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Movie theaters in Iran to reopen today **12**

#letter4you

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Reopening an open letter by Ayatollah Khamenei



© File photo

Iran calls IAEA resolution ‘counterproductive’

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday that the anti-Iran resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency’s Board of Governors is “unacceptable” and “counterproductive”. “Issuance of the board of governors’ resolution is totally counterproductive and disappointing when the Islamic Republic of Iran has had cooperation with the agency at the highest level,” Mousavi said in a statement. ➔**2**

Annual industrial growth of 2.1% achieved despite limitations

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Iran’s industry sector experienced a 2.1-percent growth during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) as the country managed to support and empower domestic production, Saeed Zarandi, the deputy industry, mining and trade minister for planning, said in a press conference on Saturday. ➔**4**

Iran tops Asian countries in organ donation

TEHRAN — Iran is ranked first for organ donation among Asian countries, Mehdi Shadnough, head of the Health Ministry’s center for transplantation and disease management, has announced.

“The country’s organ donation rate is 14.34 per 1 million people,” he noted.

The occupied Palestinian territories that claim to have the most advanced scientific and technical facilities are at the second place with 10.8 donors per a million population, he explained. ➔**9**



ARTICLE

Yuram Abdullah Weiler
Analyst and journalist

Anti-racism movement in view of Ayatollah Khamenei’s letter to Western youth

Uprisings decrying racism and injustices perpetrated and perpetuated by police have erupted in hundreds of U.S. cities and towns, and spread to numerous cities in North America and Europe. Initially triggered by the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020, protests have expanded to embrace the broader cause of eliminating racism and injustices embedded in Western capitalist governments.

“The histories of the United States and Europe are ashamed of slavery, embarrassed by the colonial period and chagrined at the oppression of people of color and non-Christians,” the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, wrote in a letter to the youth in North America and Europe in January of 2015. The Leader went on to ask, “Why should the revision of collective conscience apply to the distant past and not to the current problems?”

Do the current uprisings throughout America and elsewhere represent a revision of collective conscience? Will the protests manage to finally bring about much-hoped-for change in the oppressive governmental structures of the West that have undergone reinforcement over the centuries? One Western journalist in New Mexico is confident that the world is at the threshold of substantive change. “We’re experiencing a cultural shift, breathtaking in its pace,” wrote veteran journalist Tripp Jennings.

Others are not so sure. After all, nothing significant has happened so far beyond the indictment of the police officers involved in the slaying of George Floyd. The toppling and removal of Confederate statues, all of which are an implicit glorification of racism and slavery, is a necessary, but only meager, first step. Efforts for the eradication of these satanic symbols of racist ideology were certainly given a vigorous boost in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, but in some cities plans for their removal had already been in effect for years. ➔**7**

UN sets up inquiry into racism after George Floyd death

The UN Human Rights Council condemned discriminatory and violent policing after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis last month and ordered a report on “systemic racism” against people of African descent.

The 47-member-state forum unanimously adopted a resolution brought by African countries. The mandate also asks UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet to examine government responses to peaceful protests, including alleged use of excessive force, and deliver findings in a year’s time.

Philonise Floyd, the brother of the Black man whose death under the knee of a white officer roused world protests against racial injustice, urged the forum on Wednesday to investigate U.S. police brutality and racial discrimination.

Burkina Faso’s Ambassador Dieudonné W. Désiré Sougouri presented the African resolution on Friday, urging its adoption by consensus.

“It is important to show Africa...the Human Rights Council has heard the plight of African and people of African descent calling for equal treatment and application of equal rights for all,” he said.

The Africa group had made numerous “concessions” in the negotiations with other countries, he added.

Senegal’s envoy Coly Seck, a former council president, welcomed the consensus, telling the talks: “Black Lives Matter”.

The text was watered down during closed-door negotiations from an initial draft explicitly calling for a UN commission of inquiry on racism in the United States and elsewhere. ➔**10**

‘Civil rights isn’t over’: Americans mark Juneteenth coast to coast

Thousands marched through U.S. cities on Friday in Juneteenth observances marking the abolition of slavery more than a century and a half ago, an occasion freighted with special resonance this year amid America’s reckoning with its legacy of racism.

Capping nearly four weeks of protests and national soul-searching aroused by the death of a Black man, George Floyd, under the knee of a white police officer, demonstrators took to the streets from Atlanta to Oakland, California, blending the Juneteenth holiday with calls for racial justice.

With many formal Juneteenth events canceled due to coronavirus concerns, activists instead organized a host of virtual observances online, as well as street marches and “car caravans” through several major cities.

While the gatherings were largely festive in

mood, in keeping with Juneteenth traditions, they were also animated by demands for reforms to end brutality and discrimination in U.S. law enforcement.

Organized labor joined in the movement, with union dockworkers at 29 West Coast cargo ports marking the occasion by staging a one-day strike. Numerous major U.S. corporations declared June 19 a paid holiday this year, some for the first time.

Juneteenth, a portmanteau of June and 19th, commemorates the U.S. abolition of slavery under President Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, belatedly announced by a Union army in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, after the Civil War ended.

Texas officially made it a holiday in 1980, and 45 more states and the District of Columbia have since followed suit. ➔**10**

Iran plans to incentivize foreign airlines to use its airspace

TEHRAN — Iran plans to offer foreign airlines with incentive packages for encouraging them to use its airspace, Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company’s official Nasser Aqai said, IRNA reported on Saturday.

These packages could encourage the airlines to use Iran’s airspace instead of rival countries such as Iraq, he added.

However, Iran wouldn’t reduce the tariffs for the airlines, but discounts and incentives will be considered for the eight first airlines that use its

airspace the most, he explained.

He also noted that the travel industry has been disrupted worldwide due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which lead to a significant reduction in flights around the world and Iran.

Passenger traffic at Iranian airports was plunged by 80 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20) in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, IRNA reported in May.

The pandemic also resulted in a decrease of 70

percent and 79 percent respectively in the number of flights and cargo transport, the report added.

Moreover, European airlines stopped using Iranian airspace after the Islamic Republic accidentally downed a Ukrainian jetliner amid an exchange of hostilities with U.S. forces in the Iraqi soil on January 3.

However, three weeks later the EU Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) approved that European airlines can return to parts of Iranian and Iraqi airspace. ➔**8**

Tehran asks Romania to explain cause of Iranian judge’s death

TEHRAN — Tehran has confirmed the death of Gholamreza Mansouri, a fugitive Iranian judge accused of corruption and taking more than \$500,000 in bribes, in Romania, asking the European country to explain the cause of the incident.

“We are awaiting the official report of the cause of this incident and we ask Romanian authorities to officially inform us of the precise cause of this incident,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday evening.

Mansouri was found dead of apparent suicide on Friday at a hotel in Bucharest where he had been staying.

He was a co-defendant in a major financial corruption trial involving several senior judges accused of embezzlement and bribery.

Iran’s chief of international policing, Hadi Shirzad, said on Friday that Mansouri had jumped out of a hotel window to his death, citing information Iran had received from Interpol in Bucharest.

Iranian authorities had issued an alert for Mansouri’s arrest through Interpol and had requested he be extradited to Iran to face trial.

Mansouri was arrested in Romania last week but was residing at the Duke Hotel in Bucharest, the capital, while the police monitored him. He had been forbidden from leaving the country.

According to The New York Times, the police in Bucharest on Friday night confirmed that a foreign national staying at the hotel, and who was under police watch, had fallen to his death in what the preliminary investigation indicated was a suicide. ➔**3**



© Honaronline/ Gata Zlatabari

Photographer Bairami’s “Book of Iran” provides new insights into homeland

TEHRAN — Iranian photographer Jamshid Bairami plans to publish a collection of his photos in his new book “Book of Iran” that provides new insights into the daily lives of Iranian people.

“I am working to prepare my book, which is due to come out in three volumes, one of which will be dedicated to nature, one to architecture, and one to various people living in Iran,” Bairami said in an interview with Honaronline. ➔**12**

Iran calls IAEA resolution ‘counterproductive’

1 → He added, “Exaggerating the agency’s requests by certain governments with the United States at top of them while the basis of such requests can be questioned, is attempt to cause a new crisis on the path of Iran and the agency’s cooperation.”

He urged the members of the board of governors to be vigilant about the U.S. and Zionist regime of Israel’s attempts to reopen fake old dossiers whose incredibility had been proved.

“Those member states who voted for the resolution were expected to understand the hidden objectives of the Zionist regime and the ruling regime in the United States and refrain from accompanying them in their attempt to create an unnecessary tension,” he noted.

Mousavi strongly condemned the UK, France and Germany’s move in drafting the resolution.

“These three governments, who have been unable to implement their obligations under the JCPOA, took this action to escape forward and evade their responsibilities under the JCPOA,” he said.

Elsewhere, Mousavi said the resolution is an excessive demand by the U.S. and the three European countries which is not accepted by Iran.

Supporters of the resolution will be responsible for consequences of the tension in Iran-IAEA relations, he said.

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

China and Russia opposed the resolution and seven countries including South Africa, Niger, Mongolia, Thailand, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and India also abstained to vote.

France, Britain, and Germany, the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, submitted the draft resolution to the IAEA board on Thursday. The board did not succeed 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.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Friday, “Iran categorically deplores this resolution and will take appropriate action in response, the repercussions of which would be upon the sponsors of this resolution.”

He also said, “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.”

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the three European countries signatory to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are absolutely powerless against the U.S. coercion.

“E3 must stop public face-saving and muster the courage to state publicly what they admit privately, their failure to fulfill even own JCPOA duties due to total impotence in resisting the US bullying behind the facade, E3 are accessories to Trump and Netanyahu—and in no position to counsel Iran,” Zarif wrote on his Twitter account on Friday.

Iran to produce supersonic missiles in near future: Navy cmdr.

(Press TV) — Iran’s Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi says the country will soon manufacture supersonic missiles equipped with a jet engine variant.

Khanzadi said in remarks cited by Iranian media on Saturday that the cruise missiles currently used by the Iranian naval forces are of subsonic type that can travel near the speed of sound.



“In the near future, we have on the agenda the production of supersonic missiles, which use Turbofan engines to fly several times the speed of sound,” he added.

Supersonic missiles are capable of traveling at a speed between Mach-2 and Mach-3, which is up to 3,700 kilometres per hour. Mach number is a velocity relative to the speed of sound.

The Iranian commander further announced that the naval forces are seeking to launch missiles vertically, noting that in that case, more missiles could be placed on the deck of ships to hit diversified targets.

The missile engines used by Iran’s Navy will definitely undergo changes so that they can withstand higher temperature for a long time, he said, adding that there would also be reforms in refueling and navigation systems.

“We have achieved a range of 300 kilometres in cruise missiles and we will soon reach more exciting ranges,” Khanzadi emphasized. On Thursday, Iran’s Navy said that it had successfully tested new-generation cruise missiles — designed and developed by experts at home — during military drills in the Sea of Oman, which is close to the Strait of Hormuz, and the northern Indian Ocean.

The missiles destroyed targets at a distance of 280 kilometres (170 miles). The projectiles which were launched from both trucks and ships, hit buoyant targets in the sea.

Speaking at the end of the maneuvers, Khanzadi stressed that the production of new home-grown missiles 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 Iranian Armed Forces.

Iran says its missiles serve self-defense purposes, stressing that they are mere means of defending the nation against enemy threats.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman says, “Exaggerating the agency’s requests by certain governments with the United States at top of them while the basis of such requests can be questioned, is attempt to cause a new crisis on the path of Iran and the agency’s cooperation.”

Iran urges IAEA not to rely on unreliable information

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Behrooz d e s k Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has said that the International Atomic Energy Agency must not give credit to unreliable information propagated through “spying activities”.

“The agency must not rely on and give credit to the information that have been reached through spying activities and unreliable sources,” the Mehr news agency quoted Kamalvandi as saying in an article published on Saturday.

The 35-member IAEA board of governors passed a resolution on Friday demanding access to two old places it claimed nuclear work may have been done there.

Kamalvandi wrote, “In fact, any request for transparency or complementary access by the agency based on fake evidence are against the agency’s charter. So, it does not make any obligation for Iran to fulfil such requests.”

Unreliable source and information must not become a justification and legal basis to put pressure on other countries and level accusations against them, he added.

“Accepted obligations under the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal] do not mean that any question of the agency must be answered, otherwise, we would face many questions which are based on fake documents,” the nuclear official noted.



He also said the IAEA must respect the countries’ sovereignty.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s ambassador to the IAEA, said on Friday that Iran will take appropriate action in response to the move taken by the IAEA board in adopting the anti-Iran resolution.

“Iran categorically deplores this resolution and will take appropriate action in response, the repercussions of which would be upon the sponsors of this resolution,” Gharibabadi said in a statement. Russia and China, who voted against

the resolution, also issued separate statements on Friday reprimanding the move.

“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,” tweeted Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to the IAEA.

Permanent Mission of China in Vienna also said, “China deeply regrets at the

Iraqi PM to visit Iran

between Iran, Saudi Arabia and the U.S., what his successor Adel Abdul Mahdi tried to do.

Iran has been open for dialogue with Saudi Arabia but Tehran has been a fierce critic of the Saudi-led war on Yemen.

However, Iran has rejected the notion of talks with the Trump administration, insisting that the U.S. must first make up for its illegal sanctions measures against Iran.

Moreover, some analysts and politicians are of the opinion that the U.S. killed off any chance for dialogue by assassinating Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in early January.

In a phone conversation in May, President Hassan Rouhani told the Iraqi prime minister that Iran will stand beside the Iraqi government and people.

“As we proved that we stand beside the Iraqi people in fighting Daesh, we will stand beside the Iraqi government to help establish stability and make progress,” Rouhani stated in phone call.

He said Iran attaches great importance to Iraq’s independence, political stability, national sovereignty, and integrity.

“We always have to be careful about plots which target

interests of the Iraqi people and the region,” he noted.

Rouhani also highlighted the importance of regional peace and stability.

Elsewhere, he called for expanding economic cooperation and implementing agreements between the two countries.

For his part, Kadhimi said that it is essential for two countries to expand economic relations.

The prime minister described Iran as a “friendly” and “brotherly” country.

“We will never forget Iran’s help to Iraq in fighting Daesh and we seek expansion of relations in various areas,” he said.

Iraj Masjedi, the Iranian ambassador to Iraq, met with Kadhimi in May.

“In the meeting with Mr. Kadhimi, bilateral cooperation, continuation of actions regarding the 1975 Algiers Agreement, banking cooperation, Khorramshahr-Basra railway and visa for the two countries’ citizens were discussed,” Masjedi said in a tweet.

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

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

E3 does not support any attempt to trigger UN sanctions snapback

By staff and agency

France, Germany and the United Kingdom, known as E3, said in a statement published on Friday that they do not support any unilateral attempt to trigger a snapback of United Nations sanctions against Iran.

The statement by the European side came after 26 out of 35 countries which are member to the IAEA Board of Governors voted for a resolution drafted by the three European countries against Iran.

“We firmly believe that any unilateral attempt to trigger UN sanctions snapback would have serious adverse consequences in the UNSC. We would not support such a decision which would be incompatible with

our current efforts to preserve the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal],” said the statement published by the UK Foreign Ministry website.

The three European countries noted that they remain committed to the JCPOA in order to preserve it.

The United States has stepped up calls for the extension of a UN arms embargo on Iran since April.

Under the UN Security Council’s 2231 resolution, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the arms embargo expires in October.

