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# End of European multilateralism



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## Iran has 'nothing to hide', Zarif tells Europeans

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday reacted to a draft resolution submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors by the Europeans, saying that Tehran has "nothing to hide". Zarif suggested that "an agreeable solution is possible" but warned that adoption of "a resolution will ruin it". "Board of Governors should not allow

JCPOA enemies to jeopardize Iran's supreme interests," Zarif said in a Twitter post. Addressing the three European signatories to the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran's chief diplomat said, "E3 should not be an accessory, after failing own JCPOA duties. We've nothing to hide. More inspections in Iran over the last 5 years than in IAEA history." **→2**

## Development projects worth over \$2.8b inaugurated in 2 provinces

**TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, on Thursday, inaugurated several development projects worth 120.5 trillion rials (about \$2.86 billion) in the northern Mazandaran Province and western Ilam Province via video conference. As reported by IRNA, 10.5 trillion rials (nearly \$250 million) of the mentioned projects were inaugurated or launched in Mazandaran, while the value of the

projects put into operation or launched in Ilam was estimated at 110 trillion rials (about \$2.61 billion). Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami attended the inauguration ceremonies in Ilam province. The projects included numerous highways, freeways, rural access roads, affordable housing units, and a railway project. **→4**

## Afghan scholar Najib Mayel Heravi granted Iranian citizenship

**TEHRAN** — The distinguished Afghan expert on manuscripts, Najib Mayel Heravi, has been granted Iranian citizenship, Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has announced. "The culture ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior took effective actions to grant citizenship and the final legal actions

are in process," the culture ministry announced in a statement published on Thursday. "Iranian officials are well aware of the position of Heravi in the expansion of cultural and literary relations between the two nations of Iran and Afghanistan, following the cultural activities of the master in the promotion of Persian culture and civilization," it added. **→12**



## ARTICLE

**Mahnaz Abdi**  
Head of the TehranTimes  
Economy Desk

## Iran's FTZs development continues despite sanctions

Considering the important role that the free trade zones (FTZs) play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing development of its existing FTZs and establishment of new zones as well.

More development measures in this field have been taking since the U.S. re-imposition of sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as Iran is reducing its dependence on the oil income while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian FTZs; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

Many strides made for increasing activities in the free zones have played a significant part in boosting the country's non-oil exports and brought prosperity in the other economic sectors.

A recent report shows that the exports of commodities from the ports of Qeshm Island have increased by 7.8 folds during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Qeshm Free Trade Zone, in the south of Iran, is the second FTZ established in the country.

While 676,000 tons of goods have been exported from the island's ports during the mentioned two-month period, 656,737 tons were the non-oil goods, and the remaining 20,196 tons were the oil products.

### Investment making attraction

Establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote the non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz. **→4**

## Iraq demands Turkey to 'stop bombardment, withdraw forces' from north

Baghdad on Thursday demanded Ankara immediately halt its assault in northern Iraq, where Turkish special forces and helicopters have been targeting Kurdish rebel hideouts.

Turkey early Wednesday launched a cross-border operation into the mountainous regions of northern Iraq where the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), considered by Ankara to be a "terrorist" group, is thought to be hiding out.

Iraq's foreign ministry summoned the Turkish ambassador on Thursday and handed him a "strongly-worded memorandum calling for a halt to such provocative actions," Arab News reported.

"We stress that Turkey must stop its bombardment and withdraw its attacking forces from Iraqi territory," the ministry said in a statement.

"We affirm our categorical rejection of these violations." Thursday marked the second time in a week that Baghdad summoned Turkish ambassador Fatih Yildiz.

He was also called to the foreign ministry on Tuesday following Turkish bombardment in northern Iraq, also against PKK hideouts.

After that meeting, Yildiz said he had told Iraqi officials that if Baghdad did not take action against the rebels, Ankara would continue to "fight the PKK wherever it is."

The PKK has fought an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984, using the rugged mountains of neighboring northern Iraq as a rear base.

It has a tense relationship with the semi-autonomous Kurdish government in Iraq's north (KRG), which see the PKK as a rival but have been unable to uproot it from the area.

Analysts say the Turkish operation, dubbed "Claw-Tiger," could not have taken place without the KRG's tacit approval.

There has been no comment from Iraq's new Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, himself a Kurd who is close to top KRG authorities.

## Top official in Trump administration resigns over protest handling

*By staff & agencies*

A top official in the Donald Trump administration submitted their resignation on Thursday, citing the president's handling of recent racial tensions.

Mary Elizabeth Taylor, assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs, said that the president's actions "cut sharply against my core values and convictions," according to the resignation letter, obtained by The Washington Post.

Taylor is the youngest assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs in history and the first black woman to serve in the post.

Elsewhere, former Atlanta police officer Garrett Rolfe turned himself in to authorities at the Fulton County Jail on Thursday after being charged with felony murder and 10 other charges.

The district attorney confirmed it would not seek the death penalty in the case.

Devin Brosnan, the second officer charged in the June 12 shooting of African-American Rayshard Brooks, 27, also turned himself in and was released after signing his own bond, said his lawyer, Don Samuel.

Brosnan has not agreed to be a state witness, Samuel said on Thursday, contradicting a statement by the lead prosecutor on the case.

Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard on Wednesday said the second officer had become a "state witness", agreeing to help prosecute Mr Rolfe.

### Armed counter-protesters confront Black Lives Matter rally

A small and peaceful demonstration in an Ohio town to support the Black Lives Matter movement at the weekend was overwhelmed when hundreds of counter-protesters — some armed with rifles or baseball bats — harassed the group. **→10**

## Comprehensive health network: Iran's commitment to universal health coverage

**By Faranak Bakhtiari**

**TEHRAN** — Iran has gone far to establish a Primary Health Care (PHC) system in 1981, now covering a population of approximately 82 million rural and urban residents, is considered a great step towards universal health coverage, Dr. Mohammad Hossein Nicknam, Immunologist in Tehran University of Medical Sciences in an exclusive interview told the Tehran Times.

In two previous interviews of Tehran Times, Dr. Seyed Alireza Marandi, Head of Iran Academy of

Medical Sciences, and Dr. Christoph Hamelmann, representative of the World Health Organization (WHO), briefed the role of Iran's PHC system in countering coronavirus epidemic. Through this one, we will go through the detail.

### PHC system covers 98% of rural population nationwide

"The country's PHC system is formed of several sections working in harmony to offer primary care to different groups of people in rural and urban areas.

The healthcare network in rural areas of the country is called Health House, which is under the supervision of a rural comprehensive health center.

Each health center takes control over five Health Houses," Nicknam explained.

"With the efforts of Behvarz (healthcare providers), primary care including, preventive care, health promotion, screening, and basic medical services for the predefined conditions, are provided to the rural residents with an approximate population of 1,000 people." **→9**



© Ministry of Defence

## Navy tests new homegrown cruise missile in Sea of Oman

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Navy successfully test-fired new homegrown cruise missiles on Thursday during a military exercise in the Sea of Oman and the northern parts of the Indian Ocean.

During the military exercise, codenamed "Ramadan Martyrs", the missiles hit targets at a distance of 280 kilometers.

Short-range and long-range cruise missiles manufactured by the Iranian Defense Ministry were tested during the war game, Tasnim reported.

A variety of coast-to-sea and sea-to-sea missiles with short and long ranges were fired simultaneously from the coastal launchers and the deck of naval vessels, and they could successfully detonate the targets with great accuracy. **→3**

## Iran to use its financial resources in Iraq to import basic goods: CBI governor

**TEHRAN** — Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati says Iran and Iraq are going to implement an agreement in the coming weeks based on which Iran is going to use its export revenues in Iraq for supplying basic goods, IRNA reported.

Accompanied by a delegation comprised of representatives from the central bank, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, the Ministry of Energy and the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), Hemmati paid a day-long visit to Iraq on Wednesday, where he met with Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, the country's Finance Minister Ali Abdul Amir Alavi and his Iraqi counterpart Ali Mohsen Al-Alaq.

According to the official, under the framework of the mentioned agreement, Iran will use its gas and electricity exports revenues which amount at several billion dollars a year in addition to CBI resources in Iraq, for importing its required goods from the country.

"Last year, we signed an agreement on how to use the revenues from gas and electricity exports to Iraq. However, due to some problems, the agreement didn't become fully operational; in today's talks we reached a consensus on how to implement the agreement and to use the resources of the central bank to buy basic goods and medicine, God willing, we will take operational steps next week." Hemmati wrote in an Instagram post on Wednesday. **→4**



## Iran has ‘nothing to hide’, Zarif tells Europeans

**1 →** In his tweet, Zarif also posted a screenshot of a page showing the number of complementary accesses to Iran's nuclear facilities.

France, Britain and Germany, the three European parties to the JCPOA, have submitted a draft resolution to the IAEA Board of Governors calling on Iran to provide access for the agency to two old sites, diplomats taking part in the virtual meeting said on Thursday.

Diplomats said that Iran's ally Russia told the board it saw no need for a resolution but China voiced clear opposition, prompting the board's chairwoman to call an in-person meeting on Friday for further discussions and possibly a vote.

China said that pressing a “non-urgent” issue with a resolution could eventually lead to action by the UN Security Council and “the ultimate termination” of the JCPOA.

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi recently made anti-Iran allegations, claiming that Tehran had refused to grant access to the two nuclear sites.

At the board's meeting on Thursday over Grossi's report on Iran and the NPT via video conference, Iran's Ambassador to the IAEA, Kazem Gharibabadi, said, “Iran acknowledges the IAEA's right for asking legitimate questions, seeking transparency or demand of access for its mission; meanwhile, Iran also emphasizes its right as a member state to request that the IAEA provide solid evidence and supporting documents and arguments in this regard.”

## U.S. seeks to make Iran hold new talks: ex-diplomat

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Abdolreza Faraji-Rad, Iran's former ambassador to Norway, has said that the United States seeks to exert pressure on Iran to make the country hold new talks with Washington.



“The Trump administration puts pressure on Iran and seeks to revive sanctions to make the country [Iran] hold new talks. So, the objective behind the pressure is negotiations between Tehran and Washington,” he told IRNA in an interview published on Thursday.

Faraji-Rad said that the U.S. seeks to extend arms embargo on Iran and lay the groundwork for revival of the UN sanctions to put pressure on the country.

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.

Russia and China have already signaled they are against reimposing an arms embargo on Iran. If they block the U.S.-drafted resolution, then Washington will have to follow through on its sanctions snapback threat.

### ■ ‘Europe, U.S. are getting close against Iran’

Faraji-Rad also said that it seems the U.S. and European countries are getting close against Iran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors approved a resolution against Iran on Friday. The resolution, drafted by Britain, Germany and France, says Iran should give access to the IAEA to visit two sites which they allege nuclear activity may be done.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday reacted to the draft resolution, saying that Tehran has “nothing to hide”.

## Iran on Nord Stream 2: U.S. bully now biting EU allies with sanctions

**(Press TV)** — Iran has slammed a U.S. plan to slap more sanctions on a pipeline designed to deliver Russian natural gas to Germany, calling on European Union countries not to succumb to Washington's bullying and stand against its “aggressive law-breaking.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi was reacting, in a tweet on Monday, to a bill under discussion in U.S. Congress that would expand sanctions on the \$11-billion Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which consists of two parallel lines each stretching 1,230 kilometers along the Baltic Sea from Russia to northern Germany.



On Thursday, the bill — titled Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act — was approved by the U.S. senators. In order to become law, it needs to also be passed in the House of Representatives, and then signed by President Donald Trump.

If approved, the measure widens the sanctions in the existing law to include any entity that provides port facilities, insurance, or tethering services for the project as well as any firm that certifies Nord Stream 2 for operation.

Mousavi further highlighted Iran's repeated warnings against sitting idly by in the face of U.S. bullying and reminded Europe that “a bully will get bully-er if you succumb.”

“The American bully now bites its EU allies. The U.S. habit of aggressive law-breaking will only lead to global chaos,” warned the Iranian official, calling on the Europeans and the entire world community to “rise up against this bully.”

Germany has criticized the American bill, with its Foreign Ministry saying in a statement that “new sanctions would constitute a serious interference in European energy security and EU sovereignty.”

The first round of U.S. sanctions forced Swiss-Dutch company Allseas to pull out of the project in December 2019, leaving Russia to send its own vessel to the Baltic Sea in an effort to lay the remaining 160 kilometers of the pipeline.

The United States claims that the gas pipeline undermines Ukraine and strengthens Russia's grip on Europe's energy industry.

Moscow, however, says Washington is actually seeking to block the project in a bid to export more U.S. liquefied natural gas to Europe.

# End of European multilateralism

## Iran says to take proper response to IAEA resolution

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Friday that Iran will take appropriate action in response to a move taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors in adopting an anti-Iran resolution.

Russia and China, who voted against the resolution, also issued separate statements reprimanding the move. Russia called it “counterproductive” and China said it has “huge implications on the prospect of the JCPOA”.

The 35-member IAEA board passed the resolution on Friday, demanding access to two old places they claim nuclear work may have been done.

France, Britain and Germany, the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), submitted the draft resolution to the IAEA board on Thursday. The board failed to approve the resolution on Thursday due to opposition by Iran and China. However, the resolution was ratified on Friday despite Russia and China's opposition.

Legal experts and analysts are of the opinion that the resolution proposed by the European signatories to the nuclear deal is a prelude to the end of multilateralism that Europe claims it defends. They also say the move is a capitulation to the United States and Israel which are bent on to kill off the nuclear agreement.

Ambassador Gharibabadi said, “Iran categorically deplores this resolution and will take appropriate action in response, the repercussions of which would be upon the sponsors of this resolution.”

Following is text of the statement by Gharibabadi:

I would like to put on record the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the resolution just adopted.

At the outset, I would like to sincerely appreciate Russia, China, Azerbaijan, India, Mongolia, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa and Thailand for not supporting the Resolution, especially Russia and China for all their efforts in objecting this unconstructive path.

Considering the extensive level of constructive cooperation between Iran and the Agency and simply overlooking this level of cooperation, adoption of this resolution aimed at requesting Iran to cooperate with the Agency is deeply disappointing.

It is also a deep regret that this resolution was presented by the three European States

### The Iranian ambassador to the IAEA says the “sponsors of this resolution” will be responsible for “repercussions” of such a move.



which have not taken any concrete practical step in the implementation of their obligations under the JCPOA. These lacks of willingness or inability to take practical actions in this regard, along with the unilateral, illegal and destructive measures by the U.S. caused the future of the JCPOA to remain gloomy.

Our advice to the E2+1 States is that if they cannot do something to save the deal, they can at least avoid making the situation more complicated and difficult! Paradoxically, your lack of action was needed here, which it seems that you couldn't even do this.

It is noteworthy that we consider the current state of affairs as a trap set by the U.S. and Israeli regimes, who in the past two years, not only spared no efforts to destroy the JCPOA, but also used all tools of pressure on the Agency including through presentation of such baseless allegations, to deflect the ongoing appropriate course of cooperation and divert the attention from their non-compliance with their relevant

international obligations, or being stayed out of the most important international instruments on disarmament and arms control.

Saying that this resolution is required for strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system proves how inconsistent are the behavior and actions of the Secretariat and the main sponsors of the resolution. If one really wants to maintain and strengthen the safeguards and verification regime, it is advised to take a professional and impartial approach.

The fact that on the one hand the Safeguards Implementation Report for 2019 and the DG's report on the status of implementation of safeguards during COVID-19 indicate that there are a number of safeguards related difficulties in several States, and on the other hand, the Secretariat and the PMOs, especially the Board, opted to keep their eyes closed over these difficulties especially the nuclear activities of Saudi Arabia and the regime of Israel, who are not even allowing

### “Adoption of this resolution will neither encourage Iran to grant access to the Agency based on fabricated and unfounded allegations, nor will it force Iran to come down from its principal positions,” Ambassador Gharibabadi says.

## It is high time to hold U.S. accountable for human rights violations: Iran

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry said a statement on Thursday suggesting that it is high time for the world to hold the United States' administration accountable for violating human rights.

“Iran welcomes @UNHumanRights urgent debate on human rights violations in the US. Systemic racism, police brutality & violence against peaceful protests represent just the tip of the iceberg. It's high time world works for the US regime's human rights accountability at home & abroad,” the ministry said in a tweet.

Participants in a debate on Wednesday at the UN Human Rights Council on systemic racism called for an independent investigation into the death of African American George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis.

The council meeting began with a moment of silence for all the victims of racial injustice.

In opening the debate, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said merely condemning expressions and acts of racism was not enough to alleviate generations of suffering resulting from racial injustice.

Speaking by teleconference from New York, she said the debate was taking place as marches for racial justice and equality take place around the world.

Iranian Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Monday that violation of the



human rights in the United States is “systematic” and has become “institutionalized”.

“The United States violates human rights in areas of racism, terrorism and countries' sovereignty, and this violation of human rights is systematic and institutionalized,” Alavi said during a meeting of the Coordination Council for Islamic Propagation.

