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Iran first country in region enjoying 100% voluntary blood donation

TEHRAN — While blood donation in 70 countries still depends on replacement or paid donors, Iran is the first country in the region which has enjoyed voluntary blood donation by 100 percent since 2007.

It should be noted that today, with the expansion of the national blood supply network, the fair distribution of safe blood and its products is a great achievement, Bashir Hajibeigi, a spokesman for the

Blood Transfusion Organization said on Sunday, marking the World Blood Donor Day which is held every year on June 14.

The obvious need for blood supply anywhere in the country can be easily met, he highlighted, adding, today, the quality-assured blood supply and its products are admirable in the country, as the quality of donated blood in Tehran is the same as those in the most remote areas of the country, ISNA reported. ➔9

ICCIMA head calls on govt. to promote private sector's place in economy

TEHRAN — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called on the government to reconsider the value of the country's private sector, saying that the private sector's place in economy should be determined based on their contribution to the growth and the revenue they generate.

Speaking in a meeting of Mashhad Chamber of Commerce in the northeastern

Khorasan Razavi Province, Gholam-Hossein Shafeie said: "The private sector's current position is not suitable considering the fact that a part of the country's costs is shouldered by the private sector; this situation must be reconsidered."

Shafeie expressed the chamber's readiness for providing the government with an economic strategy that would be in line with the country's macroeconomic programs, saying: ➔4

Zarif rejects claims of Iran's role in Saudi oil attacks as unfounded

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has rejected claims that Iran was behind attacks on Saudi oil installations in November 2019 as "unfounded".

"Such claims are unfounded and unfortunately, the United Nations' secretariat has shown that it is influenced by the United States' threats. The region is in critical situation. It is wise for the regional countries to hold talks about future rather

than to be imprisoned in the past," he said during an interview which was held live on Instagram on Saturday.

He also said, "In the first year that I became the foreign minister, I told Saud bin Faisal, the late Saudi foreign minister, if he wanted to complain about the past. I told him be sure that we have more to complain about, however, we can talk about future." ➔2



ARTICLE
Ebrahim Fallahi
Tehran Times journalist

U.S. targets Iran-Venezuela trade, tanker market suffers a blow

The Trump administration is considering new sanctions on reportedly 50 oil tankers for working with Venezuela, in order to prevent the trade between Iran and the Latin American country.

Earlier this week, a U.S. official told Bloomberg that the sanctions were intended to avoid a U.S. military confrontation with other countries (indicating Iran and Venezuela).

Despite their anti-conflict claims, the Trump administration is, in fact, trying to block Iran's support for Venezuelan people who are struggling with severe fuel shortages amid their country's economic stagnation.

Furthermore, the U.S. actions are impacting the whole global market which is already wrestling with the pandemic.

This weekend, Reuters reported that the global tanker market is getting worried over the news of the U.S. sanctions and many market analysts believe that if the U.S. goes through with the sanctions, a large proportion of the global market could be affected, leading to a significant surge in tanker rates.

■ A bruised ego

As mentioned earlier, the reason for the U.S.'s recent decision could be seen as getting back to Iran who had recently landed a heavy hit on the Trump Administration's ego by sending five fuel loaded vessels to Venezuela before the eyes of the U.S. navy.

The vessels delivered a total of 1.53 million barrels of gasoline and other oil products to the fuel-hungry Venezuelans in May.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned four shipping companies and their crude tankers for continuing to facilitate oil trading with Venezuela.

The tension between Washington and Tehran has been escalating since 2018 when U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic. ➔4

Coronavirus may move travel into 'the realm of luxury' in Iran

TEHRAN — The coronavirus pandemic may turn tours and travels in Iran into luxury items as observing health protocols will rise the cost of travel in the country, Mohammad Ali Vaeqi, the vice president of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, has warned.

"With the continuation of the coronavirus outbreak, tourists may prefer individual travel rather than tours. They may also choose to go on a trip by their own vehicle and stay in tents or in nature instead of hotels," Vaeqi explained, ISNA reported on Sunday.

In the global scene, part of the new travel puzzle is the jet-set mindset focusing on tough hygiene care and social distancing as cardinal guidelines for slowing the spread of the virus.

So the average expenditure will be raised for a typical traveler particularly inbound passengers so lesser ones can afford to buy privacy and space and safer travel amenities.

On the other hand, the elderly constitutes almost 80 percent of cultural tourists to Iran, whose number will decrease and as a result, the cost of travel services will be increased, Vaeqi added.

So far, 90 percent of the 2020 inbound tours have been canceled, and the possibility of canceling the remaining 10 percent is still high, he noted.

He also stated that neighboring countries strictly control the prices and they could lure Iranian tourists, while the country is at the risk of losing even domestic travelers due to the high prices.

Vaeqi also asked the government to support to the tourism industry and try to keep it alive and strong. Another point of view expressed by Vali Teymouri, the deputy minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, says that the tourism industry of Iran will get back on the right track sooner than expected thanks to measures taken to tackle the spread of coronavirus. ➔8

Racism in America: Fresh protests in Atlanta after police officer shoots African-American man

A police officer in United States' Atlanta city shot dead an African-American man while trying to arrest him, triggering more protests amid massive outrage over George Floyd's death last month, Reuters reported. The city's police chief resigned on Saturday.

Rayshard Brooks, 27, had fallen asleep in the drive-thru line of a fast food restaurant named Wendy's. The restaurant's employees, then, called the police to complain that he was blocking other customers in line. The police tried to take him into custody after he failed sobriety test, al Jazeera reported.

The entire incident was filmed by an onlooker. The video from the spot showed Brooks struggling with two officers on the ground outside the restaurant. He then broke free and ran across the parking lot, apparently with a Taser gun, a non-lethal weapon, in his hand.

In another video footage from the restaurant's security cameras, Brooks is seen being shot by a police officer and falling to the ground, after he possibly aims the Taser at the officer.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Vic Reynolds said Brooks ran the length of about six cars in the parking lot, turned back and pointed what he had in his hand at one of the officers. "At that point, the Atlanta officer reaches down and retrieves his weapon from his holster, discharges it, strikes Mr. Brooks there on the parking lot and he goes down," Reynolds was quoted as saying by the news agency.

Brooks was taken to a hospital but died after a surgery, according to AFP. The lawyer representing his family told Reuters that the police had no right to use force even if he had fired the Taser gun, a non-lethal weapon, at them. ➔10

PMU chairman praises Gen. Soleimani

TEHRAN — Fali al-Fayyadh, chairman of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) and a former Iraqi National Security Council advisor, has praised Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

In an interview with Al-Maalomah, he said that the resistance front and Soleimani played an important role in supporting the PMU, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

Soleimani, commander of the Quds unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), was assassinated in a terrorist U.S. airstrike in

Baghdad on January 3.

General Soleimani was a legendary commander in leading the resistance forces against terrorist groups, especially Daesh, in both Syria and Iraq.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in January that Soleimani will be serving as an inspiring example for the resistance front.

During a meeting with Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza in Tehran, Zarif described Soleimani as a "remarkable" figure of resistance. Zarif said in an interview with the khamenei.

ir published on February 17 that Soleimani was not only a hero of resistance but also a hero in the fight against terrorism and advocating peace.

"The Islamic Republic has always stood by Palestinians' and other Muslim nations' side in their resistance, including Lebanon, Syria and other Arab countries whose lands have been occupied by the Zionist regime. Martyr Soleimani was, in fact, a symbol of the Iranian nation's cooperation with and assistance to the nations of the region. ➔2

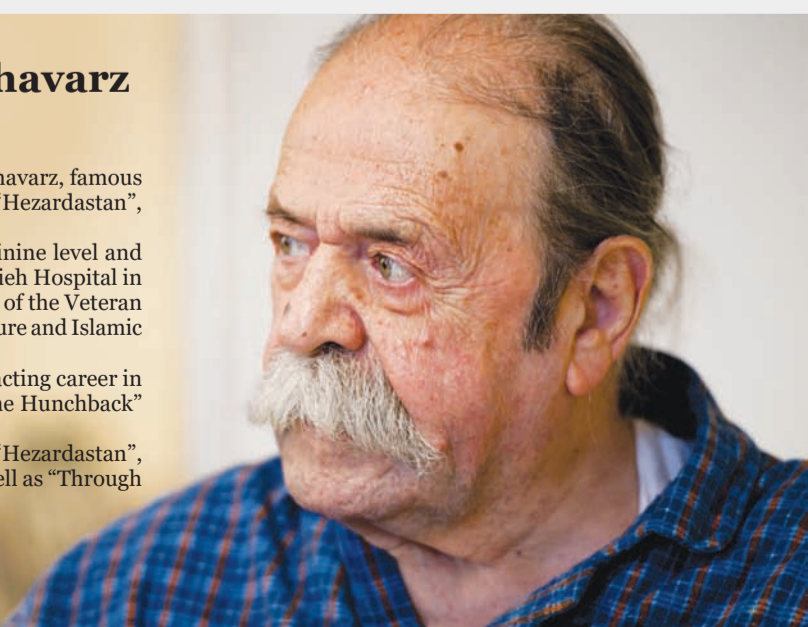
Actor Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz dies at 90

TEHRAN — The legendary actor Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, famous for his roles in Ali Hatami's hits such as "Mother" and "Hezardastan", has died. He was 90.

The actor was hospitalized due to an elevated creatinine level and impaired kidney function in late May and died at the Atieh Hospital in Tehran on Sunday, Mohammad Tabatabai, the director of the Veteran Artists Institute that is affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance confirmed.

Born in 1930 in Isfahan, Keshavarz began his stage acting career in 1948 and entered the world of cinema with "Night of the Hunchback" by Farrokh Ghaffari in 1964.

He acted in many famous hits including "Mother", "Hezardastan", "Kamalolmolk" and "Delshodegan" by Ali Hatami, as well as "Through the Olive Trees" by Abbas Kiarostami. ➔12



Saudi Arabia considers cancelling hajj for first time in modern history

Saudi Arabia is considering cancelling the hajj pilgrimage season for the first time since the kingdom was founded in 1932, after cases of coronavirus in the country topped 100,000. "The issue has been carefully studied and different scenarios are being considered. An official decision will be made within one week," a senior official from Saudi Arabia's hajj and umrah ministry told the Financial Times. The annual ritual held in late July is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, attracting about 2m people to the kingdom every year. But after the organizers of global events including the Olympic Games in Tokyo were forced to delay or cancel due to the coronavirus pandemic, Saudi officials have faced growing pressure to take action. One proposal is to allow a small number of local pilgrims to perform hajj, while observing strict health precautions. Another possibility is to cancel the pilgrimage season altogether. "All options are on the table but the priority is for the health and safety of pilgrims," the official said.

While Saudi Arabia has managed to organize hajj during previous viral outbreaks such as Ebola and MERS, the global scale of the coronavirus pandemic presents a far more difficult challenge. The government was early to enforce measures that helped control the virus after the first case was confirmed on March 2, including restrictions on travel and a two-month nationwide curfew. But after the kingdom began to ease the lockdown in late May, the number of daily cases and deaths have spiked. More than 3,000 cases were reported daily over the past six days and deaths totaled 857 by Thursday. ➔10

U.S. act in sanctioning ICC is cautionary: expert

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Yousef Molaei, an expert in international law, has said that the United States' action in sanctioning the International Criminal Court's judges and employees is "cautionary" and "preemptive".

Washington sought to give a warning to the ICC to prevent it from investigating any case related to the U.S., Yousef Molaei told ISNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He added that the move falls within President Donald Trump's "political gesture" in a series of his acts.

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 International Criminal Court (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.

Pompeo said, "We cannot, we will not stand by as our people are threatened by a kangaroo court."

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.

The International Criminal Court announced 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.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday said the ICC is blackmailed by a "lawless gang" posing as diplomats.

"International Criminal COURT now blackmailed by lawless gang posing as diplomats," Zarif wrote on his Twitter page.

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?"

Iranian presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi also wrote on Saturday that the U.S. move in imposing sanctions on ICC judges and employees shows the "anti-human rights spirit" of the White House.

However, Vaezi added, the inefficiency of these sanctions "has been proved by resistance of the Iranian people".

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said in an article published on Saturday that "it seems that the bullying United States seeks to put its knee on the neck of the world's credible lawyers and make it hard for justice and human values breathe."

Rabiei added, "This action is enough for Iran not to take Trump's readiness to hold talks seriously."

Army chief highlights utility of drones in asymmetric warfare

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iranian Army Commander Major General Abdulrahim Mousavi described unmanned aerial vehicles as a strong point in the Army, saying they play a strategic role in asymmetric warfare.



In comments on the sidelines of a visit to a base of the Army Ground Force Drone Division on Sunday, Major General Mousavi said the pilotless aircraft are of strategic significance in asymmetric warfare, both in the military and economic spheres.

It is very important for drones to be capable and diversified enough to carry out various missions, the general said, adding that one of the strong points of the drone industry in the Iranian Army is that it is homegrown and totally independent of foreign countries.

He also praised the Drone Division personnel, saying their performance has heartened the Army commanders.

In April, Iran's Army took delivery of a large number of combat and reconnaissance drones manufactured by domestic defense industries.

In August 2019, Director of Iran's Aviation Industries Organization (AIO) Brigadier General Abdolkarim Banitarafi said Russia has offered to buy unmanned aircraft from Iran during the International Aviation and Space Show in Russia (MAKS 2019).

He had also said Iran is one of the world's most advanced countries in the drone industry that exports pilotless aircraft to a number of foreign states.

PMU chairman praises Gen. Soleimani

➔ Martyr Soleimani was an individual who mounted resistance not only in the face of the Zionist regime but also in the face of extremism and terrorism. He stood by the side of the resistant people of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine," Zarif stated.

Zarif rejects claims of Iran's role in Saudi oil attacks as unfounded

‘Trump makes new mistakes to make up for his past mistakes’

➔ He also noted that it will be possible to reach a solution and an agreement in the region if the regional countries understand that the U.S. will not stand beside them and just seeks to empty their pockets.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council in a report seen by Reuters on Thursday that cruise missiles used in several attacks on oil facilities and an international airport in Saudi Arabia in November 2019 and February 2020 had been of "Iranian origin".

He also said the "items may have been transferred in a manner inconsistent" with Security Council Resolution 2231, which enshrines the international nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — signed between Iran and world powers in 2015.

Guterres said in his report that the United Nations had examined the debris of weapons used in the attacks on an oil facility in Afif in May, the Abha international airport in June and August, and the Aramco oil facilities in Khurais and Abqaiq in September.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations has rejected the UN secretary general's report on the implementation of the Security Council resolution 2231 as flawed and inaccurate.

In a press release on Friday, the mission said that the UN Secretariat lacks the capacity,



expertise, and knowledge to conduct such a sophisticated and sensitive investigation.

■ ‘Trump receives wrong analyses about Iran’

Zarif also said that Trump received wrong analyses and assumed he can reach his objectives through putting pressure on Iran.

Withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, was an example that showed Trump has been receiving wrong analyses about Iran, the chief diplomat remarked.

Zarif said on June 5 that Trump's advisors, that now most of them have been dismissed, made a "dumb bet" by encouraging him to quit the JCPOA.

■ ‘Trump makes new mistakes to make up for his past mistakes’

Zarif also said that Trump makes new mistakes to make up for his past mistakes. "The United States' administration is a regime which threatened to sanction judges and employees of the International Criminal Court. It shows they have understood

they had made mistakes, but they do not know how to get out of their mistakes," he explained.