The U.S. President Donald Trump administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

U.S. sanctions on Syria run counter to human rights: adviser

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A senior adviser to the Iranian parliament speaker said the U.S.’ fresh sanctions against Syria, imposed under the Caesar Act, constitute a violation of human rights and international treaties.

In a post on his Twitter account on Thursday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian said the US sanctions against the people of Syria under the Caesar Act run counter to the fundamental human rights and the international treaties.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran and the allies will stand by the Syrian nation and leadership vigorously,” he added.

The former Iranian deputy foreign minister underlined that the new Amer-

ican-Zionist plot against Syria will end in complete failure.

“Syria will be the ultimate victor in the economic terrorism war under sanctions,” he said.

On Wednesday, the U.S. State Department and the Treasury said 39 Syrian individuals, including President Bashar al-Assad and his wife, had been designated for a load of new economic and travel sanctions.

The law, known as the Caesar Act, places anyone who does business with the 39 named individuals and government entities in the cross hairs of the U.S. Treasury.

Hatami: Enemies are fearful of Iran’s missile power

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Defense Minister Amir Hatami d e s k

said on Saturday that enemies are fearful of Iran’s military power especially in the area of missile capabilities.

“Our defense industry has reached a level of progress and self-sufficiency, and enemy is fearful of this defense and military power, especially in the area of missile capabilities,” Hatami said during a ceremony marking the 38th anniversary of martyrdom of Iranian commander and scientist Mostafa Chamran.

He noted that enemies seek to weaken Iran’s defense capabilities through cruel sanctions.

The defense chief attached great importance to unity and resistance in face of illegal sanctions.

Hatami said in January that Iran is powerful enough to respond to any aggression and threat by the enemies.

“Thank God, today the Islamic Republic has all the necessary components of power and determination to respond to any aggressor and will respond to any threat at any level with high quality defensive weapons,” he said.



Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, the deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces, said in February that Iran’s current situation in terms of military power is better than any other time.

Ashtiani added that the country’s power is now sustainable. Gordon Duff, an American veteran journalist and security

Senior expert: Romania should account for death of fugitive Iranian judge

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Romanian police, government and the judiciary should account for the death of a fugitive judge, Gholamreza Mansouri, who was accused of receiving bribe before fleeing the country, a senior Iranian expert said, reiterating that Romania should provide Iran access to the CCTV footages of Mansouri’s hotel in Bucharest.

“The police, government and judiciary of Romania should account for troubling and de-

laying Mansouri’s return and why they did not protect a person who was under prosecution by both the Islamic Republic and the anti-revolutionary forces through the European and U.S. courts,” Seyed Mostafa Khoshcheshm told FNA on Friday.

“The Romanians should provide Iran access to the information related to the case, including the CCTV footages of the hotel,” he added.

Khoshcheshm said, “If police investigations

show that this has been a murder, then there is a possibility that the anti-revolutionary forces, Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO, also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCRI) terrorists or individuals who had been hurt by the court rulings issued by Mansouri have killed him considering that he was due to return to Iran and they would lose access to him.”

He said that the MKO had claimed earlier this week that a flight has been sent from Iran

to Bulgaria to return Mansouri and two other ordinary Iranian prisoners to Tehran, and the Romanian prosecutor did not allow him to visit Bulgaria on the pretext of the legal complaints lodged against him in Europe and the U.S.

Also, one of the opposition media has claimed that Mansouri was pushed down the stairs of the hotel before being thrown out of the window, Khoshcheshm said, asking if a professional killer acts this way.

E3 totally impotent in face of U.S. pressure, says Zarif

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the three European countries signatory to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are absolutely powerless against the U.S. coercion.

The remarks by Zarif came hours after the representatives of the 35-nation Board of Governors at the International Atomic Energy Agency passed a controversial resolution to push for intrusive inspections of two old places in Iran which is claimed nuclear activities may have been done there.

The resolution had been proposed by Britain, France and Germany, known as E3. "E3 must stop public face-saving and muster the courage to state publicly what they admit privately, their failure to fulfill even own JCPOA duties due to total impotence in resisting the US bullying behind the facade, E3 are accessories to Trump and Netanyahu—and in no position to counsel Iran," Zarif wrote in a tweet on Friday.

Rafael Grossi, director general of the IAEA, recently made anti-Iran allegations, saying that Tehran had refused to grant access to what he called "two nuclear sites".

China and Russia, two members of the JCPOA, voted against the resolution. Seven other countries including the Republic of Azerbaijan, India, Mongolia, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa, and Thailand refused to vote.

Earlier, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman rejected the politically motivated and non-technical resolution of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying, "While the Islamic Republic of Iran has the highest level of cooperation with the IAEA, adoption of a resolution by the Board of Governors is a completely non-constructive and disappointing step in this regard."

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador



Zarif says Britain, France and Germany "are accessories to Trump and Netanyahu".

to the IAEA, said on Friday that Iran will take appropriate action in response to the move taken by the IAEA board in adopting the anti-Iran resolution.

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

Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOD), has said that the IAEA must not give credit to unreliable information publicized through "spying activities".

"The agency must not rely on and give credit to the information that have been

reached through spying activities and unreliable sources," the Mehr news agency quoted Kamalvandi as saying in an article published on Saturday.

Kamalvandi wrote, "In fact, any request for transparency or complementary access by the agency based on fake evidence are against the agency's charter. So, it does not make any obligation for Iran to fulfill such requests."

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2018, but other signatories vowed to salvage it.

However, Tehran argues that the other signatories to the JCPOA — particularly France, Britain and Germany — have not done enough to save the deal from the U.S. pressure.

Meanwhile, according to the IAEA's 129-page 2019 Safeguards Implementation Report, Iran received the biggest part of the inspections that were carried out worldwide by the atomic organization's inspectors, and the figure stood at 21 percent of the entire visits made to various nuclear sites.

The Trump administration is also working to extend a UN-imposed arms embargo due to expire in October under the JCPOA.

Tehran asks Romania to explain cause of Iranian judge's death

1→ In his Friday statement, Mousavi said Mansouri had recently visited the Iranian embassy in Romania to discuss his return to Iran.

Last week, Iran's Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili announced that Mansouri was arrested due to the Judiciary's legal measures.

"Mr. Mansouri had announced that 'I will return to Iran and attend the [court's] session', but after conducting investigations we realized that this announcement is not serious and is more like a show," Esmaili stated.

He explained that Mansouri cannot be transferred to Iran at the moment due to the coronavirus circumstances, but "this will happen in the following days."

Mansouri is among several judges who were accused of corruption during the high-profile trial of a former senior Judiciary official that opened in Tehran on June 7.

In a video posted online on June 8, Mansouri didn't give details about his whereabouts, but he said he would return to Iran as soon as travel restrictions imposed due to the



coronavirus pandemic are eased.

"I have full trust in the Islamic republic, Supreme Leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei], and the judicial system," he said in the video.

On June 11, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) filed an official complaint with German federal judicial authorities demanding Mansouri's arrest for suppressing and jailing dozens of Iranian journalists.

■ Iran asks Romania to allow fact-finding team to probe the judge's death

Iran's international police on Saturday requested to send a fact-finding mission to Romania to investigate the death of the fugitive judge.

Shirzad announced that they had sent a letter to the Romanian Interpol Police for permission and asked for additional information about the death.

The police also called for Mansouri's body to be returned to Iran.

"In order to investigate the situation of the scene of the incident and its exact cause, a team of Iranian police will be formed and if a positive response is received from Romania, they will be sent to that country," Shirzad said, Press TV reported.

General: Iran to build long-range air defense systems



TEHRAN (FNA) — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Air Defense Force Brigadier General Reza Shaban announced the IRGC plans to manufacture long-range high-altitude air defense systems.

"We are in possession of home-made low-altitude air defense systems and they have passed the tests very successfully, and there are now very good plans to build long-range high-altitude air defense shields and God willing, we will witness manufacturing different such systems in the near future," General Shaban told FNA on Saturday.

"Today, we have high capabilities in building radars, including Bashir, Qadir

and other radars and they will enter the operational stage of the IRGC Air Defense Force gradually," he added.

"Actually, we are able to design any needed radar and we have gained self-sufficiency in this field," General Shaban said.

Iran has produced different powerful missile defense shields in recent years, including Third of Khordad.

A year after a U.S. intruding drone was shot down over the Southern coasts of Iran by the IRGC Aerospace Force, new images of the naval version of the missile system were released for the first time.

The system has been stationed on the IRGC Shahid Siavoshi frigate and is capa-

ble of target lock and missile fire with the frigate on the move.

Third of Khordad missile system, that has been 100% mass produced by the experts of the IRGC Aerospace Force, is the same system which shot down on June 20, 2019 the highly advanced MQ-4C Triton drone of the American terrorists in Iran's territorial waters South of the country near Kouh-e Mobarak region at an altitude of 50 thousand feet.

This system was unveiled for the first time during the visit of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. It is capable of engaging and intercepting 4 active targets at each round and has been assigned for countering tactical and strategic aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles and drones and can also shoot down its targets under electronic warfare conditions.

Last year, IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh had informed of designing and making a missile system that, unlike the existing systems in the world, can trace, lock, engage and intercept targets on a moving platform.

The Third of Khordad Air Defense Shield fires Taer-2 Missiles which have also been developed and mass produced at the IRGC Aerospace Force. Third of Khordad defense shield is also capable of launching Sayyad-2

missiles with a range of 75 kilometers.

These images have for the first time shown the production phases and production line of the system at the industrial sections of the IRGC Aerospace in which there are young men and women working to this end.

Shahid Siavoshi frigate of the IRGC Naval Force, which carries the Third of Khordad missile system, has been domestically made and it is the same frigate which had an encounter with the USS Vella Gulf warship of the U.S. Fifth Fleet on March 7, 2020 while patrolling the Persian Gulf and forced it to move away.

On June 20 last year, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force announced that it used the Iran-made short-range and mid-altitude 'Third of Khordad' missile defense shield to bring down the U.S. spy drone over the country's Southern coasts, releasing videos that showed the flight path of the plane as well as the moment it was brought down.

The incident marked the first direct Iranian attack on U.S. assets and came amid heightened tensions between Washington and Tehran. The downing of the \$220mln drone was also the latest in an escalating series of incidents in the Persian Gulf since mid-May, including suspected attacks on six tankers that the U.S. blamed on Iran. Tehran has denied any involvement in the incidents.

'Freedom of other' missing in U.S. leadership: Tehran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Years of looting other nations prove "freedom of other" is missing in the U.S. leadership, Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

"Yrs of looting & coercion prove FREEDOM OF OTHER lacked in the US successive leadership's mindsets," the ministry said in a tweet.

"Under Trump, the horrible reactions to peaceful protests remind the world the very scandalous history. #JUNETEENTH2020 is a high time to decry the US 'humans new slavery' at home & beyond."



Juneteenth is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Originating in Texas, it is now celebrated annually on the 19th of June throughout the United States, with varying official recognition.

Specifically, it commemorates Union army general Gordon Granger announcing federal orders in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, proclaiming that all slaves in Texas were free.

Texas being the most remote of the slave states had a low presence of Union troops after the American Civil War had ended, thus enforcement there had been slow and inconsistent before Granger's announcement.

Although Juneteenth is commonly thought of as celebrating the end of slavery in the United States, it was still legal and practiced in two Union border states (Delaware and Kentucky) until December 6, 1865, when ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery nationwide.

The Juneteenth celebrations took place against a backdrop of unprecedented nationwide protests demanding racial justice sparked by the death of George Floyd, a black man in Minneapolis who was killed by a white police officer kneeling on his neck for almost nine minutes.

On Friday morning, U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted a threat against any protesters who showed up at the rally, now scheduled for Saturday in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the site of one of nation's worse race massacres.

"Any protesters, anarchists, agitators, looters or lowlives who are going to Oklahoma please understand, you will not be treated like you have been in New York, Seattle, or Minneapolis," Trump wrote, adding, "It will be a much different scene!"

Afghanistan's acting foreign minister set to visit Iran Sunday

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has announced that Afghanistan's acting foreign minister is scheduled to visit Tehran on Sunday.

Mohammad Hanif Atmar is scheduled to come to Iran as head of a high-ranking political, economic and security delegation, Mehr reported.



During his stay in Iran, Atmar is set to hold talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and other officials, Mousavi said.

Various issues including economic cooperation, border-related issues, foreign nationals, media, security, health, water and energy fields will be discussed by the two sides, he added.

It comes a week after Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Afghan Ambassador Abdulghafour Lival over actions of certain anti-Iran groups in Afghanistan.

Certain groups have a record in opposition to Iran and the good neighborliness, the ministry said.

Rasoul Mousavi, an assistant to Iran's foreign minister and the director-general of the Foreign Ministry Department for West Asia, expressed concerns over effects of these groups' actions on relations between the two countries.

Certain groups have recently attacked the Iranian embassy in Kabul under the pretext that some Afghan migrants were drowned while they were trying to enter Iran.

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

Iran has said it has extensive evidence that the incident has not happened on its borders.

Earlier this month, Mousavi said nationals of some countries try to enter Iran illegally, adding that Iranian police will not never allow such acts which are related to the country's national security.

"For every country, the country's security, border security, fighting drug [trafficking], terrorism and human trafficking are important," Mousavi stated.

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

Over 200 kg of narcotics seized in SW Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) — The police chief of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province said that a car carrying 236 kg of opium was discovered in Shiraz-Yasuj highway.

After being learned about an automobile containing narcotics departing for one of the central provinces, the issue went specifically on the agenda of the province's anti-narcotics police officers, said Second Brigadier General Mahdi Ansari, police chief of the province.

He went on to say that in an inspection station on the Shiraz-Yasuj highway, the officers suspected a Peugeot 405 car and order it to stop but the driver refused to obey.

Regardless of police warnings, the driver fled the scene at a high speed, he said, adding that after several warnings shots, the car stopped.

The police officers seized 236 kg of opium and arrested the driver, he added.



NIMA returns over €30b of export revenues to economy

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) has managed to return over €30.075 billion of non-oil export revenues into the country's economic cycle since it was launched in April 2018 up to June 19, 2020.

The system has also supplied €24.931 billion to the exporters of basic goods during the mentioned time span, IRNA reported.

As reported, Iranian exporters injected a total of €2.760 billion into Nima system since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to June 19, of which €1.742 billion was again provided for importers to supply basic goods.



NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to the domestic forex market. It was inaugurated to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

In late May 2019, CBI unveiled a directive package that provided the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the new directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into NIMA, and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

As for other exporters, at least 50 percent of the total earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and a maximum of 20 percent could be distributed in form of hard currency and the rest can be used for imports.

The instructions aimed to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through NIMA, mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee to bring back to the country the foreign currency amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

Products worth over \$235m exported from Sistan-Baluchestan in 2 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over \$235 million worth of products were exported from Sistan-Baluchestan Province in northeast Iran during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), according to a provincial official.

Mohammad Rafi Soltanzadeh, the head of the province's industry, mining and trade department, said that 236,724 tons of non-oil goods worth \$235.6 million were exported via customs and border marketplaces of this province and also Chabahar Free Zone in the first two months of the current year, Mehr news agency reported.



The official said that the exported goods show a 16-percent growth in terms of weight during the two-month period of this year, compared to that of the previous year.

Construction materials (cement), fresh fruits, raw peas, sulfurs, dates, summer crops, detergents, bitumen and ceramic products were among the main products exported via this province to other countries, he said.

These products were exported from the province to the neighboring countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates as well as other countries, the official added.

