

Iran to pursue assassination of Gen. Soleimani in intl. bodies **2**



5 Iranian universities among world's top 1,000 in QS rankings **9**



Infantino extends condolence over death of Aboutaleb **11**



Hassan Fat'hi to complete "Intoxicated by Love" by summer's end **12**

Industrial, mining projects worth \$1.1b inaugurated



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Tehran: U.S. regime to soon kneel in front of Iranian nation

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has censured the U.S. regime for relying on "knee on neck" approach to its people and other countries, saying Washington will soon kneel in front of the Iranian nation.

"A Govt whose policy is relying on 'knee on neck' of either its own ppl or others around the globe europe-africa should be indeed happy w/ #EconomicTerrorism &

pressure on the public," Mousavi said via Twitter on Friday.

"But you see that not the Iranians' neck, but your knee was wrung," he said. "You will soon kneel in front of Iranian Nation."

The spokesman attached a photo of recent remarks by U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook, in which he said that the U.S. is happy with the results of the sanctions imposed on Iran. **->3**

Discovery of bizarre tomb offers clues to ancient life in Isfahan

TEHRAN — The discovery of the second giant jar-tomb in the sole historical hill of Isfahan has shed new light on ancient human life in the central Iranian city.

"The discovery of the second giant jar-tomb in the sole historical hill of Isfahan -- ('Tepe Ashraf' or 'Tappeh Ashraf') -- has proved a previous hypothesis suggesting the existence of a Parthian-era cemetery on the east of the hill. Now, Tepe Ashraf is the second place after the Tepe Sialk

(in Isfahan province) that has yielded the discovery of such jar tombs that offers valuable clues to uncover the obscure history of pre-Islamic Isfahan," IRNA quoted senior archaeologist Alireza Jafari-Zand as saying on Friday.

Jafari-Zand, who heads the archaeological excavation at the hill, believes that the cemetery could be covering a large area, adding "When we discovered the first jar-shaped tomb, **->8**

My sacking harmed Esteghlal: Winfried Schaefer

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN — Former Esteghlal coach, Winfried Schaefer, says that they could have won the title in Iran league but his sacking harmed he and Esteghlal as well.

On 29 April 2019, Schaefer was suspended until the end of the season two

days after Esteghlal's loss to Padideh in the Iran Professional League. He was replaced by his assistant Farhad Majidi.

After two months, the German coach was named as new head coach of Emirati club Baniyas.

Schaefer filed a complaint against Esteghlal to FIFA over their unpaid salaries. **->11**

World Day Against Child Labor: socio-cultural, economic growth a must

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Although the main factor to help reduce child labor in society is cross-sectoral co-operation with all the related bodies and officials, socio-cultural capacities should be used more efficiently for economic growth for protecting children as a great social asset.

"We need to create a sense of responsibility in all members of the society to be able to take effective steps in this regard using the capacities of NGOs and volunteers," Seyed Hassan Mousavi Chalak, head of the Iranian Social Workers Association, said in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times.

■ Labor and street children

Under the law, the employment of children aged 15 or younger is prohibited in Iran and there are also restrictions on types of jobs that

15-18-year-olds can do. For example, no child is allowed to work on jobs that pose occupational health hazards.

There are two concepts for labor children, some of whom are street children and others who are not homeless but have to work to provide a family livelihood.

Street children are homeless boys and girls, aged under 18 years, for whom "the street" has become home or their source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised.

Poor children and their families may rely upon child labor to improve their chances of attaining necessities. However, children may be forced to work or take part in criminal activities through gangs, such as shoplifting, robbery, theft, and burglary.

Street children, runaways, or children living in poverty are also used in organized beggary. **->9**

'Go back to your bunker': Seattle mayor hits back at Trump

Seattle's mayor has told U.S. President Donald Trump to "go back to your bunker", escalating a spat after the president threatened to intervene over a police-free autonomous zone protesters have set up in the western United States city.

The reference to a "bunker" was a nod to reports Trump was rushed by Secret Service agents to a secure area in the White House as demonstrations against racism and police brutality sparked by the death of George Floyd reached the president's residence.

Trump sparked the spat when he threatened to intervene in the neighbourhood in Seattle dubbed "Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone", or CHAZ, which was agreed upon by demonstrators and the city's police department.

"Take back your city NOW. If you don't do it, I will," Trump warned mayor Jenny Durkan and Washington state governor Jay Inslee -

both Democrats - in a tweet late on Wednesday, calling the protesters "domestic terrorists" who have taken over Seattle.

"This is not a game. These ugly Anarchists must be stooped (sic) IMMEDIATELY. MOVE FAST," he said in another tweet.

Mayor Jenny Durkan replied on Thursday, urging Trump to "make us all safe. Go back to your bunker", with Inslee joining in the Twitter mockery of Trump.

"A man who is totally incapable of governing should stay out of Washington state's business. 'Stoop' tweeting," Inslee wrote.

Protests have taken place across the country following the death of Floyd, an unarmed Black man killed in police custody in Minneapolis on May 25.

Officials in Seattle have denied reports that left-wing activists are behind the setting up of the autonomous zone. **->10**

Iranian center makes "Reminder" warning about women's rights

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN — A short film titled "Reminder" that warns about women's rights based on Islamic principles has been produced at Raaze Resaneh Cultural Dissemination Group.

The group is working under the auspices of the Qom branch of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization.

"Mental and verbal violence, including swearing, disrespect, shouting, and arrogant and scornful behavior are among the atrocities threatening

women," Mehdi Keshthkar, the director of the movie, told the Tehran Times on Thursday.

"These kinds of violence cause women to feel nihilism, self-destructiveness, isolation and anxiety," he added. He also noted that the film also intends to show how violence against women imperils the mental health of children and the society.

"Education and awareness are needed to stop violence against women," Keshthkar said and added, "The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is a good opportu-

nity to raise people's awareness of the social consequences of violence against women and to reinforce collective action against the issue."

The United Nations General Assembly has designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Keshthkar said that the film is scheduled to be screened at various Iranian and international events observing the day. Starring Iran Masudi, the movie depicts a woman's different responses to voices addressing her with favorable and undesirable words.



© IRNA / Ali Moarefi

Meet Iranian man weaving reed mats for decades

Iranian crafter Hassan Heidari, nicknamed Abu-Abdollah, is weaving flattened reeds to make a traditional mattress in a village near the southwestern city of Ahvaz on June 12, 2020.

Heidari has been crafting mats during the past thirty years to make a living. Such mats are produced by plaiting reeds, strips of palm leaf, or some other local plants. They are felt cool and suitable in the hot tropical climate of the region.

The supple mats, made through weaving without a loom, are widely used in local homes or as shopping bags, placemats, and decorative wall hangings.

Floyd murder falls within serial killings of the blacks: Philosopher Lingis

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Alphonso Lingis, a professor emeritus of philosophy at Pennsylvania State University, says the killing of George Floyd on May 25 in Minneapolis was just an example in a series of murders taking place against black Americans.

"The murder of George Floyd was another in a continuous series of unarmed black men killed by the police," Lingis tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Professor Lingis says, "Unarmed black people are three and a half times more likely to be shot by police than unarmed white people."

Following is the full text of the interview:

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

A: The murder of George Floyd was another in a continuous series of unarmed black men killed by the police. Unarmed black people are three and a half times more likely to be shot by police than unarmed white people.

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

A: The press has documented a long history of racism against African-Americans in Donald Trump's real estate dealings and social life. He attacked the legitimacy of Barack Obama's presidency baselessly claiming that Obama was born in Africa. **->7**

ARTICLE
Mick Napier
Member of Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Netanyahu's latest land grab

Israel is now openly planning the incorporation of a huge chunk of the Palestinian West Bank into Israel. As usual, the Zionist project seizes the maximum amount of land while excluding the maximum number of Palestinians, who will be herded into areas and denied citizenship.

Not a week has gone by since 1948 when land did not move from Palestinian ownership to exclusively Jewish control from which Palestinians could not benefit. This was sometimes achieved by direct violence, up to and including massacre, and at other times by bureaucratic means with the implicit threat of Zionist military and paramilitary force.

Ever aware of the international balance of forces, Israel now scents an opportunity to drive forward its project while the world's attention is focused elsewhere. Netanyahu, after all, infamously told a Bar Ilan University audience in 1989 that "Israel should have exploited the repression of the demonstrations in China [at Tiananmen Square], when world attention was focused on that country, to carry out mass expulsions among the Arabs of the territories." The Israeli elite know that, ultimately, they rely on U.S. and European support for their existence as a colonizing power in West Asia and that they must be sure they will be allowed - either openly or tacitly - to take major steps against the Palestinians.

Israel's latest seizure has prompted public protests from Israel's European and West Asian allies but nothing beyond feeble words. The German foreign minister is in Israel today (Wednesday) to "warn against" Israeli annexation of more Palestinian territory but in the same breath to assure Israel that Germany will oppose any sanctions from Europe against Israel if it proceeds with the plan. "Don't do it but if you do it there will be no negative consequences" is the message Netanyahu hears clearly. Israel, Germany and every Western chancellor well understand the steps in this diplomatic dance and they have all been dancing it for many years. It's a green light to proceed for all concerned understand that the Israeli appetite for Palestinian land has not diminished and will never end until Israel is confronted by a force capable of forcing it to do so. **->7**

Zarif to visit Ankara, Moscow

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif plans to visit Ankara and Moscow on June 14 and 15.

“Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, will visit Ankara and Moscow on Sunday and Monday next week to discuss latest regional developments with his counterparts,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday.

Following his trip to Syria in April, this is Foreign Minister Zarif’s second foreign visit after the first wave of coronavirus.

Parliament prepares plan to name Mehrabad Airport after Martyr General Soleimani

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran’s parliament has prepared a double urgency plan to change name of Mehrabad International Airport to Martyr General Soleimani.

According to the plan, Tehran has two airports and one of them is named after founder of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini and the other should be named after the international hero of fight against arrogant powers.

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

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

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

Ambassador says U.S. seeking to undermine IAEA reports on Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The United States and some other countries are seeking to undermine the mechanisms and procedures of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s reports on Tehran’s nuclear activities, the Iranian ambassador to the IAEA has lamented.

Kazem Gharibabadi, in an Instagram post on Friday, lambasted the constant obstruction by the U.S. and its allies against Iran in the quarterly meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, Mehr reported.

He wrote that the quarterly meeting of the IAEA board will begin its work on June 15 via videoconference given the coronavirus outbreak.

At the forthcoming meeting, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi will give a report on verification of the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Gharibabadi noted.

The envoy said the U.S. along with some Western countries are seeking to make the decision-making process possible through votes if necessary, while some other countries like Russia oppose it.

“Although there is a short time left to hold this meeting, the modality of the meeting and the ruling ritual of its work has not been finalized yet,” Gharibabadi said.

He added that the U.S. continues to undermine international mechanisms and procedures ruling international bodies.

According to the Iranian envoy, the IAEA director-general’s reports on the verification of the implementation of the JCPOA, as well as the safeguard agreement in Iran, will be discussed during the session.

Denmark summons Saudi envoy over funding anti-Iran terror group

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The Saudi ambassador was summoned to the Danish foreign ministry over its support for a notorious terrorist group behind a 2018 deadly attack in Iran’s southwestern city of Ahvaz.



Danish police said they were prosecuting “three people for financing and promoting terrorism in Iran, including in collaboration with a Saudi intelligence service”.

“We will not accept such activities under any circumstances and our ambassador in Riyadh has repeated the same message directly to the Saudi authorities,” Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said in a statement, in which he deplored “new very serious charges”, AFP reported.

The trio has been facing prosecution since February for spying for Saudi intelligence.

According to the Danish intelligence service PET, they worked for Riyadh between 2012 and 2018.

In February, Denmark said its intelligence service had arrested and charged three members of the Saudi-backed terror group for spying on behalf of the kingdom in the Scandinavian country.

The terrorist group Al-Ahvaziya has committed numerous crimes against Iranian targets over the past decades, among them bomb attacks in public places, abductions, assassinations, kidnapping for ransom, shooting at tourists, and blowing up oil pipelines.

Formed a few years after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the terror group was inspired back then by the Baathist regime of Iraq’s ex-dictator Saddam Hussein.

Al-Ahvaziya has been after separating the southwestern province of Khuzestan — home to the country’s Arab population — from the rest of Iran through engaging in armed conflict against the Iranian government.

In September 2018, the Saudi-backed terror outfit claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a military parade in Ahvaz, Khuzestan’s provincial capital. The assault killed 25 people, including members of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and civilian bystanders, and injured 70 others.

Shortly after the attack, the London-based “Iran International” television channel funded by Saudi Arabia allowed the al-Ahvaziya spokesman to go live on air to defend the bloodshed.

Iran to pursue assassination of Gen. Soleimani in intl. bodies

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand has said that Iran will pursue assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani by the United States in international bodies.

“Diplomatic complaints have been filed through sending letter to the [UN] Security Council and UN Secretary General [Antonio Guterres]. We are pursuing the case and completing our investigation in the Foreign Ministry. After that, international actions will be taken,” Baharvand told the IRIB in an interview published on Thursday.

Judicial investigations must be accurate and without any time limitation, he suggested.

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



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

(ISIS). Only Daesh celebrated Soleimani’s assassination.

Iranian Judiciary spokesman

China slams U.S. threats to reimpose arms ban on Iran, says it will violate UN resolution

By staff and agencies

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has slammed the United States’ threats to reimpose an arms embargo on Iran, saying it violates the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231.

Under Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal — JCPOA —, arms embargo against Iran ends on October 18.

Wang urged the U.S. to stop its unilateral sanctions, return to the correct track of observing the Iran nuclear deal and UNSC resolutions, work with all parties to maintain the international nuclear non-proliferation system, and maintain peace and stability in the Middle East, CGTN reported on Thursday.

According to 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.

Washington has threatened to trigger a return of UN sanctions on Iran if the Security Council does not extend

arms embargo.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Wang 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 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.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft announced on June 5 that Washington had shared the draft resolution on the extension of Iran’s arms embargo with Russia, Britain, France, Germany and Estonia which are all members of the Security Council.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, has said that the United States has no right to initiate anything under the 2231 resolution.



“@USAmbUNbelieves US retains right to initiate snap-back of sanctions under UNSCR 2231.

WRONG: US cannot be a JCPOA “Participant”, since @realDonaldTrump ceased U.S. participation.

The US—which is in violation of the resolution—has no right to initiate anything under 2231,” Takht-Ravanchi tweeted on June 5.

Iranian diplomat meets Iraqi FM

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iraj Masjed-di, the Iranian ambassador to Iraq, met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein on Thursday.

Ways to expand relations were discussed during the meeting.

After a separate meeting with Hassan al-Tamimi, the Iraqi minister of health, Masjed-di said in a tweet that it is not now possible to that pilgrims visit holy shrines in Iraq.

He also said that the Iraqi foreign minister and health minister have promised to cooperate in reopening the borders.

Masjed-di met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in May and exchanged views on boosting relations.

“In the meeting with Mr. Kadhimi, bilateral cooperation, continuation of actions regarding the 1975 Algiers Agreement, banking cooperation, Khorramshahr-Basra railway



and visa for the two countries’ citizens were discussed,” Masjed-di said in a tweet.