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.

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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.

Trump seeks to solidify electoral base by renewing arms embargo on Iran: American scholar

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — John Calabrese, a professor at American University in Washington and a scholar at the Middle East Institute, has said that U.S. President Donald Trump seeks to solidify electoral base by renewal of an arms embargo on Iran.

"Putting the arms embargo renewal and snapback sanctions issues in this context, these maneuvers strike me as being fundamentally about solidifying the 'electoral base'," Calabrese told IRNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He said, "Note that over the past few weeks, President Trump has taken the side of law enforcement officers, brandished a Bible in front of an historic Church that had been damaged in protests, and called for accelerating the confirmation of conservative judges."

Calabrese said Trump also took some other decisions in line with reelection bid.

"On the foreign policy front, Trump announced the imminent withdrawal of nearly 10,000 American troops from Germany and abrogation of its commitment to the Open Skies Agreement. Then, of course, there are renewed sanctions threats against China for its policies in Hong Kong, toward Taiwan, etc.," Calabrese explained.

Calabrese noted, "Circling back to Iran, against the backdrop of these initiatives, perhaps the outcome is not as important

as the 'performative' value in domestic political terms. If the administration's coercive approach succeeds, it can proclaim 'victory'."

He also said that if such an approach fail, the administration can claim that it tried but was undermined by perfidious strategic rivals and limp, feckless allies.

Elsewhere, he said that Trump signed a presidential memorandum titled, "Ceasing U.S. Participation in the JCPOA and Taking Additional Action to Counter Iran's Malign Influence and Deny Iran All Paths to a Nuclear Weapon" in May 2018 which constituted the U.S. "official withdrawal" from the JCPOA and paved the way for reimposing unilateral sanctions and putting pressure on others to follow suit.

About a month ago, U.S. Secretary Mike Pompeo reportedly decided to have his staff prepare a legal document arguing that the U.S. remains a "participant state" in the nuclear deal, he said.

"It appears to me that the Trump administration is going through these contortions for two reasons: 1) as a means of renewing the arms embargo on Iran and 2) as a domestic political ploy to demonstrate to a portion of its constituency that it is 'delivering' on past pledges," he said.

He continued, "Regarding the first point, renewing the embargo, the Trump administration seems to be preparing the 'participant

state' argument as an instrument to gain other Security Council members to follow its lead. If they don't, then the threat is that the U.S. could and would have the right to insist upon 'snapback sanctions'."

However, he predicted that Russia and China will obstruct the U.S. attempt.

"In any case, under the JCPOA, the U.S. would have to demonstrate that 'snapback sanctions' were warranted. To my knowledge, there is no concrete evidence that Iran is non-compliant. So, it is hard to see how Washington could advance its claim and gain support for it," Calabrese pointed out.

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

President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that Iran expects permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, especially friendly countries of Russia and China, to stand against the U.S. plots.

Rouhani noted that arms embargo on Iran will expire in October based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the Trump administration on June 8 of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and he called for "universal



condemnation" of the U.S. attempt to get the UN Security Council to impose a permanent arms embargo.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has slammed the U.S. threats to reimpose arms embargo on Iran, saying it violates Resolution 2231.

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.

Iran to be the focus of attention at IAEA board session: Russia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that Iran is expected to be the focus of attention in virtual session of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors.

"Virtual session of #IAEA Board of Governors is scheduled to start at 10 a.m. on 15 June. It may be lengthy, taking into account a big number of agenda items. #Iran is expected to be the focus of attention," he tweeted on Sunday.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, said on June 5 the IAEA's most recent report proves continuation of the agency's verification activities in Iran.

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

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

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



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

On the verification activities, the new report has pointed to the continuation of monitoring and verification activities under the special conditions after the outbreak of the

coronavirus and Iran's proper cooperation with the IAEA, the ambassador added.

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

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

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

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

MPs preparing bill to confront U.S. hostile acts, economic sanctions



TEHRAN (FNA) — The Iranian legislators are preparing a bill to fight against the U.S. enmity and economic embargos against the country, an MP said on Sunday.

"Preparing the plan to confront the U.S. hostile measures and economic sanctions against our country has started at the parliament," Abolfazl Aboutorabi told FNA.

He added that the plan is now being signed by the Iranian lawmakers, adding that it will be submitted to the presiding board to be approved and turned into a law.

In defiance of global criticism, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA, which President Donald Trump called "the worst deal ever," in May 2018 and re-imposed the anti-Iran sanctions.

Reports said in recent weeks that Washington is planning to use a threat to trigger a return of all UN sanctions against Iran as leverage to get the 15-member Security Council to prolong the arms embargo on Tehran.

The removal of Iran's arms embargo is

based on the nuclear deal between Tehran and major world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S. Treasury Department announced in May new sanctions against the Great Tehran Penitentiary in Iran's capital, the Law Enforcement Forces Cooperative Foundation, and Qarchak Prison and Police Chief Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari. The sanctions are also imposed on a number of other officials in the Iranian Police.

Advisor rejects Guterres' report on Aramco incident

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The parliament speaker's special aide for international affairs rejects as “baseless” the UN secretary general's report claiming that the missiles that hit the Saudi Aramco where of Iranian origin.

“The UN Sec report claiming missiles hit Saudi Aramco w/Iranian origin is a politicized move & baseless allegation,” Hossein Amir-Abdollahian tweeted on Sunday.

“Roots of regional insecurity must be sought in Tel Aviv, Riyadh behavior,” he wrote. “#Iran has the most constructive role in establishing regional & global sustainable security.”

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council in a report seen by Reuters on Thursday that cruise missiles used in several attacks on oil facilities and an international airport in Saudi Arabia in November 2019 and February 2020 had been of “Iranian origin”.

He also said the “items may have been transferred in a manner inconsistent” with Security Council Resolution 2231, which enshrines the international nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — signed between Iran and world powers in 2015.



Guterres said in his report that the United Nations had examined the debris of weapons used in the attacks on an oil facility in Afif in May, the Abha international airport in June and August, and the Aramco oil facilities in Khurais and Abqaiq in September.

Tehran says the allegations were leveled under political pressure from the U.S. and Saudi regimes.

In a statement on Friday, Iran's Foreign Ministry expressed deep concern over the abuse of the UN Secretariat for

political purposes.

“While the Secretariat has treated with utmost tolerance and leniency towards these violations so far, it is now surprisingly engaged with an issue in which it has no authority to point out highly technical and legal findings, and its so-called technical report is in no way in line with the practical arrangements of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 to perform its functions,” the statement read.

“Levelling accusations against other states using self-created processes and arbitrary procedures is a dangerous heresy, which is not accepted by the international community,” the Foreign Ministry warned.

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi also condemned the report, saying it has been made under political pressure from the U.S.

Iran rejects allegations in the UN Secretariat report, including the “Iranian origin” of the arms, Takht-Ravanchi said via Twitter on Friday.

“UN Secretariat lacks capacity, expertise & knowledge to conduct investigations,” Takht-Ravanchi wrote.

“Seems the US—with its history of Iran-bashing—sits in the driver's seat to shape UN ‘assessments’,” he added.

Trump rushes to kill off Iran nuclear deal before election

(Foreign Policy) — The battle between the United States and the remaining parties to the Iran nuclear deal is heating up, with huge stakes not just for the survival of the near-moribund accord but for the entire future of the UN Security Council and its ability to rein in bad actors.

Two years after unilaterally pulling out of the 2015 Iran deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Trump administration is dialing up efforts to kill it completely—even though Washington appears to have no alternative plan for addressing Tehran's nuclear ambitions beyond sanctions. U.S. officials have been pushing the remaining parties, besides Iran—the European Union, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China—to extend a UN arms embargo that otherwise will expire in October, just weeks before a hotly contested U.S. presidential election. The end of that arms embargo, five years after the nuclear deal went into effect, was one of the selling points of the deal for Iran in the first place.

But now, arguing that Iran's destabilizing activities in the region make it too risky to allow unfettered arms sales to Tehran, Washington is threatening to force the issue and trigger an automatic “snapback” of all UN sanctions on Iran, placing it in direct confrontation with European allies as well as Russia, China, and Iran, which want to keep the nuclear pact alive.

This week, the major remaining parties have become increasingly vocal in their rejections of U.S. pretensions to still be involved in the JCPOA at all. On Monday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry called the U.S. withdrawal from the accord the “root cause” of the current crisis, while Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the United Nations that American efforts to simultaneously leave the deal and try to determine its future are “ridiculous and irresponsible.”

On Tuesday, the European Union's foreign-policy chief, Josep Borrell, attacked U.S. insistence that, even though it left the 2015 pact, it was still somehow a participant with a voice in its future. “They withdraw. It's clear. They withdraw,” Borrell told reporters. On Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called on Russia and China, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, to take steps to block any U.S. efforts to blow up a pact it hasn't been party to for more than two years.

“This has been brewing for several months, and now all the dirty laundry is coming into the public eye,” said Ellie Geranmayeh, an Iran expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR).

Iran has warned that it may withdraw entirely from the nuclear pact, as well as the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, if UN sanctions are reimposed, opening a path to the accelerated enrichment of uranium and shutting the door on international inspections of Iran's nuclear program by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The showdown threatens not just the viability of the Iran nuclear deal, which has been tottering for two years—but which the remaining participants still hope can be salvaged—but also the legitimacy of the UN Security Council.

“For people who oppose the JCPOA and who don't like the UN, this is a golden opportunity to kill two birds with one stone,” said Richard Nephew, who helped craft sanctions during the Obama administration. “In the worst-case scenario, the deal

is dead, and the UN is rendered obsolete and neutered, which isn't a bad thing from their [the Trump administration's] perspective,” added Nephew, now at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy.

For an administration that came into office seeking to contain China and restrain Iran's and North Korea's nuclear programs, the approach seems misguided, said Jonathan Fulton, an expert on China and the Middle East at the Atlantic Council.

“You can't solve North Korea or Iran without China, and you can't solve North Korea if you blow up the JCPOA, because there's no incentive to cooperate and any deal you make could be shredded,” he said. Then there was the years-long Trump administration trade war with China. “It's getting impossible to cooperate on anything,” he said.

Trump also appears to be making no progress against North Korea; on Friday, its news agency announced that the relationship between leader Kim Jong Un and Trump was terminated, two years after they first met in Singapore and raised hopes of a deal. “Nothing is more hypocritical than an empty promise,” North Korea's foreign minister, Ri Son Gwon, said in a statement to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

U.S. brinkmanship over the Iran question threatens to bring everything down. UN Security Council members could grudgingly concede that the United States, as it contends, has the right to unilaterally force the reimposition of the arms embargo—but that doesn't mean anyone will honor it, least of all Russia and China.

“I don't see any scenario where Russia and China agree to abide by snapback sanctions,” Nephew said. And worse, he suggested, it's unlikely those permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council will sign up to any future efforts to use sanctions to rein in rogue states.

“We are not going to get another sanctions resolution at the UN Security Council for a generation, if ever. If you're never going to get compliance from other states, it will be a choose-your-own-adventure—and nobody will do it,” Nephew said. Or, other states could simply refuse to even acknowl-

edge the U.S. claim of a snapback on the embargo, which could lead to a paralyzed United Nations.

“In no circumstance will there be anything good. Either you have slow bleeding or you blow up the whole structure,” he said.

In the meantime, since the United States pulled out of the accord, Iran has carefully ramped its nuclear activities back up. It has restricted access to inspectors from the IAEA and reportedly hid past evidence of its nuclear program. It has shrugged off limits on the number of uranium-enriching centrifuges it can operate and has blown through limits on how big and how enriched its uranium stockpiles are—potentially bringing it closer to a nuclear bomb, the prevention of which was the whole point of the JCPOA in the first place. But experts say Iran isn't racing for the bomb as much as trying to ramp up pressure on the remaining parties.

“The steps Iran took to breach the deal are serious and concerning, but they do not pose a near-term risk,” said Kelsey Davenport, a nonproliferation expert at the Arms Control Association. “Iran has breached the deal in a very calibrated, transparent manner—they are creating leverage, not dashing toward a bomb.”

Perhaps anticipating a deadlock, the United States has yet to engage in any substantive negotiations on an arms embargo in New York since February, when it first floated the idea of proposing a resolution extending the arms embargo on Iran beyond its October expiration. Diplomats say Washington has held some very general discussions about its plans in capitals, but it has held off those plans to table an actual resolution.

Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said this month that the United States would soon distribute a draft resolution extending the arms embargo, though it's doubtful Washington could muster the votes needed to pass it. That would leave the United States with the option of invoking the automatic “snapback” of the embargo on grounds that Iran has failed to meet its obligations—even though the IAEA found that Iran was in compliance until Washington withdrew from the deal.



The immediate point of contention between the United States and the rest of the parties to the pact is whether Washington even has a say in the fate of any aspect of the deal going forward. That is important because on Oct. 18, a UN arms embargo—which was extended for a five-year period as part of the Iran nuclear pact—is set to expire. The Trump administration insists that it is named as a participant in Resolution 2231, which endorsed the nuclear accord it no longer recognizes, so it can still play arbiter to a deal it has nothing to do with. The European Union, China, and Russia—like many experts—reject that idea.

“The U.S. legal argument is ludicrous. The United States has said on numerous occasions that it is no longer a part of JCPOA, but it is cherry-picking elements of 2231 that support its pressure campaign while refusing to meet U.S. obligations elsewhere,” Davenport said.

For now, Iran, Russia, China, and European parties to the deal seem to be playing for time, trying to hold the nuclear accord together at least through the November U.S. presidential election. Russia and other countries are toying with procedural efforts to slow down the U.S. march to the snapback. If presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden wins—as recent polls suggest is a possibility—the deal could be resuscitated, though any additional restrictions on Iran's missile programs and regional activities would require Tehran's approval.

But the Trump administration seems determined to employ a scorched-earth policy and ensure that, whatever happens in November, Barack Obama's Iran deal is a cadaver.

“Iran hawks want to kill any trace of the JCPOA before the term is up, burn down any diplomatic bridges with Iran,” said Geranmayeh of ECFR.

Others concur that the U.S. effort to invoke UN arms sanctions on Iran—against the wishes of all the parties to the accord—would be a way to demolish any talk of reviving a deal that has been anathema to Republicans for five years. Trump has occasionally talked of driving the Iranians back to the table for a new deal, but Tehran has refused.

“This is about smashing the JCPOA and ensuring that any future administration cannot put the pieces back together,” Davenport said. And she warned that future efforts to curb nuclear proliferation could be endangered if Washington decides to reimpose an arms embargo that helped bring Iran to the nuclear table in the first place.

“They are trying to change the goal posts,” she said. “If the United States goes down this road, it would have serious consequences not just for the Iran deal but for nuclear proliferation writ large.” And the fallout from this fight could have even bigger impacts as the United States still seeks to corral international support to deal with rogue regimes from North Korea to Venezuela.

“If we are in a situation where there is such a fundamental clash between the United States and other permanent members [of the Security Council], they are going to have a much more difficult time pushing through resolutions on areas where the United States may have previously been able to persuade Russia and China to come aboard,” Geranmayeh said.

“It could really do irreparable damage to the UN Security Council framework.”