The value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year stood at \$9.341 billion.

Based on the data released by the Customs Administration, in the mentioned period Iran imported \$5.041 billion worth of goods, while exporting \$4.3 billion.

The volume of traded goods was estimated at 21 million tons, of which 14.5 million tons were related to exports and about 6.5 million tons were imported goods.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$1.19 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$1.107 billion, the UAE with \$682 million, and Afghanistan with \$341 million as well as Turkey with \$144 million, so the country's top five export destinations remained the same in comparison to previous months.

As reported, China accounted for over 27 percent of Iran's total exports, followed by Iraq, UAE, Afghanistan and Turkey with 25 percent, 15 percent, 8 percent, and four percent respectively.

The top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$1.234 billion, the UAE with \$1.78 billion, Turkey with \$535 million, Russia with \$356 million and India with \$335 million worth of imports.

In the first month of the year (March 20-April 20), India was the fifth largest exporter to Iran and the Netherlands was the fourth.

Like all other countries around the world, Iran's trade with its foreign partners has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic, however, the situation is getting back to normal and the country's trade borders are opening one by one.

TSE's number of stock traders up 467%

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The managing director of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) announced that the number of stock traders in this exchange, which was averagely 150 per day at the beginning of the past Iranian calendar year (March 2019) has already risen to 850, which indicates a 467-percent growth.

Ali Sahraei emphasized that the stock market has been highly welcomed by people from different sectors of the country since the last days of the previous year.

Such a high interest in making investment in the stock market has resulted in some unprecedented growth in this market, as TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange, has been registering new record highs of its main index, TEDPIX, for several times since then.

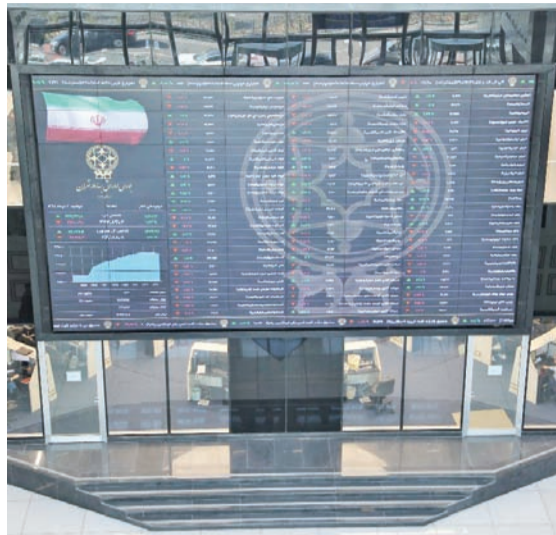
The index, which had closed at 512,000 points at the end of the previous year, has already surpassed 1.2 million points.

Different factors have been contributing to the noticeable development of the stock market, one of them is that this market is now more attractive for the investors compared to some other markets such as those of housing, gold, and foreign currency; in fact, the investors see the stock market more profitable at this time.

Facilitating trade condition

The stock market, for itself, is facilitating trades for the investors through launching some new methods. Listing the first exchange-traded fund (ETF) from a series of three ETFs on May 2 was one of these methods.

Through the three mentioned ETFs, the shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered. Finance and economic affairs minister announced on Tuesday



that the value of shares that are offered by the country's first exchange-traded fund has already doubled.

Referring to the offering of the shares via the first ETF in the past month, Farhad Dejpasand said, "The offering was our first experience in this field. About 3.6 million persons purchased the units of shares offered by the first fund."

"We are planning to offer the shares through the second ETF in the next [Iranian calendar] month (begins on June 21)", the minister further announced.

Annual industrial growth of 2.1% achieved despite limitations

1 → The official also put the annual growth in the mining sector at 1.9 percent and reiterated that the growth has been achieved in the industry and mining sectors despite all limitations (created by the sanctions).

"Our industry also has grown in the present year despite the coronavirus pandemic, in a way that 14 items out of the 16 items that we had planned to boost their production have already witnessed growth", he noted and mentioned washing machine and TV set, refrigerator and fridge, cement, and car tire as some of those products.

The deputy minister further underscored the country's achievements in production of anti-corona products and healthcare items since the year start.

Last week, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand said that despite the great demand for anti-corona medical items in the early days of the pandemic, Iran has become an exporter of such products.

Implementing 200 major industrial, mining, trade projects

Zarandi further announced that the ministry is going to implement 200 major projects in the industrial, mining and trade sectors during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

He said that some 1.69 quadrillion rials (about \$40.23 billion) has been invested in the mentioned projects that are going to create job opportunities for 41,000 people. These projects are going to be implement-

ed under a new program called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports".

In terms of the number of projects, Kerman Province with 26 projects and in terms of the volume of investment, Khuzestan Province with nearly 360 trillion rials (about \$8.57 billion), have the largest share of the said projects in the country, according to Zarandi.

He noted that the mentioned projects, which are characterized by factors like completing the industry's value chain, reducing imports, being export-oriented, using technology, and creating jobs have been selected as national projects.

Currently, there are 12,500 projects with physical progress of over 60 percent across the country, among them the mentioned 200 major projects have been selected to be completed this year.

Of the 12,500 projects, 6,000 are related to leading and prioritized industries, according to the official.

He said the ministry has named nine industries as the leading industries and is planning to strengthen them in a course of five to ten years.

He mentioned manufacturing of industrial and mining machinery as one of those leading industries.

Benefitting from capital market

The deputy minister further referred to benefiting from the capacities of the capital market as one of the major priorities of the

ministry in the present year.

"We selected 500 companies to be listed on the stock market, of them 148 companies expressed readiness", he announced, adding, "Our plan is that each week one production company will have initial public offering (IPO) or publish securities in the stock market in a way that 100 industrial companies will be listed on the stock market in this year".

Earlier this month, during a meeting on expanding financial resources for the production sector through capital market, the official had said, "According to the previous years' investigations it was found that the main problem in industry and production sector and also trade sector is lack of liquidity, and it is while the country is facing a high volume of liquidity."

There are various methods in the world to lead the capital toward production, Zarandi stated, adding one of these methods is leading the micro capitals toward production units and the stock market is one of the best ways to do so.

Supplying raw materials on agenda

Answering to a question about the ministry's programs for supplying the required raw materials for the production units, Zarandi said, "Our second priority, after supplying the basic goods, is to supply raw materials."

"In this field, we also plan to take advantage of domestic production", he reiterated. As the current Iranian calendar year (began



on March 20) is named the year of "Surge in Production", all ministries have defined plans to materialize this motto.

In early April, the former industry, mining and trade minister, Reza Rahmani, had outlined his ministry's major programs for supporting the domestic production in this year.

Developing technology and promoting knowledge-based industries, development of domestic production in line with the Leader's stresses on surge in production, managing imports and development of non-oil exports, improving the business environment, development of financing and investment and finally development of logistics were reported to be the seven major axes of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's works in the current year.

Monthly copper concentrate output rises 2%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of copper concentrate in Iran has risen two percent in the past Iranian calendar month Ordibehesht (April 20-May 20) compared to the same month in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, 106,547 tons of copper concentrate was produced during the previous month.

Copper concentrate output also rose five percent to 209,450 tons during the first two months of the current year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As previously announced, over 26.926 million tons of copper ore was extracted in Iran during the first two months of the present year.

The two-month copper ore extraction shows a 13-percent fall from the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

Copper ore extraction also fell five percent to 14.888 million tons in the second month of this year from that of the previous year.

Four development projects worth 40 trillion rials (about \$952.3 million) were inaugurated last month in the copper sector of Kerman Province in the southeast of Iran.



President Hassan Rouhani put the projects into operation through video conference.

The projects inaugurated in Khatoon Abad Copper Complex included increasing the capacity of copper smelting in the complex, building a copper concentrate storage, construction of a sulfuric acid production plant, and an oxygen supplying unit.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)'s Managing Director

Iran, China ink trade co-op MOU



trade opportunities for Iran and China.

"I am convinced that this Canton Fair will further consolidate our economic ties and friendship," he added.

Li Jinqi, Secretary-General of the China Import and Export Fair and Director-General of the CFTEC, for his part said: "Canton Fair has served as a crucial platform for China's opening-up over the past sixty-three years and exemplifies our dedication to strengthening economic ties between China and the world."

He noted that the 127th online Canton Fair aims to create a win-win opportunity for global companies where they can showcase new products and innovative technologies, injecting a new impetus to the global trade growth and stabilizing supply chains.

Iran and China have had a long history of cultural, political, and economic exchanges

along the Silk Road since at least 200 BC, and possibly earlier. To this day, China and Iran have developed a friendly economic and strategic partnership.

Approximately 80 percent of China's total imports from Iran are oil and the rest is mineral and chemical products.

The two countries' trade has fallen recently due to the outbreak of coronavirus; however the two sides are taking all necessary measures to boost up their trade turnover back to its pre-corona levels.

Trade between Iran and China reached \$5.26 billion in the first four months of 2020, 40 percent less than the same period last year.

Daily electricity consumption settles at 51GW

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — After weeks of constant increase, daily electricity consumption in Iran slightly fell on Friday to settle at 51.181 gigawatts (GW), the Energy Ministry portal (Paven) reported on Saturday.

As reported, the country's electricity consumption fell 3,714 megawatts (MW) on the mentioned date compared to the previous day.

The figure also registered a 700 MW decrease compared to the same period last year.

According to Paven, the country's power consumption stood at 51,881 MW on the same day in the previous year.

The electricity consumption in Iran has been following an unprecedented upward trend in the recent weeks as a new heat wave has blanketed the country.

Earlier this month, the energy ministry warned of the unprecedented increases in power consumption across the country.

Last Saturday, daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 55,071 megawatts (55.07 gigawatts) to register a new record high.

According to Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the Energy Ministry's spokesman for the



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

Even though the summer peak consumption period has not started yet, new

consumption records have been reported in 15 provinces of the country, Rajabi Mashhadi said on June 14.

The country's average daily electricity consumption exceeded 53,000 MW in the first week of June.

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

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

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

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

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

Ramsar Airport's 1st refueler unit starts operating

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Director of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC)'s Chalous regional office said the first refueling unit of the newly renovated Ramsar International Airport has started operating with a capacity of 20,000 liters, Shana reported.

According to Touraj Amani, before the inauguration of the new runway in Ramsar Airport, only two airlines could land on the airport, but currently 16 airlines and over 70 percent of the country's aviation fleet can have flights to this airport.

Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami inaugurated a new runway in Ramsar International Airport in the northern Mazandaran Province in late May.

Noting that the first Airbus 320 and Fokker 100 airplanes have landed on the new runway, Amani said: "In order to increase the number of airlines and flights to this airport and considering the urgent need for optimal refueling of aircrafts landing in this airport, the first refueling unit has



started operating."

The airport's new runway, on which 1.5 trillion rials (about \$35.7 million) was invested, has made it possible for Airbus planes to land in the mentioned airport for the first time after 52 years.

"As of now, all [the country's] 16 airlines can fly to Ramsar Airport," Eslami said in the inauguration ceremony of the runway.

Ramsar is one of the popular cities of northern Iran and the airport was constructed to serve tourists visiting the region.

The airport was previously closed, due to infrastructure limitations and no major flights were allowed to land in the airport.

Iranian ship en route to Venezuela signals ongoing alliance

An Iranian cargo ship is expected to dock in Venezuela soon, an arrival that comes shortly after the Middle Eastern nation sent five tankers loaded with gasoline to relieve its fuel-starved South American ally, an analyst told New the York Times on Friday.

The Golsan's journey signals a blossoming relationship between the two nations in defiance of stiff financial sanctions by the Trump administration against each of them.

Its cargo is unclear, but Russ Dallen, head of the Miami-based investment firm Caracas Capital Markets, said he believes "that it is carrying parts to continue repairing Venezuela's collapsed refineries."

The Golsan approached Caribbean waters Friday following a high-seas journey from Iran. It could reach a Venezuelan port by Sunday or Monday, said Dallen, based on tracking technology.

Venezuela holds the world's largest oil reserves, and critics of President Nicolás Maduro point to the nation's reliance on Iran for gasoline as an example of the so-

cialist government's failure.

The U.S. seeks to oust Maduro, backing his political rival Juan Guaidó.

Maduro blames many of the problems on U.S. sanctions and other measures to undermine his rule. He says the U.S. wants to install a puppet government so it can exploit Venezuela's vast resources.

Former National Security Adviser John Bolton writes in a book set to be published on Tuesday that Trump had insisted on military options against the South American nation, because "it's really part of the United States."

However, deep gasoline shortages that recently hit the capital of Caracas have eased since the Iranian tankers delivered fuel.

With Iran's recent technical help, Venezuela has also managed to get the Paraguana Refinery Complex, one of the largest in the world, partially working and producing gasoline, Dallen said.

The Iranian Embassy in Caracas did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday about the ship and other assistance.

Rebound in oil prices helps prop up midstream sector

Since the March lows, the midstream sector of the oil and gas industry has recovered most of its losses. While the overall sector is still down for the year, the 19.5 percent year-to-date loss in the Alerian Midstream Energy Select Index (AMEI) is still better than all other major energy sector benchmarks.

As reported by oilprice.com, the latest research note from independent energy infrastructure and master limited partnership (MLP) market intelligence data provider Alerian discusses this year's roller coaster in the midstream sector. The report notes that from December 31 to the low on March 18, the Alerian MLP Infrastructure Index (AMZI) decreased 67.4 percent, slightly more than the 66.6 percent decline in the price of West Texas

Intermediate (WTI).

Since March, several factors have helped drive the midstream recovery. The rebound in oil prices, aided by OPEC's agreement to substantially curb oil output and then to extended those cuts was probably the most significant factor.

But Alerian also identified "constructive company updates before and during 1Q20 earnings season and resilient distributions from larger names" as having likely supported performance. The federal funds rate cut to zero in March was also identified as a potential factor driving investors to seek higher income from the midstream sector.

To position themselves to weather the potentially choppy waters ahead, more than half

of the MLPs in the AMZI have cut distributions. This has boosted the coverage ratio of the index constituents from an average of 1.5x in Q4 2019 to 2.6X in Q1 2020.

Thus far major MLPs like Enterprise Products Partners, Energy Transfer LP, Magellan Midstream, and MPLX LP have avoided announcing distribution cuts, but the coverage ratio for all of these names has decreased over the past year.

If the coverage ratios continue to decline, expect to see more distribution cuts, especially for those names where leverage is increasing.

Magellan Midstream and Energy Transfer are among those bucking the trend of increasing leverage and hence may find themselves better able to withstand the pressure to cut distributions.

As noted previously, many midstream companies will first try to cope with falling revenues by cutting capital expenditures. Alerian writes that "the average percent reduction in 2020 spending from each MLP's initial guidance to current guidance is -24.1 percent, while the constituents of the AMEI expect to reduce spending by an additional -22.5 percent over initial guidance for this year."

This quarter's financial results will likely be the worst in memory, but investors seem to have already taken those into account. Given the moves the midstream sector has made to shore up its financial metrics in this ongoing crisis, the sector continues to offer a compelling income proposition with less risk than most of the energy sector.

Extra oil cuts from delinquent OPEC+ members could shrink the market by 1 million bpd

OPEC+ crude oil production could fall by about 1 million bpd in July and August from May levels, based on plans submitted by Iraq and Kazakhstan to institute deeper output cuts to make up for violating their quotas and loading schedules issued by fellow compliance laggards Nigeria and Angola.