He added that the Iraqi prime minister praised Iran’s efforts in the fight against Daesh-also called ISIS or ISIL.

“Kadhimi considered Iran and Iraq as two friendly and brotherly countries,” the ambassador noted in his tweet.

Tehran, Moscow enjoy growing ties, Zarif says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that Tehran-Moscow ties are growing, calling for expansion of relations.

“Fortunately, with the will and determination of both countries’ leaders and top officials, bilateral relations in line with serving the common interests and helping the regional and international stability and security are growing,” he said in a message to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the occasion of Russia’s National Day.

He expressed hope that the relations would be expanded as he congratulated Russia’s National Day.

Russia Day, called Day of adoption of the declaration of state sovereignty

Rouhani, Putin and Erdogan to discuss Syria via videoconference

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani of Iran, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish president, plan to hold a videoconference on Syria within the framework of the Astana format.

Speaking to NTV broadcaster, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Thursday that it was Iran’s turn to host the next Astana summit, but they are mulling a trilateral meeting via videoconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ankara and Moscow have agreed on the leaders’ videoconference, and they are waiting for Iran’s response about the date, Cavusoglu said.

According to Middle East Eye, the top officials will discuss the latest developments in Syria and solution to the crisis



in the country, ISNA reported on Thursday.

In a trilateral meeting on Syria with his Russian and

Turkish counterparts in Ankara in September 2019, the Iranian president stressed a few points to help revitalize the war-torn Syria.

The return of refugees to Syria, non-interference of foreign countries in Syria’s affairs, fighting terrorism, facilitating humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, and helping the formation of a constitution were among the points emphasized by Rouhani.

It was the fifth summit of its kind attended by Rouhani, Putin, and Erdogan as the hosts.

The Astana format was launched by Russia, Turkey and Iran in January 2017 in an effort to bring all warring parties in Syria to the negotiating table as a complementary part of the UN-sponsored peace talks in Geneva.

Iran asks French experts to read black boxes of Ukrainian plane

By staff and agency

Iranian investigators have asked France’s BEA air accident agency to read black boxes of a Ukrainian plane which was mistakenly shot down in January near Tehran.

“Iran’s AAIB recently made a request to the BEA that the recorders should be taken by Iran to the BEA’s premises in France to be read in the presence of representatives of other involved countries and ICAO, if the BEA is in a position to accommodate this,” Farhad Parvaresh, Iran’s representative to the UN agency, told Reuters by telephone.

The BEA said it had not formally received the request and remained in discussions with Iran, Canada and Ukraine on any involvement it may have.

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on June 7 Iran is ready to deliver the black box of the downed Ukrainian 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.

“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 inves-

tigations in Iran are on their final stages and the Islamic Republic is well informed of the details of the incident.

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

“Our investigations are comprehensively conducted and we know exactly what has occurred to the flight,” the deputy foreign minister added.

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

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 Ira-

nians, 63 Iranian-Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

■ **Tehran, Ottawa underline expedition of probe into the crashed plane**

Baharvand also stressed the necessity of quick inquiry into the case of the Ukrainian plane crash with his Canadian counterpart Marta Morgan in a phone conversation on Thursday, Fars reported.

Baharvand and Morgan highlighted the need for rapid finalization of issues related to the crashed plane, as the international flights will soon be resumed following a halt resulting from coronavirus outbreak.

Given the large number of Iranians residing in Canada and their need for communication with the families of those killed in the incident, Baharvand called on the Canadian government to remove barriers in the way of Iranian and Canadian citizens to receive consular services, but the Canadian side postponed examining the issue to future.

Zarif: ICC blackmailed by ‘lawless gang’ posing as diplomats

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has attacked the U.S. sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC), saying the ICC was blackmailed by a “lawless gang” posing as diplomats.

“International Criminal COURT now blackmailed by lawless gang posing as diplomats,” Zarif wrote in his Twitter page on Thursday.

He added, “What else will it take for the global community to wake up & smell the consequences of appeasing the bully? And who else should the US terrorize before appeasers realize EVEN they might be next?”

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, and Attorney General William Barr, on the heels of an executive order from President Trump, announced on Thursday that the U.S. will authorize economic sanctions against members of the ICC for investigating alleged U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan.

Trump signed the executive order to block the financial assets of court employees and bar them and their immediate relatives from entering the U.S.



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, “We cannot, we will not stand by as our people are threatened by a kangaroo court.” The International Criminal Court an-

nounced that Trump’s decision to impose sanctions on court employees is not only an attack on the court and the system of international criminal justice, but on the

interests of the victims of atrocities.

“These are the latest in a series of unprecedented attacks on the ICC,” the Hague-based court said in a statement.

“These attacks constitute an escalation and an unacceptable attempt to interfere with the rule of law and the Court’s judicial proceedings,” said the ICC.

The ICC was established in 2002 to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide in areas where perpetrators might not otherwise face justice. Some 123 states from across the world recognize its jurisdiction.

In March, the ICC began an investigation into war crimes in Afghanistan that could involve Americans — the first time the court’s prosecutor had been cleared to investigate U.S. forces. The decision was made on appeal after judges initially rejected the request from chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, whose visa was revoked by the U.S. in April 2019.

The case involves allegations of war crimes committed by Afghan national security forces, Taliban and Haqqani Network fighters, as well as U.S. forces and intelligence officials in Afghanistan since May 2003.

Tehran, Moscow share common responsibility for regional security, Rouhani says in message to Putin



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has felicitated his Russian

counterpart, Vladimir Putin, on the occasion of Russia’s National Day, saying Tehran and Moscow share common responsibilities and interests with regard to the security of the region.

“I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to Your Excellency and the people of that country on the Russian Federation’s National Day,” the president said in a message on Friday, Mehr reported.

He hailed the considerable developments and deepening of ties between Iran and Russia over the past years.

“I am confident that relying on the invaluable experiences of the past, the relations between the two countries will expand more and more in line with the common interests and with the aim of increasing the welfare of the two nations,” President Rouhani said.

He further stressed that “Iran and the Russian Federation hold common responsibilities and interests over the regional

security,” adding, “Therefore, it is imperative to continue the ongoing talks and negotiations between the Tehran and Moscow at different levels.”

Rouhani further wished for further prosperity and happiness for the Russian nation.

Russia Day, called Day of adoption of the declaration of state sovereignty of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) before 2002, is the national holiday of the Russian Federation. It has been celebrated annually on June 12 since 1992.

It is the successor to October Revolution Day, the former national day in the Soviet Union. The day commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) on 12 June 1990. The passage of this Declaration by the First Congress of People’s Deputies marked the beginning of constitutional reform in the Russian Soviet state.

FM Zarif says U.S. not entitled to vilify Iran

Iranian foreign minister says the United States has no right to “abuse” the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to vilify Iran, because Washington has already breached the nuclear deal and the United Nations Security Council resolution that endorsed it.

In a tweet on Thursday, Mohammad Javad Zarif noted that despite Iran’s effort to abide by its obligations as per the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Washington has been doing its best to heighten tensions with Tehran and has also been bullying other countries to follow suit.

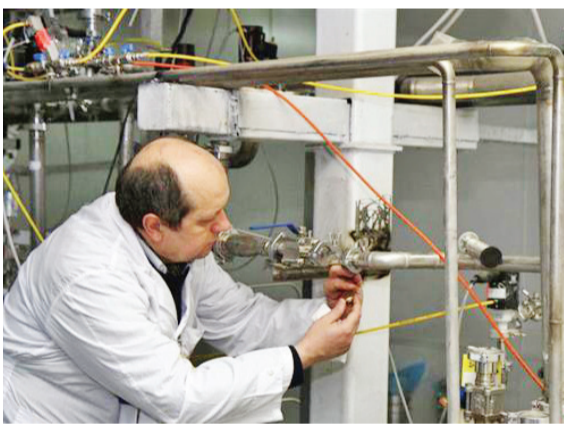
After its conclusion in Vienna in 2015, the nuclear accord between Iran and the P5+1 group of states -- the U.S., the UK, France, Russia, and China plus Germany -- was endorsed by the Security Council in the form of Resolution 2231.

The accord removed nuclear-related sanctions against the Islamic Republic that voluntarily changed some aspects of its nuclear program in return. The accord was hailed as a pillar of world security due to its swift contribution to lowering regional and international tensions.

The U.S., however, left the JCPOA in May 2018 in breach of its multilateral nature and the UNSC’s enshrinement of the accord.

The country then returned the sanctions, started scaring others to stop their legal trade with Iran, and refused to relieve the bans although Tehran won an International Court of Justice case against Washington that mandated it to lift the coercive measures targeting transfer of food and medicine to the Islamic Republic.

The U.S. has been trying to mount pressure on Iran through numerous other channels too, including the Security Council itself and the IAEA, the UN’s nuclear agency.



File photo provided by the Associated Press shows an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspector at the Natanz nuclear facility in central Iran.

The U.S. has vowed to have the Security Council extend an arms embargo that will end under the JCPOA in October, and threatened to try to restore all international sanctions against Tehran if the embargo was not prolonged.

Washington alleges that it is allowed to try taking both the measures against Iran as it is still “named” in the UNSC resolution as a JCPOA partner.

Zarif’s tweet, though, refuted Washington’s claim by invoking a 50-year-old international legal opinion.

Under the 1971 International Court of Justice opinion adduced in the tweet, “a party which disowns or does not fulfill its own obligations cannot be recognized as retaining the rights, which it claims to derive from the relationship,” the top diplomat reminded. The opinion

has described the code as a fundamental principle governing international relationships.

Russia recently attacked the U.S. efforts to come in the way of Iran’s cooperation with the IAEA, although, the nuclear agency has not yet found any evidence of “diversion” of the Islamic Republic’s nuclear work.

Earlier this week, Russia’s Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov said the nuclear deal’s “opponents” -- in clear reference to the United States and some of its allies -- were seeking to “undermine the confidence and cooperation” between Tehran and the IAEA.

He reminded that the nuclear accord was, among other things, clenched to “restore confidence in exclusively peaceful nature” of Iran’s nuclear program, noting that the nuclear agency has not found any “military dimension” to Iran’s nuclear activities.

Washington, Israel, and some regional countries have, however, long been trying to allege otherwise, with the occupying regime using every international occasion to flaunt, what it calls, evidence of misapplication of the Iranian nuclear work without providing any concrete proof.

Zarif, meanwhile, gave a list of the United States other actions, which stand in sharp contrast to the international law, saying the U.S. has clearly admitted to involvement in such acts of terrorism as assassination of the regional resistance movement’s top figures in Iraq, as well as facilitating Saudi and Israeli regime’s war crimes in Yemen and Palestine.

He concluded his tweet by emphasizing that as a result of its bleak track records with regard to ignoring the norms of human rights and international law, the United States has no right to “abuse UN & IAEA to vilify Iran.”

(Source: Press TV)

Racist Zionist regime should worry about collapse of racist symbols: security chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Thursday that the “racist” Zionist regime should be more concerned than any state with the collapse of racist symbols.

“Now that the call for ‘the most pious of you is your supremacy before God’ has been heard globally after centuries, #racist #Zionist regime should be more concerned than any state with the collapse of racist symbols,” Shamkhani tweeted.

“They know it’s their turn after the statues,” he said, using the hashtag #alllivesmatter.

In the past couple of days, Confederate statues and statues of other historical figures, including slave traders and Christopher Columbus, have toppled throughout the U.S. and around the world.

According to The New York Times, this follows years of debate about public display of Confederate symbols, following the 2015 murder of nine black church congregants in Charleston, S.C., by a Confederate-flag-bearing white supremacist, and the deadly clash in 2017 between white nationalists and counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Va., over the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee.

It came after weeks of protests over entrenched racism in the United States, reignited by the killing of George Floyd.

Floyd, an unarmed Black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25. A video of the incident shows Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, kneeling on Floyd’s neck for nearly nine minutes as the 46-year-old pleaded: “I can’t breathe.”

Following the killing, protests erupted in at least 140 U.S. cities, with thousands of people taking to the streets against police violence.

National Guard troops were activated in more than 20 states, and several cities imposed temporary curfews.

On Wednesday, Floyd’s brother testified at a House Judiciary Committee hearing on issues of racial profiling, police brutality and lost trust between police departments and the communities they serve.

“I’m tired. I’m tired of the pain I’m feeling now and I’m tired of the pain I feel every time another Black person is killed for no reason,” Philonise Floyd said during his testimony.

“Teach them what necessary force is,” he says. “Teach them that necessary force should be used rarely, and only when life is at risk.”

Iran calls for end to Israel’s tyranny over Western halls of power

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif referred to a green light by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) to the U.S. congressmen to criticize Israeli annexation, saying that the time is now ripe for putting an end to the apartheid of Israel and its Zionist lobby’s influence on the U.S.

“If there were ever any question of WHO dictates the U.S. and the Western policy in the Middle East, this headline screams it loud & clear,” Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his Twitter account on Thursday while referring to a news report by a UK-based newspaper.

The UK-based newspaper Jewish News on Wednesday reported that “the leading pro-Israel lobby in the United States (AIPAC) is telling lawmakers that they are free to criticize Israel’s looming annexation plans — just as long as the criticism stops there.”

“#AIPAC has poisoned U.S. politics for years, overtly giving instructions to Congress,” Zarif said.

“Time to end #APARTHEID Israel’s tyranny over Western halls of power,” he reiterated.

The Jewish News had reported that so far, the group has remained publicly silent. But in private, AIPAC is telling lawmakers that as long as they don’t push to limit the United States’ aid to Israel, they can criticize the annexation plan without risking future support from the lobby group.

In relevant remarks in late May, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said that the Zionist Virus as the record holder of human evil will soon be eliminated like the coronavirus.

Addressing the worldwide Muslims in a live televised speech on the occasion of the International al-Quds Day, Ayatollah Khamenei considered the dawn of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the subsequent emergence of the Resistance Front to be factors that have impeded the “Zionist virus.”

He stressed the fact that the Zionist regime, the worst human evil, will be uprooted from the Middle East despite being supported by the United States and its minions, in the not-too-distant future. Without a doubt, the Zionist virus, which is the record holder of human evil, won’t last long, and it will be uprooted.

Tehran: U.S. regime to soon kneel in front of Iranian nation

1→ Hook also said U.S. policy toward Iran has weakened the country and has affected its support for Lebanon’s Hezbollah.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump walked away from the internationally-backed Iran nuclear agreement, officially called the JCPOA, 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 JCPOA and imposed the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in line with the Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” campaign on Tehran.

Earlier this week, Hook said the United States is working to renew the arms embargo on Iran, 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,” he remarked.

He also said 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.

Afghanistan to send delegation to Iran to prevent illegal traffic

TEHRAN — The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the dispatch of a delegation from Kabul to Tehran to investigate the recent incidents for Afghan citizens and prevention of illegal traffic.

According to a statement from the Afghan Foreign Ministry, the National Security Council of the country decided to send a high-level delegation from Kabul to Tehran to prevent a recurrence of similar incidents.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry also added that it had submitted a report on the recent incidents to the National Security Council, which had decided to send a high-level delegation to Iran to prevent the recurrence of such unfortunate incidents.