He also said, “They [the U.S. officials] talk about economic relations, but they seek to loot. They talk about human rights, but their behavior runs contrary to this slogan.”

Late last month the Iranian Foreign Ministry said it regrets the tragic murder of Floyd, blaming the U.S. regime for deadly

racial profiling against African-Americans.

“Iran regrets the tragic murder of black Americans, denounces deadly racial profiling in the United States & urges authorities to do justice for every case,” the Foreign Ministry wrote in a tweet.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has also said that Iran hopes Washington will let the American people breathe.

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

the Agency to do the required inspection, should be considered as a concern.

I would also like to put on record that the Islamic Republic of Iran is applying the Additional Protocol voluntarily and provisionally due to its political commitment under the JCPOA, and since it is not yet adopted officially through its national legislative procedures, Iran does not consider it as a legal obligation.

Adoption of this resolution will neither encourage Iran to grant access to the Agency based on fabricated and unfounded allegations, nor will it force Iran to come down from its principal positions. Iran categorically deplores this resolution and will take appropriate action in response, the repercussions of which would be upon the sponsors of this resolution.

Finally, Iran does also have a solemn advice to the Secretariat of the Agency to: adhere to the limits of your authorities; acknowledge the cooperation between Iran and Agency; carry out your mandate in a professional, independent and impartial manner; do not pave the way for manipulation of issues for those with political agendas through taking positions and reporting hastily; behave in a way not to be blamed for the obliteration of the last bastion of multilateralism in Vienna and the destruction of the JCPOA.

### ■ Russia calls IAEA's resolution ‘counterproductive’

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, also said that the resolution is “counterproductive”.

“The #IAEA BG adopted resolution calling upon #Iran to provide access to 2 locations specified by Agency. #Russia and #China voted against. While stressing the need for Tehran and IAEA to settle this problem without delay, we believe that the resolution can be counterproductive,” Ulyanov tweeted on Friday.

### ■ ‘China deeply regrets adoption of the resolution’

Permanent Mission of China in Vienna expressed regrets over adoption of the resolution, warning that it may put the destiny of the JCPOA in serious jeopardy.

“China deeply regrets at the adoption, today, of IAEA Board Resolution on Iran's safeguards implementation, with the caveat of such a move's huge implications on the prospect of the #JCPOA. China & Russia voted against the above resolution,” the mission tweeted on Friday.

on June 9. Protests have started across the U.S. over brutal killing of the African-American man.

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

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

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

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on June 3 that the suffocation of the black American shows the nature of the United States.

Such crimes have frequently happened in the past, and the U.S. has done the same things in many countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out.

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

## Russia promises to stand by Iran on nuclear deal

*By staff and agency*

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday that Moscow vows to stand by Iran on nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, and resist attempts to promote an anti-Iran agenda.

“We will be doing everything so that no one can destroy these agreements,” Lavrov told reporters after talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Moscow, AFP reported.

Lavrov accused the United States of trying to “manipulate” the United Nations Security Council in order to put pressure on Iran.

“Washington has no right to punish Iran” by leveraging the UN Security Council, Lavrov said, adding that U.S. plans to extend an arms embargo on the Islamic republic “contravene international law.”

Moscow's top diplomat said at the start of the talks that Russia would firmly oppose any attempts “to promote an anti-Iranian agenda.”

Zarif described developments around the Iranian nuclear deal as “very dangerous.”

Zarif implied Washington was also using the International



Atomic Energy Agency to further its own interests.

Iran “won't allow the IAEA to become an instrument of abuse” for countries that want to scrap the Iran deal and “destroy all international obligations,” Zarif said in translated remarks.

He added that Iran had fully cooperated with the IAEA. Zarif's remarks came before the 35-member IAEA Board of Governors approved a resolution asking Iran to allow IAEA inspectors visit two sites which they allege nuclear activity may have been carried out.

The resolution was drafted by the three European countries of Britain, France and Germany which are party to the JCPOA.

Russia and China, also two signatories to the JCPOA, opposed the resolution. Seven other members also abstained to vote but the remaining 25 voted in favor.

### ■ ‘Iran, Russia firm to deal with unilateral, illegal approaches’

Zarif said in a tweet on Tuesday that Iran and Russia are determined to deal with unilateral and illegal approaches.

“Iran & Russia are ‘determined to deal with unilateral & illegal approaches to resolve global crises.’ From joint statement with FM Lavrov in Moscow today, where we reaffirmed commitment to int'l law as US & cronies attack foundation of int'l relations at IAEA & Security Council,” he tweeted.



# Tehran to boost ties with Damascus amid sanctions: Mousavi

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has denounced the new U.S. sanctions on Syria, saying that Tehran will maintain and boost economic ties with Damascus.

In a statement on Wednesday, Mousavi condemned the sanctions under the so-called Caesar Act as a violation of international law and humanitarian principles, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

"While the world is gripped by the coronavirus pandemic, the imposition of such inhumane sanctions will only add to the sufferings and pains of Syrian people," he remarked.

"As already announced, the Islamic Republic of Iran does not give any credence to such cruel and unilateral sanctions that are passed and imposed on the basis of bullying, and deems them to be economic terrorism against the ordinary people of Syria and a continuation of the U.S. attempts to destabilize that country (Syria)," Mousavi added.

On Wednesday, the U.S. State Depart-



ment and Treasury released 39 targets for sanctions, including Syrian President Bashar

al-Assad and his wife Asma.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

called the bans "the beginning of what will be a sustained campaign of economic and political pressure to deny the Assad regime revenue."

The sanctions are part of the so-called Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, which came into effect on Wednesday six months after it was signed into law by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Foreign Ministry condemned the U.S. sanctions as "a crime against humanity and a flagrant violation of international law that targets the livelihood of the Syrians."

In a statement carried by the official SANA news agency, an official source at the ministry said the Caesar Act reveals the U.S. administration's disregard for international norms and the level to which its officials have gone down.

The Americans, the source added, are behaving like "gangs and highway robbers."

The U.S. government, which discriminates against and kills its own citizens, is the last one who has the right to talk about human rights, the source added.

## Iran voices readiness to work with new UN Security Council members

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran has welcomed the election of India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway and Kenya as the new non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, voicing readiness to work with the new members.

"#Iran welcomes the election of India, Ireland, Mexico & Norway as the new UNSC non-permanent members," Iran's Foreign Ministry wrote in a tweet late on Thursday.

"Iran is ready to work w/ the new members, as the key agenda for the term 2021-22 should be effective protection of multilateralism & intl law against vicious ideologies & states," it added.

Four countries were elected to two-year terms on the UN Security Council on Wednesday in the first major vote held at the world body amid the coronavirus pandemic.

India, Ireland, Mexico and Norway will join the council on January 1 for the rotating term.

On Thursday, Kenya defeated Djibouti to also get elected



to the UNSC, after the UN General Assembly failed to choose between the two candidates during a first round.

In a tweet on Friday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry wrote, "Also, the election of Kenya to the UN Security

Council is welcomed. Iran is looking forward to working w/ Kenya & other new members on vital issues in West Asia and around the globe."

The UN Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with ensuring international peace and security, recommending the admission of new UN members to the General Assembly, and approving any changes to the UN Charter.

The permanent members of the Security Council are China, France, Russia, Britain, and the United States.

The ten non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected by the General Assembly in accordance with the participation of the members of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and other objectives of the organization, as well as on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

The non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected for a two-year term.

## Tehran says won't let nuclear inspections based on enemy's claims

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), says Iran would not open its territory to nuclear inspections induced by continuous allegations of its enemy.

"No country opens its territory to the inspections only based on continuous allegations provided by its own enemy, even if it is evident that the result of which will prove those allegations to be false," Gharibabadi said on Thursday during a speech before the IAEA Board of Governors on a recent report of the IAEA director general.

The following is the full transcript of his speech:

Madam Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before beginning to deliver my statement, I would like to register the Islamic Republic of Iran's serious concern about the possibility that the confidentiality of this meeting be compromised. Technical experts warned that undoubtedly, in this format, there is now no control over who is listening, who is recording, and who is divulging the confidential information. Let me also put on record that, just in case, the Secretariat shall be held accountable for any consequences as a result of not complying strictly with the principles of confidentiality, while Member States' responsibility should not be ignored as well, specifically considering that such confidential information was leaked to the media and even released by some institutes. It is important that the Agency take appropriate measures to ensure protection of the confidentiality of information, including when such information is made available to the Member States.

Following the release of the current report of the DG on Friday 5 June 2020, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran has shared some preliminary comments on this, which was circulated as INF/CIRC936 on 9th of June 2020.

Madam Chairperson,

The current extensive level of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Agency has not been achieved easily, just to be diminished by imprudent political interests. I would like to shed some light on the most important aspects of this cooperation:

- As a result of the JCPOA, Iran implements Additional Protocol provisionally and voluntarily;

- Iran, alone, with 432 inspections in 2019, receives more than 20 percent of the Agency's total inspections at the global level;

- Iran has granted 33 Complementary Accesses in 2019, which amounts to 73 percent of the Agency's total CAs among States with CSA and AP in force without Broader Conclusions (62 States);

- The share of Iran's inspections in the period of 2010 to 2019 has increased from 4 to 20 percent at the global level, and almost

7 inspectors are constantly present in Iran per day throughout the year;

- Despite difficulties the Agency faced in several States on the safeguards implementation during COVID-19 era, as reported by the DG, verification activities in Iran have been continued on a non-stop basis even by supporting charter flights, which the Agency described it as an exceptional cooperation;

- While Iran ceased the implementation of some of its commitments under the JCPOA, the Agency's verification activities have not been affected by such remedial measures.

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to reaffirm Iran's principal policy to engage and cooperate with the Agency in line with its obligations under the Safeguards Agreements. In view of this, the Islamic Republic of Iran acknowledges the Rights of the Agency for raising legitimate questions, seeking clarifications or requesting for access in line with its mandate and in accordance with the approved procedures, while it also underlines its rights as a Member State to seek for underlying reasons and supporting documents and argumentations from the Agency in this regard.

Iran also believes that the obligations of Member States, which reflect the Rights of the Agency, are not unlimited and are defined within the framework of the relevant instruments. The Rights of the Agency and the obligations of its Member States are two sides of a coin which are supposed to be mutually reinforcing. "Undermining the Rights of the Agency" should not be an option, nor should it be "undermining the rights of a Member State".

Madam Chairperson,

On two requests of the Agency for access, let me brief the room on the developments since March 2020. Iran continued its constructive engagement with the Agency during past two months with a view to reach a common understanding on different aspects of the requests to pave the way for finding a solution.

In this regard, two rounds of discussions were held in Tehran on 29 April and 16 May 2020, between relevant authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the IAEA delegation headed by DDG for Safeguards, during which the two sides entered into substantive discussions on how to address the issues in a professional and conducive manner.

Iran has explicitly raised two main ambiguities and concerns, which are legal and legitimate, and completely in accordance with the provisions of CSA and AP. First, the requests by the IAEA are based on invalid and safeguards-irrelevant information which are neither publicly available (open-source information), nor valid and verifiable. Needless to say that, any information claimed to be obtained through so-called secret operation or intelligence activities and any subsequent use of them as basis for the requests are not consistent with the Agency's Statute, thus should not have any status in the verification activities process and does not create any



obligation for Iran as well. Regarding the provided information attached to the letter of 21 May 2020 of the Agency, it is emphasized that the satellite imageries presented accordingly do not contain reasonable information which could be the basis for substantiation of the Agency's requests.

It is evident that the Agency lacks enough reasonable argumentations, for instance its report is replete with phrases such as "possible presence", "possible use or storage", and "possible ... conduct of nuclear related activities".

Second, Iran has also expressed its serious concerns over attempts to open an endless process of verifying and cleaning-up of ever-continuing fabricated allegations. It is noteworthy that all outstanding past issues regarding Iran's nuclear program have been considered and closed by the Board resolution 2015/72 on 15 December 2015. In this context, I would like to express Iran's concerns and strong opposition over the intentions to change the gear to re-open, under different pretexts, the past allegations which have already been closed.

Considering the above-mentioned legal ambiguities and concerns which still need further clarification, Iran has invited the Deputy Director General for Safeguards to Tehran for further discussions or hold a meeting in Vienna with Iranian delegation at the earliest time convenient for the Agency. In this context, and given the extensive cooperation between Iran and the Agency and significant amount of verification activities going on in Iran, its position on such non-urgent issue should not be called as "denial".

Madam Chairperson,

While Iran expressed its readiness to continue its consultations with the Agency with a view to settle the thematic differences and resolve the issues at hand as soon as possible, the release of the current report by the Director General is received with deep regret and disappointment. While SIR 2019 enumerates various difficulties in the implementation of safeguards in several States, it is paradoxical that the Agency behaves in a way as if there is no other issue rather to report on Iran. We consider this way of conduct neither impartial nor professional, but a double-standard.

If one could look at the developments after March around these two issues, it is

clear that a good progress was made, and it is unfair and non-factual to say that we are still at the same place as before. Needless to say that, Iran stated its willingness "to satisfy the Agency's requests as it did in the past" even before this Board's meeting, when its two main concerns are addressed. However, ignorance of the legitimate concerns raised, non-provision of underlying reasons to justify such requests, and seeking systematically and mechanistically for access by the Agency, should have not been an option.

As the distinguished delegates may remind, it was stated in the Technical Briefings that these allegations date back to more than 17 years ago, have not been proved, do not enjoy any urgency, and do not pose any risk of proliferation; it was also said that one of the two locations is a farm and the other a desert. Possibly you may ask why Iran does not grant access to the two locations automatically. The answer is clear: as a matter of sovereignty, no country opens its territory to the inspections only based on continuous allegations provided by its own enemy, even if it is evident that the result of which will prove those allegations to be false. I would like to ask the Member States to put themselves in our shoes and see if they are ready simply to engage with the Agency every now and then based on unsubstantiated allegations made by their adversaries?!

Madam Chairperson,

Since the report of the Director General also refers to the uranium metal production experiments carried out at JHL, I would like to inform that the Agency has totally disregarded all past relevant verification activities including its previous report on the reevaluation and assessment regarding possible discrepancy, documented as GOV/2015/68.

This report affirms that {and I quote}: "Agency re-evaluated this information in 2014 and assessed that the amount of natural uranium involved was within the uncertainties associated with nuclear material accountancy and related measurements" (and I unquote). It should be also added that the relevant material of the project is kept under the Agency's seal since the first day of verification in 2003.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me emphasize once again that the current level of cooperation between Iran and the Agency is exemplary, some of the aspects of which I have elucidated here in my statement. It is upon all of us to be the guardian of such a source of pride for all, including the Agency and the Member States. And, we should stand united against those who wish to destroy this for scoring purely short-sighted political points. This responsibility cannot be shouldered by Iran alone, and it is upon all of us to bear the brunt of any negative impacts if it is derailed. Merely saying that the issues related to the Safeguards are separate from the JCPOA is totally wrong.

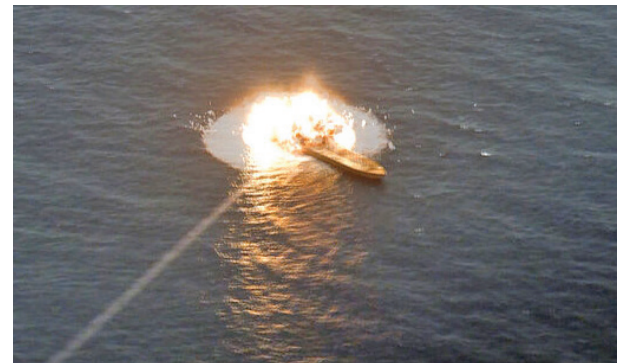
(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Navy tests new homegrown cruise missile in Sea of Oman

**1→** The war game was held on the fortieth day after a number of Navy forces were killed in an incident involving the Konarak vessel.

Nineteen Navy servicemen were killed and 15 others injured in the accident on May 10 when a number of vessels were carrying a naval training exercise off the coasts of Jask and Chabahar in the Sea of Oman.

After the war game, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, the army deputy chief for coordination affairs, described the successful test as a promising step to further boost the country's defense and deterrence power.



Sayyari said Iran will continue to move towards self-sufficiency despite brutal sanctions imposed on the country.

"Successful test-firing of long-range missiles is a sign of remarkable progress in boosting synergy between the armed forces and defense industries," he added.

Navy Chief Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi also noted that production of new home-grown missiles by Iranian experts will better equip the Islamic Republic to handle any threat against the Islamic establishment and the Iranian people while strengthening a sense of self-reliance in the armed forces.

Deputy Defense Minister Ghasem Taghizadeh said the ministry would spare no effort in supporting and improving the defense capability of the armed forces through designing and manufacturing state-of-the-art equipment.

In relevant remarks in April, Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said that Iran has increased the range of its naval missiles to 700 kilometers.