Those four countries have borne the brunt of criticism from their OPEC+ counterparts for pumping above their agreed caps in a historic supply accord aimed at shoring up the oil market's nascent recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the terms of the deal, countries that overproduced must compensate for their excess by making extra cuts below their quotas in July, August and September.

The extra cuts, if fulfilled, could go a long way towards speeding the market's rebalancing, or provide the OPEC+ alliance some breathing room to relax quotas for the rest of its members.

"The key takeaway is that OPEC+ compliance will improve in the coming months," said Stephen Brennock, an analyst with brokerage PVM Associates.

The deal's 9.7 million bpd in collective cuts are scheduled to ease back to 7.7 million bpd starting in August, though a monitoring committee plans to meet monthly to determine if any changes are needed. Its next meeting is July 15.

Iraq had exceeded its quota by the most in May, with independent secondary sources estimating it produced 4.165 million bpd, some 573,000 bpd above its cap of 3.592 million bpd.

It has pledged to implement a cut of 57,000 bpd below its quota for June and 258,000 bpd below for July and August, according to OPEC+ officials.

That would hold Iraqi crude production to 3.535 million bpd in June, 3.334 million bpd in July and 3.546 million bpd in August.

Oil minister Ihsan Ismael has said that June crude exports were being slashed by some 780,000 bpd — or nearly a quarter — from May levels to 2.8 million bpd in an effort to bring its



production in line. Domestic consumption would add another 600,000 to 700,000 bpd on top of that.

Still, the country, which has been a serial offender of its quota over the past three and a half years of OPEC+ output cuts, faces skepticism over its willingness or ability to comply.

Iraq remains wracked by political instability, civil unrest and security risks, and the terms of its contracts with international oil companies will require financial penalties if shut-ins are enforced.

"It is difficult to foresee Iraq hitting its 2.8 million bpd export pledge in June," said Paul Sheldon, chief geopolitical adviser for S&P Global Platts Analytics. "However, public Saudi pressure led to a government deal with IOCs to cut more from Iraq's largest fields, making about 3.8 million bpd of June supply look realistic. This remains above Iraq's 3.6 million bpd quota, but would denote the lowest monthly total in five years."

Cuts add up

Kazakhstan, meanwhile, was about 160,000 bpd above its

quota of 1.319 million bpd for May, according to Platts estimates. It told the OPEC+ monitoring committee that it will make an extra cut of 15,000 bpd in July and 50,000 bpd in August and September, officials said.

That would bring Kazakhstan's July production down to 1.304 million bpd and August-September output to 1.347 million bpd, if the quotas are not changed.

Nigeria and Angola have not yet submitted their cut schedules, but have been given until June 22 to do so. Loading programs for both countries indicate that their production is likely to fall.

Nigerian crude loadings in July and August are set for 1.53 million bpd, a decline of 170,000 bpd from May's 1.70 million bpd.

Nigeria was some 288,000 bpd above its quota in May, according to Platts estimates.

Angola has scheduled loadings of 1.21 million bpd in July and 1.18 million bpd in August. That would be down from 1.27 million bpd in May.

Angola pumped 90,000 bpd above its quota in May, Platts estimates.

Ministry officials from Nigeria and Angola did not respond to requests for comment.

Together, the committed reductions by Iraq and Kazakhstan, along with the reduced loadings from Nigeria and Angola, add up to about 1.01 million bpd in cuts for July and 956,000 bpd for August from May production levels, according to Platts calculations.

The OPEC+ Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee plans to hold a conference the week of June 22, once all underperforming members have detailed their cut plans.

Saudi energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, who co-chairs the JMMC with Russian counterpart Alexander Novak, has made improving OPEC+ compliance a top priority since being appointed to his post in September. But the OPEC+ coalition lacks any enforcement mechanism beyond political pressure.

Wind deals are becoming even more popular with corporate renewables buyers

Wind energy always has been a source of cheap, utility-scale clean energy. Yet, with giant turbines centrally located, it was a lesser choice than solar for corporations looking for distributed renewable options.

Now, thanks to the development of additional procurement options and even lower costs, corporate renewables buyers are turning to wind energy to quickly ramp up their clean energy procurements.

AT&T is a company that has turned mainly to wind power to meet its clean energy goals. Of its 1,500 megawatts of renewable energy procured, a little over two-thirds comes from wind, making the company the leading procurer of wind energy in the telecommunications sector.

"Everything we do has to be at scale," explained Shannon Carroll, director of global environmental sustainability at AT&T. "For us, it's about finding the right opportunity, the right size, the right geography. Between the load, the financials and geography, the wind industry has matured over the last seven years to give the best opportunities."

According to "Wind Powers American Business," a report from the wind advocacy group American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), the private sector has been a significant demand driver for wind energy, purchasing more 20 percent of all new wind installations in the United States for five years running.

Of course, corporations' appetite for renewables is increasing across the board. Corporations are a similar driver behind solar, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA). They collectively accounted for 22 percent of 2018 power purchase agreements (PPAs) for solar and wind in the United States.

Still, the increase in wind projects, I wondered: What trends are driving corporations to pick more wind deals?

1. Wind makes cheap energy

The cost of wind energy has fallen 70 percent since 2009. As the price of wind projects has fallen, the types of companies entering wind procurement deals have become more diverse. While tech companies accounted for about 70 percent of all corporate wind projects in 2015, last year they made up less than 25 percent.

Other sectors — including food, retail and telecommunications — accounted for a growing percentage of the wind pie. Notably, renewable energy procurement newcomers Gap Inc., Ball Corporation and McDonald's all selected wind for their first solo renewable contracts last year.

"The larger landscape has to be there in terms of the economic sand opportunities," Carroll said. "The right-sized deal has to be available for the right-sized company. This is a maturing market, and you're seeing more and more of that."

With cost being a huge factor in a company's renewable procurement choices, wind power's falling cost and unique attributes mean there are regions and incentives that make it more attractive in certain cases. Other tax incentives, including solar's Investment Tax Credit and wind's Production Tax Credit, can change how projects pencil.

2. Wind makes a lot of energy

One major difference between wind and solar: Wind turbines are really big.

While rooftop solar and on-site PPAs drove corporate solar uptake in the early years with systems under a megawatt circa 2008-2014), wind isn't as well suited for distributed applications. Some companies have on-site turbines, although it is less common.

Virtual PPAs (in which a corporate doesn't directly take the electricity, but takes the revenue from the electricity sold on the open market) changed all that. It opened the possibility of buying utility-scale wind — one of the cheapest sources of energy — far away from operations.

VPPAs for wind took flight in 2013 and today account for 85 percent of corporate wind purchases.

With more than 200 companies committing to procuring 100 percent of their electricity from renewable sources on an annual basis, the demand for larger capacity projects also has grown. Since 2013, the size of the average capacity contracted skyrocketed, too — from less than 10 MW to almost 150 MW.

Last week, construction completed on a 419 MW wind project in Texas with four customers — Ecolab, Lowe's, Intuit and Brown University — joining forces in a long-term power purchase agreement. This type of aggregation of buyers allows the oft-takers to share transactional costs, opening up procurement opportunities to smaller companies.

"The aggregated power agreement is an innovative and cutting edge partnership across these industries for wind energy and allowed Intuit to meet our 100 percent renewable electricity goal 10 years early," said Sean Kinghorn, global sustainability program leader at Intuit, in an email. "In the past, aggregated purchase power agreements like this would have been off-limits to a buyer of Intuit's size and comparably smaller electricity needs."

3. Wind makes energy in different regions

Different energy markets and resource potential (read: places where it's windier or sunnier) means grid-scale solar and wind energy cluster in different parts of the country.

For wind, 61 percent of all corporate deals executed so far are tied to projects in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Texas alone accounts for 39 percent of corporate wind contracts, as the state is deregulated with retail choice, meaning customers can buy electricity from alternative suppliers than their utility.

While I don't have the raw data, these two maps — one from SEIA of solar projects more than 1 MW, the other from AWEA of wind projects — show how the two resources complement each other geographically.

As companies work to better match their renewable resources with their load demands, this geographic diversification becomes more important. Some companies, such as Starbucks and Microsoft, also have taken to inking deals with multiple projects simultaneously to hedge their investments.

Forecasts show corporates will continue to drive renewable growth over the next decade. Wood Mackenzie sees up to 85 gigawatts of renewable energy demand through 2030 from the largest U.S. corporate buyers alone.

If the last 10 years are any indication, the increased demand also will bring increased offerings and contract structures. And, the more corporates that get involved, the more opportunities there will likely be.

"When you're talking about sustainability and the environment and renewable energy, you want collaboration," Carrol said. "We encourage companies to look at [wind deals] as well. You can't predict the future, but based on all indication, there will continue to be good wind deals available to companies."

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Richard Falk: Ayatollah Khamenei's letters to the youth in the West have 'prophetic character'

TEHRAN — Richard Falk, a professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, says letters by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to the youth in the West five years ago suggest “prophetic character” in view of daily protests in the West led by youth against racial injustice and state violence.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Richard Falk, who also served as UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian human rights, says “the unusual focus on the role of youth” in Ayatollah Khamenei's letters “is particularly striking and instructive”.

The Leader's addresses to the youth are known as “Letter 4 You” or “Letter for You”.

Following is the text of the interview with Professor Falk.

■ In his letter to the youth in Europe and North America on January 21, 2015, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said “I find that the sense of quest for truth is more vigorous and attentive in your hearts”. What was or is the importance of the letter?

A: It needs to be understood that as far as I can tell the January 21, 2015 letter to the youth of Europe and North America is not all known in the West. This is unfortunate as the letter is a very special communication by a leader who combines political and religious authority in an important country that directs his appeal to ‘youth’ as distinct the ‘people.’ The reasoning behind this focus is made clear, expressive of the idea that it is the youth that have the power and responsibility to overcome mistakes of the past and present. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei seems to base his attitude of hopefulness on faith that the youth of these societies will seek a better understanding of Islam and Muslims. The current world scene of daily protests in the West led by youth against racial injustice, solidarity with Palestine, and state violence suggests the prophetic character of Ayatollah Khamenei's two letters written five years ago.

It is also important to contextualize the letter in events that were occurring in Europe in 2015, particularly the terrorist attack, two weeks earlier than the date of the first letter, upon the editorial offices in Paris of the satiric magazine, Charlie Hebdo, killing 12 persons, including its main editor. The Algerian-born perpetrators were brothers, resident in France, and were self-proclaimed jihadists killed in the incident. The attack, provoked by the ironic and irreverent treatment of the prophet Mohammed in the magazine, undoubtedly abetted by the Islamophobic atmosphere in France and elsewhere, was interpreted by governments in the West as an attack by Islamic terrorism on fundamental Western values, particularly the right of free expression, an occasion for mass protests led by leaders of European states. A French court had previously rejected formal allegations that such mockery of Islam by the magazine should be prohibited and punished as hate speech, declaring that these insults were directed not at Islam as such but at its fundamentalist excesses, and thus what appeared in the magazine was permissible speech.

The letter is significant for its clear repudiation of terrorism, identifying such violence as a common enemy of Islam and the West, while calling upon the youth in these countries to study the Koran and other sacred writings to acquire a truer understanding of Islam as anti-terrorist, without ever mentioning the Charlie Hebdo incident or voicing specific criticism of the behavior of particular states. The letter combines a rejection of terrorism with a plea to avoid an acceptance of Islamophobic attacks on the religion of Islam and its adherents, while declaring common cause between Iran and the West with regard to anti-terrorism. Ayatollah Khamenei's second letter was released on November 30, 2015, again directed at youth in the West, that more pointedly repeated the central message of the earlier letter but

“Present policies and practices exhibit the persistent virus of racism that continues to be present to varying degrees throughout the West.”



Unusual focus on the role of youth by Ayatollah Khamenei ‘is particularly striking and instructive’, Princeton University Professor Richard Falk says

indicting state terrorism and anti-Islamic behavior of particular states in the West, and calling more urgently for a vigorous reaction by young people.

■ The Leader said he was writing to the youth because politicians and statesmen in the West “have consciously separated the route of politics from the path of righteousness and truth”. How do you analyze this statement?

A: This expression of the motivation for the letter is an accurate recognition of the degree to which the politics and diplomacy of the West has adopted positions that are driven by greed and ambition rather than moral standards that draw careful distinctions between good and evil. The Trump presidency underscores the illuminating assessments contained in Ayatollah Khamenei's letters. Donald Trump does not distinguish between opposition to terrorism of various kinds from broad traditions of religious faith and civilizational identity. His attempts to ban entry of Muslims to the United States implies that the religion itself is tainted, and encourages a kind of religious racism directed at Islam. Not all Western leaders are nearly as blunt in their assessments, but most subtly endorse this conflation of religion and criminal violence in the form of terrorism by extremists who falsely invoke Islam.

We can observe the analogous problems of racial stereotyping and abuse in the current protests against police brutality that has been victimizing African Americans for centuries. The sustained outcry against the police murder

This expression of the motivation for the letter is an accurate recognition of the degree to which the politics and diplomacy of the West has adopted positions that are driven by greed and ambition rather than moral standards that draw careful distinctions between good and evil.

of George Floyd on May 25th seems a world-shaking event that is in some respects similar to the Charlie Hebdo incident, and in other ways quite opposite. The police terrorism in Minneapolis derives from the structures of government, while in Paris the terrorism was the work of political extremists, but in the one case it was reacting to Islamophobia and in the other the violence was itself the expression of American racism that remains an ugly legacy of slavery.

The Leader by choosing to address youth, and youth alone, rather than the governing authorities nor even the general citizenry, implied a confidence, or was it a hope? that youth needed to play a strategic role in shaping a more humane future for the societies in the West. And it is worth observing, that it is indeed youth that have dominated the protest movements sparked by death of George Floyd, although the leading media voices of African American outrage are often drawn from older known black opponents of racism.

■ In his letter at the time, Leader said the histories of the U.S. and Europe “are ashamed of slavery.... and chagrined at the oppression of ‘people of color.’” This approach that people of color are treated badly is demonstrated in the behavior of some supremacists. What do you think the West or the youth, in general, should do to end such discriminations?

A: The dominant surface beliefs in the West do exhibit feelings of shame about the past abuses of people of color through slavery and colonialism, but present policies and practices exhibit the persistent virus of racism that continues to be present to varying degrees

throughout the West. The anti-immigration backlash to neoliberal globalization and the failure to address the ongoing Palestinian ordeal and struggle for justice have given political support from the older governing elites to renewed supremacist policies that have caused so much past suffering.

There is no assured path to justice and an end to racism and Islamophobia, but youth more than other sectors of society are disillusioned by conventional politics based on parties, elections, and top down reforms. To address these challenges to human decency it is necessary to rely on movement politics that creates a mandate for change from below, which was of course the path followed by revolutionary challenge mounted against the Pahlavi dynasty over 40 years ago. Such political movements are by their nature threatening to the established order, but it is often only effective way to address underlying conditions that give rise to injustice implanted deeply in a society's past and present. In my view, even a comprehensive repudiation of racism and discrimination in the West is insufficient, especially, given the roles played by the U.S. and NATO outside the West, as well as the gross inequalities stemming from economic globalization. Overcoming injustice in our world makes it essential to oppose militarism and predatory capitalism if we want the diverse peoples throughout the planet to coexist in ways that respect their individual and collective identities.

■ Don't you think that the Leader had

of Iran exemplifies the transformative potential of such a movement.

■ What is your suggestion about the Leader's advice that the youth in the West should fight disinformation campaigns by certain media outlets against Islam?