Chances of Trump's reelection is over 50 percent, Zarif predicts

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad D. Javad Zarif is of the opinion that President Donald Trump's chances of being reelected are still over 50 percent.

“The biggest mistake in human sciences is to predict, especially in fluid and grave conditions, but allow me to venture a prediction that Mr. Trump's re-election chances are still more than 50 percent,” Zarif said in an interview on Instagram on Saturday, according to Press TV.

“Mr. Trump has a 30-35% base that has not moved and, as long as this base does not move, there is still a chance of his re-election,” he opined.

Zarif, however, indicated that the coronavirus pandemic and nationwide protests against police brutality and racism could slim Trump's chances.

“Of course, his chances have seriously decreased compared to four to five months ago,” the chief Iranian diplomat added.

Meanwhile, in a tweet earlier this month, Trump appeared desperate to hold talks with Iran. “Don't wait until after U.S. Election to make the Big deal,” he wrote. “I'm going to win. You'll make a better deal now!”

In recent weeks, former Vice President Joe Biden has been leading Trump in the polls by a large margin.

Trump's performance in the United States' twin crises this spring has pushed his approval rating under 40 percent in the latest Gallup survey, as a majority of voters in several polls disapprove of his handling of the coronavirus and recent protests over police brutality and racism.

The two modern presidents with an approval rating below 40 percent in June of an election year — Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush — lost badly, according to Gallup.

“I think it's increasingly in jeopardy,” said Republican pollster Frank Luntz of Trump's reelection potential. “The president is not communicating that he feels your pain. And pain is what an awful lot of people feel right now.”

Suspects arrested in Iran over recent arsons: police

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's Police Chief Brigadier D. General Hossein Ashtari has announced that a number of suspects linked with the recent acts of arson in certain parts of the country have been arrested.

Responding to reporters on Sunday, General Ashtari said that the police and other organizations in charge have taken action to handle the issue, Tasnim reported.

He said good measures have been taken in this regard. “Some of the fires have started unintentionally and a number of others deliberately, and a number of individuals have been identified and arrested in connection with them,” the general added.

A series of mysterious blazes and wildfires in the past couple of weeks across Iran have raised concerns among the authorities and citizens.



Tehran's Fire Department announced on June 13 that a big fire at a flower market in the capital's Khavaran Road has been contained. There were no casualties, but 32 flower stands were destroyed.

Over the past week, several wildfires have also broken out in pastures and forests, as well as blazes in some parks in Tehran.

Austria voices willingness to deepen parliamentary ties with Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The president of the National Council of Austria has voiced his country's eagerness to deepen parliamentary relations with Iran.

Wolfgang Sobotka made the remarks in a message to Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf to congratulate him on becoming Iran's new parliament speaker.



Parliaments are the beating hearts of democracy and have a key role in societies, Sobotka said in the message, Tasnim reported.

Underlining the significant role that international interaction between the parliaments could play in building trust and de-escalating tensions, Sobotka expressed hope for the expansion of “friendly parliamentary relations” between Iran and Austria during Ghalibaf's tenure.

In September 2015, former Austrian President Heinz Fischer came to Tehran for an official visit to become the first head of a Western state visiting Iran for many years.

Late last month, Iranian lawmakers elected Ghalibaf, a former mayor of Tehran, as the new speaker of the Parliament.

IME’s worth of weekly trades rises 37%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) went up 37 per-cent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IME Public Relations and International Affairs Department reported.



As reported, 800,210 tons of commodities worth 52 trillion rials (about \$1.238 billion) were traded at the IME in the previous week, showing also an 18-percent rise in the volume of trades.

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

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

Trade between Iran, India to return to normal in 2 weeks

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Trade between Iran and India, which has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, is expected to return to normal within one or two weeks, the vice chairman of Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce told ILNA on Sunday.

Parham Rezaei said while the coronavirus has created some problems for trade between the two countries, which are still existing, they will be removed by the next two weeks.

Iran and India had held a new round of negotiations on signing a preferential trade agreement (PTA) between the two sides in mid-February.

Initiated in 2016, the negotiation on this agreement is said to be in the final stages, and the two sides hope that the list of the commodity items entitled to preferential tariffs will be finalized in the next round of the talks.

During the previous (fourth) round of the negotiations, which was also held in Tehran, the two countries discussed draft text of the agreement which is to reduce tariff rates by 25%-45%.

And in the fifth round of the talks held at the place of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), some clauses of the pact remaining from the previous talks were reviewed and discussed, said Hossein Bamiri, the secretary of TPO’s Iran-India Desk.



As reported by TPO, Iranian delegation participating in that round included Reza Seyed Aqazadeh, director general of TPO’s Asia-Pacific Office, Hossein Bamiri, the secretary of TPO’s Iran-India Desk, Mir-Hadi Seyedi, TPO’s advisor in international affairs, Zahed Talaban, international expert at TPO, and representatives from the ministries of agriculture and health, Veterinary Organization, National Standard Organization, and some other organizations.

Signing the preferential trade agreement lays a competition ground for Iranian companies to enter the Indian market, Bamiri said, adding, “In this round of the talks we tried to reduce tariffs for those commodity items that we have high potential in their production and export.”

“If tariffs are reduced and other extant barriers are removed, we can strengthen our entrance to the Indian market through the PTA”, the official emphasized.

Iran’s major exports to India are oil, fertilizers and chemicals while imports include cereals, tea, coffee, spices and organic chemicals.

Signing this PTA is of great significance for India, as the country will be able to diversify its export basket which is now limited to agricultural products, Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) Chairman Mohit Singla has declared.

“With a carefully designed PTA, strategic products such as leather, textiles and readymade garments, which attract very high duties in Iran can become naturally competitive and India will be able to leverage its export strengths,” The Economic Times reported quoting Singla.

Preferential trade between the two countries is a priority in India’s future plans for trade with Iran, according to Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra.

The two countries were supposed to finalize the preferential trade agreement by the end of 2019, a target that has not come true in due time.

While the agreement has not been reached at the projected time, the two sides resolve to finalize it as soon as possible to further promote bilateral trade.

ICCIMA head calls on govt. to promote private sector’s place in economy

1 → “We have repeatedly announced to the parliament and the parliament members that the private sector is ready to formulate the country’s economic strategy; we hope that the parliament will follow up on this issue,”

Last week, ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Ansari had also expressed the ICCIMA’s readiness for formulating an industrial strategy for the government.

The official had said that development of a strategy aligned with the country’s economic

potentials will lead to the optimization of activities and investments in the industry sector.

Elsewhere in the meeting, Shafeie mentioned the launching of the single-window business system in four provinces of the country in near future and said the single-window system is going to start operating in Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Isfahan and East Azerbaijan provinces.

During a ceremony on May 30, Tehran



Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) launched the single-window business system.

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony of the system, which was participated by Iran’s Finance Minister Farhad Dehghani, TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari said a single-window

system for the starting businesses would be a great step toward improving the business environment in the country.

The first step in improving the business environment is to establish a single-window to facilitate the process of starting a business, he stressed.

U.S. targets Iran-Venezuela trade, tanker market suffers a blow

1 → **Venezuela**

The Latin American country used to have the cheapest gasoline in the world and supplied fuel with subsidized prices for two decades, however, following the U.S. sanctions almost all of the country’s refineries shut down due to the lack of equipment and prepare maintenance.

The Venezuelan government has been forced to implement a rationing system and raise gasoline prices in recent months, while the gas stations in the country are currently under military control.

As a result, a black market is formed in which every liter of gasoline is sold for at least two dollars, and people have to wait for hours in long lines to get gas; people are the main victims of U.S.’s disruptive actions.

Washington is targeting people by blocking foreign revenues that could be used to import humanitarian goods, including food and medicine, Venezuela’s Foreign Minister,



Jorge Ariazza said on Tuesday.

Iran-Venezuela trade
Iran has repeatedly reported that it is

Iran and Venezuela’s legal right to be able to trade with each other and no country can impede the economic transactions between

Iran’s economy and the new parliament

transfer channels.

Second, Iran’s economy needs to stimulate demand. The boom in Tehran’s stock market in recent months has given the government the opportunity to increase its budget spending by issuing bonds and pursuing so-called counter-cyclical policies. As current spending and government investment increase, both households and businesses will benefit, and the economy will recover more quickly. The need for government remittances has risen sharply in the post-coronavirus era.

Third, Iran’s economy suffers from a lack of wealth tax and capital gains tax. Therefore, while reducing the corporate income tax rate, wealth tax and capital gains tax can be used to compensate for the budget deficit. This policy does not put pressure on producers and businesses while reducing budget dependence on oil and increasing economic resilience. This policy can also be recommended in order to make the distribution of income more equitable.

If there is an interaction between the new Iranian parliament and the government over the reform of Iran’s stagnant and inflationary conditions, the negative rate of economic growth in 2020 is expected to be lower than current estimates. Also, the reduction of political participation in the February 2020 parliamentary elections in Tehran may improve in Iranian next presidential election in 2021.

The following are the policy proposals for the inauguration of the Iranian Parliament:

1. Reducing monopolies, deregulating and improving the business environment, especially in the business start-up phase (in

the two countries which are both sanctioned by the U.S.

Iran also complained to the United Nations and summoned the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, who represents U.S. interests in the Islamic Republic, over possible measures Washington could take against the Iranian tankers.

Later on, in response to the U.S threats for military actions, Iran’s foreign ministry said that any U.S. attempt to halt trade with Venezuela would face an immediate and decisive response.

Regarding the recent sanctions, if the Islamic Republic decides to continue trade with Venezuela it would use vessels belonging to its own shipping line most of which are already sanctioned by the U.S., so the new sanctions, despite their negative impacts on Venezuela’s global trade, would not have a huge effect on the trade between Iran and its Latin American ally.

Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi and Mahdi Toghyani (New members of the Iranian Parliament, Professors of Economics)

It should be also mentioned that last week, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the newly-elected parliament speaker, wrote on his social media that the huge liquidity flowing into the stock market should be benefited for flourishing production and job creation.

He suggested four strategies for the prosperity of the stock market and promoting its role in materializing the motto of “Surge in Production”:

1- Encouraging and facilitating the listed companies’ capital increase
2- Expansion of financing through stock market
3- Increasing free float percentage
4- Facilitating the process for the new companies to be listed on the stock market

2,500 hectares of new greenhouses to be created by Mar. 2021

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran plans to create 2,500 hectares of new greenhouses in the country during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), which is named the year of “Surge in Production”, according to the operator of the plan for developing greenhouses.

As reported by the Agriculture Ministry, Habib Radfar said that the new greenhouses being created, the total greenhouse area in the country will reach 4,600 hectares.

Radfar also said that the newly created greenhouse area will reach 400 hectares by the end of the first quarter of the current year (June 20).

He further mentioned that of the 2,500 hectares projected for this year, some 1,200 hectares will be created in the current year, but will be put into operation in the first half of the next year (March 21-September 21, 2021).

As previously announced by the managing director of Ferdows Pars Agricultural and Livestock Holding, Iran is anticipated to produce 5,000 tons of fruits and vegetables in the greenhouses throughout the country in the current Iranian calendar year.

Azim Rajaei said that 80 percent of Iran’s greenhouse fruits and vegetables are exported.

Also as announced by the managing director of Iran’s Agricultural Parks Company (APC), over 7,250 hectares of land have been allocated to be developed as agricultural parks.

Some 1,500 hectares of fishery parks and 600 hectares of



livestock, poultry, and aquaculture parks are also planned to be inaugurated this year, Ali Ashraf Mansouri said.

He further noted that APC has registered a request for 40 trillion rials (about \$952 million) of bank facilities for implementing development projects.

The parks will be awarded to capable companies without any specific limitations, and facilities will also be provided for development in three areas of the greenhouse, aquaculture, as well as livestock and poultry.

Development of the country’s agricultural parks not only is going to create new job opportunities but also increas-

es the country’s non-oil exports and helps to preserve the environment and the national water and soil resources.

Back in March, Mansouri had announced that 8.3 trillion rials (about \$197.6 million) of facilities were paid for the development of agricultural parks across the country since the beginning of the past calendar year (March 21, 2019) up to March 11.

According to the official, the mentioned facilities were paid for development or construction of various agricultural parks including greenhouses, fisheries, and aquaculture, as well as livestock and poultry.

Iran has exported over \$5.8 billion worth of agricultural and foodstuff products in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), as announced by Head of Agriculture Ministry’s Planning and Economic Affairs Department Shahrokh Shajari.

According to the official, about 7.104 million tons of such products worth \$5.821 billion were exported to foreign destinations last year.

In the mentioned period, over 6.941 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff products worth \$6.392 billion were also imported into the country, Shajari added.

Watermelons, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and shallots were the top five exported products in the previous year in terms of weight, while in terms of value, pistachios, apples, tomatoes, pistachio kernels, and watermelons were the five major export products.

42 companies apply to build petro-refineries nationwide

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Financial and technical resumes of 42 Iranian companies which applied for construction of petro-refineries across the country have been received by the Oil Ministry for assessment, Deputy Oil Minister for Planning Houshang Falahatian said.

Nine of the mentioned companies have managed to also provide proof of funds (POF) documents to verify their financial capability for contribution to the projects, Falahatian told Shana.

Noting that the deadline for nominees' registration in the program for constructing petro-refineries on the country's coastal regions expired on June 6, the official noted that those companies whose registration hasn't been completed should submit the required documents and their POF by Tuesday.

He added that the Oil Ministry and the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) will begin the assessment of the received resumes after the mentioned deadline and the eligible companies will be selected to construct petro-refineries.



Back in March, Oil Ministry announced starting of a program for constructing petro-refinery plants in the southern coastal regions, calling on capable domestic companies to contribute to the program.

Following the announcement, 74 domestic

companies were authorized for participating in the mentioned program.

According to Falahatian, 117 companies had submitted their requests to the Oil Ministry among which 74 were initially approved.

Increasing the country's petro-refining capacity has recently become a priority for the Oil Ministry as a key defense mechanism against the impacts of the U.S. sanctions on the country's oil industry.

In early February, Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA)'s energy committee, Reza Padidar, had announced that the country's capable private sector is ready for participation in the oil ministry's refinery and petro-refinery projects.

Back in June 2019, the Research Center of Iran's parliament said in a report that petro-refineries are two times more profitable than refineries and suggested that National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s new refinery projects be defined as petro-refineries.

The report dubbed "Petro-refineries, their role in completing the oil value chain and the status in Iran's oil industry" stated that constructing petro-refineries is one of the most important ways to alleviate severe economic impacts of price fluctuations and achieve a much higher margin of profit.

Iran's daily gas production up 24 mcm



E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iran's daily production of natural gas currently stands at 674 million cubic meters (mcm), 24 mcm more than the figure for the same time last year, the spokesman of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said on Sunday.

The average gas production in the country stood at 650 mcm last year in the current month, Mohammad Asgari told Shana.

According to the official, the country's average daily gas consumption is currently 540 mcm.

Back in April, the NIGC Managing Director Hasan Montazer Torbati announced that gas production, transfer and distribution stayed stable in the country despite coronavirus outbreak.

The official also said that the country managed to have a stable gas production status despite the sanctions on its energy sector.

While elaborating on the company's performance during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), Montazer Torbati said, "Sanctions could not impede our gas production and we

had a good condition in gas supply in the past year."

NIGC managing director further noted that the company will make every endeavor to ensure stable gas supply in the current year as well.

