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Pre-historical culture unearthed in Iran

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Excavations reveal rare find of Kura-Araxes culture, a civilization existed from c. 4000 BC until about 2000 BC



File photo depicts a terracotta model of a chariot used by the Kura-Araxes people, 4th-3rd millennium BC.

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REPORT

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Just to fan the flame!

U.S. President Donal Trump gave rise to a new controversy on Tuesday by condemning a 75-year-old protester as being an "Antifa provocateur." Martin Gugino, a Buffalo activist who is still in the hospital recovering from a head wound he sustained when the police shoved him to the ground, is Trump's new target to keep the fire of protests on.

Without any evidence to prove his claim, Trump tweeted that the incident in Buffalo, the second largest city in the state of New York, may be a "set up" and once again sided with the police over people. Trump tweeted: "Buffalo protester shoved by police could be an ANTIFA provocateur. 75-year old Martin Gugino was pushed away after appearing to scan police communications in order to black out the equipment. @OANN I watched, he fell harder than was pushed. Was aiming scanner. Could be a set up?"

Trump's tweet was criticized by both Republicans and Democrats. The Times of Israel reported. Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, said, "It's a serious accusation, which should only be made with facts and evidence. And I haven't seen any yet".

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, who last week said she's "struggling with" whether to support Trump in November, reacted to the tweet in the Capitol after a reporter handed her a printout. "Oh lord. Ugh," she said. "Again, why would you fan the flames? That's all I'm going to say."

New York Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo also called on Trump to apologize for a "wholly unacceptable" tweet. "How reckless, how irresponsible, how mean, how crude. I mean if there was ever a reprehensible, dumb comment, and from the president of the United States," Cuomo said at his daily press conference. "At this moment of anguish and anger, what does he do? Pour gasoline on the fire," he added.

As an effort to malign protesters as "radical-left, bad people" engaging in domestic terrorism, Trump has frequently invoked the label "Antifa," an umbrella term for leftist militants bound more by belief than organizational structure. **→7**

Knowledge-based companies to raise annual sales to \$35 billion

TEHRAN – Knowledge-based companies in Iran sold products worth 1,200 trillion rials (about \$28 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), while the figure is projected to rise to 1,500 billion rials (about \$35 billion) in the current year, said Sourena Sattari, Vice President for Science and Technology.

"Currently, some five thousand knowledge-based companies are active in the country and the number is rapidly increasing, so that they will be one of the main pillars of the national economy," he added, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

According to official reports, 250 Iranian knowledge-based companies exported around \$400 million of products in the past Iranian calendar year, Mehr quoted Masoud Hafezi, an official with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology as saying.

Medicine and medical equipment, polymer and chemical products, and industrial machinery were the items exported by the companies mainly to Central Asia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Persian Gulf littoral states, Hafezi explained.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has reported that 35 domestic knowledge-based companies have been recently listed on the country's stock market and the number is expected to increase in the future.

According to the report, the value of the shares of the mentioned companies is estimated at 1.5 quadrillion rials (over \$35.7 billion).

The figure stood at 280 trillion rials (about \$6.66 billion) in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) which shows a significant growth in this field, so the vice presidency is trying to bring five to 10 new knowledge-based companies into the capital market this year. **→9**

Cineasts express sorry over exploitation and exclusion of people of color

By staff & agencies

Viola Davis, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Cynthia Erivo joined some 300 actors and playwrights on Tuesday in decrying racism in the U.S. theater world, saying it had been exploited and excluded and diminished people of color.

In an open letter addressed to "Dear White American Theater," the signatories complained of tokenism, prioritizing white theater for white audiences, and a failure to make promised changes in programming or leadership.

"We have watched you use our BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) faces on your brochures, asking us to politely shuffle at your galas, talkbacks, panels, board meetings, and donor dinners, in rooms full of white faces," the letter said.

It was addressed not just to theater owners and theater companies but also critics, casting directors, agents, labor unions, and university

training programs.

■ Democrats and Republicans fight over changing the police structure

U.S. Senate Republicans say they are working on their own legislation relating to police reform and social injustice following the death in custody of African American George Floyd last month.

This comes a day after the Democrats unveiled a comprehensive reform package aimed at cracking down on police brutality and recording patterns of misuse of force in the U.S., Press TV reported.

The legislation was led by the Congressional Black Caucus, Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee, and Democratic Sens. Kamala Harris of California and Cory Booker of New Jersey.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that Congress "cannot settle for anything less than transformative structural change." **→10**

Black Americans still viewed as slaves by many white people, says anthropologist

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Prof. William O. Beeman, head of the anthropology department at the State University of Minnesota, is of the view that the United States "is still a racist society".

Beeman also tells the Tehran Times that "the entire economy of the American South was dependent on slavery, and culturally black Americans are still viewed as slaves or at least

inferior by many white people."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ After a black man was killed in Minneapolis, we witnessed popular protests against this brutal act. What are the reasons for the protests between police forces and people, especially the people of color?

A: The murder of George Floyd by a white policeman was filmed on video and took place before dozens of witnesses. This was the fourth time recently that an unarmed

innocent black man had been murdered by white policemen in Minnesota (the state where Minneapolis is located). In all four cases the policemen were not punished. In one other case, where a white woman was killed by a black policeman (a Somali-American), the policeman was jailed for 12 years, and the family of the woman received a \$12 million settlement from the city. The difference in these cases was very upsetting for the black community. **→7**



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"I Can't Breathe" intl. cartoon exhibition opens in Tehran

TEHRAN — The international cartoon exhibition "I Can't Breathe", highlighting protests against racism in the U.S., opened in the Aali Gallery of the Art Bureau in Tehran on Wednesday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, the secretary of the exhibition, said that a selection of 72 works by 45 Iranian and international artists from 27 countries have been put on view.

He added that the organizers decided to hold the exhibit after the police killing of an unarmed African-American man named George Floyd. **→12**

Iran's fishery exports to EU resumed

TEHRAN — Iran's Veterinary Organization announced that the country has resumed exports of fishery products to the European Union (EU) member states, IRNA reported.

As announced by the Iranian Agriculture Ministry, despite the U.S. sanctions that have created many problems for the export of fishery products, through the efforts made by the veterinary organization, the country succeeded to obtain again the license to export aquaculture and fishery products to the member states of the European Union.

Iran's fishery output reached 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has announced.

Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The official noted that the output, which was more than the projected amount, was achieved through the help of research sectors as well as the ground laid by the private sector.

Referring to the high quality of Iran's fishery products, the head of IFO said that these products were sold easily in the export markets.

In mid-January, the official had also said that new export destinations have welcomed Iran's high-quality fishery products in the past Iranian calendar year.

New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have opened up for Iranian fishery products in the current year, Khoun-Mirzaei said.

Baeidinejad says U.S. ambassador crying wolf

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad has said that the United States' Ambassador to the UK Robert Wood Johnson must be



"ashamed of himself" who is crying wolf over detention of an Iranian citizen while Washington brutally suppress protesters. "#USAmbUK should be ashamed of himself crying wolf over detention of an Iranian, while his compatriots chanting #BlackLivesMatters are brutally suppressed at home. Can't he see from window 10,000s Londoners asking US gov to stop violence against innocents/ respect human rights?" Baeidinejad tweeted on Wednesday. In a tweet on Wednesday, Johnson criticized Iran for detaining Morad Tahbaz. He is also a citizen of the U.S. and UK.

Iran says ready to hold talks with Ukraine over plane incident

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on Tuesday that Iran is ready to hold talks with Ukraine over the plane crash incident.

"Iran is ready to hold talks with the Ukrainian side in order to settle the issues of black box of the plane and indemnity to the families of the victims," Baharvand said during a meeting with Ukrainian Ambassador to Iran Sergei Burduliak.



Baharvand



Sergei Burduliak

Burduliak said Ukraine welcomes talks. 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. air base 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.

Iranian Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili announced on Tuesday that six people have been arrested over the 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.

Baharvand also 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.

"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 warm technical cooperation with other countries on the Ukrainian flight issue and the subject has not been politicized at all.

Russia, China build case at UN to protect Iran from U.S. sanctions threat

(Reuters) — Russia and China have started making the case at the United Nations against Washington's claim that it can trigger a return of all sanctions on Iran at the Security Council, with Moscow invoking a 50-year-old international legal opinion to argue against the move.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the Chinese government's top diplomat, Wang Yi, both wrote to the 15-member council and UN chief Antonio Guterres as the United States threatens to spark a so-called sanctions snapback under the Iran nuclear deal, even though Washington quit the accord in 2018. Lavrov wrote in the May 27 letter, made public this week, that the United States was being "ridiculous and irresponsible."

"This is absolutely unacceptable and serves only to recall the famous English proverb about having one's cake and eating it," Lavrov wrote. Washington has threatened to trigger a return of UN sanctions on Iran if the Security Council does not extend an arms embargo due to expire in October under Tehran's deal with world powers to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft said last week that a draft resolution on the embargo would be circulated soon. Council veto-powers Russia and China have already signaled they are against reimposing an arms embargo on Iran. If they block the U.S.-drafted resolution, then Washington will have to follow through on its sanctions snapback threat.

Iranians have 'broken U.S. knee' through unity: Rouhani

1 → Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also said on June 3 that 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.

Ayatollah Khamenei 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."

Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif have described the illegal sanctions on Iran by the U.S. administration as economic terrorism.

Later, Zarif said "U.S. economic terrorism is supplanted by its medical terrorism" as Washington has even blocked financial channels to import medical supplies to the country to control the spread of the coronavirus.

By announcing a total ban on Iran's oil



export, the Trump administration intended to suffocate the Iranian economy.

■ Rouhani urges Russia, China to counter U.S. plots

Rouhani also said that Iran expects perma-

nent members of the United Nations Security Council, especially friendly countries of Russia and China, to stand against the U.S. plots.

Rouhani noted that arms embargo on Iran will expire in October based on the resolution

2231 which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal, adding the U.S. seeks to hatch plots and draft a resolution and send it to the UN Security Council for approval.

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

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.

■ 'We will promote our defense power'

Rouhani also said that the U.S. plots will fail and Iran will promote its deterrence power.

"The United States must know that Iran will promote defense power in any condition even if they [the U.S.] bring the case to the Security Council and cause harm to the 2231 resolution," he said.

U.S. attempts to revive Iranian sanctions can put UNSC in crisis: Russia

By staff and agency

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Tuesday that the United States' threats to raise the question of restoring all previously lifted sanctions against Iran may lead to a serious crisis within the UN Security Council.

"I think it's outrageous that the U.S. administration now tries to freely pick and choose what serves its interests in complete rejection of the views of the others and even in complete rejection of the common sense, trying to defeat JCPOA," TASS quoted Ryabkov as saying during a videoconference of the New York Council



on Foreign Relations.

"If this will happen the way as you suggest and, as many think-tankers, many op-ed writers, just people knowledgeable of this

believe, would happen, then we will inevitably end in a severe crisis situation at the Security Council," the Russian diplomat continued. "And it would be a huge blow to the sovereignty of the Security Council, and the U.S. will bear responsibility for this."

He said Washington withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program, which envisages the mechanism of triggering the 'snapback' sanctions, "subsequently approved by the UN Security Council resolution."

His comments were made in response to U.S. officials' words, who said that Washington would seek to restore all previous-

ly cancelled sanctions against Iran if the UN Security Council fails to preserve the embargo on weapons supplies to Tehran, which expires this fall.

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.

Washington's irresponsible conduct is a source of serious concern, Iran writes to IAEA chief

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, has warned that the United States' "irresponsible conduct" in hampering international cooperation for peaceful uses of nuclear technology "is a source of serious concern".

"Upon instructions and on behalf of my government, I would like to bring to your attention the persistent United States' irresponsible conduct with respect to its multilateral obligations and international law, to hamper international nuclear cooperation for peaceful purposes, which is a source of serious concern," Gharibabadi wrote in a letter to Rafael Grossi, the IAEA director-general.

Following is the full text of the letter published by ISNA on Wednesday:

Upon instructions and on behalf of my Government, I would like to bring to your attention the persistent United States' irresponsible conduct with respect to its multilateral obligations and international law, to hamper international nuclear cooperation for peaceful purposes, which is the source of serious concern.

The unlawful actions by the United States in contradiction with the Agency's Statute and the commitments made in the General Conference (GC) Resolutions, as well as against the nuclear cooperation and activities in accordance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and UNSCR 2231 (2015) are not only in violation of the UN Charter, but also could greatly impede the full implementation of the JCPOA.

I would like to recall that as stated in Article II of the IAEA Statute, the objectives of the Agency are "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health, and prosperity throughout the world", and one of the statutory functions of the Agency, as stated in Article III of the Statute, is to "encourage and assist research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world". Also, as stipulated in its article IV, which constitutes one of the fundamental objectives and pillars of the NPT, the central role of the Agency is to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the realization of "the inalienable right of all the parties to the Treaty (NPT) to develop research, production, and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles 1 and 11 of the Treaty".

Such rights, objectives, and roles of the IAEA were also highlighted and reaffirmed in the Agency's annual General Conference (GC) Resolutions; the annual GC Resolution on "Strengthening of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Activities" requests the Secretariat to "continue to facilitate and to enhance the development of nuclear technology and know-how and its transfer to and among Member States for peaceful uses ...", and "encourages Member States to contribute in sharing knowledge and technology in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy".

Furthermore, the annual GC Resolution on "Strengthening the Agency's Activities

"The Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) encourages Member States to cooperate with Iran in the framework of the JCPOA in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to engage in mutually determined civil nuclear cooperation."

related to Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications" recognizes "the importance of assisting Member States interested in uranium production to develop and maintain sustainable activities through appropriate technology, infrastructure, and stakeholder involvement and the development of skilled human resources".

Promotion and protection of peaceful nuclear activities enjoy such importance that even measures adopted under nuclear security should not hamper it. In this regard, the GC Resolution on "Nuclear Security" calls upon all States to ensure that measures to strengthen nuclear security do not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, the production, transfer, and use of nuclear and other radioactive material, the exchange of nuclear material for peaceful purposes and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and do not undermine the established priorities of the Agency's technical cooperation programme".

Against this backdrop, on 27 May 2020, the United States announced that it would unilaterally sanction "all remaining JCPOA-originating nuclear projects in Iran - the Arak reactor conversion, the provision of enriched uranium for the Tehran Research Reactor, and the export of Iran's research reactor fuel". "This action together with the previous malign policies and conducts of the United States against the nuclear cooperation and activities in accordance with the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231 (2015) - in particular designation of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and its Head Dr. Ali Akbar Salehi (31 January 2020) as well as sanctioning the cooperation and activities between Iran and other countries regarding transfer of enriched uranium out of Iran in exchange for natural uranium and providing the storage for Iran of heavy water (3 May 2019) and also the Fordow facility (18 November 2019) is intended to substantially prevent Iran, other participants and the international community from implementing their commitments under

the JCPOA.

It is noteworthy that the malign policies of the U.S. are not limited to its recent acts. In fact, the U.S. is accustomed to such internationally abhorred policies. The U.S. actions even contradict with the Resolution GOV12015172 adopted by the Board of Governors on 15 December 2015 which, among others, while "recognizing the long-term nature of the provisions of the JCPOA and their implications for the Agency", and "being guided by, inter-alia, the affirmation by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 2231 (2015)" that "conclusion of the JCPOA marks a fundamental shift in its consideration of this issue", emphasizes "the importance of faithfully honoring the undertakings and commitments under the JCPOA".

The Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) encourages Member States to cooperate with Iran in the framework of the JCPOA in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to engage in mutually determined civil nuclear cooperation. According to this resolution, States are authorized to supply, sale, or transfer of items, materials, equipment, goods and technology, and the provision of any related technical assistance, training, financial assistance, investment, brokering or other services, that is directly related to the modification of two cascades at the Fordow facility for stable isotope production; the export of Iran's enriched uranium in excess of 300 kilograms in return for natural uranium; and the modernization of the Arak reactor. The resolution also endorses that these activities continue to be in effect even if the provisions of previous resolutions are applied. Moreover, the supply of a quantity of 19.75% enriched uranium oxide (U308) exclusively for the purpose of fabrication in Iran of fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor and enriched uranium targets for the lifetime of the reactor is guaranteed in UNSCR 2231 (2015).

These unlawful actions adversely affect the international civil nuclear cooperation and ac-

It is crucial that the United States violations of its relevant obligations and unilateral actions should not have any negative impact on the work of the Agency in pursuing its mandate in the fields of peaceful nuclear uses in accordance with its Statute and other relevant documents. The Director General is requested to duly reflect such violations by the U.S. in his reports on the implementation of the relevant instruments of the Agency.



tivities as specified in Annex I and Annex III to the JCPOA by technically and practically impeding the full implementation of the JCPOA by the remaining participants and the rest of international community. These are not necessarily restricted to above-mentioned areas, but also extended to the humanitarian applications of the nuclear science and technology by imposing sanctions on radiopharmaceutical production company (Pars Isotopes Co.) and Iran's Nuclear Regulatory Authority (INRA), and even intimidating and threatening the Iranian nuclear experts in clear contradiction with the letters and spirit of the IAEA Statute". Such irresponsible and inhuman behavior by the U.S. is not only endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of patients in dire need of those radiopharmaceuticals but also posing a serious threat to the nuclear scientists, which the U.S. would be held accountable for any event in this regard.

These acts by the United States not only constitute a significant material breach of the Security Council resolution 2231 but also are in clear violation of its obligations under the relevant IAEA instruments. The United States sanctions and policies have also prevented the implementation of relevant nuclear-related provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) by Member States, including the Islamic Republic of Iran.

While the Islamic Republic of Iran is entitled to take remedial measures, which the Agency will be duly informed at any stage of its development, the United States shall bear full responsibility for the consequences of its wrongful acts. It must immediately remove these restrictions and limitations on the international cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy which are in contradiction to the objective of the Statute of the Agency, principles of the Non-proliferation Treaty, and the provisions of the Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015).

The Members of the Agency should uphold their responsibilities and consider and react proportionately to the unlawful conduct of the United States that is endangering international cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and technology.

It is crucial that the United States violations of its relevant obligations and unilateral actions should not have any negative impact on the work of the Agency in pursuing its mandate in the fields of peaceful nuclear uses in accordance with its Statute and other relevant documents. The Director-General is requested to duly reflect such violations by the U.S. in his reports on the implementation of the relevant instruments of the Agency.

Death row spy arrested months before Gen. Soleimani assassination: Judiciary

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's Judiciary said a man sentenced to death for spying for the CIA and Mossad on the whereabouts of martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani had been arrested four months before the U.S. assassination of the top Iranian general.

The case of Seyed Mahmoud Mousavi-Majd has nothing to do with the American assassination of General Soleimani in Baghdad in early January, the Judiciary's press office announced on Tuesday, according to Tasnim.

Mousavi-Majd was arrested months before that incident and the court had issued an initial ruling on his case on August 25, 2019, the Judiciary said, explaining that the convict has never been released from custody since apprehension.

Earlier on Tuesday, Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaeili announced that Mousavi-Majd was put on the death row for gathering intelligence about the whereabouts of General Soleimani.

"Recently, a person named Seyed Mahmoud Mousavi-Majd, 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," Esmaeili announced during a press conference.

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).

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.

"I'm misled by usual warmongers, again," Zarif warned Trump.

Tehran says will never surrender to U.S. sanctions

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran says it will never surrender to the United States' maximum pressure policy, urging Washington to abandon its illegal measures.

"American authorities divide the sanctions into different categories, making it difficult for themselves only," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Wednesday.

"The Islamic Republic will not surrender because of such sanctions and pressures," Mousavi added, according to Mehr.

The comments by the spokesman came as 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.

Mousavi urged the U.S. to abandon its unilateral, illegal actions and instead abide by international laws and regulations.

The world should wake up and stand against extra-territorial measures of the United States, he emphasized.

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.

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 — Britain, Germany, and France which are signatory to the nuclear deal — has failed to protect Tehran's business interests under the JCPOA against the American bans.

Meanwhile, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations has said that Washington's maximum pressure policy on Iran has increased tensions in the Persian Gulf and caused reduced commitments of Tehran under the Iran nuclear deal.

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

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

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

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

Zarif to travel to two neighboring countries

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will travel to two neighboring countries in the near future, spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Wednesday.

"In the current circumstances, some trips such as trips to Syria and Afghanistan by the foreign minister and some of the ministry's diplomats is on the agenda," Mousavi said, Mehr reported.

He said the details will be announced if the trips are finalized.

The spokesman also said nationals of some countries try to enter Iran illegally, adding that the Iranian police will not tolerate such acts which are related to the country's national security.

Referring to recent incidents regarding the Afghan nationals, the spokesman said, "For every country, the country's security, border security, fighting drug [trafficking], terrorism and human trafficking are important."

"Regardless of our relations, it's natural that the police would not tolerate such acts," he said. "In recent incidents, we witnessed that some nationals of neighboring and non-neighboring countries were trying to enter the country illegally."

The remarks came days after Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand blamed illegal traffic of Afghan migrants for the human tragedy in Harirud.

"Our investigation does not show that

incident in Harirud was caused by interference of the Iranian border guards. However, we considered evidence of the Afghan side important and gave it to the related bodies," Baharvand said on Sunday.

He said, "Due to Afghan armed forces' fight against terrorism, Afghanistan has dismantled its border stations and this has caused lack of control over borders by Afghanistan. This issue has led to problems caused by human traffickers."

Afghan media outlets have reported that about 50 Afghan migrants crossing into Iran illegally had been beaten and thrown into a river. Iranian political and border officials have refuted the claim, saying the incident happened on the Afghan side of the border.

According to some reports, 18 of the migrants, including a 12-year old boy, were drowned in the Harirud River.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry announced on May 9 that an inquiry had been launched into the tragedy.

Iran's Foreign Ministry has rejected as a "bitter joke" a claim by the United States that Iranian guards were involved in the deaths of Afghan migrants.

"Iran has strong ties with Afghanistan & leads the way to help Afghan leaders for inclusive Govt. What happened to Afghan nationals in Herat is tragic & unrelated to Iran, but U.S. regime's allegation against Iran is a 'bitter joke'," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement published via Twitter on May 5.

Iran displayed power by sending tankers to Venezuela: IRGC chief

1→ Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro appreciated Iran, China, Russia and Cuba for their assistance to Caracas, describing them as the real friends of his country.

"Humanitarian aid is coming from China, Russia, Iran and Cuba. They are (Venezuela's) true friends," Maduro said in a speech broadcast by the state TV on Sunday.

He recalled that the U.S. was offering \$20 million worth of help, "but not a single dollar came through".

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani said on Sunday that the fools who were after besieging Tehran now feel overpowered by Tehran.

"Iranian tankers, having accomplished their mission successfully, are coming back to the country. This means that the strategy of active resistance has been effective and the idiots who were seeking to lay siege on us, have now been trapped in the siege stemming from Iran's might," Shamkhani wrote in his Twitter account.

"Trump and Hook's begging for negotiation testifies to this very claim," the top security official said.

The fifth ship of Iran's fuel-carrying flotilla, Clavel, arrived in Venezuela's territorial waters on Monday, while two others are on the way back home after unloading their cargoes.

The fifth of the Iranian flotilla, carrying gasoline and gasoline products to Venezuela, successfully arrived in the Venezuelan waters on Monday and was escorted by the Latin American state's Armed Forces.

Meantime, the five Iranian tankers left the country towards Iran last week.

Iran's fuel supply to Venezuela has sharply irked the U.S. as the oil sectors of both countries are subject to draconian American sanctions.

A U.S. official said last month that President Donald Trump's administration was considering responses, prompt-



"We exercised might and the biggest exercise of our might was imposition of our will and our ships' move in free waters from the Persian Gulf to Venezuela," General Salami says.

ing Tehran to warn of retaliatory measures if Washington causes any problem for the tankers.

In response, President Rouhani said his country is always entitled to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and warned that if his country's oil tankers in the Caribbean or anywhere in the world get into trouble by the Americans, Tehran will definitely retaliate.

"Although some of the U.S. measures have created unacceptable conditions in different parts of the world, we will not be the initiator of tension and clash," Rouhani said in a

phone call with the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani last month.

Referring to the American moves in the Caribbean, he reiterated, "If our oil tankers face problems in the Caribbean Sea or anywhere in the world by the Americans, they will face problems reciprocally."

We see the conditions today more apt for cooperation, especially given the outbreak of this disease; but the U.S. continues its incorrect decisions and inhumane behaviors, the president noted.

He made it clear, "As before, we stress that the security of our region, particularly the marine security, is maintained by the regional countries and we have always announced that we are ready for cooperation with the neighboring countries."

Last Thursday, Caracas announced that the fuel-hungry Latin American country is mulling imports of more gasoline and other oil products from Iran.

The announcement came after Venezuela received five shipments of fuel from Iran in the face of U.S. sanctions.

"Tehran yesterday offered to supply Venezuela with more gasoline and refinery additives. President Maduro very likely will accept the offer because we need the fuel," an official at Maduro's office was quoted by price reporting agency Argus Media.

Other officials said the government will ask Iran for further supplies in coming weeks to give state-run oil company PDVSA more time to revive part of its refining capacity.

Maduro said he would visit Iran once health conditions resulting from the new coronavirus outbreak permit in order to thank the Iranian government and sign a "high-level bilateral agreement strengthening energy, financial and military ties".

"I am obliged to go to personally thank the people," Maduro said in a state television address, without providing a date for the visit.

Hook claims Iran sanctions produced 'excellent results'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The United States is working to renew the arms embargo on Iran, claims U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook, adding that sanctions on the Islamic Republic had produced "excellent results".

"The sanctions on Tehran have led to excellent results and we have deprived the Iranian regime of billions of dollars thanks to the sanctions," Hook said, speaking to Brett D. Schaefer of the Heritage Foundation during an online session.



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

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

Hook also claimed that Iran was at the forefront of sponsoring terrorism and added that lifting the arms embargo on Tehran would provide the Islamic Republic "an opportunity to destabilize the region."

"Iran is an isolated country and does not enjoy international support," he claimed, adding that the U.S. dispute with other countries over policy on Iran was "tactical and not substantive."

"Russia and China want to sell arms to Iran, and the embargo does not suit them," he claimed.

Hook further said that "not arming Iran contributes to bringing stability to the Middle East."

He said U.S. President Donald Trump had been "very strong against Iran," adding that "the Iranian regime is languishing under great pressure and the door is open to diplomacy ... President Trump will continue to pressure and Iran must respond."

Meanwhile, Tehran has strongly rejected the U.S. president's calls for talks under pressure, arguing that it was the U.S., not Iran and other parties to the nuclear pact, that left the negotiating table.

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

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

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

Police seize over 16 tons of narcotics in a week

TEHRAN (MNA) — Over 16 tons of narcotics have been seized by Iran's anti-narcotics police forces in the country over the last week, according to an official in the drug control headquarters.

International Deputy of Iran Drug Control Headquarters Nasser Aslani made the announcement on Tuesday, saying that some 16,322 kilograms of narcotics consisting of 12,864 kilograms of opium and 2,383 kilograms of hashish, 506 kilograms of crystal, 271 kilograms morphine, 186 kilograms of heroin, 70 kilograms of grass, and 45 kilograms of other kinds of drugs have been confiscated by police forces across the country in the last week.



The figure indicates a 20 percent decline compared to the corresponding period last year, he added.

3,369 smugglers have been arrested and 394 vehicles and some ammunition seized in the same period by police forces, Aslani said.

Iran, which has a 900-kilometer common border with Afghanistan, has been used as the main conduit for smuggling Afghan drugs to narcotics kingpins in Europe.

Based on reports, near 15 tons of drugs have been confiscated in several operations in Sistan and Baluchestan since the beginning of May.

Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades.

The country has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

The war on drug trade originating from Afghanistan has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police officers over the past four decades.

Issuance of industrial unit permits up 26% in 2 months yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The latest data released by Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry indicates that the issuance of permits for the establishment of industrial units in Iran has risen 26.4 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 19) compared to the same period of time in the past year.



The data put the number of issued permits at 4,612 during the two-month period of this year, IRNA reported. Some 556 trillion rials (about \$13.2 billion) has been invested for the establishment of the mentioned units, showing a 40-percent growth year on year. As previously reported by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19), 27,947 licenses were issued for establishing new industrial units which mark a 14.2-percent increase year on year. More than 3.63 quadrillion rials (about \$86.52 billion) was invested for setting up the mentioned units which shows a 26-percent rise compared to the preceding year. These units were expected to create job opportunities for 633,381 people, 14.2 percent more than the figure for the year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019). In the past year, the number of licenses that were issued for the newly established industrial units to start operation also increase by 2.9 percent year on year. The investment in the newly established units increased 5.3 percent compared to the preceding year, while job creation by the mentioned units fell 1.2 percent. The average investment in the mentioned sector also increased from 102.1 billion rials (about \$2.43 million) in 1397 to 104.5 billion rials (nearly \$2.5 million) in 1398. In April, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry outlined its major programs for supporting the domestic production in the current calendar year. The ministry's programs included supporting the country's industrial units and facilitating license issuances in order to promote domestic production and non-oil exports.

Iran pushes South Korea to release billions withheld by banks

1 → Iran could launch legal action to gain access to the funds, he said, without naming the lenders in question. Hemmati also didn't elaborate on the course of action that Iran may take.



Head of Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati

After sanctions were lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran the following year managed to unlock over \$6.4 billion of oil payments trapped in Indian accounts, using European banks as a clearing agent. The central bank has also filed lawsuits in Europe against financial companies that have withheld its money on the basis of court orders issued in the U.S. Iran announced earlier this month that it had received medicines valued at \$500,000 from South Korea after two years of negotiations. At the time, Iran's Foreign Ministry said the deal was approved by Washington. It also said South Korea was about \$7 billion in arrears for oil exported before the Trump administration last year reimposed penalties on Iran's crude sales. According to the Foreign Ministry in Seoul, the drugs shipped were for the treatment of genetic diseases. This month, South Korea plans to ship Covid-19 test kits worth \$2 million, it said. "We have been consulting with the U.S., Iran and the banks holding the frozen funds, seeking to make progress on this issue," said Koh Kyung-sok, a Foreign Ministry official. "So far, we've been able to utilize some of the funds to expand humanitarian trade with Iran, and will continue to seek ways to increase such exchanges," he said by phone. The head of the Central Bank of Iran has said that the two countries have been working on a special trade vehicle, similar to that established with the European Union, which would allow Iran to complete humanitarian transactions using the money locked in Korean banks. The U.S., which abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal two years ago, has sought to "stonewall" the plan, according to Hemmati. The EU mechanism -- known as Instex -- provides European companies with a trading vehicle to sell goods and services to Iran without using dollars, routing transactions through U.S. banks, or moving money across the Iranian border. But its impact has been limited due to companies' fears over the reach of American penalties. "Should Korean banks not adhere to their international agreements with us, we reserve our rights to take legal actions under international laws," Hemmati said.

