluated in terms of parameters related to the acidification process to create a good database, he concluded.

Lake Urmia to be fully revived within 7 years

1 → Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one-tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

A project on transferring water from Zab River to the lake has been proposed by the government and a budget of 3 trillion rials (nearly \$71 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been earmarked in this regard, IRNA quoted Issa Kalantari as saying on Monday.

The Zab water transfer tunnel to Lake Urmia will be completed in the next six months, and with its operation, the lake's water volume will reach 14.7 billion cubic meters over the next seven years and will rehabilitate the lake after years, he stated.

With the transfer of water from Zab, about one billion cubic meters of water will enter the lake permanently annually, he highlighted.

The government has allocated 100 trillion rials (around \$2.3 billion) in planning and implementing a project to transfer water from the Kanisib Dam to the lake, Mohammad Bagher Nobakht, head of Budget and Planning Organization, said.

According to the project, about 36 km of tunnels have been constructed with the aim of transferring 600 million cubic meters to the lake annually, he noted.

Nobakht continued that “the project is in the final stages, so we expect to exploit it later this summer.”

Kalantari also noted that one of the most important factors



in the revitalization of Lake Urmia is a 40 percent reduction in water consumption in the agricultural sector, 36 percent of which has been achieved so far.

Contrary to assumptions that water reduction was thought to lead to a reduction in crop production, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, there has been a 17 percent increase in crop production in the lake's catchment area, he stated.

This increase shows that water waste in the agricultural sector of the catchment area of Lake Urmia has been very high, he lamented.

“In the last seven years, we have fallen behind the plan to revitalize Lake Urmia due to problems and financial constraints by 12 to 14 months, but the lake will finally be fully restored in 2027”, he emphasized.

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province said that the lake's level has reached 1,271.87 meters, which is 37 centimeters higher than the last year's level.

The lake's water volume was estimated at more than 4.620 billion cubic meters, which indicates an increase of 1.010 billion cubic meters compared to the last year and 1.7 meters since 2014.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve the Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level of 1274.10.

The lake was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets, and ducks, and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

These days, life has returned to Lake Urmia. The lake now has so much water that tourists can swim in its shiny water and birds and aquatic species such as flamingos and Artemia have returned to it, but it still has a long way to completely survive.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Iran outlaws private ownership of wild animals

Iran has outlawed the private ownership of wild animals, including cheetahs, lions and tigers, and will fine or imprison anyone parading the wild animals in public, YJC reported on Wednesday.

“If a person seen in public walking an exotic pet, will be fined up to 800 million rials (about \$20,000) and could face up to three-year term of imprisonment,” Department of Environment's (DOE) director for hunting and fishing Ali Teymouri has said.

مالکیت شخصی و نگهداری حیوانات وحشی ممنوع شد

مدیرکل دفتر حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید اظهار داشت: براساس قانون اگر شخصی اقدام به نگهداری چهارپای وحشی از جمله یوز پلنگ، شیر و ببر کند، به جریمه نقدی و زندان محکوم می شود. علی تیموری مدیرکل دفتر حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست در گفتگو با خبرنگار حوزه محیط زیست گروه اجتماعی باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان؛ در رابطه با خیابان گردانی حیوانات وحشی اظهار داشت: برای متخلفان نگهداری از حیوانات وحشی جریمه ۸۰ میلیون تومانی و ۳ سال حبس در نظر گرفته شده است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“cryo-, cry-”

■ **Meaning:** freezing or cold

■ **For example:** You can return to most normal activities the day after **cryosurgery**.

PHRASAL VERB

Nail somebody down

■ **Meaning:** to force someone to say clearly what they want or what they intend to do

■ **For example:** Before they repair the car, nail them down to a price.

IDIOM

Cream of the crop

■ **Explanation:** the best people or things in a particular group

■ **For example:** As usual, the cream of the crop of this year's graduates were offered the best jobs.

Some 1,000 earthquakes occur in Iran in a month

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran, recorded more than 960 earthquakes across the country over the past month (April 20-May 20).

Nine earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 4 have been recorded in the country by the National Seismological Center, the largest of which occurred on May 2, with a magnitude of 5.1 near Faryab in Kerman province.

Statistically, 876 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, and 77 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4, also, 6 earthquakes with magnitudes 4-5 have occurred.

Also, 3 earthquakes with magnitudes 5-6 shook the country.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes. About 2% of the earthquakes of the world occur in Iran but more than 6% of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes. This shows the high level of vulnerability in Iran, according to Mehdi Zare, a professor of engineering seismology.

Most recently, an earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale shook the capital city of Tehran on May 8, killing two and injuring 33. The causative fault for the earthquake was Mosha fault, 5km north of the city of Damavand.

Tehran is one of the most hazardous metropolises in the world in terms of the risk of different natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, subsidence, drought, landslide, fire following an earthquake, etc.

Pinkest flamingos fight the hardest for food, scientists learn

The pinkest flamingos are also the most aggressive when it comes to squabbling over food, scientists have found.

Research from the University of Exeter also suggests bright pink plumage to be an indicator of good health in lesser flamingos.

Dr Paul Rose, a zoologist at the University of Exeter and lead author on the study, said: “Flamingos live in large groups with complex social structures. Colour plays an important role in this. The colour comes from carotenoids in their food, which for lesser flamingos is mostly algae that they filter from the water.