According to the official, of the total produced gas, some 25 percent goes to household consumption, 37 percent is supplied to the power plants, 30 percent is used in the industry sector, four percent used as CNG and four percent is for other consumptions.

With the hot season approaching, NIGC is taking necessary measures to increase the gas production in order to keep the gas supply stable; since during the summer peak period the country's electricity consumption rises and as a result gas consumption by the country's power plants is also expected to increase.

Iran's daily gas consumption hit a record high of nearly 600 million cubic meters (mcm) last year.

Over 93.6 percent of Iran's population enjoy natural gas. Gas is supplied to 97 percent of people in the urban areas and 82 percent of people in the rural regions.

Daily electricity consumption breaks 55GW record



E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 55,071 megawatts (55.07 gigawatts) on Saturday to register a new record high, IIRB reported, citing the Energy Ministry's spokesman for electricity industry.

According to Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the country's electricity consumption increased by 1000 MW compared to the figure for the same date last year.

The rise in electricity consumption comes as last week the energy ministry had warned of the unprecedented increases in power consumption across the country.

"If electricity consumption continues the current upward trend, we will have to impose blackouts," Rajabi Mashhadi regretted.

According to Rajabi, even though the summer peak consumption period has not started yet, new consumption records have been reported in 15 provinces of the country.

The official mentioned Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Bushehr, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, and West and East Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Kerman, Zanjan, Qazvin, Yazd, and Sistan-Baluchestan as provinces that already broke the records of last year's peak electricity consumption.

Last week, the country's average daily

electricity consumption exceeded 53,000 MW registering again anew record.

Rajabi Mashhadi called on people to manage their consumption and try to limit the use of air conditioners during the night time in order to decrease electricity consumption and prevent blackouts during the summer period.

In early May, Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR) announced that the electricity consumption, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to May 6 increased by five percent compared to the same period last year.

According to Rajabi Mashhadi, despite the coronavirus outbreak which led to the closure of some industrial units, electricity consumption has been increasing in the country as the hot season is approaching.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new strategies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid.

OPEC gets chance to gain upper hand in long battle with shale

Once the global oil market emerges from the coronavirus crisis, it may be greeted by a surprising change: greater dependence on crude from OPEC.

For the time being, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies are relinquishing their share of the market in a bid to prop up crude prices, slashing millions of barrels of output as the pandemic crushes fuel demand.

They'd already spent the past three years forsaking sales volumes to offset the oil glut unleashed by burgeoning U.S. shale production. Before the pandemic, forecasters were projecting that the group would need to cut production further in coming years.

Yet the current upheaval could give OPEC another chance. As the oil-price collapse chokes off investment in new supplies around the world, from the mega-projects of Big Oil to drilling by U.S. shale wildcatters, some analysts see the cartel reviving its battered standing.

"From the point of view of oil-market share, OPEC will be a clear winner in the coming years," said Michele Della Vigna, head of energy industry research at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. "Under-investment in the rest of the industry ultimately plays to their favor."

■ OPEC revival?

It's a message that the organization should still treat with caution. Warnings abounded during the last decade that the plunge in investment which followed the 2014 oil-market crash would leave a supply gap for OPEC to fill. But the shortage never materialized as American shale proved surprisingly resilient.

Instead, the 60-year-old organization -- led by Saudi Arabia and other West Asian exporters -- found itself in late 2016 forming an alliance with erstwhile rivals, such as Russia, to curtail production. Last week this 23-nation network, known as OPEC+, reaffirmed it will keep output capped all the way through to 2022. The group's monitoring committee meets again on June 18 for another review of the market.

■ Shifting view

It's too early to tell whether the latest predictions of a supply



gap will prove unfounded, or whether this time really is different. But initial indications do suggest that OPEC could re-emerge from the current round of cutbacks in a stronger position.

Before this year's price rout, market-watchers projected that demand for the organization's crude would dwindle as its rivals kept on growing.

In an annual outlook published in November, OPEC itself predicted that such demand would sink 7% by 2023, squeezed by both the relentless flood of American shale and new offshore supplies from Guyana and Norway. The International Energy Agency forecast that the volume required from OPEC wouldn't rebound to last year's levels until 2024.

Now the picture appears to be shifting. Goldman Sachs forecasts that this "call on OPEC" may instead climb roughly 17% between 2019 and 2025, reaching 34 million barrels a day. Rystad Energy A/S, a consultant based in Oslo, and Citigroup Inc. have also turned projections for demand declines into estimates of growth.

■ U.S. decline

"Maybe it's a reprieve," said Ed Morse, head of commodities research at Citigroup. "The big threat from U.S. production

growth of 1 million barrels a day per year ad infinitum -- or at least through 2025 -- is no longer present in the way it was."

The price crash is upending the Trump administration's ambitions of American "energy dominance." U.S. crude production has plunged by 15% in the past two months, to just over 11 million barrels a day, according to government data. With spending in the shale sector slashed in half, according to IEA estimates, worse may be yet to come.

For Goldman, an even bigger issue than the shale slowdown is a 60% decline over the past five years in annual investment in long-term projects -- which particularly sustain output from OPEC's rivals -- to about \$37 billion. This will finally be felt next year, bringing supply growth outside OPEC to a halt, the bank says.

This year's economic slump is only tightening the squeeze, reducing overall oil and gas investment by almost \$250 billion, or about a third, according to the IEA. Oil majors such as BP Plc and Exxon Mobil Corp. have announced billions of dollars of cuts in capital expenditure.

■ Shale lifeline

The risk remains that OPEC's current strategy of propping up oil prices with production cuts could throw rivals a lifeline.

Brent crude has more than doubled since late April to about \$40 a barrel, and there are signs that U.S. shale drillers are seizing on the opportunity. EOG Resources Inc., America's largest shale-focused producer, and Parsley Energy Inc. are ramping operations back up.

Nevertheless, investment delays amid the downturn have paved the way for a supply shortage in future years, said Per Magnus Nysveen, head of analysis at Rystad. In that environment, OPEC nations like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates -- with much lower production costs and massive hydrocarbon resources -- may be best placed to grab market share.

"The deferrals in investments in the current downturn have created the conditions for an under-supplied 2025," Nysveen said. The West Asian OPEC countries "will be crucial to bridge the balances."

Ammonia unit of Lordegan Petrochemical Plant goes online

TEHRAN (Shana) — The CEO of Lordegan Petrochemical Company announced the launch of the ammonia unit of the complex in this year, which is named the year of "Surge in Production".

Mohsen Mahmoudi announced this, and pointed out that the project has been launched with the aim of producing 677,000 tons of ammonia, Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) reported.



The urea and ammonia units of the plant are designed in three stages; the first stage is utility and is fully operational. The second phase is the production of ammonia, which is now in operation and is in the final stages of urea production with a capacity of about one million tons per year, which, God willing, will be operational next month, he said.

Mahmoudi said inauguration of the unit was important because of the absence of foreign contractors in the project.

Referring to the positive effects of the project for the region's economic development, he said: "With the full opening of this petrochemical plant, 600 people will be directly employed and 2,000 people will be hired indirectly."

Lordegan Petrochemical Company has been built in a 100-hectare land in the Felard region in Lordegan city, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province.

India's oil demand has a long and painful road to recovery ahead

India's oil demand has rebounded from levels witnessed during the lockdown, prompting refiners to raise throughput, but consumption will struggle to recover to year-ago levels in coming months and keep overall demand numbers for 2020 in the red, analysts told S&P Global Platts.

With the economy struggling and COVID-19 cases rising, domestic demand for petrol and diesel -- they together make up for the bulk of the oil products basket -- will remain subdued for the rest of the year. This means that India may have a problem of plenty at hand as far as oil products are concerned, forcing its refiners to seek overseas markets.

"Outlook for oil demand in India is not looking good. High unemployment and poor economic outlook will cap demand growth, and yet refineries are running to meet their annual target. So product exports will remain high," said Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at Energy Analytics.

According to the latest data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, India's oil products demand in May fell 23 percent year on year to 14.65 million mt, or 3.7 million bpd, reflecting subdued economic activity during the lockdown period. But on a month-on-month basis, overall fuel demand in May rebounded 47.4 percent from April due to partial relaxation in the lockdown.

In May, demand for diesel fell 29.4 percent year on year to 5.5 million mt as most commercial vehicles were off the road. Gasoline demand declined 35.4 percent year on year to 1.77 million mt. Jet fuel demand dropped 83.7 percent year on year to 111,000 mt as commercial aircraft were grounded.

But on a month-on-month basis, diesel demand grew by 69 percent, gasoline by 81.8 percent and jet fuel by 61.3 percent in May.

■ Not out of the woods yet

Platts Analytics expects India's oil demand in the second quarter to contract over 1 million bpd year on year, before improving and taking the H2 fall to 90,000 bpd. It expects oil demand to fall 400,000 bpd for the whole of 2020.

"Although the staggered easing of lockdowns from second half of May has provided some relief to state refiners, targeted restrictions will continue to weigh heavily on oil demand throughout H2 2020. Some states are even looking to re-impose lockdowns to control the spread of the virus," said Senthil Kumaran, consultant at Facts Global Energy.

India's economic growth slumped to 3.1 percent in the first quarter, marking its slowest pace in 11 years, due partly to the impact of the lockdown that began March 25. India's manufacturing PMI plunged to 27.4 in April from 51.8 in March, before improving slightly to 30.8 in May.

However, in the lockdown period, India's LPG demand has been a bright spot, mainly due to free distribution of cooking gas cylinders among poor families. In May, LPG demand was at 2.32 million mt, up 12.8 percent on the year, while it was 8.7 percent higher over April levels.

Sanjiv Singh, chairman of Indian Oil Corp., told S&P Global Platts in a recent interview that LPG would witness robust year-on-year demand growth of 6 percent-7 percent in 2020. LPG demand increased as home cooking rose sharply during the nationwide lockdown. In addition, the government's decision to free give LPG cylinder refills to more than 80 million poor households will support LPG demand.

■ Recovering throughput

Analysts said India's fuel demand would display a recovery path for the second straight month in June as the lockdown is mainly restricted to specific zones.

State-owned Indian Oil Corp. is aiming to increase throughput to 90 percent of capacity across its nine refineries by the end of June as economic activity gathers steam following the easing of lockdown measures.

IOC's crude throughput stood at 83 percent as on June 10, with consumption of all petroleum products combined almost doubling in May from April, the company said in a statement June 10.

"With the gradual lifting in lockdown restrictions, several downstream industries in the petrochemicals sector have resumed operations from late April and product evacuation from refinery stocks has increased gradually," IOC said.

Despite the gradual revival in demand, exports will continue to rise as the domestic consumption is unlikely to reach pre-lockdown levels. May data from India's oil product exports is not out yet but April data showed exports of refined oil products jumping 36.9 percent year on year to 6.04 million mt. For the January-April period, oil product exports rose 16.3 percent to 21.64 million mt.

"Gasoil exports have remained at elevated levels in May and June, but shrinking product outlets in the export market will continue to pressure crude runs of private refiners in the coming months," FGE's Kumaran said.

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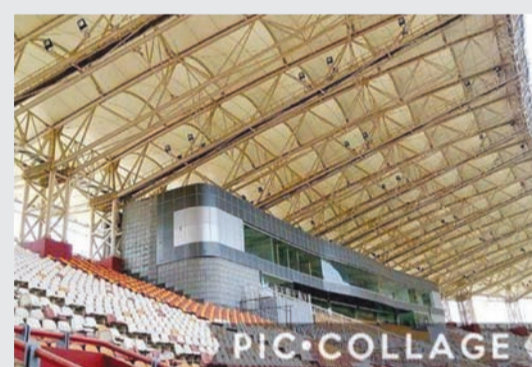


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Israeli colonial projects in West Bank and Jerusalem

Israel has its roots in a colonial project that has modernized its face but continues to subject Palestinians to military occupation, land dispossession and unequal rights.

72 years after its establishment, the wounds of the Nakba are still open, as Israel prohibits over five million refugees the right of return - while guaranteeing citizenship to anyone who can demonstrate Jewish ancestry.

According to Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, the forced displacement of Palestinians amounts to ethnic cleansing.

"The tale of Palestine from the beginning until today is a simple story of colonialism and dispossession, yet the world treats it as a multifaceted and complex story - hard to understand and even harder to solve", affirms Pappé in the 2015 book *On Palestine*, co-written with American scholar Noam Chomsky.

The treaties partitioned the West Bank into three areas: area A under Palestinian Authority (PA) control, area B under joint Israeli-Palestinian administration, and area C, run by Israel. The

accords, which should have paved the way for the creation of a Palestinian state, instead led to increased Israeli presence in the territory through the expansion of Zionist settlements.

Scholar Edward Said has pointed out that Palestinian leaders had effectively given up the right to self-determination in most of the West Bank's territory in exchange for Israel's acknowledgement of the PA, and referred to the agreement as "an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles".

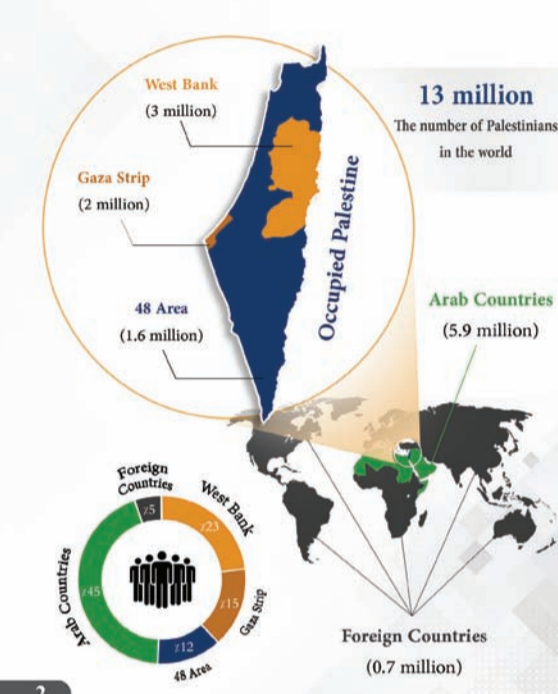
Oslo's failure is particularly evident in area C, a scarcely populated district comprising more than 60% of the West Bank and most of the territory's natural resources, where Israel retains exclusive control over law enforcement, planning and construction.

Moreover, Israeli forces are in charge of all borders within and around the West Bank. These arrangements, which have been repeatedly condemned as attempts to de facto annex area C, begin to scratch the surface of what the Israeli occupation looks like today.

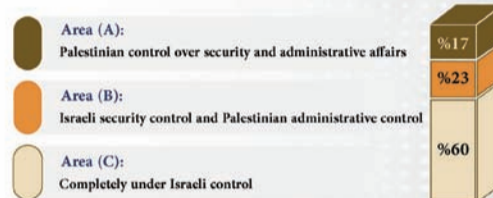
Palestine in Modern History



Palestine Demographics



According to the Oslo Accords, West Bank has been divided into three areas:



%87

of West Bank residents live in area A and B, whereas only 13% live in Area C.

Area C includes the Jordan Valley, natural reserves, water springs, industrial zones, Israeli settlements, and most of the Apartheid Wall.

