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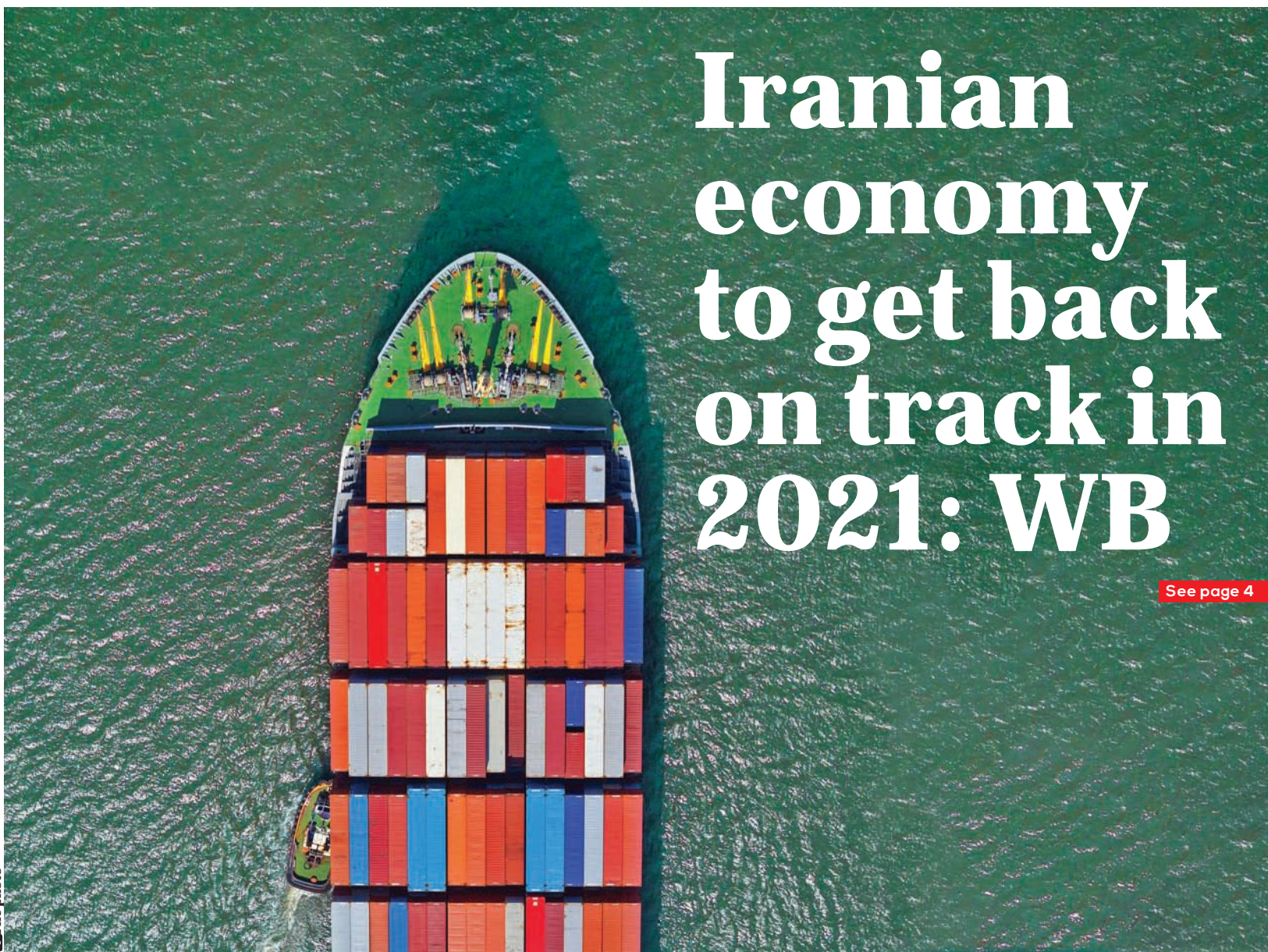
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CIA spy faces death for gathering intel on Qassem Soleimani: Iran

TEHRAN — Iranian Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili announces a CIA spy who was gathering intelligence about the IRGC Quds Force and martyr General Qassem Soleimani has been sentenced to death.

"Recently, a person named Seyed Mahmoud Mousavi-Mojed, who had connections with Mossad and CIA and

provided them with intelligence on security issues such as the Guards Quds Force and the location of martyr Qassem Soleimani in exchange for U.S. dollars was sentenced to death by the Revolution Court, and the verdict has been confirmed by the Supreme Court and will be implemented soon," Esmaili announced during a press conference on Tuesday. ➔3

Memoirs of Koniko Yamamura, mother of martyr Mohammad Babai, ready for publication

TEHRAN — Iranian writer Hamid Hesham, the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year in 2018, plans to publish memoirs of Koniko Yamamura, the mother of martyr Mohammad Babai in Iran.

Entitled "Immigrant of the Land of the Sun", the book will be published by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization.

Yamamura is the only Japanese moth-

er whose son was martyred during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, and this book will cover the memories of the mother of the martyr.

Yamamura chose the name Saba after she married an Iranian Muslim in Japan and moved to Iran afterwards, where her life was totally changed after her 19-year old son Mohammad was martyred. ➔12

Aerial survey sheds new light on vast ancient city in southern Iran

TEHRAN — An in-depth aerial survey combined by series of field research has shed new light on remnants of a vast ancient city in southern Iran, which was once in the heart of the mighty Sassanid Empire in its heyday. The discovery has opened up a new window towards the urban engineering and Persian garden arrangements of the time.

"A large Sassanid urban site has been discovered near Farashband of Fars province as the result of a remote

sensing project conducted with the help of previously-taken and new aerial photographs and preliminary field studies of archeology on a site [some small sections of which had been discovered before]," ILNA quoted archaeologist Parsa Qasemi as saying on Tuesday.

Remote sensing is the process of detecting and monitoring the physical characteristics of an area by measuring its reflected and emitted radiation at a distance (typically from satellite or aircraft). ➔8



ARTICLE

Samaneh Aboutalebi
Tehran Times journalist

Historical sites losing heritage status; who's to blame?

Every year, a number of historical monuments in Iran lose their place on the National Heritage list. Some are also at risk of losing their prestigious UNESCO status.

Although according to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, this only includes less than one percent of the monuments, it should be noted that the damage to the buildings that led to their removal from the list, maybe permanent and irreparable.

Historical monuments indicate the historical identity of each nation. They are not only used as tourist attractions but are also places for preserving ancient relics and exquisite documents and objects remained from the past. From another point of view, it's our duty to make our best to preserve them as the human treasure to be flawlessly handed over to future generations.

In the old days, unconventional constructions were not done, but now, due to technical changes and new styles of architecture and urban planning, everything has changed. And if the necessary foresight for the protection of the historical monuments is not provided, they will either be completely destroyed or their value will be reduced.

Experts have found that if the areas and elements around a valuable and registered building are left to their own, the building will gradually lose its ongoing visual value and beauty.

Therefore, defining the boundaries of historical sites seems a good solution to prevent possible damages including deliberate destruction and illegal constructions within their boundaries as well as help protecting and preserving them in a proper way.

However, sometimes the demarcation of historical monuments are violated, they are repurposed into some buildings with various usages and even their visual beauty is disrupted, which can bring serious and irreversible damages, least of which is losing their place on National Heritage list as well as UNESCO World Heritage List. ➔8

There is still considerable racial inequality throughout U.S.: philosopher

TEHRAN — Charles Taliaferro, a professor of philosophy at St. Olaf College in the U.S., says that "despite gains made by the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and the two term presidency of an Afro-American, there is still considerable racial inequality throughout the country."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Taliaferro also says, "Many have pointed out that Trump's earlier campaign slogan 'Make America great again' could be interpreted by his base as 'Make America white again'."

Following is the text of the interview with Professor Taliaferro:

■ After a black man was killed in Minneapolis, we witnessed popular protests against this violent act. What are the reasons for these protests, especially by the blacks?

A: Unfortunately, despite gains made by the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and the two term presidency of an Afro-American, there is still con-

siderable racial inequality throughout the country. Afro-Americans are under-represented in government, especially in the current administration and the Republican controlled senate, and the wealth in the USA disproportionately favors whites, especially white males. So, there is a bedrock of discontent, even anger at racial inequality; add to that the terrible, blatant police killing of an unarmed, non-resisting black male on May 25th, and you get a tidal wave of protests that overwhelmed cities across the USA. Still, there is some evidence of an important divide between persons of color and white allies protesting the unjust killing and hordes of persons who are not so much grieved at the killing, as they are taking advantage of the occasion to loot and destroy property, sometimes out of malice, sometimes out of a thirst for anarchy. I live not far from the riots in my city and have witnessed white youth stealing cars; they are certainly not doing that to protest an unjust killing. ➔7

600 rights groups urge UN probe into U.S. police brutality

By staff & agencies

Thousands of American mourners have paid tribute to George Floyd, whose death at the hands of a white U.S. police officer ignited nationwide protests against U.S. police violence and mistreatment of African Americans.

Mourners streamed into a church in Houston, Texas to honor African-American Floyd as U.S.-wide protests over his death entered a third week.

This was a final stage in a series of ceremonies paying tribute to Floyd before he is laid to rest in his hometown on Tuesday.

The 46-year-old died after Derek Chauvin, the white officer, knelt on his neck and pinned him to the ground for nine minutes in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25.

His death unleashed protests against police brutality and for racial justice in the U.S. and many world countries.

The Floyd protests, which came amid pent-up despair and anger inflicted by the coronavirus pandemic that has hit U.S. minority communities especially hard, deepened a political crisis for President Donald Trump as he threatened to deploy the military into the streets to put down the protests.

Protesters clamored for an end to police brutality, saying they were hopeful that Floyd's death would mark a turning point in race relations, police aggression and a lightning rod for change in the way police departments function across the U.S.

The Houston procession came as pressure mounted in Congress and across the United States for sweeping reforms to the justice system and U.S. police.

■ **U.S. Democrats push for police reforms**

Democrats in Congress unveiled a police reform bill. ➔10



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Churches in Tehran observe social distancing

TEHRAN — Prayer services and practices were held in three churches of Tehran on Sunday in compliance with health protocols and social distancing rules, IRNA news agency reported.

A prayer service for Christians living in Tehran was held at the Saint Sarkis Cathedral Church with the speech of the Sepuh Sargsyan, archbishop of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran.

The prayer service was also held at St Gregory the Great RC Church.

It is worth noting that the Assyrian Tuma Church was also disinfected for Christians.

The national headquarters for combating coronavirus has agreed to reopen the courtyards of the holy shrine on May 25, the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) reopened after more than two months of closure due to the coronavirus outbreak. ➔9

Six arrested in Iran over the Ukrainian plane crash incident

TEHRAN — Iranian Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili announced on Tuesday that six people have been arrested over the tragic Ukrainian plane crash incident.

"Six persons were arrested in this respect. Three of them are out on bail and three others are under arrest. This continuation of arresting after about six months shows our determination in dealing with the issue," Esmaili said at a press conference.

He also said that the families of the victims can file complaint and so far 70 families have done so.

On January 8, a Ukrainian airliner was shot down shortly after taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport.

The Ukrainian passenger plane, with 176 people aboard, was mistaken for an invading missile. The tragic incident happened a few hours after Iran fired missiles at a U.S. airbase in Iraq in retaliation for the January 3 assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. Following the retaliation attack, the Iranian military had been put on high alert.

The victims of the crash included 82 Iranians, 63 Iranian-Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on Saturday that Iran is ready to deliver the black box of the downed plane to a French or any other foreign company capable of decoding it.

"According to our investigations, Iran, Ukraine, and many other countries are not capable of decoding the black box due to the aircraft's modern technology," Mehr quoted Baharvand as saying late on Saturday. ➔2

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EU rejects any U.S. attempt to invoke Iran nuclear deal

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's top diplomat said Tuesday that since the United States has already withdrawn from an international agreement curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, it can't now use its former membership of the pact to try to impose a permanent arms embargo on the Islamic Republic.



The accord, which Iran signed with the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, China and Russia in 2015, has been unraveling since President Donald Trump pulled Washington out in 2018 and re-instituted sanctions designed to cripple Tehran under what the U.S. called a "maximum pressure" campaign.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft have said that extending a permanent UN backed arms embargo against Iran is now a top priority for Washington.

But speaking to reporters Tuesday after talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell insisted that since the U.S. has pulled out of the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, it can no longer claim to have a role in it.

"The United States has withdrawn from the JCPOA, and now they cannot claim that they are still part of the JCPOA in order to deal with this issue from the JCPOA agreement. They withdraw. It's clear. They withdraw," Borrell said.

On Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and he called for "universal condemnation" of the U.S. attempt to get the UN Security Council to impose a permanent arms embargo.

The EU sees the nuclear deal as a key pillar of regional and world security and has struggled to keep the pact alive despite U.S. pressure. Borrell is tasked with supervising the way the pact is applied and to help resolve disputes between the parties.

Iran hopes Washington will let U.S. people breathe

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has said that Iran hopes Washington will let the American people breathe.

"We have been witnessing cruelty and discrimination against a part of the American society since the time of slavery. They are shouting against oppression and the world is hearing it," ISNA quoted him as saying on Tuesday.

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

George Floyd died on May 25 after being pinned down by a white officer despite yelling: "I cannot breathe" under the knee of a white U.S. police officer.

Mousavi had earlier said that brutal killing of the African-American man was a harrowing demonstration of "systematic racism" exercised by the current rulers of the White House.

"Brutal killing of #GeorgeFloyd by Minneapolis' white man in uniform in cold blood is a harrowing demonstration of systematic racism and white supremacy glorified by the current administration," he tweeted on May 28.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on June 3 a police officer put his knee on a black man's neck and pushed until he died, noting it shows the nature of the United States' governments.

He said such crimes have frequently happened in the past, and the U.S. has done the same things in many countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries.

Pointing to the slogan of "I cannot breathe," which the U.S. people have been chanting in recent days, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "This is what the nations that have been the victims of United States' oppressive usurpation want to say from the bottom of their hearts."

'Instead of preparing sanction plan on Iran it's better the U.S. counter racism'

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The Iranian presidential chief of staff said on Tuesday that Republicans in the United States must counter racism and injustice in their own country instead of preparing sanctions plan against Iran.

"The United States' Republicans must think about preparing a plan to erase structural injustice and racism in the United States and establish peace and security for the people of this country instead of preparing sanction plan against the Iranian nation," Mahmoud Vaezi tweeted.

The congressional Republicans are about to unveil a sweeping piece of legislation outlining sanctions aimed at Iran, Russia and China, Washington Free Beacon reported Monday.

According to the magazine, what promises to be "the largest package of Iran sanctions in history" is set to be revealed on Wednesday.

The backers of this plan hope to receive some Democratic support both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, where they do not hold a majority.

Lavrov calls U.S. attempts to impose arms embargo on Iran 'ridiculous'

By staff and agency

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has called the United States' attempts to impose a permanent arms embargo against Iran "ridiculous" and "irresponsible".

In a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council circulated Monday, Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and called for "universal condemnation" of the U.S. attempts, AP reported.

He said the United States withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six major powers and now has no legal right to try to use the UN resolution endorsing the deal to indefinitely continue the arms embargo, which is set to expire on Oct. 18.

He said statements by U.S. State Department officials that the Trump administration doesn't plan to resume its commitments under the nuclear deal but plans to invoke rights allegedly deriving from the resolution endorsing it are "ridiculous and irresponsible."

Lavrov's letter went further in explaining Moscow's strong opposition to an indefinite arms embargo and U.S. use of the "snap back" provision.

"We are proceeding on the basis that the United Nations should not become hostage to the political situation in the United States, which has decided to withdraw from the plan," he said. "There are no valid grounds for raising in the Security Council the issue of an arms embargo against Iran."