According to the report, the purpose of the negotiating team is to prevent illegal traffic by focusing on ensuring better border security between the two countries.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry also announced that the delegation will discuss with Iranian officials the fight against human trafficking on both sides of the border, the beginning of the process of establishing the identity of Afghan citizens and the legalization of immigrant residency, as well as the implementation of the draft law on

the employment of Afghan workers legally.

Following the car crash of Afghan nationals in Yazd Province, Afghan Ambassador to Tehran Abdolghafor Lival held a meeting with the officials of the province on Sunday and noted, “We believe that human traffickers and the driver are responsible for this incident.”

According to Lival, the driver has been identified and the judicial authorities are striving to arrest him.

He further maintained that bilateral relations are significant for Afghanistan and appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting Afghan refugees.

Also, on May 1, some claims surfaced in media reports that Iranian border guards had tortured and thrown as many as 57 Afghans into the Hari River (Harirud) in western Herat province to prevent their illegal entry into Iran. The Khaama Press News Agency said at least 23 of them drowned in Harirud.

Tehran has roundly rejected the claims, saying the incident took place on the Afghan side of the border and Iranian forces had no role in the incident.

Iran has extensive evidence that the incident has not happened on its borders. According to Iran’s Foreign Ministry



Spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi, the confirmed reports received from the border guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran show that such an incident has not occurred on the mentioned date and location. He noted that Iran has not been associated with Afghan migrants and the claims of transferring people to camps or inhumane treatment are completely baseless. He added that due to weather conditions of the region, not a single Afghan citizen entered the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran on that date.

A 354-km highway to be built linking Iran, Iraq

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** —Iranian transport and urban development minister announced that Iran and Iraq have reached a deal on building a 354-kilometer highway between the two countries, Press TV reported.

Mohammad Eslami said that the long highway connecting the city of Mehran on the western Iranian border to the holy city of Najaf in central Iraq will ease traffic across the border and would help boost trade between the two neighboring countries.



“The Mehran-Najaf Highway could be a high-potential road for transit and trade exchanges between the two countries in addition to the function it would have for transporting the pilgrims,” the minister added.

He said that Iranian and Iraqi officials had concluded “initial talks” for building the key road.

A study by the Iranian parliament shows that nearly two million Iraqis visit Iran each year for pilgrimage purposes. The number of Iranians visiting Iraq for a similar reason is around 700,000 although over two million Iranians arrive in Iraq during the Arba'een period, a special religious occasion which takes place in the second month of the Islamic calendar.

Iraq and Iran have massively expanded their trade relations over the past years mainly as a result of deepening political ties between the two neighbors.

Iraq is only second to China in Iran's list of top export destinations with more than \$12 billion worth of goods and services purchased from Iran each year.

Iran has embarked on a series of major transportation projects to facilitate trade with Iraq, including a railway that would connect cities on the southwestern border to the Iraqi port city of Basra.

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

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

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

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

Health protocols are strictly applied on Mehran crossing, having all workers use protective equipment and the area and cargo continually disinfected, according to Latifi.

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

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

Annual elevator production falls to 25,000 units

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of the Iranian Syndicate for Elevator and Escalator Industries said although the country has the capacity for production and commissioning of 80,000 elevators annually, only 25,000 units are currently produced per year due to the stagnation of the construction industry, IRNA reported.



According to Abbas Abrishami, the highest level of elevator production and installation in the country was recorded in the Iranian calendar year of 1392 (March 2013-March 2014) with 70,000 units, which was due to the boom in the construction of Mehr housing units.

Abrishami further mentioned the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's plans for establishing export groups for this sector in order to develop the exports of services and products in the industry, adding that Iran is the third country in the world after the United Kingdom and Canada to launch scientific training centers to provide academic training in this area.

The official noted that the syndicate has 1,800 members, which include 1,200 members in the design and engineering services department, 200 in the production department and another 200 in the field of distribution and sales of parts, while the rest are active in the other areas.

He put the total number of operating elevators in the country at nearly 750,000, from which 250 million people use on a daily basis, adding that the demand for the sale and installation of elevators is 50,000 per year.

Industrial, mining projects worth \$1.1b inaugurated

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — President

Hassan Rouhani, on Thursday, inaugurated four industrial and mining projects worth 48.26 trillion rials (about \$1.15 billion) in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi Province and central Isfahan Province via video conference.

The projects included two iron ore concentrate units in Sangam Iron Ore Complex (SIOC) and an iron pellet production unit in Sanabad Mining and Industrial Development Company (SIMIDCO) in Khorasan Razavi, as well as expansion of a home appliance unit in Isfahan.

As reported, with a production capacity of 5 million tons per year, Sangam iron ore concentrate units are going to create direct and indirect jobs for 3,500 people.

The project was completed with €150 million of foreign investment as well as eight trillion rials (about \$190 million) of domestic investment.

Meanwhile, Sanabad's 2.5-million-ton pellet production unit, with a domestic



investment of 1.9 trillion rials (about \$42.23 million) and 900 million yuan of foreign

investment will also create direct jobs for 280 people.

60% of home appliances in Iran locally-made



ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian deputy industry, mining, and trade minister for industry affairs says Iranian producers have indigenized the knowledge for manufacturing 60 percent of the country's home appliance needs, IRIB reported.

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony of a home appliance production unit on Thursday, Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki said the development of domestic production in the home appliance industry has been very significant so that nearly 70 percent of the small home appliances are currently made by domestic producers.

Underlining the increase in the production of home appliances during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), the official said the production of washing machines has increased by 152 percent from 48,000 units in the previous year to 121,000 units this year.

He further mentioned the upward trend of the production home appliances in the previous calendar year 1398 and noted that despite the restrictions created by the U.S. this industry's production capacity increased 10 percent in 1398 compared to its preceding year.

Based on Industry, Mining and Trade

Ministry data, in the previous year, 1,168,700 refrigerators and freezers were produced in the country, an increase of 7.8 percent compared to the preceding year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019), while domestic companies produced 732,200 washing machines, to register a 32-percent increase year on year.

Also, the production of coolers increased by 6.3 percent to 904,900 units during the said period.

According to the official, the increase in the production of home appliances was achieved in a situation where two international companies (LG and Samsung) which held nearly 80 percent of Iran's market reduced their production in the country and left Iran under U.S. pressures.

South Korea's LG Electronics and Samsung have ended their presence in the Iranian market since the beginning of 2020, abiding by the U.S. pressures for cutting ties with one of their biggest markets.

The departure of the Asian companies from the Iranian market created a new opportunity for domestic companies to, once again, come to the spotlight for showcasing their capabilities and benefit from a market that belongs to them.

Iran's iron ore concentrate production capacity reaches 62m tons



ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's iron ore concentrate production capacity has increased by five million tons (mt) to reach 62 million tons following the inauguration of the country's biggest concentrate unit in northeastern Khorasan Razavi Province, IRIB reported.

The mentioned production unit was inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani via video conference during a ceremony on Thursday.

Speaking in the ceremony, Acting Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Hossein Modares Khiaabani said the mentioned project will be completed in two phases,

each of which will add 2.5 million tons to the country's iron ore concentrate production capacity.

As announced by the ministry, Iran produced 47,306 million tons of iron ore concentrate in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

In its outlook plan for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (2025-2026) Iran has envisaged production of 55 million tons of steel per annum, and to achieve this target the country requires to extract 160 million tons of iron ore concentrate.

‘Strategic planning to optimize investment in industry sector’



ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mohammadreza Ansari, the deputy head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), says the development of a strategy aligned with the country's economic potentials will lead to the optimization of activities and investments in the industry sector.

According to Ansari, despite creation of various development programs over the past few years, industrial development strategies have either not been implemented or haven't fit the country's real needs, ICCIMA portal reported.

“Developing new programs in this area requires that we first determine the areas in which we have the advantage to improve and grow,” Ansari said.

In the absence of such a strategy, we will come to short-term decisions made for the industry sector, while the basis for an industrial development strategy is to consider a set of economic trends related to each other to come up with a long-term program.

Industrial strategy refers to a set of long-term government approaches

that define a framework for the development of the country's industrial sector in relation to the global economy, the official said.

The industry sector, indirectly, affects the allocation of resources to other sectors and this way influences the whole economy; thus, by considering the concept of industrial development as a path or a stage of transition to economic development, industrial strategy can be seen as a roadmap based on which industrial policies covering tools, resources, requirements and executive tactics can be identified, he explained.

Earlier this year, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie had called on the Iranian parliament to support the private sector in preparing a strategic plan for the industry sector.

“One of the main problems in the production sector is the lack of an industrial development strategy,” he said in a parliament open session.

Shafeie announced the readiness of the country's chambers of commerce, guilds and cooperatives for formulating this strategy.

Tire output up 18% in 2 months yr/yr



ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Production of tire in Iran has risen 18 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, IRNA reported.

As reported, 42,453 tons of tires have been produced in the country during the two-month period.

In terms of number, a 21-percent growth was also experienced, as 6,363 million tires of different types were produced in the first two months of the present year.

Having the annual production capacity of 426,000 tons of tire, Iran accounts for

41 percent of tire output in the West Asian region, according to the deputy director of non-metal industries office of Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

Mohsen Safdari has said that 11 tire production units are active in the country creating jobs for 14,500 people.

He said 426,000 tons is the nominal capacity, while the real output is less than this figure as some units are working with 60-70 percent of their capacity.

“Iranian tire industry is dependent on foreign raw materials by 40 percent, so we are self-reliant by 60 percent in this field”, the official announced.

Petchem sector's leap and realization of 'Surge in Production'

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the petrochemical export is the second largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Iran has been highly developing this sector over the recent years as the development of the giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units.

Also, the U.S. sanctioning Iran's oil exports has encouraged more development of the petrochemical industry to boost exports from this sector.

Now, pursuing the third leap in this sector, the country aims to boost its annual petrochemical production capacity to 100 million tons in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2021-March 2022) from the current 66 million tons.

While the leap in the petrochemical output is a big measure to boost Iran's non-oil exports, it also plays a very significant role in the realization of the current Iranian calendar year's motto, which is "Surge in Production".

The already released data and reports indicate that the petrochemical sector has been moving in the way of growth since the year start (March 20), as the output of petrochemical units in the first 50 days of the current year increased by six percent compared to the previous year's same period.

According to Jalal Mirhashemi, National Petrochemical Company (NPC)'s production control manager, the country's petrochemical complexes are producing with a desired capacity, and many complexes have shown production growth since the beginning of the current year.

He said that Iran's petrochemical industry is ready to realize the surge in production intended for the current year, adding that in addition to launching and operating new projects, the existing idle capacity of some complexes will also be used with the measures taken.

■ New projects to be implemented Meanwhile, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has announced that 17 new petrochemical plants are planned to be



inaugurated across the country during the current year.

The new projects worth about \$12 billion are aimed at increasing Iran's annual petrochemical production by 35 percent in the present year, according to NPC Managing Director Behzad Mohammadi.

With several new projects going operational, the country's petrochemical production capacity is going to increase significantly this year, as said by the NPC project director.

"In the year of 'Surge in Production', the petrochemical industry is trying to benefit from the most of the domestic capabilities and with the new petrochemical projects being inaugurated, the production capacity in this industry will increase significantly," Ali-Mohammad Bosaqzadeh has said.

Noting that the balanced development of the petrochemical industry is of particular interest among the NPC strategies for the current year, the official said: "In this regard, the development of downstream petrochemical industries is going to prevent the sale of raw materials and will result in the production of products with higher added value."

He further noted that most of the underway projects in this industry are currently using domestic equipment, licenses, and technological knowledge of the Iranian experts.

■ More investment to be attracted The country is also planning to attract more investment to the petrochemical sector in this year.

As announced last week by the head of Pars Special Energy Economic Zone (PSEEZ) Organization, the organization is determined to boost investment attraction in the zone during the current year.

PSEEZ, which is named Iran's energy hub, is also home to the world's largest gas reserve, South Pars gas field. Many petrochemical units, which receive feedstock from South Pars gas field, being located in PSEEZ have made the zone also the hub of Iran's exports of major non-oil commodities that are gas condensate and petrochemicals.

Iran is also planning for making an investment of 44 trillion rials (about \$1.47 billion) for the construction of four petrochemical parks in the country, which contribute significantly to the petrochemical output growth.

■ Technical knowledge to be improved

As strengthening domestic production and indigenizing the knowledge and technology for production of the products and equipment that Iran imports from other countries has become one of the major programs that the country is pursuing in recent years, the

National Petrochemical Company has the elevation of technology on its agenda especially in this year which is the year for a surge in production.

During a recent interview, the NPC managing director put emphasis on the necessity of elevating technical knowledge in the petrochemical industry, and said, "We should promote technical knowledge in a way to move toward more diversity in production and also producing products with higher value-added."

To materialize the goal of indigenizing the production of the oil industry's equipment, the country's Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC) has also played a very significant role in collaborating with the knowledge-based companies for working on innovative research projects for producing various equipment and base-products needed in the industry.

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

However, catalysts are very expensive substances and currently, the country is spending millions of dollars every year on importing such products into the country, producing such catalysts inside the country would make a huge difference in the profitability rate of the petrochemical plants.

Iranian petrochemical industry is currently using 40 different types of catalysts which cost the industry \$260 million annually.

"Currently, the knowledge for producing 16 of the mentioned 40 types has been indigenized which would save the country \$105 million every year," Ali Pajouhan said, adding, "We plan to produce over \$100m worth of petrochemical catalysts annually, by the end of the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (March 20, 2022)."

Taking all the above-mentioned approaches and programs into consideration, it is obvious that the petrochemical sector is playing an undeniable vital role in nullifying the U.S. unilateral sanctions against the country, while it also plays a great part in realizing the slogan of "Surge in Production and making Iran self-reliance."

NPC to build propylene storages in north-central Iran

ENERGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Following a plan for expanding Iran's petrochemical industry, National Petrochemical Company (NPC) is going to construct propylene storage tanks near Damghan city in north-central Semnan province, IRIB reported.

As reported, NPC Managing Director Behzad Mohammadi, accompanied by a group of officials from the province, visited the site considered for the project on Thursday.

During the visit, Mohammadi emphasized that access to communication routes such as railways is a necessity for the implementation of such projects.

"The construction of these storage facilities is a base for the development of the petrochemical industry's leading projects, and in this regard, all available capacities must be used to achieve a balanced development of the industry," he said.

Earlier this month, Mohammadi had said that the capacity of the country's propylene production has increased to 950,000 tons, however, the demand for the product in the country is more than this figure and plans are underway to increase the figure.

"With the PVM method, the methanol



produced by the country's methanol production units can be converted to propylene, and in this way, the production capacity of propylene can be increased," he added.

Iran has been facing a shortage of propylene for years. The country's propylene

production is set to rise to four percent of its total petrochemical production in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Based on NPC data, currently there is a shortage of 175,000 tons of this product in

the country, Shana has reported.

In the calendar year of 1404, the country's propylene production is set to reach 1.95 million tons, however, Iran will be still facing an annual shortage of about 700,000 tons by then.

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

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

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

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

Oil demand recovery under spotlight as lockdowns ease

Optimism over a swift and steady economic rebound from crushing pandemic lockdowns have helped global oil prices stage a dizzying rebound from near two-decade lows in April.

Nearly all the oil demand metrics have been encouraging so far. After bottoming out in early to mid-April, global economic indicators are improving with the exception of aviation activity which remains well below seasonal norms.