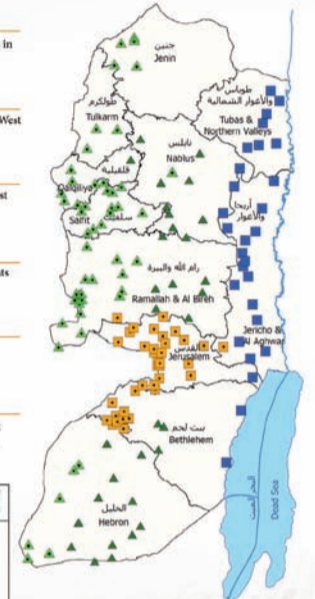


The West Bank has been fragmented into more than 200 geographically disconnected areas. Actual control is in the hand of Israeli occupation.

Israeli Colonization in the West Bank & Jerusalem

- 1967**
Israel has started establishing settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem.
- 160**
The number of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem up till now.
- 298**
The number of Israeli outposts in the West Bank and Jerusalem up till now.
- 2200 km²**
Under the control of the Israeli settlements of West Bank and Jerusalem.
- %39**
of West Bank and Jerusalem is under the control of the Israeli settlements.
- 700,000**
The number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Jerusalem by the end of 2019.

Israeli Settlement	Average number of settlers in each hub
East hub	250
Mountain hub	1,860
West hills hub	3,930
Greater Jerusalem hub	10,600



The Increasing Number of Israeli Settlers in the West Bank & Jerusalem



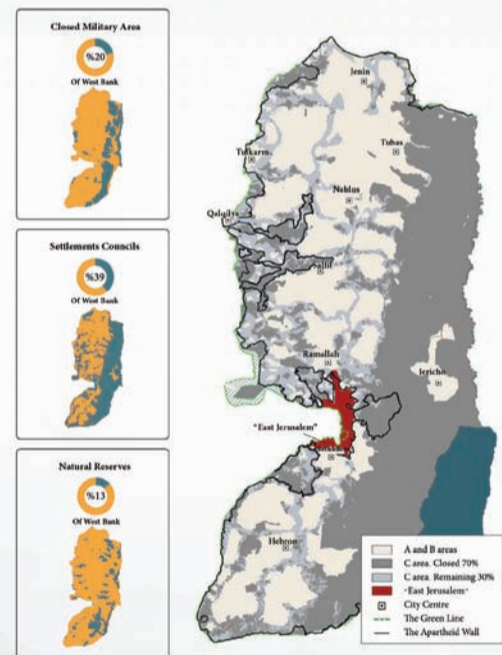
Pre-Oslo (1967 - 1993)



Post-Oslo (1994 - 2020)



Israeli Colonial Project in Area "C" of West Bank



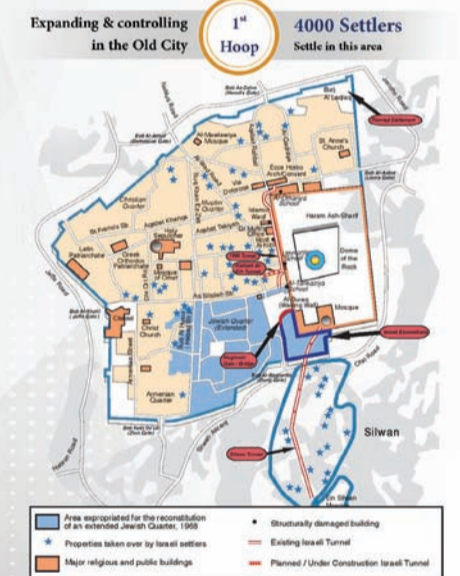
Israeli Colonial Project in the Jordan Valley

Zoning of lands in the Jordan Valley & Dead Sea area

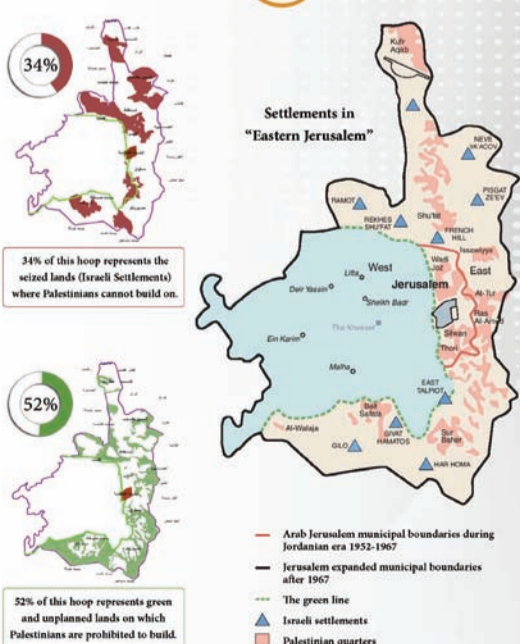


Israeli Colonial Project in Jerusalem

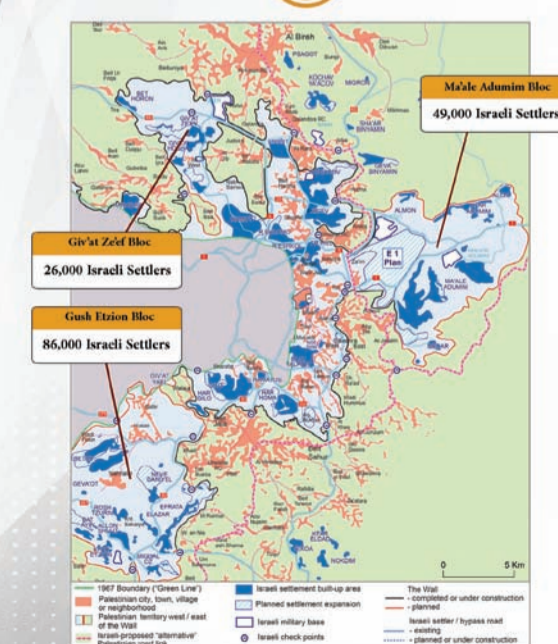
In 1948, the Western part of Jerusalem was occupied by Israel, and in 1967, it occupied the eastern part of the city. The occupation besieged Jerusalem applying the three-hoop strategy:



The Expanded Jerusalem municipal boundaries after 1967



Boundaries of the Greater Jerusalem Project



Israeli Colonial Violations in 2019



Map of "Future Palestine" according to "Deal of the Century"



References:

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Excavations at Iranian mosque unearth new evidence on life in early Islamic era

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Some historical objects have been unearthed during a round of archaeological excavation, which is currently underway in a centuries-old congregational mosque in Rasht, the capital of Gilan province, northern Iran.

"Excavations inside the historical Safi Mosque in Rasht led to the discovery of objects bearing historical values appearing to have been found beneath Islamic-era tombs," deputy provincial tourism chief Vali Jahani announced on Saturday.



"The objects include a glass scent-bottle, a handmade pottery bowl, and other pieces of glassware. And the placement of these objects in the lower layers of Islamic-era tombs shows the importance of this historical area," the official said, CHTN reported.

Earlier this month, several ancient glazed tiles were unearthed beneath the mosque while a team of restorers was digging into its mihrab. Mihrab is a semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque that points out the qibla, the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca and hence the direction that Muslims should face when praying.

Referring to a restoration project, which initially led to such discoveries in the mosque, the official explained "The restoration project has been temporarily suspended to leave the ground for archaeological surveys."

"Given that the discovered objects will be very useful in the dating of the city of Rasht, so fragments of these works will be sent to advanced laboratories in the country to obtain the absolute antiquity of the objects, and dating will be conducted via the thermoluminescent approach."

"According to the present evidence, these historical objects discovered from the Safi Mosque belong to the Ilkanind and Timurid periods," he concluded.

In the month of Farvardin (March 20 – April 19) a trench measuring 1.5 m by 1.5 m was carved in the mosque's shabestan (an underground space that can be usually found in the traditional architecture of mosques in ancient Iran), which resulted in recognizing some additional sections.

Safi Mosque, also known as Sefid and Shahidiyeh Mosque, which is widely considered as the oldest standing monuments in Rasht, was reportedly established before Shah Ismail, the Safavid monarch, assumed power (in 1501).

Fire incident causes no harm to historical Susa

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A fire broke out at the UNESCO-registered site of Susa in the southwestern Khuzestan province on Friday, but fortunately the incident has inflicted no damage to the historical site.

Susa was once the capital of the Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the Achaemenian king Darius I and his successors from 522 BC.

Part of Susa is still inhabited as Shush on a strip of land between the rivers Shaour (a tributary of the Karkheh) and Dez.



Weed growth and dry vegetation, as well as heat and wind, caused the fire, cultural heritage expert Mohammad Darvishi said on Sunday, ISNA reported.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country and the lockdown of the historical sites, the small number of employees, who attended their workplace in the site, couldn't monitor the whole area every day, he added.

Although the volume of fire was too high due to strong winds, it was contained and successfully extinguished by firefighters, he concluded.

Earlier last week, fires broke out at the ancient Hegmataneh Hill in the west-central Iranian province of Hamedan and Rab'-e Rashidi, a 14th-century educational complex in northwestern East Azarbaijan province.

In both incidents, fire inflicted no damages to the historical sites and dry vegetation and hot weather were announced as the causes of fire.

It seems that the way these historical sites are managed and maintained needs to be reconsidered because even if the fire did not cause any damage to them, according to the officials, it has certainly destroyed their visual beauty, which is not good for the tourism industry of the country.

Excavations have uncovered evidence of continual habitation dating back since about 5000 BC. The earliest urban structures there date around 4000 BC.

According to UNESCO, "the excavated architectural monuments include administrative, residential, and palatial structures" and the site contains several layers of urban settlement dating from the 5th millennium BC through the 13th century CE.

Relics unearthed from the region demonstrates that even the earliest potteries and ceramics in Susa were of unsurpassed quality, decorated with birds, mountain goats, and other animals designs.

After the fall of the Achaemenid empire and the reign of Alexander the Great, who married in Susa, the city became part of the Seleucid empire. It was now called Seleucia on the Eulaeus. A palace in Greek style was erected, next to Darius' palace. The administrative center, however, was in the southern part of the city, where nearly all Greek and Parthian inscriptions were discovered. In the Parthian age, the city minted coins.

Coronavirus may move travel into 'the realm of luxury' in Iran

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

Apart from the expenses and their certain effects, many domestic experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Earlier in April, the Iranian government announced it will bail out those which are grappling with fiscal problems by offering loans with a 12-percent interest rate. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also suggested a rescue package for tourism businesses.

The government has also allocated a 750-trillion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises suffered by the coronavirus concerns.

On April 20, Iran lifted intercity travel bans days after President Hassan Rouhani unveiled a "Smart Social Distancing Initiative" as a new phase of measures to prevent the virus spread. Over the past couple of months, many countries, including Iran, imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, incoming and outgoing flights have been suspended, and road travels restricted to a great extent. Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its



Volunteers use sprays to disinfect the ground around Azadi Square in Tehran on March 27.

numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed

on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Archaeological survey to offer new glimpses of troglodytic architecture in northern Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A team of Iranian archaeologists has started work on troglodyte shelters in a northern Iranian region, believing that they are still giving up long-buried secrets.

"The first season of the field research, which is aimed to review and identify a troglodytic architecture – locally named Kafer Kelli (infidel's chamber) – located near the city of Amol, Mazandaran province, has been commenced through a systematic archaeological approach," CHTN quoted Iranian archaeologist Mey-sam Fallah as saying on Saturday.

Stretching in an area of approximately 50 km, this Dastkand (Hand-carved) caves are an attractive and unique collection in Iran, which is located on the large body of the middle Alborz mountain range in Haraz Valley, Larijan district of Amol city. They are dotted between the village of Ab-e Ask and the village of Punjab in the city of Amol (south to north or vice versa), Fallah, who leads the archaeological survey, noted.

According to sources, most of these hand-carved colonies have several rooms with light entrances, surveillance locations, restrooms in upper floors, and kitchens.



The archaeologist underlined that necessary efforts are being made to examine and document these hand-carved shelters to shed new light on their history and function, which have been completely neglected.

"These unique shelters are much more impressive than many other rocky structures and hand-carved examples in our country in terms of density and concentration in the sole region. Some of them can only be reached through rock climbing,

some are located in the vicinity of rural areas and are easily accessible, and finally, some are in the foothills and intermountain valleys of the Haraz Valley."

One of the important measures of this project, which is carried out by archaeologists and photogrammetrists, is aerial mapping and three-dimensional digital modeling being done with the help of a photogrammetry drone, he explained.

"After all of our assumptions are tested and after all our reliable data are analyzed with a look at similar examples, then we can comment more coherently and accurately on the history of these troglodyte shelters," he concluded.

Iran is a haven for ancient troglodytic architecture which is somewhat forgotten though they are filled with life and creativity. The northwest Kandovan village is one of the most famous examples of troglodytic architecture in the country; its ice-cream cone-shaped homes are resembling that of Turkey's Cappadocia.

In October 2018, the country hosted the 3rd International Troglodytic Architecture Conference in which tens of experts, researches, and academia discussed troglodyte-associated architecture, culture, and technology.

Zanjan's first hospital to turn into museum

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Shahid Beheshti Hospital, the first hospital built in the northwestern Zanjan province, will be turned into a health museum, provincial tourism chief has said.

The hospital, which was built in 1937 during the First Pahlavi period (1925-1941), was known as Shahnaz Hospital at the time.

The hospital is being restored in collaboration with Zanjan University of Medical Sciences, and the museum is expected to be inaugurated in the near future, Amir Arjmand said on Sunday, CHTN reported.

Having a health museum can help people to get acquainted with the province's medical history and difficulties and problems the hospital staff were facing



at the time, he added.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

In late January, Zanjan was designated as a "world city of filigree" by the World Crafts Council after the WCC assessors visited various craft workshops, stores, exhibits, and bazaars of a city in a two-day itinerary in last December.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting fine, pliable metal threads and soldering them at their points of contact with each other with a metal groundwork.

Millennia-old footwear: the art of Givoh-weaving in Shiraz

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Photos depict craftspeople making pairs of Givoh -- traditional footwear being produced in the Iranian plateau for millennia -- at a workshop in Shiraz, southern Iran, June 9, 2020.

Also called Kalash, particularly in western regions of the country, the footwear used to be very popular all over Iran till a couple of decades ago. This lightweight and breathable footwear was originally intended to wear by men, however, in some regions, they are welcomed by women too in the hot summertime.

Givoh is usually made from carpet yarn, leather, and other raw materials so that it lets the air circulate from its tiny pores. Such shoes traditionally come in white color, but one can find them in red, blue, orange, and black as well.



Iran first country in region enjoying 100% voluntary blood donation

➡ More than 85 percent of all donated blood worldwide are used to produce blood products, while the rate is 65 percent in Eastern Mediterranean countries. Iran ranks among the highest-income countries in terms of converting more than 97 percent of the blood donated by people to plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP), he emphasized.

Only 55 of 171 countries produce PDMP through the fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country. A total of 90 countries reported that all PDMP are imported, 16 countries reported that no PDMP was used during the reporting period, and 10 countries did not respond to the question, according to WHO.

He went on to note that Iran currently has the highest blood donation rate in the Eastern Mediterranean region; So that out of 9.9 million blood donation units in this region, more than two million belongs to Iran.

Also, the index of blood donation is 25 per 1,000 populations; While in the member states of the Eastern Mediterranean region, this number is 14.9 per 1000, he stated.