A: Youth, and of course others, should follow the advice of the Leader to study Islam in a sincere and authentic manner, and on this basis shape a critical understanding of the tensions between the West and Islamic countries. With such an understanding it would become possible to form strategies and tactics that reject both terrorism and Islamophobia. It would then also become possible to adopt appropriate policy adjustments in the West, starting with military disengagement from the Middle East and restoration of the 2015 nuclear program agreement with Iran. (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-JCPOA). Yet this is not enough. Youth need address common human problems, as dramatized by the COVID-19 experience, in a globally cooperative spirit, and extend its vital concerns to climate change, global migration, poverty, international law, the UN, and world peace.

To advance a positive program for change with justice it is also imperative to clear away the obstructive effects of Islamophobia and other forms of disinformation by seeking to contest mainstream distortions of social and religious realities and by developing media outlets that disseminate reliable accounts and understandings of violent crimes. Both of these developments are starting to happen, thanks the protests and the disorienting impacts of the pandemic, but whether the effects will be temporary or more transformative remains uncertain at this stage.

■ Injustice against the people of color is not in any way comparable to the degree of brutality against the Palestinians at the hands of occupiers. In his second letter to the Western youth on Nov. 29, 2015, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “This (brutality) is done without even giving them (Palestinians) time to gather their belongings or agricultural products.” In your view, what the youth in the West are expected to do in regard to the sufferings of the Palestinians?

A: I do not think it is helpful to evaluate the suffering endured by people of color with the apartheid conditions of subjugation and exploitation endured for so many decades by the Palestinian people. In both instances, the brutality and suffering are intolerable, to be opposed, and ended by forces of good will. We do not need to decide which is worse.

While not developed with a specific plan, the implication of Ayatollah Khamenei's message is that the youth of Europe and North America have an obligation to expose the nature of Israel's criminal domination of the Palestinians and seek justice based on the equality of Arabs and Jews. The youth of America have a particular obligation as it is the U.S. Government that has lent its geopolitical muscle to Israel's defiance of international law and morality, and continues to subsidize Israel's behavior with large annual economic subsidies. The denial of fundamental Palestinian rights in their own country epitomizes the colonial past of the West's relations with the Middle East and also is the defining injustice of the imperial present in which indigenous rights of a native people have been cast aside by terroristic methods to uphold structures. These wrongs must be rectified if a sustainable peace is to be achieved.

These letters of Ayatollah Khamenei deserve reflection and response, and not only from youth in the West but from the entire population of each country that is being indirectly challenged. If this is done in a sincere manner it would be the beginning of the end of both terrorism and Islamophobia, and would allow countries to coexist with respect for their civilizational and religious differences once correctly interpreted and acted upon.

“The reasoning behind this focus is made clear, expressive of the idea that it is the youth that have the power and responsibility to overcome mistakes of the past and present.”

Anti-racism movement in view of Ayatollah Khamenei's letter to Western youth

➡ In the city of Louisville, Kentucky, for example, plans for removing two Confederate statues were announced by Mayor Greg Fischer in 2016, but a court decision allowing the action only came last Friday, June 12, 2020 following years of legal battles. Rejecting claims that this was an attempt to erase history, Fischer insisted that the removal “allows us to examine our history in a new context that more accurately reflects the reality of the day, a time when the moral deprivation of slavery is clear.” In the city of Jacksonville, Florida, Mayor Lenny Curry has announced plans to remove three Confederate monuments and eight historical markers.

When demonstrators threatened to topple the 115-year-old Confederate Soldiers & Sailors Monument in Birmingham, Alabama, Mayor Randall Woodfin begged the crowds to disperse and assured them he would “finish the job.” Later the mayor insisted, “Violence, looting and chaos is not the road to reform,” but, “In order to prevent more civil unrest in our city, I think it is very imperative that we remove this statue that's in Linn Park.” If Woodfin keeps his promise, he may be faced with a lawsuit from the state, since the Alabama legislature passed a law in 2017 prohibiting local governments from removing or altering monuments and memorials.

In a sense, Birmingham Mayor Woodfin, who is Black, is representative of the intractable problem of racism and injustice in America. With a motto of “Putting People First,” Woodfin envisions making Birmingham “a laboratory for progress,” but has announced a crime-fighting program that increases the number of police officers on the streets. Increasing the number of police officers translates to increased violence against Blacks and minorities, as is gruesomely verified by the statistic that eight out of the 100 largest city police departments in the U.S. kill Black men at a rate which exceeds the average U.S. murder rate.

In contrast to this reactionary, typically white tactic of increasing police presence, protestors in Seattle, Washington have created a police-free autonomous zone. After police abandoned a precinct building, demonstrators simply moved in and took over, claiming it for the people and setting up CHAZ, the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone. One of the members of the newly-created community explained, “I think what it's doing is exposing the unnecessary need of an over-policed state.” Mike Baker of the New York Times characterized CHAZ as “an experiment in life without the police — part street festival, part commune.”

U.S. president Donald Trump responded to the innovative CHAZ community by threatening Seattle's mayor, Jenny Durkan, who refused to give permission for federal troops to come in and evacuate the occupants. “Take back your city NOW. If you don't do it, I will,” Trump tyrannically tweeted, referring to the peaceful protestors as “ugly Anarchists.” Durkan replied, “One of the things this president will never understand is that listening to the community is not a weakness. It's a strength.” Some members of the CHAZ community have even set up checkpoints manned by armed individuals, the purpose of which is to safeguard what one worker in a nearby coffee shop called an “anti-racist zone.”

Rather than seeing the latest American uprising as a revolt against racism and injustice, the moneyed class continues to view the protests in terms of economics and society; specifically, frustrations due to unemployment resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and the dysfunctionality of the U.S. political system. “What started as a health crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic has turned into an economic crisis, then leading to a job-loss catastrophe,” explained CEO, founder and executive recruiter Jack Kelly, who noted that frustrations encompassed “society as a whole—including our inept political leaders.” Blaming egotism and political differences, he predicted that “we'll continue to have unrest, increasing unemployment and the destruction of small businesses.”

Blaming the current crop of incompetent politicians, momentarily satisfying as it may be, fails to address the systemic racism, economic inequality and societal injustices embedded in the staggering system of corrupt crony capitalism as practiced in America and the West, and promulgated by threat of sanctions and military force. “Peaceful” protests will not change this system. Even conservative white journalists will concede this fact. “As I listen to government officials these days calling for ‘peaceful’ protests,” wrote Walt Rubel in the Las Cruces (NM) Bulletin, “I suspect what they really want are protests that are easy to ignore.”

Perhaps taking Rubel's words at face value, protestors in the second largest city in New Mexico have twice resorted to blocking traffic at a major intersection, unusual civil disobedience by Las Cruces standards. On Saturday, June 6, a group of demonstrators held up traffic for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the duration of time Minneapolis police had George Floyd in a so-called choke hold, technically termed a vascular neck restraint (VNR). Incidentally, researchers in the peer-reviewed Journal of Applied Psychology had concluded “VNR is a safe and effective force intervention; however, outcomes could vary in different populations,” which was certainly true in George Floyd's case.

Trump had even planned a campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the site of one of the bloodiest racist massacres of Blacks in U.S. history, which was executed by white citizens of that city in 1921. June 19 marks the celebration of Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when enslaved Blacks in Texas finally found out they had been freed some two and one-half years earlier by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Despite denouncing the evils of slavery before the graduating class of the U.S. military academy, yet the hypocritical U.S. president has declined to authorize the renaming of the ten U.S. military bases named after Confederate army officers.

Ayatollah Khamenei asked in his letter to the youth in the West, “Why does the power structure in the world want Islamic thought to be marginalized and remain latent?” The martyred Black leader Malcolm X understood the transformative power of Islam and the threat it poses to corrupt Western crony capitalism...so does the white power structure that assassinated him. The youthful leaders behind the current American uprising should read Ayatollah Khamenei's letter, learn about the power of Islam and apply it to revise the collective conscience of the West.

Millennia-old relics confiscated from antique dealer

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A batch of prehistorical relics, estimated to date from the time of Mannaeans in the early 1st millennium BC, has recently been seized from an antique dealer near the city of Bukan, West Azarbaijan province, northwest Iran.

“The relics include an earthen bowl and eighty beads. Such semi-precious stones were mostly used as personal ornamentations in the past,” CHTN quoted Bukan tourism chief Obeydollah Sorkhabi as saying on Saturday.



Briefing on the confiscation, the official said “The objects were found after the police investigated a suspicious vehicle moving on a road towards Bukan,” the official said.

“The relics are estimated by cultural heritage experts as objects with magnificent historical values dating back to some 2,500 years ago.”

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Mannaeans are first recorded in the annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (reigned 858–824 BC) and are last mentioned in Urartu by Rusa II (reigned 685–645 BC) and in Assyria by Esarhaddon (reigned 680–669 BC).

Mannai, also spelled Manna, was an ancient country surrounded by three major powers of the time namely Assyria, Urartu, and Media. With the intrusion of the Scythians and the rise of the Medes in the 7th century, the Mannaeans lost their identity and were subsumed under the term Medes.

Tourism projects worth \$1.1m to get off the ground in Fars

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A total of seven tourism-related projects, worth over 50 billion rials (about \$1.1m), are scheduled to be completed in the southern province of Fars by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), provincial tourism chief has said.



A guest house, two traditional restaurants, a nature park, and three recreational centers will come on stream by the yearend in the cities of Shiraz, Kazeroon, Fasa, and Mehr, CHTN quoted Jamshid Moeini as saying on Tuesday.

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

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country’s most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Hafezieh (mausoleum of Hafez, an illustrious 14th-century Persian poet), the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, and Sadi mausoleum are some of the most-visited sites in the province.

Over 6,500 crafters trained in Hamedan in a year

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A total of 6,560 crafters were trained in the west-central province of Hamedan by taking courses on handicrafts during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 19), provincial tourism chief has said.



The courses were divided into three levels in the fields of painting on pottery, hand-woven kilim, vitray, wicker works and pottery, CHTN quoted Hashem Mazaheri as saying on Saturday.

Handicrafts exports from the province reached some \$35 million during the previous Iranian calendar year.

Lalejin pottery held an 80 percent share of the province’s exports, which included traditional glassware, ceramics, wooden products, sculptures, and furniture.

Lalejin, a world pottery capital in Hamedan province, is one of the most essential centers for production of the earthenware and ceramics in the country.

Lalejin celebrated its registration as the world pottery capital in 2016, a privilege given by jurors of the UNESCO-affiliated World Crafts Council.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world’s greatest cities. It was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan’s attractions to name a few.

A taste of Jurassic world: Iran’s Katale-Khor cave on agenda to be a tourism hub

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Katale-Khor, a limestone cave full of natural crystals believed to date from the Jurassic era, is planned to become one of the country’s tourism hubs, CHTN reported on Saturday.

Literally meaning “Mountain of Sun”, Katale-Khor is located in the northwestern Zanjan province and is said to date back to some 120 million years ago, so that it has embraced lots of natural and artificial changes during this lengthy period. The cave was reportedly discovered some seven decades ago by a group of Iranian cavers.

However, the distance between the cave and the surrounding cities and the lack of the tourism infrastructure are among the problems and weaknesses that have prevented the region from realizing its potential, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand said.

He also asked the private sector to collaborate in the investing in the tourism industry of the province along with the government.

The cave interiors embrace huge hallways and corridors, which are impressively lit by flashlights.

Some three-seventh of the prolonged cave have been explored so far. A length of about 3km of the cave is open to the public while a 4km-route is accessible to experienced cavers and researchers.

Exploring a cave may not be on the “to-do list” of travelers in Iran. However, Karafu, Ali-Sadr and Quri Qaleh, and Katale-Khor are amongst the most visited caves, the latter is situated some 150km south of Zanjan, off a road that connects Soltaniyeh to Hamedan.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the enigmatic evidence of human presence on the Iranian plateau is as early as Lower Paleolithic times.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation



is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Iran plans to incentivize foreign airlines to use its airspace

→ 1 Despite propaganda over security issues in the region, Qatar Airways, Emirates, and several other Persian Gulf airlines continued using Iranian airspace at the time.

On January 3, a U.S. drone strike assassinated top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani and in an act of retaliation, Iran fired missiles at U.S. targets in Iraq on January 8. The Ukrainian airliner was accidentally shot down by Iran’s air defense as it was on high alert in the tense aftermath.

Iran’s tourism minister on January 12 said that the country’s tourism industry has suffered a setback but it will certainly return to “normal”, in remarks referring to the tragic crash. Ali-Asghar Mounesan said, “These events are a major blow to tourism, but we will leave it behind by the means of new plans and we will return to normal.”

But why Iran? Because the country boasts credible surgeons and physicians, cutting-edge medical technologies, high-tech medicine and diverse specializations, super affordable procedures within a trusted health system, and finally it is home to many hospitable people.

It doesn’t matter the taste, Iran can be a top choice of many foreign tourists who are fans



of camping and eco-tours, fans of historical sites. For those who want to experience something completely new and exciting, visiting or staying with nomads is recommended.

Accommodation in the country varies from luxurious five-star hotels to camping in the middle of the jungle!

Iran is home to one of the world’s oldest

continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. In Iran, there are two dozen UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 22 of which cultural ones, representing architectural, social, religious, and economic achievements as well as tastes of history throughout the ancient land.

The matter of security is essentially considered as a complex question for many foreigners willing to visit a host country. When it comes to media outlets, in particular, some Western ones, Iran is a country that is often portrayed as unwelcoming. However, many visitors to Iran describe it as one of the safest countries they’ve ever been to.

The 2019 Travel Risk Map, which shows the risk level around the world, puts Iran among countries with “insignificant risk”, a category where the UK, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Finland are placed in.

The Islamic Republic has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in [calendar year] 1404 (March 2025-March 2026). Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Govt. permit to ensure quality of agritourism in Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran’s deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri has said permits will be granted to eligible tour operators to launch their agritourism businesses, aiming to set certain standards in a move to ensure the quality of such services in the country.

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.

“The executive instructions on how to issue an agritourism license have been scrutinized, concluded and will soon be implemented,” Teymouri said on Tuesday, ISNA reported.

To finalize the scheme, in addition to reviewing global models and international standards for agricultural tourism, frequent expert meetings were held with the participation of scientific experts and activists in this field.

In this regard, the ministry has also held follow-up sessions with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Environment, the Municipalities and Village Administrators Organization, and Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, amongst other related entities and organizations.

Such a legal basis will lay the ground for further monitoring the performance of activists who are holding specialized licenses, the official noted.

“During the provincial trips made by the Minister of



Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, he paid visits to touristic farms that were operating without a [government] license due to lack of legal grounds, according to the request of applicants to legalize their activities and to develop job opportunities, the minister issued a special order to solve the problem,” Teymouri explained.

“In order to develop employment-related areas of tourism, the Tourism Ministry has prepared several guidelines and technical criteria concerning nomadic tourism camps, licenses related to maritime tourism, natural parks, etc., which will create good employment in the future...”

Some experts believe that in addition to the customer

services jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying “For this reason, agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in the field of production and services.”

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might include Outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers’ markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

Rural Tourism, however, differs from agritourism in two ways. First, rural tourism enterprises do not necessarily occur on a farm or ranch, or at an agricultural plant, they do not generate supplemental income for the agricultural enterprise.

To cite an example, we could refer to saffron farms in northeast Iran that are going to fame as a new destination for agritourism. Iranian Saffron is known as the “red gold”, saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to the physical and spiritual medicine.