“A healthy flamingo that is an efficient feeder – demonstrated by its colourful feathers – will have more time and energy to be aggressive and dominant when feeding.”

The team studied the lesser flamingo species at the WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre in Gloucestershire. They looked at three types of feeding arrangements for the birds – an indoor feeding bowl, a larger indoor feeding pool and a spacious outdoor feeding pool, the Guardian reported.

They found flamingos pushed each other around while trying to get to the food, with brighter-coloured birds appearing more aggressive than their paler rivals.

However, when it came to feeding in the outdoor pool, the flamingos observed spent less than half as much time displaying aggression. No difference was found between males and females in rates of feeding or aggression, the researchers said.

According to the team, the findings published in the journal Ethology suggest captive birds should be fed over a wide space where possible.

Rose said: “When birds have to crowd together to get their food, they squabble more and therefore spend less time feeding. It's not always possible to feed these birds outdoors, as lesser flamingos only weigh about 2kg and are native to Africa, so captive birds in places like the UK would get too cold if they went outside in the winter.

“However, this study shows they should be fed over as wide an area as possible. Where possible, creating spacious outdoor feeding areas can encourage natural foraging patterns and reduce excess aggression.”

The team also found that lesser flamingos display a “flush of colour” when they are ready to breed, only to regain their paler hues after becoming parents.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

North Korea nuclear talks

(December 10, 2003)

South Korea says it still hopes to continue talks about North Korea's nuclear programme soon. However there are still some disagreements between the North and the United States. This report from Charles Scanlon:

South Korean officials say the North appears to be **upping the ante** in its confrontation with the United States. It's demanding fuel oil and an end to **sanctions** in exchange for a **nuclear freeze**. But the foreign minister, Yoon Young-kwan, said the proposal wasn't the North's **final word**. He said North Korea had recently become more positive about a deal and the United States was also being more flexible and constructive. The Bush administration **initially refused to negotiate**, saying the North Korean regime had to first **scrap** both its nuclear weapons programmes. But the US and its allies this week formally offered **security guarantees** to the north as the first step towards a settlement. Mr Yoon said it was too early to talk about economic aid but that could be **addressed** in later rounds.

South Korea has been pushing hard for a resumption of negotiations this month. There's concern that a further delay will cause a **damaging loss of momentum**. Chinese diplomats have been engaging in **shuttle diplomacy** to try to narrow the differences between Washington and Pyongyang. North Korea claims to have reprocessed enough plutonium this year to make several atomic bombs.

■ Words

upping the ante: increasing the level of demands; asking for more of something

sanctions: international restrictions that mean certain things cannot be sold to a particular country

a nuclear freeze: stopping the further development of nuclear weapons

final word: last offer

initially refused to negotiate: at first would not discuss

scrap: cancel

security guarantees: when one country says it will protect another country from attack

addressed: discussed and dealt with

loss of momentum: slowing down the speed of progress

shuttle diplomacy: when officials from a third country travel often between two other countries to try and help to solve a problem

(Source: BBC)

Former top Republican General backs Biden for president

Former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell endorsed Democratic former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden Sunday, becoming the first major Republican to publicly back Donald Trump's rival ahead of November's election.

Powell, who led the U.S. military during the 1991 Gulf War in Iraq under Republican former President George HW Bush and later led the Department of State under President George W Bush, said Trump has "drifted away" from the U.S. Constitution and posed a danger the country and its democracy, Reuters reported.

"I cannot in any way support President Trump this year," Powell, who did not vote for the Republican president in 2016, told CNN. Asked if he would vote for Biden, he added: "I will be voting for him."

Trump, who has been critical of the Iraq war, in a tweet called Powell "a real stiff."

Powell is the latest former top military officer to rebuke Trump in the wake of sweeping mass protests aimed at fighting racial injustice spurred by the May 25 death of an unarmed black man in Minnesota.

Former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and other retired officers have condemned Trump in recent days in a rare rebuke with few precedents in U.S. history.

Lockdowns may have averted 3 million deaths in Europe by curbing: study

Wide-scale lockdowns including shop and school closures have reduced COVID-19 transmission rates in Europe enough to control its spread and may have averted more than three million deaths, researchers said Monday.

In a modelling study of lockdown impact in 11 nations, Imperial College London scientists said the draconian steps, imposed mostly in March, had "a substantial effect" and helped bring the infection's reproductive rate below one by early May, Reuters reported.

The reproduction rate, or R value, measures the average number of people that one infected person will pass the disease on to. An R value above 1 can lead to exponential growth.

The Imperial team estimated that by early May, between 12 and 15 million people in the 11 countries - Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland - had been infected with COVID-19.

By comparing the number of deaths counted with deaths predicted by their model if no lockdown measures had been introduced, they found some 3.1 million deaths were averted.

"Measuring the effectiveness of these interventions is important, given their economic and social impacts, and may indicate which course of action is needed to maintain control," the researchers said in a summary of their findings.

A second study by scientists in the United States, published alongside the Imperial-led one in the journal Nature, estimated that anti-contagion lockdown policies implemented in China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, France and the United States prevented or delayed around 530 million COVID-19 cases.

Focusing their analysis on these six countries, the U.S. research team compared infection growth rates before and after the implementation of more than 1,700 local, regional and national policies designed to slow or halt the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

They found that without anti-contagion policies in place, early infection rates of SARS-CoV-2 grew by 68% a day in Iran and an average of 38% a day across the other five countries.