Stock market, a ground for materializing ‘Surge in Production’

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) is named the year of "Surge in Production", indicating that many endeavors should be made in all sectors for realizing a jump in the country's production status. Materializing this motto requires strong financial support for the production units, and directing the liquidity toward the production activities. It is obvious that the stock market can play a significant role in the realization of this objective. The country's stock market enjoys high potential to support domestic production and as its capacity is being more and more expanded, it should be noted that it's now the best place for attracting the liquidity to the production.

■ A prosperous market While the Iranian stock market has been developed in recent years through many measures such as applying more financial instruments and also making the people more acquainted with the stock market activities, this market has been booming since the previous year. In the past Iranian year 1398, the performance of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is the main stock market of Iran, was unprecedented, as its main index, TEDPIX, which had closed at 178,000 points at the end of the calendar year 1397, climbed to 512,000 points at the end of last year. The previous year was in fact a golden era for the Iranian stock market, as the volume of trades and the number of shareholders witnessed some outstanding growth, not at all comparable with those of its preceding years. The trend of sharp increase also continues in the current year. TEDPIX has already passed one million points in this year registering a new record in the country's stock market's history, something almost unbelievable just some time ago. Many factors are contributing to the prosperity that the stock market is experiencing, one of which is that making investment in this market is now more profitable compared to the parallel markets such as those of gold coin and foreign currency. Meanwhile, as previously mentioned, people are getting more familiar with activity in the stock market.

■ Promotion of production elements The need for securing the required funds for the production activities on one side and the promising status of the stock market



on the other side highlights how much this market can pave the way for realizing the slogan of "Surge in Production". The stock market can surge the production through promoting the major elements of production, which are capital, workforce, and technology. While the number of production companies listed on the TSE has been continuously rising since the past year, the country is trying to bring also more knowledge-based companies into this market in the present year. In the current year, a new index will be introduced as the knowledge-based index in the TSE, for which the initial measures have been already taken. This action makes the activities of knowledge-based companies in the stock market more tangible.

■ Attracting attention of officials As the stock market is flourishing more in the country, it has brought the officials' more attention to its role in financing projects in different sectors of the country, and it has resulted in initiating some new approaches regarding this market. For example, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami has recently announced that his ministry's planning to offer 12 freeway and railway projects to be financed through the country's stock market. Also in early April, Central Bank of Iran's Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said that the stock market's role in financing should be expanded regarding that this market is being highly welcomed.

Monthly non-oil exports improve 60% as pandemic restrictions ease

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Export Confederation Mohammad Lahouti says the country's export has improved in the recent weeks following the removal of some corona-related restrictions in the borders, IRIB reported on Wednesday. The data regarding the exports in the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (April 20-May 20) indicates that the export has improved by 60 percent compared to the previous month, Lahouti said. According to Lahouti, the exports in the mentioned month have fallen 50 percent in comparison to the last year's same period. "Many countries around the world have predicted a sharp decline in trade," he said, adding that some international organizations see the global trade falling by about 30 percent in 2020, due to the coronavirus outbreak. Noting that many countries have reduced corona-related restrictions and almost all the country's borders have resumed their activities, the official predicted that the country's export is going to increase further in the coming weeks.

"In case that something unpredictable



does not happen, we can expect that in the first six months of the [current Iranian calendar] year (started on March 20), part of the damage to Iran's exports will be compensated, and in the second half of the year, we can even aim for increasing the exports [compared to the previous year]" he said. According to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) data, Iran's exports in the first month of the current calendar year (March 20-April 20) decreased by about 39 percent year on year. With the relative reopening of borders and the reduction of restrictions, the decline in exports recorded in previous months is expected to be compensated in the coming months.

Iran, an exporter of anti-corona medical items

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand said despite the great demand for anti-corona medical items in the early days of the pandemic, Iran has become an exporter of such products. Speaking in the 95th government-private sector dialogue meeting on Tuesday, Dejpasand noted that this is a clear indication of the potentials and capabilities of the Iranian producers which should not be overlooked. He also mentioned the negative impacts of the coronavirus outbreak on the global economy as well as on Iran and noted that oil revenues of many oil-producing countries including Iran have fallen due to declining demand followed by the coronavirus outbreak, however, Iran is more resilient than the other countries since due to several years of sanctions, the country's reliance on oil sales has declined significantly. "We do not feel much of the effects of coronavirus on oil sales, and we are prepared to manage this," Dejpasand said. He also referred to the private sector's worries over the government's new strategies for compensating the budget



Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand

deficits resulted from the fall in oil revenues and said, "Some might worry that the government might increase the taxes to offset its budget deficits resulted from the pandemic, but our approach is not to use tax instruments and pressure on production units to realize our resources."

Expansion of customs, trade ties discussed between Iran, Armenia

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum discussed expansion of trade and customs relations during a meeting, via video conference, with an Armenian delegation comprised of senior officials from various sectors. As reported by the TPO, the Armenian side of the meeting included deputies from the economy, and territorial administration and infrastructure ministries, Armenian ambassador to Tehran, and a representative from Customs Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. In the video conference meeting, which was the second such meeting in the past 30 days, Zadboum mentioned the upward trend of the two countries' trade in the current year and said: "Despite the coronavirus outbreak, the trade between Iran and Armenia has increased by up to 30 percent over the past two months compared to the same period last year." Equipping and modernizing road infrastructure, crossings, laboratories, quarantine centers, and cold storages on the Iran-Armenia borders, as well as

the privatization plan and has said that it will speed up the process of offering more shares of state-owned companies in the stock market during the current Iranian calendar year. But it should be noted that privatization should spur productivity, not just collect the capital.

■ All-out co-op among government, SEO, listed companies, shareholders needed To help the stock market move in the way of realizing "Surge in Production" all-out cooperation among the government, Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), the listed companies, and the shareholders is required. Each of the mentioned bodies has responsibilities to this end. The government should encourage the state-owned organizations and companies for a more active presence in the stock market, it should also prevent the growth in the parallel markets such as housing, gold, and forex markets. The SEO should prepare the ground for attracting more shareholders, improve trading condition, promote the culture of activity in the stock market among the people, develop the services offered by the stock market brokerage and consulting companies, offer incentives to the listed companies, and create more and more transparency. The listed companies should offer proper, complete, and transparent information on-time and lead some proper part of the attracted investment toward boosting production. And the shareholders should keep abreast of the latest news and information about the market, refer to the specialized financial entities including the brokerage and consulting companies, bring their savings into the stock market, lower the risk of investment via trading through the exchange-traded funds (ETFs), prevent from emotional reaction and approaches in decision making, and finally make investment in the productive sectors. In general, the stock market can play a very effective role in a national economy by booming and invigorating different sectors. It can act as a major supporter of the domestic economy. In Iran, now that the stock market is experiencing a really flourishing era- right at the time when the liquidity should turn in the direction of production- the government, the SEO, and the people should take the advantage of this condition and help this market act as a major player in realizing the motto of "Surge in Production" which will bring economic prosperity for the country. If such a thing realizes, it will be a real win-win for all involved bodies.

Electricity sector needs \$1.2b every year

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian says the country's electricity sector requires at least \$1.2 billion annually to realize its development goals, IRNA reported.

Speaking in a parliament open session on Wednesday, Ardakanian noted that a part of these needs is met through exporting electricity to the neighboring countries.

"Iraq is Iran's most important neighbor to which we are currently exporting electricity, thus meeting part of the foreign currency needed in the electricity industry," the minister said.

Ardakanian also mentioned the efficiency of the country's thermal power plants and said: "A study of different regions of the world shows that while the average efficiency of thermal power plants in the world is 37.3 percent, this number is slightly better in our country than the global average."

The official put the power plants' average efficiency in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) at 38.6 percent, noting that efforts will be made this year to raise the figure to more than 39 percent. He went on underlining the importance



of the combine-cycled power plants saying, combined cycle power plants are among the most important units that can save significant amounts of natural gas and reduce environmental pollutants.

Ardakanian expressed hope that the government would support the ministry to provide the necessary resources for these

power plants in order to save more fuel.

We have the capacity to add up to 7,500 megawatts new steam units to these power plants, he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister mentioned the significant fall in the electricity losses in the national power grid and noted that six years ago (when President Rouhani

took office for the first 4-year period), losses in the distribution sector stood at nearly 15 percent, while currently the figure has been declined to 9.76 percent.

According to the official this level of reduction in the electricity losses mean that the Energy Ministry has saved the country nearly 500 trillion rials (about \$20.8 billion) worth of electricity.

Iran's total power generation capacity currently stands at about 85,000 MW.

Currently, combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share in the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants.

In early April, Ardakanian announced that the ministry plans to inaugurate 12 thermal power plants with a total capacity of 2,100 MW as well as hundreds of solar and wind farms and other small scale power stations in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to the minister, following a program called "A-B-Iran", the Iranian Energy Ministry is going to inaugurate 250 major water and electricity projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) during the current year.

A new transmission line synchronizes Iran, Iraq power grids

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that Iran and Iraq's power grids have become synchronized since a month ago via the new Amarah-Karkheh 400-KV transmission line stretching over 73 kilometers.

The new line is now synchronized to provide electricity to both countries. It also paves the way for increasing export to power-hungry Iraq in the near future, Fars news agency reported.

With synchronization of the two grids, the quality of electricity in Iraq will improve.

In 2004 Iran started selling electricity to Iraq. Iran electricity exports to the western neighbor are at its highest level of 1,361 megawatts per day now.

Last year, Ardakanian and Iraqi Deputy Minister of Electricity Nafaa Abdulsada Ali Al-Hmidawi inaugurated the operation of linking Iran's power grid to Iraq.

The operation was aimed at bringing more sustainability for Iran and Iraq electricity supply, setting the ground for electricity exports and ensure improvement of the supply grid.

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Iran Grid Management Company Davood Farrokhsad said that electricity exports to Iraq will increase through more preparations.

Iranian and Iraqi dispatching centers were connected in Baghdad and the power grids were interlinked, he added.

He said that Iran's electricity export to Iraq is in its highest level.

Last Wednesday, Ardakanian met with his Iraqi counterpart Majid Mahdi Hantoush to discuss development of cooperation in the



field of electricity and related areas.

Ardakanian has focused his one-day visit to Iraq on discussions pertaining to promoting bilateral collaboration between the two neighboring nations in the field of electricity, synchronizing power grid between Tehran and Baghdad, cooperating in education, and expansion of power networks.

He is also scheduled to meet with Iraqi top officials in a bid to boost cooperation in the relevant fields.

Back in December 2019, Ardakanian announced that Iran will continue exports of electricity to Iraq by renewing earlier contract.

"Iran has signed a 3-year-long cooperation agreement with Iraq to help the country's power

industry in different aspects. The documents state at its end that we will export electricity to Iraq as far as they need," Ardakanian told FNA on December 9, 2019.

The contract to "export Iran's electricity" to Iraq will be extended, he added.

Iran's electricity exports to the neighboring countries in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) reached 8 billion kilowatt hours (kWh), registering an increase of 27.6 percent year on year.

According to Iranian Electrical Power Equipment Manufacturing and Provision Company (known by its Persian acronym SATKAB), the Islamic Republic of Iran exported electricity to Armenia, the Republic of

Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in the past calendar year.

Iran's total energy exports to the mentioned countries in the previous year stood at 8.31 billion kilowatt hours, 1.736 billion kWh more than the figure for the preceding year.

The highest electricity export in the said period was 6.652 billion kWh to Iraq, up 34.6 percent from the preceding year of 1397, followed by Afghanistan (775 million kWh) and Pakistan (516 million kWh). Armenia (53 million kWh) and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (33 million kWh).

Electricity imports in the previous year amounted to about 1.329 billion kWh, of which 1.294 billion kWh were from Armenia and 34 million kWh was imported from the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan.

Based on the mentioned data, Iran's electricity exports were six times more than the country's imports.

Iran's electricity exports to its neighbors are witnessing an upward trend in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) as well, so that in the first 45 days of the year electricity exports reached 436 million kWh, 19 percent more than the figure for the last year's same period.

Iran has had electricity exchanges with most of its neighbors namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Iraq, as well as the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic among which Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan have been sole importers of Iran's electricity.

Iran gas sector experiencing fast development

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iran's gas industry development has over the past six years seen daily growing development with the focus having been on recovery from the giant South Pars gas field. Development of gas industry is racing ahead in both upstream and downstream sectors. Iran's gas industry train has been overcoming all restrictions in order to reach the final destination, which is maximum recovery from joint fields and replacement of gas with petroleum products. The gas industry hopes to connect all cities, as well as all villages with more than 20 households to the national gas network. In addition to maximum recovery from joint gas fields, processing the already recovered gas would be also instrumental in order to avoid any halt in the development operations.

National Iranian Gas Company (NIOC) Directorate of Production Coordination and Supervision is tasked with coordinating and supervising the affairs of gas refining companies. A total of seven gas refining companies are operating across the country under the authority of this Directorate. The companies receive gas from sources to be refined and fed into trunk lines in order to finally reach end-users.

The Shahid Hasheminejad gas refinery (Khangiran) in Sarakhs in Iran's northeastern most spot, the Ilam gas refinery in western Iran, the Bid Boland gas refining company (the oldest gas refinery in the West Asia), the Sarkhoun and Qeshm refinery in Bandar Abbas, the Parsian gas refinery in Fars Province, the Fajr Jam gas refinery in Bushehr Province and the South Pars Gas Complex (charged with gas recovery from the giant South Pars gas field) are currently processing and refining gas across the country.

Masoud Zardouyan, director of NIGC production coordination and supervision, said: "The gas refineries' output totals 1 bcm/d."

He said that in addition to treated gas, a variety of byproducts including condensate, sulfur, ethane, propane and butane were being



supplied at the refineries.

He said that the current culture of high gas consumption needed to be modified, adding that gas, a God-given blessing, would have to serve the long-term interests of people and future generations.

■ 13 refineries at South Pars

Zardouyan touched on Iran's gas production capacity, saying that 10 gas refineries had become operational in the offshore South Pars gas field area. He said that two more refineries had already become operational, but would be completely delivered to NIGC later on.

He said that Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) would also hand over a 13th refinery at South Pars by 2021, which would bring the total number of gas refineries to 13.

■ Gas quality closely watched

Zardouyan said that refining companies were complying with NIGC's IGS standard in their production. He said IGC was a strict environmental standard.

He said all requirements for IGC had

been fulfilled at refining companies whose production is under close watch.

As far as byproducts are concerned, the standards are regulated based on the customers and buyers' demands, while the sulfur content and the purity of products comply with standard levels.

The expression of satisfaction by foreign buyers of products with the high quality of products shows the high level of standards in gas production.

■ Ilam Refinery development

Zardouyan said Ilam gas refinery was a strategic facility in Iran due to its location. He said that Ilam refinery's role in gas supply to western Iran was similar to the Khangiran refinery's gas supply to northeast Iran.

He said that the gas production spots were located in the southern half the country.

"In our view, the Khangiran storage facility (supplier of gas to the Hasheminejad refinery) in northeast and the Tange Bijar facility (supplier of gas to Ilam gas refinery) in the west are significant sources of gas supply,"

the official said.

He added that National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) had in its primary studies estimated that 10.2 mcm/d of gas would be recovered from Ilam refinery. In phase one, the output was 6.8 mcm/d, he said, adding that gas recovery has been under way at this refinery since 2007.

The second development phase of Ilam gas refinery is put out to tender, which would bring the final production capacity there at 10.2 mcm/d.