Implied driving activity is already well above pre-crisis levels in both the U.S. and Germany, Europe's biggest economy and user of fuels.

In the week to June 5 alone, the U.S. saw a surge in refined product demand to 17.57 million bpd, the strongest since the week ended March 27 when the first statewide lockdowns went into effect.

Market consensus has formed around an expected global oil demand slump of around 8-9 million bpd this year after a fifth, or some 20 million bpd, of demand, was wiped out by lockdowns in April.

But the so-called V-shaped recovery path —where global oil demand will continue to rise steadily to snap back to its previous trajectory by year-end —is being called into question.

■ Demand patterns

One major uncertainty over oil's recovery is how much of the world's upended work and social behavior partners during the crisis stick even after lockdowns are lifted.

On June 9, the U.S. Energy Information Administration cut its forecast for 2021 U.S. oil demand for a second time, forecasting demand will be 1.26 million bpd lower than its pre-lockdown

baseline.

Standard Chartered is even more bearish, predicting slow recoveries in jet fuel demand and diesel demand will hobble the U.S. rebound next year.

"We think that much of the market is ignoring the downside risks to demand arising from both economic weakness and permanent changes in patterns of energy use brought on by COVID-19," the bank's energy analyst Emily Ashford said in a note.

Fears that the pandemic could inflict lasting damage on oil demand due to less commuting, fewer business trips and hard-wired adoption of social distancing, are hard to gauge. For now, at least, most market watchers feel it is still too early to predict how behavior patterns will impact demand.

Research suggests that overall energy savings from mass home-working are likely to be limited, and in many cases could be non-existent, according to The World Economic Forum.

■ Second-wave concerns

The other key variable in current demand recovery forecasts is the potential for second-wave of infections —and resulting return to lockdowns—if the current curbs are lifted too quickly.

Goldman Sachs this week raised its forecast for Brent crude by \$6/b for the second half of 2020 to \$45/b on stronger recovery data but noted risks from a bounce in global infection rates.

"The positive start to reopening does not resolve the uncertainties about a potential second wave of infections or of a more difficult recovery beyond the easier gains of the first few months," the bank said.

While there are no signs yet that ongoing efforts to loosen

curbs on mobility and business activity are fueling new cases in Europe and the U.S., elsewhere moves to contain the coronavirus are more mixed.

In some emerging economies of Latin America and South Asia, single-day coronavirus infection rates continue to spike.

India saw the highest single-day spike of 10,000 new cases on June 7 while Indonesia logged almost 1,000 new cases on June 6, a new single-day high for the country.

In Brazil, the situation has continued to worsen with the country's most populous state Sao Paulo reporting a record number of COVID-19 deaths for the second day running on June 10. Chile, meanwhile, still has the highest infection rate in South America.

■ Jet lag

Even under the default, V-shaped demand scenario, a uniform return to pre-crisis demand levels is far from assured with large potential disparities between geographic and specific fuel markets.

According to forecasts by S&P Global Platts Analytics, Western Europe is set to feel the most pain in terms of oil demand impact with 13% of its oil consumption set to disappear in 2020.

The U.S., however, is set for the biggest loss in terms of volumes with 2.4 million bpd impacted, or 29% of the global total, according to the outlook.

In China, where the lockdown response was initially viewed as extreme, oil demand may fall just 340,000 bpd this year, according to Platts Analytics, helped by government incentives to limit fuel price falls which created an import binge during May.

PSEEZ sets up industrial waste disposal unit

ENERGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Pars Special Energy Economic Zone (PSEEZ) Organization established a solid industrial waste disposal unit with the capacity of 100,000 tons, Shana reported.

During the opening ceremony of the Khakchal Landfill Site, the head of the organization's HSE unit said the 11-hectare project was designed in the three phases: waste landfill, recycling unit and waste incineration.

Bahram Dashti-Nejad said that the landfill was designed based on the geographical topography of the region on a sloping surface with an investment of IRR. 200 billion by the private sector, creating jobs for 150 people indirectly.



South Pars industrial and petrochemical units are facing limitations in terms of waste disposal standards, in such a way that some of them have more than a thousand tons of waste depot, which will be curbed by implementation of this project, the official argued.

"If the capacity increases, it will be possible to provide services to the whole province of Bushehr," he said.

Dashti-Nejad stated: "This industrial solid waste landfill is one of the most special units in terms of attention to the environment and rural and urban areas, and with three layers of GCL, washed sand and GEO TEXTILE, which is considered a waste separator, it is practically impossible for the waste to leak leachate to the environment."

Last week, the newly head of PSEEZ Organization said the organization is determined to boost investment attraction in the zone during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

"This year we are determined to attract investment in various industrial fields, fortunately many domestic industries are interested in presence and investment in the zone," Iraj Khoramdel said.

With more investment attracted in the South Pars projects, we will see a significant leap both in terms of job creation and in terms of production and national wealth," he added.

PSEEZ, which is named Iran's energy hub, is also home to the world's largest gas reserve, South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. The zone is the hub of Iran's exports of major non-oil commodities that are gas condensate and petrochemicals.

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

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

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

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

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

OPEC+ cuts effective in reducing oil market volatility

The study, OPEC's Pursuit of Market Stability, was conducted by the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) and published by the International Association of Energy Economics, oilprice.com reported.



The cartel's performance between 2001 and 2014—three years before the advent of OPEC+ as opposed to just OPEC, was still robust, reduced oil volatility by as much as 50 percent, and at least 25 percent. Further quantifying the group's actions, the study found that OPEC's efforts resulted in an average \$175 billion annual increase in global GDP.

By country, those economic benefits are distributed \$39.4 billion to the United States, \$30.9 billion to China, \$59.4 billion to the European Union, and \$45.6 billion to everywhere else.

Our counterfactual analysis based on monthly data indicates that OPEC, in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, has succeeded to a limited but important degree in its attempt to employ spare capacity to offset shocks and stabilize the price of oil," the report's executive summary reads in part.

The study went beyond quantifying OPEC + 's performance over the years. It also detailed the inelasticity of oil demand, which requires large price movements to shore up small gaps in the market between supply and demand.

The report finds that shale oil has a "limited impact" on the elasticity of the demand for OPEC oil since it is such a small fraction of non-OPEC supply.

"Therefore, the development of shale oil has not significantly reduced the value of OPEC's buffer. Our results show that OPEC's spare capacity, as an institutional mechanism, plays a critical role in the well-functioning of the oil market, for the benefit of the global economy."

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

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

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Social justice vs. social distancing

By Mahmood Monshipouri

The ongoing unrest and mass protests over the death of George Floyd, amid the backdrop of a still-raging COVID-19 pandemic, have raised a question about the tradeoff between social distancing and social justice.

The unrest, which has drawn widely diverse participants, including energetic and diverse cohorts of young white allies, unseen in the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, are likely to continue well into the future. It is now widely acknowledged that the effects of the death of Floyd will linger long after the rallies and protests have ended.

At the same time, the lives of many people in the United States and around the world have been devastatingly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. For racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, the outcome has been consequential as the coronavirus pandemic has adversely and disproportionately impacted black and Latinx communities. The unemployment rate among African-Americans has doubled and that of Hispanic minorities tripled, with the American middle class trapped by fears of financial instability and growing uncertainty.

Clearly, Mr. Floyd's death has spurred a genuine debate in America about what needs to be done about systemic discrimination and racial injustice. Dramatically, social distancing has taken a backseat to matters relating to social justice, which have re-arisen to assume a renewed immediacy.

While sooner or later, as Roxane Gay aptly notes in The New York Times (May 31, 2020), a vaccine will be created to effectively manage the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, a cure for white supremacy and police brutality is in most ways more complex and difficult.

The protests across the United States and the globe reflect and reinforce deeper problems about justice and accountability. Many Americans are rightly concerned about the lack of professionalism and transparency on the part of the police, especially regarding the treatment of African Americans.

Police departments across the country must be held to a new standard of accountability for ongoing discrimination and racial oppression. Studies have shown that the United States has one of the highest poverty rates in the developed world, with one in six Americans

While sooner or later, as Roxane Gay aptly notes in The New York Times (May 31, 2020), a vaccine will be created to effectively manage the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, a cure for white supremacy and police brutality is in most ways more complex and difficult.



living below the poverty line.

The sanctity of life—the cornerstone of fundamental human rights—has given a new urgency and impetus to the slogan: “Black Lives Matter.” Crucial to this movement is the right to dissent, which has taken precedence over social distancing, protesting the inherent biases of the US justice system.

While the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be blamed on any particular individual, group, organization, or political system, the disturbing images of police responses and the violence perpetrated against Mr. Floyd caught on bystanders' smartphones have placed the issue of accountability front

and center in the debate over racial injustice.

It is also worth noting that while the coronavirus has been and continues to be invisible, the images of Mr. Floyd's death have gone viral on social and broadcast media. The high visibility of this tragic incident has both alarmed and animated the consciousness of the vast majority of the American people.

The public outrage demonstrated on the streets of major US cities has been intensified by the Trump administration's woefully inadequate and inappropriate response. Instead of healing the wounds of racism and police brutality, Trump has encouraged the militarization of crackdowns and the use of

Instead of healing the wounds of racism and police brutality, Trump has encouraged the militarization of crackdowns and the use of force against protesters in the name of law and order.

force against protesters in the name of law and order.

The crackdowns against peaceful protesters has sent the wrong message to the protesters both in the United States and the rest of the world, as these events have been reminiscent of faraway lands where authoritarian and repressive regimes have for centuries relied on brutal mechanisms of control and suppression.

To characterize the protesters as looters, anarchists, and trouble-makers as a justification to evoke the National Guard to suppress these genuine and spontaneous waves of protests has fundamentally damaged the Trump administration's image—both domestically and from an international standpoint.

What are we to make of this episode? And how can the playing field of racial injustice be leveled? Some observers have reminded us that the United States left the New Deal unfinished and neglected to safeguard the security of all sectors of American society and that now more than ever investment is needed in the American people.

The protesters seek a holistic agenda that addresses these deeply rooted inequalities, including vast educational reform, economic justice packages and law enforcement reform. Yet, the lack of bipartisanship in the US Senate seems appalling given that the Senate has failed to even pass an anti-lynching bill, with the Republican majority blocking the move. As the cases of coronavirus spike around the world amidst nationwide and global protests, the importance of showing responsible behavior, which entails wearing masks and gloves while also keeping the necessary distance from others, cannot be stressed enough.

In the meantime, the commitment to reforming law enforcement and achieving economic justice requires an ongoing process of forging relationships based on trust, transparency, credibility, and accountability with marginalized individuals as well as with other groups of people.

In the short term, and until that commitment is seriously made and rigorously pursued, however, the only hope for change lies in suffrage. Voting in fair and free elections remains the most empowering tool at the disposal of the economic and social underclass.

(Source: The Berkeley Blog)

Floyd murder falls within serial killings of the blacks: Philosopher Lingis

1 → ■ Given that the November elections, it seems that Trump feels that racist rhetoric can attract those whites who have racial tendencies. What is your assessment?



A: A large part of Trump supporters are people who lost good jobs in manufacture as a result of globalization. In the 2016 election Trump blamed Mexicans and Chinese who were “stealing American jobs.” He depicted Mexicans as lawless and without morals. Now he accuses the Chinese of deliberately creating the coronavirus or in any case allowing it to spread to destroy the American economy. He is blaming the American African-Americans who are protesting police brutality for destroying buildings and property. Will enough people accept this to ensure his reelection? As of now it looks problematic; a Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 64 percent of Americans sympathize with “people who are out protesting right now” compared to 27 percent who were not, while 9 percent are unsure.

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

A: An over-complex question that would require a long discussion. I will just make two observations.

From ancient times great cities were multicultural—Kassite Babylonia, Rome, Persepolis, Qosqo, Palmyra, Istanbul. Modern cities are multicultural—Amsterdam, Los Angeles, New York City, Paris, São Paulo, San Francisco, Singapore. 140 languages are spoken in Toronto, 200 in London, 250 in Sydney. They are stable, innovative, and prosperous. Tensions that arise between groups have to be resolved locally.

My city, Baltimore, has lost a great deal of its manufacturing industries and consequently population; from 950,000 in 1950 to 660,000 today. There are 18,000 empty buildings in the city. At her inauguration Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced a policy to settle 20,000 families in the city in the next four years. She welcomed refugees and immigrants from Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Nepal, and set up a set of organizations with money to help them find housing and work, to learn English and computers, receive medical care. She emphasized all that they will bring to our city: restaurants with food from many lands, new ways to think, more languages and religions, new music and festivities.

Russia coronavirus cases top 511,000

Russia, the country with the world's third-largest coronavirus outbreak, passed the symbolic milestone of 511,000 confirmed cases Thursday, after the capital lifted tight lockdown restrictions this week.

The latest figures took the country's total to 511,420 cases, after 8,779 new cases were recorded in the last day, a government website said.

According to AFP, the most cases were reported in the two largest cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg and their surrounding areas.

The capital confirmed 1,436 new cases Thursday as the numbers of new infections have significantly fallen this week.

Moscow lifted restrictions including compulsory travel passes Tuesday, a move welcomed by residents who rushed out to enjoy the streets and parks.

Many other regions are lifting lockdown restrictions as Russia is preparing to hold a July 1 national vote despite the pandemic.

President Vladimir Putin is seeking public backing for constitutional amendments that would allow him to stay on at the Kremlin beyond his current term.

Russia has confirmed a total of 6,532 COVID-19 deaths, a far lower mortality rate than in other countries with large outbreaks.

Critics have cast doubt on the low official mortality rate and accused authorities of under-reporting to play down the scale of the crisis.

Russia attributes its lower virus death figures to mass testing which has identified many cases with mild or no coronavirus symptoms.

The health ministry is now adjusting how it reports numbers to include all deaths believed to be related to the virus even if the direct cause of death was another condition or the patient tested negative.

Moscow reported Wednesday that it saw 5,260 such deaths in May.

Former finance minister Alexei Kudrin, a liberal politician known for his outspoken comments, said Russia's health system requires more funds and modernization in many regions.

“Medicine is significantly underfunded even according to the current norms and also it needs a serious overhaul,” Kudrin, who heads the Audit Chamber that examines government spending, said in an interview with TASS state news agency.

“We will carry out a check and show these figures,” he added. Nevertheless the economist said Russia “is not doing a bad job with the pandemic,” crediting the role of the military, which has built emergency facilities.

Netanyahu's latest land grab

1 → In political as in scientific endeavor, we value a simple theory which can explain a huge amount, ideally all, of the key data. When we look at Israel/Palestine, the entire history since 1897 can be understood by seeing Zionism as a colonial project in alliance with a key European power to secure its interests in the region, and aiming at the seizure of the land and the expulsion of the native Palestinians.

Britain's template for this particular colonial enterprise was in many ways its own oldest colony, Ireland; Britain promoted settlement there by Scottish and English farmers under British military protection. They seized the best land from the native Irish and violently oppressed them. This naturally generated fierce resistance from the natives which the incoming settlers could only deal with in alliance with the colonial superpower, Britain.

Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British governor of conquered Jerusalem made clear the connection and the motivation behind the infamous Balfour declaration, i.e. to secure for Britain a “little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism”.

After World War II the Zionist leadership recognized that the USA had emerged from that war greatly strengthened while Britain had been bankrupted and subordinated to the new world super power, the USA.