Using econometric modelling normally used in assessing economic policies, they found lockdowns had slowed the infection rate with "measurable beneficial health outcomes in most cases".

Syrian Al-Qaeda offshoot launches deadly offensive

A terrorist group active in northwest Syria launched an offensive Monday, capturing two villages and killing 19 government forces, a war monitor said.

"Militants led by Hurras al-Deen launched an assault on two villages in Sahl al-Ghab," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.



They seized the villages of Al-Fatatra and Al-Manara, in Hama province, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said.

He said the clashes left 19 government soldiers and six militants dead, AFP reported.

The area from which the offensive was launched lies in the broad Idlib region, which is controlled by militants and rebels and is the last bastion of resistance to Damascus.

A truce reached on March 6 has largely stemmed the fighting in the region, which President Bashar al-Assad has vowed to fully retake.

Hurras al-Deen is a relatively small but powerful armed group led by Al-Qaeda loyalists, the closest thing to the mother organization's franchise in Syria.

Although they cooperate at times, it is a rival of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an alliance of Islamist factions dominated by former members of Al-Qaeda's ex-Syria affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra.

The Idlib truce brokered by Damascus ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey has largely kept Syrian and Russian warplanes out of the region's skies.

Aid groups had warned that an outbreak of COVID-19 in the Idlib region could cause a humanitarian disaster of previously unseen proportions if the fighting did not cease.

Statues of Confederate figures, slave owners come down amid protests

Romney marches in Floyd protest



→ 1 Romney told a Washington Post reporter that he was participating in the demonstration "to make sure that people understand that black lives matter." The Utah senator later tweeted a photo of himself at the protest with the caption "Black Lives Matter," becoming one of the most prominent GOP figures to do so.

An aide to Romney said the senator did not have any further comment on his participation, and that he wasn't intending to publicize his march. Romney's words during the march, captured on video by the Washington Post, are all he wants to say at this point, the aide said.

Joining the evangelical group was "spontaneous," the aide said, adding that Romney was in DC and intended to march Sunday. He came across a group of 1,000 to 1,500 evangelicals from the DC area near the Capitol and joined their march for an hour and a half, the aide added.

His participation comes as Republicans -- for the most part -- have backed the President following his threats to use the military on protesters and his controversial church photo-op last Monday.

■ UK.Protesters Pull Down Statue of Slave Trader and Throw It Into the Bristol Harbour

For someone who died nearly three centuries ago, Edward Colston has become a symbol for the Black Lives Matter movement in Britain.

The toppling of his statue in Bristol, a city in the southwest of England, on Sunday by anti-racism protesters was greeted with joyous scenes, recognition of the fact that

he was a notorious slave trader — a badge of shame in what is one of Britain's most liberal cities.

Demonstrators attached ropes to the statue before pulling it down. Footage of the moments after the statue crashed to the ground saw hundreds, if not thousands, of local Bristolians, in ecstasy.

Images on social media showed protesters then appearing to kneel on the neck of the statue for eight minutes, recalling how George Floyd died in Minneapolis on May 25. The statue was then rolled into the nearby Bristol Harbour — again to rapturous scenes.

Hamas warns of massive uprising against Israel's plans to annex West Bank

→ 1 Trump's highly provocative scheme, which further denies the right of return for Palestinian refugees to their homeland, is also in complete disregard of UN Security Council resolutions and rejected by the vast majority of the international community.

"The occupation and its plots against Jerusalem [al-Quds] and Palestine will be doomed to failure and its conspiracies will not secure a future for its existence on the Palestinian land," Hamas added on in its statement.

The statement came two days after the Naksa Day, which marks the displacement of Palestinian people after Israel prevailed in the Six Day War in June 1967.

"On the Naksa anniversary, the Palestinian cause is still beset with liquidation plots, the latest of which is the ominous deal of the century that was orchestrated by the Zio-American administration," the resistance movement further said.

Hamas also sounded that alarm as some countries had already begun into the "flagrant stage of normalizing



relations" with the Tel Aviv regime "through political, economic, cultural, sports and artistic trajectories in defiance of the dignity and will of the Arab and Muslim

Pakistan, U.S. hold talks on restarting intra-Afghan peace talks

The United States Afghan peace envoy and Pakistan's army chief have held talks to discuss the commencement of a peace process between the Afghan government and the Taliban, according to a statement, as violence has recommenced after a brief ceasefire was announced two weeks ago.

U.S. Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad met with Pakistani army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa in Islamabad on Sunday, the U.S. and Pakistan's military said in separate statements.

"The two took note of recent progress

created by the Eid ceasefire and accelerated prisoner releases as well as reduced violence ahead of intra-Afghan negotiations," said the U.S. statement on the meeting, released on Monday.

According to al Jazeera, the U.S. said Khalilzad "expressed his appreciation" in Pakistan's role of bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

"The two agreed peace in Afghanistan offers an unprecedented opportunity to advance security, connectivity and development for the region," said the U.S. statement.

Fresh protests in Kashmir after Indian forces kill nine rebels

Anti-India protests have continued for a second day on Monday in Indian-administered Kashmir after the Indian forces killed at least nine rebels in the disputed region.

The rebels, including three commanders, were killed in separate gunfights with the security forces in Shopian district, some 70km (43 miles) south of the capital, Srinagar. The fighting began on Sunday.