"Once the farthest range of our naval missiles did not exceed 45 km and even that was reached with the help of American military advisors," Rear Admiral Tangsiri said.

"However, we have developed subsurface and surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 700 kilometers, which have been totally made by domestic military experts," he added.

**■ Tens of missiles await enemy, warns Army chief**

Army Chief Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi warned enemies that tens of missiles await them if they take any action against Iran.

"No sanction will restrict the long-sighted Iranian mindset," Mousavi wrote in a letter to Khanzadi.

He also praised the naval forces for conducting a successful naval exercise, saying the war game created a wave of hope, pride and honor in the hearts of the people.

## VP says Iran unwavering in its support for Syria, resistance front

**TEHRAN (Press TV)** — Iranian Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri reaffirms the Islamic Republic's outright support for Syria and the regional resistance front in the face of foreign-backed scheming and violence.

Speaking in a phone conversation with Syria's newly-appointed Prime Minister Hussein Arnous on Thursday, Jahangiri called Iran "Syria's strategic partner," which would changelessly stand by the Syrian people and government's side.

"The unscrupulous assassination of Martyr Lieutenant General [Qassem] Soleimani has not affected any change in Iran's policy of backing Syria and the resistance front," Jahangiri added.

General Soleimani, former commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), proved a decisive element in the regional fight against foreign-backed militancy and Takfiri terrorism. He directed Iran's military advisory support for Syria and Iraq during the height of Daesh's campaign against the countries, a contribution that resulted in the Takfiri terrorist group's defeat in late 2017.

A U.S. drone attack assassinated the general and senior Iraqi anti-terror commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, among others, in early January as the former was on an official visit to Baghdad.

"The Islamic Republic will not spare any effort to help reduce the [existing] pressures facing the Syrian people. By God's grace, Syria will reclaim its power, calm, and stability," Jahangiri noted.

The Islamic Republic began providing Syria with advisory military assistance after numerous states, at the head of them the U.S. and its Western and regional allies, began funding and arming militants and terrorists with the aim of deposing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government. Despite initially losing considerable expanses of territory to Daesh and other terror outfits, the country, however, rallied with the help of Iran and Russia, another Damascus' ally, and reversed the balance in favor of itself on the battleground.

**■ 'Syria defeated terrorism'**

The Iranian official hailed that the Syrian people, Armed Forces, and government had successfully withstood multiple adversities.

"Syria has attained good achievements," Iran's first vice president said, adding that among regional Arab states, Damascus' "powerful performance" against terrorism indicates that the Syrian people "triumphed" against the evil phenomenon.

The victories, though, enraged the Israeli regime that reacted by resorting to military incursions into Syria, Jahangiri noted, saying the Islamic Republic condemns the aggression.

The Iranian vice president, meanwhile, urged the international community, especially the United Nations, to provide serious support for the Syrian people amid the outbreak of the new coronavirus, mainly by enabling transfer of medicine and staples to them.

The Syrian official, for his part, said the Islamic Republic's supportive stance towards Syria "has turned into a strategy that serves to reinforce the countries' ties against the enemies of the resistance front."

He also voiced Damascus' interest in further deepening of the relations, and expressed gratitude towards Tehran for its assisting the Syrian people and attempts at lessening the pressures that they are facing.



## Development projects worth over \$2.8b inaugurated in 2 provinces

**1 →** As for Mazandaran, some 92 kilometers of highways as well as 466 affordable housing units were inaugurated, and the construction operations for 30 kilometers of freeways were also started.

The president also inaugurated a 126-kilometer freeway as well as 230 kilometers of highways and rural and urban access roads and ordered the start of constructing 470 kilometers of ways in Ilam.

Some 7,900 square meters of government and public buildings, completion of semi-finished projects and also 1,300 affordable Mehr housing units in Ilam, Dehloran and Abadan counties were also among the inaugurated projects in Ilam province.

Earlier this month, Rouhani had inaugurated four industrial and mining projects worth 48.26 trillion rials (about \$1.149 billion) in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi Province and central Isfahan Province via video conference.

Transport and Urban Development Ministry has it on the agenda to inaugurate 980 kilometers of freeways during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), according to Mohammad Eslami.

The minister said that there are currently 2,460 km of freeways laid across the country, Mehr news agency reported.

## Iran to use its financial resources in Iraq to import basic goods: CBI governor

**1 →** In the meeting with Al-Alaq, Hemmati noted: “Iran will use its huge financial resources in Iraq for doing the purchases under the framework of this agreement.”

The Iraqi central bank governor Ali Mohsen Al-Alaq, for his part, explained that Iran’s resources in Iraq are the revenues of the country earned from exports of gas and electricity to Iraq.



Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati (L) meet with his Iraqi counterpart Ali Mohsen Al-Alaq in Baghdad on Wednesday.

According to Hemmati, in his meeting with al-Kadhimi, the prime minister emphasized his country’s determination for resolving the problems regarding the electricity and gas due payments, saying: “I have had meetings with the relevant officials in this regard and I am aware of the problems. I have asked them to resolve them.”

“We have an agreement for solving the money transfer problems by providing food and basic goods, and we will cooperate in this regard; in addition, Iraqi businessmen are interested in cooperating, and I have personally ordered that the problems related to Iran’s payment be resolved,” Kadhimi said.

## Nearly 810,000 tons of steel exported in 2 months

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Iran exported 809,665 tons of steel during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), IRNA reported.

As reported, the two-month export in this year was drastically lower than the figure of the same period of time in the past year, which was 2.041 million tons.

The monthly steel export stood at 393,753 tons in the second month of this year.

According to the data indicated in the World Steel Association (WSA)’s latest report, production of crude steel in Iran has risen 14.1 percent in March 2020 from March 2019.



The WSA’s report, which is on steel production by 64 countries, put Iran’s steel output at over 2.8 million tons in March.

WSA has previously announced that Iran’s crude steel production climbed 30 percent in 2019 while the average global growth in this sector stood at 3.5 percent.

According to the global organization, Iran produced 31.9 million tons of crude steel in 2019, while the figure was 24 million tons in 2018.

The data and reports released by Iranian organizations also show that the country’s steel sector is still experiencing growth in output and export despite the U.S. sanctions.

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

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has announced that production of iron ore concentrate in Iran reached 47,306 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

The country has extracted 64,274 million tons of iron ore during the past year, according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since September 23, 2019.

Industry Ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

Iran’s export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

As reported, the country’s major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in the previous year.

# Iran’s FTZs development continues despite sanctions

**1 →** Development of the existing free trade zones and establishment of new FTZs is currently one of the major economic approaches of Iran and in a bid to attract more investments to these zones Iranian government offers various incentives to the investors.

Tax exemption is one of those incentives which has been offered for more than a decade to the investors in the free zones.

Such incentives have encouraged investment making in these zones.

One of the newly-established zones is Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC).

Last December, the managing director of IKAC announced that over 50 Iranian companies have put in requests to invest in the free zone.

Iran’s free zones not only attract domestic investors; they are also attractive for those foreigners interested in investment making in Iran.

Last July, a Turkish company inked a memorandum of understanding with Kish Free Zone Organization (KFZO) to build a big tourism complex on Kish Island with making an investment of \$100 million.

**■ More free zones to be established**

The significant role of the FTZs in the national economy has prompted the government to establish more free zones throughout



the country.

Last December, Jask Port in the southern Hormozgan province became a free trade zone.

Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said at the time that the program for turning the country’s ports into free trade zones with the aim of facilitating investment and attracting foreign investors is on the government’s agenda.

The parliament has already approved the

bill on the establishment of eight free trade and industrial zones as well as 12 special economic zones throughout the country.

**■ Government’s support**

As mentioned above, the government is encouraging investment making in the free zones through offering different incentives. It supports these zone also in other ways.

On May 13, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri said the business units based in

## Sponge iron production increases 11%



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Production of sponge iron in Iran rose 11 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, 5,552 million tons of sponge iron has been produced during the two-month period of this year, rising from 4.994 million tons produced in the same time span of the previous year.

Iran’s production of sponge iron has climbed six percent to 27.907 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), from 26.359 million tons in its preceding year, according to the data released by Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA).

The country’s export of sponge iron has also risen 77 percent in the past year.

Meanwhile, sponge iron consump-

tion in the country increased four percent to 26.965 million tons from 25.826 million tons on an annual basis.

Three projects each with a capacity of 800,000 tons were launched in the country during the past Iranian year.

The projects were put into operation in the southeastern province of Kerman, South Khorasan Province in east and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province in the southwest of the country.

Iran is only second to India globally in terms of the volume of sponge iron production. The country is the 10th largest steel producer in the world.

Sponge iron is a metallic product produced through the direct reduction of iron ore in the strong state. It is a substitute for scrap and therefore is mostly applicable in making steel through the secondary route. The procedure of sponge iron making aims to expel the oxygen from iron ore.

## Foreign investment approved for industry, mining, trade projects rises 5.4%



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The value of foreign investment approved by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) increased by 5.4 percent compared to the same period last year, ISNA reported.

According to the latest data released by the Industry Ministry, the total foreign investment approved by the ministry in the mentioned period amounted at \$417.3 million, registering a \$21.4-million rise compared to the \$395.9-million for the last year’s same time span.

As reported, investment packages were approved for the implementation of 18 industry, mining and trade projects in the mentioned period, also indicating a 28.5 percent rise in terms of the number of projects compared to the previous year’s same two months.

Back in April, the Industry Ministry

the country’s free trade zones can use the 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) of facilities that the government is providing to compensate the economic damages of the coronavirus outbreak.

Jahangiri said that the government has provided these facilities under easy conditions and expressed hope that by the end of the Iranian month of Khordad (June 20), all units affected by the coronavirus crisis will be able to benefit from these facilities.

The official underlined the significance of the free zones in the country’s economy, saying the free zones have been established with the aim of becoming important centers of investment, production and employment in the country.

The first vice-president emphasized that the program prepared by the Secretariat of the Free Zones High Council for the implementation of 310 development and service projects in the country’s free zones by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (starts on March 2021) must be seriously pursued.

He further mentioned 620 trillion rials (about \$14.7 billion) of investment made in the mentioned projects and said: “The implementation of these projects will increase production and employment and will have a [positive] impact on the country’s economy.”

published the foreign investments data for the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 20-April 20), according to which in the mentioned month the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province attracted more than 70 percent of the approved foreign investments in Iran, while 76 percent of the investments were made by German companies.

Also, the share of industry in these projects was 78 percent, while trade and mining projects accounted for 11 percent of the projects in terms of number.

The largest volume of foreign investment in Farvardin was made in the chemical and coke manufacturing groups, and petroleum refinery products.

As previously reported by the Industry Ministry, Iran expects a 10-fold increase of foreign investment in industry and mining sectors by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2021).

## Electricity, industrial projects put into operation in Isfahan Province

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Acting Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Hossein Modares Khiabani inaugurated three electricity and industrial projects in Mobarakeh Steel Company in the central Isfahan province on Thursday, IRNA reported.

The projects include the high and medium voltage network of Shahid Kharazi 2 unit, the boiler of the Heat Recovery Steam Generators (HRSG) of the company’s gas power plant, as well as a rebar hot rolling unit.

Nearly eight trillion rials (about \$190.5 million) was invested for completion of the Shahaid Kharazi electricity network, which is aimed to supply the electricity required for the increase in the unit’s production up to 7.2 million tons.

The capacity of this project is 1,500 Megavolt-Ampere and it will create jobs for 75 people.

As reported, over 60 percent of the equipment used in this project has been provided by domestic companies.

The complex’ HRSG boiler was also built with 1.1 trillion rials (about \$26 million) of investment.



Acting Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Hossein Modares Khiabani (3rd L) visit Mobarakeh Steel Company in the central Isfahan province on Thursday.

## Economic co-op discussed between Iran, Syria

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — During a meeting between Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous and an Iranian delegation, the two sides explored the ways to further develop economic cooperation between Iran and Syria which have been targeted by the U.S. sanctions, , Fars news agency reported.

Iran-Syria economic collaboration still continues in line with the guidelines of the leaders of the two countries, Arnous said in the meeting in Damascus on Wednesday.

Syria has a comprehensive plan to develop the agricultural and food industries to increase the stability of the Syrian people in the face of sanctions, he added.

Head of Headquarters for Developing Iran’s Economic Cooperation with Iraq and Syria Hassan Danayeefer who was heading the visiting Iranian delegation, for his part, reiterated that his country is standing alongside Syria to counter economic sanctions.

He noted that the Iranian delegation’s trip

to Damascus took place to offer economic help, stressing the significance of joint coordination for overcoming all the obstacles on the way of economic collaboration.

Iran and Syria have been taking major steps for expansion of their mutual trade ties. The two sides have exchanged numerous trade delegations and Iranian private companies are investing in various fields of Syrian economy like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction

projects.

Last month, Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi said that the value of Iran’s trade with Syria will reach \$1 billion by the next Iranian calendar year 1400 (starts on March 21, 2021).

“Considering the plans we have on the agenda for expanding trade with Syria, the value of Iran’s trade with the country is expected to reach \$1 billion by the next year,” Kashefi noted.



# SP gas supply to national network up 10%

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) says gas supplies from the complex to the country's national gas network has increased by 10 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), year on year.

According to Hadi Hashemzadeh Farhang, the amount of sour gas received from the South Pars platforms as feedstock in the mentioned two months also increased by about nine percent compared to the same period last year, IRIB reported.

The official noted that the annual overhaul operations of the complex' refineries was started on May 4 and will be completed by the end of summer (September 21).

Emphasizing the importance of gas condensate production by the Persian Gulf Star refinery (PGSR), Hashemzadeh Farhang, said: "The amount of gas condensate produced by this complex in the first two months of [the Iranian calendar year] 1399 increased by more than nine percent compared to the same period last year."

In 2019, Hashemzadeh Farhang had said that South Pars refineries account for refining 74 percent of gas produced in Iran.

Earlier this month, the spokesman of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said the country's daily production of natural gas increased by 24 million cubic meters (mcm) and currently stands at 674 mcm.

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

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

Also in April, Mohammad-Ali Dadvar, the PGSR managing director, announced that the refining capacity of the plant is going to grow 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) by September



2020 to hit 480,000 bpd.

Dadvar said the facility was currently receiving an average of 420,000 bpd of gas condensate as feedstock.

The huge South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qa-

tar in the Persian Gulf, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

## No Covid-19 impact on Iran gas distribution

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — Iran has one of the most extended gas pipelines in the region. Last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), Iran extended its gas pipelines to 37,343 kilometers. Furthermore, 86 gas compressors are under operation while 316 have already become operational across the country.

Saeed Tavakoli, CEO of Iran Gas Transmission Company (IGTC), tells "Iran Petroleum" that Iran managed to distribute about 247 bcm of gas last calendar year at a sustainable rhythm.

Here is the full text of the interview Tavakoli gave to "Iran Petroleum":

■ How much gas did Iran distribute last calendar year?

IGTC conducted a series of important measures last calendar year (1398), including distribution of about 247 bcm of gas, which was up 8 bcm year-on-year. Moreover, 170 periodic overhauls of compressor units (turbines and compressors), 8,300 kilometers of pigging and 2,886 kilometers of smart pigging were carried out in the same year. We have managed to carry out smart pigging and guarantee sustainable gas transmission despite the U.S.'s withdrawal from the JCPOA and the ensuing exit of many foreign companies.

In terms of safety, volume of installations and equipment, as well as preparedness and reaction under emergency conditions, we are among the top companies in the region.

In 1398, we hit a record 800 mcm/d of natural gas transmission. It has to be taken into account that the volume of gas transmission is proportionate with supply at points of production. Since we witnessed increased output in 1398 with the startup of new South Pars phases, we felt obliged to not let any gas stay at production points. We increased the gas transmission rate and no gas was staid. We maintained 100 percent gas supply sustainability for three consecutive years at the first month of winter when gas consumption reached its peak. It means that emergency gas transmission installations did not stop working.

■ How was it possible?

To that end, we set up a maintenance system based on physical assets. For the first time in the country's gas network, 18 compressors operated without any replacement. Furthermore, through engineering expertise, we managed to have a 50-percent increase in the nominal capacity of stations and gas transmission pipelines under emergency conditions. We



overhauled and monitored our systems during the first half of the year in order to guarantee a sustained gas transmission in winter. Although we were faced with heavy flooding in late March 2019, we had no fire or explosion, nor did we have any reparation in our gas transmission infrastructure or halt in our activities. As mentioned before, one reason for our success was precise reparation based on the network needs. Since our concerns over gas supply during consumption peak are not limited to winter and we also face consumption peak at power plants in summer, we embarked on the transmission network detection from the very beginning and used maintenance systems relying on physical assets to maintain our equipment.

■ Are there any specific criteria for maintenance?

Naturally, our maintenance of equipment has to be done based on specific indexes. We have also to take into account the fact that we are under sanctions and therefore no foreign supplier or company would help us with maintenance. Therefore, we have taken this factor into consideration and we know that we have to rely on domestic companies. In order to cover the risk, we were exposed to assess domestic companies. We also engage a number of knowledge-based companies and startups and informed them about our needs.