■ Flaring on the decline

Zardouyan touched on the measures taken to reduce flaring at gas refineries across the country, saying: "The top priority in flaring is environmental concerns, including CO2 and SO2 emissions. The second point is the non-profitability of some varieties of gas that is flared. This issue takes up added significance in South Pars due to the concentration of more production units."

■ Efficient use

Asked about future production from mature reservoirs, Zardouyan said: "The accelerated development of South Pars in recent years has added to the country's gas production on a daily basis. But the fact is that gas consumption has been increasing at the same pace. Once SP14 is completed development of South Pars would be over and no new development project could be envisaged to meet growing consumption. Therefore, we had better change habits and some uneconomical methods in order to benefit from this national asset in a better way in favor of public, society and future generations."

■ Alternative reservoirs

Zardouyan said gas reservoirs would deplete one day and gas refineries would be out of service.

He said that the Directorate of Corporate Planning at the Petroleum Ministry, NIOC and NIGC were holding regular meetings in order to find alternative gas reservoirs.

Sivand oil field's 1st well to go operational soon

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) has finished the drilling operations for the first well of Sivand offshore oilfield in the Persian Gulf and the well is going to go operational in near future, Shana reported.

"We are currently in the stage of completing the well and after the end of this stage, production will begin," Mehdi Heidar-Borzog executive manager of the field's drilling operations said.

According to the official, the mentioned project has been carried out in order to maintain and increase the production capacity of Sivand and Esfand oil fields and it is estimated that with the completion of the project, 1600 barrels per day will be added to the production of this oil field.

IOOC signed an EPD (engineering, procurement and drilling) contract with Petro Iran Company, in October 2018, for maintaining and enhancing oil production capacity of Sivand, Esfand and Dena offshore oilfields.



The deal covered various operations including drilling, repair and completion of 13 wells in the three fields, including the drilling of four new wells, re-drilling 6 wells and repairing three others.

Sivand (Siri C) oil field is located in the west of Siri Island in the Persian Gulf about 100 km above the border line with the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

And with the full implementation of the plan to maintain and increase oil production in the Sivand and Esfand fields, the daily oil production of the two fields will increase by 16,000 barrels.

U.S. sanctions 121 ships linked to Iran's IRISL; little oil market impact expected

The U.S. Treasury Department on June 8 designated 121 tankers, container ships and other vessels owned or tied to Iranian shipper IRISL for additional secondary sanctions, but the action is expected to have limited impact on crude and oil product markets, Platts reported.

The list names two crude carriers, seven products/chemical tankers and six bunkering tankers.

Two of the medium-range tankers on the list -- the Clavel and the Petunia -- recently delivered Iranian gasoline to Venezuela, according to cFlow, Platts trade-flow software.

In addition to designating IRISL, or the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, the secondary sanctions also named Esail Shipping, also known as E-Sail Shipping, of Shanghai.

The Trump administration last month warned the global maritime, energy and metal industries to be on guard for "illicit shipping" schemes that expose them to sanction risks, particularly with trades involving Iran, North Korea and Syria.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement that "doing business with or otherwise supporting" IRISL or E-Sail is exposed to potential sanction risks.

"We urge government authorities worldwide to investigate all IRISL and E-Sail activity in your ports and territorial seas and take appropriate action to put a halt to it," he added.

Nigeria vows full compliance with OPEC+ output cuts by mid-July

Nigeria will implement all of the oil-production cuts agreed with the OPEC+ coalition by mid-July at the latest, Bloomberg quoted the head of the country's state oil company as saying.

The latest agreement by the 23-nation alliance, struck over the weekend, hinged on promises from the African producer and others to make up for their past disregard of output quotas. OPEC+, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, is cutting about 10 percent of global oil supplies to offset the demand hit from coronavirus.

"Definitely by the end of June, we'll see full compliance from Nigeria," Mele Kyari, group managing director of Nigerian National Petroleum Corp., or NNPC, said in a Bloomberg television interview when asked when the full package of curbs will be implemented. It will be done in the first half of July "in the worst case scenario," he said.

Over the past 10 days the country has been cutting more than required under the OPEC+ pact, Kyari said.

Oil Minister Timipre Sylva said in an Instagram post earlier this month that Nigeria was pumping 1.412 million barrels a day, exactly in line with its OPEC+ target. It implemented only 52 percent of the designated reduction last month, when it pumped 1.613 million barrels a day he said.

That would roughly require the country to curb production by an extra 67,000 barrels a day for three months to offset its earlier deviation, according to Bloomberg calculations.

International oil prices have rebounded to about \$40 a barrel in London, more than double the low reached in late April, as OPEC+ reins in supply and fuel demand recovers. The coalition's accord will support crude at about \$42 to \$45 a barrel by the end of the year, Kyari said.

The discount on Nigerian crude versus Brent, the international reference price, will probably disappear by the end of July, he added.

Yet the market's journey back to pre-crisis conditions will be slow. Global oil demand probably won't reach levels seen before the pandemic until the third quarter of 2021, he predicted.

While some of Nigeria's assets can produce with oil prices below \$30 a barrel, the country is insisting that partners and suppliers cut costs "by at least 30 percent to 40 percent" to ensure projects remain in their "comfort zone," he said.

Second Announcement



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TENDER NO. : 48-32-9800107
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06	HYDRAULIC DRIVEN DIAPHRAGM PUMP ACCORDING TO API 675	15 Nos & 15 SETs

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 6,148 EURO or 990,000,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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

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Black Americans still viewed as slaves by many white people, says anthropologist

‘United States is still a racist society’

➔ The reason this is a continual problem is that police conduct is not under the full control of the mayor or even the chief of police. The mayor and chief of police can hire and fire policemen, but they can't control their conduct, and they can't punish them except to fire them from their jobs. The police have a very strong federation with their own lawyers. Moreover, the laws generally favor the policemen. All a policeman has to say is: "The subject threatened me, so I shot him (or her)," and the law protects the policeman from punishment. They also can say "the subject was resisting arrest," and the law will equally favor the policeman. The U.S. Supreme Court has made it even harder to convict policemen for murder when they are "on duty."

However, because almost anyone can take a video with their phones, policemen have found it harder to use these excuses when there is video evidence showing that they were lying, as in the case of George Floyd.

Police are not supposed to be racist. But many are. The head of the police federation in Minneapolis appeared on stage with Donald Trump this year, supporting him. Many people think that Trump is a racist, and that his actions protect racist policemen.

If this murder were only restricted to Minnesota, the protests would not have spread. These kinds of confrontations have been going on for many years all throughout the United States, and many people feel that policemen in general are racist. Black people are very afraid of them. Fathers and mothers educate their children about how to behave if confronted by a policeman or policewoman, because they have seen many innocent people killed by the police in routine encounters. About 1 in 1000 black men can expect to be killed by a policeman.

For this reason, the murder of George Floyd was just the latest outrage for not only the black community, but for many white citizens as well, especially younger white people who have a much less prejudiced view of black people. The



If this murder were only restricted to Minnesota, the protests would not have spread.

protests against George Floyd's murderer quickly spread to other communities where black people had been murdered by the police. These incidents are so widespread in the United States that hundreds of communities rose up and protested.

Sadly, we must confront the fact that the United States is still a racist society. The entire economy of the American South was dependent on slavery, and culturally black Americans are still viewed as slaves or at least inferior by many white people. Even

distinguished professors, athletes, artists and politicians have had bad encounters with the police. So these protests are essentially saying "ENOUGH!!"

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

A: Trump's supporters are largely non-college-educated white men living in rural

areas. A large number of them are racist. Trump knows this, and he manages to keep them supporting him by sending out racist messages himself. He is telling them that it is acceptable to be racist, and they respond positively to that message.

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

A: Yes, most people believe that this is Trump's strategy. I believe it is safe to say that Trump will receive 100% of the racist vote in the next election. He knows this, and so he keeps sending out racist messages to signal these people: "I am like you. I will protect you."

■ One of the dangers facing the U.S. 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?

Actually, I don't agree with you. The United States has in fact been supremely successful in attracting immigrants, and is becoming more multicultural every day. This is the problem for the white population, however. Twenty or thirty years ago the vast majority of the United States population was white. This is changing rapidly. Only recently the white population in many parts of the country is becoming a minority population. In some parts of the Southwest, Hispanic Americans outnumber non-Hispanic Americans. Washington D.C., the nation's capital is majority African-American, as are many large United States cities. The white population is in panic. They hate being in the minority in their communities, and many would like the black and brown and non-Christian people to disappear. But these recent immigrants are not disappearing. They are, every year, a larger and larger proportion of the population. The United States in 20 years will be totally a nation with a majority of non-white people, and that is what has made racism so violent.

‘Denigrated and discredited’: how American journalists became targets during protests

A photographer who says she was blinded in one eye. A TV reporter surrounded and arrested by police live on air. A cameraman slammed in the chest with a riot shield while filming a peaceful protest outside the president's home.

These brutal crackdowns on the media did not take place in a developing world dictatorship. They were in the United States of America, a nation admired around the world for its constitutional right to freedom of speech – but where Donald Trump has spent four years constantly denigrating the media.

During more than a week of demonstrations triggered by the death of George Floyd, an African American man killed by a white Minneapolis police officer who pressed a knee on his neck for nearly nine minutes, journalists covering the story have become targets for both police and protesters in cities across the country, waving their press badges in vain.

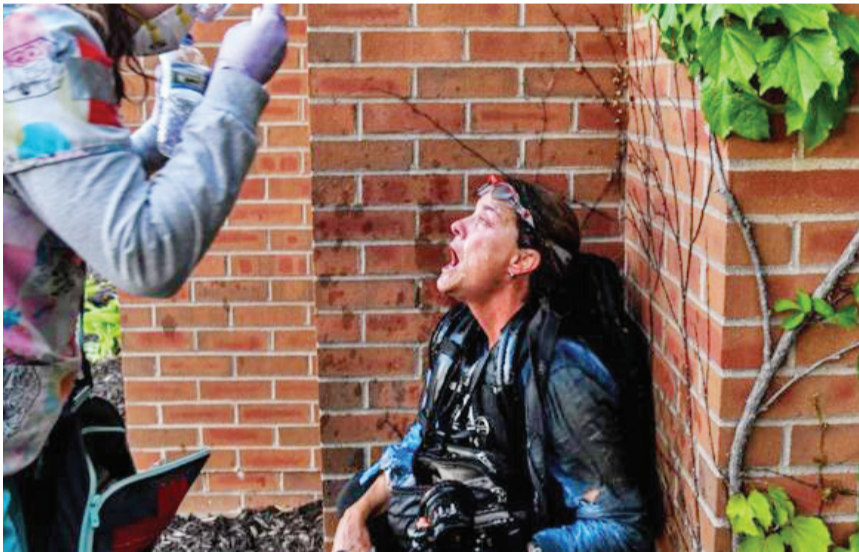
The U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, organized by a coalition of press freedom groups, has counted more than 300 incidents since the unrest began: "49+ arrests, 192 assaults (160 by police), 42 equipment/newsroom damage. Assault category breakdown: 69 physical attacks (43 by cops), 43 tear gassings, 24 pepper sprayings, 77 rubber bullets/projectiles."

Many campaigners find the situation impossible to divorce from Trump's sustained contempt for the media. He has railed against "fake news" and described the press as "the enemy of the people".

Suzanne Nossel, chief executive of PEN America, a leading human rights and free expression organisation, said: "You can't but see the linkage when somebody with such a powerful platform has been relentlessly attacking individual journalists and media outlets and discrediting their reporting so persistently, and then you see members of law enforcement who are actually willing to be caught on film and on camera arresting and attacking members of the media who are doing their job."

She added: "It's as if a switch had been turned off in terms of respecting the role of a free press in a democracy."

Attacks on journalists by protesters, or people who attach themselves to protests, has also been another striking feature of the demonstrations, which



Journalists from across the U.S. have reported being targeted by police at protests

have generally been peaceful by day but in some instances marred by violence at night. A crew from Fox News was surrounded by demonstrators outside the White House when they, along with peaceful protesters, were charged by park police and the national guard so Trump could stage a photo op outside a historic church.

Nossel added: "Your goal in terms of mounting a forceful demonstration is to capture attention and headlines and television coverage and the media is crucial to that, so for protesters to turn on journalists evinces a real confusion about what it is that keeps our democracy and mechanisms of accountability working."

"The press makes mistakes and misjudgments and that's a fact, but to think of a working journalist as somehow your enemy, somebody deserving of attack, does reflect this campaign of denigration and discrediting."

But law enforcement has been by far the main culprit.

In Minneapolis alone, Linda Tirado, a freelance photojournalist and activist who has contributed to the Guardian, said she was now blind in her left eye after being shot at by police; the CNN correspondent Omar Jimenez, who is black, was arrested on live television and released a short time later; Ali Velshi, a host on the MSNBC network, said he was shot in the leg by police firing rubber bullets after his crew identified

themselves as journalists.

In Washington, Amelia Brace and Tim Myers were reporting for Australia's 7News channel outside the White House when they, along with peaceful protesters, were charged by park police and the national guard so Trump could stage a photo op outside a historic church.

With its first amendment guarantee of free speech, America has typically been relied on by journalists, writers and dissidents around the world who face persecution from authoritarian governments. Washington has condemned media repression in Egypt, Turkey and elsewhere. But that moral credibility has been put at risk by a steady deterioration during the Trump era.

In 2018, the U.S. for the first time joined the ranks of the most dangerous countries for journalists to operate, according to the advocacy group Reporters Without Borders. Last week the International Crisis Group, usually preoccupied by global hotspots, warned that racial division risks further "division and instability".

Speaking from Zimbabwe, Tendai Biti, a human rights lawyer, said he has a 13-year-old son growing up in Maryland. "I'm thinking whether I made the right decision to allow him to go to school in the United States of America because he's black and it's obvious there are huge structural issues around race,

around inequality, around exclusion which America must deal with," he said.

"But what's also shocking is the disproportionate response of the state, if you like, the Africanisation of American politics, the language of exclusion and the language of hate and, of course, what we've seen, the exuberant and excessive force used by the authorities."

Biti, a former political prisoner who served as finance minister in the then president, Robert Mugabe, added: "For us, who have been fighting autocracies and dictatorship on the African continent, the events in America are giving licence and legitimacy to the authoritarianism and dictatorship and violence that we have seen as democrats for decades."

"Every little tinpot on the African continent is smiling and is studying America's new copybook plucked from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from Zimbabwe, from the Central African Republic, from Djibouti."

The implications for journalists in Africa and elsewhere are profound, Biti added. "Whenever truth becomes a casualty then journalists will suffer. They are mediums of communication, whether it's newspapers, whether it's websites, whether it's social media. In Africa, once, the medium of communication becomes a target, then the messengers become targets and you've got a problem."

Far from toning down his rhetoric, Trump has continued his assault in remarks and tweets. At the end of May he wrote, "The Lamestream Media is doing everything within their power to foment hatred and anarchy," and called journalists "truly bad people with a sick agenda". He has not offered any hint that he accepts responsibility for helping create a hostile environment.

Bill Galston, a former policy adviser to President Bill Clinton, said: "I do a lot of reading every day about how the rest of the world is reacting to this and, as an American, it makes me really want to cry. We are the object of scorn from our enemies and pity from our friends. We've come to this? At least your country [the UK] has had some decades to get accustomed to the idea of national decline. We're new to it."

(Source: The Guardian)

Just to fan the flame!

➔ No sign of Antifa

U.S. Attorney General William Barr has repeatedly blamed anti-fascist activists for the violence that has erupted during demonstrations over George Floyd's death, but as a report by NPR claims, federal court records show no sign of so-called Antifa links so far in cases brought by the Justice Department.