Four rebels were killed in the Pinjora area on Monday morning after the government forces set up a cordon and search operation when they received intelligence

about the presence of the fighters, who either want Kashmir's independence or a merger with Muslim-majority Pakistan, al Jazeera reported.

Five other rebels were killed in a gunfight with the forces in Shopian district's Reban area on Sunday afternoon. Police said three soldiers were wounded.

"Nine militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, including its three top commanders, have been neutralized in less than 24 hours," state police chief Dilbagh Singh told reporters on Monday.

UAE failed expansionism in Libya, Yemen costs billions of dollars: Report

A report says the United Arab Emirates' expansionist policy and its involvement in conflicts in Libya and Yemen have cost the country billions of dollars, sparking condemnation from senior officials inside the emirates, amid the failure of the Emirati-backed militants in both countries.

The UAE has been supporting Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar against the Tripoli-based internationally recognized government. The country is also part of the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen and has even clashed with the Riyadh-backed militants in the country.

The UAE has provided the militants in both countries with extremely expensive weapons -- including unmanned aerial vehicles, missiles, helicopters and air defense systems, according to Turkish state news agency Anadolu.

"Thousands of civilians have been killed in Yemen and Libya due to the use of these weapons supplied by the UAE," the report added.

The news agency referred to a report on Libya released by the UN Security Council in December last year that also confirmed the UAE's support for Haftar and clearly demonstrated the inventory of weapons and ammunition supplied. Libya has been in chaos since 2011, when a popular uprising and a NATO intervention led to the ouster of long-time dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Since 2014, two rival seats of power have emerged in Libya, namely the internationally-recognized government of Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, and another group based in the eastern city of Tobruk, supported militarily by Haftar's rebels.

The strongman, who is primarily supported by the UAE,



Egypt, and Jordan, launched a deadly offensive to capture Tripoli, the seat of the government, in April last year. His forces have been bogged down on the city's outskirts.

According to the UN, hundreds of people have been killed and more than 200,000 have been displaced as a result of the offensive.

Government forces recently liberated several towns that had been occupied by the rebels in the northwest. Haftar's rebels have been intensifying a pushback by escalating attacks on civilians in the capital.

The UAE also pays for thousands of mercenaries from countries such as Chad and Sudan to fight alongside Haftar.

The report added that the UAE, one of the members of coalition against Yemen, sent several heavy weapons worth billions of dollars to Yemen as well as deploying its own soldiers.

Moreover, the country is also the only supporter of the

peoples who have long supported the Palestinian people in their long struggle with the Zionist enemy."

According to Press TV, Palestinian officials have already threatened to sever bilateral agreements with Tel Aviv if it goes ahead with the annexation that will definitely undermine the two-state solution. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has already said that the U.S. proposal "belongs to the dustbin of history."

Elsewhere in its statement, the resistance movement also urged the Palestinian Authority, led by Abbas, to fully disengage from the "disastrous" Oslo Accords and its political, economic and security obligations and to sever all the remaining ties with the Israeli regime.

The Oslo Accords were signed by late chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Arafat, and former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1993 and 1995. The declared goal of the accords was to achieve peace based on the UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and to realize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Fresh protests in Kashmir after Indian forces kill nine rebels

Anti-India protests have continued for a second day on Monday in Indian-administered Kashmir after the Indian forces killed at least nine rebels in the disputed region.

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Four rebels were killed in the Pinjora area on Monday morning after the government forces set up a cordon and search operation when they received intelligence

separatist Southern Transition Council (STC), which attacked Saudi-backed militants in Yemen and unilaterally declared "autonomy" in the south of the country.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 in order to bring former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crush the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives over the past five years.

According to the report, the UAE's aggressive foreign policies drew opposition from some of seven emirates.

"Like Saudi Arabia and some other oppressive Arab regimes, the UAE has one of the non-leaking governments. However, it was learned that a secret meeting was held several months ago on the country's foreign policy and its interventionist attitudes towards the countries in the region," the news agency reported.

At the meeting, the news agency says, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the vice president and prime minister of the UAE, expressed his opposition to the country's foreign policy.

"We spend hundreds of millions of dollars every day and what do we get in return?" Al Maktoum said.

He also called for reviewing "its aggressive and intrusive foreign policy as soon as possible because it had cost enough to the country and that it had no benefits", the report added.

(Source: Press TV)

Discus thrower Hadadi misses competing

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi says that he has really missed competing.

Hadadi tested positive for the coronavirus in late March but he earned full recovery after self-quarantined himself.

"I am training in Kish Island at the moment and keep in touch with my American trainer Mac Wilkins," Hadadi said.

"I miss competing and want to participate at the Hungarian meeting Gyulai István Memorial. I've not participated in any event for eight months and miss competing," he added.

"I love throwing and I hope that the Hungarian meeting will not be canceled due to coronavirus," the 2012 Olympic Games silver medalist stated.

The four-time Asian Games gold medalist is going to compete at his fourth Olympic Games in Tokyo, and possibly Paris 2024.

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

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

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

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



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

will get him to his goal.

"In my 20 years in the sport, I have seen

a lot of people bigger, stronger than me but they can't throw far," he said.

We are in no hurry to appoint new coach: Davarzani

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mohammadreza Davarzani, head of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF), says that they are in no hurry to find a new head coach for Iran national volleyball team.