Through a gradual process, we assigned our maintenance and manufacturing tasks to domestic companies. We started with the manufacturing of parts and equipment. When the domestic companies became mature we negotiated with knowledge-based companies and asked them to develop the required

equipment. Currently, domestic companies are supplying most of our needs. For instance, some of our required items like filters had been purchased from foreign companies, but now we are manufacturing them all entirely in Iran. So is the case with the oil we use in rotary equipment. Among other important measures we undertook last calendar year, was to use composites with Iranian-engineered formula in repairing our equipment. Until recently we could not carry out immunization with composite for high-pressure pipes entirely in the country and the companies that were active in this sector were mainly commercial and used to import raw materials for composites without transferring in any technical knowhow. Therefore, we conducted research two years ago in this regard and we have now developed the formula for composite manufacturing. That can ensure us that we would not face any problems. In Iran, three companies have been qualified to conduct composite-based repair.

■ How have sanctions affected the gas transmission network?

Every change would definitely affect Iran's gas transmission network, but fortunately resilience and more importantly preparedness and reaction to emergency conditions is high at IGTC. We have developed specific plans for all of our reparations and measures. We know quite well that we are under sanctions and technology owners would not provide us with necessary equipment. We had started working on some of equipment which we could not manufacture in Iran and we managed to produce many of them. When the sanctions were toughened and we are barred from the cooperation of top companies our activities

did not stop and we continued our work.

Of course, it is noteworthy that the U.S.'s withdrawal from the JCPOA and subsequently the re-imposition of sanctions affected our activity. But we transformed this threat into an opportunity and turned to manufacturing commodities and items which we could not produce through getting help from knowledge-based companies and startups. For instance, we are currently manufacturing most instruments, mechanical and electrical equipment in Iran.

■ Has the Covid-19 outbreak affected IGTC's activities?

First of all, I have to acknowledge that the outbreak of Covid-19 caused problems for us in Iran because since two years ago we carry out our annual overhaul in March. This time, it coincided with the Covid-19 outbreak. Naturally, it caused problems to our planning. However, we tried to go ahead with our plans based on schedule. We limited our activities related to periodical technical inspection and visits and carry them out in line with necessary protocols. We had to reduce the number of our staff in order to respect social distancing and health protocols and therefore the work was done with more pressure. However, we managed to carry out our reparation in line with the health instructions of the Petroleum Ministry and social distancing. The number of IGTC staff infected with Covid-19 has so far been very low and we have fortunately lost none of our colleagues over this time.

■ Has gas transmission volume declined?

No, we have not had any reduction in gas transmission to consumers and the transmission network has been working based on national dispatching needs. In fact, the entire gas produced in the country is transmitted to consumers and the coronavirus has not caused any restrictions to gas transmission.

■ Covid-19 restrictions seem to continue as Covid-19 is not disappearing any time soon. How will it affect Iran's gas transmission network?

Our main activity in Iran's gas transmission network pertains to maintenance of equipment for safe and sustained gas supply. With the Covid-19 outbreak, we also adapted our maintenance and reparation to the coronavirus-related conditions by reducing the time of people's presence and their risks. As I mentioned before, we are transmitting the whole gas we are producing. There has been no cut to water and electricity supply and we have had no halt in gas supply either.

## Market rebalancing, full commitment to conformity remains the focus – JMMC

**VIENNA (Shana)** — OPEC and non-OPEC 19th Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) was held via videoconference, on Thursday, 18 June 2020, under the Chairmanship of Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy, and Co-Chair Alexander Novak, Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation.

The Committee reviewed the monthly report prepared by the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) and recent developments in the global oil market, as well as immediate prospects for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021.

The JMMC reiterated the critical role that the 'Declaration of Cooperation' (DoC) continues to play in supporting oil market stability and economic recovery, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic shock and the subsequent severe global economic downturn. In this regard, it recalled the historic decision taken by all Participating Countries in the DoC at the 10th (Extraordinary) OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting on 12 April 2020 to adjust downwards overall crude oil production, and the decisions taken at the recent 179th Meeting of the OPEC Conference and the 11th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting on 6 June 2020. This included extending the first phase of the production adjustments by a further month, now till 31 July 2020, and subscribing to the concept of compensation by those countries who were unable to reach full conformity (100%) in May and June, to accommodate the underperformed volumes in July, August and September, in addition to their already agreed production adjustment for such months.

The Committee took note of the overall conformity of 87% for the month of May 2020. It also observed individual country conformity levels and reiterated the critical importance that all Participating Countries achieve their 100% level, and make up for any monthly shortfalls in the months of July, August and September. It welcomed the expressed commitments from those countries below the 100% May conformity level and specific compensation plans highlighting how this will be accommodated, and delivered, between July and September.



The Committee emphasized the critical importance of adhering to full conformity, and compensating the overproduced volumes in the months of May and June, during the months of July, August and September 2020, in accordance with the Statement of the 11th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting of the DoC (6 June 2020), in particular with reference to the five elements agreed.

The Committee would like to thank those participants, namely Iraq and Kazakhstan, which have already submitted their compensation schedules, and agreed to give other underperforming participants, which have not yet submitted final plans, until next Monday 22 June 2020 to submit their schedules for compensation to the OPEC Secretariat.

Furthermore, the Committee mandated the Secretariat to reach out to all the underperforming Participating Countries to submit their schedules for compensation by the above mentioned date.

The Committee stressed that the attainment of 100% conformity from all participating Countries is not only fair and equitable, but vital for the ongoing and timely rebalancing efforts and helping deliver a sustainable oil market stability.

The Committee stated their appreciation of additional voluntary contributions totaling 1.2 mb/d made by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Oman in the month of June 2020.

The Committee thanked the JTC and the OPEC Secretariat for its ongoing work. The JTC and the JMMC will continue their monthly meetings, with the next ones scheduled for 14 July and 15 July, respectively.

## Saudi Aramco cuts hundreds of jobs amid oil market downturn, sources say

State oil giant Saudi Aramco started laying off hundreds of employees this month, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters, as global energy companies reduce their workforces in response to the coronavirus crisis.

Like other top oil firms, Aramco has cut capital spending for 2020 after the pandemic brought an unprecedented drop in oil demand and hammered crude prices. Oil majors have cut workforces by 10 percent to 15 percent to cuts costs and as part of restructuring plans.

Most of those who lost jobs at Aramco were foreigners, the sources said. One source estimated that 500 people had been laid off, adding that the job losses were mostly based on performance and similar actions took place each year.

Aramco has more than 70,000 employees.

"Aramco is adapting to the highly complex and rapidly changing business environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We constantly review and revisit our operating expenditures where necessary to continue driving operational excellence and profitability," Aramco said in a statement.

"We are not providing information regarding the details of any action at this time, but all our actions are designed to provide us more agility, resilience and competitiveness, with a focus on long-term growth," it said.

Bloomberg was first to report the job cuts.

Qatar Petroleum, one of the world's biggest energy companies, has also laid off foreigners and cut its spending plans to cope with the slump in oil and gas demand which has hit global economies, industry sources have told Reuters.

Kuwait, a key Persian Gulf oil producer, plans to stop hiring foreigners for its oil sector for a year, the Kuwaiti oil minister said this month.

## Coronavirus will hasten 'peak oil' by three years, says research firm

An influential research firm has cut its estimate of potential oil production by an amount that exceeds the reserves of Saudi Arabia, as the coronavirus crisis accelerates longer-term structural changes to the market.

According to Financial Times, in an annual report published on Thursday, Oslo-based Rystad Energy said its estimate of "recoverable" oil resources — the volume that could be extracted from the earth, given constraints of technology and demand — has fallen since 2019 by 282bn barrels to 1.9tn barrels, as consumption habits change and oil companies abandon exploration plans. The proven reserves of Saudi Arabia, the world's second biggest producer, come to 267bn barrels.

"Peak oil" is now a little closer," said Per Magnus Nysveen, head of analysis at Rystad, referring to the hypothetical moment of maximum production. "We used to say that peak oil will happen around 2030. Now we say that

it could happen in 2027 or 2028."

Crude consumption dropped as much as one-third at the height of the coronavirus crisis in April, as lockdowns and travel restrictions forced people to stay home. Demand has begun to recover, but there is growing acknowledgment across the industry that the impact of the virus may reverberate for years to come.

People will be reluctant to travel by air for some time, Nysveen said, reducing demand for jet fuel. Meanwhile, he said, the sharp fall in crude prices will cause drilling activity to plunge in the near term, leading to a spike in prices between 2023 and 2025 — just as electric vehicles become competitive with the combustion engine. This should accelerate a switch from petrol and diesel, further hurting demand for crude.

Rystad said this drop-off in demand, coupled with increasing environmental consciousness among investors, would discourage oil producers from pumping money into projects in more

remote areas with long lead times, meaning areas previously expected to be explored for oil would be left untouched.

Modelling by Moody's suggests global oil demand may not return to 2019 levels until at least 2025. The rating agency said that there is possibility that demand does not return to last year's levels at all.

"Oil demand may take a long time to recover??.?. due to the combination of weaker economic growth, decarbonisation trends and behavioral shifts, increasing the possibility that demand peaked in that year," said James Leaton, senior credit officer at Moody's.

British oil major BP last week said it expected the pandemic to expedite the transition towards cleaner energy as it slashed the value of its assets by \$17.5bn. Its new chief executive Bernard Looney told the FT in a recent interview that the peak in oil demand may have already passed.



Second Announcement

شرکت پتروشیمی شازند  
ایرانی**Competitive tendering from an open list No 99-121**

SUBJECT: Repairing rotors involved in turbine and compressors of Olefin unit and procurement of a Turbine device.

SHAZAND PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY (ARPC) Intends to identify qualified contractors to assign implementation of aforesaid subject. Thereupon we invite all reputable domestic or international companies whom have knowledge and adequate specialization toward the said subject and have the capability to fulfill tender subject individually or in consortium with other qualified foreign companies to submit their request. Therefore all applicants should up to 10 (ten) days after the date of insertion of this advertisement (except for Thursday's and Friday's) with introducing a representative; render the stated documents in clause B and fill up application form of participation in tender. Hence applicant's representatives with a letter of introduction should attend to address No. 68 Taban St. Vali-e-Asr Ave / Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, to ARPC legal department.

In case of any question or ambiguity please contact us via telephone +98 21 82122543

## A) Scope of work:

After assessment by supervisory body and in case of approval will be announced subsequently

## B) Requested Documents:

1- Presenting a valid original letter of representation or a valid association memorandum of agreement with foreign partner company in field of design, engineering, and exercising similar projects with time validity (for companies who take part in tender in consortium).

2- Rendering schedule of activity records and the works in progress in field related to subject with certificate of completion and certificate of clearance and consent letters related to this records.

3- Audited financial statement for recent 3 years and other creditable certificates which affirm applicant's financial solvency for implementing subject of this advertisement.

NOTE: Submission of the documents will not create any right for the applicants, and ARPC will be free to accept or reject applicants for bidding without any accountability.

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# Messages of U.S. spy drone shoot-down, Will U.S. learn lessons?

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

One year has passed since a pivotal point in the history of Iran-U.S. tensions – the day when the White House opened its eyes towards the truth of Iran’s defense power.

■ What happened?

A US Navy’s RQ-4A spy drone flew from a U.S. base in the Persian Gulf region at 00:14 a.m., June 20, 2019. The drone went ahead with its mission of gathering intelligence in the region but while returning, violated Iranian airspace and was brought down by IRGC’s air defense at 4:05 a.m. near Kouh-e Mobarak region – which sits in the central district of Jask County – around Hormuz Strait.

In a statement, IRGC announced that the drone had turned off its transponder and ignored multiple warnings of the Iranian air defense.

■ What were early reactions?

U.S. military rushed to condemn the downing, claiming that the drone had been in international airspace when Iran shot it down.

Hours after the incident, the U.. military confirmed that one of its drones had been shot, claiming that the incident took place in international airspace. Navy Captain Bill Urban, a spokesman for the U.S. military’s Central Command, also alleged that it was “an unprovoked attack.”

Iran, however, highlighted that the drone had actually entered its airspace. Foreign Minister Zarif took to Twitter to voice full support for IRGC’s act in defending the country’s borders. “We don’t seek war, but will zealously defend our skies, land & waters,” he stressed.

Later Iranian lawmakers issued a statement, praising the downing of the intruding spy drone, noting that the act “broke down the equations of its psychological warfare; no other aggressive flying object will be able to enter the Iranian sky.”

Commenting on the operation, Major General Hossein Salami, the IRGC’s chief commander, said that “At dawn today, the IRGC’s Air Force bravely downed a U.S. spy drone, which had intruded our border, violating our national security. This is how the Iranian nation deals with its enemies.”

The IRGC’s chief said Iranian frontiers are “our red line,” and that the downing of the American drone sent a “transparent and firm message” that the defenders of Iranian borders would react to any act of aggression by any outsider with a “decisive and final” strike.

Meanwhile, IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh noted that there had been a Boeing P-8 Poseidon manned aircraft, with more than 35 people on board, accompanying the RQ-4A but Iranian forces have refrained from shooting it down. This was later confirmed by U.S. President Donald Trump who also appreciated Iranian forces for not targeting the manned plane.

Western media reports claimed that U.S. had been ready to retaliate IRGC’s measure by targeting some air defense bases in Iran but Donald Trump had canceled the attack some 10 minutes before it was launched. Trump implied that it was not fair to kill more than 150 Iranians for an unmanned drone, however, some experts believed that the US was much worried about a war with Iran that could be way more catastrophic for U.S. forces than those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

■ How Iran proved its word?

One day after the incident, Iran retrieved sections of the downed drone from its territorial waters which proved that the UAV had been flying in Iran’s airspace.

He went on to say that sections of the drone were afloat on Iran’s territorial waters and Iranian forces collected them after the drone was shot down, and then sent the debris Tehran, Hajizadeh said on June 21.

In early February, IRGC revealed part of the retrieved sections of RQ-4A:

On the sidelines of the event, Hajizadeh said that IRGC now enjoys full familiarity with the codes and frequencies of the drone. “Americans should draw a red line for using this drone against Iran because we are now familiar with all its codes and frequencies; meaning that we can deactivate it not from a 100km distance, but from thousands of kilometers away, from Tehran,” he said.

■ What was the missile system that downed the U.S. drone?

IRGC announced that the system that launched a missile towards the U.S. spy drone was the home-made



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■ What was the missile system that downed the U.S. drone?

IRGC announced that the system that launched a missile towards the U.S. spy drone was the home-made Khordad 3 system.

Khordad 3 is a domestic Iranian design which was first unveiled in 2014. Equipped with a powerful phased array radar, the system can engage up to four targets at the same time and fire a total of eight missiles at them.

The system has an operational range of between 50 and 75 kilometers and can intercept airborne targets as high as 25 to 30 kilometers.

Despite years of sanctions against its defense sector, Iran has managed to take big steps in fulfilling its own needs and creating what is required to defend the country against hostile measures.

■ What were the messages?

The news acted like a bomb last year with almost all major media outlets across the world talking about it and providing analysis. The point that in all analyses was evident was that Iran’s defense capabilities cannot be underestimated.

To shed more light on the messages of the incident one year on, we reached out to two Iranian political commentators, Foad Izadi and Mohammad Marandi.

“The message was clear to the Americans that Iran has the capability of defending itself and the will to use that capability,” Izadi, a professor at the University of Tehran, said.

“And a lot of people in Washington were doubtful on both accounts; some people thought Iran is not able to for example shoot down a sophisticated American drone and some people believed Iran is capable of doing it but will not do so,” he added.

The clear message, he continued is that “attacking

Iran will have clear consequences to the Americans and the end result is that Iran will hold the U.S. government responsible for any attacks on Iran and will respond severely.”

“I think it’s pretty clear that the Iranians downed the drone because it was violating Iranian airspace so sending a message to the United States that Iran will vigorously protect its borders and that the United States must keep a distance and that they should recognize that Iran sees exactly what they are doing and has the capability to deter U.S. aggression,” Marandi, a professor at the University of Tehran, told Mehr News Agency.

“In addition to that, the downing of the drone also revealed that Iran has its own surface to air missile technology that is capable of downing the most advanced American aircraft,” he said, adding that “The missile that was used was made in Iran by Iranian experts and used by Iranian military officers to bring down the drone.”

“So it shows the degree of Iranian’s sophistication as well, and the fact that despite sanctions, Iran is able to produce highly sophisticated weapons that protected even from the most advanced American military capabilities.”

“I think that that was a major blow to the Americans not because of the drone itself considering the fact that it was very expensive, but also it showed the limitation to the American power and that the Americans would not be able to carry out any significant strike against Iran without being badly hurt in the process,” noted the analyst.