They promptly switched patrons in order to secure political protection and support for the planned ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians, which they carried out in 1947-48.

Israel also sees an opportunity from the alliances it is forging informally with Saudi Arabia, the (Persian) Gulf emirates, and its partner in enforcing the siege of Gaza, the Egyptian dictatorship.

By every reputable measure Israel is already a pariah regime in the eyes of world public opinion, with its support among American Jews ebbing away as the racism and apartheid of that regime becomes official and drives young Jews into active opposition to Israeli Apartheid.

No massive rise of the Black Lives Matter movement across the USA and around the world presents yet another crisis in Zion support for the BLM movement has embraced the cause of Palestine as a core component of opposition to the racism that blights American and all Western societies.

At the same time Netanyahu has pinned Israel's political support firmly to the strange creature who tweets from Washington and who is generating loathing and resistance across the USA. His likely disgrace will strengthen elite political hostility in the U.S. towards Israel.

Sometimes Israel's seizure of Palestinian land proceeds

relatively slowly but sometimes that racist process speeds up a direction of travel, however, is one way. Similarly all of Palestine needs to be liberated from Zionism before freedom can be glimpsed, which means building up international resistance to the racist system which Israel enforces across the whole area it controls.

Israel recognizes nothing except strength; what force can make Israel abandon its plans to seize more land and lock stateless Palestinians in more open prisons surrounded by Israeli soldiers and armed settlers? In the short term it is difficult to see but in the long term the international popular anger at Israeli ethnic cleansing must find a way to boycott and isolate the apartheid regime. Currently, the main concern of Israel is that worldwide anger at its crimes will continue to strengthen the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment [as] and Sanctions). This movement has never grown by gradual baby steps but has taken giant steps following Israel's giant crimes, massacres in Gaza or the killing of the Mavi Marmara passengers. Will this latest violation of Palestinian rights have the same results?

Mick Napier is a founder member of Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, a campaigner against the crimes of the UK government, and a commentator on current affairs with specific reference to the Palestine and West Asia.

EU human rights court rebukes France over fines for BDS activists

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled that French judges were wrong to take penal action against members of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, who staged demonstrations against Israeli-made products, stating the protests did not amount to incitement to discrimination.

On Thursday, Europe's top rights court ruled that the demonstrations by about a dozen activists from “Collectif Palestine 68” group – a local offshoot of the BDS movement – on two occasions in 2009 and 2010 outside a supermarket near Mulhouse, eastern France, could not be considered a hate crime.

During the protests, the activists displayed products made in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and urged clients not to buy them.

The Strasbourg-based ECHR said the French judges should have taken into account the fact that “the applicants had not been convicted of making racist or anti-Semitic remarks or of inciting hatred or violence.”

The court further noted in its ruling that political speech is by nature controversial, but remains a legitimate public interest, “provided that it did not cross the line and turn into a call for violence, hatred or intolerance.”

ECHR also ordered French authorities to pay each of the applicants 7,380 euros (\$8,383) in damages, and a further 20,000 euros (\$22,720) to jointly cover legal expenses.

The activists were initially cleared of the charges after their arrests, arguing at the



time they had a right to call to boycott Israel as part of the freedom of speech.

However, an appeals court overturned the ruling and found them guilty of inciting people to discriminate against products from Israel.

The verdict prompted the demonstrators to appeal to the European court in 2010.

Amnesty International has hailed the ruling by Europe's top rights court.

“Today's landmark decision sets a significant precedent that should stop the misuse of anti-discrimination laws to target activists campaigning against human rights violations perpetrated by Israel against

Palestinians,” Marco Perolini of Amnesty France said in a statement.

The BDS movement was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations pushing for “various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law.”

Thousands of volunteers, trade unions, NGOs, academic and business societies, as well as cultural figures worldwide have joined the boycott campaign to help promote the Palestinian cause.

■ PLO urges intl. coalition to confront Israel annexation plans

The secretary general of the Palestine

Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee has called for the formation of an international coalition to confront the Israeli regime's plans to annex large areas of the occupied West Bank.

“The formation of the international coalition must emanate from an international conference which includes all of world countries under the United Nations auspices to support the Palestinian people and reject the Occupation's aggressive measures against the Palestinian people including settlement, Judaization, blockade and killings that contradict all international conventions and norms,” Saeb Erekat told Arabic-language al-Mugtama news magazine.

Erekat added that the Palestinian Authority has been leading intensive diplomatic efforts to mobilize international support against the looming Israeli move, stressing that the recognition of a Palestinian state is the first step towards preventing Israel from seizing nearly 33 percent of the West Bank.

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

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

Annual handicraft exports fetches Iran \$523m

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19), tourism minister has said.

Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, IRNA quoted Ali-Asghar Mounesan as saying on Tuesday.



Back in May, deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian noted that due to the outbreak of coronavirus, suitcase exports of handicrafts were completely stopped since the month of Esfand (the last month of the year), and official exports of handicrafts experienced a steep decline."

Talking on the significance of handicrafts in the country, she noted, "Iran globally ranks first in terms of having the topmost number of world cities [and villages] of handicrafts," Mahmoudian said.

"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.

Iran's handicrafts exports reached \$289 million in the year 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, based on data released by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones were exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Job creation plan launched for craftspeople in South Khorasan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Management and Planning Organization's head Mohammad Baqer Nobakht and South Khorasan province's governor general Mohammad Sadeq Motamedian signed a memorandum of understanding on Thursday, aiming to create 3,000 jobs for craftspeople in the province by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2021).



A total budget of 250 billion rials (around \$6 million) is considered to be allocated for creating job opportunities as well as promoting the position of handicrafts in the province, CHTN reported.

Giving loans to the craftspeople and helping them to reach global markets and exporting their products are also covered in this memorandum.

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.

Museum of Art and Anthropology opens in Najafabad

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Museum of Art and Anthropology was inaugurated in Najafabad, central Isfahan province, CHTN reported on Thursday.

The Mehrparvar Mansion, which was restored last year, has turned into the museum, with the aim of introducing the rich history and culture of the city, provincial tourism chief Alireza Habibi announced.



A budget of 20 billion rials (about \$500,000) was allocated to the restoration and preparation of the museum, which displays 400 historical relics from different eras, he added.

The museum will also display some of centuries-old handicrafts, which are being forgotten due to the changes in People's lifestyles, he noted.

The Mehrparvar Mansion, which was built in late Qajar era (1789–1925) and early Pahlavi period (1925-1979), is one of the spectacular historical buildings of Najafabad.

Located in west of Isfahan province, Najafabad was built during the Safavid-era (1501–1736). The city is famous for its historical dovescotes and Sheikh Bahai fort with seven dovescotes is one of the city's popular tourist attractions.

Discovery of bizarre tomb offers clues to ancient life in Isfahan

→ 1 we assumed that we should reach other ones until yesterday (on June 11) we could discover another one of these tombs embedded in a giant earthen jar."

The archaeologist is confident that further excavations will lead to the unearthing of other examples of this type of burial places, the report said.

"The discovery of the second jar-shaped burial place in the eastern part of Tepe Ashraf proves to the archaeological hill we may have encountered a Parthian cemetery."

Over the past couple of days, the team has uncovered ancient stone well estimating to date back to the time of Sassanids.

Some clay works from Seljuk and Buyid dynasties have also been found while workers were digging the ground for water piping of the six-meter well.

Researchers say the square stone well is historically very valuable in terms of its physical shape and form. The well is dug among the rocks and is six meters deep.

"Excavations on Tepe Ashraf began in 2010 and lasted for six seasons. Now, with the operation to save the historical works of the two hills of Jey and Ashraf, important objects were found that could help us in the excavations of the seventh season."

Jafari-Zand further noted that the pottery found in the projects is amazingly undamaged and they can help a lot to say the exact age of the ancient site of Ashraf and Jey. The artifacts found in this area belong mostly to pre-Islamic periods up to the 5th century AH, he reiterated.

According to this archaeologist, the only place where archaeological excavations have been carried out in Isfahan in the past was the Atigh Grand Mosque, where only two or three pieces from the Sassanid era had been identified, and the rest were from the Islamic period.

Back in 2010, Jafari-Zand announced that his team had found evidence at the site suggesting that the Sassanid site had also been used during the Buyid dynasty (945–1055). "We stumbled upon a reconstructed part in the ruins of the castle, which suggests that the structure had been used during the Buyid dynasty."

"The bricks used in the rebuilt part are very similar to bricks used in the construction of the Shahrestan Bridge and the Isfahan Congregational Mosque, which date to the Buyid era," he added.

The archaeologists believe that their excavations at the mound, which is located in the urban area of the city, will be helpful in the development of archaeological



studies in the ancient city.

"Isfahan is a city, which has never died over the history... and the old Isfahan is beneath the modern city. Thus, normally, archaeological excavation is impossible in the city," according to Jafari-Zand who believes that the mound keeps a part of the history of Isfahan and Iran in its heart.

The mound has seriously been damaged on the northern side by the construction of a street. Besides, unscientific excavations carried out by several archaeology interns in 1987 disturbed the historical strata in a part of the site.

Soaked in a rich history, Isfahan was once a crossroad of international trade and diplomacy in Iran during the 16th and 17th centuries, and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. Isfahan is filled with architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

It has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to seeing the whole world.

Coronavirus causes \$14.2m damage to Iran's museums

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iranian museums and historical sites have taken 600 billion rials (about \$14.2 million) hit from the coronavirus outbreak over the previous months.

Although the museums and other tourist sites have reopened their doors to the public gradually as restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic have been relaxed, they faced a huge loss due to the closure, ILNA quoted Mohammadreza Kargar, the director of museums and historical properties at the tourism ministry, as saying on Friday.

However, the number of visitors during the past two weeks is not as much as we expected, he added.

Considering the fact that there are no foreign tourists in the country, the number

of foreign tourists visiting museums is zero and the domestic visitors are only 20 percent of the number of the visitors in same period of time in the past year, he stated.

The country closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak back in February.

During the Iranian New Year (Noruz) holidays in late March, some museums and tourist sites arranged online visits and virtual tours for the people who were in-home quarantine.

The virtual tours were extended for the following months and a number of people explored centuries-old objects at museums as well as tourist attractions across the country.



No major harm to Fars historical sites by quakes



TOURISM **TEHRAN** – No serious damage was inflicted

on historical sites across the southern Fars province as two medium-sized quakes struck the province earlier this week, provincial tourism chief has said.

The province was hit by two earthquakes of magnitude 5.1 and 5.7 on Tuesday. The quakes took place near Beyram in Larestan county, south of the province.

A group of assessors and cultural heritage experts were dispatched to the southern parts of the province after the quakes to investigate possible damages. Mosayyeb Amiri said, CHTN reported on Friday.

Investigations revealed some minor harm and cracks on Beyram Jame Mosque, Safieddin Mosque, Meymun Castle, Shah Zandu Holly Shrine, and

Alipur and Azimi martyrs mansions, he added.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars, or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights including Hafezieh (mausoleum of Hafez), the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, and Sadi mausoleum. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Skiing without snow: forest ski resort to open in northwest Iran



TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Forest skiing will be added to charms of touristic Ardebil province in northwest Iran this year.

"The first phase of the country's first forest ski slope will be operational in Ardebil this winter," Ardebil's Governor-General Akbar Behnamjou said on Thursday, CHTN reported.

"The required equipment and gears for launching this important tourism complex has been purchased and imported into the country and will be installed soon."

"Increasing the longevity of travels is one of the important programs for the prosperity of the tourism industry in the province."

Reclining on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-

known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition, it is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble. The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardebil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

Iran has long been an international destination for avid powder chasers during winter, while - in total contrast - its arid and semi-arid climate reaches sweltering levels in summer. Maybe not the first that comes to mind, snow-capped mountains above Tehran are home to some of the world's best ski resorts where powder hounds can enjoy famous Iranian hospitality.

World Day Against Child Labor: socio-cultural, economic growth a must

1 → Some of the children who had criminal backgrounds cannot also have a decent career, may get involved in illegal activities. Besides, they may not develop good social skills and are much more likely to suffer from depression, drug addictions, and identity difficulties.

On the other hand, some children work seasonally for different reasons. For example, they may work in summers to learn a skill, help their families, and save money to be financially independent or experienced.

Many of the villagers also ask their children to join them in farming, livestock breeding, and gardening, but not all of them are poor, but there has long been a concept among Iranians that work empowers the youth, and children were working limited hours with their families.

There was a plan called Ostad-Shagerdi (literally meaning teacher and student), through which children were sent to a skilled person to be trained professionally, it was much more like a bond between the teacher and student and the child was not paid.

This can be an opportunity for those aged 15-18 whose job is insecure. For example, during my previous career in the Welfare Organization, we have implemented an Ostad-Shagerdi plan in Kermanshah province, through which those children worked 4 hours a day and trained for 4 hours to help them both learn a skill and earn income.

We had three courses of training, including, life skills, vocational training and literacy, and healthcare services were provided to them free of charge, in addition to a shelter. After a while, they could live on their own and make a living.

We implemented a plan in several provinces across the country that these children were introduced to the grocery stores in each neighborhood and the grocer was a kind of supporter to the child to prevent them from being subject to any violence while working.

■ 83-87% of working children financially struggling

Referring to the leading causes of child labor in the country, he noted that the current causes of child labor in the country are similar to its global causes, which are economic and financial issues.

The inefficient social security system is another reason behind child labor. If the coverage of social security expands and becomes stronger, a significant part of this phenomenon will decrease.

Some 83-87 percent of working children are those financially-struggling families.

Currently, 5-6 million people (that are legally eligible for a living allowance) are



under the coverage of the Welfare Organization and Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and are receiving subsidies, but the pension does not cover their living expenses.

Although the financial burden is indeed heavy for the government, we missed the capacity to expand social support, which might have been affected by various factors, such as U.S. sanctions, improper management, etc.

Now that the country's economy is not in good condition, the population in need of continued support is growing, and this is worrisome.

Working children are consequences of inefficient economic and social security systems.

■ No law deficiencies on prevention of child labor

Different articles of the Constitution, the law on the Comprehensive Welfare and Social Security Organizational Structure, and Law on Maintenance of Women and Orphaned Children are all consisted of child labor prevention and protection of these children.

There are no law deficiencies in the country, even undocumented foreign nationals should be protected based on the law.

What makes the situation fragile is mostly lack of financial resources to enforce the law properly.

Even the law on the protection of the rights of the child, passed by the Guardian Council a few days ago, defines the protection for working children, banning economic exploitation, unfavorable working conditions, and long work.

■ Economic condition a factor to blame

Although the exact number of working children in the country is not known, what can be said is that the population has increased. When the economy gets weaker, we have to expect more phenomena like child labor, so that we need to take measures in this regard.

■ Education needed in places where children work

Referring to the barriers to organizing working children, he said that lack of suitable job opportunities for children of working age and lack of skill is the main reason behind this.

"We cannot stop the child from working and keep them off the street, but we can reduce the burden of this problem; sometimes streets are even safer for these kids because working for gangs and other illegal activities is much more dangerous," he stated.

As all of these types of work interfere with a child's education, most children have neither the time nor the energy, to attend school,

so, education must be transferred to places where children work.