Welcome to incredible rainbow mountains in northwest Iran!

TOURISM d e s k There are many top reasons to visit Iran, from its diverse natural geography to its cultural festivals, the remnants of ancient civilizations, and maybe above all; its hospitable people.

If you are a nature photography enthusiast, or simple a nature lover, or trekker looking for an amazing place which looks like walking on another planet, the colorful Aladaghlar Mountains is an option. They are situated along a road that connects Ahar to Tabriz northwest Iran.

Few places on Earth feature such dazzling painted mountains such as Zhangye National Geopark in China and Ausangate mountains in Peru.



Iran is third worldwide for COVID-19 convalescents

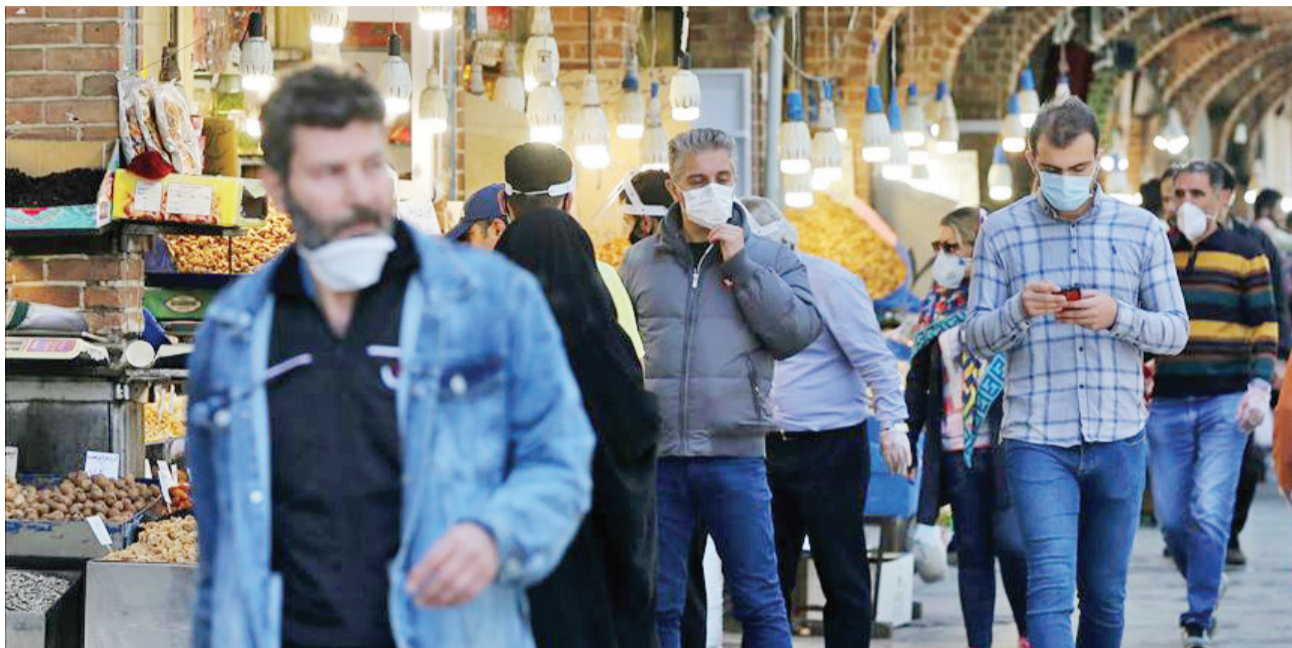
SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran is the third country in the world in terms of the highest number of coronavirus convalescents.

The biggest share of convalescents is reported in Germany (91.5%), Turkey (85%), Iran (80%), and Italy (76%), TASS reported.

The number of convalescents worldwide might soon reach 50%, according to the report. In the past seven days, approximately 500,000 people across the globe have recovered from the illness, but this is noticeably less than the 700,000 recoveries recorded during the previous week.

The infection's mortality rate is also on decline. The figure, which topped 7% in early May, has already dropped to 5.3% (down 0.3 percentage points in the past seven days).

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 202,584 on Saturday, of whom 9,507 have died and 161,384 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,322 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 115 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.



Lack of 3,000 buses: Tehran transport fleet to be renovated

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between Tehran Municipality and Iran Khodro car manufacturing company to meet part of the transport fleet's need for 3,000 buses.

Tehran needs 3,000 buses to reduce waiting times at stops so that we will try to achieve this goal, Tehran Mayor Pirouz Hanachi has said.

"We signed a contract and a memorandum of understanding to renovate the transport fleet in the capital, the contract includes the production of 120 buses and 130 minibuses during the next 6 months, and the agreement includes 800 minibuses, buses, and electric buses."

The government has allocated 1 trillion rials (nearly \$23 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to repair Tehran's buses,



Hanachi said, adding, buses are different from other means of transportation, and it is possible to completely retrofit them.

Mahmoud Tarafo'e, CEO of Tehran Bus Company, stated on Friday that currently, 62 percent of the capital's bus fleet is extremely old, adding that "If the current trend continues, Tehran's buses will operate for up to 6 more years.

Summer to begin with partial solar eclipse

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A solar eclipse will occur on the first day of summer (June 21), but the moon is too far away to fully block the sun.

The solar eclipse will sweep across the southeastern part of Iran, most notably the port of Chabahar, where 98 percent of the sun will be covered by the moon, Masoud Atighi, head of the Astronomical Society of Iran, said.

The eclipse will begin in Tehran at 9:04 a.m. local time and continue until 11:38, he noted.

The eclipse will be seen from the African continent to Asia, and the southern parts of the European continent as well as a small part of northern Australia.

A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between Earth and the Sun, there-



by totally or partly obscuring the image of the Sun for a viewer on Earth. An annular solar eclipse occurs when the Moon's apparent diameter is smaller than the Sun's, blocking most of the Sun's light and causing the Sun to look like an annulus (ring). An annular eclipse appears as a partial eclipse over a region of the Earth thousands of kilometers wide.

Iran tops Asian countries in organ donation

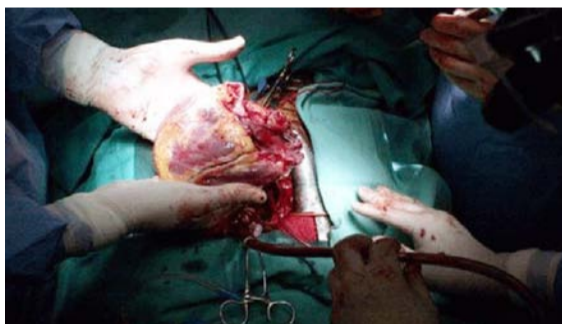
➔ He went on to say that South Korea ranks third in Asia with a rate of 8.68 per million population.

Turkey, Kuwait, China, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Qatar also rank fourth to tenth, respectively, he stated.

Iran is a leading country in saving the lives of patients needing organ transplants, he highlighted.

In February 2019, Shadnough said that the organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over the past 18 years. Although Iran ranks 26 in organ donation in the world, it can claim better ranks given some plans being implemented in this regard.

Organ donation of brain death has reached up to 60 percent, he said, lamenting that the country ranks 21st regarding



organ donation from brain dead patients in the world while ranking 14th regarding organ transplant from alive patients.

According to the figures revealed by the International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation (IRODaT), Spain leads the world in organ donation.

Some 8,000 people die of brain death annually in Iran, out of 4,000 brain deaths being qualified to be organ donors, only 1,000 donate their organs.

Some 25,000 people are waiting in transplant lists and every day some 7 to 10 people waiting for an organ lose their lives.

10 percent of Iranians amounting to 8.2 million have organ donor cards.

'Martyr Mostafa Chamran would have stood up for justice, against racism'

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Martyr Mostafa Chamran would have stood up for justice and against acts of racism which have recently occurred in different parts of the world, as he could never forget what the occupying regime had done to the Palestinian people, said Mehdi Chamran, the brother of Martyr Mostafa Chamran and the former chairman of Tehran City Council, in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times on Friday.

Referring to the countries who pretend to condemn acts of racism and show justice,

he said that Martyr Chamran never forgot what the occupying regime had done to the Palestinian people, even when he turned back to the country he has been always thinking about such cruelties.

Describing racism as a scourge perpetuated over centuries in parts of the world, he noted that even during the time he was studying in the United States, there have been aggressive actions against him by political or religious extremists.

"I think if he was among us and witnessed acts of police brutality and racism in the U.S.,

he would have stepped up and acted to help end systemic racism against people of African descent and other minority groups in the United States," he stated.

Highlighting the historic role of Martyr Chamran in struggles against racism, he said that he would have tried to organize the civil rights movement in the United States, and taken steps to eradicate racism.

June 20 marked the 39th martyrdom anniversary of professor-commander Mostafa Chamran, the first Iranian defense minister after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Born in 1932, Chamran was a member of parliament, as well as the commander of paramilitary volunteers during the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988). Chamran left his academic career as a scientist and professor at the University of California, Berkeley to help Islamic movements in Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt.

He was also instrumental in the struggles leading to the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Chamran died on June 20 1981 after being hit by shrapnel shells in Dehlaivieh, a region in Iran's southern Khuzestan Province during the 1980-1988 Iraqi imposed war on Iran.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

'Too soon to decide cheetah kept in captivity is pregnant or not'

Female Asiatic cheetah, Delbar, kept in captivity, undergone artificial insemination at Pardisan Park in Tehran earlier this year (starting on March 21), and may be pregnant but it is still too soon to determine, Majid Kharrazian-Moqaddam, director of the wildlife conservation and management at the Department of Environment has said.

تشخیص بارداری دلبر؛ ماده یوزپلنگ پارک پردیسان هنوز زود است

مجید خرازیان مقدم، مدیرکل دفتر حفاظت و مدیریت حیات وحش سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: حدود دو ماه پیش عملیات لقاح مصنوعی بر روی دلبر، ماده یوزپلنگ پارک پردیسان با موفقیت انجام شد اما تشخیص بارداری او هنوز زود است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"ex-, exo-"

■ **Meaning:** outside or external

■ **For example:** For some people, **exotic** animals make great pets because of their shock value and novelty.

PHRASAL VERB

Note something down

■ **Meaning:** to write something down so that you will remember it

■ **For example:** Note down the main points you want to include in your essay.

IDIOM

Cross that bridge when we come to it

■ **Explanation:** to deal with a problem when it occurs and not worry about it before

■ **For example:** What will happen if we can't repay the loan? We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Half of world's population exposed to increasing air pollution, study finds

More than half of the world's population is exposed to increasing air pollution despite global efforts to tackle toxic fumes, a study has found.

In some regions pollution has soared five times above safe levels set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), according to researchers at the University of Exeter.



They warned poor air quality posed a "major, and in many areas growing, threat to public health".

Professor Gavin Shaddick, the university's chair of data sciences and statistics, said: "While long-term policies to reduce air pollution have been shown to be effective in many regions, notably in Europe and the United States, there are still regions that have dangerously high levels of air pollution, some as much as five times greater than World Health Organisation guidelines, and in some countries air pollution is still increasing."

The study, carried out with WHO, found the highest levels of air pollution in middle-income nations, particularly in central and southeastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Inefficient energy use in households, industry, agriculture and transport, as well as coal-fired power plants, are major sources of fine particulate matter air pollution. In some regions, sand and desert dust, waste burning and deforestation also contribute.

For the study, the research team examined trends in global air quality between 2010 and 2016 against a backdrop of global efforts to reduce pollution through short- and long-term policies.

They used ground monitoring together with satellite data to provide yearly, air-quality profiles for individual countries and wider regions.

Professor Shaddick added: "Although precise quantification of the outcomes of specific policies is difficult, coupling the evidence for effective interventions with global, regional and local trends in air pollution can provide essential information for the evidence base that is key in informing and monitoring future policies."

WHO estimates 4.2 million deaths a year across the world can be attributed to outdoor air pollution.

It advises that annual mean concentration of fine particulate air pollution should not exceed 10 micrograms per cubic metre.

The proportion of the global population exposed to levels above that guideline fell from 94 to 90 per cent between 2010 and 2016, driven largely by decreases in North America and Europe.

But the Exeter study, published in the journal Climate and Atmospheric Science, found levels "remained virtually constant and extremely high" in other regions.

Fifty-five per cent of the global population is exposed to increasing levels of pollution, the research found.

More than 99 per cent of the population in central and south-eastern Asian nations is breathing unsafe air.

This pollution is not confined to cities, with the vast majority of people living in rural areas also exposed to dangerous levels.

"Addressing air pollution in both rural and urban settings should therefore be a key priority in effectively reducing the burden of disease associated with air pollution," the study said.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

U.S. Army stretched

(January 07, 2004)

The U.S. military is being over-stretched; it is being forced to go beyond its normal capacity, largely due to its commitments in Iraq, a situation which could last for years. In this weeks Words in the news, defence correspondent Jonathan Marcus looks at the growing problem afflicting the U.S. military and what can be done about it. This report from Jonathan Marcus, Defence Correspondent.

The Pentagon may command the most powerful **military machine** on earth, but it still has insufficient troops to comfortably carry out all of the missions **assigned** to it. It's combat power, fighting units, that matter and it's these that are in short supply. Of the thirty one combat brigades in the U.S. army, some eighteen are currently **deployed**, preparing for deployment, or have just returned from **active duty** overseas.

Bear in mind the U.S. military is also undergoing a period of **profound** transformation. Some units are adapting to new roles and new equipment and the strains become **self evident**. Many soldiers and their families in what is still an all volunteer army are unhappy and the latest efforts by the Pentagon to maintain unit cohesion by preventing troops from leaving the service while their units are deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan will only add to the pressures. That's why **cash inducements** are being offered to get troops to re-enlist.

Of course it was never supposed to be like this. Military transformation, which in some ways has only just begun, was intended to provide a **lean** U.S. military that could fight and win quickly against almost any opponent. That part worked in Iraq. But the hope was that peace keeping or security duties could then be handed over to other countries. Instead, the U.S. has had to **shoulder the bulk of the burden**. This means extending **tours of duty**, drawing more on reserves and getting the marine corps into the peace keeping business.

■ **Words**

military machine: the well-controlled system or organization of the country's armed forces

assigned: given

deployed: positioned ready for immediate action

on active duty: fighting as a member of the armed services

profound: great, intense

self-evident: so obvious that there is no use for proof or explanation

cash inducements: money given in order to persuade somebody to do a particular thing

lean: fit, strong, with no wastage

shoulder the... burden: accept the responsibility

tours of duty: a period of time which a soldier spends working in a foreign country

(Source: BBC)

John Kerry: Trump victory could provoke a revolution

Former Secretary of State John Kerry raised the possibility that a victory by President Trump could provoke a revolution in the United States, claiming that Republicans have a history of denying voting rights to Democratic voters.

"If people don't have adequate access to the ballot, I mean that's the stuff on which revolutions are built," Kerry said during a virtual appearance at the Copenhagen Democracy Summit. "If you begin to deny people the capacity of your democracy to work, even the Founding Fathers wrote in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, we have an inherent right to challenge that. And I'm worried that increasingly, people are disaffected."

Kerry implied that such chicanery contributed to his defeat in 2004 and former Vice President Al Gore's loss in 2000, maintaining that this pattern unfolded recently in Georgia — an apparent reference to Stacey Abrams's defeat in the state's 2018 gubernatorial race. That history, as he views it, undermines U.S. claims to Western leadership, Washington Examiner reported.