■ Increased tensions with Iran

The anniversary of the drone incident comes as U.S. has not yet stopped its tension-building behavior and measures. Washington is continuing what Iran calls economic terrorism with severe unilateral sanctions against Tehran in defiance of international law while the international community is not taking any practical action against this unilateralism.

Meanwhile, the U.S. also assassinated Lieutenant General Ghasem Soleimani in January and received a firm response some days later when Iranian missiles hit Ain Asad base in Iraq. The answer was again proof that Iran is capable of answering hostile measures but at the same time, does not seek war.

## Iran-Venezuela alliance a glorious example for nations to follow: American analyst

By Payman Yazdani, Morteza Rahmani

An American columnist and political author says the Iran-Venezuela alliance against the U.S. is a glorious model for other nations to stand against Washington’s hegemonic policies.

Stephen Lendman made the remarks in an interview with Tehran Times on Tuesday, while commenting on the reports about Iran’s decision to continue its fuel delivery to Venezuela, despite Washington’s struggles.

Having shipped about 1.5 million barrels of fuel to Venezuela last month, Iran reportedly intends to keep up shipments to the South American country with 2 to 3 tankers per month.

“The myth of American exceptionalism, the indispensable state, an illusory moral superiority, and military supremacy persist despite hard evidence debunking these notions,” said Lendman.

Noting that “the U.S. is hostile to ordinary people everywhere, at home and abroad,” the analyst added, “It’s hostile to Iran and other sovereign independent nations because they won’t subordinate their rights to U.S. interests.”

Referring to Iran-Venezuela alliance as a glorious example for other nations to follow, Lendman said, “Over time, that’s the future.” “The U.S. is so hellbent to dominate other nations, it ends up being its own worst enemy — why it’s been declining for years.”

While the U.S. has been using sanctions as a weapon toward the nations standing against its hegemonic approaches to achieve its geopolitical goals, Mexico has followed Iran’s lead expressing readiness to supply Venezuela with fuel upon demand.

Responding a question that whether Iran and Mexico’s decision, as well some European countries’ willingness for independence, can initiate what it takes to disarm the U.S. of its sanctions weapon in the long run, the analyst said, “If Mexico intends following Iran’s lead on supplying fuel to Venezuela, maybe other nations will do the same thing.”

Referring to the possibility of others to follow suit, he said, “Germany would be key if begins to take this step because it’s an economic powerhouse country and influences other European nations.”

“Look how it [the U.S. is mistreating close ally Germany, threatening sanctions on the country for supporting Russia’s Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline that will deliver low cost natural gas to European countries,” he said.

“The U.S. wants them buying higher cost LNG. Germany is resisting. Over time, other nations will as well,” added the prominent author. Lendman stressed that the U.S. mistreatment of Iran, Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, and its own allies at times “is a self-defeating policy.”

“What can’t go on forever, won’t. The U.S. war on humanity makes more enemies than allies. One day U.S. imperialism will end up in the dustbin of history where it belongs.”

In response to a question over the U.S. unilateral sanctions against Tehran and Caracas and the possibility of any hostile move by Washington against the Iranian flotilla, the American expert said, “As we know, U.S. sanctions are illegal. As they more greatly affect U.S. allies as they do, these countries will eventually not recognize them incrementally.”

Regarding the repercussions of a potential war against Iran, he noted that “while the U.S. wages endless wars, it prefers attacking weak nations unable to hit back hard.”

The U.S. hasn’t won a war since WW II, he said, emphasizing, “Attacking Iran would be madness. Could it happen? Indeed it could but I doubt it because the Pentagon knows it would be hit hard in return. Cool heads in Washington know Israel will pay a big price.”

“I doubt they’ll be a U.S. war on Iran even though it could happen,” he said.

He further referred to the developments which could disrupt the U.S. struggles for dominating world energy.

“The U.S. is losing the battle for global dominance. The more hostile it gets against more nations, how things are now, the closer it gets to the end of its imperial road.”

“All empires in world history met the same fate. So will the U.S.,” he added.

“I’ve said many times that the U.S. is a nation in decline because of its imperial arrogance, hubris, waging endless wars against invented enemies, and its unwillingness to change, Lendman said, adding, “I’m hopeful that anger on U.S. streets will spill over to other nations fed up with destructive U.S. actions.”

He said, “Washington is infested with right wing extremists. U.S. dark forces were behind 9/11.”

“I strongly believe SARS Cov-2 virus causing COVID-19 disease came from a U.S. biolab — unleashed worldwide, a 2nd 9/11.”

Elaborating on the issue, Lendman said economic collapse benefits the U.S. ruling class, enabling greater wealth accumulation at the expense of ordinary people.

Such approach, he said, “also lets dominant U.S. companies eliminate competition.”

The Analyst said such policy was “the outcome of the 2008-09 financial crisis and what’s happening now is much worse.”

## EU diplomacy is profitable for Israel, but a disaster for Palestine

By Ramona Wadi

Since Israel announced its plan to annex swathes of the occupied West Bank, the EU has only hypothesised on what steps the bloc may take in response. The most prominent of these could be the exclusion of Israel from the Horizon 2020 research grants. Other than this possibility (it is no more than that at this stage), which should have been done long before now in any case due to Israel’s perpetual violations of international law, the EU has tacitly approved Donald Trump’s deal upon which annexation is based, and will most likely restrict its collective response to rhetoric.

U.S. President Trump has dealt Palestinians a severe blow, which would have been impossible if the international community had united, decades ago, to rectify its colonial approach to Palestine. Through non-binding resolutions, the UN led the way in creating Israel’s ability to act with impunity which is derived from Palestinian dependence. No strategy other than anti-colonial resistance could have worked, and despite the UN’s purported intentions to eradicate colonialism, it reneged and instead provided Israel with the necessary diplomatic cover to appropriate virtually all of Palestine.

The EU is no different. It placed itself at the helm of alleged peace-building strategies, in particular through its financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority alongside its diplomatic relations with Israel. As a result, Palestinians became pawns in a state-building project without a state, presided over by an internationally-funded entity that has no political legitimacy and which functions as a colonial collaborator with, and defender of, the colonial-settler state of Israel, as well as a mouthpiece for international diplomacy.

Spanish MEPs have criticised the EU’s Foreign Affairs Chief Josep Borrell’s statement, noting that calling upon Israel to refrain from annexation is not enough. However, the EU is also portrayed

as “the only international actor that can force upon them genuine negotiations between the parties involved.” There are no genuine negotiations, as any diplomat knows. Israel must be identified as a colonial power and decolonisation should take the place of negotiations, thus reversing the power imbalance that prevents Palestinians from uncompromised political decision-making.

Consider Luxembourg’s Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn’s recent statement that the EU would “inevitably” recognise Palestine as a state “if Israel moves forward with its controversial plan to annex the West Bank.” Is this ludicrous diplomacy what the PA has been striving to achieve; the recognition of a hypothetical state when there is barely any land upon which to build it? Symbolic recognition of Palestine within the two-state context has failed to achieve any political advantage for Palestinians, but recognising a state when the demise of its hypothesis has been obvious for years is the epitome of EU hypocrisy.

Writing “reproachful letters would be a humiliation for the EU,” Asselborn added. Belatedly recognising a Palestinian state is not, in EU diplomacy, because when it comes to Palestine and the Palestinian people, there is no limit to what the international community can get away with while still proclaiming itself to be a champion of human rights. The EU, in particular, relishes this status, which the PA supports unabashedly, to the detriment of the Palestinian people. Without a plan to prevent Israel’s annexation of the occupied West Bank, what role is the EU playing other than facilitating the U.S. deal of the century? The reality is that EU diplomacy is profitable for Israel, but an absolute disaster for the Palestinians

*Ramona Wadi is an independent researcher, freelance journalist, book reviewer and blogger. Her writing covers a range of themes in relation to Palestine, Chile and Latin America. Her article appeared in MEMO.*

First Announcement



1399.1355

**NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN**  
**TENDER NO. : 01-31-59-9180145**

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Items	Material Description	Quantity
13	P/F”BAKER CAC”SINGEL WELL CONTROL PANEL REF.BAKER	1194

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: [WWW.nisoc.ir](http://WWW.nisoc.ir) , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 15,390 EURO or 2,138,796,735 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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

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## Martyrs Bakeri's paternal house added to national heritage list

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – The paternal house of the famed d e s k Iranian martyrs Mehdi, and Hamid Bakeri, has recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Located in Miandoab, West Azarbaijan province, the single-stories house has been evaluated worthy of achieving the national tag by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The inscription was announced on Sunday in a letter to the governor-general of the northwestern province, provincial tourism chief Fatemeh Alizadeh has said.



Two younger brothers of Bakeri family, Mehdi, and Hamid, are widely considered as national heroes for braveness showed during the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war, which is also called Sacred Defense in the Islamic Republic.

Mehdi (1954-1985) was a well-known commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) during the war, who was critically injured during Operation Badr near the Iraqi city of Al-Qurnah. While his comrades tried to send him back for medical attention by a speedboat, the boat was shot by Iraqi soldiers and sunk in Shatt al-Arab and his body was never found.

Hamid (1955-1984) was Mehdi's deputy in several operations. He was martyred during Operation Kheibar in the south of Majnoon Island in Iraq. His body remained on the battlefield and was never returned home.

## Qajar-era crypt unearthed while digging at house yard in northwest Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – A historical crypt, supposed to date from the Qajar era (1789–1925), has recently been unearthed in the city of Urmia in northwest Iran while workers were digging in the yard of a house.



“A historical crypt, belonging to the Qajar period, has recently been discovered during a grading and site preparation at the yard of an old residential house located in the historical district of Urmia, [the capital of West Azarbaijan province],” provincial tourism chief Jalil Jabbari announced on Thursday.

“The excavation operation was started at the house, under the supervision of cultural heritage experts after its owner was granted a building permit within the historical context of Urmia,” the official explained.

“Accordingly, the excavation operation was stopped as soon as the crypt showed up. So archeological studies and architectural surveys could be carried out at the site.”

“[Initial] studies have shown that this crypt belongs to the Qajar period.... A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the owner of the building to facilitate steps to [possibly] restore or putting the monument on the National Cultural Heritage list,” Jabbari noted.

A crypt (from Latin crypta “vault”) is traditionally a stone chamber beneath the floor of a religious place of worship or other building. It typically contains coffins, sarcophagi, or religious relics. Originally, crypts were typically found below the main apse of a church, such as at the Abbey of Saint-Germain en Auxerre, but were later located beneath chancel, naves and transepts as well.

## Abandoned crafts revived in Ardebil province

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Two handicraft fields, which were obsolete in northwestern Ardebil province, have recently been revived, CHTN reported on Thursday.

Forgotten handicraft fields of Shawlbafi and Ojaq Qiraghi have been brought back to life with a great deal of efforts made by the local artisans, provincial tourism chief Nasser Mahmudi announced.



Shawlbafi (knitting shawls) is a type of hand-made men's clothing made of a type of goat's hair, while Ojaq Qiraghi is a kind of hand-woven kilim.

The potential market demand, the number of the skilled craftspeople, and the [practical] usage of a product should be taken into account when an abandoned craft is sought to be revived, he added.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some

\$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces.

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

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

# Ancient customs house being restored in southern Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – The ruins of an ancient d e s k customs house, which was once one of the busiest and most prosperous in its heyday, is being restored during an urgent rehabilitation project on the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf, southern Iran.

The customs house is located within the ancient Siraf Port that was once one of the major centers for marketing pearls and silk among other goods in the West Asia region during the Sassanid epoch (224–651) and early Islamic era.

“An emergency restoration [project] has been started on the historic Bangsar customs house to preserve and revive this monument, which has been suffered from sea waves in centuries due to its proximity with the [Persian Gulf] coast,” IRNA quoted Mehdi Azarian, the director of Siraf national heritage site, as saying on Tuesday.

“The restoration project, in this phase, includes strengthening the walls, columns, injecting mortar into the worn parts, as well as lining the exterior walls, interior spaces, and their surroundings,” the official explained.

Pointing to the construction of a stone wall to prevent the sea waves from hitting the monument, he said “By repairing the ancient customs house of Bangsar, tourists will be more convenient for visiting this magnificent historical monument.”

“The materials used in the construction of this building are stone, mortar, and plaster, and according to the available evidence, it is likely to have two floors, which according to the theory of English archaeologist Professor [David] Whitehouse (1941 – 2013) dates back to the ninth and tenth centuries CE.”

The port of Siraf was discovered in the 19th century (it was first mapped by Sir Aural Stein), and was the target of a massive British archaeological excavation between 1966-75, led by Whitehouse. The excavations uncovered the mosques, houses, bazaars, and Sasanian origins of the town and a massive haul of Islamic and Chinese pottery, glass, and inscriptions. Siraf was an internationally famous port, especially during the Abbasid period (c.750 CE on-



wards), when ships owned by Sirafi merchants sailed the Indian Ocean in search of luxuries. Through Siraf passed the silks and porcelains of China, the spices and aromatic woods of India and Indonesia, and the ivory, animal skins, and gold of East Africa.

With about 1,100 years of history, the historical port of Siraf in the Persian Gulf has been inscribed on the National

Heritage list. At one time, the port had been one of the major centers for marketing pearls and silk in the region, but it was gradually submerged over the centuries.

According to some historians, Siraf had a population of about 300,000 during the early Islamic era and this fact shows that it was a large city. However, today, just about 7,000 people live in Siraf in a small area.

## Historic bazaar of Tabriz to be equipped with advanced smoke detectors

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – The UNESCO-registered bazaar of Tabriz will be equipped with advanced smoke detectors to ensure the safety of the centuries-old marketplace situated in Iran's East Azarbaijan province, IRNA quoted Tabriz Fire Department official Alireza Zebardast as saying on Tuesday.

Last year, a fire broke out in the vaulted labyrinthine bazaar, which caused about 200 billion rials (\$1.33 million) damage to the UNESCO-registered site. Firefighters managed to put out the blaze, which took six hours to extinguish.

While the bazaar has seen several fires over the past years due to the disregard of safety measures, provincial tourism chief Morteza Abdar said last year that this time fire inflicted the least damage to the bazaar due to regular restoration work on the marketplace over the past few years.

Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2010



and was mentioned by Marco Polo when he traveled the Silk Road in the Middle Ages. A jumble of interconnected covered pas-

sages that stretches for about 5 km, the bazaar has been a melting pot of cultural exchange since antiquity. It embraces countless shops,

over 20 caravanserais and inns, some 20 vast domed halls, bathhouses, and mosques, as well as other brick structures and enclosed spaces for different functions. Its history dates back to over a millennium, however, the majority of fine brick vaults that capture most visitor's eyes date from the 15th century.

Tabriz became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

The ancient city retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin.

During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

## Gold-illuminated Divan of Hafez sells for 375,000 GBP at Sotheby's

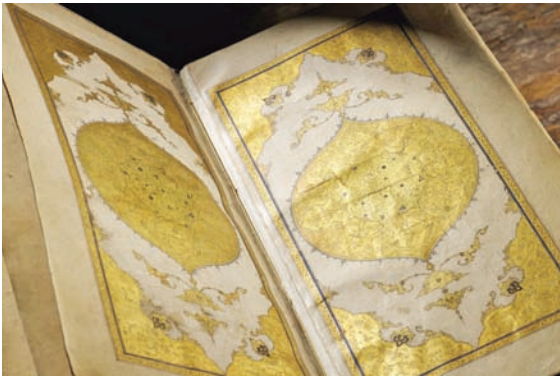
**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – A gold-illuminated Divan d e s k of Hafez, one of the earliest copies of the work of the 14th-century illustrious Persian poet, has recently sold for 375,000 GBP in an online auction held in London by the Sotheby's.

The luxurious manuscript of Hafez's seminal work went under the hammer at Sotheby's, bringing an end to the dramatic story of the text's theft and rediscovery. The stolen manuscript was dramatically discovered earlier this year by a Dutch art sleuth.

Illustrated by the calligrapher Shaykh Mahmud Pir Budaqi, the manuscript was part of the collection of the Islamic art collector Jafar Ghazi, who died in Germany in 2007. After his death, his heirs discovered that many of his manuscripts had been stolen, the Guardian reported earlier in March.

“While 175 items were recovered by police in 2011, the Divan was still missing. When a €50,000 (£43,000) reward was offered by German police, it was tracked down in 2019 by Arthur Brand, a Dutch art detective who has previously found a pair of bronze horses sculpted for Adolf Hitler, and a stolen Picasso.”

The magnificent manuscript bears a dedication to one of the most important patrons of the arts of the book in fifteenth-century Central Asia, the Qara Qoyunlu prince Pir Budaq (d.1466). While book production in Timurid Persia



A manuscript of Divan of Hafez features an array of gilded designs and illustrations. (Courtesy of Sotheby's)

dwindled due to conflicts and political instability, other centers of patronage flourished and welcomed artists from all over the region, according to organizers.