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

Now, the volleyball chief says that they will wait until September to choose the best choice for the team.

"All volleyball competitions in Iran will reopen in September and it means that we have enough time for appointing the new head coach," Davarzani said in an interview with ISNA.

Asked him whether they have decided to select an Iranian coach, he said, "The issue has been raised and the federation is monitoring several Iranian coaches but board of directors are in no hurry to appoint the coach."

"If we want to hire a foreign coach, we will have to find



a coach better than the Iranian coaches. We must pick a world's top-level coach who has previously experienced Olympics and world championships but it's hard to find the best option because the top-level coaches are committed to their current teams. Iran federation is not going to hire a second-rate coach for the National Team," he added.

Iran debuted in 2016 Olympic Games where the Persians finished in fifth place behind Brazil, Italy, the U.S. and Russia.

In this edition, Iran want to make a splash and this is the reason why the federation is not in a hurry to choose the new head coach. The National Team have been drawn in Pool A along with Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela, while Pool B consists of Brazil, the U.S., Russia, Argentina, France, and Tunisia.

"The new coach must surely be aware of the domestic league and also analyze the situation of our rivals at the Olympic Games," Davarzani concluded.

FIFA denies allegation of Iran suspension

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Contrary to recent speculation, FIFA has not yet officially commented on the issue of the amendment of the Iranian football federation's statutes and has not taken any step to suspend the federation.

With several letters exchanged in recent months, FIFA ordered the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) to amend its statutes and to remove some problematic and illegal provisions such as the role of Minister of Sport and Youth in

the FFIRI General Assembly.

Consequently, FFIRI removed the Sports and Youth Minister from the statutes of the federation and sent the amended draft statutes to FIFA.

Now, in response to an Iranian media's question about whether the Iranian federation has been suspended, FIFA has denied the issue of suspension.

"Please be informed that the FFIRI did provide FIFA with their proposed amendments to the Statutes within the



stipulated deadline of 5 June 2020. The reviewing process of the document is still ongoing. In addition, we can confirm that the FFIRI is not suspended," read the email sent by FIFA.

If the draft statutes of the FFIRI is approved by FIFA, the federation's officials can take further steps to complete the process of the amendment of the FFIRI Statutes and plan to hold an extraordinary assembly and then hold the presidential elections of the federation in upcoming months.

Japan's Hasebe 'proud' after setting Asian Bundesliga games record



Berlin: Former Japan captain Makoto Hasebe said he was "proud" after setting the record for most Bundesliga appearances by an Asian player.

Centre-back Hasebe, 36, played the full 90 minutes in Eintracht Frankfurt's 2-0 loss to Mainz on Saturday in what was his 309th German top-flight match to leapfrog ex-Korea Republic forward Cha Bum-kun.

"I'm very proud to have played more Bundesliga games than any other Asian player. But for me, it would have been much, much more important for the team to win," Hasebe told the Bundesliga's official website.

"We weren't as good as we needed to be today. We were lacking something in all areas," he told the club website.

Hasebe made his Bundesliga debut in 2008 for Wolfsburg where he won

the title before a one-season spell with Nuremberg.

In 2014 he joined Eintracht and has played more than 150 times for the Commerzbank Arena outfit with whom he lifted the German Cup in 2018.

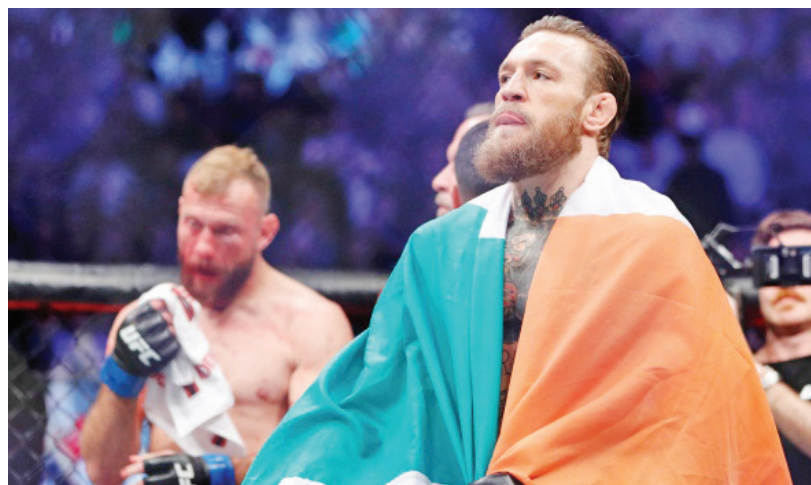
He retired from international football after the 2018 FIFA World Cup having won 114 caps for Japan.

In May Hasebe announced he will take up a position as a club ambassador from next month and maintain a dual role during his 14th season in Germany in 2020-2021.

Eintracht are in 11th place in the table having only won once since the season returned after a two-month break due to the coronavirus pandemic.

(Source: AFP)

Conor McGregor retires for a third time



Mixed martial arts superstar Conor McGregor, 31, yesterday announced his retirement from the sport - for a third time.

The former two-division Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) world champion said his fighting days were over in a Twitter message posted on his verified account, alongside a picture of the Irishman with his mother, Margaret.

"Hey guys I've decided to retire from fighting. Thank you all for the amazing memories! What a ride it's been!" he wrote.

McGregor's last fight was in January after a 15 month-absence, when he knocked out American Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone in a ruthless 40-second destruction in Las Vegas.