Experts reviewed court documents of individuals facing federal charges connected with the unrest. As of Tuesday morning, none is alleged to have links to the Antifa movement.

The single instance in which an extremist group is mentioned in court documents is against three Nevada men. Federal prosecutors allege the trio belong to the right-wing Boogaloo movement that wants to bring about a civil war. The men have been charged with plotting violence during Las Vegas protests.

Experts believe that Antifa isn't even a group; it's more of a diffuse movement of leftists who share a similar ideology in opposition to fascism. In an interview with Fox News, William Pelham Barr, a government official and the 77th and 85th United States Attorney General, described Antifa as a "very loosely organized group" with a "sort of unique or unusual system of communication and organization." On the question of hierarchy, he said that "there are people who could be characterized as leaders in any given situation."

In sworn testimony before congressional lawmakers, FBI Director Christopher Wray said the bureau considers Antifa "more of an ideology than an organization."



■ Who gave Trump the information?

On Tuesday, the New York Times reported that Trump's conspiracy theory is based on a segment broadcasted by a conservative cable network called One America News. This cable has a minuscule audience, attracts few readers on the web, and has struggled to break into the television mainstream. But thanks to one powerful viewer in the White House, the network's influence — and its conspiracy theories — are echoing in the highest reaches of American politics.

The segment would probably have faded into obscurity had Trump not chosen to amplify it to his nearly 82 million Twitter followers. Later on Tuesday, One America News aired a follow-up segment that portrayed Mr. Gugino as a liberal extremist, "far from the kindly old man that many in the media are describing," in the words of a correspondent, Pearson Sharp.

One America News, based in San Diego, was founded in 2013 by Robert Herring, a California businessman who made a fortune in the technology industry. The network rallied behind Trump in the 2016 presidential election. Its coverage increasingly shifted to cheerleading on behalf of the president and his administration.

Trump, a keen tracker of his media coverage, took notice. On Twitter and sometimes at public events, he often promotes One America News as a preferable alternative to Fox News, which is another network known for conservative opinion whose coverage occasionally rankles Trump. Inside the West Wing, One America News often airs on television screens alongside mainstream cable news networks, the New York Times' report says. Its White House correspondent, Chanel Rion, is now a staple of nationally televised news briefings, often called on by Trump's press secretary, Kayleigh McEnany.

The Herring family, in turn, has positioned One America News as a destination for pro-Trump viewers who feel alienated from more mainstream conservative outlets. The network's chief executive, Robert Herring, claimed in a Twitter post that his network would present "follow-up reporting" to back up its claims about Mr. Gugino. "Mr. President, you haven't let us down on doing what you say, and we won't let you down as your source for credible news!" Mr. Herring wrote.

In the segment about Mr. Gugino, the One America News reporter, Mr. Rouz, claims that "newly released video appeared to show Gugino using a police tracker on his phone trying to scan police communications during the protest." The footage, as seen in the segment, offers no explicit evidence to back up that assertion.

■ Who is Gugino? Activist or extremist?

"He was an activist a seasoned peacenik who in a lifetime of protest has taken part in demonstrations against military drones, climate change, nuclear weapons, and police brutality," said Gugino's friends to the New York Times on Tuesday.

But Mr. Gugino is also a football fan, they said, a mild-mannered bachelor and a Buffalo native who returned to his hometown some years ago to care for his ailing mother.

The one thing he is not, however, those who knew him said, is what Trump suggested he was on Twitter Tuesday morning: a wily Antifa provocateur.

"Antifa? Oh, heavens no," said Judy Metzger, 85, a longtime friend who lives near Mr. Gugino in Amherst, a suburb of the city. "Martin is a very gentle, a very pleasant person."

Born in Buffalo, Mr. Gugino spent most of his working life in Cleveland, where he specialized in creating computer databases, his friends and colleagues said.

He went back to his hometown to care for his mother, and after she died, he lived alone in her home, finding fellowship at the Western New York Peace Center and other parts of the city's close-knit left-wing activist community.

John Washington, 35, first met Mr. Gugino at an Occupy Buffalo event in 2011 when both men took to the streets of Niagara Square, the same place where Mr. Gugino was shoved by the police last week. "He has this kind of thirst for justice," Mr. Washington said. "He gets very latched onto powerful ideas and tries to really experience them, not just learn them."

Trump and his allies have often tried placing anti-fascists and other "outside agitators" at the center of the protests. This is a way to delegitimize them and to deflect from the fact that the vast majority of the demonstrations have been peaceful.

But even by his own standards, Trump appeared to test the boundaries of credulity by trying to brand a retired septuagenarian computer programmer as a follower of Antifa, whose adherents are, for one thing, generally much younger. In fact, as Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, believes, Trump seems to want only to fan the flames. But why?

Virtual tours of Iran available for foreign tourists

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – An Iranian travel agency is offering virtual tours of some distinguished historical places across the country for foreign tourists as the country's tourism, like many other countries, has gone into partial or complete lockdown over the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some of the country's UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. in Isfahan, Persepolis in Shiraz, Golestan Palace in Tehran, and historical city of Yazd can be visited online, travel agency manager Mehdi Eshraqi said on Wednesday, ISNA reported.



Interactive virtual tours of Iranian cooking are also organized for foreign food lovers, which are held in English language, he added.

He also noted that each tour will cost about 14 euros, which is affordable compared to similar tours around the globe.

Iran has suffered an average 15.8 percent fall in foreign arrivals during the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period last year, according to data released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that analyzes impact of the Covid-19 on international tourism.

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

Iran's tourism suffered several times over the past Persian year (ended March 20) from various upheavals including the U.S. sanctions aimed to cripple Iran's economy, flash floods in March 2019, the [mistakenly] downing of a Ukrainian jetliner in January, and ultimately the coronavirus pandemic in the country.

The ancient land embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Museum of ceramic opens in Tehran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Farzaneh Ceramic Museum was inaugurated in Tehran on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

The director of Tehran Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department Parham Janfeshan, the founder of the museum Leila Farzaneh and the director of museums and historical properties at the tourism ministry Mohammadreza Kargar were among the attendees of the inauguration ceremony.



Speaking at the ceremony, Janfeshan noted that the museum is first of its kind which can be a place for architects and designers to come together.

The art of designing and producing ceramics is originated from handicrafts and the secret of its permanence is its usage in Iranian architecture, he added.

The museum, which is privately owned, displays collections by artist Leila Farzaneh.

Handicraft workshops open in eastern Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Eight handicraft workshops have been launched in the eastern South Khorasan province on the occasion of the national handicrafts week, which is being held from June 9 to 16.



The workshops will be used for traditional towel weaving, wicker works and cutting precious and semi-precious stones, CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Hassan Ramezani as saying on Wednesday.

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

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

Pre-historical culture unearthed in central Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran has recently unearthed a rare Bronze Age culture, related settlements and relics following to rounds of excavation in a plain near the north-central city of Qom.

"Archaeological excavations carried out at a broad natural sandy-gravel hill named Tepe Yousef Khan has revealed relics and remains which are related to the Kura–Araxes culture known as one of the most developed Bronze Age cultures of the time," IRNA quoted senior Iranian archaeologist Siamak Sarlak, who led the excavations, as saying on Tuesday.

The Kura–Araxes culture, also called the Early Transcaucasian culture, was a civilization that existed from about 4000 BC until about 2000 BC, which has traditionally been regarded as the date of its end; in some locations, it may have disappeared as early as 2600 or 2700 BC. The earliest evidence for this culture is said to be found on the Ararat plain; it spread northward in the Caucasus by 3000 BC.

Talking about the discovery, Sarlak explained that in 2019 wintertime a digging was held by locals in Khavveh village to develop economic and agricultural activities. It, however, led to the accidental discovery of the pottery vessels and human remains in an ancient cemetery located beneath a natural hill named after its private owner, Yousef Khan.

Following reports to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, a team of archaeologists led by Sarlak started an extensive survey at the site under the supervision of the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (ICAR).

"Samples of burial remains have been lent to [archaeological institutions in] Denmark and Italy for further genetics studies and other related examinations under memoranda of understanding the institutions have previously inked with Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sarlak explained that the discovery of Yousef Khan cemetery and the preliminary results of the research conducted in this area, has led the team to clarify some ambiguous points in the archeology of the Bronze Age in Qom plain.

"Firstly, it concluded the chronological sequence of Qom plain. Before the excavations at Yousef Khan cemetery, except in the Qoli Darwish [archaeological] area, there was no evidence in other areas of the Qom plain that shows a rupture in the chronological sequence from the end of the Elamite period to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (2200–1550 BC)."

"Moreover, the documents obtained from Yousef Khan cemetery showed that the direct presence of the Kura–Araxes culture in Qom plain often seems to be limited to the its southern mountainous areas..."

The head of the archeological excavation added: "Undoubtedly, such conclusions are only a temporary assumption and are based on the present evidence, and such assumption will remain the same until the completion of surveys in the plains and mountains of the Qom region."

Referring to the geographical location of the archaeological site, he noted that Yousef Khan cemetery indicates the direct evidence of the Kura–Araxes culture, which is located at an altitude of 2000 meters above sea level in the foothills south of the Qom plain.

According to Sarlak, the third point indicates some archaeological evidence that this culture had coexistence, interaction, and connection with the native culture of the region.

"For confirmation of this assumption, concerning the simultaneous presence of pottery traditions scattered in the region, we adopted the flowing as criteria for the graves of Yousef Khan hill: 1) – Kura–Araxes culture (scorched black and red-brown pottery, utensils with so-called Nakhchivan handles, the use of embossed decoration on handmade pot-



Archaeological excavations carried out at a broad natural sandy-gravel hill named Tepe Yousef Khan has revealed relics and remains which are related to the Kura–Araxes culture known as one of the most developed Bronze Age cultures of the time.

tery). 2) pottery traditions of the native culture (pea-colored potteries and simple brick-making earthenware, and containers with gutter-shaped catchment) ."

Talking about their occupation; their source of income, the senior archaeologist noted: "The available evidence suggests that the Kura–Araxes communities were based in the valleys of the mountainous regions south of Qom, relying on livestock breeding for their economic and that their settlement pattern was likely based on nomadic or semi-nomadic migration."

"Dating of the graves is difficult because, after the collapse of late 4th millennium BC large sites in the central Iranian plateau, there are no known nearby settlements dated to the 3rd millennium. However, by analogy to more distant sites and based on pottery, cylinder seals and metal objects, a preliminary date within the middle 3rd millennium BC has been proposed for the cemetery," according to a paper jointly written by Arkadiusz Soltysiak, Siamak Sarlak, and Hadi Rafiei.

Human remains from Khavveh were studied in 2019 in the facilities of the Department of Archaeology, University of Kashan, using the standard protocols presented in Buikstra and Ubelaker with some modifications. In total, the skeletal remains of seven individuals were identified, including six adults and one infant, likely a neonate. All retrieved elements were extremely eroded and fragmented, with mostly only pieces of long bone shafts being identified.

Based on general robustness, two individuals were assessed as more likely females than males and one as more likely male than female. Age-at-death assessment was possible

only in the case of the best-preserved skeleton, having two teeth exhibiting a moderate-high degree of dental wear, therefore suggesting that it was a mature individual.

Sources say that the economy of the Kura–Araxes communities was based on farming and livestock-raising (especially of cattle and sheep). They grew grain and orchard crops, and are known to have used implements to make flour. They raised cattle, sheep, goats, dogs, and in later phases, horses.

Before the Kura-Araxes period, horse bones were not found in Transcaucasia. Later, beginning about 3300 BC, they became widespread, with signs of domestication. There is evidence of trade with Mesopotamia as well as Asia Minor. It is, however, considered above all to be indigenous to the Caucasus, and its major variants characterized (according to Caucasus historian Amjad Jaimoukha) later major cultures in the region.

From the Caspian in the northwest to Baluchistan in the south-east, the Iranian Plateau extends for close to 2,000 km. It encompasses the greater part of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan west of the Indus River containing some 3,700,000 square kilometers. In spite of being called a "plateau", it is far from flat but contains several mountain ranges, the highest peak being Damavand in the Alborz mountain range at 5610 m, and the Dasht-e Loot east of Kerman in Central Iran falling below 300 m.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation in the Iranian plateau is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

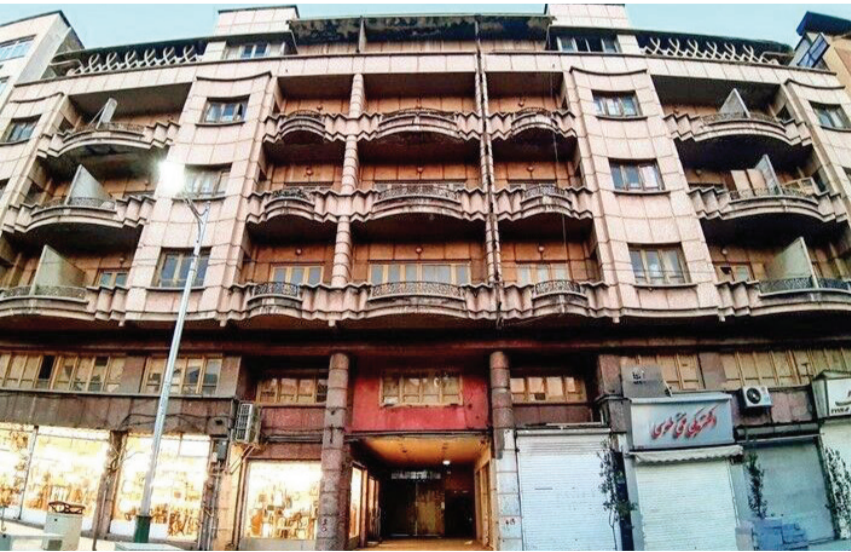
14 properties in Tehran added to National Heritage List

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A total of 14 historical and natural sites in the Iranian capital have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage List, IRNA reported.

Laleh Hotel in Lalehzar Street, Pasteur Institute of Iran, Ford Building, Qeitarieh Park and Melal Cultural Center are some of the new entries, Mostafa Pourali, a senior official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Wednesday.

Laleh Hotel in Lalehzar Street was built in 1945 in a street, which was known as Tehran Broadway in 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Modern theatre scene started at six theater centers located at the Lalehzar Street while it also had 16 cinema halls. Lalehzar aesthetic was a combination of Western architecture with national symbols and elements.

Pasteur Institute of Iran is a medical research center, which was established in 1920. It is considered as one of the oldest leading research and public health centers in Iran and West Asia.



Iranian woodcarver honored at A' Design Award and Competition

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian handcraft, woodcarver and designer Mohammad Ali Vadood has won a prestigious award for his marquetry work dubbed "Forest Heart Wood Picture" at the A' Design Award and Competition, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

His art project, according to the organizers of the Italian award, tries to fulfill the purposes of taking a fresh look at wood to explore a new perception in it and to harmonize with its pure nature as well. "So, we can come up with original ideas to create real art; Applying an innovative technique in working with wood and also in using common tools so we could achieve adequate quality in our performance; Discovering, creating and defining new ways to gain desired images by tracing natural patterns in pieces of wood and making a synthesis between them."

His work that bears the indigenous Naqshbandi method was created in Tehran, started and finished in 2010, and to find appropriate woods they were provided from different places. It took six months to accomplish



the project as it turned out to be time-consuming to find desired wood pieces.