"We're not meeting the standard that we ought to be meeting, so I'm deeply concerned about protecting the vote," he said.

Kerry didn't mention Republicans explicitly, but he maintained that there was a history of "certain officials of a particular party purposefully [making] it difficult for the other party to vote where they control those matters." He predicted that Trump would lose handily but warned that Republicans would "pull out every stop" in the closing weeks of the race.

And yet, Kerry remains optimistic about the outcome. "I'm going to continue to believe this election will not be close, we'll have a mandate in America," he said. "And if it is close, we'll just have to deal with whatever the circumstances are at that time. Hopefully, we've laid enough groundwork, the legal barrier, that we will be well prepared."

Turkey: Haftar forces need to pull out from Sirte for Libya ceasefire

Turkey Saturday said Libyan eastern commander Khalifa Haftar's forces needed to withdraw from the strategic city of Sirte for a lasting ceasefire and accused France of "jeopardizing" NATO security.

Ibrahim Kalin, the presidential spokesman, told AFP Turkey supports the position of the UN-recognized government in Tripoli, saying Sirte and Al-Jufra need to be evacuated by Haftar's forces for a "sustainable ceasefire."

According to AFP, Kalin also accused France of "jeopardizing" NATO's security by supporting Haftar, whose forces have been conducting an offensive to take the capital Tripoli since last year.

"In Libya we are supporting the legitimate government and the French government is supporting an illegitimate warlord and jeopardising NATO security, Mediterranean security, North African security and Libya's political stability," he said.

Erdogan says Turkey has lost some ground in coronavirus fight

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Saturday Turkey had lost some ground in its battle with the coronavirus pandemic but a focus on hygiene, masks and social distancing will protect people and help the economy rebound in the second half of the year.

"The numbers in recent days show that we have lost our position in the fight against the epidemic," Erdogan said in a televised address. "But we aim to remove the pandemic from our agenda by respecting the cleaning, mask and distance rules."

According to Reuters, economic recovery signals have been "quite strong" since May and "we expect great momentum from the second half of the year," he added.

Resistance News

Badran: Annexation is a quantum shift in the chain of Israel's crimes

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Member of Hamas's political bureau Husam Badran has said that the annexation project is not a symbolic or passing matter, but rather a quantum shift in the chain of Israeli crimes, warning such step would adversely affect all aspects of Palestinian life.

In Twitter remarks, Badran said that all options are open to the Palestinian people to confront and frustrate the annexation plan.

The Hamas official expressed his belief that the Palestinian people are capable of thwarting the annexation plan, calling for necessarily reaching a national consensus on all issues to face the challenges.

He affirmed that the annexation plan targets the Palestinian people from all spectra regardless of their political, intellectual or geographical affiliations.

"In practice, it is a threat to all of us and this entails the need to pool all efforts to confront it and avoid being busy with internal disputes," he said.

Three Palestinian young men kidnaped by IOF in W. Bank and J'lem

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) last night and at dawn Saturday kidnaped three Palestinian young men in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

In al-Khalil, the IOF kidnaped a young man called Hussein ash-Shawahin from his home in Yatta city.

Another young man identified as Ali Abu Salah, a resident of Arraba town in Jenin, was taken prisoner at the Za'atara military checkpoint in southern Nablus as he was on his way to Ramallah.

In east Jerusalem, the IOF stormed Issawiya district and kidnaped a young man from his home in Al Aliyan neighborhood.

U.S. threatens UAE with sanctions over Syria rapprochement

The U.S. has threatened to slap sanctions on the United Arab Emirates as Abu Dhabi presses ahead with efforts to normalize ties with the Syrian government.

U.S. Special Representative for Syria Engagement James Jeffrey issued the warning during a press conference on Washington's recently enacted anti-Syria economic measures, known as the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, which blacklists 39 entities and individuals, including Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his wife Asma.

Jeffrey said the U.S. would not exclude the UAE from its coercive measures if it violates the Caesar Act.

"Anyone who engages in economic activities, whether in the UAE or in other countries... may be targeted by these sanctions," Jeffrey said.

The U.S. envoy also rebuked Abu Dhabi for its policy of rapprochement with the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, calling the reopening of the UAE embassy in Damascus a "bad idea."

"The UAE knows that we absolutely refuse that countries take such steps," he added.

The Caesar Act came into effect on Wednesday, six months after it was signed into law by U.S. President Donald Trump.



targeting individuals and businesses anywhere in the world that operate either directly or indirectly in Syria's economy.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry condemned

the American sanctions as "a crime against humanity and a flagrant violation of the international law that targets the livelihood of the Syrians."

'Civil rights isn't over': Americans mark Juneteenth coast to coast

→ 1 Four Democratic U.S. senators planned to introduce a bill to declare Juneteenth a federal holiday.

"Juneteenth is the oldest celebration of the end of slavery in the US. And it should be recognized as a federal holiday," Senator Tina Smith, one of four, wrote on Twitter.

One focal point of Friday's events was Atlanta, a center of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, where about 1,000 people gathered at Centennial Olympic Park downtown for a peaceful march on the state capitol building.

Emotions were running high in Atlanta, where Ray-shard Brooks, an African American, was fatally shot in the back by a white policeman in the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant June 12, reigniting outrage still simmering from Floyd's death on May 25 in Minneapolis. The Atlanta policeman was dismissed from the department and charged with murder, although his arrest came more quickly than that of the officer ultimately charged with murder in the Floyd case.

Many Atlanta marchers carried signs proclaiming "Black Lives Matter," or "Get your knee off our necks," and "I can't breathe," referring to Floyd's dying words.



'Civil rights isn't over'

Marcher Antonio Jeremiah Parks, 27, of Atlanta said the civil rights movement had not yet fulfilled its promises. "Civil rights isn't over," said Parks, who is Black and works at a homeless shelter. "We still feel the pain of slavery."

UN sets up inquiry into racism after George Floyd death

→ 1 "It is absurd that the final resolution passed by the United Nations strips mention of the United States, where police kill people, particularly Black people, at alarmingly higher rates compared to other developed countries," said Jamil Dakwar of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which led 600 activist groups in calling for the urgent debate.

"The United Nations needs to do its job — not get bullied out of doing it — and hold the United States accountable," he said in a statement.

The Trump administration, which quit the forum two years ago alleging bias against its ally Israel, made no immediate comment. U.S. Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Andrew Bremberg said on Wednesday that his country

was "not above scrutiny" as it grappled with racial discrimination but was implementing police reforms after Floyd's killing.

During the debate, Western delegations including Australia, Germany, Italy, Poland and the European Union said that the United States should not be singled out.

"This problem does not belong to any one country, it is a problem around the world,"

said Australian ambassador Sally Mansfield.

Activists said that Australia had been particularly active in negotiations to take the spotlight off the United States.

Germany's ambassador Michael Ungern-Sternberg said: "We are convinced a report with a broader approach and less focus on one specific case would have been more appropriate".

Annexation plan will heavily damage EU-Israeli ties: EU

The European Union's foreign policy chief has warned that the annexation of Palestinian territories in the occupied West Bank pursued by the Israeli regime will have "significant consequences" for bilateral ties between the bloc and Tel Aviv.

High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell made the remark in a speech he delivered to the European Parliament on Thursday, stressing that the clear position of the bloc is to "continue supporting a negotiated two-state solution, based on international parameters."

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is facing a number of criminal indictments, has repeatedly said that he would commence cabinet-level discussions for annexing more areas in the occupied West Bank on July 1, in accordance with U.S. President Donald Trump's plan, the so-called deal of the century.

Trump's scheme, which has already been categorically rejected and condemned by the Palestinians, largely gives in to Israel's demands while creating a Palestinian state with limited control over its own security and borders, enshrining

the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital" and allowing the regime to annex settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

In response to Trump's highly-provocative scheme and Israel's annexation plans, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared the end of all agreements signed with Tel Aviv and Washington on May 19.

"Annexation would inevitably have significant consequences for the close relationship we currently enjoy with Israel," Borrell said. "I will not prejudge the specific impact of a possible annexation, but let me underline that the EU has its own obligations and responsibility under international and EU law."

Back in February, a month after Trump officially unveiled his much-condemned scheme, an overwhelming majority of the European Parliament legislators denounced the proposal, saying the contentious plan flies in the face of international law.

In his comments on Thursday, Borrell said he was using all of the EU's "diplomatic capacities in order to put pressure for that not to happen."

Borrell added that he had talked with Israel's alternate premier, Benny Gantz, and foreign minister, Gabi Ashkenazi, about "the gravity of such an announcement."

The EU's foreign policy chief, however, admitted that "it is difficult to find unanimity" on the matter, referring to opposition from Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic to Europe's denunciation of the plan.

However, there is "a strong, very strong majority of countries that continue supporting a negotiated two-state solution based on international parameters and considering that any annexation would be against international law," he added.

On Thursday, the European Parliament finalized the Open Skies aviation agreement between the bloc and the Tel Aviv regime, but said "the vote today does not prejudice the EU position on future political developments in Israel."

According to Trump's scheme, the future Palestinian state will consist of scattered lands linked together via bridges and tunnels. It will also be demilitarized, meaning it will be subject to Israeli control for security.

President Abbas has already said that the scheme "belongs to the dustbin of history."

UK demonstrators hold fourth weekend of anti-racism protests

Anti-racism demonstrators are holding a fourth weekend of protests across the UK, despite a ban on large gatherings because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Demonstrations were taking place Saturday in cities including London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Hundreds assembled for a socially distanced Say No to Racism rally in Glasgow's George Square, where earlier this week members of the far right attacked a refugee-rights gathering.

In Edinburgh, protesters including "Train-spotting" author Irvine Welsh called for the removal of a statue of Henry Dundas from its column in the city's St. Andrew Square. The late 18th-century Scottish politician was responsible for delaying Britain's abolition of the slave trade by 15 years until 1807. During that time, more than half a million enslaved Africans were trafficked across the Atlantic.

Hundreds of thousands of people have

held mostly peaceful anti-racism protests across Britain since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, urging the UK to confront its own history of imperialism and racial inequality.

After some protesters scuffled with police and defaced a statue of wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill in London, and demonstrators in Bristol toppled a statue of slave trader Edward Colston, counter-protesters rallied last week with the stated aim of protecting monuments.

Hundreds of far-right activists clashed June 13 with police near the Churchill statue in London, which had been boarded up for protection.

According to AP, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced he is setting up a commission to look at what more can be done to eliminate racial injustice, but opponents accuse the Conservative government of opting for talk rather than action.



Iran looking for top four spot: Davarzani

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mohamadreza Davarzani, head of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF), says that they are going to be among the top four teams in the world.

Iran made history in 2016, booking a place at the Olympic Games for the first time as the top ranked Asian team. The "Persian Leopards" finished at the fifth place in the Games.

Now, the head of IRIVF, who has returned to volleyball after three years, eyes a better position to where they were before.

"We are looking for a place among top four teams in the Olympic Games, that's why I am here. Iran qualified for the Olympic Games after 52 years in 2016 and we finished in fifth place under leadership of Raul Lozano," Davarzani said in an interview with Mehr news agency.

"After Rio, we came to a conclusion that our new purpose is to move up in the world rankings. Then, Igor Kolakovic was appointed as new head coach since he had worked in Serbia National Team for eight years. The Montenegrin coach penned a two-year contract with option to extend an additional two years in 2017 and we won 2018 Asian Games and 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship under leadership of the coach," he added.

Iran parted company with Kolakovic in March after cancellation of Volleyball Nations League and 2020 Olympic Games due to coronavirus outbreak. Now, the Iranian federation is searching for a new



© Mehr/ Maryam Kamyab

head coach for the upcoming Olympics.

"We are weighing up how to find the best coach for the National Team because the new head coach should know our volleyball. If we want to appoint a foreign trainer, he will surely be a top-level coach. Otherwise,

the next coach will be an Iranian coach but we are in hurry to appoint the new coach," Davarzani stated.

Iran's Women Volleyball Team have no coach at the moment but Davarzani says the federation will appoint a head coach

for the team soon.

"We are in contact with Julio Velasco to find a good coach for the women's team. After the coronavirus lockdown, we will appoint a woman coach for the team," Davarzani concluded.

Iran Paralympic secretary general Rezaei resigns



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Secretary general of Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) Hadi Rezaei has resigned from his post.

The Iranian media reports suggest that Rezaei has resigned after a disagreement with NPC president Mahmoud Khosravi Vafa.

The Board of Directors have not yet accepted his resignation.

The 60-year-old had been previously named as Chef de Mission for next year's Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

Rezaei fulfilled the same role at 2018

Asian Para Games in Jakarta where Iran finished third overall in the medals table.

He is one of the Iranian most decorated para athletes and coaches.

Rezaei won three consecutive Paralympic Games gold medals in 1988 (Seoul), 1992 (Barcelona) and 1996 (Atlanta) as a player.

As a coach, he also led Iran sitting volleyball team to three Paralympics gold medals in Sydney 2000, Beijing 2008 and Rio 2016 and two silvers in Athens 2004 and London 2012.

Rezaei also is head coach of Iran's sitting volleyball team.

Iran league will definitely resume: official



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Gholamreza Behravan, the counselor of the Iran Football League Organization, says that the decision to hold the remaining matches of the Iran Professional League (IPL) will not change and the games will definitely resume.

During recent weeks, some of the IPL teams have come together to oppose the resumption of the games. They even sent a letter to the Iranian football federation last Monday and threatened to withdraw from the league. However, some clubs denied it later.

"The Iran League Organization took the decision to restart the league matches in consultation with the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters, and this plan will definitely be supported by FIFA.

"Any team who oppose the decision made by the league organization and the football federation or want to withdraw from the competitions, will be dealt with legal action," said Behravan, the former head of Iran Football League Organization.

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

Sporting legend Alex Zanardi in artificial coma after horrific handbike crash

Ex-Formula One driver and four-time Paralympic gold medalist Alex Zanardi is in an artificial coma after suffering severe head injuries in a horrific cycling race crash.

The 53-year-old Zanardi, who had both his legs amputated after a motor racing accident almost 20 years ago, lost control of his handbike machine while competing in the 'Obiettivo tricolore' relay race in Tuscany, Italy on Friday.

According to multiple reports, he crossed the white line into the path of an oncoming track, which was unable to avoid him.

Following the accident, the Italian was airlifted to the Santa Maria alle Scotti hospital in Siena where he underwent three hours of emergency neurological surgery for facial head injuries.

A statement released by the hospital said Zanardi is in a "stable" condition in intensive care following his operation.

"He is incubated and supported by artificial ventilation while the neurological picture remains serious," read the medical bulletin.

Zanardi's plight was captured in the headlines of all the major Italian sports papers as news spread of the seriousness of his accident.

"No Alex, no!" said Corriere dello Sport, while Italian



prime minister Giuseppe Conte wrote on Twitter: "Come on Alex Zanardi, don't give up. All of Italy is fighting with you."

Zanardi raced for Jordan, Minardi and Lotus in F1 before a successful switch to CART racing in the US where he was series champion in 1997 and 1998.

He returned to F1 with Williams for one season in 1999 before returning to the CART series.

It was in that formula that he suffered his infamous 320kmh crash at Lausitzring in Germany in September

2001, escaping with his life, but losing both his legs.

In an incredible show of determination and spirit, Zanardi adapted to his prosthetic legs and returned to compete in the European Touring Car Championship in 2003, driving for BMW.