UFC president Dana White paid tribute to McGregor, saying: "I love Conor. There are a handful of people who have made this really fun for me, and he's one of them."

The controversial fighter had also an-

nounced his retirement from the sport in March last year and in April 2016.

In 2016, he said he decided to "retire young" and "thanks for the cheese."

That announcement was made just one month after his UFC 196 loss to Nate Diaz, yet McGregor returned in the summer to beat Diaz in the rematch at UFC 202.

He then fought again in November that year, beating Eddie Alvarez to claim the UFC lightweight championship.

McGregor tweeted a second retirement in 2019. Later that same day, The New York Times published a story saying the fighter was "under investigation over a sexual assault accusation in Ireland."

McGregor denied the accusation, telling journalists ahead of his next fight the following year, "Guys, I have done nothing wrong here."

(Source: Reuters)

FC Nantes eye Iranian striker Kaveh Rezaei

French professional football club have reportedly set their sights on signing Iranian forward Kaveh Rezaei.

Rezaei plays at Charleroi on loan and must return to Brugge at the end of the season but voetbal24.be has reported that the French team is going to sign the 28-year-old player.



The Ligue 1 club wants to sign Rezaei as a replacement for Kalifa Coulibaly.

Rezaei has scored 14 goals and provided five assists in 25 games for Charleroi in the current season.

voetbal24.be had previously reported that Club Brugge have received offers from non-Belgian teams for the forward.

(Source: Voetbal24.be)

Ashkan Dejagah has yet to return to Iran

IRNA — Tractor football team iconic midfielder Ashkan Dejagah has not yet returned to his team's training.

Iran Professional League will restart on June 24 and all football clubs have started their trainings.

Tractor midfielder Dejagah, who returned to Germany after the competitions were halted due to coronavirus outbreak, has not returned to Tabriz to participate at his team's practice.

Tractor's Algerian forward Okacha Hamzaoui has not returned to the training as well.

Mirzajanpour joins Sepahan volleyball team

Tasnim — Iran outside spiker Mojtaba Mirzajanpour joined Iranian volleyball club Sepahan on Sunday.

The 28-year-old player has penned a one-year contract with the Isfahan-based team.

He has most recently played at Shahrdari Varamin.

Mirzajanpour was a member of the team who won the AVC Men's Tokyo Volleyball Qualification tournament in January.

He has also played in Iranian teams Shahrdari Orumiyyeh and Sarmayeh Bank and Italian club BCC Castellana Grotte.

Friendly: Zob Ahan beat Sepahan in Isfahan derby

Tasnim — Zob Ahan football team edged past Sepahan 1-0 in Isfahan.

The friendly match was played as part of preparation for the rest of the Iran Professional League (IPL) in Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium.

Serbian midfielder Ivan Markovic scored the only goal of the match in the 88th minute.

The game was played without fans and with a strict health protocol in place.

Sepahan sit second in the table and Zob Ahan are 11th.

Man City captain David Silva being offered lucrative pay day in Qatar

David Silva is being offered a lucrative move to Qatar this summer when the curtain finally falls on his stay at Manchester City.

The playmaker will leave the Etihad after 10 trophy-laden seasons and Doha-based Al-Duhail, who top the Qatar Stars League, have told his representatives they are willing to blow any rivals for his signature out of the water in terms of the financial package on offer.

Tenerife-born Silva, 34, is already wanted by clubs in Spain and the United States.

But with the 2022 World Cup drawing nearer, there is a desire in Qatar to further raise the profile and standard of their domestic game and Al-Duhail know that landing a player of Silva's calibre will represent a major coup.

Croatia striker Mario Mandzukic joined the Qatari club on a free transfer from Juventus in January and the ambitious outfit want El Mago to follow him to the Middle East.

Silva joined City from Valencia for around £26million and he has repaid that fee several times over.

He played a major role in helping them to their first Premier League title in 2011-12 as well as the three top-flight crowns that have followed since.

Silva, who won the 2010 World Cup and 2012 Euros with Spain, has also won two FA Cups and five League Cups during his time in England.

And he will hope he and his City pals can add one final FA Cup winners' medal to his incredible haul in August before he departs.

Pep Guardiola has already confirmed he plans to fill the void left by Silva by offering talented youngster Phil Foden the chance he has been waiting for.

"Phil is an incredible player but he still has things to improve," Guardiola told reporters in January. "Sometimes it takes time to understand exactly what he has to do, sometimes you have to be patient."

"But David is going to leave this season and we are not going to buy any player in his position because we have Phil."

"We trust Phil. If we didn't believe in him, we might go to the market to replace David, but we have Phil."

(Source: mirror.co.uk)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com
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 » **Webmaster:** webmaster@tehrantimes.com
 » **Printed at:** Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

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

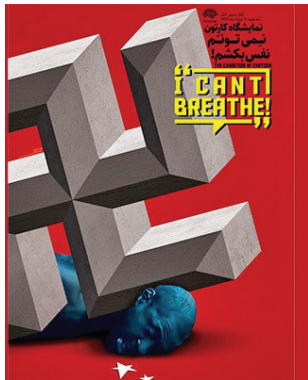



Why should a human being boast? His beginning is a sticky embryo, and his end a terrible corpse. He can neither secure his subsistence, nor ward off death.
Imam Ali (AS)

“I Can’t Breathe” subject of Iranian intl. cartoon exhibition

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Art Bureau of Iran’s Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization has launched an international cartoon exhibition on “I Can’t Breathe” to show protests against racism in the U.S.