Lavrov said the nuclear deal and the Security Council resolution "form a single whole" and can't be considered separately. And under Article 25 of the UN Charter, "the United States side is obliged to carry out the decisions of the Security Council, rather than undermine them through its unlawful actions," he said.

Lavrov said international courts have held



"that a party which disowns or does not fulfill its own obligations cannot be recognized as retaining the rights which it claims to derive from a relationship."

The United States, having violated the Security Council resolution and declined to implement the 2015 nuclear agreement has therefore "forfeited the possibility" of using the "snap back" provisions, the Russian chief diplomat pointed out.

Lavrov called on the U.S. to stop undermining the nuclear agreement and the UN resolution.

He said Russia and "other responsible members of the international community will continue to make every effort" to preserve the nuclear deal.

"The United States must recognize that there are neither legal nor other grounds for its policy of using Security Council mandates to pursue its own selfish interests," Lavrov said.

"We are proceeding on the basis that the United Nations should not become hostage to the political situation in the United States, which has decided to withdraw from the plan," Lavrov says in a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. "There are no valid grounds for raising in the Security Council the issue of an arms embargo against Iran."

IRGC to transfer experiences to automotive industry: commander

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, said on Tuesday that the IRGC will transfer its research experiences to automotive industry.

"We are capable in the area of electronics and can transfer our experiences," he said during a meeting with top officials of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and managing directors of the automotive industry.

During a visit to Iran Khodro projects in May, Hajizadeh said that the IRGC is prepared to transfer defense technology to auto industry.

"We have a technological industry and we are prepared to transfer it to the country's



automotive industry with no limitation," said the aerospace chief of the IRGC.

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

Six arrested in Iran over the Ukrainian plane crash incident

1 → "Iran can deliver it to a French or any other foreign company capable of decoding it but we have to make sure that there are no risks of abuse of the black box," he added.

He stated that talks with Ukraine on transferring the black box to its intended destination for decryption are underway but not finalized.

According to Baharvand, technical investigations in Iran are on their final stages and the Islamic Republic is well informed of the details of the incident.

"We do believe that decoding the black box will add nothing special to Iran's investigation about the incident," he asserted.

"Our investigations are comprehensively conducted and we know exactly what has



occurred to the flight," the deputy foreign minister added.

He also pointed out that Iran has had a warm technical cooperation with other countries on the Ukrainian flight issue and the subject has not been politicized at all.

Iran, Venezuela to continue fighting Trump's hostile policies: envoy

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Venezuela's envoy to the UN Jorge Valero has said that Iran and Venezuela will continue fighting U.S. President Donald Trump's hostile policies.

"The people of Iran and Venezuela are two brotherly nations and will continue their war against Trump's hostile policies," ISNA quoted him as saying on Tuesday in an interview with Al Mayadeen TV channel.

Valero also praised Iran's humanitarian aid to Venezuela. 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.

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.

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.

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.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has also said that arrival of Iranian oil tankers in Venezuela breaks the United States' "unacceptable" and criminal blockade.

Carlos Antonio Alcalá 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," the Venezuelan envoy said.

Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela Hojat Soltani has also 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. zever, the professor said, U.S. President Donald Trump is not willing to take such a risk.

'German ambassador has returned to Iran'

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Tuesday that Michael Klor-Berch told, the German ambassador to Tehran, has returned to Iran. Mousavi also said a new ambassador will soon replace Klor-Berch told. "As far as I know, the German ambassador left Iran due to some

personal matter and returned. If I am not mistaken, he met with an official in the [Iranian] Foreign Ministry yesterday or the before that," he said.

A new ambassador will be appointed after the necessary bureaucratic process, he noted.

EAEU ideal opportunity for enhancement of Iran-Kyrgyzstan trade: Rouhani

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called for the promotion of trade ties with Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

In a telephone conversation with his Kyrgyz counterpart Sooronbay Jeenbekov on Tuesday, Rouhani said the Eurasian Economic Union has provided a good opportunity for closer economic and trade interaction between Tehran and Bishkek.

Stressing the need for the promotion of economic relations between the two nations, he added, "We should not wait for an end to the coronavirus for economic cooperation, as we

can expand the trade exchanges and economic cooperation within the framework of the health protocols."

The president further pointed to the completion of a sports complex project in the Kyrgyz city of Osh with the help of Iranian engineers, saying Iranian companies are fully prepared to offer technical and engineering services to Kyrgyzstan.

"Iranian engineers and experts are ready for cooperation (with Kyrgyzstan) in the construction of power plants, power transmission lines, dams, and roads, and in the projects on

development of electricity facilities," he stated.

Rouhani also highlighted Iran's success in the battle with COVID-19 and production of the necessary equipment by Iranian knowledge-based companies, stressing, "Undoubtedly, in order for us to be able to protect our people against this virus, all countries should assist each other."

"Despite the restrictions and pressures imposed by the US against Iran, we have fortunately achieved good success in the fight against the virus, and could also help a number of friendly countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, in the battle with the disease."

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Iran urges Europe to stand up to U.S. unilateralism

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Parliament speaker's special aide for international affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian has urged the European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal to stand up to the U.S. unilateralism which is a "clear violation of human rights."

Amir Abdollahian met with French Ambassador to Tehran Philippe Thiebaud on Tuesday. During the meeting, he condemned U.S. sanctions that have hampered humanitarian supplies into Iran.

Criticizing the European countries' approach towards the unilateral actions of the United States, the special aide said, "European countries must stand up to the arbitrary and unilateral decisions of the United States, while showing their independence, and prevent the worst violation of human rights violations, peace, and security in the world."

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal and re-imposed illegal sanctions on Iran. Bowing to U.S. pressure, the European trio — the three European signatories to the nuclear deal — has failed to protect Tehran's business interests under the JCPOA against the American bans.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Tehran began to gradually reduce its commitments under the pact to both retaliate for Wash-



ington's departure and Europeans' failure to honor their commitments.

On January 5 of this year, Iran took a fifth and last step in reducing its commitments and said it would no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear industry, whether concerning the capacity and level of uranium enrichment, the vol-

ume of stockpiled uranium or research and development. However, Iran has insisted if the Europeans honor their obligations it will immediately reverse its decisions.

Noting that the U.S. illegal sanctions have challenged the Islamic Republic's battle against the novel coronavirus pandemic, Amir Abdollahian said, "All countries should

be treated similarly in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, especially when it comes to free access to medicine and medical equipment."

The official also pointed to the long history of Tehran-Paris relations, saying that the Islamic Republic expects France not to allow a third country to undermine such cooperation.

"The development of relations between the two countries, especially in the parliamentary arena, has an effective role in increasing the level of interaction between us," he noted.

Amir Abdollahian also expressed his condolences to the people of France and the families of the victims of the coronavirus, adding that the two countries' health departments could work together to control the deadly pandemic.

Thiebaud, for his part, referred to Iran's significant role in helping ensure stability and security in the region, saying that "France welcomes the development of friendly relations with Iran in various fields, especially parliamentary relations."

He also expressed his country's readiness for consultation and cooperation with Iran in line with solving regional issues, including fight against terrorism, stressing that boosting parliamentary ties could greatly contribute to this cause.

CIA spy faces death for gathering intel on Gen. Qassem Soleimani: Judiciary

1→ On January 3, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered airstrikes that killed General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in Baghdad's international airport.

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

Millions of mourners took to the streets in Iran's south-eastern city of Kerman, Soleimani's hometown, to attend the popular general's burial ceremony.

Addressing the mourners in Kerman, Major General Hossein Salami, chief of the IRGC, condemned the U.S. military's "cowardly" assassination.

Prior to his burial in Kerman, millions took to the streets in Ahvaz, Mashhad, Tehran and Qom to say farewell to the martyr general. Hundreds of thousands of people also mourned the martyrdom of Soleimani in the Iraqi cities of

Kadimiya, Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf.

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

Subsequently, Tehran warned the United States against any act of military action, asserting that the U.S. will face the "fiercest response" if it makes the slightest move against Iran. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran starts no war, but teaches lessons to those who do.

"Don't be misled by usual warmongers, again," Zarif warned Trump.

Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, armed forces chief of staff, also said Iran has no intention to attack U.S. forces in the region but warned if the Americans have an "ill will against our country's security" or make the slightest move against Iran "they will face our most fierce reactions".



233 Indian citizens stuck in Iran due to coronavirus sent home



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — 233 Indian citizens who were not able to return to India due to the coronavirus outbreak were transferred to their country, according to a report.

"According to diplomatic agreements, yesterday and in the first stage, 233 Indian citizens, who were not able to return to their country due to the spread of COVID-19 and the restrictions it created, were transferred to India through Bandar Abbas's Shahid Bahonar Port," ISNA reported on Tuesday.

According to The Hindu, Indian Navy's INS Shardul departed from the port of Bandar Abbas on Monday evening with 233 Indian nationals who are being evacuated

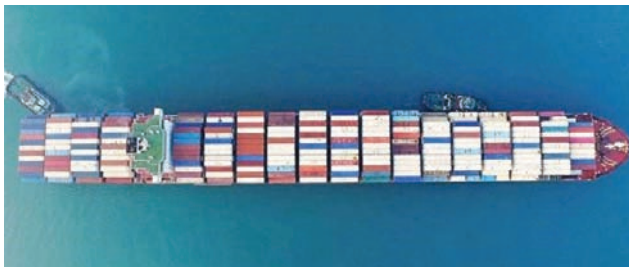
under Operation Samudra Setu.

The ship is expected to reach Porbandar in Gujarat on June 11, the Indian Navy said.

The Indian Mission in Iran had prepared the list of Indian citizens to be evacuated and also facilitated their embarkation after requisite medical screening.

The Indian Navy said in a statement that social distancing norms have been ensured onboard INS Shardul and it has been specially provisioned for evacuation, including embarkation of additional medical staff, doctors, hygienists, nutritionists, medical stores, rations, personal protective equipment, face-masks and lifesaving gear.

U.S. sanctions on Iranian shipping network take effect



TEHRAN (Tasnim) — U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran's shipping network took effect on Monday, months after they were announced in December.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a statement on Monday warned commercial and maritime industries, governments and others that they risked U.S. sanctions if they did business with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and its Shanghai-based subsidiary, E-Sail Shipping Company.

"These designations serve as a clear warning that anyone doing business with or otherwise supporting IRISL or E-Sail are exposed to potential

sanctions and risk contributing to Iran's proliferation-sensitive programs, including its nuclear and missile programs," Pompeo said in the statement, Reuters reported.

He also asked governments around the world to investigate activity by the shipping entities in their ports and seas, encouraging them to take appropriate action to stop the activity.

The State Department accused IRISL of transporting items related to what it called "Iran's ballistic missile and military programs", as well as other "proliferation-sensitive items".

Judiciary official: Some European countries providing safe haven for Iranian criminals

TEHRAN (FNA) — A high-ranking judiciary official said some European states are not honest in their claim about supporting the Iranian nation as they provide shelter for financial and security criminals.

Iranian Judiciary's deputy for international and human rights affairs, Ali Baqeri, made the remarks on Monday after the Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi issued an order urging strong pursuit of those financial criminals who have fled the country.

"Some Western countries use all means to support those who have committed security and economic crimes and, at the same time, are impudently claiming that they back the Iranian nation," Baqeri said.

He stressed that some European countries not only refuse to extradite the fugitive criminals, but also grant them refuge and citizenship.

"These countries are not just a safe haven for terrorists who have the blood of the Iranian nation on their hands, but also are the shelters for corrupt individuals and embezzlers, who have stolen the Iranian people's money," Baqeri noted. The Iranian Judiciary official then censured the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for its biased reports in support of corrupt elements escaping from Iran.

Instead of shedding crocodile tears, the BBC must "urge the British government to give response to all, including the Iranian nation, as why it has turned into the main refuge for violators of the Iranian people's rights," including their



economic rights, he reiterated.

Earlier on Monday, Iranian Judiciary Chief Seyed Ebrahim Raisi slammed western countries' role in providing safe haven for economic criminals, and urged the prosecutor general to pursue these fugitives' return to the country.

"One of the examples of injustice and major oppressions against mankind is that a few countries, claiming to struggle against organized corruption and money-laundering, have provided shelter for economic criminals and their dirty money," said Raisi on Monday.

He, meanwhile, ordered Iran's Prosecutor General and

Judiciary's deputy chief for international affairs to seriously follow up the efforts to return fugitive financial criminals to the country.

Raisi urged those facing charges to surrender to justice and be sure that they cannot escape it.

In relevant remarks in June, 2016, then Iranian Justice Minister Mostafa Pourmohammadi lashed out at the Canadian government's lack of cooperation in the case of the former Iranian Bank Melli Chief, Mahmoud Reza Khavari, who fled from Iran to Canada during an embezzlement scandal.

"Unfortunately, although Canada is a member of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)", it only speaks in words, doesn't show necessary cooperation, is not committed and has not rendered any cooperation (on Khavari's case) yet, Pourmohammadi told reporters in Tehran.

He called on the Interpol to take action and help repatriate Khavari to Iran.

Mahmoud Reza Khavari, a former Iranian banker, fled to Canada after a \$2.6 billion financial fraud came to light in 2011. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison and the Interpol issued a warrant for him in December 2017.

Marjan Sheikholeslami, accused of embezzling public funds in Iran in two separate cases, has also fled to Canada. In 2010, amid the international sanctions on Iran, she founded various companies in Iran and Turkey to help Iran bypass the sanctions and sell its petrochemical products, but has reportedly refused to pay back the government's money.

Ghalibaf: Armed forces' power lies in their popularity

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on Monday that the power of the Iranian armed forces lies in their popularity.



Ghalibaf made the remarks on Monday evening during a meeting with a number of senior armed forces commanders.

During the meeting, he described the armed forces as a stronghold of security for Iranians, Mehr reported.

The Islamic Republic has benefited from a powerful authority which is rarely found anywhere else and it is all due to the dedications of brave soldiers and commanders, he commented.

Ghalibaf further pointed out that popularity is the key to the power of the armed forces as well as its deterrence power against the enemy.

Ghalibaf, the former national police chief and mayor of Tehran, added, "If people become more involved in economy and industry, we will make more progress in this regard, as we did in the defense arena."

He also expressed hope that the Iranian parliament can enact effective laws regarding the defense field with the cooperation of the armed forces.

For his part, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri said the new parliament includes many veterans and reliable forces, expressing hope that the new MPs would resolve many key issues.

The top general also called for a reform of the law on using guns after 26 years, and a revision of the law on compulsory military service.

U.S. should give up wrong approach on Iran deal: China

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The U.S. should give up its wrong approach toward the Iran nuclear deal, says Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying.

"I'd like to reiterate that the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and maximum pressure on Iran is the root cause of the current Iranian nuclear crisis," she said during a press conference on Monday.

"The only correct way to resolve this issue is to uphold and implement the JCPOA," Hua said, adding, "The U.S. should give up its wrong approach, avoid obstructing other parties' implementation of the nuclear deal, and leave room for diplomatic endeavors."

Hua stated that China supports greater dialogue and cooperation between Iran and the IAEA to find a proper solution to ensure IAEA monitoring on the basis of upholding previous consensus.

"In the meantime, we hope all parties can support the above-mentioned diplomatic endeavors and do things that lead to de-escalation rather than escalation," the Chinese spokesperson remarked.

"We also believe the IAEA will properly resolve the matter in an objective and impartial manner," she added.

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

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

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, said the report proves continuation of the agency's verification activities in Iran.

In comments on Friday night, Gharibabadi said the report also shows a suspension of Tehran's commitment to JCPOA.

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

Asked to comment on IAEA's Friday reports, Hua said China noted the latest IAEA reports regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. "The reports confirmed that Iran has maintained the agency's verification and monitoring activities in the country, that Iran has not taken the fifth step of reducing commitments and has not diverted declared nuclear materials for other purposes."