Pir Budaq was an important member of this cultural movement and a keen bibliophile. Numerous manuscripts dedicated to him have survived in institutions and private collections today. The current previously unrecorded Di-

## Restoration project starts on ramparts, corner towers and gateway to UNESCO-tagged Soltaniyeh Dome

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – The mudbrick ramparts and d e s k corner towers of a southern gateway to the UNESCO-tagged Soltaniyeh Dome in northwestern Zanjan province are under some rehabilitation works, CHTN reported.

The restoration project began in late May and it is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer, while reviving the southern ramparts and its inscriptions were initially commenced in previous years, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand said on Friday.

The project aims at restoring the grandeur of the historical site, which is one of the top architectural and cultural attractions of the province, he added.

A new passageway will be inaugurated as part of the project to facilitate visits to the site, the official added.

The 14th-century Gonbad-e (“The Dome of”) Soltaniyeh is highly recognized as an architectural masterpiece particularly due to its innovative double-shelled dome and elaborate



interior decoration. The very imposing dome stands about 50 meters tall from its base. Covered with turquoise-blue faience

wan is a testament to Pir Budaq's bibliophile pursuits and an important witness to the grandeur that must have been his library.

Pir Budaq was the eldest son of Jahan Shah (r.1439-67), a Qara Qoyunlu ruler who controlled what is today Azarbaijan early in his career. After the death of the Timurid ruler Shahrukh in 1447, Jahan Shah expanded his reign, conquering Sultaniyya, Hamadan, Qazvin, and later Qum, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd.

Pir Budaq participated in the last military campaigns in Shiraz (1452) and Yazd (1453), and soon after was given the governorship of Shiraz (1456), an appointment that lasted only two years. Due to his rebellious nature and wish for independence, in 1458 Jahan Shah ordered Pir Budaq to move to Baghdad, closer to the capital Tabriz.

Despite the political turmoil, Baghdad became an important cultural center thanks to Pir Budaq, who moved his entire court from Shiraz. The city flourished as a center for manuscript production, the present Diwan a testament to this renaissance.

The auction took place at Sotheby's' Arts of the Islamic World & India including Fine Rugs & Carpets' on June 10, it also included 69 carpet lots and among them Persian, Anatolian and Caucasian rugs and carpets from the 16th-19th century. The sale was originally due to take place on April 1.

tiles, the stunning structure dominates the skyline of Soltaniyeh, an ancient city in Zanjan province, north-western Iran.

Meaning “Town of the Sultans”, Soltaniyeh was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century.

The monument is, in fact, the mausoleum of Oljaitu, also known as Muhammad Khodabandeh, who was the eighth Ilkhanid dynasty ruler from 1304 to 1316.

According to UNESCO, the mausoleum's interior decoration is so outstanding that scholars like A.U. Pope have described the building as “anticipating the Taj Mahal”.

The UN cultural body has it that the Mausoleum of Oljaytu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia. The fairly large dome is the earliest extant example of its type in the country and became an important reference for the later development of the Islamic dome.



# Comprehensive health network: Iran's commitment to universal health coverage

**1 →** While complicated cases or those with more severe symptoms are sent to the comprehensive health center, and emergency patients are referred to the provincial hospitals," he said.

"Currently, over 17,800 Health Houses are providing services to 28 million villagers nationwide, with a workforce of 31,000, he highlighted, adding, 6,642 family physicians and 5,852 rural midwives are working in 2,794 comprehensive rural health care centers.

Therefore, 98 percent of the country's rural population is covered by the PHC system," he noted.

## ■ 93% of the urban population covered by PHC system

A similar system is providing primary care in urban and suburban areas by Health Posts with community-based health care workers (called "Moragheb-e-Salamat"), each of whom is tasked with offering services to about 2,500 people, Nicknam further explained.

"There is also an urban comprehensive health center which supervises three Health Posts, he noted, adding, some 5,343 health posts and 2,723 health centers are active across the country, with 24,000 healthcare practitioners.

Pointing out that 93 percent of the urban residents are covered by the health networks in the country, he said that 3,987 physicians and 1,2032 health care providers (dentists, nurses, midwives, and health professionals in the fields of environmental health, nutrition, mental health, etc.) provide services to 54 million people," he also explained.

He went on to say that patients who need more specialized services are referred to the provincial hospitals and medical clinics.

He further added that each of the health networks in 31 provinces of the country, operates under the supervision of the province's medical universities. (Figure 1)

## ■ Lack of medical staff first challenge to PHC system in 1980s

In 1971, a research project was carried out in the northwestern city of Urmia that came



up with an idea of setting up a comprehensive healthcare network in both rural and urban areas of the country, he stated.

Similar projects were piloted in provinces of West Azerbaijan, Shiraz, Tehran, Fars and Lorestan from 1973 to 2020. However, Iran's health care network was launched in 1981-1983. PHC design and start-up goes back to that time, he emphasized.

He went on to note that over six years (1984 to 1990), the PHC system was highly developed throughout the country.

The most important challenge in the early stages of launching PHC system was the lack of health care providers, which was not easy to deal with, he said, adding, in 1985, it was decided to enhance the capacity of universities to educate more medical staff, he said.

He also added that a year later, the ministry of health switched to the current Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

## ■ PHC system resulted in affordable public health coverage

Referring to the most important outcomes of the comprehensive health network, Nicknam stated that accessible health services, public health coverage, comprehensive health service packages, affordable health services, appropriate spaces were among the main goals of the PHC system.

Community participation, empowering people, promoting community health education, coordination and cooperation within and outside the network were also the other outcomes, he added.

Pointing to the measures taken in this regard, he said that training skilled workforce, conducting applied research, improving quality of service, appropriate technology, prioritizing services and referral system, increasing people, and service providers' satisfaction were the main measures.

## ■ Iranian health network in line with WHO's universal health coverage

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that "easy access to healthcare services along with

lowering public spending on healthcare services are the two main requirements of an efficient health network, as emphasized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its 2008 report.

Ensuring universal health coverage (UHC) without impoverishment is the foundation for achieving the health objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); so the WHO has set a theme of "Health for all" for two years.

Although UHC was on the center of attention, PHC was the path to its achievement."

Principles of PHC network in the country are fully in line with recommendations of WHO, he stated, highlighting, WHO experts consider Iran's PHC system as a good model for other countries to follow.

On many different occasions, authorities and experts of WHO and other health-related agencies have admired our PHC system, he further added.

## ■ Crossing borders for affordable healthcare

Noting that to promote health in the region, we need to think of a cross-border primary healthcare system, he added that "the neighboring countries will surely welcome the establishment or strengthening of health care networks in their countries.

Cooperation and coordination of these networks can lead to the promotion of health in the region."

In the past, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education created a group called G5, in cooperation with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and the World Health Organization, which structure can be used to expand the health care network to the neighboring countries.

*Mohammad Hossein Nicknam is the permanent Member of the Iranian Academy of Medical Science. He has been the head of the international relations department of the ministry of health and medical education for more than 16 years.*

## Endangered red deer population expands in northeastern Iran

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — While **d e s k** the red deer population in Iran has declined by over 80 percent during the past 4 decades, the species population once again reached up to 500 in northeastern Golestan National Park due to suitable climatic conditions and environmental enthusiasts, the Park's director has said.

Climatic conditions and above normal rainfall this year along with coronavirus lock-downs that led to fewer tourists in the area have resulted in a growing wildlife reproduction, including the red deer in Golestan National Park, the oldest national park in Iran and a unique refuge for wildlife, Mehdi Teymouri explained.

As the largest native species of deer in Iran, the population faced an 80 percent decline in 2012; while in the late 1350s (falling between 1971-1981), 1,900 to 2,100 red deer lived in Golestan National Park, he noted, ISNA reported.

The red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) is one of the largest deer species, which inhabits most of Europe, the Caucasus Mountains region, Asia Minor, Iran, parts of western



Asia, and central Asia.

The red deer is the largest species of deer in Iran and once has been found from the southern shores of the Caspian Sea to as far as North Khorasan province in the northeast, while now it is only inhabiting in part of Alborz mountain in protected areas.

Conservation efforts are made more difficult by the fact that the species gestation period is around 8.5 months and the female deer gives birth to one fawn at a time.

Illegal hunting and deforestation of the Caspian Hyrcanian Forests have caused a major drop in the population of the mammal, putting it at serious risk of extinction.

## Dynamic distancing plan to be launched for COVID-19 containment

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — A dynamic distancing plan will be put into operation in provinces across the country, so that each can decide whether to impose restriction or reopening, depending on the COVID-19 new cases surge in their area, Iraj Haririchi, deputy minister of health has announced.

After the relative decline in the number of new cases and deaths in April and early May, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control gradually put the reopening of public places on the agenda by observing health protocols, but the increasing number of patients and deaths in recent days have prompted the Headquarters to delegate authority to provincial officials.

The coronavirus chart has been speeding up or slowing down in different provinces over the recent months, so it is not possible to manage it equally across the country, President Hassan Rouhani said.

Therefore, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has announced the implementation of a dynamic distancing plan, through which each province is al-

lowed to announce lock-down or reopening regarding their condition.

Under the scheme, people at risk for COVID-19 will be screened to undergo treatment, including the elderly and those with high blood pressure and diabetes, Haririchi noted, IRNA reported.

Provinces of Kordestan, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, East and West Azerbaijan, Khorasan Razavi, Lorestan, Golestan, Hormozgan, Sistan and Baluchestan were the provinces faced a surge in infected cases over the past week, he said.

He went on to say that there is a trio to control the epidemic in the country, the first part is to observe the social distancing, the second is screening, testing or diagnosing the infected cases, and the third one is separation and isolation.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 200,262 on Friday, of whom 9,392 have died and 159,192 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,615 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 120 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Some 50 people die in traffic-related accidents per day

Everyday 40 to 50 people in the country lose their lives on a daily basis in traffic-related accidents, an official with traffic police has said.

Police has taken all necessary measures to decrease the number of traffic related deaths, and considering the current conditions of roads and the budget there is nothing much left to do, Fars news agency quoted Mohammad Hossein Hamidi as saying on Saturday.

Revising the traffic laws and adopting stricter laws, improving road conditions and increasing vehicle safety are essential to decrease the number of road crashes, Hamidi noted.

## جان باختن ۵۰ نفر در تصادفات رانندگی کشور در هر روز

رئیس پلیس راه راهور ناجا گفت: روزانه بین ۴۰ تا ۵۰ نفر در تصادفات رانندگی کشور کشته می شوند.

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری فارس، سردار محمدحسین حمیدی با اعلام خبر فوق اظهار داشت: اقدامات پلیس به حد نهایی خود در کاهش تلفات تصادفات رسیده و با وضعیت فعلی اعتبارات، سفرها و ... نمی‌توان بیش از این تصادفات رانندگی را کاهش داد وی تأکید کرد: اصلاح قوانین و افزایش بازدارندگی آنها و اصلاح وضعیت راه و افزایش ایمنی خودروها از جمله ضروریات برای تداوم کاهش کشته های تصادفات رانندگی است.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “cerebro-, cerebr-”

■ **Meaning:** brain

■ **For example:** Passive smoking is considered a major cause of **cerebrovascular** disease, which causes strokes.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Think something up

■ **Meaning:** to produce a new idea, name etc. by thinking

■ **For example:** She was trying to think up an excuse.

## IDIOM

### Give somebody a (good) run for their money

■ **Explanation:** to make your opponent in a competition use all their skill and effort to defeat you

■ **For example:** They've given some of the top teams a run for their money this season.

## Human exploitation of nature is driving pandemics like coronavirus, say UN and WHO

Humanity's broken relationship with nature has led to the coronavirus and other pandemics will follow, WWF International said, if the world continues to reject the warning signs.

WWF's new report calls for an international effort to reduce the risk of the next animal-borne, or zoonotic, disease outbreak, including stopping the trade and consumption of high-risk wildlife, rampant deforestation and booming industrial agriculture and animal farming, the Independent reported.

A long line of conservation and public health leaders have issued dire warnings in the wake of the pandemic, which has caused more than 439,000 deaths globally, and called for recovery plans to take into account both the environment and public health.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, wrote in The Independent: "While Covid-19 demands immediate action, there also needs to be a long-term vision; one that enables us to fundamentally transform our relationship with the natural world to reduce the risk of future pandemics."

"Many of the global health challenges that we face today, including infectious diseases, malnutrition and noncommunicable diseases are all linked to the decline of biodiversity and ecosystems," said Dr Maria Neira, WHO Director, Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health.

In a statement on Wednesday, Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International said: "There is no debate, and the science is clear; we must work with nature, not against it. Unsustainable exploitation of nature has become an enormous risk to us all."

The coronavirus originated in China last year. Scientists may never find its exact origins but currently, researchers mostly agree that the most plausible explanation is that the virus made the jump from an animal to humans in a "zoonotic spillover" event.

The World Economic Forum ranked pandemics and infectious diseases as an "acute threat" to human life a decade ago and an estimated 60% of emerging human viruses are zoonotic, according to the National Institutes of Health.

In February, China issued an unprecedented nationwide ban on all terrestrial wild animal commerce and consumption, including exotic species raised on farms. Authorities are now considering changes to the law. WWF today called on other governments to follow China's lead and close high-risk wildlife markets.

Ending high-risk wildlife trade and consumption will not be enough, WWF said. There was a need to tackle industrial farming operations which are pushing deeper into diverse ecosystems, bringing humans, farmed animals and wildlife into closer contact than ever before.

The report advocated for an overhaul in unsustainable diets. Most habitat loss associated with agriculture come down to just three commodities, beef, soy and palm oil. In the past 30 years, 178m hectares of forest have been cleared, equivalent to a fifth of the US. Some 10m hectares of forest are being flattened every year for agriculture and other land uses.

"Land conversion for agricultural activities has caused 70 per cent of planetary biodiversity loss and half the loss of tree cover globally to date," the report noted.

WWF called for systemic change rooted in a 'One Health' approach linking the health of people, animals and the environment, noting that the UN Biodiversity Summit is a moment when world leaders could accelerate action. (Covid-19 has led to the summit being postponed until 2021).

Mr Lambertini said: "World leaders must take urgent action to transform our relationship with the natural world. We need a New Deal for Nature and People that sets nature on the path to recovery by 2030 and safeguards human health and livelihoods in the long-term."

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### New SARS case

(January 05, 2004)

China's health ministry has confirmed that a man in Southern China is suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS. It is the first confirmed case in China since July 2003. The World Health Organisation has urged the Chinese authorities to take precautions while killing thousands of civet cats, which are believed to be the source of SARS. This report from Daniel Schweimler.

**The authorities** in Guangdong province in southern China have said that tens of thousands of the masked palm civet and related animals, such as raccoon dogs and Chinese ferret badgers, are likely to be **slaughtered** and they will close down all wild animal markets in the region. They will also try to stop civets being brought in from neighbouring areas.

But much of the trade in civets is already illegal and the WHO has warned the authorities about the dangers of **driving the market further underground**. They say that could be **counterproductive** in trying to **contain** SARS.

Civets are regularly sold in live animal markets and are a **prized dish** in wildlife restaurants. They are also believed to **have medicinal properties**. Trade in the mammal, which has a body like a cat, long legs, a long tail and a pointed **snout**, was banned last April amid **sweeping** efforts to stop the spread of SARS. **That prohibition was lifted** in August despite warnings by scientists that the animals might still be a health threat. Traders reported, however, that the animal began disappearing from markets soon after scientists linked them with the SARS epidemic. Researchers said it was unlikely that diners could get SARS directly from eating the meat but added that it was more likely to pass to those people who bred or butchered the animals.

■ **Words**

**the authorities:** government officials

**slaughtered:** killed

**driving the market further underground:** making the illegal sales more secret and more difficult to prevent

**counterproductive:** having the opposite effect from what is intended

**to contain:** to restrict; to control and prevent from increasing

**a prized dish:** food that is prepared in a particular style and that is wanted and admired because it is rare and of good quality

**to have medicinal properties:** to contain useful substances to treat and cure illness

**snout:** nose

**sweeping:** widespread; great

**that prohibition was lifted:** that ban was removed

(Source: BBC)



## Twitter labels Trump’s tweet as ‘manipulated media’

Twitter Inc (TWTR.N) added a ‘manipulated media’ label on a video posted on U.S. President Donald Trump’s Twitter feed on Thursday that showed a doctored news clip with a misspelled banner flashing “Terrified toddler runs from racist baby.”

The original video, which went viral on social media in 2019, showed a black toddler and a white toddler running towards each other and hugging. It was published with the headline “These two toddlers are showing us what real-life besties look like” on CNN’s website last year.

The clip shared in Trump’s tweet first shows the part where one of those toddlers is seen running ahead of the other. At one point the banner reads: “Racist baby probably a Trump voter”.

The tweeted video, with more than 7.7 million views and 125,000 retweets, then goes on to show the original video and concludes: “America is not the problem. Fake news is.”

“We may label Tweets containing synthetic and manipulated media to help people understand their authenticity and to provide additional context,” Twitter says in an explanation of its policies posted on its website.

