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Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project finalized

TEHRAN — The third phase of the Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project, which outlines key strategies for the next five years, was approved as a document of joint cooperation between Iran and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The project aims to focus on better management of wetlands in accordance with climate change, improving the management of natural resources, and emphasizing on the role of public participation and raising awareness, Ali Arvahi, the director of the project stated.

The third phase of the project will start in June 2020.

Under the second phase, \$2 million was provided by the Government of Japan to UNDP, contributing to the revival of Lake Urmia from its current critical situation. The project specifically addressed the restoration of Lake Urmia through the promotion of sustainable agriculture and effective reduction of water consumption. The project engaged with local communities and farmers using Integrated Participatory Crop Management Techniques (IPCM). The Project, in cooperation with the Government of Iran (Department of Environment), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has been operating since 2005 with the aim of reducing or permanently eliminating threats of the wetlands and maintain sustainability in general.

Measures have been piloted in selected and important wetlands to introduce the experiences in the form of the ecological approach while establishing a new management system to implement it in other wetlands in the country.

Iran currently has 25 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), covering a surface area of 1,488,624 hectares.

The Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

The Convention on Wetlands is the oldest of the modern global intergovernmental environmental agreements. The treaty was negotiated through the 1960s by countries and non-governmental organizations concerned about the increasing loss and degradation of wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds. It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. ➔9

Iran to introduce tourist attractions in 10 languages

TEHRAN — The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts will introduce the country's tourist attractions in 10 languages for target markets by the end of July.

The ministry has designed and produced a wide range of promotional items, which will be offered as "product-oriented" and "introduction of the country's tourist attractions" brochures, ISNA quoted Mohammad-Ebrahim Larjani, the ministry's director for advertising and marketing, as saying on Saturday.

Some short videos on different branches of tourism in Iran and the country's tourist sites and historical monuments are being prepared to be released on social media and websites as well, he added.

He also noted that the items are being produced in English, Arabic, Russian, Turkish, Azeri, German, Chinese, French, and Japanese, which can cover target markets in at least 100 countries.

Iran's coronavirus-hit tourism industry will get back on the right track sooner than expected thanks to measures taken to tackle the spread of the disease, deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri said the Tehran Times back in May.

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

"In response to the pandemic, the tourism ministry in close collaboration with the health ministry has developed protocols comprising practical guidelines and instructions to improve health standards in hotels, guest houses, eco-lodge units, tourist destinations, transport facilities, recreational centers, and restaurants." ➔8

Annual exports from free trade, special economic zones hit \$17b

TEHRAN — The value of exports from Iran's free trade zones and special economic zones stood at \$17 billion during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Morteza Bank announced.

The official also said that commodities worth \$5 billion produced in these zones have been sent to different areas in the country during the previous year, IRIB reported.

Bank further put the value of products imported to the free trade zones and special economic zones at \$5 billion in the past year.

Emphasizing that the value of imports to these zones is very low compared to the worth of exports from them, the official said, "We are planning to reach the same level of exports in the current year as well." ➔4

Iran, Afghanistan sign document for comprehensive cooperation

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks with Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, in Tehran on Sunday during which they signed a document for comprehensive cooperation.

Atmar visited Tehran at the head of a high-ranking political, economic and

security delegation on Sunday.

According to IRNA, Zarif and Atmar discussed the latest developments in relations and also political, economic, security, cultural cooperation and issues related to Afghan refugees.

The two sides agreed that the document for comprehensive cooperation be finalized in three months. ➔2

Iran publishes rare copy of Nezami Ganjavi's Khamseh

TEHRAN — The Iranian Academy of Arts has published a rare copy of Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi's Khamseh, which was inscribed during the 16 century.

Nezami's reputation rests on his Khamseh, which is a pentology of poems written in Masnavi verse form (rhymed couplets) and totaling 30,000 couplets.

These five poems include the didactic work Makhzan ol-Asrar (The Treasury of Mysteries), three traditional love stories

of Khosrow and Shirin, Leili and Majnun, and Haft Paykar, and the Eskandarnameh, which records the adventures of Alexander the Great.

There are various versions of the Khamseh in Iranian libraries, but the two versions kept at the Central Library of the University of Tehran and the library of the Shahid Motahari School and Mosque in Tehran were inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register list in 2011. ➔12

Trump calls anti-racist protesters 'thugs'

By staff & agencies

A tumultuous spring spilled into summer in America on Saturday with President Donald Trump returning to the campaign trail in Tulsa and protests over racism and police brutality sweeping the country.

Trump held his first rally since the coronavirus pandemic began on a tense Juneteenth weekend in the Oklahoma city where the 1921 Tulsa race massacre left up to 300 Black residents dead and the Black Greenwood District in ruins.

Thousands of people, many wearing MAGA hats and waving American flags, arrived at Tulsa's Bank of Oklahoma Center arena, while a group of protesters chanted "Black lives matter" near one of the site's entrances.

After the number of people at Saturday's rally was smaller than initially expected, Trump thanked those who attended the event.