But it was for his exploits on a handbike that the man from Bologna has become best known to a worldwide audience, winning multiple medals at the 2012 and 2016 Paralympics and world championships.

He was in training for this year's Tokyo Paralympics, hoping to add to his impressive tally of gold medals, until it was postponed.

Zanardi has also competed in grueling Ironman triathlon races, setting a new world best for a Paralympic athlete at a race in Italy last September as well as continuing to race specially-adapted BMWs in various endurance motorsport events.

Messages of support have come flooding in across the sporting world, with former F1 world champion and Indy Car legend Mario Andretti writing: "I am so anxious and frightened about Alex Zanardi that I'm holding my breath. I am his fan. I am his friend."

(Source: CNN)

Tottenham boss Jose Mourinho hits out at VAR after Manchester United draw

Jose Mourinho pointed the finger of blame at VAR as his Tottenham Hotspur side were denied a Premier League victory against Manchester United by a late penalty on Friday.

Spurs were on course for three valuable points in the race for a Champions League qualification slot when David De Gea failed to keep out Steven Bergwijn's first-half strike.

But Bruno Fernandes' 81st-minute penalty after Paul Pogba was bundled over by Eric Dier made sure United went home with a 1-1 draw to stay fifth, four points above eighth-placed Spurs.

It could have been worse for Tottenham, but another United penalty in stoppage time was rescinded by VAR after Fernandes went down under apparently no contact from Dier.

"I am not happy with the penalty and not happy with the second penalty," Mourinho said. "I am unhappy with the VAR, not the referee on the first, the referee can make a mistake but VAR is there to do the job."

"In the second I am unhappy with [referee] Jon Moss because he did not give the free kick leading up to it and then gave another penalty. In this case

the VAR gave the truth.

"We knew that we could have a penalty against because we know they have an incredible record of penalties given."

Mourinho also said VAR should have been used to book Fernandes for simulation after appearing to fall theatrically before the second penalty was called.

While the Portuguese coach was left frustrated against the club that sacked him last season, United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer praised Pogba who came off the bench in the second half for only his ninth appearance of the season.

The France midfielder has been sidelined by ankle injuries and had not appeared since January, but sparked United into life when he replaced Fred just past the hour mark.

"Paul did everything a midfielder should do, he tackled, won passes and showed some skills so fantastic to have him back," Solskjaer told reporters.

"He's had a frustrating season with his injuries. Paul has shown today how he can contribute and I just look forward to getting him fitter and seeing Paul getting back to his best."

(Source: ESPN)

Mojarrad awarded ambassador title of school building benefactor

Volleyball.ir - Ali Asghar Mojarrad was awarded ambassador title school building benefactor by Iran's Education Minister Mohsen Haji-Mirzaei.



In the ceremony held in Mojarrad's hometown Bojnord, North Khorasan, he received the ambassador title from Haji-Mirzaei.

The 22-year-old middle blocked has recently joined Iranian volleyball club Sepahan.

Mojarrad was a member of Iran national team who won the AVC Men's Tokyo Volleyball Qualification tournament in January.

Mes Sungun on verge of winning Iranian Futsal League

Tasnim — Defending champions Mes Sungun defeated Giti Pasand in the first leg of the Iranian Futsal Super League on Friday.

In the match held in Isfahan's Pirooz Hall, the visiting team defeated their rival 4-3.

The second leg will be held in Tabriz next week.

The 2019-20 Iranian Futsal Super League is the 21st season of the Iran Pro League and the 16th under the name Futsal Super League.

The season features 12 teams this year.

Mes Sungun are going to make hat trick by winning the title.

Tractor officially parts company with Yuri Matias

IRNA — Iranian football club Tractor confirmed the termination of Brazilian Jefferson Yuri de Sousa Matias's contract.

The 25-year-old Brazilian defender joined Tractor in January but played just two matches for Tractor before the competitions were halted due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Matias had joined Tractor from Portuguese football team Academica.

Now, the Tabriz-based football club have announced that Matias cannot return to Iran due to flight restrictions.

Tractor sit third in the Iran Professional League (IPL) 10 points behind leaders Persepolis.

AEK Athens eye Iran's Mohebbi: report

Tasnim — Greek football team AEK Athens have reportedly set their sight on signing Iran international winger Mohammad Mohebbi.

Mohebbi currently plays in Iranian top flight football team Sepahan.

The 21-year-old player had been previously linked with a move to Spanish football teams Granada and Levante.

Mohebbi started his football career in Shahin Bushehr in 2017 and joined Sepahan at the beginning of the current season.

Mohebbi also represented Iran national football team three times and scored two goals.

AEK Football Club also known in European competitions as AEK Athens FC, are a Greek professional football club based in Nea Filadelfeia, a suburb of Athens, Greece.

Inter great Mario Corso dies

Inter Milan legend Mario Corso has died aged 78.

Corso, who was nicknamed God's Left Foot, played more than 400 times for the Serie A giants from 1957 to 1973, winning four titles.



The left-winger also represented Italy at international level.

Inter Milan paid tribute to their former player on Twitter: "Mario Corso has passed away, a man who was Inter through and through and an eternal champion, gifted with infinite class."

"He enchanted the world with his left foot in a team that marked an era. The thoughts and love of every one of us go to his family at this difficult time."

(Source: Mirror)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

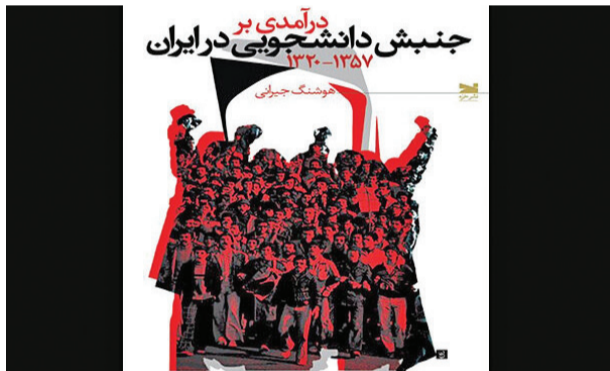
The least you may do for God is, not to resort to sin through His blessings.

Imam Ali (AS)

Book on history of student protests in Iran published

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A book that chronicles the history of student protest in Iran has recently been published.

Written by Iranian scholar Hushang Jeirani, “An Introduction to Student Movements in Iran” has been published by Khazeh, a major publishing company in Tehran.



Front cover of Iranian writer Hushang Jeirani's book “An Introduction to Student Movements in Iran”.

The book contains four chapters. In its first chapter, the book scrutinizes the student movements from 1934, when the University of Tehran, Iran's first institution of higher education, was founded until the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, the overthrow of the democratically elected prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq in favor of strengthening the monarchical rule of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, on 19 August.

The coup was orchestrated by the United States and the United Kingdom and carried out by the Iranian military.

The second chapter spotlights the student protest formed after the coup until 1960 when the country witnessed a more open political atmosphere.

The atmosphere dominated the country until 1963 when the demonstrations of June 5 and 6 provoked the 15 Khordad Uprising.

The book ends with a study of the radical movements during the student protests and the students' relations with the community of Iranian students in overseas universities, which led the 1979 revolution.

Jeirani has also translated a number of bestsellers of overseas writers into Persian. His Persian translation of “Debriefing the President: The Interrogation of Saddam Hussein” by John Nixon, the first C.I.A. officer who interrogated Saddam Hussein after his capture in December 2003, was published in 2017.

Photographer Bairami's “Book of Iran” provides new insights into homeland

➔1 Bairami added that he has been working on his collection for about eight years and hoped to publish the book this year.

He said that he has divided Iran's nature into four categories: forests, beaches, mountains and deserts and added, “I have traveled around Iran four times and have taken the photos. I tried to cover all the regions and at the present time I have been visiting the small villages to find more details.”

“Each photo bears a caption. However, the research efforts have been made by a team of experts,” he added.

“Many important artistic events are rooted in the realities scattered in society. On one of the trips to a village, I got to know a rural family and their life story. Their story was so interesting for me that I began to write a screenplay based on that,” he said.

“Currently I am rewriting the screenplay with the assistance of a friend, and plan to shoot the film in the same village with a few amateur actors from that same village,” he added.

Bairami also explained that he has several projects to promote the southern Iranian island of Hormoz in the Persian Gulf, including reviving the beach line of the island and the old architecture of the region.

“The improvement of the region will help increase the number of tourists and lead to economic growth in the region, while those who have left their homes for other cities hoping to get jobs will return to their homeland,” he explained.

“We plan to hold several events on the island including a beach music festival inviting musicians from all the coastal cities of the northern and southern regions of the country, in addition to festivals of seafood and festivals of handicrafts,” he concluded.

Movie theaters in Iran to reopen today

A R T **TEHRAN** — Movie theaters will resume activities today after a four-month-long closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Peyman Qasemkhani's comedy “Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army” and Mohammad Kart's directorial debut “Butterfly Swimming” are the two films announced to hit the silver screens.

However, Rasul Sadr-Ameli, the producer of “Butterfly Swimming”, said on Friday that the film will not go on screen until appropriate conditions promised for screening would be provided.

Starring Sam Derakhshani, Pejman Jamshidi, Hamed Komeili and Reyhaneh Parsa, “Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army” is a sequel to Qasemkhani's 2017 comedy film “Good, Bad, Garish” about a film director who has to use two superstars for his new film contrary to his desires.

“Butterfly Swimming” tells the story of Hashem, a gang member whose wife's swimming video goes viral. Now Hashem and his brother-in-law Hojjat are looking for the person who uploaded the video on the net.

In a meeting held at the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters in early June, President Hassan Rouhani said that movie theaters and concert halls would resume activities with 50 percent of their capacity.

The Cinema Organization of Iran had announced earlier that movie theaters in the so-called “white areas” or regions with no coronavirus hospitalizations in the past two weeks were allowed to reopen.

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

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



Sam Derakhshani acts in a scene from the comedy “Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army” by Peyman Qasemkhani.

also among the regulations required by the headquarters.

In a letter sent earlier to President Hassan Rouhani, the Association of Iranian Theater Owners asked for the coronavirus restrictions on cinemas to be lifted, and called for a reopening of theaters across the country based on health protocols during the pandemic.

In addition, the Cinema Organization of Iran has recently announced that Iranian cineastes can resume their activities in the near future.

The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi announced that the coronavirus outbreak in Iran would cause an estimated loss of over 9,700 billion rials (Over \$230 million) in the art and

culture sectors by April 19, the end of the first month of the Iranian calendar year.

He had made the remarks in a report sent to President Hassan Rouhani and several other high-ranking officials, including the head of the Planning and Budget Organization, and asked for urgent support for people working in numerous vulnerable jobs in the various sectors.

“Frida Kahlo & Diego Rivera” published in Persian



Cover of the Persian version of American author Gerry Souter's book “Frida Kahlo & Diego Rivera”.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of the book “Frida Kahlo & Diego Rivera” by American author Gerry Souter has been published by Negah Publications in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Nilufar Aqa-Ebrahimi.

They met in 1928; Frida Kahlo was then 21 years old and Diego Rivera was twice her age. He was already an international reference, she only aspired to become one. An intense artistic creation, along with pain and suffering, was generated by this tormented union, in particular for Frida.

Constantly in the shadow of her husband, bearing his unfaithfulness and her jealousy, Frida exorcised the pain on canvas, and progressively won the public's interest. On both continents, America and Europe, these committed artists proclaimed their freedom and left behind them the traces of their exceptional talent.

In this book, Souter brings together both biographies and underlines with passion the link that existed between the two greatest Mexican artists of the 20th century.

Souter earned his degree at the Art Institute of Chicago and then went on to do further studies in art at the University of Chicago.

Himself an artist, Souter has exhibited his paintings and photographs at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Phoenix Art Museum and a number of other galleries.

A professional author, he has written more than 20 books since 1997, with great success. His continuing studies in art history and architecture, the sharpness of his writing, and his visual experience add a dynamic aspect to the study of the lives of artists and the description of their works, keeping the reader captivated, page after page.

Memento Films to offer “A Hero” at Cannes Film Market

A R T **TEHRAN** — Paris-based Memento Films International will offer Iranian director Asghar Farhadi's new film “A Hero” at the Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film), which is the rendezvous for professionals in the global film industry.

The market will be organized online this year due to the pandemic from June 22 to 26.

Memento Films commenced the worldwide sales of the film, which is in the Persian language, during the European Film Market in Berlin in February.

Farhadi who is scheduled to shoot the film on

location in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz in July has not given any details about the film's plot yet.

However, Alexandre Moreau, VP Sales and Marketing at Memento, which has sold five films by Farhadi, earlier said, “He is a consistent director, and a master of suspense which always draws audiences to theaters. The script is absolutely fascinating and tackles many contemporary issues of our modern societies.”

Oscar-winning Farhadi has hired Mohsen Tanabandeh, the star of the popular Iranian TV

Farindokht Zahedi pens plays for street performances



Theater scholar Farindokht Zahedi in an undated photo. (Tasnim/Mehdi Dorani)

A R T **TEHRAN** —Iranian writer Farindokht Zahedi has recently completed three plays, which are most appropriate for street performances.

“Performance in the City: Three Street Plays” is composed of the plays “A Just Clamor”, “Clean Earth” and “The Fourth Stage”, Zahedi told the Persian service of Honaronline on Saturday.

Zahedi, a lecturer at the Faculty of Dramatic Art and Music at the University of Tehran, lamented that some of the street theater artists do not have much knowledge of this genre.

“Due to this flaw, most of those artists working in this field use scripts that lack the attributes of street plays,” she said.

Zahedi noted, “This media is not just for entertainment,” and added, “Street plays should have critical and social characteristics, raise people's awareness, and give solutions to problems and

unfavorable circumstances.”

She expressed her hope that the collection could help raise the knowledge of street theater among the artists and encourage them to produce more plays for street performances.

Dastan Publications is scheduled to release “Performance in the City: Three Street Plays” in the near future.

Zahedi said that the collection has been created in collaboration with a number of her colleagues working around the world and added, “Therefore, it is practicable for the plays to be performed in other countries.”

She said that she has changed the names of some characters and places to make the plays appropriate for performances in Iran.

Zahedi taught a course in Oriental rituals during a four-week program in August and September 2016 at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado.

She is the writer of “From Ritual to Performance” about Japanese rituals.

series “Paytakht”, and Amir Jadidi, the actor of the acclaimed war drama “The Lost Strait”, for the cast of “A Hero”.

Farhadi's previous film, “Everybody Knows” starring Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem, was filmed in Spain.

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

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



A scene from “When the Moon Was Full” by Iranian director Narges Abyar.

Synergetic Distribution buys rights to “When the Moon Was Full”

A R T **TEHRAN** — Synergetic Distribution, a Los Angeles-based distribution company that releases feature films, documentaries and television series, has purchased rights to screen Iranian director Narges Abyar's “When the Moon Was Full” to distribute the drama in America and Canada.

Mohammad Atebbai, the director of Iranian Independents, a company marketing Iranian independent feature and documentary films, holds the rights for the international distribution of the film.

“When the Moon Was Full” tells the story of a woman from Tehran who marries a man from an Iranian province near the border of Pakistan. Soon afterwards, she discovers that her new brother-in-law is a religious extremist trying to recruit her husband for his bloody cause.

The film won the Crystal Simorgh for best movie during the 37th Fajr Film Festival in 2019.

The film also brought Abyar the Crystal Simorgh for best director. The movie also won Hutan Shakiba the award for best actor, while Elnaz Shakerdoost was crowned best actress.