The reports also suggest that Iran would like to engage in more dialogue and cooperation with the IAEA on fulfilling its obligations, she said.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, she continued, China is always committed to upholding the JCPOA, endorsing multilateralism, safeguarding peace and stability in the Middle East and championing international order based on international law.

"We are ready to carry out closer coordination with relevant parties and continue making efforts for the political and diplomatic solution of the Iranian nuclear issue," the spokesperson concluded.

Russian diplomat says U.S. failed policy against Iran goes unabated

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** - Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has slammed the United States for continuing its failed policy against Iran.

"The failed policy continues. And the problem is not only the lack of any creativity but the total lack of strategic thinking and vision," he tweeted on Tuesday.

His comments came as the U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran's shipping network took effect on Monday.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a statement on Monday warned commercial and maritime industries, governments and others that they risked U.S. sanctions if they did business with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and its Shanghai-based subsidiary, E-Sail Shipping Company, according to Reuters.

He also asked governments around the world to investigate activity by the shipping entities in their ports and seas, encouraging them to take appropriate action to stop the activity.

"The (U.S.) failed policy continues. And the problem is not only the lack of any creativity but the total lack of strategic thinking and vision," Ulyanov tweets.

TSE witnesses 578% growth in 2 years

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—The value of shares in Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is the main stock exchange of Iran, has risen 578 percent over the past two years, IRNA reported. TSE's worth of shares stood at 26 trillion rials (about \$619 million) at the end of the first month of current Iranian calendar year (April 19), which shows 38.5 percent growth from the year start (March 20). The growth trend in Iran's stock market was outstanding in the past Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19).



While the prosperity was witnessed in the four major stock exchanges of the country, i.e. Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), in the past year, TSE, which is the major one among the mentioned four exchanges, experienced a huge boom.

TEDPIX, the main index of TSE, that had closed at 178,000 points at the end of the year 1397, climbed to 512,000 points at the

end of last year, and through surpassing half a million points it registered a new record in the exchange's existence.

Many capital market experts and also those active in this market believe that Tehran Stock Exchange experienced a golden era in the past year, as the volume of trades and the number of shareholders in this market during the previous year was not at all comparable with those of its preceding years.

While the value of trades in TSE jumped 2.6 folds in the past year, return on investment (ROI) reached 180 percent in this market, registering the highest annual growth in the exchange's history.

Different factors contributed to the past year's prominent success in the stock market.

One important factor was the proper ground laid in the stock market and providing a more appropriate condition for traders, for example through setting better regulations and applying some new financial instruments.

People's elevated knowledge about the stock market was another contributing factor in this due.

And the other factor was the status of parallel markets, such as those of foreign currency, gold coin, and housing in the past year that made making investment in the stock market a better and more profitable choice for the investors.

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

We have been witnessing new record highs continuously posted by the exchange since the year start.

On April 18, TEDPIX registered its highest-ever daily jump, as it gained 23,219 points to stand at 668,981.

It also experienced its highest-ever weekly growth in the week ended on April 24, while the index rose 96,160 points to 741,923.

Iran's stock market also witnessed its largest-ever initial public offering (IPO) on April 15, when Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta) offered eight billion shares, which account for 10 percent of its stakes, for sales in Tehran Stock Exchange.

Anticipating that the TSE's trend of growth will be also continued in the current year is endorsed as the government is strongly determined to carry out its privatization plan through offering the shares of some state-owned organizations in the stock market during this year.

New bridge in Iran-Turkmenistan border opened

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami inaugurated a new border bridge between Iran and Turkmenistan in Sarakhs northeast Iran via video conference on Monday, ILNA reported.

The Turkmen Minister of Construction and Architecture Rahim Gandymov, as well as local governors of Iran's Khorasan Razavi Province and Turkmenistan's Ahal Region also watched on as the land bridge was opened to connect namesake cities of Sarakhs on the two sides of the border.



Speaking in the opening ceremony, Eslami said the bridge would play a key role in boosting trade between Tehran and Ashgabat while it would also help Iran expand its economic ties with countries in the Central Asia region.

"I am sure that we can benefit from this [bridge] to strengthen the [two sides'] economies, trade, and commerce and open up new horizons for development," he stressed.

The implementation of this project, comes as Iran is developing relations with the members of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) under the framework of the body's infrastructure and development plans, and also following the Ashgabat transit agreement, as well as the agreement between the Caspian littoral states.

This bridge is the second joint border development project between the two countries of Iran and Turkmenistan which has been constructed with the aim of expanding and developing transit as well as increasing road transport.

The opening of the Sarakhs Bridge comes as Iran and Turkmenistan has yet to fully open their borders after more than three months of closure over the new coronavirus pandemic.

Iran has erected disinfection installations at the border, including several 20-meter-long tunnels, to ensure shipments passing through the frontier are free of any virus.

According to Eslami, the complete installation of disinfection equipment in the border points is an indication of Iran and Turkmenistan's efforts and determination for reopening borders and resuming trade in the region.

Iranian economy to get back on track in 2021: WB

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—The World Bank has predicted that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) will increase by 2.1 percent in 2021 after experiencing a 5.3 percent fall in the current year due to the negative impacts of the coronavirus outbreak.

"Iran's GDP is expected to shrink again in 2020, by 5.3 percent, partly reflecting the effects of the large-scale COVID-19 outbreak on domestic consumption and the services sectors (e.g., tourism)," WB said in its latest report on the global economy dubbed "Global Economic Prospects" released on Monday.

Underlining the downward trend of inflation among West Asian countries, World Bank stated that "Iran's inflation has been falling on a year-by-year basis, although it remains elevated at about 20 percent."

The bank's data show that 2020 is going to be the last year with a negative economic growth rate for Iran since in 2021 Iran's



economic growth rate is projected at 2.1 percent.

Based on the WB report, the worst economic performance this year is going to be in the Eurozone. Economic growth in the region by the end of 2020 will fall by 9.1 percent. The U.S. economy will also grow negatively by 6.1 percent.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic shutdown in advanced economies and other parts of the globe have disrupted billions of lives and are jeopardizing decades of development progress, the bank said.

Based on the report, the pandemic will shrink global GDP by 5.2 percent in 2020, the worst since World War II and nearly three times as steep as the 2009 global recession.

Although the World Bank projects a rebound of 4.2 percent in 2021, it warned that an "even worse scenario is possible" if the health crisis takes longer than expected to contain.

Iran ready to restart transit ties with Central Asian countries

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said that his country is ready to restart transit relation with the Central Asian countries, IRNA reported.

Iranian government aims to facilitate trade and transit with the regional countries while complying with the health protocols to combat coronavirus outbreak, the minister stressed.

To this end, all required disinfection equipment have been installed in the road and railway terminals on the borders, Eslami noted.

While Iran's land borders are reopening, the country is resuming trade and transit with the neighbors and regional countries.

On June 6, Iran and Iraq's Kurdistan region resumed trade via land border, which had been stopped for several weeks due to the coronavirus outbreak.

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

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

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

The same day, the land borders between Iran and Turkey reopened after more than three months, and 150 Iranian trucks entered Turkey in a single day, as announced by the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Rouhollah Latifi said that the mentioned



trucks entered Turkey via three land borders of Bazargan, Sero, and Razi.

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

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

Also on Monday, Iran's Mehran crossing on the border with Iraq, which had been closed since early March due to the outbreak of coronavirus, was reopened, Latifi announced.

The border crossing resumed operation following several rounds of talks with Iraqi officials, according to the IRICA spokesman.

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.

Exports from Iran to Afghanistan hit \$341m in 2 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Iran exported 1.06 million tons of commodities worth \$341 million to Afghanistan during the first two months of the current Iranian year (March 20-May 20), Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) published on its website citing the data released by Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Exports from Iran to Afghanistan witnessed a 3.5-percent rise in tonnage and eight percent decline in value compared to last year's corresponding period.

According to IRICA, major commodities exported to Afghanistan during the period included fruit and vegetable, foodstuff, industrial goods and construction materials.

Tomatoes topped the list of exports with over \$26 million, followed by iron bars with \$23 million.

Pastry and chocolates with \$10.2 million, oil derivatives with \$8 million, cream with \$7.67 million, urea with \$7.6 million, cement with \$7.61 million, fruit juice with \$6.5 million, watermelon with \$6 million and apples with \$5.8 million followed the list.

Notably, \$850,000 worth of day-old chickens were exported to Afghanistan during the period.

Trade continues despite coronavirus pandemic

Iranian border crossings of Milak, Mahiroud and Dogharoun linking the country to Afghanistan are open for trade despite the coronavirus pandemic.

According to chairman of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, Afghanistan has lifted all restrictions on the import of Iranian products that had been placed after the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Iranian truck drivers carrying goods to Afghanistan are easily granted entry visa,



Hossein Salimi said.

The value of annual trade between the two countries stands at around \$3 billion, he said.

As previously announced by the 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 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.

'Industrial parks should improve infrastructure capacities for surge in production'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) says in order to realize the current Iranian calendar year's motto which is "surge in production", the infrastructures should be improved in the country's industrial parks, IRIB reported.

Making the remarks during a visit to the northwestern East Azarbaijan Province, Mohsen Salehinia said 1500 inactive production units are set to be revived in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), of which 90 units will be in East Azarbaijan.

Underlining the importance of domestic production, the official said: "In the current situation of the country, production is very important and by maintaining production we can play a role in the country's economic growth; therefore, all industrial units are trying to improve production."

Referring to the support provided by the government



for the development of infrastructures in industrial parks, he said: "In order to fulfill the slogan of surge in production, infrastructure and raw material supply issues must be resolved quickly."

PMO, CFZO ink MOU to implement free zone regulations in Chabahar

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Chabahar Free Zone Organization (CFZO) to implement the laws and regulations of free zones in the two ports of Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti in Chabahar.

The MOU was signed by PMO Head Mohammad Rastad and CFZO Managing Director Abdolrahim Kordi in Tehran on Tuesday.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Rastad underlined the important role of Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti ports in Chabahar free zone in southeastern Iran, saying: "The Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the aim of expanding mutual cooperation, accelerating maritime transport services, and avoiding interference and parallel work in these activities."

Benefiting from facilities and legal advantages of free zones in the two ports of Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari is an important achievement for the development of trade activities in this zone, he said.

According to Rastad, joining of Chabahar port to the country's free zones will improve the competitiveness of this

port and provide new opportunities for the development of investment in this area.

From now on, the import of raw materials and production activities through Shahid Beheshti port is going to increase significantly and this will make it possible to increase the port's capacity from 8.5 million tons up to 23 million tons per year, the official said.

Rastad furthered underlined the signing of this MOU as an important step towards the development of Makran coast and promotion of the eastern transit lines and said: "We hope that by enforcing these rules and regulations, more incentives will be created for importers, producers, exporters and investors in the region."

Managing director of Chabahar Free Zone also considered the signing of this memorandum a very important measure in the country's current economic situation, saying it would be very effective in trade and commercial prosperity of the region.

Kordi further emphasized that this MOU will facilitate the process of investment and port activities in Chabahar free zone.

Located on the Makran Coast of Sistan-Baluchestan



PMO Head Mohammad Rastad (L) and Managing Director of Chabahar Free Zone Organization Abdolrahim Kordi signed an MOU in Tehran on Tuesday.

province in southeastern Iran, Chabahar is officially designated as a Free Trade and Industrial Zone by Iran's government.

Due to its free trade zone status, the city has increased in significance in international trade in recent years.

Monthly consumption of CNG falls 40% in Iran

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Consumption of compressed natural gas (CNG) in Iran dropped 40 percent during the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-April 19) from its preceding month, IRNA reported.

According to Mohammad-Hossein Bagheri, the acting operator of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC)'s CNG projects, the consumption of the mentioned fuel declined due to the travel restrictions following the coronavirus outbreak.

"With the reduction of restrictions and the reopening of most businesses, we are expecting an increase in CNG consumption and a return to pre-corona levels," Bagheri told IRNA.

Noting that CNG in the country had increased to nearly 24 million cubic meters (mcm) back in February following the implementation of the gasoline rationing scheme, the official said following the coronavirus outbreak and implementation of restrictions on travel in March, average CNG consumption fell to 20.8 mcm per day.

According to the official, CNG consumption



tion increased again in the second month of Ordibehesht (April 20-May 19) after the travel bans were lifted.

Iran's CNG consumption stood at 19 mcm per day before the implementation of the fuel rationing scheme.

In mid-November 2019, the Iranian

government started rationing of subsidized gasoline and increased fuel prices as it plans to use the revenue for supporting under-privileged families.

There are currently 2,400 CNG stations across Iran that supply 22 percent of the country's fuel basket.

Iranian Oil Ministry considers CNG as the national fuel, therefore, in order to increase the share of this fuel in the country's energy basket, it is planned to turn 1.46 million public vehicles into dual-fuel cars, which can increase CNG consumption by 10 mcm per day.

Back in May, NIOPDC announced that the necessary infrastructure is prepared for developing the CNG sector to be able to distribute 30 mcm per day of gas across the country.

"The Oil Ministry and National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company have created the infrastructure for the development of the CNG industry, only in the conversion sector development measures should be taken," an official with the company told Shana.

Hamid Qasemi Dahcheshmeh noted that Oil Ministry has been supportive of the industry since very beginning through supporting the production of CNG-powered engines and converting automobile plants to produce dual-fuel cars in this regard.

"In the previous years, 920,000 vehicles were converted through the Oil Ministry's direct contracts," he added.

95% of population in Iran supplied with natural gas

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) says that the national gas transferring network covers 95 percent of the country's population, IRNA reported.

Making the remarks in a video conference with some NIGC directors on Tuesday, Hassan Montazer Torbati said that 95 percent is a big figure.

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

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

Gas is supplied to 97 percent of people



in the urban areas and 82 percent of people in the rural regions, according to Torbati.

Last month, the NIGC's former dispatching director said the transmission

capacity of the national gas network has risen to one billion cubic meters per day (bcm/d).

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

Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana further mentioned the South Pars gas field's new platforms going operational in the current year and noted that with the increase of the national gas network's capacity the new production capacity from the South Pars platforms won't be idle.

"The country's [natural] gas production capacity is going to be increased to one billion cubic meters per day and now the national network is capable of transmitting this capacity," he said.

A glut of diesel is quietly undermining oil price resurgence

In all the hullabaloo of OPEC+ prolonging the deepest production cuts in history, it's easy to overlook ominous signals for oil prices -- and the wider economy -- that are emanating from the diesel market, Bloomberg reported.

The world's largest crude oil producers agreed on Saturday that they would extend collective output curbs, effectively keeping 1/10th of supply off the market for another month. While the measures may be tightening the global crude market, potentially driving prices higher, they do almost nothing to address grim margins that refineries are earning when selling diesel, one of the most important petroleum products that the industry churns out.

"The world's awash with diesel," said Alan Gelder, vice president for refining, chemicals and oil markets at consulting firm Wood Mackenzie Ltd. "There's just loads of it everywhere."

Away from Europe, where diesel often powers cars, the fuel is also widely consumed by industry: things like freight to move goods around, as well as in construction and agriculture.

And while demand has recovered strongly in Asia -- in particular China -- since the coronavirus first broke out, markets in Europe and the U.S. are barely being propped up by increased online shopping and need for delivery. The economic recession means there's been a much bigger hit to the amount of freight that's being moved around.

The bigger problem right now, though, is supply. Refineries -- particularly in Europe and the U.S. -- are trying to make as little jet fuel as possible because demand from the aviation industry still remains far below where it was before the pandemic struck. And that means producing more diesel. Similarly, refineries cannot meet a recovery in gasoline consumption without boosting their overall processing rates -- and that too brings more diesel.

■ High-yield problem

In the U.S., where it's a seasonally weak consumption period anyway, diesel supplied, the main measure of demand, last week hit the lowest weekly level in 21 years, tumbling to just 2.72 million barrels a day, according to the Energy Information Administration. At the same time, stockpiles have grown for nine straight weeks to sit at the highest since 2010.