“After the police killing of an unarmed African-American man named George Floyd, which drew nationwide protests, an international campaign named ‘I Can’t Breathe’ was launched to



A poster for the Art Bureau’s international cartoon exhibition of *I Can’t Breathe*.

show protests against racism,” Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, the secretary of the exhibition, said on Monday.

The organizers have received over 70 submissions from cartoonists in 27 countries across the world.

The exhibit will open in the courtyard of the Art Bureau on Wednesday.

George Floyd died on May 25 after being pinned down under the knee of a white officer for 9 minutes despite yelling: “I can’t breathe”.

Floyd’s death has sparked protests nationwide and around the world, engulfing city streets with tens of thousands of demonstrators.

Many of the demonstrators who converged on the U.S. Capitol were young Blacks in their twenties who as an expression of outrage over Floyd’s death felt compelled to march in the streets for the first time.

The U.S. has been rocked by demonstrations over police slaying of unarmed Black men, women and youth over the past decade.

The demonstrators say they have been driven to protest after seeing too many videos and hearing too many stories about Black Americans dying at the hands of police officers, and by their concerns about the future of the country itself.

Owj ready to collaborate with Iranian Army on film projects

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Owj Arts and Media Organization, a major institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema, announced on Monday that it is ready to collaborate with the Iranian Army on film projects.



In a letter sent to Army Deputy Coordinator Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari on Monday, Owj director Ehsan Mohammad-Hassani confirmed the rear admiral’s remarks last week criticizing those movies challenging the valor of the Army during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and many other difficult situations of the country.

“In your interview last week with a news agency, you criticized a number of productions about the Army, and this shows your great motivation to make a major change in the art and media productions on the valor of the youth of the country in the Army,” Mohammad-Hassani said in the letter.

“We also confirm your remarks, and that the Army presence in the war and its aftermath has many compelling stories, which can become subjects for numerous film and art productions,” he added.

“Thus, your brothers at the Owj Arts and Media Organization announce their readiness to give any help and to share their experiences in any way to ease your genuine concerns,” he noted.

The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) released a video showing Sayyari in an interview with its correspondents on the lack of dissemination of information about the Army’s role in the Iran-Iraq war and its aftermath.

Tehran exhibit to showcase Michel Setboun’s photos on Islamic Revolution

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Renowned French photographer Michel Setboun’s collection on the Islamic Revolution will go on display in an exhibition opening today at the Imam Cultural Center in Tehran.

Entitled “Around Enqelab (Revolution) Street”, the exhibit will be available for viewing by the public while it will also be online.

The collection contains a selection of photos of rallies and street uprisings that Setboun had taken during the Islamic Revolution from 1978 to 1979.

The collection contains pictures of a speech by Imam Khomeini, battles between armed forces and the university students, pulling down the statue of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and people’s visits with Imam Khomeini.

The photos have been selected from the book titled “The Days of the Revolution”, which was published by Iran’s Association of Revolution and Sacred Defense Photographers in 2016.

The exhibit will be running until June 27 at the cultural center located on Amir-Soleimani St., Niavaran neighborhood, and the virtual exhibit is available on the Instagram of the center.

Setboun worked for the Sipa Agency in Iran during the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

“The Days of the Revolution” was published based on an agreement signed between the Association of Revolution and Sacred Defense Photographers and Setboun in 2011 when he was in Iran for the 3rd Fajr International Festival of Visual Arts.

The Ahvaz Museum of Contemporary Art showcased a collection of Setboun’s



A photo by French photographer Michel Setboun.

photos in an exhibition at that time.

The showcase was a part of the Fajr International Visual Arts Festival, which was organized to celebrate the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. The organizers also honored Setboun with a prize at the

closing ceremony of the event.

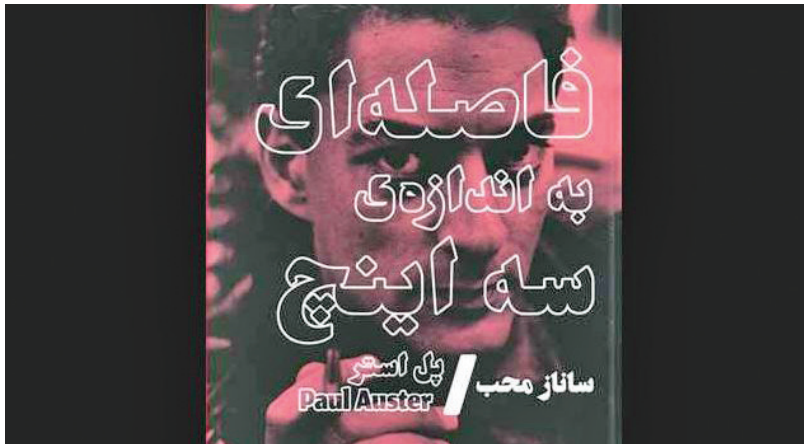
A number of the photos were from the 42-photo collection, which was purchased by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

Setboun is the author of “New York Vertigo”,

a collection of photographs that aims to capture the incredible vitality and spectacular variety of life in the world’s greatest city.

His credits also include “Mongolia: Dream of Infinity” and “40 Years of Photojournalism: Generation Sipa”.