■ Socio-cultural capacities, cross-sectoral co-op are key factors

Although the main factor to help reduce these phenomena is cross-sectoral cooperation with all the related bodies and officials in attendance, socio-cultural capacities should be used for economic growth and protecting these children as our social capital.

"We need to create a sense of responsibility in all members of society to be able to take effective steps in this regard using the capacities of NGOs and volunteers."

Some countries like India worked well on this issue without spending a big sum of money but by strengthening a sense of responsibility in the society which needs to be shared among other countries dealing with the same issue, he noted.

Good social capital can lead to various growth in a society, like promoting ethics, producing quality goods, and feeling responsible for whatever happens in society.

In the current situation that preventing children from working is difficult, if not impossible, it is essential to provide them with safe work, education and a suitable work environment, observing their right and reduce their presence in the street.

It is noteworthy to say that social issues are not political and should be separated from politics, but also should be prioritized and taken into consideration more seriously.

■ World Day Against Child Labor

The World Day Against Child Labour is an International Labour Organization (ILO)-sanctioned holiday first launched in 2002, aiming to raise awareness and activism to prevent child labor. It was spurred by ratifications of ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment and ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labor.

The World Day Against Child Labour, which is held every year on June 12, is intended to foster the worldwide movement against child labor in any of its forms.

World Day Against Child Labour 2020 focuses on the impact of the crisis on child labor. The COVID-19 health pandemic and the resulting economic and labor market shock are having a huge impact on people's lives and livelihoods. Unfortunately, children are often the first to suffer. The crisis can push millions of vulnerable children into child labor.

Already, there are an estimated 152 million children in child labor, 72 million of which are in hazardous work. These children are now at even greater risk of facing circumstances that are even more difficult and working longer hours.

Coronavirus: Iran rings alarm bell as adherence to health protocols drops

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — An official with the Iranian health ministry has warned that observing health protocols and social distancing rules against the coronavirus has drastically fell in the country over the past couple of weeks.

"Observing health protocols and implementing social distancing rules were at a normal level by 27th of Khordad (May 16). At that time, over 77.57 percent of people observed the protocols," ISCA quoted Mohsen Farhadi as saying on Wednesday.

But unfortunately, statistics show that the figure has sharply declined to 22.66 percent, he lamented.

The situation in Tehran is alarming as the figure has decreased from 56 percent to 10.54 percent, he noted.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 182,545 on Friday, of whom 8,659 have died and 144,649 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,369 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 75 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Philanthropists support 28,000 orphans, deprived children

Iranian benefactors have made cash and kind contributions from the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (starting on May 6) to help 28,000 children who are either orphaned or whose parents are financially struggling, deputy director of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has announced.

There are currently 600,000 philanthropists who support orphaned children as well as children living in families in financial distress, IRNA quoted Alireza Asgarian as saying on Wednesday.

The foundation also intends to build housing units for families who cannot afford to rent houses, he added.

مردم ۲۸ هزار کودک بی سرپرست را تحت حمایت قرار دادند

معاون توسعه مشارکت‌های مردمی کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) گفت: خیرین و نیکوکاران کشور از ابتدای ماه مبارک رمضان تاکنون ۲۸ هزار کودک بی‌سرپرست را تحت حمایت‌های مالی و غیرمالی خود قرار دادند.

علیرضا عسگریان روز چهارشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار اجتماعی ایرنا افزود: ۶۰۰ هزار حامی در سطح کشور در یاری‌رسانی به ایتام و فرزندان محسنین با کمیته امداد همکاری دارند.

عسگریان اظهار داشت: ساخت مسکن برای خانواده‌های تحت پوشش کمیته امداد از دیگر برنامه‌های اجرایی و دارای اولویت کاری این نهاد در سال جاری است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"para-"

■ Meaning: on the side of, beside

■ For example: *Paranoia* is an instinct or thought process which is believed to be heavily influenced by anxiety.

PHRASAL VERB

Perk something/someone up

■ Meaning: to make something or someone more active, cheerful or interesting

■ For example: She seemed kind of tired, but she perked up when Helen came over.

IDIOM

Cut to the quick

■ Explanation: If you cut someone to the quick, you hurt their feelings or offend them deeply

■ For example: Alan was cut to the quick when Joe expressed doubt about his sincerity.

5 Iranian universities among world's top 1,000 in QS rankings

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Five Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top 1,000 universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.



QS is the world's leading provider of services, analytics, and insight to the global higher education sector, whose mission is to enable motivated people anywhere in the world to fulfill their potential through educational achievement, international mobility, and career development.

The QS World University Rankings portfolio, inaugurated in 2004, has grown to become the world's most popular source of comparative data about university performance.

Some 1,000 of the world's top universities are ranked using six different indicators to compile QS World University Rankings 2021. Universities are evaluated according to the following six metrics: academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ratio.

As per the data published on QS World University Rankings official website, Sharif University of Technology, ranked 409, Amirkabir University of Technology, ranked 477, University of Tehran, ranked between 591 to 600, Iran University of Science and Technology, ranked between 601 to 650, and Shiraz University, ranked between 801 to 1000, are the top 5 Iranian universities among world-class universities.

In the 2021 QS ranking, Amirkabir and Tehran universities also had a growth rate compared to last year. In particular, Amir Kabir University of Technology has been promoted from 489 to 477 (12 steps up) and Tehran University from 650-601 to 591-600 (50 steps up).

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) tops the list for a record ninth consecutive year in QS ranking. MIT is one of five American institutions in this year's top 10. Stanford University, Harvard University, California Institute of Technology, University of Oxford, Swiss Federal University of Technology, University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, University of Chicago, and University College London (UCL) are among the world's top 10 universities.

Among the Islamic countries, Malaysia with 20 universities (ranked 59), Turkey with 9 universities (ranked 465), the UAE with 8 universities (211), Kazakhstan with 10 universities (165), and Saudi Arabia with 10 universities (143).

Indonesia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Brunei, Kuwait, Iraq, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman are on the list of top universities of QS 2021.

The University of Malaya (UM) is ranked the top university among all Islamic countries with an 11-point rise from 70 in 2020 to 59 in 2021.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Libya and the Arabs

(December 22, 2003)

Libya's announcement that it is giving up plans to develop weapons of mass destruction has caused surprise and consternation in the Arab world. This report from Roger Hardy.

Colonel Gaddafi may have **had his own, Libyan, reasons** for taking his surprise decision. But he must also have been aware that it would remind his fellow-Arabs of their **collective weakness** in the face of an **assertive** American superpower. After all, the Libyan leader had seized power in 1969 as a champion of a radical form of Arab nationalism. He'd seen himself as the **political heir** of the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel-Nasser, who had **captured Arab hearts** with his defiance of the West and his calls for Arab unity.

But those **heady days** are **long gone**. Now each Arab state is left **pursuing its own self-interest**. Even the idea - put forward by a number of Arab officials - that the Libyan move puts pressure on Israel to abandon its undeclared nuclear programme is **based more on hope than realism**. Israel has no such intention; nor is it under American pressure to do so. The Arab state that will now feel **uncomfortably isolated** as a result of Colonel Gaddafi's decision is Syria. It too stands accused by Washington of developing weapons of mass destruction, as well as supporting groups the Bush administration regards as terrorist.

■ Words

had his own... reasons: if you have your own reasons for doing something you have specific circumstances which make you do it
collective weakness: not having, together, much power
assertive: someone who is assertive acts in a forceful way
the political heir: someone who works or thinks in the same way as a former leader
captured Arab hearts: gained the full support of Arab people
heady days: here, a time when there is enthusiasm and optimism for a cause

long gone: past, finished

pursuing its own self-interest: only interested in its own goals and ambitions

based more on hope than realism: here, unlikely to happen
uncomfortably isolated: its traditional friends and supporters have left it

(Source: BBC)



!Be kind to me

Turkey slams U.S. criticism over convicted consulate staffer

Turkey called Friday on the United States to respect its judicial independence after Washington criticized the conviction of a Turkish U.S. consulate employee on terror-related charges.

An Istanbul court on Thursday sentenced Metin Topuz, a liaison officer for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) at the consulate, to eight years and nine months in prison for aiding a "terror group" which Ankara blames for an attempted 2016 coup, AFP reported.

The ruling triggered a backlash from the United States, Turkey's NATO ally, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo saying Washington was "deeply troubled" by the decision and hoped it would "swiftly be overturned."

But the Turkish foreign ministry hit back at the comments.

"The rule of law prevails in Turkey and the Turkish judiciary is independent," the ministry said in a statement.

Israeli annexation of West Bank serious violation of intl. law: Jordan

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi says Israel's controversial plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank constitute a major violation of international law and cannot go unanswered.

Addressing a joint press briefing along with his German counterpart Heiko Maas in the Jordanian capital of Amman, Safadi said the Israeli plan would torpedo any opportunity for peace in the region, the Palestinian Information Center reported on Thursday.

"We are working with our partners and brothers in order to prevent Israel from carrying out its annexation plan because implementing it means killing any opportunity towards peace," the top Jordanian diplomat said.

For his part, Maas expressed Berlin's concern over Israel's intent to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian territories.

According to Press TV, he said the European Union rejects any unilateral plans which may pose a serious threat to the region.

The comments come after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu received the approval of his newly-installed coalition regime to put his annexation plan to vote in the Israeli cabinet or parliament as soon as July 1.

Syrian president relives prime minister, names his successor

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has removed the Arab country's prime minister from his post and designated a minister as his successor, state media says.

In a decree carried by Syria's official news agency SANA, the Syrian president on Thursday removed Prime Minister Imad Khamis from the post and designated Water Resources Minister Hossein Arnous as his successor.

According to the brief decree, Arnous, 67, will be the new Syrian premier without losing his current post as the head of the ministry of water resources, which he assumed in 2018.

Arnous was born in Idlib and had served in a long succession of government posts, including governor of Dayr al-Zawr province that borders Iraq, from 2009 to 2011, and Quneitra province in southern Syria, in 2011.

He was also the minister of public works and housing from 2013 to 2018.

Neither the decree nor the SANA report mentioned the reasons behind the dismissal of Khamis, who has been the Syrian prime minister since 2016.

Trump aims to sidestep another arms pact to sell more U.S. drones

The Trump administration plans to reinterpret a Cold War-era arms agreement between 34 nations with the goal of allowing U.S. defense contractors to sell more American-made drones to a wide array of nations, three defense industry executives and a U.S. official told Reuters.

The policy change, which has not been previously reported, could open up sales of armed U.S. drones to less stable governments such as Jordan and the United Arab Emirates that in the past have been forbidden from buying them under the 33-year-old Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), said the U.S. official, a former U.S. official and one of the executives. It could also undermine longstanding MTCR compliance from countries such as Russia, said the U.S. official, who has direct knowledge of the policy shift.

Reinterpreting the MTCR is part of a broader Trump administration effort to sell more weapons overseas. It has overhauled a broad range of arms export regulations and removed the U.S. from international arms treaties including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty.

Sidestepping the accord would allow U.S. defense contractors General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc and Northrop Grumman Corp to break into new markets currently dominated by less sophisticated offerings from China and Israel, which do not participate in the MTCR.

Heidi Grant, the Pentagon's Director of Defense Technology Security Administration, declined to comment on the pending MTCR policy change but said the U.S. military is eager to see drone sales expanded to more countries. Such sales would bolster the militaries of allies and replace drones sales from other nations, she said. "If we are unable to meet this growing demand, we shoot ourselves in the foot," Grant told Reuters.

Iraq PM Kadhimi: Baghdad, Washington committed to U.S. troop pullout

Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi says Baghdad and Washington have affirmed their commitment to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Arab country, months after Iraqi lawmakers passed a resolution calling on the government to end all foreign troop presence.

Kadhimi, however, did not give any time-line for the troop pullout.

The prime minister said the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue by video conference discussed the future of the presence of American forces, and recognized the Iraqi parliament's decision on the pullout of foreign troops from the country< Press TV reported.

A joint statement said the United States promised to reduce troops from Iraq over the coming months.

"The two countries recognized that in light of significant progress towards eliminating the ISIS threat, over the coming months the U.S. would continue reducing forces from Iraq," it said, without giving figures.

"The United States reiterated that it does not seek nor request permanent bases or a permanent military presence in Iraq," it said.

Iraq, in turn, promised to protect bases housing U.S. troops after a series of rocket attacks blamed on pro-Iranian paramilitary groups, the statement added.

■ **'Sovereignty of Iraq red line in Baghdad-Washington talks'**

Iraqi legislator Abbas al-Zameli has described the country's sovereignty as the red line in negotiations between Baghdad and Washington.

"We have a fundamental and major



point as regards Iraq-U.S. talks. Anything can be negotiated except for the country's sovereignty and independence, as they are considered as a red line," Zameli said in an exclusive interview with Arabic-language al-Maalomah news agency.

He added, "We support the prime minister in his efforts to safeguard the sovereignty of Iraq and remove all foreign forces from the country. We cannot compromise on the withdrawal of all foreign forces, including Americans, from the country."

■ **'U.S. military presence in Iraq source of concern for regional states'**

Hassan al-Fadam, a lawmaker from the National Wisdom Movement political coalition, said the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq has become a source of concern for many regional countries, emphasizing that the parliament is closely monitoring the course of dialogue between Washington and Baghdad.

"The Council of Representatives supports the dialogue between the United States and

Iraq, and is keeping an eye on the outcomes of the talks. It is necessary to review the strategic agreement with the U.S. and expedite the departure of the (American) forces, which has become a source of concern and annoyance for many countries in the region," Fadam told al-Maalomah news agency.

He added, "Our security forces and the Popular Mobilization Units are able to score territorial gains without the need from any foreign forces. The dialogue should be within the context of Iraq's need to keep some of the trainers, and that their presence should be under the supervision of the Iraqi government."

Iraqi lawmakers unanimously approved a bill on January 5, demanding the withdrawal of all foreign military forces led by the United States from the country following the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq's PMU, and their companions in a U.S. airstrike authorized by President Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport two days earlier.

Later on January 9, former Iraqi prime minister, Adel Abdul-Mahdi, called on the United States to dispatch a delegation to Baghdad tasked with formulating a mechanism for the move.

The 78-year-old politician said Iraq rejected any violation of its sovereignty, particularly the U.S. military's violation of Iraqi airspace in the assassination airstrike.

Deadly blast hits Kabul mosque during Friday prayers

A blast in a mosque during Friday prayers in the western part of capital Kabul has killed at least four people and wounded many more, Afghanistan's interior ministry said.

"Explosives placed inside the Sher Shah Suri Mosque exploded during Friday prayers," said a statement issued by the ministry, which added that the mosque's prayer leader Azizullah Mofleh was among those killed, al Jazeera reported.

Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said police have cordoned off the area and helped move the wounded to ambulances and nearby hospitals.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but a mosque attack earlier this month was claimed by an ISIL (or ISIS) terrorist group affiliate,

headquartered in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

"Interestingly, every time you have the peace process gaining some momentum and pace, you have these kinds of attacks in the country," Habib Wardak, a national security analyst based in Kabul, told Al Jazeera.

"The ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack that happened last week on a mosque in Kabul, so despite the fact that you have these news and press conference from the government that they have eliminated ISIL, how can they conduct such sophisticated operations?"

Friday's blast had parallels to one earlier this month, when an explosion tore apart a famous Kabul mosque and led to the death of renowned Afghan cleric Maulvi Ayaz Niazi.