## Bahrain regime forces attack inmates taking part in Shia mourning ritual

A Bahraini human rights activist says regime forces have attacked dozens of Shia inmates participating in a mourning ritual at the notorious Jau Prison as the ruling Al Khalifah regime presses ahead with its crackdown on pro-democracy activists in the tiny Persian Gulf country.

Arabic-language Lualua television network, citing a post published on the official Twitter page of Zeinab Khamis – a member of Bahrain Human Rights Society, reported on Thursday that prison guards stormed into Building 4 of the detention facility and assaulted the inmates as they were marking the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (PBUH) – the sixth Shia Imam and founder of the Ja’fari school of jurisprudence, who died on the 25th day of the lunar calendar month of Shawwal more than 13 centuries ago.

According to Press TV, Hundreds of inmates are currently being held behind bars at Jau Prison, which is Bahrain’s main detention facility, for their participation in peaceful pro-democracy rallies.

## EU leaders tackle huge virus recovery plan

EU leaders launched fraught negotiations Friday, deeply divided over how to raise and then distribute a major recovery fund to revive a European economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic.

Europe faces its biggest recession in the bloc’s 63-year history, and states are under pressure to look beyond their own borders and to find ways to lift the whole continent.

On the table at Friday’s virtual summit is a proposal from European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen for a 750-billion-euro rescue fund that, if accepted, would mark a historic milestone for EU unity, AFP reported.

“We have a collective responsibility to deliver,” summit host Charles Michel, president of the leaders’ European Council, said on Twitter. “Now is the time to engage.”

But opposition is fierce from countries known as the “frugal four” -- The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Austria -- who have promised to fight deep into the summer to rein in the spending.

“It is clear that we expect no essential agreements at this summit,” said a government official in Germany, which takes over the EU’s rotating presidency on July 1 and will drive the negotiations.

“We know about the difficulties. This will be a big piece of work,” the official said.

A French source called it a “warm-up round” that would “take the temperature” before leaders land a compromise in late July.

## Resistance News

### IOF raids homes, arrests 8 Palestinians in West Bank sweeps

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN— Israeli occupation forces (IOF) at dawn Friday launched large-scale raids in the West Bank, arresting at least 8 citizens.

Local sources reported that 8 Palestinians were kidnapped from their homes in different areas in the districts of Tulka-rem, Jenin and Salfit.

The IOF searched the detainees’ homes and wreaked havoc on them, before they were transferred to Israeli interrogation centers.

Confrontations broke out between the IOF and local residents when the frontiers raided Qabatia town in Jenin. According to eyewitnesses, the IOF heavily fired stun grenades and rubber-coated metal bullets at Palestinian civilians.

No injuries were reported.

### Jordan deplores Israel’s digging works at Aqsa Mosque’s western wall

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN— Jordan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has strongly denounced Israel’s digging and construction works at the Aqsa Mosque’s western wall in Occupied Jerusalem.

In a statement, spokesman for the ministry Dhaifullah al-Fayez said that that western wall is an integral part of the Aqsa Mosque and that the Jerusalem Awqaf and Aqsa Affairs Department has exclusive jurisdiction, under international law, over all affairs related to the Aqsa Mosque.

Spokesman Fayez pointed out that all maintenance and restoration works at the Aqsa Mosque, including its walls, are within the exclusive powers of the Jerusalem Awqaf.

He stressed that Israel, as an occupying power, must respect its obligations in this regard and halt all digging activities on the site immediately.

He said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent an official protest letter in this regard to the Israeli occupation authority.

# Trump Calls John Bolton ‘Disgruntled Boring Fool’ Who Only Wanted War

### Biden seizes on Bolton book to hit Trump’s China record

U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out at his former National Security Adviser John Bolton as details from the ex-official’s new tell-all White House memoir were revealed to the press.

According to CNN, Trump called Bolton “incompetent” and a “wacko” after one excerpt from the former adviser’s book, The Room Where It Happened, alleged that Trump praised Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman amid fury over the killing of Jamal Khashoggi to divert attention away from his daughter Ivanka Trump.

“This will divert from Ivanka,” Trump is reported as saying. “If I read the statement in person, that will take over the Ivanka thing.”

At the time of issuing his statement, the president’s daughter Ivanka was under fire for using a personal email account to conduct government business.

In social media posts and an interview with Fox News yesterday, Trump said Bolton was a “washed-up guy” who had littered his memoir with “fake stories” and lies.

Sharing a post by the filmmaker Dinesh D’Souza dubbing Bolton “thin-skinned” and unhinged, Trump tweeted: “President Bush fired him also. Bolton is incompetent!”

An hour earlier, the president said: “Wacko John Bolton’s ‘exceedingly tedious’ (New York Times) book is made up of lies & fake stories.”

**■ Biden seizes on Bolton book to hit Trump**

John Bolton’s claim in an explosive new book that President Donald Trump urged China’s Xi Jinping to help him win reelection could undermine his campaign’s effort to portray Democratic rival Joe Biden as soft on Beijing.

Biden’s top aides moved quickly Thursday to argue that it’s Trump who has taken a weak approach to the rising superpower. They seized on accusations from Bolton, Trump’s former national security adviser, that the



president continually kowtowed to Xi and ignored human rights abuses while trying to get his foreign counterpart’s assistance with domestic politics< Ap reported.

“The Bolton allegations are just the most noxious and hateful cherry on top of a sundae that already existed here,” Ron Klain, a longtime Biden adviser, said in an interview. “We have seen for three years that Donald Trump has curried favor with authoritarian regimes that are willing to help him personally and politically.”

China already loomed large in the contest as Trump and Biden have traded accusations over corruption, geopolitical pandering and the president’s shifts in tone toward the country during the coronavirus pandemic, which ignited in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. But Bolton’s accusations intensified the debate

with less than five months remaining until the election.

Biden’s team hopes the book will help reinforce their argument that the administration was slow to react to the pandemic, in part because of the tone set by Trump.

Trump also, according to Bolton, asked Xi for China to make agricultural purchases from U.S. farmers that could shore up the president’s hold on states he’d need to win this November.

“Turning a blind eye to human rights to China is a pattern; it’s an administration that is carrying out an amoral foreign policy that some might say is immoral,” said Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, who noted that Trump has also not called out abuses by the likes of Saudi Arabia and Russia. “They want to look tough on China without actually being

tough on China.”

But after the pandemic tore across America, Trump’s rhetoric shifted dramatically, blaming China for not containing the coronavirus and underselling its severity. And as support for the president began to slide, the campaign looked to link Biden to China, suggesting that as Obama’s pointperson to Asia, he helped enable Beijing’s rise.

The campaign also claimed that Biden’s son Hunter personally profited off his father’s international access. It also put tens of millions of dollars behind television and digital ads that resurface Biden’s previous praise for Beijing.

**■ Pompeo calls Bolton ‘a traitor’**

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday accused former national security adviser John Bolton of being a “traitor” in a forceful rebuke of Bolton’s new book.

“I’ve not read the book, but from the excerpts I’ve seen published, John Bolton is spreading a number of lies, fully-spun half-truths, and outright falsehoods,” Pompeo said in a statement. “It is both sad and dangerous that John Bolton’s final public role is that of a traitor who damaged America by violating his sacred trust with its people.”

“To our friends around the world: you know that President Trump’s America is a force for good in the world,” he continued.

In the book, a copy of which has been obtained by CNN, Bolton also alleges that Pompeo had privately assailed Trump during negotiations with North Korea.

Bolton describes a meeting between Trump and Kim Jong Un in which the North Korean leader blamed troubled relations between his country and the US on the actions of prior administrations. Emphasizing the meetings he and Trump had held, Kim told the President that they could dispel mistrust and work quickly toward a nuclear agreement.

## Top official in Trump administration resigns over protest handling

### Hundreds of armed counter-protesters confront Black Lives Matter rally in Ohio

**→ 1** Alicia Gee, a 36-year-old substitute school teacher, expected about 50 people to attend a demonstration – the first protest she had ever organized, she told the Cincinnati Enquirer – but almost twice as many turned out, The Guardian reported.

The rally was intended to show solidarity with the minority black community in Bethel, a mostly white town of about 2,800 people 30 miles east of Cincinnati, she added.

But the small group of protesters were overwhelmed when roughly 700 counter-protesters turned up to show their opposition to the kind of rallies and marches against racism and police brutality sweeping the nation since the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis in May.

Gee’s gathering demonstrated the renewed reach of the Black Lives Matter movement to small, majority white towns in the midwest that haven’t seen protests in years, spurred by recent, high-profile examples of killings of black people by white police officers or armed individuals acting as vigilantes.

Some small towns holding rallies now did not see such events after the killing of Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014.

**■ Lawmakers, activists criticize Trump police reform order**

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has met with fresh criticism for what critics described as “woeful” his attempt at police reform that could not address systemic racism.

In a Rose Garden ceremony on Tuesday, the Republican president signed an executive order on police reform after weeks of protests over the brutal death in custody of an



unarmed black man and widespread calls for action against such police behavior.

The protests erupted in response to the killing of George Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes on May 25.

According to Press TV, Trump issued an executive order that would discourage police from using chokeholds and call for a National Database that tracks officers who use excessive force.

But he faced criticism as critics say the order fell far short of the demands of Black Lives Matter activists seeking fundamental change.

Activists and lawmakers have been wanting an outright ban on chokeholds with no exception and on no-knock war-

rants, among other things.

But the president said, under a new credentialing process, chokeholds will be banned “except if an officer’s life is at risk”.

Democrats slammed Trump for lack of ambition, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi calling the president’s order “weak.”

Speaking on MSNBC, Pelosi criticized Trump’s Rose Garden event as “a photo op” and said the executive order “fell sadly and seriously short.”

Chuck Schumer, the minority leader in the Senate, said, “Unfortunately, this executive order will not deliver the comprehensive meaningful change and accountability in our nation’s police departments that Americans are demanding.”

Meanwhile, Vanita Gupta, president and chief executive of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said, “This executive order is a woeful attempt to shift focus from the dangerous rhetoric and policies he has previously promoted.”

“Piecemeal reform effort will not achieve the transformative change needed to heal our country and usher in a new era of public safety in which all communities thrive.”

There have also been calls for U.S. police departments to be defunded after Floyd’s death.

But Trump said, “I strongly oppose radical and dangerous efforts to [defund], dismantle and dissolve our police departments.”

“Americans know the truth: Without police, there is chaos; without law, there is anarchy; and without safety, there is catastrophe. We need leaders at every level of government who have the moral clarity to state these obvious facts.”

## Taliban says no threat to West as U.S. troops leave Afghanistan

The Taliban Friday played down concerns that Afghanistan could be used as a launching ground for future attacks on the West, after the U.S. said it had so far upheld its pledge to reduce its military presence in the country.

The top U.S. commander for the region said it cut the number of troops to around 8,600 in line with a deal agreed with the insurgents in February, but warned conditions must be met for a full withdrawal by next year.

General Kenneth McKenzie, the head of U.S. Central Command, said “conditions would have to be met that satisfy us - that attacks against our homeland are not going to be generated from Afghanistan”.

McKenzie said the Taliban were “no friends” of Daesh, but that it needs to see “deeds and not words” about what they would do against al-Qaeda - the group responsible for the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington.

“And so we’re very focused on what the Taliban is doing, how they’re participating in these negotiations as we go forward,” he told a panel discussion hosted by the Aspen Institute on Thursday. “The jury is still very

much out.”

The Taliban Friday said it was committed to the February deal, “especially the U.S. and the West’s concern about a threat to them from Afghanistan”.

“Our country will not be used against anyone. They should not be concerned,” Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP.

The February deal calls for all U.S. and foreign troops to withdraw from Afghanistan by mid-2021, nearly 20 years after Washington invaded the country following the September 11 attacks.

Under the agreement, the United States

said it would pull out all troops in return for security guarantees from the insurgents and a pledge to hold peace negotiations with the Afghan government in Kabul.

However, a recent expert report to the UN Security Council said that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban “remain close” and were in regular consultations over the negotiations with the United States.

The Afghan government which has moved closer to talks with the Taliban in recent weeks, has long accused the insurgents of providing a platform to groups such as IS and Al-Qaeda to carry out attacks in the country.

## Venezuela to take U.S. sanctions case to International Criminal Court

The Venezuelan government has vowed to take the United States to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in response to new unilateral sanctions imposed by Washington on the Latin American country.

The administration in Washington introduced sanctions on Thursday that targeted Mexican companies and individuals for allegedly attempting to evade U.S. restrictions on Venezuela’s oil sector.

“Washington continues to narrow the circle around Venezuela. They [the United States] believe that we cannot export oil and the Venezuelan people are left without food products, medicines, and petrol,” Ven-

ezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza wrote on his Twitter page later in the day.

“The UN multipolar system must respond. We will go the International Criminal Court over this case,” he added.

Iran, which is also under harsh U.S. sanctions, opened a case at the Hague-based court in 2018, calling on the organization to suspend unilateral economic sanctions imposed by Washington after U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 international nuclear deal.

Venezuela descended into political turmoil after op-

position figure Juan Guido unilaterally declared himself “interim president” of the country in January last year, and with Washington’s assistance and help from a small number of rogue soldiers, later launched a botched putsch against the elected government. There was also an attempt at assassinating the legitimately-elected President Nicolas Maduro with a drone in 2018.

Guido’s self-proclamation and his coup received backing from the U.S. administration.

Washington has imposed several rounds of crippling sanctions against the oil-rich South American country aimed at ousting Maduro and replacing him with Guido.



# No one from Arsenal asks me about Azmoun: Arshavin

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Andrey Arshavin, who is currently in charge of transfers at Russian side Zenit Saint Petersburg, says that no one from Arsenal has called him over a deal to bring Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun to the Emirates.

Dubbed the “Iranian Lionel Messi”, the 25-year-old has previously attracted the interest of English Premier League and Serie A teams.

Area Napoli has recently reported that the North London giants have made contact with Arshavin over a move to sign Azmoun but Arshavin has rejected the rumors.

“Azmoun? there are interests from European clubs but no one from Arsenal has called and asked me about him,” Arshavin told Russian public sports channel Match TV.

“The agents contacted me but I sent them to Zenit football club sporting director Javier Ribalta. The interest is there but the decision should be taken by the head coach and president of the club. The club will consider his transfer if they benefit from that. They have to find his replacement in the club,” the ex-Arsenal midfielder added.

The Sun also reported that Arsenal are weighing up whether Azmoun would suit the Premier League.

Along with Arsenal, it has been said that West Ham and Leicester are keeping tabs on the striker.

The Zenit forward, who has scored 14 goals in 29 appearances this term, has revealed



he is looking for a new adventure.

“I have a contract with Zenit, I’m focused on the team and I hope everything

will go well, I have been in Russia for eight years, I had a good experience here,” he said, adding that “but I would like to try a

new challenge, I hope it starts soon. I can’t say anything specifically, the two clubs should speak.”

## Iran drawn with Uzbekistan at AFC U19 Championship



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran have been pitted against hosts Uzbekistan at the 2020 AFC U19 Championship.

Title holders Saudi Arabia were drawn in Group C with Australia, Vietnam, Laos following Thursday’s official draw for the competition at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Adding to the excitement and intensity of the competition is the knowledge that the top four sides will qualify for the FIFA U20 World Cup Indonesia 2021.

Korea Republic, the tournament’s most successful team with 12 titles and the runners-up in 2018, were drawn in an enticing Group B with Japan, Iraq and Bahrain.

Four-time winners Iran will have hosts Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Cambodia for company in Group A.

Qatar, Tajikistan, Malaysia and Yemen will tussle for the two quarter-final slots from Group D.

The AFC U19 Championship Uzbekistan 2020 will be held on October 14-31.

## Iran learn AFC U16 Championship fate



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran have been drawn with DPR Korea, Qatar and Bahrain at the AFC U16 Championship Bahrain 2020.

Three-time winners and defending champions Japan are set to face Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and China PR in Group D following Thursday’s official draw at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Sixteen teams will be vying for the title while the top four teams will qualify for the FIFA U17 World Cup Peru 2021, the-afc.com wrote.

Tajikistan, the 2018 runners-up, were drawn in Group B alongside Oman, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates.

Two-time champions Korea Republic, who finished third in 2018, were drawn in Group C with Australia, India and Uzbekistan.

DPR Korea, winners in 2010 and 2014, will be up against hosts Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran and Qatar in Group A.

The AFC U16 Championship Bahrain 2020 will be played on November 24 to December 12.



## Persepolis defender Ansari undergoes knee surgery

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team defender Mohammad Ansari had surgery on his left knee on Wednesday and will not be able to play for the rest of the season.

He will be released from the hospital on Thursday.

On June 5, Ansari suffered a torn ACL during the training after a knee-on-knee collision with his teammate Siamak Nemati.

It’s for the second time that Ansari suffers a knee injury.