■ Risk of blood unsafety almost zero in Iran

Blood safety in Iran is nearly 100 percent and the risks of blood transfusion are almost zero, Hajibeigi said.

All blood donations are screened for infections before use by the screening of first-time blood donors, vaccination of continuous donors against hepatitis B, and increasing the quality of screening tests and new laboratory



methods, he also noted.

Although access to safe blood is still a privilege of the few, Iran's blood safety is on par with European countries and higher than the United States, he highlighted.

It should be noted that last year, the continuous blood donation index has reached nearly 60 percent, he stated, adding, the Continuous Blood Donation Index is one of the indicators of the promotion of blood transfusion centers in the world.

Even in some provinces of the country, such as Semnan, the index reaches up to 80 percent, he also highlighted.

■ World Blood Donor Day

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated across the world to raise awareness about safe blood donations and to thank those who voluntarily donate blood to save the lives of others.

The day is celebrated on June 14 to mark the birthday anniversary of scientist Karl

Landsteiner who won the Nobel Prize for his discovery of the ABO blood group system.

Donating blood is not only a good cause but it also has some benefits on health. For example, donating blood can protect your heart as doing that at regular intervals can reduce the viscosity of your blood. Notably, increased viscosity can limit the blood flow to the heart and can cause organ failure or a heart attack.

■ Blood safety and availability

According to WHO, of the 118.5 million blood donations collected globally, 40% of these are collected in high-income countries, home to 16% of the world's population.

In low-income countries, up to 54 % of blood transfusions are given to children under 5 years of age; whereas, in high-income countries, the most frequently transfused patient group is over 60 years of age, accounting for up to 75% of all transfusions.

Based on samples of 1000 people, the blood donation rate is 31.5 donations in high-income countries, 15.9 donations in upper-middle-income countries, 6.8 donations in lower-middle-income countries, and 5.0 donations in low-income countries.

An increase of 7.8 million blood donations from voluntary unpaid donors has been reported from 2013 to 2018. In total, 79 countries collect over 90% of their blood supply from voluntary unpaid blood donors; however, 56 countries collect more than 50% of their blood supply from family/replacement or paid donors.

Bakhtegan wetland's water intake up by 900%



ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Bakhtegan wetland in southern Iran hit a record high of 894 percent increase in water intake over the Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (April 20-May 20) compared to the same period last year, the highest rate among Iranian wetlands, according to satellite monitoring.

Hamid Zahrabi, head of the department of environment of Fars Province, said on Sunday that 15.68 square kilometers of Bakhtegan had been filled with water during Ordibehesht last year, while it increased to 155.9 square kilometers in the current year, IRNA reported.

Bakhtegan Lake is a Salt Lake with a surface area of 3,500 square kilometers it was once Iran's second-largest lake. It was fed by the Kor River. Several dams on the river had significantly reduced water

flow into the lake, increasing its salinity and endangering the lake's populations of flamingos and other migratory birds.

With heavy rainfall raising Bakhtegan wetland level by 30 percent, flocks of flamingos migrated to the wetland nesting and laying eggs, however, temperature raise along with high evaporation resulted in drainage of the wetland which put the lives of many flamingo hatchlings at risk in July.

Based on the latest data published by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization, since the current crop year (September 23, 2018), Fars province recorded 422.2 millimeters of rainfall compared to 366.9 millimeters in the previous water year, demonstrating a 15.1-percent rise. The amount also raised in comparison to the long-term average of 295.8 mm, amounting to 42.7 percent.

MAP grants \$600,000 aid to Iranian families affected by COVID-19



SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Global charity organization Moms Against Poverty (MAP) has sent a shipment worth 25 billion rials (nearly \$600,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to help financially struggling families affected by the coronavirus in Iran, Karim Hemmati, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), said on Sunday.

Moms Against Poverty is a global non-profit organization with the mission to nurture and educate underprivileged children to their fullest potential so that one day they can contribute and lead within their own communities and break the cycle of poverty.

First, they address children's basic needs, such as food, shelter, and health-care. Then, using education and vocational programs, MAP provides them

with the tools and environment they need to thrive and become successful members of their community and the world at large.

"So far, 144 international shipments of humanitarian aid have been provided to the Red Crescent Society from various countries," IRNA quoted Hemmati as saying.

In total, 1.1 trillion rials (around \$26 million) of public and charitable donations have been provided to the IRCS so far, he concluded.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 187,427 on Sunday, of whom 8,837 have died and 148,674 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,472 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 107 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

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Camera traps picture Asiatic cheetah, Persian leopards in Semnan

An Asiatic cheetah and three Persian leopards have been observed through camera traps in Shahrood county in north central Semnan province, Amir Abdous, the provincial department of environment chief, has announced.

"Cameras have recently captured photos of an Asiatic cheetah and three Persian leopards around watering troughs," he said.

All are mature and physically healthy, which is so precious, Abdous further highlighted, Mehr reported on Wednesday. Referring to ten camera traps installed in the area by the environmentalists to determine the exact distribution of the species, he said that Asiatic cheetah and Persian leopard are two invaluable species which are endangered despite being among umbrella and flagship species.

تصویر برداری همزمان از سه پلنگ و یک یوزپلنگ در شاهرود

مدیرکل حفاظت محیط زیست استان سمنان از تصویربرداری سه پلنگ ایرانی و یک یوزپلنگ آسیایی در پارک ملی توران شاهرود خبر داد. امیر عبدوس در گفتگو با خبرنگار مهر، تاکید کرد: تصاویر ضبط شده از سه قلاده پلنگ توسط دوربین تله‌ای در کنار یکی از آبشخورهای این پارک ملی تهیه شده است، تصاویر شاهد سلامت و وضعیت جسمی مناسب این گونه دارد.

مدیرکل محیط زیست استان سمنان گفت: نصب ده دوربین تله‌ای توسط یکی از عکاسان و دوستداران طبیعت در توران همچنین ثبت تصویر یک قلاده یوزپلنگ آسیایی را نیز به دنبال داشت، تاکید کرد: پویایی جمعیت جانوران وحشی در یک زیست بوم در گرو حفظ گونه‌های شاخص آن زیست بوم به‌خصوص گونه‌های چتر و پرچم است و پلنگ به عنوان گونه چتر و یوزپلنگ به عنوان گونه پرچم در این پارک ملی نقش بسزایی در پویایی جمعیت سایر گونه‌ها به‌خصوص طعمه‌های خود دارند.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ish”

■ **Meaning:** sort of or similar to

■ **For example:** One of the twins is athletic while the other is more **bookish**.

PHRASAL VERB

Pick somebody/something out

■ **Meaning:** to choose or recognize someone or something from a group

■ **For example:** She was able to pick out her father at the other side of the room.

IDIOM

Dab hand at something

■ **Explanation:** If you're a dab hand at something, you're very good at doing it

■ **For example:** Why don't you call Suzy? She's a dab hand at planning parties.

It will take more than a few cycle lanes to make green, pandemic-proof cities

As large swathes of the world start to reopen after weeks of coronavirus lockdown, urban planners are rethinking how to build future-proof cities.

The lockdown emptied the roads and cleared the skies over the world's largest and most polluted cities. It opened a window on what cleaner cities could look, sound and smell like, according to the Climate Change News website.

At its peak in early April, the slowdown of road, rail and maritime transport contributed the largest drop in global emissions – just under half of a 17% daily fall in CO2 emissions, according to a study published last month in Nature.

Now restrictions are lifting, while the risk of infection puts people off public transport, a shift to private cars threatens to send emissions rocketing. Global emissions have already bounced back to just 5% below pre-pandemic daily levels.

City authorities have a challenge to make sure commuters can travel to work at a safe distance from each other.

Many mayors have promised to rebuild greener and fairer. From Mexico City to London and Bogota to Milan, plans for hundreds of kilometres of new bike lanes have been announced – strengthening a pre-pandemic movement to reduce car dominance.

Nearly 40 members of C40, a network of major cities working to address climate change, committed to use the recovery to drive investments in “excellent public services” and increasing community resilience against future threats, including climate change.

This will require a holistic approach, going much further than a few cycle lanes.

“Cycle lanes shouldn't be an end in themselves – they are a means to live differently,” Carlos Moreno, scientific director of the Entrepreneurship, Territory, Innovation chair at Sorbonne University in Paris and a planning advisor to mayor Anne Hidalgo, told Climate Home News.

Moreno believes the transformation of cities needs to align with a pathway to holding global warming to 1.5C, the tougher target of the Paris Agreement. To achieve that, the best available science says global emissions need to nearly halve by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

“We have 10 years to radically transform our cities,” he said.

To live within today's climate, biodiversity and public health constraints, Moreno argues for an overhaul of urban design to bring essential services closer to people's homes. People get around by foot or cycle and streets are redesigned not merely as places of transit but as “living spaces”.

The pandemic compelled local authorities in densely populated areas to reclaim streets for public use: entire road sections were pedestrianised in Tel Aviv, pavements enlarged in Auckland, parking spaces became bikes lanes in Tirana, and restaurants were encouraged to use outdoor spaces for dining in Vilnius.

Janette Sadik-Khan, former transport commissioner for New York city, said the move would have been considered “almost revolutionary” a decade ago.

“This is a historic moment when cities can change course,” she wrote in a report by the National Association of City Transportation Officials which she chairs. “Empty lanes... form the outline of the future cities we need to build,” she said.

While there is clear public support for policies that would maintain air quality improvements, private cars are still perceived as the Covid-safe transport option.

“It would be naïve to think the pandemic is going to lead to the death of the car, in a context where public transport is associated with risk,” said Tim Schwanen, director of the Transport Studies Unit at Oxford University's School of Geography and the Environment.

The swing back to private cars is a serious concern, he told CHN. In the absence of holistic transport policies, it could cause emissions to rebound sharply.

A spike in air pollution would aggravate any future respiratory pandemic. Researchers established a link between long-term exposure to PM2.5 air pollution, much of which comes from diesel cars, and a higher death rate from Covid-19.

Yet in Wuhan, ground zero for the pandemic, car sales boomed to unprecedented levels when the city reopened after being sealed off for weeks.

An Ipsos survey in March found 66% of Chinese respondents used private cars after lockdown, compared with 34% before the outbreak. Use of buses and public transit dropped from 56% to 24%.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Climate change

(December 24, 2003)

U.S. scientists have reported that humans have had a significant influence on the earth's climate over the last ten thousand years. This report by Richard Black:

Over timescales of thousands of years, the Earth goes through a **natural cycle** of warmer and colder periods, **driven by** changes in heat coming from the Sun. Professor William Ruddiman from the University of Virginia has now calculated that if the Earth had followed its **natural cycle** over the last ten thousand years, it ought to have got steadily colder. It hasn't because, he believes, human activities have been keeping the temperature **steady**. “What should have happened with the natural climate is it should have **cooled substantially**. And instead humans just started adding **greenhouse gases** to the atmosphere at a rate which cancelled most, but not quite all, of that natural cooling; and so it's a combination of a natural cooling mostly cancelled by a human warming.”

Our **ancestors** started adding the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide **principally** by cutting down trees for farming; whereas methane production started with **wet farming** of rice. Professor Ruddiman believes this ten-thousand year warming added almost a degree Celsius to the average temperature.

■ **Words**
timescales: periods of time set for development or completion of something
over timescales of: over time periods of
goes through a natural cycle: follows a pattern which has a regular rhythm
driven by: here, led by
steady: here, the same
cooled substantially: cooled by a large amount
greenhouse gases: gases which cause the earth's atmosphere to warm up. A greenhouse is a building made of glass used for growing plants.
ancestors: here, a general term meaning people who have lived on the planet before now
principally: mainly
wet farming: here, rice grown in water

(Source: BBC)

Putin says Russia will be able to counter hypersonic weapons

Russia will soon be in a position to counter hypersonic arms deployed by other countries, President Vladimir Putin said Sunday, adding that Moscow was ahead of the United States in developing new types of weapons.

According to daily Star, Hypersonic glide vehicles can steer an unpredictable course and manoeuvre sharply as they approach impact. They also follow a much flatter and lower trajectory than ballistic missiles.

Washington and Moscow have been expanding their defense capabilities as some Cold War-era arms control agreements collapsed during worsening of Russia's ties with the West.

Last year Russia deployed its first hypersonic nuclear-capable missiles, while the Pentagon has a goal of fielding hypersonic capabilities in the early to mid-2020s.

"It's very likely that we will have means to combat hypersonic weapons by the time the world's leading countries have such weapons," Putin was quoted as saying by the RIA news agency.

While Russia and the United States had broadly the same number of nuclear weapons, Putin said Moscow was ahead in advanced arms development.

Lebanon PM says coup attempt fell apart after violent riots

Lebanon's Prime Minister Hassan Diab has condemned the recent violent street protests, saying they were an attempt by opponents to overthrow his government and deepen a currency crisis in the debt-ridden country.

Diab made the remarks in a televised address late Saturday after demonstrations rocked the cities of Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon on Thursday, with participants calling for the government's resignation< Press TV reported.

Diab said his political opponents were stirring unrest in a bid to thwart the government's fight against corruption.

The unrest was "a programmed campaign organized by parties known by name and method of thinking that are not deterred from using any method to shatter the image of others," Diab said.

However, the Lebanese administration enjoys "a high percentage of citizens' confidence, which has disturbed many of those who bet on its failure" and try to pump "lies and rumors to prevent the government from removing the rubble under which the secrets of corruption disappear," he added.

Diab took office in January with Hezbollah's backing, putting an end to a nine-month political deadlock amid an economic crisis and nationwide protests against the nation's ruling class.

In his televised address Saturday, the Lebanese premier censured efforts to mount a "coup" against the government and manipulate the value of the Lebanese pound.

Militants kill 20 soldiers, 40 civilians in northeast Nigeria attacks

Extremist militants killed at least 20 soldiers and more than 40 civilians and injured hundreds in twin attacks in northeast Nigeria's Borno state Saturday, residents and a civilian task force fighter said.

According to Reuters, the attacks, in the Monguno and Nganzai local government areas, came just days after militants killed at least 69 people in a raid on a village in a third area, Gubio.

Two humanitarian workers and three residents told Reuters that militants armed with heavy weaponry including rocket launchers arrived in Monguno, a hub for international non-governmental organizations, at roughly 11 a.m. local time. They overran government forces, taking some casualties but killing at least 20 soldiers and roaming the area for three hours.

The sources said hundreds of civilians were injured in the crossfire, overwhelming the local hospital and forcing some of the injured to lay outside the facility awaiting help.

The sources said the militants also set fire to the local police station and burned down the United Nations' humanitarian hub in the area, although a UN spokesperson said the facility sustained only light damage. Fighters distributed letters to residents, in the local Hausa language, warning them not to work with the military, white Christian westerners or other "non-believers".

Resistance News

UN Arab Group rejects Israel's nomination as chair of legal committee

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN—The Arab Group at the UN has announced its opposition to Israel's nomination for vice-chairman of the Legal Committee at the 75th session of the General Assembly slated for next September.

Mansour Al-Otaibi, permanent representative of Kuwait to the UN, stated, in his capacity as head of the Arab Group, that the UN circulated a message on June 8 regarding the election of the chair and members of the bureau of the sixth legal committee at the 75th session of the General Assembly.

"With regard to the election of vice-chairmen of the committee, the group sent an objection to secretary-general Antonio Guterres against Israel's nomination of a candidate for the vice-chairmanship of the bureau of the sixth committee at the upcoming session," Otaibi said in a press release on Saturday.