Most Americans support sweeping Democratic police reform proposals

Most Americans, including a majority of President Donald Trump's Republican Party, support sweeping law enforcement reforms such as a ban on chokeholds and racial profiling after the latest death of an African American while in police custody, according to a Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll released on Thursday.

The national survey on June 9-10, shows the public broadly on the side of Democratic lawmakers, who proposed a series of changes to police departments in the United States as protesters gathered nationwide to condemn the death of George Floyd and racism, Reuters reported.

The White House and Republican lawmakers are preparing their own plans for changes in policing, though they are expected to fall short of the deep reforms

being sought by Democrats in Congress and Joe Biden, their party's presumptive presidential nominee in the Nov. 3 election to challenge Trump.

The poll conducted online of 1,113 U.S. adults showed bipartisan support for many of the Democrats' proposals.

For example, 82% of Americans want to ban police from using chokeholds, 83% want to ban racial profiling, and 92% want federal police to be required to wear body cameras.

It also found that 89% of Americans want to require police to give the people they stop their name, badge number and reason for the stop, and 91% support allowing independent investigations of police departments that show patterns of misconduct.

ICC must up its game to survive after U.S. onslaught: experts

The International Criminal Court must step up to ensure its survival after U.S. President Donald Trump authorised sanctions against the tribunal over an Afghan war crimes probe, experts said Friday.

Trump's administration on Thursday unleashed an unprecedented onslaught against what it branded a "kangaroo court", subjecting ICC officials to asset freezes and travel bans if they target U.S. personnel.

According to AFP, the move escalates long-standing U.S. opposition to The Hague-based court, which is battling its own poor track record of convictions, lack of support from the world's largest powers and internal disputes over pay.

But analysts and rights groups urged the under-fire ICC - set up in 2002 to prosecute the world's worst crimes - to continue its work with renewed vigour if it wants to cement its legitimacy.

"I believe that the future of the court depends on its willingness to prosecute the 'hard cases' involving powerful countries like the United States, Israel, Russia and the United Kingdom," William Schabas, international



criminal law professor at Leiden University, told AFP.

"For too long its work has been directed at developing countries and pariah states. Delivering equal justice for all means that it can tackle the strong as well as the weak."

■ **'Unprecedented' measures -**

The United States - like Russia, China, Israel, Syria and a number of other countries - is not a member of the ICC, and its opposition to the court is longstanding.

In 2002 the U.S. Congress even passed the so-called "Hague Invasion Act" allowing the US president to authorise military force to free any U.S. personnel held by the ICC -- in theory making an invasion of Dutch shores a possibility.

But the Trump administration has now gone further, preemptively targeting the court over any attempt to prosecute U.S. personnel over alleged war crimes in Afghanistan, or its ally Israel over the situation in the Palestinian territories.

U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr said Thursday's steps were just the first against a "corrupt" institution that he accused, without giving evidence, of being manipulated by Russia.

Personal sanctions by Washington are "unprecedented," said Carsten Stahn, programme director at Leiden University's Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies in The Hague.

'Go back to your bunker': Seattle mayor hits back at Trump

➔ **'Peaceful as hell'**

In the CHAZ area on Thursday, there were tents with supplies for volunteer medics as well as food donated by local restaurants, along with fruit, snacks and water bottles.

At one point a crowd locked arms

and prevented two police officers from reaching a boarded-up police station in the area. The officers failed to break in when they tried to enter through a different road.

"The scene here is peaceful as hell," said a demonstrator who identified her-

self as Jahtia B.

"This is our city. I was born and raised in this city. Let's give it to the people, the people who live in Seattle and have been thriving here," she told AFP news agency.

An African American demonstrator, Rich Brown, said he was scared on

Sunday when police used tear gas and flash-bang grenades in an attempt to clear the area.

"Today I feel supported, welcomed," he said. "We're able to speak, it's what we've been wanting to do this whole time, without intimidation, without fear."

N. Korea vows to bolster military might in face of U.S. threats

North Korea has vowed to bolster its military might to counter U.S. threats, saying relations between Washington and Pyongyang have descended into a "dark nightmare".

The announcement by North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Son Gwon on Friday came on the second anniversary of the first-ever summit between President Donald Trump and the North's leader Kim Jong-un.

Ri said Pyongyang's secure strategic goal "is to build up a more reliable force to cope with the long-term military threats from the U.S."

Kim and Trump met in Singapore on June 12, 2018, after which the North took several unilateral measures towards denuclearization in a goodwill gesture not reciprocated by the U.S.

In the wake of the summit, Pyongyang demolished a nuclear test site and suspended its missile and nuclear tests, which have long been the target of harsh unilateral U.S. sanctions.

Trump, who has since met with Kim three times, has so far refused to relieve any of the harsh sanctions on the North.

"The question is whether there will be a need to keep holding hands shaken in Singapore when there is nothing of factual improvement to be made," asked the North Korean foreign minister.

Ri said that there is no use in simply "maintaining personal relations between our supreme leadership and the U.S. President."

"Never again will we provide the U.S. chief executive with another package to be used for (political) achievements without receiving any returns. Nothing is more hypocritical than an empty promise."

She said the past two years of diplomacy has only showed that Washington continues to pursue "regime change" in Pyongyang and threatens the North with the prospects of a pre-emptive nuclear strike and "isolation and suffocation."

The two leaders met for the last time last June at the



inter-Korean border, but a subsequent working-level meeting broke down over the U.S.'s "old stance and attitude."

My sacking harmed Esteghlal: Winfried Schaefer

1 → The Blues have to pay the coach's payment otherwise, they will be punished by FIFA and could face the points deduction.

Esteghlal are one of the most popular football team in Iran and points deduction can be a massive blow to the team.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Schaefer has opened up about his time in Esteghlal and how he has to do at the moment.

Special thanks to Mohammad Hossein Zarandi, for making this exclusive interview possible.

■ **Tehran Times:** First of all, would you please let us know about your condition in Emirati club Baniyas?

Winfried Schaefer: We did a great job in Baniyas and build a new team completely. The youngest team in the league, many players who never got a chance to play before. Baniyas are now on a very good way. Since the coronavirus crisis which halted the UAE's league, they changed their strategy drastically and we saw that we do not share the same ideas anymore. Next season I'll not work with Baniyas anymore.

■ **You were sacked as Esteghlal coach and now the Iranian football club have to pay you 550,000 USD. Esteghlal General Manager Ahmad Saadatmand is reportedly going to arrange a meeting with you to get a discount. Is that right?**

I can say very honestly that Ahmad Saadatmand was the only Esteghlal's board member at my time who seemed to understand the problems we had to face. You'll remember that at that time the team and the coaching staff had to deal with circumstances that were so bad. I never saw something similar. After he became the team's president, he reached out to me and I have to say he is very polite. I asked him to be an honorable man and take care of the salary of my Iranian and foreign staff. We previously agreed to meet but in the current situation, it's impossible what they're asking us to do. They can hold a meeting in Germany to talk about the issues.

■ **Are you ready to negotiate with Esteghlal to solve the problem?**

I am very confused by this question. The Esteghlal management and the ethic committee should focus on the circumstances of Esteghlal over the last three years and should focus on a transparent investigation. I can imagine it would make it more important for the millions of fans and it could help solve the financial crisis. Let's hope President Saadatmand get all the support he needs from authorities. He needs this desperately because he is now in a very difficult situation that isn't his mistake and the fans and the team deserve transparency too. Asking for a compromise in this situation is something that is unheard of in the professional world. Imagine you are fired from a job which you worked hard and the cancelation is not justified. You declared clearly that you want to



do everything in your power to support your newspaper, but they talk bad about you, they lie and spread terrible rumors. Then they ask you to compromise on the money they owe you. How would you react?

■ **Esteghlal club prevented you to enter the training one day after you were informed you were no longer the team's coach. Honestly, it was not a professional behavior on behalf of a great team such as Esteghlal.**

If I go into detail about the injustice and the sabotage the team and I had to suffer in my second year, certain people will spread more lies and defamation. Let's me say this - the team and the staff fought against problems every single day and night. The last chapter of this sad spectacle was a shame for the President and the management and for Esteghlal.

■ **Have you been linked with a move to your former club Karlsruhe?**

No. The fans of course remember the good time we had. Karlsruhe always played in the second division before I came. We had a successful 12 years there, always first Bundesliga and very often in the Europa competition. After I left the team, they played at the second or third division. I will go back only with a strong financial partner to rebuild the club.

■ **You worked at Esteghlal for two years but just won a Hazfi Cup in 2018, while the team's archrivals Persepolis have won the**

titles in the past three years.

Another strange question. When I came to Esteghlal the President asked me to save Esteghlal, because they were in the bottom of the league table. We not only won the cup, but also qualified for the AFC Champions League. The next year was, as I said, a nightmare. We had to build a new team but we had no support and we had to deal with sabotage. But we still were able to be at the top of the league. I know, in the third year, with support of the management we would have been champions. I worked well with Pendar Tofighi, but he didn't get the necessary support, so we lost important players. Well, you know, the rest. Imagine what was taken away from the fans.

■ **What's different between Esteghlal and Persepolis as a person who has worked in Iran football?**

Let me answer this question with a little anecdote. After two days of training together, I asked (Gadwin) Mensha "why the Esteghlal fans feel Persepolis are treated better?" he laughed and said, "I never expected to see such big differences." The trainings facilities were only one point of many.

■ **Why can't the Iranian teams win the AFC Champions League?**

I think we could have won in our second year if we would have had the same team as the first year. And I think we could have

won in the third year if we would have kept the team from the second year. We built a good team twice.

The Iranian players are outstanding, strong, skilled and they want to learn. But the circumstances are simply not comparable to Qatar, South Korea and Japan. You can only survive with hard work and with a good team spirit and a good mentality. For me, the match against Japan in the AFC Asian Cup is a good example for the problems Iranian Teams face often. It's all about building confidence and psychological strength, beside of skills and fitness. We did that well in our first year, we did that again in the second year, step by step. That's why I said the third year would have been a big success.

■ **Carlos Queiroz and Branko Ivankovic. What's your opinion on them?**

They are two men I like very much and I respect. But I don't want to judge their work. Both coaches were successful in Iran football.

■ **The last question: Gabriel Calderon, Andrea Stramaccioni and Marc Wilmots left Iran since the country failed to transfer their salaries over the U.S. sanctions. Have you any idea about this?**

I never talked to them. I can only say it's an honor to train the national team of Iran. It's a dream job and I am sure there would have been a solution if both parties agree to work for a solution.

Infantino extends condolence over death of Aboutaleb



S P O R T S TEHRAN — FIFA President Gianni Infantino extends his deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Iranian football coach Parviz Aboutaleb.

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

"I wish to extend my deepest sympathy to Aboutaleb's family and Iranian football fans. Our thoughts

and prayers go out to his family. The words cannot express our sadness," said Infantino in a letter sent to Iran Football Federation.

Aboutaleb was a member of Iranian football clubs Rah Ahan and Esteghlal in the early 60's and also coached National Team in 1982 after retiring from his playing career.

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

Iran national football team unchanged in FIFA ranking



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran national football team still are 33rd in world and second in Asia in the latest FIFA ranking released on Thursday.

Japan as the best Asian team sit 28th in the world.

Although club football has slowly restarted or been scheduled to restart in various leagues around the world, the spread of COVID-19 remains an obstacle

to the staging of international matches.

This has again affected the latest FIFA World Ranking, which remains unchanged.

Belgium remain top followed by France and Brazil, while England and Uruguay are 4th and 5th, respectively.

Lurking behind them in descending order are Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Argentina, and Colombia.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 16 July 2020 (TBC).

Nekounam, Shojaei nominated for Asia's Greatest Players in Spanish Football

Iranian players Javad Nekounam and Masoud Shojaei have been nominated as the Asia's greatest players in Spanish football.

La Liga, the top division of Spanish football, holds a place in the consciousness of fans throughout the globe, and it is also a nation which has played host to some standout players from the world's largest continent.

In increasing numbers, Asian players are flocking to Spain, with some of the continent's brightest prospects now making it their first port of call in European football.

With La Liga resuming this week, the-afc.com invites the fans to decide which Asian player has made the biggest impact in Spanish football.

■ **Javad Nekounam**

Arriving in Spain just prior to his 26th birthday, Nekounam was an instant hit in a side which reached the UEFA Cup semi-finals, only for his progress to be suddenly halted by a serious knee injury.

That made the 2007-08 campaign a near write-off, but he returned to become a fan favorite in the city of Pamplona and regular goal scorer with a habit of netting late winners.

Iran has produced several outstanding players over the years. That no Team Melli player has bettered Nekounam's 151 caps speaks volumes about his quality and longevity.

■ **Masoud Shojaei**

While Nekounam was the first Iranian player to shine

in La Liga, Masoud Shojaei wasn't far behind, and the duo created a unique Team Melli influence in northern Spain.

Often used as an impact player off the substitute's bench, Shojaei was a reliable contributor of assists, particularly in his debut season where he created eight goals for his teammates.

A serious injury robbed him of the entire 2011-12 campaign, and his time in Spain finished in the Segunda Division with Las Palmas, but his tally of more than 100 appearances in the top tier outlines his quality as a player.

The Iranian duo have to vie with Wu Lei (CHN), Takashi Inui (JPN), Paulino Alcántara (PHI) and John Aloisi (AUS) to be named as the Asia's Greatest Player.

(Source: the-afc)

Bashar Resan doesn't want to leave Persepolis

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iraq international midfielder Bashar Resan is poised to restart his work with Persepolis and focus on the remaining matches of the Iranian football league.



Resan, who returned to Iran after a four-month suspension of football due to coronavirus outbreak, has said that he never thought about terminating his contract with the Tehran giants.

"I don't know where these rumors are coming from, it has never crossed my mind that I would not return to Iran. I am a Persepolis player and I will commit my future until the end. There were some problems, but I never thought about terminating the contract. Persepolis fans have always been kind to me, and it's hard for me to ignore their passion and love," said the Persepolis midfielder.

"I'm glad that I returned to Iran and joined the team training. Unfortunately, I came back a little late, but the important point is that I'm here now and can train with my teammates at Persepolis," he added.

Iran Professional League (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.

Bashar, 24, signed a contract with the IPL champions, Persepolis, in 2017. He was one of the most influential players in the Red's back-to-back title successes in the league and Hazfi Cup.

With regard to the payment of part of his delayed salary, Resan said: "The officials of the club have been following my conditions and keeping in touch with me during this period and I thank them. They promised that another part of my contract will be paid by the end of the week."

"I'm just here to do my part and help this team win, and of course, the ultimate goal is to win another IPL trophy. I am completely focused on Persepolis and our remaining matches," Resan concluded.

Ebrahimi, Ezatolahi leave KAS Eupen

Omid Ebrahimi and Saeid Ezatolahi left Belgian team KAS Eupen and returned to their clubs.

Belgian site GrenzEcho.net reported that the two Iranian players have returned to their teams after their loan contracts ran out.

Ezatolahi, 24, signed for Eupen from Russian team Rostov on loan in 2019.

Ebrahimi, who joined Eupen from Al Ahli in 2019, will return to the Qatari club in the summer.

The site reported that the Belgian club didn't extend their contracts.