At the start of the pandemic, diesel was one of the few relative positives in oil markets as the world began going into



coronavirus lockdowns. The trucking industry was still running at full speed to stock up supermarkets. Now, margins on making the fuel in the U.S. are hovering near a 10-year low.

"The bright spot has shifted from diesel to gasoline," said Stephen Jew, director of global refining and marketing at IHS Markit. "The refineries are profit driven and can adapt quickly, and they will always try to find the bright spot. They will be chasing the gasoline."

It's not possible for refineries collectively to completely stop making diesel and jet fuel, especially if they increase runs to meet demand for gasoline. So a diesel glut will likely linger until there is a broad economic recovery, including a resumption in air travel.

"In our mind, the problem gets worse before it gets better," Jew said.

That recovery is likely a long way off. Jet fuel demand may not return to pre-virus levels until 2026, according to Fitch Solutions. That means refineries might still need to make diesel at the expense of jet fuel, further adding to stockpiles of the former and thereby reducing its profitability.

While demand in Asia might be better, even that market will soon face challenges as refineries return from maintenance programs and ramp up operating rates.

The region's diesel markets may head the way of the rest of the world if the recovery in demand isn't as strong as expected, and if China increases exports on the back of stronger export markets, said Sandra Octavia, oil analyst at Energy Aspects.

Asian refineries may ramp up runs in July, as seen by their flurry of July-arrival crude purchases, she said. Stronger prices also mean the region will continue to attract supplies from India. "That's a lot of pressure on demand recovery to perform," said Octavia.

Increased supplies from Asia, which typically sends much of its excess to Europe, would further test a diesel market that's already struggling.

China to cut teapot refining capacity as plans for mega complex

China's oil hub Shandong has embarked on a plan to shut down capacity of half a million barrels per day shared among small, independent refiners to make way for a giant complex that should spur economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

Reuters exclusively reported last week that China, the world's largest oil consumer after the United States, was going ahead with the \$20 billion Yulong Petrochemical complex.

The planned 400,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) refinery and 3 million ton-per-year ethylene plant in Yantai, Shandong, the country's hub for independent refineries, sometimes referred to as teapot refineries, had long failed to get approval as China struggled with excess refining capacity.

The drop in demand because of coronavirus lockdowns, as well as expectations climate concerns will reduce conventional motor fuel use, is likely to increase over-supply in the near term.

But state approval was granted last week for a new mega refining complex, weighted towards petrochemical production whose demand is expected to be relatively robust.

That has prompted Shandong to accelerate a plan dating from 2018 to close 500,000 bpd in capacity over the next two-to-three years, Shandong-based industry officials and consultancies said.

That amounts to 20 percent of Shandong's capacity, made up of more than 60 small plants.

The Shandong government, which has yet to make public any details of the restructuring, did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

■ 'Dead serious'

Wang Zhao, senior analyst with consultancy Sublime Information Group, said Shandong will first target plants of less than 60,000 bpd, especially those with financial losses, out of about a dozen that have shown interest in compensation.

"The government is dead serious about restructuring, but its execution hinges on how smoothly the relevant parties reach a deal on compensation," said Wang, who is based in Shandong's Zibo city.

The first closures would include Binyang Ranhua, Zhonghai Jingxi Chemical, Yuhuang Chemical and Jinshi Asphalt, with combined crude distillation capacity of just over 200,000 bpd, Wang said. A separate Shandong oil source, who asked not to be named, shared the view.



The semi-official China Chemical News reported last week the Shandong government has asked creditors of the targeted plants, mostly state-run banks, to stop chasing debt repayments and urged compensation to be prioritized for relocating workers and investing in new projects.

Jinshi Asphalt, a bitumen-producing unit with capacity to refine 20,000 bpd of crude, based in Binzhou, northern Shandong, is expected to start closing imminently.

"We've received the first payment as compensation to shut down our crude oil unit," a manager, who declined to be named because of company policy, told Reuters. "Dismantling will start soon."

He did not specify the amount of compensation.

Shandong sources said the government had proposed last year a fee of 800 yuan for each ton of capacity, taking the total expense to 20 billion yuan (\$2.82 billion) for closing 500,000-bpd.

Binyang Ranhua, also based in Binzhou, has agreed to dismantle its 88,000 bpd unit, and will channel the funding into new chemical units, a plant executive said.

Of the others expected to be among the first to close, Zhonghai Jingxi Chemical declined to comment and Yuhuang Chemical could not be reached for comment.

■ Not all keen to take the cash

Some refineries are reluctant to shut capacity.

"We were all legal entities when we started, and our plant is running well. Why should we close down?" said an executive with a refiner based in Dongying on Shandong's northern coast.

Shandong in any case is expected to proceed with caution.

"The main preoccupation for local authorities is likely to be employment and tax revenue, so protecting these through the consolidation process will be the top priority," Michal Meidan, director of the China Energy Program at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, said.

Oil industry's gas flaring down 25%

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) says the oil industry's flare gas waste in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) declined by 25 percent compared to the preceding year.

In a message commemorating World Environment Day, Masoud Karbasian said: "One of the important measures taken by the company in the field of environment is to prepare reports on the emission of flare gas wastes, which shows a 25 percent decrease compared to the previous year."

He pointed to the NIOC's programs for environmental protection in the previous year and added: "One of these measures was the implementation of a project to collect 18 to 20 million cubic meters per day of flare gases by National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC).



According to the official, Maroon Petrochemical Company and Persian Gulf Bid Boland Gas Refinery invested in the project with the aim of supplying petrochemical industry's feedstock until the Iranian calendar year 1401 (starts in March 2022).

In order to achieve a desirable level of environment protection and sustainable development, NIOC has prepared various programs, the official said.

Realizing these programs is not possible except with the cooperation and coordination among different organizations in the industry and with the support of managers, workers and employees of this industry, he stressed.

Back in August 2019, Hamid Chitchian, a former minister who currently advises the government on energy issues, said the country had major projects planned to prevent flare gas waste.

According to Chitchian, at the time about 16 billion cubic meters (over 52 billion cubic feet) of flare gas was burning in the country that could be used for various economic purposes, including power generation.

Later that month, the NISOC Head Ahmad Mohammadi said that the country's southern oil fields will stop wasting flare gas within three years.

According to Mohammadi, the controversial practice of burning off gases through stacks at oil fields, will stop by 2022 in at least four locations south of Iran based on deals signed with two major Iranian companies.

Commercializing flare gas would enable Iran to diversify energy resources for power plants and industrial units while it can also be exported to other countries.

Saudi Arabia says 'no room whatsoever' for noncompliance over OPEC+ production cuts

OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia and non-OPEC leader Russia said Monday that the success of the energy alliance's latest production cuts relies on all members complying with the terms of the deal, CNBC reported.

The statement comes shortly after OPEC and non-OPEC allies, known as OPEC+, agreed to extend its deepest round of production cuts in history to take roughly 10 percent of oil supplies off the market through to the end of next month.

"We have no room whatsoever for lack of conformity," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said during a virtual press conference on Monday.

Those that failed to conform to the OPEC+ deal in May and June should compensate with extra cuts from July through to September, Prince Abdulaziz said.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said via a translator that he fully agreed with his Saudi counterpart. "I can say that overall conformity levels are extremely high, considering the magnitude of the cuts and how bad the situation is."

"We have spent a lot of time discussing full conformity and how this will be compensated because the success of the deal and the success of our efforts rests on all countries doing their part," he added.

International benchmark Brent crude futures traded at \$41.72 a barrel, down around 1.3 percent, while West Texas Intermediate futures stood at \$38.88, over 1.6 percent lower.

Both contracts pared gains after rising to their highest level since March 6 earlier in the session, climbing to \$43.41 and \$40.44, respectively.

■ What has been agreed?

Oil prices have surged since some of the world's most powerful oil producers brought in a production cut of 9.7 million barrels per day from May 1. The move was designed to prop up prices at a time when the coronavirus pandemic had led to an unprecedented demand shock in energy markets.

The International Energy Agency estimated that roughly 25 percent of demand was drained from the market in April as confinement measures brought mobility to a near standstill for billions of people across the globe.

The output cuts from OPEC+ were initially scheduled to be scaled back to 7.7 million barrels per day from July 1 through to the end of the year.

But the new deal, secured over the weekend, means the group will now cut 9.6 million barrels per day through to the end of July. The figure is 100,000 barrels per day lower than the previous agreement because Mexico said it remained committed to the terms of the original deal and subsequent reduction in cuts.

Saudi Arabia's energy minister insisted on Saturday that the actions of noncompliant members of the energy alliance, such as Iraq, Nigeria, Angola and Kazakhstan, would be "vital" if OPEC+ is to restore confidence in the "unity and effectiveness" of the group.

Nonetheless, speaking at Monday's news conference, Prince Abdulaziz was unequivocal when it came to the future of the energy alliance.

"OPEC+ is until death do us part," he said.

The group will review its production policy on a monthly basis, with the next group meeting scheduled to take place on June 18.

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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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MBS wholly-owned subsidiary of Trump's U.S. incorporation: experts

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

In an interview with the Tehran Times, international energy experts Chris Cook and Mahmood Khaghani answered several questions on the current status quo of the international oil market and its major role players. The experts also discussed the current conflicts among the petrodollar earners, i.e. the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Russia, and if the golden age of oil is over.

The full text of the interview follows:

■ Since the U.S. started exports of gas and oil shale, it has been seeking to become the main role player in the world energy market. What policies were applied by American officials in this regard and how successful they have been?

Chris Cook: The U.S. has immense reserves of oil which have a very high cost of extraction, in particular the hard cost of carbon fuel used in its production. However, the U.S. has been able to use two techniques unavailable to other nations to massively increase the domestic production of high-cost shale oil and gas. Firstly, Wall Street investment banks could and did support the oil price with the assistance of BP and more recently Statoil/Equinor from 2001 onwards (which producers will always do when they can) through the Intercontinental Exchange market platform. Secondly, the resulting inflated prices and U.S. agreement with Saudi Arabia and GCC countries [Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf] to invest Petrodollar surpluses in U.S. Treasury bills which indirectly funded the U.S. bank lending to finance the wave of shale oil and gas production.

Mr. Khaghani: As many observers have highlighted on several occasions, President Obama administration policies resulted in the rapid expansion of shale oil production during the Wall Street manufactured 2009-2014 oil price bubble was only a temporary expedient to rid the U.S. of reliance on Saudi oil through his energy strategy of 'Transition through Gas' (Qatari, Iranian and Caspian) to a sustainable economy.

■ How do you think of President Trump's energy policy?

Mr. Cook: President Trump's strategy of 'Energy Dominance', reversed Obama's strategy, re-inflated the oil price over \$60/bbl and once more poured debt finance into shale oil and gas development, which had by then drastically reduced its cost base and productivity. The outcome is that the U.S. has overtaken all other oil producers, but this flood of light shale oil quality oil exceeds U.S. capacity to consume light oil products such as gasoline. This necessitates export, which in turn creates an opportunity for a U.S. Gulf oil benchmark to become dominant.

■ Why the U.S. is pressuring Europe to stop gas purchases from Russia and sanctioned Iranian gas?

Mr. Khaghani: Well, you don't need to be an energy expert to release that as a by-product, the U.S. has immense excess gas which it can either flare off or dump onto the global market, which is why they are strong-arming European buyers to buy it with threats of sanctions on Russian supplies and sanctioning investment and development of Iranian natural gas resources.

■ What about the ISIS role in the region's energy issues and the terrorist group's relationship with the U.S. energy



policies?

Chris Cook: Good question and you may also ask how ISIS helped the U.S. to hit its energy targets. In my opinion, ISIS had a disruptive effect on Iraqi supplies and reduced Syrian oil production. While this clearly tightened the oil market supply, I do not believe the result was material.

■ How do you see Trump's dominance in Saudi Arabia influencing OPEC's role in the oil market?

Mr. Cook: "I see Saudi Arabia under Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) as essentially a wholly-owned subsidiary of Trump's U.S. Incorporation, and therefore; with a consolidated interest in sustaining global oil prices at the highest level the market will bear. Meanwhile, this consolidated group ruthlessly ensures that any competitors will access the market (if at all in Iran's case) on inferior terms."

Mr. Khaghani shared his view with Mr. Cook. Both view the relationship through a commercial business lens.

It seems that Russia-Saudi Arabia conflict has influenced shale prices, yes?

Mr. Cook: There is a general misconception that there is a Russia-Saudi Arabia conflict, when in fact, the true conflict is between the U.S. and Russia, and Saudi Arabia is merely a U.S. proxy. It is self-evident that the U.S. would never act against their own interest in high prices and it, therefore, follows that this is a trumped-up imaginary 'conflict' used to deflect blame for inflated prices and which is feed it to a credulous, uncritical and complicit media.

■ What about the coronavirus' influence on the U.S. desired targets?

Mr. Cooke: Simply put, the coronavirus demand shock, which is estimated to have reduced product demand by some 30m barrels/day, is probably the greatest global economic shock ever seen. In our analysis, the U.S. has since September 2019 put in place an oil price peg between \$50 and \$60/barrel by literally basing the U.S. dollar on shale oil reserves. But the coronavirus essentially killed physical oil price formation, in a similar way to the discontinuity in physical oil markets in late 2008 when trust in the banking system dried up oil trade finance. This literally blew away the U.S. market peg and led to a price discontinuity. The market is now under repair, as flows of Saudi oil to the U.S. and capital back into the oil market

complex are intended to re-inflate and pump up oil market benchmarks back up to the levels at which U.S. energy dominance may be resumed.

How about China's role as a major oil consumer in the market? Taking into account its current conflicts with the U.S. and etc.

The two experts believed that Chinese traders are astute and ruthless and operate under strategic Chinese state direction on a massive scale. There has long been widespread 'groupthink' prevalent in the oil market, where participants assume that the oil market will be dominated forever by producers.

Mr. Cook: In my view, whereas the U.S. and other producers prefer a market price at the inflated \$50/\$60 per barrel level, clearly China, India, Japan, and above all the EU who are all major consumers would prefer a price pegged between maybe \$30 to \$40/bbl since the difference between the two price bands represents a net transfer from consumers to producers approaching \$1 trillion per year, and that is before the additional costs of refining crude oil to fuel in turn distributed and sold to consumers as energy services such as heat/cooling, power, mobility and so on.

Mr. Khaghani: China has taken advantage of this market discontinuity to fill strategic reserves now over 1.2 billion barrels, and a stream of literally hundreds of oil tankers is currently delivering to China oil bought at distressed prices which will be available for immediate re-sale. Meanwhile, China has also finalized a system of sanction-proof buyers able to take delivery of crude oil anonymously through the Shanghai Exchange, and this oil may then be refined by independent Chinese "teapot" refiners to be delivered/dumped into the global market at prices with which no other refiner can compete.

Considering China's role in the current market Mr. cook added: "To cut a long story short, I believe - and my analysis will be substantiated or refuted in the near future - that market power has moved permanently downstream to the buy-side in a structural market shift, and that in due course will move further downstream to energy services."

■ How is OPEC influencing oil prices, major policies of the market, and its future?

Mr. Khaghani: Since 2001, when the

oil market was taken over by intermediary traders and banks, OPEC has lost control of oil price formation and OPEC meetings serve only as a source of market noise enabling intermediaries and insider traders to profit from volatility at the expense of producers and consumers alike.

Mr. Cook: As for the future of the oil market, I think that the era of trading oil as a commodity is coming to a close and that we will begin to see flows of oil increasingly supplied and "swapped" for flows of products. Mr. Khaghani and I have advocated for more than 10 years that Iran can lead the way in this regard, and frankly, at this moment in market history, they have no other choice. As the great fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes put it: "If you eliminate the impossible, what remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth".

Do you consider any specific relation between the recent OPEC decision about the extension of output cut and the impact of the coronavirus on the market?