"The Arab group has concerns and considers Israel ineligible for membership in the bureau because of its ongoing and systematic violations of international law and many UN resolutions for more than seven decades," the Kuwait representative underlined.

He called for circulating his letter about the Arab Group's position in this regard to all member states.

Mahathir backs Biden, says U.S. re-electing Trump would be disaster

Malaysian elder statesman Mahathir Mohamad, known for his own iconoclasm and strongman leadership during two stints as prime minister, believes the re-election of United States President Donald Trump in November would spell "disaster".

During a wide-ranging interview with This Week In Asia focused on his own country's political turmoil, the 94-year-old former premier also dismissed the Trump administration's claim that China should take responsibility for the coronavirus pandemic.

Mahathir, who for decades reveled in his reputation as an anti-West champion of developing countries, said the U.S. president's "belligerence" had exacerbated tensions between the two superpowers.

"I never thought he would win, but he won," Mahathir said during the interview, conducted via videoconferencing app Zoom. "[Now] people are saying there are a lot of people who would support him. It would be a disaster."

By comparison, Mahathir said former vice-president Joe Biden, who is the Democratic nominee, was a more "reasonable" figure who had reacted with empathy to America's recent race-related unrest.

"I don't know whether he will be re-elected, but I hope Biden will be different from him," Mahathir said, adding that he had told some Americans "I am voting for Biden [even though] I don't have the right to vote".

He conceded his country has endured its fair share of political dysfunction — he was



unseated as prime minister in a shock political coup in March — but he remained perplexed by the White House's revolving door.

"You know, he sacks all the staff that are not for him," Mahathir said. "It sounds like a Third World country. In Malaysia, probably we do that — we don't like a staff [member], we sack him. But this is America: very, very

liberal and tolerant and things like that."

Mahathir said he had been observing the nationwide protests in the U.S. that erupted following the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis. He said he was taken aback by Trump's purported willingness to deploy active-duty troops against demonstrators.

"I mean, he threatens to use the army

against people who are demonstrating," Mahathir said. "It's unheard of."

He added that he was appalled when Trump last week suggested Martin Gugino, a 75-year-old man critically injured by police during a demonstration in Buffalo, could be a saboteur linked to Antifa, a far-left protest movement.

"How can you say that? You must have clear evidence," Mahathir said. "Was [Gugino] really acting or is it true what happened? The whole press says it's true what happened."

Trump and key figures in his administration, such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have also accused Beijing of seeking to conceal the extent of the coronavirus outbreak earlier this year.

Robert O'Brien, Trump's national security adviser, in May likened China's alleged effort to downplay the severity of the virus to the Soviet Union's cover-up of the meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in 1986.

However, Mahathir, a doctor, defended China's initial response, although he agreed "in hindsight" the Chinese government could have handled the situation better.

He said: "If this thing happened in Malaysia, and we discovered that somebody is suffering from a strange disease, we don't go to town and say 'Oh, there is a strange disease here!' [The Chinese] are threatened by [the coronavirus]. They have to find out first, and as they are investigating at that stage, they didn't realise that it is going to result in a pandemic."

Racism in America: Fresh protests in Atlanta after police officer shoots African-American man

➔ **1 More than 10,000 demonstrate against racism in Zurich**

Meanwhile, demonstrators took to the streets of several Swiss cities to protest against racism, the news agency Keystone-SDA reported.

In Zurich alone, more than 10,000 people demonstrated Keystone-SDA reported, citing city police.

The mostly young protestors held up signs with slogans taken from anti-racism and anti-police brutality rallies in the US including «White silence is violence» and «Black lives matter».

Protestors also met in the capital Bern, Lausanne, and in St Gallen. During the demonstration in Zurich, people knelt down several times to commemorate the brutal incident.

Hello, this is Linah Alsaafin taking over the blog in Doha from my colleagues in Kuala Lumpur.

■ **Police arrest more than 100 after London Black Lives Matter protests**

British police said they have arrested more than 100 people after protesters, including far-right protesters, clashed with officers in London.

Hundreds of far-right protesters turned out on Saturday, many saying they wanted to «protect» monuments targeted recently by anti-racism protesters for links to slavery and colonialism.

The protests, attended by far-right groups including Britain First, turned violent when some scuffled with riot



police and others hurled bottles, flares and smoke grenades at officers. Six police officers suffered minor injuries.

More Black Lives Matter protests are planned on Sunday after rallies in at least a dozen British towns and cities on Saturday, including Newcastle, Bristol, Chelmsford, Canterbury and Brighton.

■ **Tokyo marches in solidarity with George Floyd protests**

Holding handmade signs that read «Black Lives Matter,» hundreds of people marched peacefully in Tokyo on Sunday, highlighting the outrage over the death of George Floyd.

Mitsuaki Shidara, who works for a food maker, was in the crowd at Yoyogi Park, where the march began. He said Japan has plenty of discrimination problems, but they are overlooked.

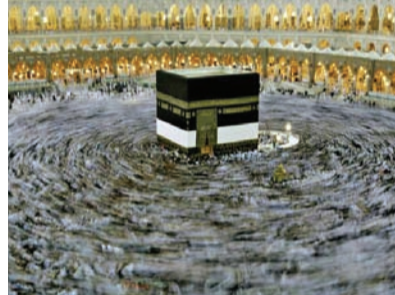
«We are all human first, but we are divided by nationality, gender, religion, skin color,» Shidara said, «What's happening in the US shows racism is going on, even after 400 years,» said Shidara.

Saudi Arabia considers cancelling hajj for first time in modern history

➔ **1** Visiting the holy Saudi city of Mecca to perform hajj is a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it. During the week-long trip, pilgrims pray in the Grand Mosque, circumambulate the Kaaba — a cube structure draped in black in the mosque's main courtyard — and visit Mount Arafat. The rituals conclude with Eid al-Adha, a celebration that marks the end of hajj when pilgrims replace their white ihram robes with regular clothes and sacrifice sheep, goats and camels.

The fact that hajj rituals must take place in the second week of the Muslim month of Dhu al-Hijja — which falls this year from July 29 to August 4 — means the pilgrimage cannot be postponed and that there are tight schedules to finalize travel and accommodation plans. The Saudi government, which takes great pride in organizing hajj and hosting religious visitors, imposes national quotas on the number of pilgrims from each country each year. Leaders of Muslim nations often petition the Saudi king, whose official title is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to increase their national quota as demand outstrips supply and the waiting list can be as long as 30 years.

The biggest allocation goes to Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, which usually



sends around 200,000 pilgrims. But this year, Indonesian officials have said their citizens will not travel. "In May, we prepared two options: a 50 per cent quota reduction or cancellation. [But] Saudi Arabia has not opened access to hajj pilgrims from any country to date," Fakhirul Razi, Indonesia's religious affairs minister, told local media earlier this month. "As a result, the government doesn't have enough time to make primary preparations for services and protection of pilgrims." Malaysia said on Thursday it would also not send pilgrims this year.

Saudi Arabia in late February suspended umrah, which is known as the lesser pilgrimage and can be performed year-round, as a result of the virus. A month later, the government advised Muslims seeking to perform the hajj pilgrimage this year to delay making travel arrangements until there was more clarity on the extent of the outbreak.

China, Korea, Egypt report rise in virus cases as curbs ease

China reported its highest daily total of new coronavirus cases in two months Sunday and infections in South Korea rose, showing how the disease can come back as curbs on business and travel are lifted.

Elsewhere, governments including Egypt, Ukraine and North Macedonia have reported their highest single-day totals of new infections since Friday. In the United States, case numbers are rising in some states as President Donald Trump pushes to reopen businesses despite warnings by public health experts.

The world is seeing more than 100,000 newly confirmed cases every day, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

China had 57 new confirmed cases in the 24 hours through midnight Saturday, the National Health Commission reported. That was the highest since mid-April and included 36 in the capital, Beijing, a city of 20 million people.

South Korea's government reported 34 more cases, adding



to an upward trend in infections.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 30 were in the greater Seoul area, where half of the country's 51 million people live. New cases have been linked to nightlife establishments, church services, an e-commerce warehouse and door-to-door sellers.

On Saturday, Egypt's Health Ministry announced 1,677 new confirmed cases. The Arab world's most populous country has its highest coronavirus death toll at 1,484 among 42,980 confirmed cases.

Also Saturday, Ukraine reported 753 new cases, more than double the daily count earlier this month. Authorities in North Macedonia reported 196 cases.

In the United States, the number of new cases in Arizona in the southwest has risen to more than 1,000 per day from fewer than 400 when the state's shutdown was lifted in mid-May, according to an analysis by The Associated Press.

Abbas demands higher-level Security Council meeting on Israel's annexation plans in West Bank

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has called for the forthcoming United Nations Security Council meeting to be held at a higher level, with foreign ministers in attendance instead of representatives, when it convenes later this month to discuss Israel's controversial plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank.

Secretary General of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee, Saeb Erekat, told Arabic-language Voice of Palestine radio station on Saturday that Abbas had instructed Palestine's ambassador at the UN, Riyad Mansour, to push for

an upgraded meeting on June 24, and also propose the formation of an international coalition against Tel Aviv's looming annexation attempt to the UN General Assembly.

Erekat then hailed the recent positions of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the European Union, Russia and China, stating that such stances show Palestine has been able to forge an international coalition in support of its cause.

Palestine has asked the EU to adopt an official position, impose sanctions on Israel if it proceeds with its annexation plan, and recognize the State of Palestine within 1967 borders, he pointed out.

Erekat finally called on Arab countries to provide financial assistance to Palestine, and help it overcome financial and political challenges in the face of Israel's moves.

■ **Netherlands, Morocco, Indonesia reject Israeli annexation plans**

On Saturday, the Netherlands and Morocco opposed Israel's plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, saying such a measure would breach international law and resolutions.

Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Sigrid Kaag both reiterated Amsterdam's rejection of the

Israeli settlement expansion policies, describing them as an obstacle to peace as well as a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The two ministers later highlighted that any Israeli annexation of Palestinian lands will be in violation of international law, and its acceptance will be a dangerous precedent in other conflict zones.

For his part, Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Nasser Bourita said any Israeli annexation of the occupied Palestinian lands would undermine all efforts aimed at establishing comprehensive peace.

Beiranvand prevented from travel to Belgium

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Alireza Beiranvand's travel to Belgium was hindered because he could not get the necessary permission for the trip.

The goalkeeper of the Persepolis and Iran national football team was scheduled to travel to Belgium early Sunday to partake in the Royal Antwerp's testing session.

However, the measures taken by the European Union (EU) due to coronavirus pandemic canceled his trip and despite being at Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport, he could not get the necessary permission to travel.

Beiranvand, 27, will leave Persepolis in the summer. Belgian side, Royal Antwerp, have reportedly paid 700,000 euros to sign the custodian on a three-year contract.

Persepolis club issued a short statement on their official website emphasizing that despite the problem with coordination of their Belgian counterpart, the necessary steps will be taken to make it possible for Beiranvand to travel to the European country.

Antwerp have been trying for several months to sign the goalkeeper of the Iranian national team. They finally made the contract with the Iran international player but it was subject to medical tests. In case of concessions with the test results, Beiranvand will join Antwerp.

The goalie, who blocked Cristiano Ron-



aldo's penalty at the 2018 World Cup, has already tried several times to travel to the country, without success. The coronavirus measures had a lot to do with that, and

according to some Belgian media reports, visa problems had also made the situation more complicated,

Persepolis, who rely on Beiranvand's

good performances in the league matches, are in a race to win Iran Professional League (IPL) title, which is scheduled to resume on June 24.

Ashkan Dejagah attacked by Iranian fans



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran and Tractor midfielder Ashkan Dejagah has been attacked by some football fans just a day after he shared a picture on his Instagram account.

Tractor football team have started the training after Iran football federation announced that the league will restart on June 24. However, the team's owner Mohammadreza Zenouzi threatened the organizers to withdraw from the league if the competition resumes. He believes that resumption of the competition would

increase the risk of virus transmission and cancelation the current season is the best way.

Dejagah had also said he would not travel to Tabriz due to coronavirus fears. Now, he has published his picture in a restaurant in Berlin, Germany with his friends, ignoring coronavirus health protocols.

The Tractor football fans have asked him to return to Iran to help their team since the Tabriz based football team have a great chance to book a place in the AFC Champions League's next season.

Esteghlal looking for agreement with Schaefer in Dubai



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian football club Esteghlal are going to arrange a meeting with German coach Winfried Schaefer in Dubai, the UAE.

The Iranian team have to pay the coach's payment otherwise, they will be punished by FIFA and could face money punishment, points deduction and transfer ban.

The Blues have been ordered to pay 550,000 USD to Schaefer by FIFA.

Now, Esteghlal's head of international relations Kazem Ghayyem is going to travel to Dubai to negotiate with the German coach.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Schaefer had opened up about his time in Esteghlal and said in the current situation, it's impossible what they're asking him to do.

Esteghlal need to reach an agreement with Schaefer because points deduction and transfer ban can be a massive blow to the team.

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.

Premier League's international appeal faces coronavirus test

When the 100 day-wait for Premier League football comes to an end on Wednesday, the anticipation will be felt as keenly in Mumbai and Beijing as in Manchester and Birmingham.

The global reach of the English top-flight has helped secure its position as the wealthiest league in world football.

The Premier League's overseas television rights deals for the 2019-2022 three-season cycle hit a record £4.2 billion (\$5.3 billion) and another £2 billion deal has already been struck for Scandinavian rights between 2022 and 2028.

That income will be all the more welcome, with uncertainty over when supporters will be allowed back into stadiums and commercial revenues expected to tumble in a global economic crisis.

However, without the atmosphere generated by paying fans, the Premier League's appeal may be diminished in football's new normal.

"What makes it special in England is the way people react to the game," former Arsenal manager and FIFA's chief of global football development Arsene Wenger told The Athletic.

"It is the best country in the world for the way the fans respond to what's happening on the pitch. That's why I think



it will be the most handicapped championship without that."

■ Rescheduled rebate

The need to cram the remaining 92 games of the season into a five-and-a-half week window also means many more midweek games with evening kick-offs in England, forcing fans in the Far East to tune in during the early hours.

Overseas broadcasters will be compensated with a re-

ported £107 million rebate due to the change in scheduling.

However, the excitement over the Premier League's return endures, particularly among the huge number of Liverpool fans, many of whom are awaiting a first league title in their lifetimes.

Jürgen Klopp's men are just two wins away from being crowned champions of England for the first time in 30 years.

Hu Zhifei, a 26-year-old journalist and member of Liverpool's official fan club in Beijing, had planned a trip to see his heroes in action in February that was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Nobody is anticipating the league's restart more than Liverpool fans because we are within two wins of the title," said Hu, who will tune in to watch the Reds via internet streaming despite kick-offs in the early hours.

Excitement is also building in India, where the Premier League has built up a strong following among urban youth in a traditionally cricket-obsessed nation.

"Finally I'll watch some live EPL action. I have already chalked out a schedule for these matches," Qazi Ahmad Masood, a 17-year-old student, told AFP. "I would love to see my favorite club Liverpool lift the trophy."