(Source: GrenzEcho.net)

WKF laud Iranian karate athletes

World Karate Federation has lauded the Iranian karate athletes who have helped their people during the coronavirus crisis.

These difficult times are the perfect moment to show the many values of our sport. Karate's first-class athletes are very much aware of the strength of Karate values and the tremendous impact that the crisis is having on the weaker groups of population; some of them continue making their best to help those in need.

Sajad Ganzadeh of Iran is part of the humanitarian project "Empathy Nights" aiming to bring food to those who need it the most.

In these difficult times, it is crucial to keep the spirits up. Iran's Hamideh Abbasali and Bahman Asgari Asgari Ghoncheh are doing their best to help spread positive messages and are joining and initiative of the Peace Commission of the National Olympic Committee of Iran to share hope in these troubled moments.

(Source: WKF)

Two-thirds of sponsors unsure about 2021 Olympics

Two-thirds of Tokyo 2020's corporate sponsors are undecided on whether to continue supporting the Games now the event has been pushed to 2021, according to a new survey.

In the poll published late Thursday by Japanese public broadcaster NHK, 65 percent of the sponsors surveyed said they had not made up their minds about whether to extend their financial backing for another year.

According to NHK, some companies voiced concerns that their promotional activities around the Games could be curtailed due to crowd-reduction measures imposed against the coronavirus.

They were also worried the Games could be scrapped altogether, with several senior Olympic officials saying the Tokyo Olympics must take place next year or not at all.

Many also said they had not decided whether to extend their sponsorship because they had not yet opened negotiations with the organizers -- suggesting they may be open to persuasion.

Tokyo CEO Toshiro Muto revealed later Friday that the organizing committee had not contacted the sponsors due to the coronavirus state of emergency that was declared in Japan just after the Games were postponed in late March.

(Source: AFP)

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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Patience is two in kind: one against what you dislike, and the other before what you like and seems beautiful.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Painting

■ Paintings by Mostafa Sarabi are currently on view in an exhibition at Delgosha Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Sea, a Place that Is Not Seen From the Land" will run until June 25 at the gallery, which can be found at 30 Mohajer Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Behruz Majidi is displaying his latest paintings in an exhibition at E1 Gallery.

The exhibit entitled will run until July 3 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebheh St., off Mahdih St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

■ Zarna Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by the Visual Art Shot Group.

Works by Nagar Valeh, Soleiman Farrokhi, Behzad Firuzi, Zahra Mohammadi and several other artists have been selected to be showcased at the exhibit that will continue until June 17 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.

■ Shirin Babazadeh, Shila Jalilpiran, Nasrin Sadeqi and Mani Mehrzad are hanging their latest paintings in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibit titled "The Lost Gaze" will run until June 26 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



Drawing

■ Dastan Basement Gallery is displaying a collection of drawing by Ila Firuzabadi in an exhibition entitled "Studies for the Fountains". The exhibit will be running until July 3 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



Multimedia

■ Paintings and sculptures by Effat Jalilnejad are on view in an exhibition at Saye Gallery.

The exhibit named "Maybe It's a Dream" will run until June 16 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

■ An exhibition of paintings, sculptures and drawings by Sara Abri, Ruha Teimuri, Nasim Pirhadi, Hossein Ehsai and several other artists is underway at Sohrab Gallery.

The exhibit named "Tension" will run until June 23 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

■ A group of artists, including Saleh Sharifi, Maryam Amini, Mohammad Abbasi, Elham Nafisi and Behnaz Qasemi, is showcasing their artworks in various media in an exhibition at Soo Gallery.

Named "Rally", the exhibition will run until 23 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.

■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Amir Kabirnejad, Afshin Baqeri, Kambiz Derambakhsh and Qodratollah Aqeli is underway at Arte Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until June 29 at the gallery located at No. 2880, Vali-e Asr Ave.

Photo

■ Shamideh Gallery is hosting an exhibition of photos by Arash Pajuh entitled "Zone-1".

The exhibit will run until June 22 at No. 8, 1st Dead End off Sanjabi St. near Madar Square.

Hassan Fat'hi to complete "Intoxicated by Love" by summer's end

A R T TEHRAN — "Intoxicated by Love", also known as "Drunk on Love", an Iran-Turkey joint film project shot by Iranian director Hassan Fat'hi in Turkey in 2019, will be completed by the end of summer, producer Mehran Borumand has said.

"Several short scenes have been left unfinished due to the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus and are scheduled to be completed after the restrictions are lifted and the borders reopen," Borumand said.

"Due to the current situation, we estimate that the entire project will be completed by the end of summer and the film will be ready for screening, however, the screening time will be based on the film screening situation in Iranian movie theaters and around the world, since this is a joint production and must be screened in Iran and Turkey simultaneously," he added.

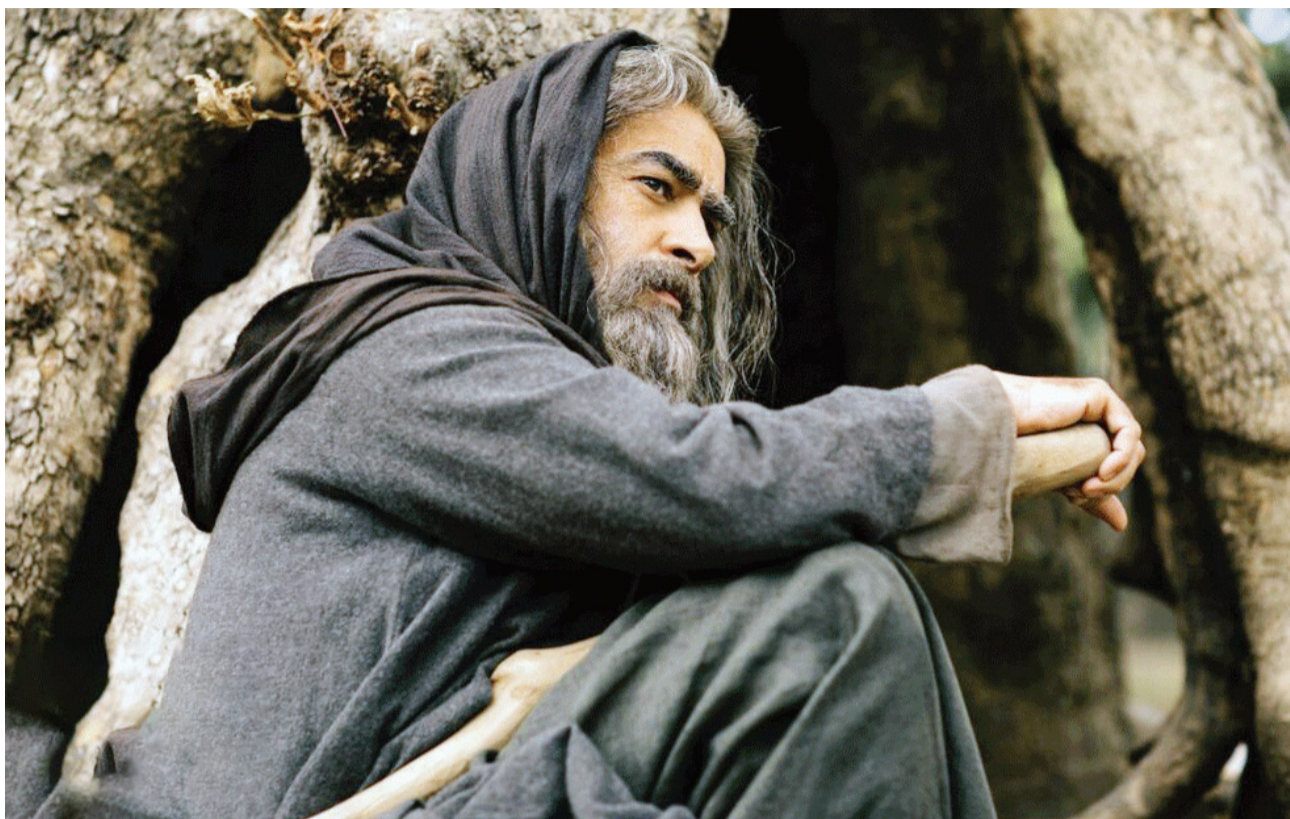
He also said that Fat'hi will accompany the team through the end of the project and will supervise the entire post-production stage.

Fat'hi started shooting "Intoxicated by Love" in Konya in October focusing on the lives of the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi and Shams-i Tabrizi, the wandering sage who later became the mentor of Rumi in the 13th century CE.

The Iranian actors Parsa Piruzfar and Shahab Hosseini star as Rumi and Shams respectively while Turkish TV star Hande Erçel plays the role of Kimia, Rumi's stepdaughter and Shams' lover.

Turkish actor Ibrahim Çelikkol and Iranian actor Hesam Manzur are the other members of the cast.

"Intoxicated by Love" was written by Fat'hi himself and his fellow Iranian writer Farhad Tohidi in consultation with Mohammad-Ali



Actor Shahab Hosseini acts in a scene from the co-production between Iran and Turkey "Intoxicated by Love" by Iranian director Hassan Fat'hi.

Movahhed, a top Iranian expert on Rumi. Rumi undertook journeys to Syria, during one of which he met the dervish, Shams.

He was deeply influenced by Shams during their second visit in Konya and for months, the two men constantly interacted, and as a result, Rumi neglected his disciples

and family, who could not tolerate the close relationship.

One night in 1247, Shams disappeared forever. This experience turned Rumi into a poet. The Divan of Shams is a true translation of his experiences into poetry.

The ENG Yapim Medya Organization from

Istanbul is one of the sponsors of the project.

Cinematographer Morteza Pursamadi, film editor Sepideh Abdolvahhab and makeup artist Iman Omidvari, all from Iran, and Sahin Karakus, Aytekin Yalçın, Tolga Tosun and Fatih Koca, all from Turkey, are collaborating in the project.

"Gaze" director Farnush Samadi selected for Turkish festival jury



Iranian director Farnush Samadi.

A R T TEHRAN — Farnush Samadi, director of the acclaimed Iranian short "Gaze", has been selected for a jury of the International Migration Film Festival in Turkey.

She along with Vienna-based cultural manager Marija Milovanovic and Dutch film expert Wouter Jansen will judge the entries in the Same Boat Short Film Competition, the organizers have said.

The festival will take place in Gaziantep, the capital of Gaziantep Province, in the western part of Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Region, from June 14 and 21.

Samadi's "Gaze" was screened at numerous international events across the world. It is about a woman who witnesses something happening on the bus on her way back from work, but she has to decide whether to reveal it or not.

Earlier last week, the organizers announced that Iranian actor Shahab Hosseini was selected for the jury of the

official competition the festival, which will be presided over by renowned Turkish filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan.

"Aho" by Amir-Hossein Hemmati is the sole Iranian movie that will be screened in the UNICEF International Short Film Competition.

In today's world, Aho, an Afghan woman trying to hold on to a difficult life where women are treated like second class citizens, struggles to survive and make a living in this brutal, challenging environment. Only pursuing this purpose, Aho has an important secret that would put her in a difficult position if revealed. The film narrates the tale of a strong woman who faces difficulties in the midst of war and destruction.

Over 50 films have been selected to be screened online during the festival, which will bring together hundreds of filmmakers, press members, participants from non-governmental organizations and academics from Turkey and across the world.

Doc on former diplomat Ardeshir Zahedi under Shah premieres

A R T TEHRAN — A documentary on Ardeshir Zahedi, a former Iranian diplomat who served during the reign of Iran's last monarch Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as the country's foreign minister and its ambassador to the United States and the United Kingdom during the 1960s and 1970s, premiered at the Mellat Palace Museum on Thursday.

"The Last Diplomat" directed by Amir Tajik uncovers untold stories of Iran's history witnessed by Zahedi.

In addition, Zahedi was the son-in-law of the Shah and the documentary includes unseen photos and footages of the Pahlavi family in addition to personal albums of Zahedi.

The production team made more than 18 months of full-time efforts to collect exclusive information with the help of an experienced crew.

A poster for the documentary was also unveiled during the premiere attended by the crew, interested documentarians and individuals.

Speaking at the ceremony, Tajik said that the officials at the museum have made great contributions to the documentary.

"I tried very hard to collect the information. Part of Zahedi's life was during the coup d'état against Mohammad Mossadeq's government in 1953, which Zahedi believed was not a coup d'état," he said.

"A major event of those days was the capture of Iran's



A poster for the documentary "The Last Diplomat" about the former Iranian diplomat Ardeshir Zahedi by Amir Tajik.

radio building, and the documentary shows previously unseen photos in addition to voices which belong to those days and are preserved in the secret archives of the radio station," he said.

He also added that part of the documentary features recent words uttered by Zahedi in honor of martyred Commander Qassem Soleimani.

Zahedi is a descendant of two families that have shaped

Doc Edge festival picks "Sunless Shadows", "Copper Notes of a Dream"



A scene from "Copper Notes of a Dream" by Reza Farahmand.

A R T TEHRAN — "Sunless Shadows" and "Copper Notes of a Dream", two documentaries from Iran, will go on screen at the Oscar-qualifying Doc Edge Film Festival 2020, running online in Auckland, New Zealand from June 12 to July 5.

"Sunless Shadows" by Mehrdad Oskui is about a group of adolescent girls that serve their sentence for the grave crime of murdering their father, their husband or another male family member in an Iranian juvenile detention center.

Oskui won the Silver Horn for the director of his "Sunless Shadows" at the 60th Krakow Film Festival in Poland last week.

"Copper Notes of a Dream" by Reza Farahmand is about a ten-year-old Palestinian refugee, Malook, who lives in Jarmuk, a suburb of Damascus in Syria, which is ruined during the war with ISIS. Malook dreams of becoming a singer.

Together with his older sister Ghofran, he is planning to organize a concert with professional musicians.

To earn money for the concert, Malook and some friends pull the copper wires out of the walls of vacant buildings that are riddled with bullets and rockets and write apologies for their theft on the walls, in hope the people who have fled will understand, if they ever return.

In consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic and New Zealand's robust efforts to keep everyone healthy, inspired and motivated, the organizers introduce the first ever entirely online film festival and free schools program exclusive to New Zealand audiences and communities across the country.

The organizers offer a true film festival experience possible online with scheduled screenings to watch with friends and family followed by Q&A sessions with filmmakers.

the history of modern Iran. His father, Fazlollah Zahedi (1897-1963), served as prime minister, and his maternal grandfather, Nasrollah Khan Moshir od-Dowleh, served as the first prime minister of Iran after the establishment of the Constitution in 1907.

Zahedi has led a very eventful life. During World War II, when Ardeshir was twelve, his father, who was the commander of the Isfahan division, was arrested by the occupying Allied forces and imprisoned in Palestine.

After completing his college education at Utah State University, Ardeshir returned to Iran to become deputy director of the Point Four Program.

In 1957, he married the Shah's first daughter Shahnaz. Mahnaz, the Shah's first granddaughter was born a year later. Although the couple separated in 1964, Ardeshir still remained a close confidant and friend of the Shah until his death in 1980.

In the last two decades of the Pahlavi dynasty, Zahedi served as an ambassador to the United States, and five years as foreign minister of Iran.

During his diplomatic career, he took an active role in the United Nations discussions. As the head of the Iranian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, he signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The 91-year-old Zahedi presently resides in Switzerland.