In November 2018, he experienced a torn ACL in the last minutes of the match against Japan’s Kashima Antlers in the AFC Champions League final in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

Iran Professional League will resume on June 24 and it means that Ansari will not be able to accompany his team for the nine remaining matches.

Persepolis, who sit top of the table with 10 points ahead of Sepahan and Tractor, will restart the league with a match against Paykan on June 28.

## Bahrain awarded 2021 Asian Youth Para Games

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Bahrain has been awarded the right to host the fourth edition of the Asian Youth Para Games.

The Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) announced that on Wednesday.

The Games will be held in the Persian Gulf country from December 1 to 10.

The event is being organized in conjunction with the National Paralympic Committee

(NPC) of Bahrain with the support of the local government.

An estimated 800 athletes under 20 years of age are expected to compete in nine sports: Athletics, Badminton, Boccia, Goalball, Para Taekwondo, Powerlifting, Swimming, Table Tennis and Wheelchair Basketball.

The Asian Youth Para Games is a multi-sport event held every four years for youth

athletes with physical disabilities. The first Games was held in 2009 in Tokyo, Japan.

In the past three editions, Iran finished second behind Japan.

“The APC’s new vision is to ‘Make for an inclusive Asia through Para-sport’ and I can think of no better place to start achieving that than with the region’s youth,” APC President Majid Rashed commented.

“We’re delighted that the NPC of Bahrain

has put together such a strong bid to host the next Asian Youth Para Games and we offer our thanks to them and their government for supporting the next generation of Asian para-athletes.

“Providing opportunities for young para-athletes to compete in a multi-sport environment will hopefully inspire them to continue on their sporting journey which may lead ultimately to the Paralympic Games.”

## Large number of changes made to 2020, 2021 UWW calendars

The United World Wrestling bureau voted Tuesday on a large number of changes to the 2020 and 2021 competition calendars, including a blanket delay on all competitions until no earlier than September 1, 2020.

The changes are an optimistic outlook to the return of competition and will be reviewed again in August.

The recommendations reviewed by the bureau were first considered and drafted by the Technical Commission. “I thank the Technical Commission for their hard work and consideration in this difficult time,” said United World Wrestling president Nenad Lalovic. “We will only return to the mat when it is safe for our athletes, coaches, referees, and spectators.”

The Cadet, Junior, and U-23 Continental Championships will be the first to potentially return to competition, with a window of September 1 to October 30 to organize a competition. A continent may also choose to cancel their championships depending on the pandemic status of each region.

Due to the athletes’ schooling requirements there will

be no Cadet World Championships in 2020, nor will there be U-15 championships organized in 2020.

The Junior World Championships are being proposed for the end of November in Belgrade SRB or beginning of December, while the U-23 will remain in Tampere, FIN and be competed on the same dates in November.

Due to the increased risk of travel and transmission for the age group, the Veterans World Championships will be postponed to 2021 where Greece will be the host of the competition.

Two Beach Wrestling World Series events in 2020 will remain on the calendar for Romania and Greece, with one of the nations to also host Cadet & Junior World Beach Wrestling Championships. The Beach Wrestling Commission is currently reviewing all dates and details.

The 2021 calendar has also been impacted by COVID-19 and the delay of the 2020 Olympic Games.

It’s been proposed to change the current 2021 schedule to reflect what occurred in 2020, with the Senior Continental Championships scheduled before the Continental

Olympic Qualifiers.

The seeding system for the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games will consist of results from the following tournaments: 2019 Senior World Championships, 2020 Ranking Series in Roma (ITA), 2020 Senior Continental Championships. Ranking Series Events 2021 will not be included into the seeding of the Olympic Games due to IOC qualification criteria already fixed.

Members also approved to adjoin the ranking of the 2021 Senior Asian Championships for wrestlers from China, North Korea and Turkmenistan because they were not able to participate in the 2020 Senior Asian Championships.

The Ranking Series will consist of two events in 2021, both will provide points to be factored into the “Best Wrestler of 2021” awards but again will not be factored into seeding at the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The 2021 Senior World Championships are scheduled for October 2-10 in Oslo. There will be no World Cups in 2020 or 2021.

(Source: unitedworldwrestling.org)

## Iran volleyball competitions postponed

**Iranvolley.ir** - The Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) has postponed the league competitions until further notice.

The federation had already announced that the league would likely be held in July but it was postponed due to second wave of coronavirus.

IRIVF head Mohammad Reza Davarzani has said that the indoor and beach volleyball competitions are postponed following second wave of Covid-19.

“The federation has decided to postpone the competitions in order to secure the health and safety of the athletes and coaching staff,” Davarzani said.

## Branko Ivankovic rejects Persepolis’s offer

**PLDC** — Branko Ivankovic’s lawyer Dario Busic has said that his client has rejected Persepolis’s offer to compromise over the financial agreement.

According to him, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) will hear their appeal against the Iranian club.

“We will send our complaint to CAS this week and the trial cost will be 104,000 Swiss francs,” Busic said.

Asked him if Persepolis club had called his client, Busic said, “Yes, they contacted us but we didn’t accept their request.”

Persepolis must pay 1,055,000 euros to Ivankovic.

The club has to also pay 162,000 euros to Ivankovic’s assistant Igor Panadic and it should pay 320,000 euros to Zlatko Ivankovic (assistant) and Marco (fitness coach).

## Esteghlal forward Tabrizi sidelined with torn ACL

**Tasnim** — Esteghlal football team striker Morteza Tabrizi has been sidelined after suffering a torn ACL.

He was suffered the injury in the friendly match against Rayka on Wednesday. Esteghlal midfielder Reza Azari had already missed the rest of the season due to torn ACL.

Esteghlal will meet Foolad on June 24 in Ahvaz in Iran Professional League.

With nine weeks remaining, Esteghlal sits fourth in the table, 11 points behind leader Persepolis.

## Shojaei voted Asia’s Greatest Player in La Liga

Iranian player Masoud Shojaei has been voted as the Asia’s greatest player in Spanish football.

In a poll conducted by the-afc.com, 61 percent of participants voted the Iranian midfielder.



While Javad Nekounam was the first Iranian player to shine in La Liga, Shojaei wasn’t far behind, and the duo created a unique Team Melli influence in northern Spain.

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

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

The Iranian defeated his compatriot Nekounam, Wu Lei (CHN), Takashi Inui (JPN), Paulino Alcántara (PHI) and John Aloisi (AUS) to be named as the Asia’s Greatest Player.

(Source: the-afc)

## Azmoun nominated for Asia’s Greatest Russian Premier League player

One of the most geographically diverse leagues in football, few domestic competitions outside of the AFC have welcomed so much Asian talent as the Russian Premier League.

With several players joining the league from East, West and especially Central Asia, the competition has been a league of interest for Asian fans since its inception in 1992.

It has played host to star players from some of the continent’s biggest football nations, with League, Cup and European silverware all won by Asian players.

Iran international forward Sardar Azmoun will vie with Mirdjalal Kasimov (UZB), Keisuke Honda (JPN), Kim Dong-jin (KOR), Odil Ahmedov (UZB), Mukhsin Mukhamadiev (TJK), Vitaliy Denisov (UZB), Dmitri Khomukha (TKM), Vladimir Maminov (UZB) and Eldor Shomurodov (UZB) to become the Asia’s Greatest Russian Premier League player.

Much was expected of Sardar Azmoun when he was snapped up by Kurban Berdyev’s Rubin Kazan as an 18-year-old, and he has grown to become a superstar of Asian football.

The first Iranian to play in the Russian Premier League, the only Iranian to win the league title and the youngest player from his country to score in the UEFA Champions League, one of Azmoun’s most memorable spells came in the second-half of the 2018-19 season, when he scored 12 goals in 16 matches upon joining title-bound Zenit.

Despite almost daily reports linking him to some of Europe’s biggest clubs, the 25-year-old remains in Russia, where he looks set to lift the Premier League once more at the end of the season.

(Source: the-afc)



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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com  
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430  
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
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Zip Code: 1599814713



## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

God must be thanked for every blessing, and he who is thankful, receives more blessings, and he who neglects it, endangers that blessing and may soon lose it.  
*Imam Ali (AS)*

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Painting

■ Mahvash Dowlatbadi is displaying her latest paintings in an exhibition named "Distressed Order" at Haft Samar Gallery. The exhibition will run until June 29 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahhari Ave. ■ O Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Omid Bazmandegan. The exhibit will continue until July 6 at the gallery that can be found at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.

### Multimedia

■ A group of artists from the Sakoo Art School in Tehran is showcasing their latest artworks in various media at Shokuh Gallery. The exhibit will continue until June 30 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd. ■ Batul Mozaffari, Fatemeh Baqeri, Melika Tutunchi, Reza Nikukar and a number of other artists are displaying their latest paintings, sculptures, photos and handicrafts in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit named "Manifestation" will run until June 24 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

■ Golhaye Davudi Gallery is playing host an exhibition of artworks in various media by Nazanin Asgari, Shohreh Hashemi, Kobra Ramezani, Farnaz Vijeh and several other artists. The exhibit runs until June 24 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.

■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Elaheh Nami, Ali Rahimi, Ali Mohammadian, Zeinab Zafari, Nahid Faraji and several other artists is underway at the Entezami Gallery. The exhibit will be running until June 24 at the gallery located at 608 Shariati Ave. near Motahhari St.

### Drawing

■ Drawings by Mohammadreza Qorbani are currently on view in an exhibition at Asr Gallery. The exhibit will run until June 30 at the gallery located at 18 Delaviz St. off North Mirzaye Shirazi St.

### Postcard

■ An exhibition of a collection of postcards by Hamid Akbaridoost, Samaneh Es'haqi, Abdi Asbahi, Ali Ansari, Ali Taqavi and several other artists is currently underway at Saye Gallery. The exhibit will run until July 1 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

### Doll

■ Ouria Mahmudi is displaying a collection of her latest dolls in an exhibition at Saye+ Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Invisible Thread" will run until June 24 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

### Photo

■ Honare Tehran Gallery is showcasing a collection of photos selected by Feridun Farbud in an exhibition titled "Photography 99". The exhibit will run until July 20 at the gallery that can be found at 3 Nikushahr Dead End, Iranshahr St.

# Iranian director to make "Don't Shoot at Children" about fall of Saddam Hussein

**A R T TEHRAN** — Ensieh d e s k Shah-Hosseini, director of the acclaimed Iranian movie "Good Night Commander", has announced her plan to make "Don't Shoot at Children" about the fall of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and its aftermath.

The project received the approval of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in 2015, however, it was not made at that time due to some financial issues facing producer Seyyed Amir Seyyedzadeh, Shah-Hosseini said on Thursday.

"Everything is OK now and shooting will start in the near future," she added.

The film will be shot in the Arabic language with an all-Iraqi cast.

Shah-Hosseini directed "Good Night Commander" in 2006 about a correspondent on the front during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The film describes the terrors of war as seen through the eyes of a timid reporter who manages to overcome her thoughts of suicide on the battlefield. This drama, conceived as harsh "psychotherapy", tells of the beautiful Maryam who, after her unsuccessful marriage, thinks of committing suicide in a way that would at least be of some benefit to others. She thus enters the Iran-Iraq war as a reporter. Her time spent in the devastated desert landscape, armies spilling over from one side to the other depending on which has the upper hand, totally changes her vision of the world. She is surrounded by suffering and pain, even in the village where she goes to find shelter after her unit is massacred. A wedding in the village ends in tragedy. The close of the film again finds Maryam at the front, where she comes across her friend, the commander Beshar.

"I am following my beliefs in filmmaking



Iranian director Ensieh Shah-Hosseini in an undated photo. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

and speaking, and I'm talking about them in the form of films," Shah-Hosseini said.

"The story of 'Don't Shoot at Children' is different from the other films I've made

and I hope people will like it," she added.

She pointed to the long hiatus in her filmmaking career and added, "I have not made any films for a long time, but I was able

to study more and this is of greater importance."

Seyyedzadeh has also said that he would do his best to complete the film before February 2021 to participate in the Fajr Film Festival.

## Afghan scholar Najib Mayel Heravi granted Iranian citizenship



Afghan expert Najib Mayel Heravi receives an award from President Hassan Rouhani for his lifetime studies on Islamic manuscripts at Iran's Book of the Year Awards in Tehran on February 8, 2015.

→1 Based on the statement, the master has been granted an apartment in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province where he has been living for years and following the legal process, the ownership of the house would be transferred to Heravi.

In January 2017, Iran awarded Heravi for his lifetime achievements in the study of Persian manuscripts during a special ceremony for honoring the supporters of manuscripts in Tehran.

The message of the then president of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in honor of Heravi was read at the ceremony, which was held at the National Library and Archives of Iran.

Heravi also received an award from

President Hassan Rouhani for his lifetime studies on Islamic manuscripts at Iran's Book of the Year Awards in Tehran in February 2015.

Heravi was born in Herat, Afghanistan in 1950. He is one of the most prominent researchers of his time.

Furthermore, he is a remarkable figure in Iranian studies, calligraphy and paleography.

Since 1974, he has been completing his project entitled "Bibliography of Sufi Writings in the Persian Language".

"Khasiate Ayenegi: A Criticism of Ayn al-Quzat Hamadani's Biography with Selected Persian Writings" is among his noteworthy credits.

## Film producer Mahmud Razavi selected Majlis speaker's cultural advisor



Photo: Producer Seyyed Mahmud Razavi in an undated photo.

**A R T TEHRAN** — Majlis d e s k speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, has appointed Seyyed Mahmud Razavi, the producer of acclaimed movies such as "Blood Trap" and "Standing in the Dust", as his advisor on art and cultural affairs.

"Following the emphasis by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on due attention to culture, and due to your religious and revolutionary's commitment, I appoint you the art and cultural advisor of the Majlis speaker," wrote Qalibaf in his statement addressing Razavi.

By this appointment, the Majlis intends to reinforce the interaction

between the parliament and art and cultural activists as well as to improve the relationship with the cultural organizations to make better use of their potentials, Qalibaf said.

"The Midday Event", a political drama that features the terrorist atrocity of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization in Iran of the 1980s, and "Woodpecker", a drama that centers on the isolation of a female addict, are the other films produced by Razavi.

Razavi, a graduate of cultural management and an active film producer, was a member of the team of advisors to Qalibaf when he was the mayor of Tehran.

## "Yalda" to compete in Mediterranean Film Festival Split

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian d e s k director Masud Bakhshi's movie "Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness" will be screened at the Mediterranean Film Festival Split taking place in the city of Split, the second-largest city in Croatia from July 2 to 11.

"Yalda", a co-production by Iran, France, Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Lebanon, will be competing with nine other films in the official section of the event.

"Matriarch" by Jure Pavlovic from Croatia, "A Son", a coproduction of Tunisia and France by Mehdi M. Barsaoui, "Mosquito" by Joao Nuno Pinto from Portugal, and "Two of Us" by Filippo Meneghetti from France are among the films.

Yalda is about Maryam, a young woman who has been sentenced to death for murdering her husband, Nasser. Iranian law allows for the victim's family to forgive her and spare her life, so Maryam's fate will be decided by Nasser's daughter, Mona, on the country's most popular televised reality show.

In front of millions of viewers during Yalda, the winter solstice celebration, Maryam and Mona discover that forgiveness



A scene from Iranian director Masud Bakhshi's movie "Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness".

can be difficult as they relive the past.

"Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness" received the Grand Jury Prize of the World Cinema Dramatic section at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah in February.

The film was also an entry to the 2nd Pyeongchang International Peace Film Festival in mid-June.

## Iranian doc "Zero to Platform" honored at Queen Palm festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — The d e s k Iranian documentary "Zero to Platform" won the award for best feature in the Sports/Inspirational category at the Platform Queen Palm International Film Festival.

The festival is a quarterly film, music and screenwriting competition with a live annual screening and awards show event in Palm Springs, California.

Directed by Sahar Mosayyebi, the documentary chronicles the concerted efforts of the Mansurian sisters, Elaheh, Shahrbanu and Soheila, who chose wushu martial art to achieve success in life despite all the hardship they have faced throughout their lives.

"Boundless Life" by Stefan Rainer from Austria also won the award for best feature in the Sports/Inspirational category.

One of the two awards for best foreign-language film went to "Rising Silence" by Leesa Gazi from Bangladesh and the other one was given to "Once Upon a Judgment Day" by Mehmet Tanrisever from Turkey.

"Strings of Sorrow" also was named best drama while "Seadrift" by Tim Tsai from the USA was selected as best documentary. One of the two awards for the First Time



"Zero to Platform" by Iranian filmmaker Sahar Mosayyebi.

Filmmaker was presented to Maria Forslin and Adrienne West from Sweden for their joint production "Break of Day". The other one went Aurora J. Culver, Ambika Leigh and Adriana Gonzalez-Vega from the USA for "To the New Girl".

The award for best feature in the Social Awareness section was presented to "Lovemobil" by Elke Lehrenkrauss from Germany.