(Source: AFP)

Costa back on target but Atletico held by Bilbao

Diego Costa scored his first goal since October but Atletico Madrid missed the chance to move into La Liga's top four by drawing 1-1 away at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

Costa celebrated by holding up the shirt of Virginia Torrecilla, a player from Atletico's women's team, who underwent surgery on a brain tumour last month.

His equalizer came two minutes after the excellent Iker Muniain had given Bilbao the lead towards the end of the first half and neither side could find a winner at the empty San Mames, with Atletico defender Santiago Arias missing the best chance late on.

This was always going to be one of the tougher games in Atletico's run-in but it

was still an opportunity missed after fellow top-four hopefuls Valencia and Getafe both failed to win on Saturday.

Diego Simeone's side stay sixth, now level on points with both Getafe and Real Sociedad in front of them, although la Real have a game in hand against Osasuna to come later on Sunday.

Athletic Bilbao remain 10th, five points behind Valencia in seventh.

Atletico have been among the worst-hit Spanish teams financially by the coronavirus pandemic and reports in Spain this week have suggested the club would stand to lose around 100 million euros if they fail to qualify for next season's Champions League.

(Source: Mirror)

Mohammad Mousavi officially joins Saipa

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran middle blocker Mohammad Mousavi opted to join Iranian volleyball club Saipa.

The 32-year-old player, who was a member of Polish volleyball team Indykpol AZS Olsztyn last season, has penned a two-year contract with Saipa.



"I had offers from the European teams but I decided to return to Iran," Mousavi said.

Russian volleyball team Kuzbass Kemerovo also wanted to sign Mousavi but reached an agreement with Serbian player Petar Krstanovic.

Mousavi has already featured many Iranian teams, namely Shahrdari Varamin, Sarmayeh Bank, Matin, Paykan, Kalleh Mazandaran and Shahrdari Urmia and Giti Pasand.

Saipa have already completed the signing of Iran outside hitter Mohammadjavad Manavinejad.

Esteghlal midfielder Azari misses rest of season

Tasnim — Esteghlal midfielder Reza Azari has been sidelined for the rest of the season due to a knee injury.

In the friendly match against Havadar football team, Azari suffered a torn ACL.

He will have to undergo knee surgery and will miss the rest of the season.

With nine weeks remaining, Esteghlal sit fourth in Iran Professional League (IPL), 11 points behind leaders Persepolis.

The IPL will restart on June 24 with a match between Foolad and Esteghlal.

An uncertain future ahead of Saeid Ezatollahi

Russian site Championat has reported that there is an uncertain future ahead of Iranian midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi.

The 24-year-old Iranian midfielder left Belgian team KAS Eupen and returned to Rostov but his contract with the Russian team runs out in June.

Rostov coach Valery Karpin, who has extended his contract until 2025, has not expressed his support for the Iranian midfielder.

The defensive midfielder joined Rostov in 2015 and played in Russian teams Anzhi Makhachkala and Amkar Perm, English Championship side Reading and Eupen of Belgium on loan.

Now, it's not clear whether Ezatollahi will stay in Russia or continue his football in another league.

(Source: Championat)

Iran Coach Skocic attends 'Golden Coach Congress'

IRNA — Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic attended the 'Golden Coach Congress'.

The Golden Coach Congress electronically brought together a cast of coaches and specialists from the world of football on June 12 and 13.

Wenger, Valverde, Seedorf, Del Bosque, Hierro, Camacho, Clemente and Pochettino talked about football in this congress.

Skocic will reportedly return to Iran next week to monitor the league's matches.

Three Iranians nominated for best defenders of ACL2017 Team

Khosro Heydari, Sadegh Moharrami and Peyman Shirzadi are three Iranian players who have been nominated for the best defenders of ACL2017 team.

With the 2020 AFC Champions League currently on hiatus, the-AFC.com continues its series of articles to determine the best sides from the last four editions of the Continental competition.

There are 14 players in contention for the four places in the backline. The fans should review the nominees and then choose their favorite defenders for this all-star XI in the respective polls.

■ Heydari

The experience of veteran Esteghlal defender Khosro Heydari proved crucial as the Tehran side reached the knockout rounds for the first time since 2013. Another backline member who played an important role going forward, the former Iranian international attempted more crosses than any other defender, two of which led directly to goals.

■ Moharrami

A near ever-present in the Persepolis backline as the Tehran giants reached the semi-finals for the first time, Moharrami was at his combative best throughout, winning more tackles and more duels than any other defender. Not only did he also complete more dribbles than any of his defensive compatriots, meanwhile, he was second only to Shanghai SIPG's Hulk in the competition.

■ Shirzadi

Esteghlal Khouzestan shook off their debutants tag to progress to the AFC Champions League knockout stages at the first time of asking and full-back Peyman Shirzadi's accurate deliveries from the left flank were a potent part of their arsenal that helped them there.

The polls end on June 21 at 4pm (UTC+8). The Best XI chosen by fans and the best XI based on the 2017 statistics will be announced at the beginning of July.

(Source: the-afc)

La Liga to seek criminal action against pitch invader

La Liga's organizing body has said it is filing for criminal action against the man who ran on to the pitch during Real Mallorca's behind-closed-doors match against Barcelona on Saturday to try to get a photo with Lionel Messi.

The fan, wearing an Argentina shirt with Messi's name and number 10 on the back, breached strict security measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus by going onto the pitch early in the second half.

A statement from La Liga on Sunday said the man accessed the pitch "without any authorization and disobeying the protocols established by health legislation, as well as disobeying the orders of security staff".

"La Liga also wishes to show its absolute condemnation for this type of conduct that puts the health of others at risk and risks damaging the integrity of the competition," the statement added.

The fan, a French Mallorca resident, spoke to Spanish radio station Cadena Cope after being ejected by security personnel and police, revealing that he had scaled a two-meter fence to access the stadium.

"I had planned this ever since I knew the match was happening. I wanted a photo with Messi and to meet him because he's my idol," he said.

Mallorca said they were investigating how the fan had got into the stadium.

(Source: Eurosport)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A person who analyzes himself receives a benefit, and he who neglects it, is a loser. He who learns a lesson from others, finds insight, and with such insight comes understanding and avoiding ignorance, and he who understands, will be well aware.

Imam Ali (AS)

IIDO director elaborates on Iran’s social-cultural status in Majlis

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi attended a Majlis session on Sunday to elaborate on the social and cultural status of the country.



Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi delivers a speech at the Majlis on June 14, 2020. (Mehr/Hamid Vakili)

150 MPs had praised efforts made by the IIDO director in reopening the religious sites and mosques across the country.

This is the first time the IIDO director has been summoned to brief the Majlis on the activities of the organization.

The director of IIDO, a major organization that promotes Islamic culture and art, is selected by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Qomi, 40, took the helm at the organization in August 2018.

Speaking at the session, Hojjatoleslam Qomi said, “Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said that culture is truly oppressed, and the MPs’ aversion to joining the Majlis cultural commission shows this oppression of culture.”

“The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has not been held for about four months, the High Council of Cyberspace is not established yet, the entire budget for the culture of the country is below one-half percent and is equal to the construction of only 300 kilometers highway,” He added.

Pointing to Ayatollah Khamenei’s remarks made in 2011 saying that the country needs 10 million Quran memorizers, Qomi said, “This is not something inaccessible; many countries have reached higher numbers than this. Several organizations including the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization and several other organizations receive budget for their Quranic activities, but how many of these 10 million memorizers have been trained?”

“The big problems in the worlds of economy and security are solved through culture; we need to pay due attention to cultural solutions,” he asserted.

He added that the problems of in the daily lives of people such as housing and economic issues need to be solved through increasing cultural capacities.

Qomi replaced Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Mehdi Khamushi who held the post for more than a decade.

In his decree, the Leader said, “It is necessary that all country’s officials and different institutes back the organization to better carry out its important responsibilities.”

The Tehran Times, Mehr News Agency, and the Art Bureau are among the numerous cultural institutions working under the auspices of the IIDO.

Nominees for Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year announced

TEHRAN — Five cultural figures were selected as the final nominees to compete for the title of the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year, the Art Bureau has announced.

The nominees are filmmaker Javad Afshar, painter Hassan Ruholamin, singer Gholamreza Sanatgar, graphic designer Mohammad-Saber Sheikhrezai and writer Mohsen Kazemi.

Afshar received the nomination for his docudrama “Gando” about the spy case of Iranian-American journalist Jason Rezaian.

Ruholamin was nominated for creating a painting in memory of Quds Force commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani who was martyred in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Sanatgar was nominated for his songs “Qassem Is Still Alive” and “O Iran”.

Kazemi received the nomination for writing the memoirs of Kazem Darabi, an Iranian suspect in the 1992 Mykonos Restaurant assassinations case in Berlin, in the book “Teahouse Painting”.

Five figures will be selected from the nominees as finalists.

The Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year for 2019 was due to be announced during the 6th Islamic Revolution Art Week on April 9. However, the Art Bureau postponed the event due to the coronavirus outbreak and there are plans to hold a ceremony should the situation permit.

The Art Bureau has said that the institute plans to organize the art week as soon as possible.

The art week is organized every year to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary



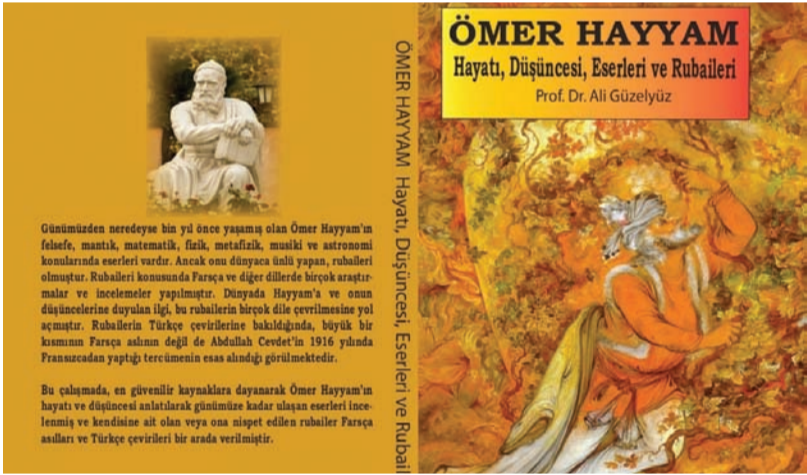
(L to R) Javad Afshar, Mohammad-Saber Sheikhrezai, Mohsen Kazemi, Gholamreza Sanatgar and Hassan Ruholamin were nominated for the title of the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year.

of documentarian Morteza Avini who was killed by a landmine in 1993 during

his last trip to the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran while making

a documentary about soldiers who were still listed as missing in action.

Book on Persian poet Omar Khayyam published in Turkey



Front cover of Ömer Hayyam: Hayatı, Düşüncesi, Eserleri ve Rubaileri authored by Turkish scholar Ali Güzelyüz.

CULTURE TEHRAN — A book titled “Omar Khayyam: His Life, Thought, Works and Rubaiyat” (Ömer Hayyam: Hayatı, Düşüncesi, Eserleri ve Rubaileri) has recently been published in Turkey.

Professor of Persian literature Ali Güzelyüz of Istanbul University is the author of the book released last week by Demavend Publications in Istanbul.

Khayyam is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through a translation of a collection of his quatrains in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam by the English writer Edward Fitzgerald.

The book contains over 250 poems by Khayyam translated into Turkish by Güzelyüz.

Demavend has previously published the Safarnamêh (“Book of Travel”), the most-celebrated prose work of the Persian poet and mystic Abu Muin Naser-e Khusrav al-Marvazi al-Qubadiyani, known as Naser-e Khusrav who lived during the eleventh century.

It is a diary describing his seven-year journey through Syria and Palestine.

The publisher has also published books by numerous Iranian literati, including Sohrab Sepehri and Forugh Farrokhzad.

Culture minister laments lack of funds for public libraries



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi in an undated photo.

CULTURE TEHRAN — Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi has lamented the lack of necessary funds budgeted to pay the staff working in public libraries.

He made the remarks on Sunday during a meeting with the new MPs at Majlis, the Iranian parliament.

He said that over 7,400 employees work at public libraries across the country, and the budget allocated to the culture ministry is not enough to pay them.

“Over 360 public libraries have been launched across the country over the past three years,” he stated.

“These libraries have worked as cultural clubs, which organized hundreds of reading competitions in the country. Only one million people participated in the Razavi Reading Competition,” he noted.

“Iran is not limited to Tehran,” Salehi said and added that his organization has considered other cities and towns across the country.

“Over the past year, the ministry has organized over 240,000 cultural events in the cities and towns, and allocated 12,000 billion rials to improve the cultural infrastructures in the remote regions of the country,” he added.

“99 Red Balloons” published in Persian

TEHRAN — A Persian translation of British writer Elisabeth Carpenter’s novel “99 Red Balloons” has been published in Tehran by Peydayesh Publications.

The gripping psychological thriller has been rendered into Persian by Maryam Arabi.

Two girls go missing, decades apart. What would you do if one was your daughter?

Eight-year-old Grace was last seen in a sweetshop. Her mother Emma is living a nightmare. But as her loved ones rally around her, cracks begin to emerge. What are the emails sent between her husband and her sister? Why does her mother take so long to join the search? And is there more to the disappearance of

her daughter than meets the eye?

Meanwhile, ageing widow Maggie Sharples sees a familiar face in the newspaper. A face that jolts her from the pain of her existence into a spiraling obsession with another girl – the first girl who disappeared.

Carpenter lives in Preston with her family. She completed a BA in English literature with the Open University in 2011. Libby was awarded a Northern Writers’ New Fiction award, and was longlisted for Yeovil Literary Prize (2015 and 2016) and the MsLexia Women’s Novel award (2015).

She loves living in the north of England and sets most of her stories in the area. She currently works as a bookkeeper.

“11 Missed Calls”, “Only a Mother” and “The Woman Downstairs” are among her other noteworthy credits.

Resistance festival to spotlight films on health workers

CULTURE TEHRAN — The 16th edition of the Resistance International Film Festival announced on Sunday that it will allocate a special section to films on health workers this year.

The organizers asked filmmakers and artists around the world

to submit their short, documentary and animation films, music videos and motion graphics before the deadline of August 20.

The category named “Health Defenders” has been established in honor of the medical workers on the front line of the campaign against COVID-19.

An exhibition of photos and posters on the medical workers will be also organized on the sidelines of the festival, which will take place in Tehran from September 21 to 27.

The festival is organized every year to commemorate the anniversary of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Actor Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz dies at 90

→1 The actor also played the role of Shakkur in “Caravans”, a 1978 Iranian-American film directed by James Fargo based on the novel by James Michener. The movie was shot in Iran and the Mexican-American actor Anthony Quinn acted in the movie, playing the role of Zulfiqar.

Keshavarz donated memorabilia to the Film Museum of Iran on his 90th birthday anniversary in mid-April.

A handwritten letter from his late friend, stage director and playwright Hamid Samandarian, was a highlight of the collection.

Some of his certificates and the obituary of Shaban Ostadkhani (Ostokhuni), the villain whose role he played in Ali Hatami’s acclaimed TV series “Hezardastan”, were also among the donated items.

The contracts for several films and TV

series in which he has acted, including “Mirza Noruz Shoes”, “Dear Uncle Napoleon”, “Sarbedaran” and “Sadeq Kordeh”, were also in the collection.

Also included were his ring, pen, eyeglasses, fountain pen, hat and several other items.