Naqshbandi is a new method or attitude which is used

to create this piece and aims to benefit from connecting lines, expanding textures from one piece to another, and deciding upon the true light shade, not just the color contrast and various tonalities as it is usual in other works of marquetry. It requires the artist to make a full-hearted attempt to harmonize themselves with the nature of wood as much as possible, and help them grow a clear perception of their work and gain a direct inspiration from natural fortuities given by wood. So, the whole thing will finally sound the art of nature in the eye of beholder.

Vadood is a life-long artist and designer who works in the field of wooden arts. His works include wooden sculpting, carving and marquetry. As an art instructor, he has always done his best to help his students think creatively. As an artist, reviving old forms of art from ancient Persia has been something that he highly regards with respect and enthusiasm, especially when it goes to Old Iranian wood carving and its design.

Political will required to protect Caspian Sea environment, Iran says

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Caspi-an Sea littoral states must have enough political will to preserve the marine environment and ecosystem of this waterbody, Issa Kalantari, head of the Department of Environment (DOE), has said.

Kalantari made the remarks in an on-line meeting on preserving the Caspian marine environment with the environment ministers of the five Caspian littoral states on Tuesday.

We have a bitter experience with the Persian Gulf environment in south, because the countries bordering the Persian Gulf do not have enough political will to protect it, so today we are facing hundreds of environmental problems, he lamented.

Iran is located on the southern side of the Caspian Sea, so the pollution of other countries enters our shores, and if the Secretariat of the Tehran Convention had followed these issues on a daily basis, it would not have been exacerbated, he noted.

“We cannot solve the problems with a bilateral agreement, so that an active secretariat should be formed as soon as possible and the countries can cooperate synergistically.”

Certainly, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) with its 50 years of experience can help in this regard, he said, highlighting, all countries must cooperate on both issues of pollution and biodiversity, because Iran is located on the southern side of the Caspian Sea, therefore, the pollution of other countries accumulates on the Iranian shore to a large extent.

“We should approve a 10-year environmental plan for the Caspian Sea protection, and with the countries’ collective monitoring, we will be able to turn the sea



into a model worldwide.”

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed inland body of water on Earth by area. It is bounded by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Russia to the northwest, Azerbaijan to the west, Iran to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southeast. The sea has a surface area of 371,000 square kilometers and a volume of 78,200 cubic kilometers.

The Caspian Sea water level has reached

its lowest level since 1995, mainly because of a recent drop in the water level of the Volga River, which supplies most of the sea’s water, by about 22 percent.

In 2019, the average water level stood at -27.18 meters, showing 13 centimeters decrease compared to the year before, ISNA reported.

According to the national center for Caspian Sea studies and research affiliated

to the Water Research Institute, seawater temperature is one of the main criteria in heat exchange and an indicator in assessing the potential for evaporation from the water level, which is one of the main components of the Caspian water balance.

The increasing trend of the Caspian Sea surface temperature, especially in recent years, has been one of the factors affecting the reduction of water level.

How to reduce food insecurity and mitigate climate change amid COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare our most fundamental vulnerabilities. In the United States, unemployment rates reached levels not seen in more than a century. The rate of food insecurity in our country has more than tripled to an estimated 38 percent. In fact, food insecurity is rising everywhere. According to a survey from The Global FoodBanking Network, food banks in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America reported increased demand for emergency food assistance since the crisis began, as well as a shortage of supplies.

Yet one-third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted each year. This food waste accounts for 8-10 percent of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, further contributing to the climate crisis. As the world responds to COVID-19, government leaders and policymakers also have a chance to rebuild and modernize policies for a more efficient and resilient food system, according to the Hill website.

There is no silver bullet, but we can start by reducing food waste and turning food surplus into sustenance for those in need. Food donation helped to mitigate hunger and food insecurity for more than 62 million people before COVID-19. There is enough food produced in the world to feed everyone, but because food is heavily regulated, laws can pose barriers to food donation, complicating efforts to redirect safe, surplus food to those in need. Food donation policy reform needs to be part of the global strategy to reduce world hunger and food waste.

In the U.S., food safety rules vary from state to state and city to city, making it impossible for large businesses to standardize their food donation programs and ensure surplus food makes it to those in need. In India, millions of pounds of food go to waste each year from lavish weddings, as caterers are afraid they will be liable if someone gets sick



from donated surplus. In Argentina, food companies face a tax penalty if they donate food to food banks rather than throw extra food supplies away in a landfill. In Canada, food banks feel they must turn away food past its “sell by” date even though that food is still safe and edible for days and weeks past the quality date. Replacing these barriers with stronger policies could make food recovery the easy choice, and could assist in efforts to reduce world hunger and mitigate climate change.

Reducing unnecessary food waste has emerged as a global priority in recent years. Whether to mitigate climate change, to address food insecurity and hunger, or simply to save money and natural resources, more countries are investing in food waste reduction efforts and partnering with food industry leaders to drive change. Unfortunately, food businesses and food recovery organizations from India to Mexico to the United States consistently report running into legal barriers that hamper their efforts. But what do food

donation laws in India have to do with food donation laws in the United States? As it turns out, countries can learn a lot from one another as they attempt to answer questions about food donation law and policy.

There are six key areas of law that impact food donation in countries across the world: i) food safety, ii) date labeling, iii) liability concerns, vi) tax incentives and barriers, v) government grants or incentives, and vi) food waste penalties or food donation requirements. These issues are raised again and again by food banks, retailers, caterers, hotels, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies across countries. To ensure food is not needlessly wasted, governments can review their policies on these six areas and make sure they are making food donation the easy choice. Policymakers can take advantage of resources, like the newly launched Global Food Donation Policy Atlas, to learn from one another about how they can reform their laws to build a more resilient and sustainable food system.

Food loss and waste are not new, but the COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the inefficiency and absurdity of food waste while millions go hungry. It is heartbreaking to see produce rotting in the field and the mass euthanizing of animals while families line up for hours outside of food pantries and community feeding sites. Food donation cannot solve all our food insecurity needs. It is not a replacement for necessary social protection and work security programs. However, it can ensure that safe, edible food is not wasted in vain. We must bridge the gap between surplus food and emergency food needs. The time is now for national policymakers to eliminate needless legal barriers and offer needed incentives, to make food recovery and donation the easy choice for safe surplus food, and to rebuild from COVID-19 with a stronger and more resilient food system for the future.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ع

20% of areas in Iran at high risk of flood

Twenty percent of areas across Iran are highly prone to flooding, Khosro Shahbazi, head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO), has said.

“Precipitation in Iran is one-third of the world’s average, as the country is located in a dry and fragile region where we experience 11 millimeters decrease in precipitation each 10 years and an increase in evaporation of more than 50 millimeters every year,” he explained, ISNA reported. Rainfall fluctuations usually lead to flood and devastation, so a comprehensive planning for watershed management and flood control is required, he noted.

Since most of the water supply is extracted from groundwater resources, the country is in a critical condition in terms of groundwater resources, he stated, highlighting, because perception is less than water withdrawal from the aquifers, so the best way to store rainwater is watershed and aquifer projects.

بیست درصد ایران جزو مناطق با خطر سیل خیزی بالا است

سرپرست سازمان جنگلها، مراتع و آبخیزداری می گوید ۲۰ درصد ایران جزو مناطق با خطر سیل خیزی بالا است.

به گزارش روز جمعه ایسنا، خسرو شهبازی افزود: میزان بارش در کشور ما یک سوم متوسط آن در دنیا است و از نظر جغرافیایی در منطقه ای خشک و شکننده واقع شده‌ایم که هر ۱۰ سال با ۱۱ میلیمتر کاهش بارش و بیش از ۵۰ میلیمتر افزایش تبخیر و ترقق مواجه هستیم که همه منجر به این شده که بارش‌ها در منطقه ما سیلابی و ویرانگر باشد، به همین خاطر نیازمند برنامه ریزی جامع برای مدیریت حوضه‌های آبخیز و کنترل سیلاب‌ها هستیم.

به گفته شهبازی از آنجایی که بیشتر آب مورد استفاده در کشور از آبهای زیرزمینی تامین می‌شود جزو کشورهای بحرانی و فوق بحرانی از نظر منابع آب زیرزمینی بوده و چون برداشت ما از سفره‌ها بیش از ورودی آب به آنهاست و بهترین راهکار برای ذخیره این آب‌ها انجام پروژه‌های آبخیزداری و آبخیزداری است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“sens- or sent-”

■ **Meaning:** feel, be aware

■ **For example:** Moving house seemed like the *sensible* thing to do.

PHRASAL VERB

Pop up

■ **Meaning:** to appear, sometimes unexpectedly

■ **For example:** Her name keeps popping up in the newspapers.

IDIOM

Dead as a doornail

■ **Explanation:** This expression is used to stress that something or someone is very definitely dead

■ **For example:** They’ve started fighting again, so the peace agreement is now as dead as a doornail.

Knowledge-based companies to raise annual sales to \$35 billion

➔ The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology is following up on several programs to help funding knowledge-based companies by utilizing capacities of the capital market.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani has said that supporting knowledge-based companies is the ministry’s priority in the current year.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the country’s major production units, especially in the field of basic goods and healthcare products, were completely active and this could be an opportunity to increase the country’s non-oil exports when the outbreak is over, Rahmani noted.

‘More masks than jellyfish’: coronavirus waste ends up in ocean

Conservationists have warned that the coronavirus pandemic could spark a surge in ocean pollution – adding to a glut of plastic waste that already threatens marine life – after finding disposable masks floating like jellyfish and waterlogged latex gloves scattered across seabeds.

The French non-profit Operation Mer Propre, whose activities include regularly picking up litter along the Côte d’Azur, began sounding the alarm late last month, the Guardian reported.

Divers had found what Joffrey Peltier of the organisation described as “Covid waste” – dozens of gloves, masks and bottles of hand sanitiser beneath the waves of the Mediterranean, mixed in with the usual litter of disposable cups and aluminium cans.

The quantities of masks and gloves found were far from enormous, said Peltier. But he worried that the discovery hinted at a new kind of pollution, one set to become ubiquitous after millions around the world turned to single-use plastics to combat the coronavirus. “It’s the promise of pollution to come if nothing is done,” said Peltier.

In France alone, authorities have ordered two billion disposable masks, said Laurent Lombard of Operation Mer Propre. “Knowing that ... soon we’ll run the risk of having more masks than jellyfish in the Mediterranean,” he wrote on social media alongside video of a dive showing algae-entangled masks and soiled gloves in the sea near Antibes.

The group hopes the images will prompt people to embrace reusable masks and swap latex gloves for more frequent hand-washing. “With all the alternatives, plastic isn’t the solution to protect us from Covid. That’s the message,” said Peltier.

In the years leading up to the pandemic, environmentalists had warned of the threat posed to oceans and marine life by skyrocketing plastic pollution. As much as 13 million tonnes of plastic goes into oceans each year, according to a 2018 estimate by UN Environment. The Mediterranean sees 570,000 tonnes of plastic flow into it annually – an amount the WWF has described as equal to dumping 33,800 plastic bottles every minute into the sea.

These figures risk growing substantially as countries around the world confront the coronavirus pandemic. Masks often contain plastics such as polypropylene, said Éric Pauget, a French politician whose region includes the Côte d’Azur.

“With a lifespan of 450 years, these masks are an ecological timebomb given their lasting environmental consequences for our planet,” he wrote last month in a letter to Emmanuel Macron, calling on the French president to do more to address the environmental consequences of disposable masks.

Earlier this year the Hong Kong-based OceansAsia began voicing similar concerns, after a survey of marine debris in the city’s uninhabited Soko Islands turned up dozens of disposable masks.

“On a beach about 100 metres long, we found about 70,” said Gary Stokes of OceansAsia. One week later, another 30 masks had washed up. “And that’s on an uninhabited island in the middle of nowhere.”

Curious to see how far the masks had travelled, he began checking other nearby beaches. “We’re finding them everywhere,” he said. “Ever since society started wearing masks, the cause and effects are being seen on the beaches.”

WORDS IN THE NEWS

China and Africa

(December 17, 2003)

Chinese and African leaders have finished a two-day meeting aimed at improving cooperation between countries that represent more than one third of the world’s population. The meeting was held in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

This report from Mark Doyle:

If you visit almost any marketplace in Africa, many of the **consumer goods** on sale - from buckets to razor blades to **hurricane lamps** - are likely to be Chinese. In a very large number of African capitals, the main football stadium is likely to have been built with Chinese aid money.

Sino-African trade - and aid - is large and growing. Some estimates put it as high as twelve billion dollars a year. Although direct comparisons are difficult, the links between the world’s largest developing country, China, and the world’s largest developing continent could grow to **challenge the post-colonial** links between Europe and Africa. The meeting in Addis Ababa has heard Chinese promises to cancel debts, **grant duty-free access** into China for African products and increase Chinese investments in Africa.

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe used the meeting to praise China and attack the west. But political links and **so-called** ‘South South Cooperation’ are only one **aspect** of the Addis meeting. Chinese and African businessmen used the meeting to **network** among each other to place more Chinese goods on stalls in African marketplaces.

■ **Words**

consumer goods: here: items which are for sale
hurricane lamps: paraffin lamps in which the flame is specially protected by glass

Sino-African trade: the buying, selling and exchanging of goods and services between China and Africa
to challenge: to be in competition with

post-colonial: the time following a period of history in which African countries, then known as ‘colonies’, were ruled by foreign powers
grant: give

duty-free access: the entry of one country’s goods into another country without any tax

so-called: placed before a word or phrase, indicates that something is usually referred to in a particular way
aspect: part

to network: to make personal contact; to meet other people involved in the same kind of work

(Source: BBC)

Hamas urges Muslim countries' action against Israeli annexation plan

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh called on Muslim and Arab countries to take immediate action against the Zionist regime's plan to annex parts of the West Bank.

In a letter to heads of state of more than 40 countries, Haniyeh described the plan as a new aggression and a threat to the present and future of Palestine and the entire Arab and Muslim Ummah, al-Ahed News reported.

He said an immediate meeting of Arab and Islamic countries is necessary to support Palestinians' united stance against all settlement activities, Judaization attempts in Jerusalem al-Quds and West Bank, and attempts to sideline the Palestinian issue.

Haniyeh underlined that a unified and serious stance must be adopted to counter all such conspiracies and to support Islamic and Christian sanctities.

He further decried attempts by some Arab countries to normalize ties with the Zionist regime as an "unforgivable mistake".

The Zionist regime wants to annex parts of the West Bank on July 1, as agreed between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and rival-turned-partner Benny Gantz of the Blue and White party.

The plan has drawn international condemnation and outrage.

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem al-Quds, is seen as occupied territory under international law, thus making all Zionist settlements there – as well as the planned annexation – illegal. (Source: IQNA)

India, China Achieve partial 'disengagement' of ongoing border standoffs

The "disengagement" has not resulted in major change to the ongoing standoff at Pangong Lake.

By Ankit Panda

On Tuesday, the armed forces of India and China began to partially disengage along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh, where the two sides have been mired for weeks in standoffs along separate points.

Although the steps Tuesday were not officially and publicly announced, Indian sources who spoke to the Hindu noted that the following steps had been taken by the two sides: "Partial deinduction has happened from some points in Galwan and Hot Springs areas. [The] Chinese side removed some of the tents and some troops and vehicles have been moved back, and the Indian side too has reciprocated."

"At some points in the Galwan Valley, Chinese troops have moved back 2-3 km," the Hindu reported. One of the major flashpoints between the two sides, at Pangong Lake, which is bisected by the Line of Actual Control, continues to be unresolved, per the reports.