Paul Auster’s “Collected Poems” rendered into Persian



Front cover of the Persian translation of Paul Auster’s “Collected Poems” by Sanaz Moheb.

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian poet Sanaz Moheb has rendered a selection of poems by American novelist and poet Paul Auster into Persian.

The poetry has been selected from Auster’s book “Collected Poems” and published by Sib-e Sorkh Publications in Tehran.

The book is a compelling anthology of poetry, translations and composition notes by the author featuring selections from “Spokes”, “Wall Writing”, “Disappearances”, “Effigies”, “White Spaces” and other works, along with biographical details and the author’s own thoughts on his writing.

Auster’s complex novels, several of which are mysteries, are often concerned with the search for identity and personal meaning.

After graduating from Columbia University (M.A., 1970), Auster moved to France, where he began translating the works of French writers and publishing his own work in American journals.

He gained renown for a series of experimental detective stories published collectively in 1987. It comprises “City of Glass” (1985), about a crime novelist who becomes entangled in a mystery that causes him to assume various identities; “Ghosts” (1986), about a private eye known as Blue who is investigating a man named Black for a client named White; and “The Locked Room” (1986), the story of an author who, while researching the life of a missing writer for a biography, gradually assumes the identity of that writer.

Other books that feature protagonists who are obsessed with chronicling someone else’s life are the novels “Moon Palace” (1989) and “Leviathan” (1992). “The Invention of Solitude” (1982) is both a memoir about the death of his father and a meditation on the act of writing.

Auster also penned several verse volumes including “Unearth” (1974) and “Wall Writing” (1976) as well as the essay collections “White Spaces” (1980) and “The Art of Hunger” (1982).

“Sunless Shadows” wins Silver Horn for filmmaker Mehrdad Oskui at Krakow festival



Iranian documentarian Mehrdad Oskui in an undated photo.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian documentarian Mehrdad Oskui has won the Silver Horn for the director of the social film “Sunless Shadows” at the 60th Krakow Film Festival in Poland.

The film “with precision, authenticity, sensitivity and creative elegance presented dramatic stories about domestic violence and hidden traumas,” the jury said in their statement during the closing ceremony of the festival on Saturday.

“Sunless Shadows” is about a group of adolescent girls that serve their sentence for the grave crime of murdering their father, their husband or another male family member in an Iranian juvenile detention center.

The main prize in the documentary competition went to Radu Ciorniciuc for the film “Acasa, My Home”, a production from Romania, Finland and Germany.

The audience award was given to the Norwegian documentary “The Self Portrait” directed by Margreth Olin, Katja Hogset and Espen Wallin.

In the international short film

competition, the Golden Dragon Grand Prix was given to director Shoko Hara for the animated short film “Just A Guy” from Germany.

Russian filmmaker Alex Evstigneev received the Silver Dragon for the director of the best documentary film for “The Golden Buttons”.

The award for best animated film in this section went to “He Can’t Live without Cosmos” directed by Konstantin Bronzit from Russia.

The Silver Dragon for best director in the feature film category was awarded to Madeleine Sims-Fewer and Dusty Mancinelli for the Canadian film “Chubby”.

The awards ceremony was attended by Tomasz Raczek, the editor-in-chief of the Film Magazine of the Polish Filmmakers Association, and Polish Film Institute director Radoslaw Smigulski.

The winning films were screened on Sunday in the virtual cinema halls of the Krakow Film Festival and the screening rooms of the Pod Baranami Cinema in Krakow.

IIDCYA publishes books on international studies on children’s literature

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Three top international studies on children’s literature have recently been published in Persian by Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.

“Aesthetic Approaches to Children’s Literature: An Introduction” by Swedish literary critic and academic Maria Nikolajeva is one of the books.

Mehdi Hejvani is the translator of the book, which was originally published by the Scarecrow Press in 2005.

This work provides students of children’s literature with a comprehensible and easy-to-use analytical tool kit, showing through concrete demonstrations how each tool might best be used to examine aesthetic rather than educational approaches to children’s literature. Contemporary literary theories discussed include semiotics, hermeneutics, structuralism, narratology, psychoanalysis, reader response, feminist and postcolonial theory, each adjusted to suit the specifics of children’s literature.

German scholar Emer O’Sullivan’s “Comparative Children’s Literature” is another book translated by



This combination photo shows copies of the Persian version of “Centuries of Childhood”, “Aesthetic Approaches to Children’s Literature” and “Comparative Children’s Literature” published by IIDCYA.

Maryam Jalali and Mahbubeh Farhangi.

Published in 2009, the book traces the history

of comparative children’s literature studies, from the enthusiastic internationalism of the post-war period — which set out from the idea of a supra-national world republic of childhood — to modern comparative criticism.

Drawing on the scholarship and children’s literature of many cultures and languages, O’Sullivan outlines the constituent areas that structure the field, including contact and transfer studies, intertextuality studies, intermediality studies and image studies.

French medievalist and historian of the family and childhood Philippe Aries’ “Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life” has been rendered into Persian by Zeinab Sadat Ghani.

The theme of this extraordinary book, originally published in 1965, is the evolution of the modern conception of family life and the modern image of the nature of children.

Aries traces the evolution of the concept of childhood from the end of the Middle Ages, when the child was regarded as a small adult, to the present child-centered society, by means of diaries, paintings, games and school curricula.