Mr. Cook: I genuinely believe OPEC decisions now serve only to generate profits for 'insider' traders and the oil market complex.

■ What will happen to the demand level after the coronavirus pandemic?

"We do not think the market will ever reach previous levels of demand. The pandemic has served to accelerate deep structural trends away from the capital and resource-intensive economies towards a 'smart' networked global economy based upon renewable energy and the value of what Exxon calls the "Fifth Fuel" - in other words, the intellectual value in which Iran is also rich," they answered.

■ When and how will the market survive from Covid-19?

Mr. Cook: I believe Covid-19 is a death blow to commodity markets. This is most harshly demonstrated by the ludicrous U.S. spike of the WTI market price to a negative price of some \$37/bbl. I do not believe the contract - which was already struggling - will survive this and in my view, the U.S. intention is for a new market benchmark based on a U.S. Gulf export benchmark.

But in terms of the great structural trends I described above, this is merely to move the deckchairs on the 'Titanic' as the oil market ship hit the Covid-19 iceberg.

■ Can we say the golden age of oil has expired? Is oil going to experience what coal went through? What policies are being applied to postpone or even prevent the oil downfall?

Mr. Cook: That is a good summary of the current market inflection point, and as above I envisage that the oil market will now migrate downstream via products to 'smart' services. I believe that one of the 'Big Trades' of the 21st Century will be the smart swap of the use of intellectual value for the value of carbon fuel savings first pioneered by the great Scottish inventor James Watt in 1778 when he supplied innovative steam-powered pumping as a service in exchange for a third of coal savings.

Chris Cook, a senior research fellow at the University College London and director of Petro Scotland

Mahmood Khaghani, the former director of Caspian Sea Oil and Gas Affairs at the Iranian ministry of oil

There is still considerable racial inequality throughout U.S.: philosopher

➔ Following the incident, Donald Trump, as the president, also angered protesters with a tweet to the point that Twitter was forced to hide his tweet. What is the reason for Trump's racist approach?



A: Trump is appealing to his base: angry, sometimes scared white citizens who want to use force to confirm and enhance their power. Trump has very little support among Afro-Americans today or in the past. It is hard not to see Trump's obsession with attacking and reversing the work of Obama in racial terms, going back to when Trump began questioning whether Obama was a legitimate president on the false ground that he was not born in America.

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

A: I agree. Many have pointed out that Trump's earlier campaign slogan "Make America great again" could be interpreted by his base as "Make America white again."

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

"I think the USA has almost always had tensions among its diverse populations," says Taliaferro, a professor of philosophy at St. Olaf College.

A: Great question. I think the USA has almost always had tensions among its diverse populations. In a sense, there are at least two narratives in our history. One is sometimes called American exceptionalism, according to which the USA is superior to other nations and uniquely great in world history. The other is a far less flattering self-understanding: the USA was founded amidst slavery, misgivings about minorities. Still, there are ideals among the American founders that were pro-justice, and anti-slavery - for example the presidency of the Adams. Let us hope that those ideals prevail in the future.

ICC: Israel war crime probe faces no obstacles

The International Criminal Court (ICC) says a potential probe of war crimes committed by Israel against Palestinians can proceed despite warnings and allegations to the contrary by the regime and its ally the United States.

The ICC's Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda made the remarks on Monday after the court's Pretrial Chamber asked her whether the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) would prevent initiation of such a case, saying the agreements had no impact on the conduct of such investigation.

The 1993 and 1995 accords purportedly sought to enable "peace" between the two sides based on UN Security Council resolutions and realize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.



Israel has alleged that the agreements prevent the PA from lodging a case with the court against Tel Aviv.

On May 19, however, PA chief Mahmoud Abbas said the Authority no longer viewed itself as bound by the Oslo Accords due to an intention announced by Israel to annex some 30 percent of the occupied West Bank in a U.S.-backed move.

Last December, Bensouda announced that she was "satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation into the situation in Palestine."

A PA-appointed committee has trusted The Hague-based tribunal with dossiers on Israel's 2014 war on Gaza that killed thousands of Palestinians, the regime's illegal settlement construction on the occupied territories, and its abuse of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody.

According to Press TV, last month, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned the court against asserting jurisdiction over Israel, saying the United States would "exact consequences" for any "illegitimate" investigations. Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Statute from which the ICC draws its power, and may, therefore, refuse to cooperate with a potential investigation.

The ICC has, however, accepted Palestine as a state with the status to file a complaint that could lead to the probe.

Trump eying the Whites for the November elections: West Asia commissioner for human rights

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – As the United States engulfed in anti-racism protests following the brutal suffocation of black citizen George Floyd by a white policemen in Minneapolis on May 25, some analysts and politicians are of the opinion that Donald Trump, who is not hiding his racist tendencies, is seeking to use the situation to win the votes of the whites in the November elections.

Haissam Bou-Said, commissioner for the West Asia at the International Human Rights Commission, is among those who say Trump is looking to the whites to win the elections in such a situation.

"President Trump is looking today to the upcoming elections and he believes that white voters will make a huge difference in the election, where he can easily beat his rival by adopting a racist behavior against the minorities," Bou-Said tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ George Floyd's death has sparked protests across the U.S. with demonstrators desperately calling for an end to police violence. What are the reasons for these protests?

Answer: First of all, we would like to underscore our deep sadness on the awful scene in the streets of American cities due to the crime committed by a police officer in Minneapolis.

This is not the first violent action against



black Americans. It happens many times. And with the President Trump administration's policies, it was expected to witness such a tragedy.

Black Americans are being deprived from many of their rights. They are also not welcomed in white societies in some districts. The feeling of white supremacy is well felt in the administration.

■ Trump's threat to shoot Minneapolis protesters spurred Twitter to hide his tweet. What is your comment on Trump's racist approach?

A: President Trump is looking today to the upcoming elections and he believes that

white voters will make a huge difference in the election, where he can easily beat his rival by adopting a racist behavior against the minorities.

His tweet was considered to be unacceptable, therefore Twitter was obligated to take action as President Trump's tweet goes against the rules of Twitter.

■ Which cultures or religions put more emphasis on the equality and justice and pay more attention to the rights of people with different colors and races?

A: It might sound strange to some of us who say that Muslim culture does not make a differentiation between people based on

their races, skin or language. These are based on Quranic teachings.

Quran went even further by prohibiting such actions by emphasizing there is no difference in heaven based on race or color. For so doing, we believe that it's imperative to start teaching the essential laws of Islam as a free will without imposing it on the Western communities. We need to show how great Islam is in this sense.

■ The United States has not been able to adapt to multiculturalism and attract immigrants, people of color or religious minorities. Please explain.

A: The components of the United States are based on multiculturalism as a general view. The fact is that the composition in some states are made of one race, where others are not acceptable to join. We can realize in some areas it is full of blacks or Chinese or Arabs and these races cannot live easily side by side due to their color, language or social life, despite the laws that ban discrimination against citizens.

We have also a distinguished type of works that are made for certain races and people with different colors. We can remember how the whole world was surprised by seeing Barack Obama taking the office at the White House and how mad other Americans became just because President Obama was not white. Asians and Arabs also are not welcomed in many white states, not only Africans.

Pirangah, a place of worship for Jews, Zoroastrians and Muslims in central Iran, made a national heritage site

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Pirangah, a centuries-old temple in central Iran which is worshipped by Jews, Zoroastrians and Muslims, has recently been made a National Heritage site.

A common place of worship, which is revered by Zoroastrian, Jewish and Muslim locals in Yazd, has been registered a National Heritage site, ISNA reported on Tuesday.



In July 2017, historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. It is also home to a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don’t miss” destination by almost all of its visitors. It is teemed with mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Hormozgan exports \$6m of handicrafts in year

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Handicrafts exports from Hormozgan province reached some \$6 million during the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended March 20), CHTN reported.



Embroideries, kilim, potteries, wicker works and woodworks were amongst most important handicrafts of the southern province exported to Persian Gulf littoral states and Turkey, provincial tourism chief Reza Boroumand said on Tuesday.

Some four high-quality works by artisans in the province were also awarded with the National Seal of Excellence during the last year, he added.

He also noted that about 64,000 people are currently working in various fields of handicrafts, of which 98 percent are women.

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

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

Some \$35,000 allocated to restore Safavid-era mansion

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A budget of 1.5 billion rials (some \$35,000) has been allocated to implement a restoration project on the Hatami mansion which dates back to Safavid-era (1501–1736) in Borujerd, the western province of Lorestan.



The project includes repairing the rooftop and arches of the 1,300-square-meter building based on its original plan. CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi as saying on Tuesday.

Lorestan province is one of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran, which mainly acts as a gateway to the neighboring Khuzestan province which hosts UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.

Falak-ol-Aflak fortress in Khorramabad, the capital of the province, is one of its top tourist destinations.

Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Aerial survey sheds new light on vast ancient city in southern Iran

→ 1 “This [archaeological] area is situated about 11 kilometers northeast of Farashband town, and 28 kilometers away from the ancient city of Gur (now called Firuzabad). It is also located 2.7 kilometers east of Narak village and three kilometers north of Bachan village in (Nujin rural district).”

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Sasanian Archaeology witnessed an increasing interest in the number of landscape archaeological surveys and excavations undertaken, according to a paper written by Qasemi of the Pantheon-Sorbonne University (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne).

Covering some 14 square kilometers in area, the ancient city embraces six separate rectangular sections, with a vast fortress in the middle, and dozens of pavilions and residential buildings, which are dotted along its thoroughfares, the archaeologist explained, ILNA reported.

“Due to the [geographical] location of the Farashband area, which was once in the heart of the Sassanid Empire, many archeological finds have been found so far, the most important of which is [cubic-shaped] four-arched monument that is locally called Chahar-Taqi. In the southwest [of the site] is a small rural settlement and in its east corner are the remains of a village that is home to many scattered buildings dating from the Sassanid to the Islamic Middle Ages.”

Attaching great importance to the collective ancient site, Qasemi noted that the ancient site had previously been designated [just] as a castle on Iran’s 1/100 maps.

“Unfortunately no researcher has noticed its importance so far so that the site [which is proved to bear far more than a ruined castle] has suffered a lot of damage over the past few decades.”

“It should be noted that most of our archeological colleagues of Fars province had previously visited this area and just documented a very small portion of its central part, and none of them could realize how vast the archaeological site is. They only identified its central part and briefly ended up with specifying some key buildings there such as a caravanserai and a central building, known as Chahar Bazaar (Four Marketplaces),” he lamented.

In the autumn of 2014 and 2017, Qasemi and his colleagues conducted two seasons of excavation at the site of Tole Qaleh Seyfabad, located in the south of the major Sasanian city of Bishapur. The finds consisted of remain of a regular architecture building with several functions for office; storage; and workshop, in addition to a large number of Sasanian clay bullae related to the advanced administrative system, different kind of pottery, evidence of a mass advanced wet agriculture technique, many objects made of clay, stone, metal, and glass that were attributed to the commercial and economical activities were found.

Sasanian Empire was one of the powerful empires of the late antiquity in the east. This empire was founded by Ardashir I, who was born in the city of Istakhr in Fars state, southern Iran, and was crowned in 226 CE. The territory of the Sasanian Empire during four centuries (ca. 224-651 CE) enclosed most parts of West Asia and Central Asia.

After the rise of the empire, most of the Southwest and



File photo depicts people visiting a magnificent Sassanid-era bas-relief in Naqsh-e Rostam, an ancient necropolis near Persepolis in Fars province, southern Iran.

Central Asia were politically and economically dominated by them. In terms of complicated cultural criteria, the Sasanian political, economic, and social entities were more sophisticated and powerful than the earlier governments. Existence of a powerful administrative and managerial hierarchy that administered the central state’s policies gave rise to the development and significance of a great empire.

In many ways, Iran under the Sasanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that under the Sassanids the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance.

Rock-carved bas-reliefs are widely deemed as the most impressive and best-known works of Sasanians, of which about thirty are known from the first two centuries of Sasanian rule. The largest number is in Fars, in the majestic silent valley of Naqsh-e Rostam, in the small bay of rocks at Naqsh-e Rostam, on the steep inclines of a gorge at Bishapur. There are also other examples across the country.

In 2018, UNESCO added “Sassanid Archaeological

Landscape of Fars Region”, which is an ensemble of Sasanian historical cities in southern Iran, to its World Heritage list. The property comprises eight archaeological sites, including fortified structures, palaces, and city plans in Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, all located in modern Fars province. UNESCO says that the archaeological landscape reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which had a significant impact on the architecture of the Islamic era.

Encyclopedia Britannica states that a revival of Iranian nationalism took place under Sassanid rule. Zoroastrianism became the state religion, and at various times followers of other faiths suffered official persecution. The government was centralized, with provincial officials directly responsible to the throne, and roads, city building, and even agriculture were financed by the government. The dynasty was destroyed by Arab invaders during a span from 637 to 651.

Covering some 14 square kilometers in area, the ancient city embraces six separate rectangular sections, with a vast fortress in the middle, and dozens of pavilions and residential buildings, which are dotted along its thoroughfares, the archaeologist explained.

Historical sites losing heritage status; who’s to blame?

→ 1 According to the law, the offenders must pay damages and they could be sentenced to six months to three years in prison, but the problem is the ministry is not the owner of all the historical sites and many of them are privately owned and it seems there is no law enforcement guarantee.

Lack of awareness of the values of cultural heritage, lack of necessary financial and human resources, sufficient expertise on demarcation, and most importantly lack of coordination between cultural heritage-related bodies such as the municipalities are among the problems the ministry is

facing in this issue.

One of the big steps to solve such problems was transforming the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization into a ministry in 2018, which gave it more power and authority.

It seems that the position of the ministry should be such that other organizations do not act against it, which could be a bit difficult due to the vague rules in this regard.

It is also suggested that any activities within the boundaries of historical sites be authorized and supervised by the cultural heritage experts and even by teams of archaeologists in some cases, if necessary.



File photo depicts the centuries-old Arg-e Karim Khan with a modern hotel being constructed in the background, distorting general views of the brick fortress in Shiraz, southern Iran.

Tarikhaneh: the oldest existing mosque in Iran



© IRNA/Amir Rahmani

TOURISM d e s k Photos depict scenes from Tarikhaneh Mosque, which was once a Sassanid-era (224–651) temple, located near the modern city of Damghan, central Iran, June 2, 2020.

Some sources including the ArchNet, a collaborative digital humanities project focused on Islamic architecture, say that the Tarikhaneh Mosque is the oldest existing mosque in the country.

Also called Tarik Khana, the monument incorporates a simple Arab plan with Sassanian construction techniques.

An arcade lines the central courtyard, a single bay deep on all but the qibla side where it increases to three bays. The central aisle on the qibla arcade is wider and taller than the others, a form that presciently indicates the later ubiquitous monumental axis of Persian architecture.

The arcades, recalling Sassanian precedents, are formed of fired brick arches, elliptical and sometimes slightly pointed, and massive circular brick piers.

Standing together at a distance from the mosque are the remains of a square minaret of uncertain date, possibly part of the original construction period, and a cylindrical minaret from the Seljuk period (1060-1307). The latter is strikingly divided into six zones of ornamentation, each rendered in brick with a different geometric pattern.

The prayer hall of a mosque is where the 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 Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions.



Why COVID-19 claims fewer lives in Iran compared to many other countries?

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Fortunately, compared to many countries in the world, the mortality rate of coronavirus in Iran is significantly lower than in many developed countries, Ehsan Mostafavi, director of the research center for emerging and re-emerging diseases of the Pasteur Institute of Iran has said. The main factor is the relatively young

population, as the median age in Iran is 32 years, while in countries like Spain and Italy the age is 45 and 47 years, respectively, he stated.

So as the population gets older, non-communicable diseases prevalence increases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity, and diabetes so that more people will be vulnerable to the diseases,



he explained.