According to Indian news agency ANI, the disengagement also resulted in the movement of Chinese "troops and infantry combat vehicles," which "moved back by 2.5 km" in the Galwan area. "India has also moved some of its troops back," ANI reported, citing Indian government sources.

This week's disengagement, however, would suggest that the ongoing talks between the two sides are creating some momentum toward deescalation. India and China have been using a variety of diplomatic and military mechanisms to communicate over their ongoing standoff, which is the most serious between them in years.

On Saturday, the Indian and Chinese sides met at the corps commander level through military channels in the Chushul-Moldo region of Ladakh and "agreed to peacefully resolve the situation in the border areas in accordance with various bilateral agreements," the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

That statement noted that the two sides would "continue the military and diplomatic engagements to resolve the situation and to ensure peace and tranquility in the border areas." Meetings at lower military levels had taken place intermittently after the initial clashes in Ladakh in early May.

According to one Indian report, high-level Indo-Chinese communication has also taken place. Nitin Gokhale, of Bharat Shakti, an Indian publication, reported that Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval spoke with Yang Jiechi, director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, on May 8.

India is one of two countries with China continues to have an unsettled land border (the other being Bhutan). Much of the border remains undefined, undelineated, and undemarcated.

With the exception of a May 9 incident at Naku La, along the settled Sino-Indian border off the northern border of the Indian state of Sikkim, other major standoffs have taken place in the unsettled western sector of the disputed border, which separates Indian-administered Kashmir from Chinese-held Aksai Chin.

Over the course of the standoff, both India and China have accused the other of sending troops onto the other's territory across the Line of Actual Control.

(Source: The Diplomat)

President of Burundi dies

Outgoing Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza died after suffering a cardiac arrest on Monday, according to a statement posted on the official Burundi government Twitter account.

"The government of the Republic of Burundi present their most sincere condolences to the Burundian people in general and to his afflicted family. Burundi has just lost a dignified son of the country, the President of the Republic, a Supreme Guide of National Patriotism," the statement said.

The government of Burundi has declared seven days of mourning and the country's flag will be flown at half-staff in memory of the late president, the statement read.

Nkurunziza was 55 and had served as president of the central African country since 2005, including a controversial third term that critics said violated the country's constitution. Scores died in pre-election violence, as demonstrators rallying against Nkurunziza's candidacy were met with deadly force by police.

Nkurunziza survived a failed coup attempt by an army general in 2015 while the President was in Tanzania.

In March 2019, the UN Human Rights office in Burundi was forced to close following concerted pressure from Nkurunziza's government. He did not run for a fourth term in presidential elections held in May.

(Source: CNN)

Cineasts express sorry over exploitation and exclusion of people of color

➔ 1 Also, Congressional Black Caucus Chair Karen Bass said, «The world is witnessing the birth of a new movement in our country.»

Their legislation calls for a ban on chokeholds and creating a National Police Misconduct Registry «to prevent problem officers from changing jurisdictions to avoid accountability.»

The bill also incentivizes states and localities to make racial bias training mandatory and to teach officers about their «duty to intervene.»

The package was likely to face stiff resistance from Republicans, police unions, and local officials who do not want Washington to intervene in their policymaking.

Meanwhile, Republicans, who are accusing Democrats of pushing to defund police departments across the country, introduced a resolution on Tuesday to formally oppose such a plan.

Spearheaded by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), the resolution would put the Senate on record opposing the efforts if passed.

■ Public opinion has moved fast on BLM

According to the New York Times, in the last two weeks, American voters' support for the Black Lives Matter movement increased almost as much as it had in the preceding two years.

American public opinion can sometimes seem stubborn. Voters haven't changed their views on abortion in 50 years. Donald Trump's approval rating among registered voters has fallen within a five-point range for just about every day of his presidency.

But the Black Lives Matter movement has been an exception from the start.



Public opinion on race and criminal justice issues has been steadily moving left since the first protests ignited over the fatal shootings of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. And since the death of George Floyd in police custody on May 25, public opinion on race, criminal justice, and the Black Lives Matter movement has leaped leftward.

Over the last two weeks, support for Black Lives Matter increased by nearly as much as it had over the previous two years, according to data from Civiqs, an online survey research firm. By a 28-point margin, Civiqs finds that a majority of Americans support the movement, up from a 17-point margin before the most recent wave of protests began.

The survey is not the only one to suggest that recent protests enjoy broad public support. Weekly polling for the Democracy Fund's U.C.L.A./Nationscape survey shows a significant increase in the police's unfavorable views and an increase in the belief that African-Americans face a lot of discrimination.

Perhaps most significant, the Civiqs data is not alone in suggesting that an outright majority of Americans agree with the central arguments of Black Lives Matter.

A Monmouth University poll found that 76 percent of Americans consider racism and discrimination a «big problem,» up 26 points from 2015. The survey found that 57 percent of voters thought

the anger behind the demonstrations was fully justified, while a further 21 percent called it somewhat justified. Polls show that a majority of Americans believe that the police are more likely to use deadly force against African-Americans and that there's a lot of discrimination against black Americans in society. Back in 2013, when Black Lives Matter began, a majority of voters disagreed with all of these statements.

■ Trump wanted to fire defense secretary for not using troops against protesters

A report by the Wall Street Journal revealed that Donald Trump wanted to fire Mark Esper last week after the defense secretary balked at the commander in chief's plan to use active-duty military personnel to quell civilian unrest. Officials told the WSJ that Trump was furious with Esper for not backing his idea to use troops to thwart protests in Washington, D.C., Minnesota, and elsewhere following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25.

Trump consulted advisers to ask about firing Esper, his fourth defense secretary, since taking office, according to the unnamed officials.

But the advisers warned him against the move, and Trump shelved the plans to fire Esper immediately, the paper reported.

Esper, aware of Trump's anger, was making his plans to resign over his differences regarding the military's role in civilian affairs, the officials said.

Firing the Pentagon chief would have meant another major shake-up in the administration during one of the biggest security crises of Trump's presidency.

China rejects Harvard study suggesting Covid-19 was circulating last summer

Scientists used satellite images and online search data to indicate early arrival of virus in Wuhan

China has angrily rejected findings by scientists at Harvard University that coronavirus started circulating in the city of Wuhan at the end of last summer — months earlier than Chinese authorities have admitted. The researchers from Harvard and Boston universities came to that conclusion after analyzing satellite images of hospital car parks in Wuhan, the center of the coronavirus outbreak, and queries on China's Baidu search engine about disease symptoms such as a cough and diarrhea.

"We observe an upward trend in hospital traffic and search volume beginning in late summer and early fall 2019," the scientists wrote in a paper released online but not peer-reviewed. Hua Chunying, a Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman, dismissed the findings when she was asked about them at a daily press briefing on Tuesday.

"To derive these conclusions from phenomena such as road vehicle traffic??.?.?is extremely preposterous," she added. The Harvard scientists extracted data for Wuhan hospital parking volume between January 2018 and April 2020 and found a steep increase in traffic that began in August 2019 and peaked in December. Searches for cough and diarrhea from Baidu users in Wuhan rose steeply over the same period. "This finding lines up with the recent recognition that gastrointestinal symptoms are a unique



A woman has her temperature checked in Wuhan, China, in January. (Photo: Getty Images)

feature of Covid-19 disease and may be the chief complaint of a significant proportion of presenting patients," the researchers said.

The conventional scientific view is that the virus originated in bats and moved from a still unidentified

intermediate animal host into humans in Wuhan in November or early December, possibly via the city's live animal market.

This is supported by genetic analysis of the virus, which suggests that there would have been more mutations by the time the disease was recognized later in December if it had already been circulating for three or four months. However, there have been unconfirmed reports of Covid-19 cases outside China at the end of 2019.

The Harvard team said its findings "corroborate the hypothesis that the virus emerged naturally in southern China and was potentially already circulating at the time of the Wuhan cluster". Commenting on the study, Paul Digard, professor of virology at the University of Edinburgh, said: "Using search engine data and satellite imagery of hospital traffic to detect disease outbreaks is an interesting idea with some validity."

However, it is important to remember that the data are only correlative and as the authors admit cannot identify the cause of the uptick. "It would have been interesting (and possibly much more convincing) to have seen control analyses of other Chinese cities outside of the Hubei region."

(Source: The Financial Times)

Global report: WHO urges Pakistan to return to lockdown as hospitals struggle

Brazil restores Covid-19 data online; Argentina passes 1,000 daily cases for first time; Fauci says 'we're still at the beginning' of pandemic



People attend the funeral prayers of a coronavirus victim in Hyderabad, Pakistan, on Tuesday. (Photo: Nadeem Khawar/EPA)

■ Brazil:

Elsewhere in the Americas, the Brazilian government restored coronavirus figures on its official website, after a supreme court justice on Tuesday ruled that the full details should be reinstated. On Saturday, the Brazilian government removed data relating to the pandemic from the health ministry website, and announced it would stop publishing the cumulative death toll or number of infections. President

Jair Bolsonaro has consistently sought to play down the severity of the coronavirus, dismissing it as a "little flu". Brazil has the second-highest number of cases worldwide, with close to 740,000, and more than 38,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

■ Chile:

Chile meanwhile reported 3,913 cases on Tuesday. Dr Anthony Fauci, the top infectious dis-

eases expert in the US, warned on Tuesday the pandemic was "far from over," and that he was surprised at how "rapidly it just took over the planet". Speaking in a videotaped discussion at a Biotechnology Innovation Organization conference, Fauci said: "I mean, Ebola was scary. But Ebola would never be easily transmitted in a global way." He added: "HIV, as important as it is, was drawn out over an extended period of time."

He warned that the world was still at the start of seeing the coronavirus pandemic's effects. "Oh my goodness," Fauci said. "Where is it going to end? We're still at the beginning of it."

On Tuesday, 21 U.S. states reported weekly increases in new cases. Arizona, Utah and New Mexico all posted rises of 40% or higher for the week ending Sunday, compared with the prior seven days, according to a Reuters analysis.

Spikes in cases and hospitalizations in parts of California and the U.S. southwest prompted Arizona to reactivate its emergency plan for medical facilities and California to place counties where half its population lives on a watch list.

The rise in cases, which could lead authorities to reimpose or tighten public health restrictions aimed at slowing the virus' spread, complicates efforts by Donald Trump to reopen the US economy and hold election rallies once more.

(Source: The Guardian)

Tractor likely to withdraw from Iran league

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — With two weeks left to Iran Professional League (IPL) resumes, Tractor will likely withdraw from the competition.

In late May, four clubs Tractor, Machine Sazi, Shahr Khodro and Nassaji threatened Iran League Organization they would withdraw from the competition if the league resumes. The clubs believe that resumption of the competition would increase the risk of virus transmission. So, they plan to cancel the current season in every way possible.

Tractor and Machine Sazi owner Mohammadreza Zenouzi says that they will definitely pull out the competition if the league restarts.

"The health of people is more important than everything. We don't want to endanger our players," Zenouzi said.

On Tuesday, the Tabriz based club announced that their six players have been tested positive for Covid-19.

Tractor iconic players Masoud Shojaei and Ashkan Dejagah have not yet joined their team to start the preparation. Furthermore, Tractor Algerian forward Okacha Hamzaoui has yet to return to Iran and it means the team are not ready to resume the league.

The Iran Professional League (IPL) is scheduled to restart on June 24 with a match between Foolad and Esteghlal.

With nine matches remaining, Tractor are third in the IPL table, 10 points behind leaders Persepolis.

All football competitions in Iran were postponed in early March due to the coronavirus outbreak but the league organization



has been given the green light by the health officials to reopen the games.

Iran on Wednesday confirmed 81 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus over

the past 24 hours, bringing the nationwide death toll to 8,506.



Five substitutes approved for rest of IPL season

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran Professional League (IPL) teams will be able to make five substitutions, rather than three, in each match to the end of the season after the country's football federation approved new rules.

In a meeting in the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) with the presence of the Secretary General of the federation, Mehdi Mohammad Nabi, the law-makers gave competitions, including Hazfi Cup, the option of increasing substitutes to protect player welfare on the football matches' resumption.

IPL, which was halted four months ago, will resume on June 24 with a match between Foolad and Esteghlal.

It was also agreed in the meeting that the additional assistant referees, the officials who stand to the side of the goal in league games, will not be used any more so the number of referees per game will be four instead of six.

The decision was made due to the outbreak of the coronavirus so that fewer people would have to come to the football field according to new safety measures.

The International Football Association Board said in May that the temporary changes to substitutions had been made for interrupted 2019-20 competitions as "matches may be played in a condensed period in different weather conditions, both of which could have impacts on player welfare".

AFC offers condolences on the passing of Parviz Aboutaleb



The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of former Islamic Republic of Iran national football team coach Parviz Aboutaleb who passed away on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at the age of 78 after battling with Alzheimer's disease.

Aboutaleb represented Iranian clubs Rah Ahan and Esteghlal in the early 60's. After retiring from his playing career, he continued to contribute to the game as a head coach, guiding the entire spectrum of age group teams in

IR Iran before being appointed as Team Melli's head coach in 1982.

Aboutaleb shared a great passion for football and was a great icon of the game and will be remembered for his valuable contributions to the development of football in IR Iran.

The thoughts and prayers of the AFC and the rest of the Asian football community are with the family and friends of Aboutaleb, the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran and the IR Iran football community during this difficult time.

(Source: the-afc)

Federer to miss rest of season after second knee op



MUMBAI (Reuters) — Roger Federer will miss the rest of the 2020 season after undergoing a second procedure on his right knee, the 20-times Grand Slam singles champion said on Wednesday.

Federer struggled with injury at this year's Australian Open in Melbourne, where he lost in the semi-finals to eventual champion Novak Djokovic, and subsequently underwent surgery on the knee in February.

"A few weeks ago, having experienced a setback during my initial rehabilitation, I had to have an additional quick arthroscopic procedure on my right knee," the

38-year-old said in a Twitter post.

With professional tennis shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic it remains to be seen how many tournaments Federer will actually miss.

The Swiss also had knee surgery to repair a torn meniscus in 2016 and missed the second half of that season.

When he returned to the tour for the 2017 season it looked like he had never been away, winning the Australian Open to end a near five-year Grand Slam title drought and adding the Wimbledon title later that year.

Schalke's US player McKennie slams 'racist' Trump

Schalke's American midfielder Weston McKennie has accused Donald Trump of being a racist and criticized the US president for his behavior following the death of George Floyd, which has sparked protests around the world.

"In my eyes, he can be called racist," McKennie, a 21-year-old US international, said in an interview with German magazine Sport Bild.

"I don't think Trump is the right man for the job of president.

"I don't think he understands his responsibility to the entire country.

"I think he's ignorant. I don't support him one bit. I don't think he's a man of his word."

Floyd, who was buried on Monday, died when a white policeman knelt on his neck in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the end of May. The death, caught on video, has sparked waves of protests in cities across the US and around the world.

Trump has adopted a tough approach to putting down the protests in US cities and he voiced his support for the police at a round table on law enforcement at the White House on Monday.



McKennie, who was born in Texas, wore an armband demanding "Justice for George" in Schalke's first league game following the death of Floyd.

French player Marcus Thuram and England international Jadon Sancho also called for justice for Floyd after scoring goals in the Bundesliga.

Last weekend, some Bundesliga clubs, including Schalke, showed solidarity with the global protests by dropping to one knee before their matches.

McKennie said he feels it is important for sportsmen

and women to draw attention to the Black Lives Matter movement, which has also been supported by a host of US sports stars.

"Basically, it's important that we athletes are also committed to the fight against racism, because we have the exposure," he said.

"That's why it's up to all of us."