He went on to say that the second influential issue is the health care system and health practitioner's efforts in recent months. Both in the process of screening and early detection of patients and finally in isolation and early treatment.

Fortunately, during this time, unlike some European countries, no serious issue in the

treatment process reported, he concluded.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 175,927 on Tuesday, of whom 8,425 have died and 138,457 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,095 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 74 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

Kindergartens to reopen under health protocols amid pandemic

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Kindergartens across the country will reopen on June 13 observing health protocols with a maximum capacity of 50 percent with the priority given to children of working parents.

As per President Hassan Rouhani's order to reopen the kindergartens, they will start working in compliance with the protocols of the Ministry of Health, ISNA quoted Habibollah Masoudi Farid, deputy head of the Welfare Organization, as saying on Tuesday. The organization has prepared a draft of the mentioned

protocols which mainly includes observing the hygienic standards, he added.

For example, each child and trainer should be tested for fever as soon as they arrive, parents are not allowed to enter the children's space, and even the entry and exit of children should be on a schedule that does not lead to congestion, he explained.

These are the general recommendations of our proposal to the headquarters for coronavirus fight, he noted, concluding, it is hoped that these cases will be finalized by Wednesday and announced to the provinces.



Commonwealth nations to protect coral reefs with satellite technology

Commonwealth countries are to gain free access to satellite technology that will help them monitor and protect their endangered coral reefs from threats such as climate breakdown, overfishing and pollution.

Commonwealth countries hold nearly half of the world's remaining tropical coral reefs, with 47 out of the 54 member countries having a coastline. Nearly half of them are islands or groups of islands, which face particular threats from the climate crisis, and for whom coral reefs are often vital protections against storms as well as fish nurseries and tourist attractions.

"Whatever we do as a Commonwealth family will make a massive contribution to safeguarding the coral reefs that we are dependent on globally," said Baroness Patricia Scotland, secretary general of the Commonwealth. "We feel this real responsibility around the world. The Commonwealth can change the trajectory of this crisis, if our members are willing to work together, and we will."

Nearly all the reefs are at risk of extinction in the coming decades as the climate crisis takes hold, and nearly half of the world's reefs have already been destroyed or badly damaged in the last 30 years owing to changes in the climate, overfishing, pollution and other exploitation. About 250 million people are directly dependent on coral reefs for their livelihoods.

The technology will use high-resolution satellite images and data analyses to allow marine scientists, government officials and policymakers to monitor the health of coral reefs and take the action needed to protect them. Software will be provided to countries free through the Commonwealth's partnership with Vulcan Inc, a US-based group founded



by Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul Allen, and a new interactive coral reef map will be hosted online at the Commonwealth Innovation Hub.

"[Countries] need data to know what they can do within their tight budgets," Scotland told the Guardian in an interview. "Being able to share information will galvanise us."

She said the climate and ecological crises, as well as the coronavirus pandemic, required urgent action, and the health of the oceans was a key part of the global ecosystem. "The world is saying to us, 'I can't breathe,'" she said. "When we stop [exploiting it], nature restores itself very rapidly. But we have not got a lot of time."

The Commonwealth will open up a demonstration of the project on Monday, designated as World Oceans Day, as countries around the world seek to improve the management of their own waters and the

high seas.

In the UK, the government on Monday published a review of ocean protections that has recommended setting up new highly protected marine areas, where fishing, dredging, oil drilling, construction and all other forms of exploitation would be banned.

The UK currently has a "blue belt" network of 355 marine protected areas, where activities such as fishing are restricted. The review, led by former fisheries minister Richard Benyon, would require these to be expanded with new zones where everything would be off limits, except for shipping moving through the area and non-damaging leisure activities such as scuba diving and kayaking.

Joan Edwards, director of marine conservation at the Wildlife Trusts, said letting stretches of sea return to their natural state could be a revelation, in allowing marine life

to recover after decades of overexploitation. "Our seas are in an impoverished state, and it's hard for our generation to comprehend how abundant our waters once were. Cod were once as long and wide as humans are tall, and whales, dolphins and basking sharks were many times more common than they are today," she said. "We need to let the sea show us what it's capable of."

Today's marine protected areas serve only to maintain basic protections against some of the most damaging activities, such as bottom trawling, according to campaigners, and the protections vary across locations.

Ministers have yet to respond to the Benyon review's findings. Philip Evans, an oceans campaigner at Greenpeace UK, said: "It's important that these recommendations not only become a reality, but grow in ambition to cover at least 30% of the UK's waters by 2030, instead of sitting on ministers' desks gathering dust."

The government is currently locked in a battle with the EU over fishing rights after Brexit. British fishermen argue that they have been disadvantaged for decades by agreements reached when the UK was joining the EU in the 1970s that gave greater access rights to foreign vessels, with the result that the majority of the catch in some UK waters now goes to EU fleets. But as part of any Brexit deal, the EU wants to preserve access to British waters for its vessels, as the fishing fleets in several member states would suffer otherwise.

Campaigners are concerned that amid the squabbles, the pledges by both the EU and the UK to halt overfishing and abide by scientific advice on catch size will be lost.

Hour-al-Azim Wetland seeking Ramsar site designation

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Hour-al-Azim Wetland is on the way to be registered in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2021).

Located in the southwestern province of Khuzestan bordering Iraq, the wetland had been dried up and turned to a major sand and dust storm hotspot due to oil sector projects and not being granted its water right.



The Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

The Convention on Wetlands is the oldest of the modern global intergovernmental environmental agreements. The treaty was negotiated through the 1960s by countries and non-governmental organizations concerned about the increasing loss and degradation of wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds. It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

"The valuable Hour-al-Azim wetland has not yet been registered in the Ramsar Convention. Last year, we applied for registration, and initial correspondence was done, and the ecological section of the Wetland, including basins one, two and three, will be listed as a Ramsar site by the end of this year," said Ahmadrza Lahizanzadeh, head of marine environment affairs at the Department of Environment (DOE).

To rehabilitate the long-lost Hour-al-Azim, four billion cubic meters of water was needed, fortunately, floods came to help and revived the wetland, he highlighted.

The problem now is to provide water to compensate for evaporation, and the Ministry of Energy must consider the wetland's water right, he noted.

"There is no permanent budget for the valuable wetlands of Khuzestan, and we must consider an annual credit for the protection and restoration of wetlands."

Churches in Tehran observe social distancing

1 → Following the official approval of the coronavirus epidemic in Iran, the national headquarters for combating coronavirus promoted the "Stay Home Movement" after the closure of schools and universities, so that the whole country could act based on scientific and effective steps to combat the virus.

On March 15, the closure of holy shrines and religious places across the country hit the news.

Currently, the major shrines of Imam Reza and Hazrat Masoumeh are allowed to open starting from an hour after dawn until an hour before dusk.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 175,927 on Tuesday, of whom 8,425 have died and 138,457 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,095 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 74 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Saddam's capture

(December 15, 2003)

The bloodless capture of Saddam Hussein has given the American and British governments a big boost. It has also given new hope to the people of Iraq who feared his regime might one day return. This report from Jonathan Marcus: This is a historic **turning point** for modern Iraq. Saddam Hussein's capture marks a huge morale boost for US forces and a serious blow to **Ba'athist elements engaged in armed resistance** against them. It provides a significant political boost for President George Bush and for the British Prime Minister Tony Blair who were both coming under ever stronger criticism for launching their invasion of Iraq as **the casualty toll mounted**. But above all the capture of Saddam Hussein marks a huge opportunity for the Iraqi people.

This is **the definitive end** of the Ba'athist regime. There can be no **succession**. Saddam Hussein is in custody and his two sons who were major **props** to his regime are both dead. This does not mean that armed resistance to the Americans and their allies will end. This after **all derives from a number of factors**; political; nationalist, Islamic and criminal. One of Saddam Hussein's last acts in power was to empty the prisons. But the arrest of the former Iraqi ruler creates a **dramatic shift in the psychological climate**. Ordinary Iraqis have already been celebrating in the streets.

■ **Words**
turning point: time when something changes
Ba'athist elements engaged in armed resistance: supporters of the previous government who are fighting
the casualty toll mounted: the number of people killed or injured got bigger
the definitive end: the final, absolute end
succession: the continuing of the previous government
in custody: in prison
props: supports
derives from a number of factors: is because of different reasons
a dramatic shift: a big change
psychological climate: the way that people think
(Source: BBC)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

\$7b to be allocated to retrofit, rebuild flood-devastated houses

A budget of 290 trillion rials (nearly \$7 billion) will be allotted to reconstruct and repair housing units destroyed by flood in 18 provinces across the country, Mehdi Jamalinejad, deputy interior minister for urban and rural development has announced.

Flood has devastated some 169,377 housing units, 68,333 of which are beyond repair and must be reconstructed, he stated.

Moreover, household appliances of 109,832 families also have suffered damages, he further regretted.

He went on to say that 20,000 housing units, undergone devastation by recent flooding in Aq-Oala county in northern Golestan province, are under construction.

Non-repayable loans amounting to 25 trillion rials (nearly \$600 million) will be provided for retrofitting of houses, 7.4 trillion rials (around \$177 million) will also be earmarked to compensate for the infrastructure damages, he explained.

اختصاص بیش از ۲۹ هزار میلیارد تومان برای بازسازی خانه های سیل زده

معاون عمران و توسعه امور شهری و روستایی وزیر کشور گفت: براساس مصوبه اخیر هیات وزیران مبلغ ۲۹ هزار و ۱۳۰ میلیارد ریال برای بازسازی و جبران خسارات ناشی از سیل در بخشهای مختلف ۱۸ استان پرداخت می شود.

بر اساس ارزیابی های انجام شده در ۲۱ استان کشور، بیش از ۱۶۹ هزار و ۳۷۷ واحد مسکونی شهری و روستایی در سیل های اخیر در کشور آسیب دیده اند که باید دوباره احداث شوند.

جمالی نژاد بیان داشت: در اثر سیل به ۱۰۹ هزار و ۸۳۲ واحد مسکونی نیز خسارت معیشتی وارد شده است.

وی اضافه کرد: امروز ساخت ۲۰ هزار دستگاه واحد مسکونی که در سیل آسیب دیده بودند نیز در آق قلا شروع شد.

دبیر کمیته نوسازی و بازسازی قرارگاه بازسازی مناطق سیل زده در ادامه گفت: ۲۵ هزار میلیارد ریال تسهیلات قرض الحسنه و همچنین مبلغ ۷ هزار و ۴۶۰ میلیارد ریال برای مرمت زیرساخت های آسیب دیده از سیل پرداخت خواهد شد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“co-, col-, com-, con-, cor-”

■ **Meaning**: with or together
For example: What will it take for us to **coexist** in peace?

PHRASAL VERB

Nose out

■ **Meaning**: to find out or discover information, secrets, etc.
■ **For example**: He nosed out their plans.

IDIOM

Crocodile tears

■ **Explanation**: To shed crocodile tears means to shed false tears or show insincere grief
■ **For example**: Caroline pretended to be sad but we all knew her tears were crocodile tears.

Coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan may have started in August: Study

The novel coronavirus might have hit the Chinese city of Wuhan as early as August 2019, months before it was first reported, according to a new study in the United States.

The report published by the Harvard Medical School analyzed satellite images of hospital traffic in Wuhan, where the disease is said to have originated in December last year - and search engine trends related to the virus.

“Increased hospital traffic and symptom search data in Wuhan preceded the documented start of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in December 2019,” the report said.

“While we cannot confirm if the increased volume was directly related to the new virus, our evidence supports other recent work showing that emergence happened before identification at the Huanan Seafood Market.”

According to al Jazeera, The U.S.-based researchers looked at satellite imagery of parking lots of six hospitals in Wuhan, five of which showed their highest relative daily volume between September and October 2019.

These findings also coincided with an uptick in queries on the Chinese search engine, Baidu, for coronavirus-related symptoms like “diarrhoea” and “cough”.

Nepal calls for border talks with India as row over map deepens

Nepal’s foreign minister says his country was still waiting for a response from India on holding talks to resolve a border dispute that has strained relations between the South Asian neighbors.

Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali told The Associated Press in an interview on Tuesday that requests to talk were made in November and December last year, and again in May.

“We have expressed time and again that Nepal wants to sit at the table to resolve this problem,” Gyawali said.

“We are waiting for formal negotiations so that these two countries with ... a very unique type of partnership can develop a more inspiring relationship that reflects the requirements of the 21st century.”

The latest border dispute between the countries began over India’s inauguration last month of a Himalayan link road built in a disputed region that lies at a strategic three-way junction with Tibet and China.

According to al Jazeera, the 80-km (50-mile) road, inaugurated by Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, cuts through the Lipulekh Himalayan pass, considered one of the shortest and most feasible trade routes between India and China.

Nepal fiercely contested the inauguration of the road and viewed the alleged incursion as a stark example of bullying by its much larger neighbor, triggering a fresh dispute over the strategically important territory.

The government of Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli issued a new political map of Nepal that showed the disputed territory within its borders.

Obama’s EU envoy says Trump is ‘like Mussolini’ for ‘openly fomenting racial divisions’ amid police brutality protests

The former U.S. ambassador to the European Union has compared President Donald Trump to Benito Mussolini, Italy’s fascist strongman, insisting he has only widened racial divisions among citizens as protests rage around the U.S.



The former envoy, Anthony Gardner – who served under President Barack Obama from 2014 to 2017 – told Politico on Monday that Trump’s actions and rhetoric were reminiscent of Il Duce, the godfather of fascism and an ally of the Nazis during World War II, RT reported.

“For a couple of years, I was troubled by many things that Donald Trump shares with Benito Mussolini, someone my Italian grandparents fled from in 1938,” said Gardner, a Democrat and a backer of former vice president Joe Biden’s presidential campaign.

While he didn’t elaborate on the comparison or provide examples, Gardner referred generically to Trump’s response to police brutality protests that have erupted across hundreds of American cities since late May, after an unarmed black man was killed in the custody of the Minneapolis police.

Though he said he was happy to see former top officials-turned #Resistance heroes – such as ex-defense secretary James Mattis – “speaking out” against Trump and his heavy-handed threats to unleash the military on violent protests and rioting, Gardner nonetheless deemed them complicit.

“When you choose to work for this kind of administration, which showed its true colors very early on, at some point you abet the policies,” he said, adding: “So while I am glad they are saying what they are saying, it comes too late.”

The former envoy’s pitch for the Democratic Party’s 2020 hopeful, Joe Biden, was somewhat lackluster, however. He acknowledged the former VP has generated little excitement among young voters, but argued the other party front runners – Senators Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) – were “unelectable,” leaving Biden as the only option next to Musso... er, Trump.

600 rights groups urge UN probe into U.S. police brutality

Thousands pay tribute to George Floyd as calls for U.S. police reform grow

➔ 1 which would make it easier to prosecute officers for abuse and allow victims to sue law enforcement for damages in civil court, ending a legal doctrine known as qualified immunity.

The Justice in Policing Act would ban chokeholds and place new restrictions on the use of lethal force.

The legislation, however, does not call for U.S. police departments to be de-funded or abolished as activists have demanded sweeping cuts to law enforcement budgets.

White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany said Trump “is appalled by the defund-the-police movement.”

Joe Biden, who is challenging Trump in the November election, also opposes the movement to defund police departments but supports the “urgent need” for reform, his spokesman said.

Biden met with Floyd’s relatives for more than an hour in Houston on Monday, according to the family’s lawyer.

■ **U.S. anti-racism protests continue across several states**

Demonstrators gathered in mainly peaceful rallies in New York, Portland, and Phoenix, decrying the killing of Floyd.

A mass demonstration was also held in Los Angeles near a memorial for a number of people killed by police.

In Seattle, Washington, officers used stun grenades and pepper spray to disperse people, after they tried to set up barricades outside the city’s capitol.

In the state of Oregon, thousands of protesters shut down Portland’s interstate highway as part of their ongoing campaign to denounce police racism, saying they will stop their rallies



only after concrete reforms end police violence.