US goalkeeper Zack Steffen, who is on loan from Manchester City at Bundesliga side Fortuna Dusseldorf this season, agrees that sports stars should use their platform to speak out.

"It is very urgent that something is done. It is only sad that something like this had to happen first," the 25-year-old told AFP subsidiary SID.

"What happened in the video of George Floyd is simply inhuman.

"I am proud to be an American, but some of the things that have been done by the government in recent years are just not America, for me, and that has to change.

"As athletes we have a platform.

"We can really make a difference and make the world a better place."

(Source: AFP)

IPL fixtures dates announced

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran League Organization has announced the date of the next three rounds of Iran Professional League (IPL).

IPL, which was halted four months ago, will resume on June 24 with a match between Foolad and Esteghlal.

With nine matches remaining, Persepolis sit top of the IPL table, 10 points ahead of Sepahan and Tractor.

Matchweek 22

Sunday 28 June

Tractor	Nassaji
Shahr Khodro	Zob Ahan
Sanat Naft	Pars Jonoubi
Shahin Bushehr	Naft Masjed Soleyman
Paykan	Persepolis

Monday 29 June

Sepahan	Gol Gohar
Foolad	Machine Sazi
Esteghlal	Saipa

Matchweek 23

Saturday July 4

Tractor	Sanat Naft
Zob Ahan	Paykan
Persepolis	Shahin Bushehr

Sunday July 5

Pars Jonoubi	Esteghlal
Gol Gohar	Shahr Khodro
Naft Masjed Soleyman	Machine Sazi
Nassaji	Foolad
Saipa	Foolad

Matchweek 24

Friday July 10

Machine Sazi	Persepolis
Shahin Bushehr	Zob Ahan

Saturday July 11

Shahr Khodro	Saipa
Foolad	Pars Jonoubi
Sanat Naft	Nassaji
Paykan	Gol Gohar
Esteghlal	Tractor
Foolad	Naft Masjed Soleyman

Rezaeian joins AFC's #StayActive episode

Islamic Republic of Iran's Ramin Rezaeian is the latest Asian star to join forces in promoting the benefits of maintaining a healthy mind and body in today's Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) #StayActive episode.

Since its launch just over a month ago, the #StayActive campaign has engaged with millions by showcasing the fitness programs of Asia's biggest icons and continues to galvanize and challenge the Asian football family to enhance their physical health and mental wellbeing while following the physical distancing guidelines initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Rezaeian, who features for Qatar Stars League side Al Shahania and was one of Team Melli's standout performers at the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018, said: "My heart and prayers go out to our healthcare workers, frontliners and everyone coping with this new normal. Throughout this time of uncertainty, it is easy for us to feel discouraged or anxious but maintaining a healthy mind and body is well within our control.

"Endurance training and resistance exercises not only strengthen our body, but it gives us the confidence to approach each day with a positive mindset. Starting everyday with some form of physical activity, even at low intensity, can help us lead more productive lives.

Bandar Abbas Beach Volleyball Tour cancelled

The FIVB has announced further adaptations to its beach volleyball calendar following discussions with the relevant beach volleyball event organizers.

The FIVB is constantly monitoring the status of all FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour 2020 events, ensuring that the health and wellbeing of athletes, officials and fans remains the top priority in all decision making.

As such, the FIVB has announced several updates to the status of these events in consideration of the current situation, global travel limitations and local government restrictions on holding international sports events.

The adaptations to the calendar include the cancellation of several events, originally scheduled for March and May 2020, that were previously postponed due to global coronavirus pandemic.

These include the 3-star events in Bandar Abbas, Iran; Gold Coast, Australia and Jurmala, Latvia, as well as a 4-star event in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

(Source: FIVB)

Pourmirzaei 'best option' to replace late Rahman: coach

MNA — Newly appointed head coach of the Iranian powerlifting team, Ali Asghar Ravasi, described the passing of Siamand Rahman as a 'great blow' to the team, adding that his replacement has been determined.

"The sudden demise of Siamand Rahman inflicted a great blow to the team and first, efforts should be put to rebuild the team's morale and then to get prepared for Tokyo Paralympics," Ravasi told ISNA on Monday.

Asked about Siamand Rahman's replacement, he noted that Mansour Pourmirzaei is currently the best option. "Currently, Mansour Pourmirzaei who has already secured quota for the Tokyo Paralympics is the best option for replacing Rahman and we are hopeful that he could repeat Rahman's gold in Tokyo."

The coach went on to say that Pourmirzaei has already set 270-280kg records but he is not enjoying the utmost readiness. "We will try to boost his record so that he could be an appropriate replacement for Rahman."

Siamand Rahman, dubbed as the world's strongest Paralympian, was one of the Iranian powerlifters who was expected to win his third gold at the Paralympic Games in a row but died due to heart attack on March 2.

Pourmirzaei's last medal came in July 2019 when he claimed the silver in World Para Powerlifting Championships in Kazakhstan by lifting 236kg. Rahman clinched the title of that event with 265kg.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

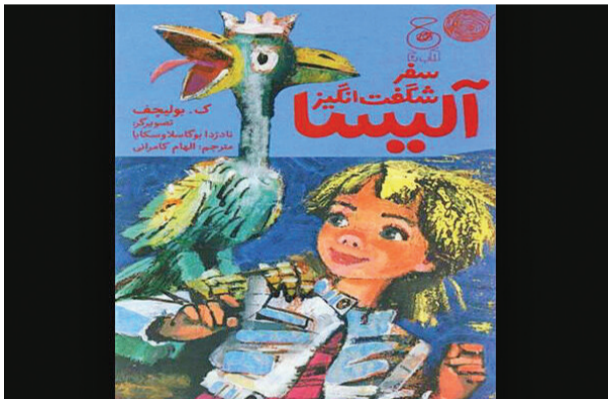
Mix with people properly, so that they weep for you when you die, and show you affection and fight your enemy when you are alive.

Imam Ali (AS)

“Alice: The Girl from Earth” published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of **d e s k** “Alice: The Girl from Earth” written by Russian author K. Bulychev (Igor Mojeiko) has recently been published by Cheshmeh Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Elham Kamrani and tells of some incidents in the life of a little girl of the twenty-first century, recorded by her father on the eve of her first day in school.



Front cover of the Persian translation of “Alice: The Girl from Earth” by Russian author K. Bulychev.

It’s the late 21st Century, and little Alice lives next door to the Space Zoo, where everything is sooooo interesting. Really, there’s no way she can help herself.

Whether it’s raising a newly-hatched Brontosaur, discovering an ancient civilization on Mars, traveling into the past, joining her father on a short jaunt around the Galaxy to collect rare animals, and fighting off walking bushes with an unearthly taste for fruit juice, outsmarting space pirates, battling space plague, facing down psychotic war robots with Napoleon complexes, and getting through the Third Grade in the 21st Century can be tough!”

“I Can’t Breathe” intl. cartoon exhibition opens in Tehran

→1 “The incident drew nationwide protests and an international campaign named ‘I Can’t Breathe’ was launched to show protests against racism,” he added.

The book containing the displayed collection was also unveiled at the opening ceremony.



An art aficionado takes a photo with his cellphone at the international cartoon exhibition “I Can’t Breathe” that opened in the Aali Gallery of the Art Bureau in Tehran on June 10, 2020. (Mehr/ Hamid Vakili)

Art Bureau director Mohsen Momeni-Sharif, and writers Mohammadreza Sangari and Mojtaba Rahmandoust were among the invited guests at the opening ceremony.

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

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

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

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

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

Iran’s “Cast out of Heaven” honored at Sony World Photography Awards

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian **d e s k** photographer Hashem Shakeri’s series “Cast out of Heaven” took the runner-up prize in the Discovery category at the Sony World Photography Awards as the organizers announced the winners on Tuesday.

The series depicts the aftermath of the expansion of Tehran satellite towns, which occurred after the implementation of the government’s Mehr Housing Project in 2007.

In this category, Russian photographer Maria Kokunova’s series “The Cave” won first prize. The series covers Kokunova’s life in isolation in a cozy cave of maternity, in a country house in Leningrad Oblast.

British photojournalist Hugh Kinsella Cunningham took third place for his series “Invisible Wounds” about the invisible wounds of a viral outbreak of Ebola in North Kivu, an active conflict zone in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Pablo Albarenga was selected as this year’s Photographer of the Year for his series “Seeds of Resistance” about those environmentalists who were killed while protecting their communities from mining, agribusiness and other projects threatening their territories.

The winners in other categories, including architecture, landscape, sports, still life and environment, were also honored.

The organizers showcase the works of winning and shortlisted photographers at a prestigious annual exhibition at Somerset House in London.



A photo from Iranian photographer Hashem Shakeri’s series “Cast out of Heaven”.

Theater troupes resume street performances



this fie photo shows a street theater performance from the northern city of Lahijan. (Tasnim/Keivan Firuzei)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Theater **d e s k** troupes in Tehran and four other provinces have resumed street performances after all cultural activities were shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic for over three months, Iran’s Dramatic Arts Center (IDAC) has announced.

Twelve troupes in Tehran will have 48 performances for 10 nights, while other street performances will take place in the provinces of Gilan, Qazvin, Kerman and Kermanshah.

“Kermanshah is among the so-called ‘red areas’ or regions with higher numbers of coronavirus hospitalizations over the past two weeks, however four theater troupes are due to have performances with the central theme of warnings against the coronavirus pandemic,” director of the Street Theater Center of IDAC Saman Khalilian has said.

“The performances in Kermanshah will take place at the red lights across the city, where the troupes wearing masks and carrying puppets will perform plays giving messages of warnings against the new virus to the occupants in the cars stopped at the traffic lights,” he added.

The performances will be short in due to the duration that the traffic lights are red but high in numbers.

“Health protocols and social distancing should be observed while watching the plays, and the audience needs to observe all the health protocols

during the performances,” he added.

“We hope people will collaborate with us so that we can think of resuming stage theater performances,” he said.

The performance will try to promote the motto “Me, You, Us, Theater, Life, Coronavirus,” and will mostly help entertain people and help refresh their mood.

Earlier, this week, President Hassan Rouhani, in a meeting held at the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters, said that the movie theaters and concert halls will resume activities with 50 percent of their capacity on June 21.

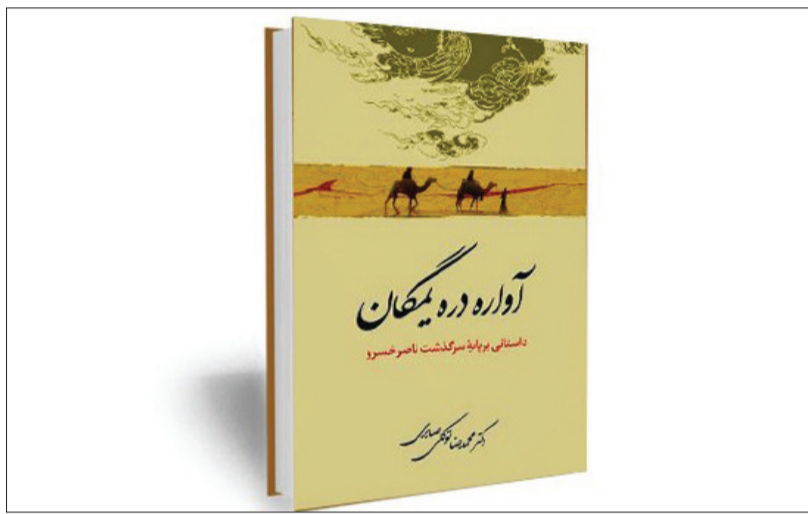
However, the president did not mention anything about reopening the halls dedicated to theater performances.

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

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

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

Novel explores life story of Persian poet Naser-e Kosrow



A copy of Mohammadreza Tavakkoli-Saberi’s novel “The Wanderer of the Yamgan Valley”.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A novel **d e s k** recently released by Moein Publications recounts the life story of Abu Muin Naser-e Khusraw al-Marvazi al-Qubadiyani, known as Naser-e Khusraw, the Persian poet and mystic who lived during the eleventh century.

The book named “The Wanderer of the Yamgan Valley” has been written by Mohammadreza Tavakkoli-Saberi.

Born in 1004 in Qubadiyan, Merv, Khorasan (Iran), Naser-e Khusraw came of a family of government officials who belonged to the Shia branch of Islam.

In 1045 he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and continued his journey to Palestine and then to Egypt, which was ruled at that time by the Fatimid dynasty.

The Fatimids headed the Ismaili sect, an offshoot of Shiism, and they sent missionaries to propagate their beliefs throughout the Islamic world.

Naser-e Khusraw became such a missionary, though it is not certain whether he became an Ismaili before his trip to the Fatimid capital or after. He returned to his homeland in what is now Afghanistan, but his vigorous advocacy of the Ismaili ideology within Sunni territory forced him to flee to Badakhshan, where he spent the rest of his days, lamenting in his poetry that he was unable to be an active missionary.

His poetry is of a didactic and devotional character and consists

mainly of long odes that are considered to be of high literary quality. His philosophical poetry includes the Rawshanainameh (“Book of Light”).

His most-celebrated prose work is the Safarnameh (“Book of Travel”), a diary describing his seven-year journey through Syria and Palestine. It is a valuable record of the scenes and events that he witnessed.

He also wrote more than a dozen treatises expounding the doctrines of the Ismailis, among them the Jami al-Hikmatayn (“Union of the Two Wisdoms”), in which he attempted to harmonize Ismaili theology and Greek philosophy.

Naser-e Khusraw’s literary style is straightforward and vigorous. In his verse, he displays great technical virtuosity, while his prose is remarkable for the richness of its philosophical vocabulary.

He died c. 1072/77 in Yumgan, Badakhsh?n, Central Asia, which is now in present-day Afghanistan.

Tavakkoli-Saberi has also written “The Lapsable Journey”, which is a diary describing his journey to Syria and Palestine similar to the one Naser-e Khusraw did.

“A Travel for Visit” is another of Tavakkoli-Saberi’s books that is his account of his travel to Badakhshan to visit Naser-e Khusraw’s tomb.

He has also written a correction to one of the oldest copies of the Safarnameh.

“Box Man” crowned best short at Euro Fest

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Manuchehr **d e s k** Teimurzadeh’s “Box Man” has been named best short at the Euro Fest – European International Film Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia.

“Box Man” tells the story of a reporter who in search of success is making a film about a teenager living in a wooden box. At end, the reporter changes his mind about making the film and is drawn into the teenager’s world.

“Covid-19” by Iman Azar from Canada was selected as best feature.

In the middle of a global pandemic, a ride service provider is now an essential worker. Through uncertainties he has to continue his job to provide for his family. Fear and anxiety between him and his passengers drive them apart to stay socially distanced, yet they feel closer through their struggles. Everyday tasks are now big challenges for those who risk their lives to leave their homes. Minutes feel like hours and



“Box Man” by Iranian director Manuchehr Teimurzadeh won the award for best short at the Euro Fest – European International Film Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia.

time is at a standstill.

“Prayer on the Square” by Gabriel Dettre from Germany won the award best documentary.

The documentary is about an old couple and their son who sing on a square in the middle of Sana’a, the capital of Yemen. Their song is a prayer for the past, the present and for the dark future of the country that has been ruined in front of our eyes by war, famine and destitution.

The award for best animation went to “Golema” by Geena Gasser and Amon Zucker from Switzerland.

In the animated film, an old man driven by a mystical legend tries to awaken a clay figure to free himself and a little girl from a hopeless imprisonment.

Marc Dessup from France was named best director for his “Survive” about a man who takes refuge in an underground shelter in a struggle to survive after a planetary cataclysm.