■ **600 rights groups urge UN probe into U.S. police brutality**

Relatives of victims and activist groups called on the United Nations to launch an investigation into police violence and repression of protests in the United States.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), and World Organization against Torture (OMCT) were among some 600 groups that signed a letter that called for a special session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The Geneva forum, which is due to meet from June 15, can hold a special session if re-

quested by one-third of its 47 member states. The United States quit the forum two years ago alleging an anti-Israel bias.

The death of George Floyd was “only one of a recent string of unlawful killings of unarmed black people by police and armed white vigilantes,” the letter said.

“We are deeply concerned about the escalation in violent police responses to largely peaceful protests in the United States, which included the use of rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray and in some cases live ammunition, in violation of international standards on the use of force and management of assemblies,” added the letter.

N. Korea cuts communication links with South

North Korea has announced that it will sever hotlines with South Korea as the first step towards shutting down all contact with Seoul, in retaliation for actions taken by defectors who have been sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border.

State news agency KCNA made the announcement on Tuesday as Seoul also confirmed that Pyongyang had refused to receive calls from its liaison office after making the threat, Yonhap news agency reported quoting South Korea’s unification ministry.

“The liaison office attempted to call North Korea this morning, but the North did not answer,” the unification ministry said on Tuesday.

Yonhap also quoted South Korea’s defence ministry as saying North Korea also did not answer calls via military hotlines.

For several days, North Korea has lashed out at South Korea, threatening to close an in-

ter-Korean liaison office and other projects if South Korea did not stop defectors from sending leaflets and other material into North Korea.

Top government officials in North Korea, including leader Kim Jong Un’s sister, Kim Yo Jong, and Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, determined “that the work towards the South should thoroughly turn into the one against an enemy”, KCNA said.

As a first step, at noon on Tuesday (03:00 GMT), North Korea will close lines of communication at an inter-Korean liaison office, and hotlines between the two militaries and presidential offices, the report said.

■ **‘Dire situation’**

On Monday morning, North Korea did not answer the liaison phone call for the first time since 2018, though it later answered an afternoon call.

South Korea has promised to take legislative action to ban activities of the defectors, but analysts said North Korea’s move is probably about more than the defectors with the country facing increasing economic pressure from the coronavirus crisis and international sanctions.

“North Korea is in a much more dire situation than we think,” Choo Jae-woo, a professor at Kyung Hee University, told Reuters News Agency.

“I think they are trying to squeeze something out of the South.”

Cutting communications is “a well-worn play for Pyongyang”, but one that can be dangerous, Daniel Wertz, of the U.S.-based National Committee on North Korea, said on Twitter.

“Regular communication channels are needed most during a crisis, and for that reason, North Korea cuts them off to create an atmosphere of heightened risk,” he said.

The people of North Korea have “been angered

According to press TV, The groups voiced concern that “rather than using his position to serve as a force for calm and unity, President Trump has chosen to weaponize the tensions through his rhetoric”. They also denounced the deployment of more than 60,000 National Guard members in two dozen US states.

They said recent police killings of unarmed black people as well as police use of excessive force violate US obligations under major international human rights treaties, calling for the right to peaceful assembly and protest to be protected.

■ **White House says has ‘no regrets’ about tear-gassing peaceful protesters**

The administration of US President Donald Trump has said there are “no regrets” about the decision of using tear gas against peaceful demonstrators from outside the White House last week.

The demonstrators were protesting at Lafayette Square outside the White House against police violence and systemic racism sparked by the recent police killing of unarmed, handcuffed African-American man George Floyd.

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said on Monday night that neither President Trump nor anybody inside his administration had regrets about police’s actions against protesters.

“No there’s no regrets on the part of this White House because look I’d note that many of those decisions were not made here within the White House,” McEnany said.

She said that Attorney General William Barr had decided to have police clear demonstrators from Lafayette Square.

by the treacherous and cunning behaviour of the South Korean authorities, with whom we still have lots of accounts to settle”, KCNA said.

The report accused South Korean authorities of irresponsibly allowing defectors to hurt the dignity of North Korea’s supreme leadership.

“We have reached a conclusion that there is no need to sit face to face with the South Korean authorities and there is no issue to discuss with them, as they have only aroused our dismay,” the state news agency reported.

According to al Jazeera, the decision to cut communications marks a setback in relations amid efforts to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons programme in exchange for relief on tough international sanctions.

The two Koreas remain technically at war because the 1950-1953 Korean War ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

UK COVID-19 death toll nears 52,000

The United Kingdom’s COVID-19 death toll neared 52,000 on Tuesday, according to a Reuters tally of official data sources that highlighted the country’s place as one of the worst hit in the world.

New data for England and Wales brought the toll to 51,766, the highest in Europe and putting the UK behind only the much larger United States in a pandemic that has killed more than 400,000 people around the world.

Such a large death toll has prompted criticism of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who opposition parties say was too slow to impose a lockdown or protect the elderly in nursing homes or to build a test and trace system, Reuters reported.

The Reuters tally comprises fatalities where COVID-19 was mentioned on death certificates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland up to May 29, and up to May 31 in Scotland. It also includes more recent hospital deaths.

Unlike the lower death toll published daily by the government, the Reuters tally

includes suspected cases - which gives a more accurate picture because testing was scarce early in the crisis.

Johnson’s government has said it is making real progress in driving down the number of deaths that take place each day.

The UK death toll for confirmed cases of COVID-19 rose by 55 to 40,597 on Monday, the lowest rise since a lockdown was imposed in March.

Still, the death toll surpasses even some projections by the government’s own scientific advisers.

In March, Britain’s chief scientific adviser said keeping deaths below 20,000 would be a “good outcome”. In April, Reuters reported the government’s worst-case scenario was 50,000 deaths.

Epidemiologists say excess mortality - deaths from all causes that exceed the five-year average for the time of year - is the best way of gauging deaths from a disease outbreak because it is internationally comparable.

Erdogan, Trump agree on ‘some issues’ regarding Libya

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says he and U.S. President Donald Trump have come to unspecified agreements about the conflict in Libya, where a host of countries are aiding rebels against a Turkish-backed government.

“A new era between Turkey and the U.S. may start after our phone call. We agreed on some issues,” Erdogan said in an interview with state broadcaster TRT on Monday, without elaborating.

Ankara backs the internationally-recognized government of Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj against rebels commanded by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. The United Arab Emirates and Egypt, among other countries, back Haftar.

The White House also confirmed in a statement that Trump and Erdogan had discussed the conflict in Libya, as well as Syria and the wider eastern Mediterranean region, but similarly provided no details.

Haftar’s rebels launched a deadly offensive to capture Tripoli, the seat of the Libyan government, in April last year. They have not been able to advance past the city’s outskirts. Recently, government forces have made major gains against the



rebels, retaking a major airport and liberating several towns.

Egypt recently proposed a ceasefire that would have started on Monday as the Libyan rebels lost ground. While Russia and the UAE welcomed that initiative, the Libyan government and Turkey – whose support for Tripoli has helped change the course of the war – said fighting would continue to recapture the coastal city of Sirte and the Jufra air base, to the south, in a strategic region of the oil-exporting country.

“Now the goal is to take over the whole Sirte area and get it done. These are areas with the oil wells, these are of great importance,” Erdogan said.

Libya’s Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha also stressed that the government would engage in political talks only after retaking Sirte and also the inland Jufra airbase.

According to press TV, Erdogan also announced that he would discuss Libyan matters with Russian President Vladimir Putin, including what he said was the supply of Russian planes and Pantsir air defense systems to Haftar’s rebels.

“They have Pantsirs there, they sent 19 warplanes to Libya,” Erdogan said, adding, “After talking with him (Putin), we can plan ahead.”

Russia has denied dispatching warplanes to Libya.

■ **Russia, Turkey support Libya peace process**

Meanwhile, Russia’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart, Mevlut Cavusoglu, had agreed on the need to collaborate toward a peace process in Libya in a call on Monday.

The two sides also agreed that a new UN Libya envoy must be appointed swiftly, according to the statement.

Payam Niazmand a dream can come true for Persepolis

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – It's hard, but perhaps not impossible, to sign Sepahan goalkeeper Payam Niazmand as a replacement for Alireza Beiranvand who will leave Persepolis at the summer.

Beiranvand played brilliantly for the Reds after joining them from Naft Tehran in 2016. He is in much better form at the moment, having won three Iran league titles, three Super Cups and one Hazfi Cup in the last four years, but he has to leave his team to join Belgian top flight football team Antwerp.

Now, Persepolis want to maintain their supremacy at the Iran football and Niazmand can help them to keep going since he is a promising goalkeeper in Iran football.

Ex-Persepolis goalkeeping coach Igor Panadic in an interview with Tehran Times said that Croatian custodian Bozidar Radosevic deserves to wear the No.1 jersey in the team but they need another goalkeeper at the same level.

"Sepahan goalkeeper Payam Niazmand is the best Iranian keeper in the league at the moment and I think Persepolis must sign him," he said.

But it will be difficult for Persepolis to sign the goalie since he has been linked with the European teams. Furthermore, there have been lots of challenges between Sepahan and Persepolis in the recent years and the Isfahan based football team are unlikely to let Niazmand leave the team to join their old foe.



Born in Tehran, Niazmand set the new all-time record at 940 consecutive minutes without conceding a goal in March and it shows how reliable he is. Playing at popular

football Persepolis can be a stepping stone for Niazmand to wear Iran National Football Team No. 1 and it could be tempting for him to change his mind and travel to hometown

to play for the current champions.

It would be one of the biggest transfers for Persepolis who have bitter memories about the goalkeepers in the current decade.

Iran's NOC chief Salehi Amiri hopes Olympics to be held as scheduled

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — President of National Olympic Committee (NOC) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Reza Salehi Amiri, said that according to the officials of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and 2020 Asian Beach Games will likely take place as scheduled in 2021.

The Sixth Asian Beach Games is due to be held in Sanya, China. Sanya would be the second Chinese city to host the Asian Beach Games, after Haiyang 2012.

In the meeting attended by top officials of the Olympic and Paralympic committees, which was held with the focus on the Asian Beach Games Sanya 2020, Salehi Amiri said: "Based on what the IOC and OCA top officials have said, the Tokyo Olympic Games and China Beach Games will likely be held on the scheduled dates."

However, he insisted that there is still possibility of



postponement and even suspension of both tournaments, especially the Tokyo Olympics, considering the looming danger of the second wave of Covid-19, and the limited time before critical decisions must be made.

"We cannot stop our current plans just because of the possibility of suspension of the competitions, but we must continue our preparation and necessary planning in the lead up to the Olympics and Paralympic as well as Asian Beach Games," said Salehi Amiri

"In order to continue the Olympians' training, we provided facilities for them to follow their training in their homes, we also provided psychological services for these athletes," the president of the Iranian NOC added.

March next year has been set as a possible deadline for making a decision on the Tokyo Olympics, according to Japan's Olympic minister Toshiaki Endo. The Olympics is scheduled to be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021.

Brazil withdraws from race to host 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup

Two AFC Member Associations are among the three remaining bids to host the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, after Brazil withdrew its application to organize the event on Monday.

A Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) statement announced both the withdrawal of its own candidacy and that it will now support fellow South American nation Colombia in its bid to host the event.

Australia, which forms part of a joint bid with New Zealand, and Japan are Asia's bidding nations, with the winning bid to be chosen on June 25.

The CBF statement said the reasons Brazil's withdrawal were chiefly financial, saying: "Due to the scenario of economic and fiscal austerity, fueled by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it would not be advisable, at this moment, to sign the guarantees requested by FIFA."

"In view of the exceptional moment experienced by the country and the world, CBF understands the cautious position of the Brazilian Government, and of other public and private partners, which prevented them from formalizing the commitments within the time or in the required manner."

"Added to this is our perception, built



during the process, that the accumulation of large sporting events held in a short period of time in Brazil could not favor the candidacy in the vote on June 25."

Asia has hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup on two occasions, both in China PR, while South America has never hosted women's football's showpiece event.

The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup will be the first edition of the tournament to be held with 32 teams.

(Source: AFP)

Madrid could host Champions League final - city mayor

The mayor of Madrid has said the city is being considered as a potential host of this year's Champions League final and has given the idea his "total and absolute support".

The fixture was due to be played at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul on May 30 before the Champions League was postponed in March with only half of the last 16 completed.

The final last season between Liverpool and Tottenham was held at Atletico Madrid's Wanda Metropolitano while Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu hosted the 2010 decider between Inter Milan and Bayern Munich.

"I know steps are being taken in this regard and on behalf of the city council, I want to show my total and absolute support for the Champions League final being held in Madrid," Madrid mayor Jose Luis Martinez-Almeida said on Monday night to Spanish television channel Trece.

Spain has been able to bring coronavirus under control in recent weeks and Madrid moved into phase two, the penultimate stage of the government's de-escalation programme, on Monday. But overall there have been more than 27,000 deaths caused by coronavirus in the country.

"I think hosting an international event like the Champions League final is very



important but especially in these circumstances," Almeida added.

Almeida added that "adequate security conditions exist, we have the infrastructures and public services to host it and it would send a message to the world that Madrid, despite what we have experienced, does not give up and is back."

UEFA is yet to confirm how or if the tournament will continue, with an update expected after the governing body's executive committee meeting on June 17.

(Source: Eurosport)

Back to the beginning with Alireza!

Albion midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh talks us through his early days as a footballer.

Like all budding footballers, Alireza Jahanbakhsh had an idol he looked up to.

Here he talks us through the early days of his career that remarkably included sharing the same pitch with an Iran international he'd admired from a young age.

■ Who was your first footballing hero?

The most important games that I remember were the qualification matches for Iran to get into the 1998 World Cup in France. I was five or six years old and remember watching to see how they did.

Iran did well in the qualification and people were really excited about the games. My family are big football fans and we all watched them.

That generation has been one of the best ever that played for the country. We had a player called Mehdi Mahdavi who was always my idol. He played in Germany for 12 years.

When I was a bit older, I remember the 2002 World Cup, the Brazilian Ronaldo was my biggest idol then. I was now

playing football myself with my friends and I was always trying to act like him.

■ What was your first football shirt?

Before football I played a lot of different sports! At six or seven I did gymnastics for two years and I loved it at the time. That was when I wore my first proper sporting outfit.

Then at the age of nine or 10 I went to a class for self defense, and from the age of 11 I started to play sports with a ball. I played handball, indoor football and lots more sports.

My first jersey was for my school. I remember they gave us a full outfit with top, shorts and trainers. I loved it at the time, and it was a great feeling when I wore it.

■ At what age did football become your main focus?

I was very close to playing indoor football after I had been selected for the national team. There was a tournament for under-15s that I was invited to when I was only 12.

I was the top scorer during the year and really enjoyed it. I made the national team and from age 13 moved to an academy in my home town. I played there for a year and then went to try out for the under-15 national side.

I didn't get selected, so my football started then really. I played in the third division back home and then moved to Tehran to a small club for a year and progressed to the first team and the first division of the Iranian League.

■ You made your Iranian Pro League debut at the age of 17 for Damish Gilan, becoming one of their youngest ever players – what was that like?

It was amazing to be honest. I was young and wanted to get as many minutes as possible in the first division.

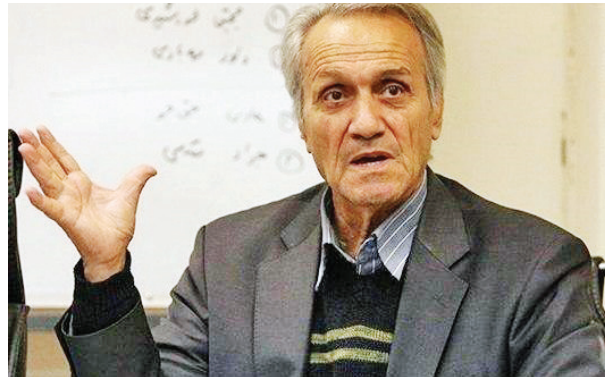
I wanted to learn and progress. Funnily enough the year I broke into the side, the player I mentioned earlier whom I looked up to, Mehdi Mahdavi, was returning from Germany! He played in right midfield and I played right-back in my first game. I couldn't believe it. It really was a dream come true for me to play against one of my first heroes.

I played there for another season and enjoyed a really good campaign, and then I moved on to Holland in 2013.

(Source: Brighton&HoveAlbion.com)

Ex-Iran coach Parviz Aboutaleb passes away

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Iran national football team coach Parviz Aboutaleb passed away on Tuesday.



Aboutaleb, who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, died at the age of 78.

He was a member of Iran football clubs Rah Ahan and Esteghlal in the early 60's and coached National Team in 1982.

Aboutaleb also worked as head coach in youth levels in Iran.

He will be laid to rest on Wednesday in Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery.

Tehran Times offers its heartfelt condolence to his bereaved family.

India to observe IDY-2020 through video blog

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The 6th International Day of Yoga (21st June 2020) falls during the close-downs and social distancing phase world-wide; caused due to COVID pandemic.

Indian government has set out a novel way to observe the IDY-2020 by inviting yoga enthusiasts from all countries to participate in an international "#MyLifeMyYoga Video Blog Competition" announcing country-specific and global prizes.

The completion is now open till 15th June 2020 and those willing to participate can post a video blog of themselves on social media using the hashtag #MyLifeMyYogaIran. The winners of the competition shall be announced on 21st June through: <https://yoga.ayush.gov.in/yoga/>.

Persepolis eye Shahriar Moghanlou

Tasnim - Paykan striker Shahriar Moghanlou has been linked with a move to Persepolis football club.

Persepolis forwards Anthony Stokes and Christian Osaguona will leave the team at the summer and the team is going to sign Moghanlou.

Moghanlou has already expressed his satisfaction to join Persepolis but he is under contract with Paykan.

Moghanlou, 25, is the best top scorer of Iran Professional League with 10 goals so far.

Mohammad Naderi to return to Kortrijk: report

Tasnim – Persepolis football team left back Mohammad Naderi will reportedly return to Belgian team Kortrijk.

He joined the Iranian team on loan from Kortrijk in 2018 and has to return to Belgium at the summer.

Persepolis defender Mohammad Ansari has been recently sidelined for six-month due to a torn ACL and Naderi's departure can be a big blow for the Reds.

Naderi has won an Iran Professional League, one Hazfi Cup and one Super Cup with Persepolis.

Korea Republic squad to undergo training camp

Korea Republic's U-19 squad will begin a training camp next week, ahead of the AFC U-19 Championship 2020.



The young Taeguk Warriors will become the first Korea Republic national football squad to undergo training amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Korea Football Association (KFA) announced a 36-man camp roster for head coach Kim Jung-soo. The camp will begin on Monday at the National Football Center, located north of Seoul.

The KFA said Kim will get a closer look at the players and determine the future direction of the squad in the camp.

Kim had previously managed the U-16 team in the 2018 AFC U-16 Championship, where Korea Republic finished fourth, and subsequently led his charges to a quarter-final finish in the 2019 FIFA U-17 World Cup in Brazil.

The players and coaching staff will be asked to follow strict quarantine measures, as they are required to fill out health questionnaires before reporting to the NFC and will have regular temperature checks during the camp.

Kim's charges recorded a perfect record in the 2020 AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers, winning all three matches with 18 goals scored to emerge as Group I winners.

The top four teams of the Championship will represent the Continent at the 2021 FIFA U-20 World Cup.

(Source: AFC)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Forsaking a need is easier than requesting it
from unworthy persons.

Imam Ali (AS)

Memoirs of Koniko Yamamura, mother of martyr Mohammad Babai, ready for publication

➔1 What makes her life distinguished are the events that changed her life.

"I never thought my life story would turn into a book, because if I were living in Japan with my parents, I would have had a typical life, but marrying an Iranian Muslim changed my life totally," she has said.

"After the martyrdom of my son, several writers proposed to write my biography but I did not agree, but in a journey to Hiroshima I met Hesam and I trusted him and the interviews began for the book," she added.

Hesam has also said that he met Yamamura in 2014 during a visit to Hiroshima along with a number of Iranian cineastes, authors and war veterans who attended the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony.

The ceremony is held annually to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy of the U.S. nuclear attack on the Japanese city.

"I met Yamaumura at the airport, she was introduced to us as the translator of the team where I noticed she was reciting verses of the Holy Quran while onboard or she sometimes told me short memories of her life," Hesam said. "Later, I noticed that she patiently listened to the survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bombardment and those Iranian veterans injured in Iraqi chemical attacks as she was in tears. It was in those years I began talks through interviews and gradually I was successful in writing her untold stories," Hesam said.

Dean Koontz's "Eyes of Darkness" comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of "The Eyes of Darkness" by American author Dean Ray Koontz whose novels are billed as suspense thrillers has been published in Tehran.

The story is about Tina Evans who has spent a year suffering from incredible heartache since her son Danny's tragic death. But now, with her Vegas show about to premiere, Tina can think of no better time for a fresh start. Maybe she can finally move on and put her grief behind her.

But then there is a message for Tina scrawled on the chalkboard in Danny's room: NOT DEAD. The two words send her on a terrifying journey from the bright lights of Las Vegas to the cold shadows of the High Sierras, where she uncovers a terrible secret.

"The book is about a virology laboratory and biological studies," translator Nahid Hashemian has said.

"The writer first had chosen Russia to be the location of the laboratory but he changed the location to Wuhan in China in the new edition of the book after the end of the Cold War," she added.

"However, by using ulterior elements, he has tried to prevent the book from being labeled as a political novel," she said.

"This book has been translated into 40 languages, no Persian translation of the story has been published so far, except the one I did," noted Hashemian who translated the book during the home quarantine in March and April.

Neyestan is the publisher of the Persian version of "Eyes of Darkness".



A copy of the Persian translation of American author Dean Ray Koontz's novel "Eyes of Darkness".

Bonhams to offer works by Iranian artists

A R T TEHRAN — A collection of works by a number of celebrated Iranian artists will go under the hammer at the Bonhams auction house sale in London set for June 11.

Works by artists from Syria, Egypt and Iraq will also be offered in the Modern and Contemporary Middle Eastern (West Asian) Art sales.

Being offered are 96 lots, 18 of which belong to Iranian artists with the highest prices.

The highest-priced item belongs to Jewad Selim for his painting Nisa Fi Al-Intidar (Women Waiting) offered at £170,000-280,000.

"The Magnified Sacred", a mirror work by Monir Farmanfarmaian from Iran has been offered at £110,000-220,000, placing as the second-highest priced item.

Farmanfarmaian had earlier said that "The Magnified Sacred" represents the nine elements of the body: brain, bones, nerves, veins, blood, flesh, skin, nails and hair.

"Golzar" by Mohammad Ehsai, "Untitled" from Sohrab Sepehri's Tree Trunk Series and "Gold Leaf Bowl with Green Hue" by Farhad Moshiri are among other highlights of the Iranian artworks selected

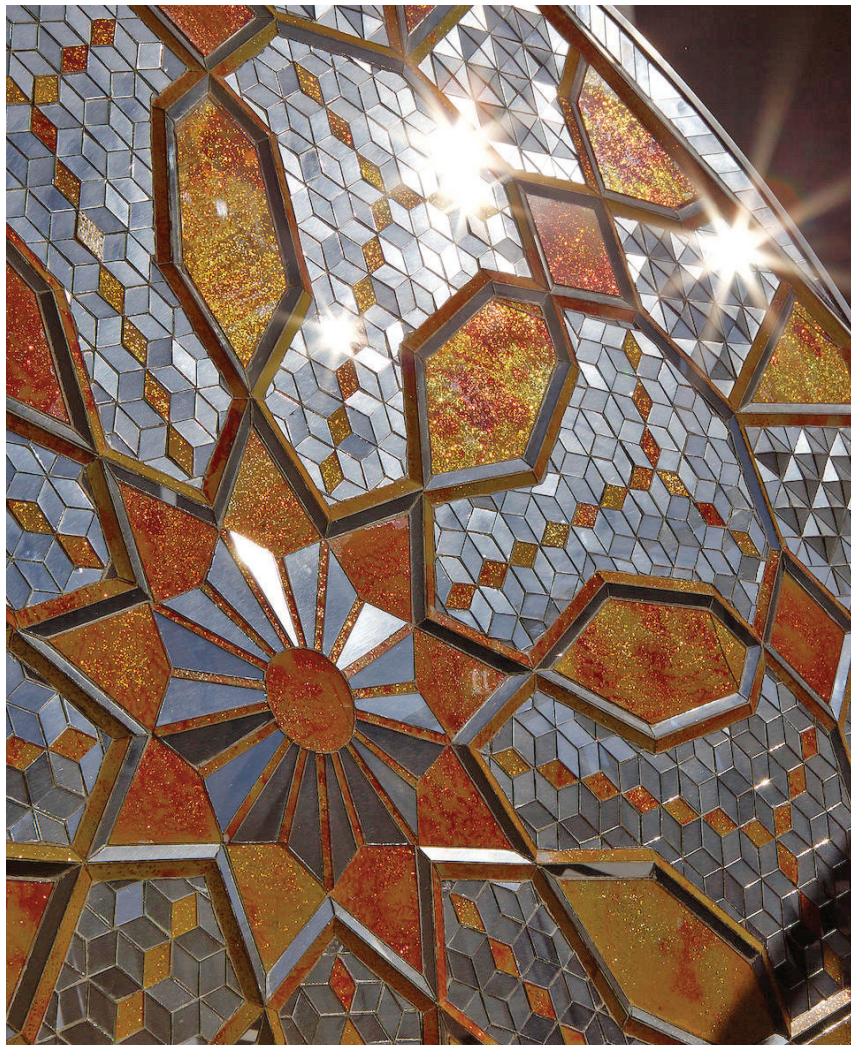
to be auctioned.

The modern and contemporary West Asian art market has experienced significant growth since the category began gaining recognition among collectors regionally and globally over the past decade.

The twentieth-century Arab and Iranian art has witnessed an extraordinary development that is in keeping with the rich artistic legacy of the region and is reflected in the world's long-standing fascination and interest in West Asian art and culture.

Bonhams has maintained a significant international presence in the market since the early years of its development. During their inaugural sale of modern West Asian art in Dubai in 2008, Bonhams broke 33 world records and witnessed the first West Asian artwork to achieve an auction sale of over one million dollars; Farhad Moshiri's stunning mixed media work "Eshq" (Love).

Since then, Bonhams has firmly established itself as one of the leading auction houses in the category, holding regular bi-annual sales first in Dubai and now in London, in recognition of the growing international market for art from West Asia and surrounding regions.



Iranian artist Monir Farmanfarmaian's mirror work "The Magnified Sacred" will be on sale at Bonhams auction in London on June 11, 2020.

Ischia festival picks three Iranian films



A poster for "Weekend" by Ario Motevagh.

A R T TEHRAN — A lineup of three Iranian movies will be taking part in the 18th edition of the Ischia Film Festival in Italy.

The festival will take place in Ischia from June 27 to 4 July in a hybrid version between events in attendance and partly online.

"Dreamless Sleep" by Foad Asadi and "Weekend" by Ario Motevagh are will be competing in the short film category.

"Dreamless Sleep" shows a forbidden jungle where people commit suicide, two men are looking for corpses to pick up and sell. One day, they run into a girl who is about to hang herself; which poses a challenge

between these two.

In "Weekend", Moniri and the Kheradmand family are in the park for a picnic but after finishing their meal, it turns out that they are there for something else.

"Song Sparrow" by Farzaneh Omidvarnia will be screened in the non-competitive section of the event.

It is about a group of refugees who tries to reach a safe country in search of a better life. They pay a smuggler to transport them across borders in a refrigerated truck. However, the freezing temperature of the truck turns their hopes for a better future into a fierce struggle for survival.

Wife of Iranian soldier martyred by ISIS shares memories in "I Know the Way to Our Home"



A poster for the book "I Know the Way to Our Home" by Maryam Hazrati.

CULTURE TEHRAN — Ozra Shoghi, the wife of Iranian soldier Farid Kaviani who was martyred by ISIS terrorists in Syria, has shared her husband's life story in the book "I Know the Way to Our Home".

Maryam Hazrati is the author of the book published by Khat-e Moqaddam Publications.

Farid was a construction worker and married Ozra at a very young age. He was forced to travel to other cities for work.

It was hard for Farid to tolerate the separation. Sadeq was their first son. Their life was very simple and the very first win-

ter when Sadeq was a child, Farid had to sell his wedding ring to acquire proper clothing for his son.

When Ozra was expecting their second child, Farid began to talk about moving to Syria for work as a construction worker, but he actually wanted to go to defend the holy shrine of Hazrat Zeinab (SA), the granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad (S), in Damascus.

Farid began to travel to Syria in 2011 more frequently, and finally Ozra heard the news of his martyrdom in August 2016 when their third child was only an infant.

MX Player to stream Iran's "Last Fiction"

A R T TEHRAN — MX Player, an Indian media streaming service, will be offering the acclaimed Iranian animated film "The Last Fiction" in the near future.

Users from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal also have access to the MX Player service, director Askan Rahgozar said on Monday.

In 2018, MX Player, which was created by J2 Interactive and is owned by Times Internet, the digital media division of Times Group, had 500 million users worldwide, including 350 million in India. In 2019, the platform had over 275 million active monthly users in India.

Earlier in April, Hoorakhsh Studio, the producer of the film, said that platforms providing the video on demand (VOD) service in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would offer "The Last Fiction" in the region on April 28.

Aurora Trade, the distributor of "The Last Fiction" in the region, had previously canceled the Russian premiere



"The Last Fiction" by Ashkan Rahgozar.

of the film, which had been set for late March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The movie can currently be downloaded on the VOD platforms Filmin in Spain and Cinesquare in Macedonia,

which covers Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Bosnian and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Slovenia, Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

The 7Sky Entertainment in Turkey and Hoorakhsh are jointly distributing the film around the world.

The movie recounts a story from Persian poet Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh about Zahak's treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness, but he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology that reveals human nature.

The movie has been screened in numerous international events, winning over a dozen awards. It was named best animated film at the 37th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February 2019.

"The Last Fiction" was among the submissions for the 2020 Oscars consideration, but it failed to receive a nomination.

"A Hero" picks "Paytakht" star Tanabandeh, "Lost Strait" actor Jadidi

A R T TEHRAN — Oscar-winning Iranian director Asghar Farhadi has hired Mohsen Tanabandeh, the star of the popular Iranian TV series "Paytakht", and Amir Jadidi, the actor of the acclaimed war drama "The Last Strait", for the cast of his new project "A Hero".

The duo is the sole professional members of the cast, a public relations team of the project announced on Tuesday.

Shooting will begin on location in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz in July.

Farhadi's plans to make "A Hero" were announced in February.

Paris-based Memento Films International started the worldwide sales of the film, which is in the Persian language, during the European Film Market in Berlin in February.

"We are proud to propose a brilliant, new film project by great director Asghar Farhadi," said Alexandre Moreau, VP Sales and Marketing at Memento, which has sold five films by Farhadi.

"He is a consistent director, and a master of suspense which always draws audiences to theaters. The script is absolutely fascinating and tackles many contemporary issues of our modern societies," he added.

Starring Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem, Farhadi's previous film "Everybody Knows" was filmed in Spain.

Farhadi's "The Salesman" and "A Separation", both in his native language, won him Oscars for best foreign-language film. "A Separation" also received a best screenplay Oscar nomination.



A combination photo shows actors Mohsen Tanabandeh and Amir Jadidi.

The movies grossed \$23 million worldwide and more than \$7 million in the U.S.