"You are warriors. We had some very bad

people outside. They were doing bad things. But I really do appreciate it," Trump said.

Later, the President said there were "very bad people" outside, describing protesters as "thugs."

Members of the National Guard formed a barrier to stop protesters near the Bank of Oklahoma Center in Tulsa.

There were large groups of protesters in downtown Tulsa near the site of the rally, police said, but they were demonstrating peacefully.

"There are multiple groups of demonstrators with varying viewpoints in the area adjacent to the rally," the Tulsa Police Department tweeted. "Overwhelmingly these encounters have been peaceful with everyone attempting to share their views."

Earlier, the Trump campaign blamed what they described as "radical protesters" for preventing people from entering the rally. Several CNN teams in Tulsa did not see any of that type of activity. ➔10

Chuck Schumer, 115 Democrats sign letter objecting to Israeli annexation

TEHRAN — Three of the most senior, pro-Israel senators in the Democratic Party joined the growing list of elected Democrats opposing Israeli plans for West Bank annexation.

Senators Chuck Schumer, Bob Menendez and Ben Cardin join the warning voices on Capitol Hill, signaling a consensus against Israeli annexation within the Democratic Party

Meanwhile, U.S. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and 114 other Democrats have signed onto a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Net-

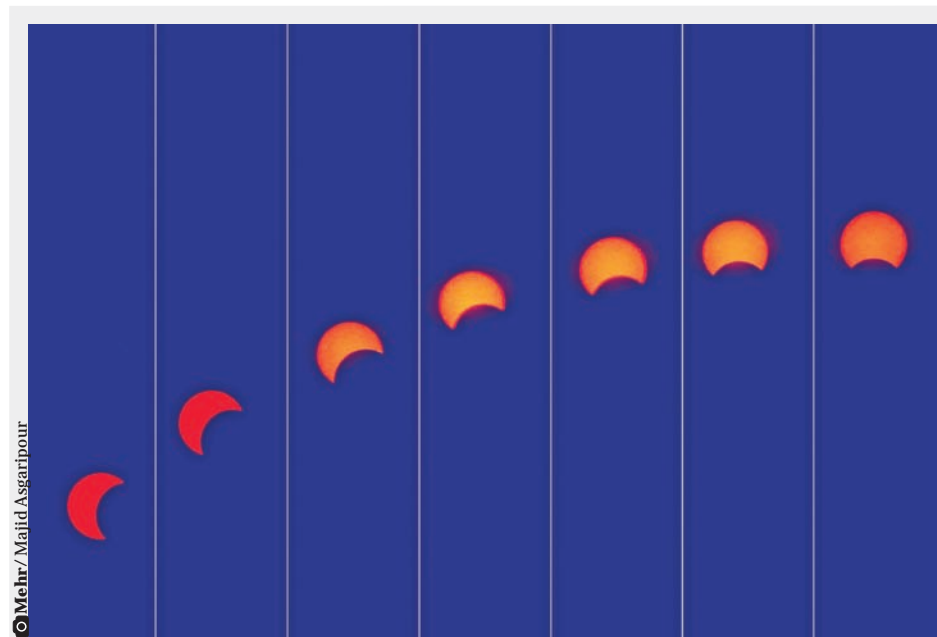
anyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz to express opposition to Israel possibly applying sovereignty to the West Bank.

In addition to Hoyer, House Appropriations Committee chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Congressional Progressive Caucus co-chair Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) are among the 115 Democrats who have added their names to a letter initially authored by Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), David Price (D-N.C.) and Brad Schneider (D-Ill.).

"We have consistently endorsed the pursuit

of a negotiated peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians resulting in two states for two peoples and a brighter future for the Israeli people and the Palestinian people," states the letter. "In that vein, we write today to express our deep concern that the push for unilateral annexation of territory in the West Bank after July 1st will make these goals harder to achieve."

The members of Congress also said annexation "risks insecurity in Jordan, with serious ancillary risks to Israel."



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"Ring of fire" solar eclipse observed in Iran

The first solar eclipse in 2020, commonly referred to as a "ring of fire," was seen on the first day of summer (June 21) in parts of Iran.

The eclipse swept across the southeastern part of the country, most notably the port of Chabahar, where 98 percent of the sun was covered by the moon.

The eclipse began in Tehran at 9:04 a.m. local time and continued until 11:38.

The second and final solar eclipse of 2020 will be a total solar eclipse on Dec. 14.

Iran's exhibitions to be held on schedule as of July 2

TEHRAN — Managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) says all of the country's exhibitions will be held physically and based on schedule as of July 2, IIEC published on its website on Sunday.

Mentioning the successful launch of the "Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements" exhibition earlier this month, Bahman Hosseinzadeh said since Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds has been equipped with disinfection devices and equipment, all exhibitions will be held on schedule and in compliance with health protocols.

According to Hosseinzadeh, specialized exhibitions can be held in accordance with four health protocols including protocols for exhibition centers, pavilion construction, participants and visitors.

The official noted that the mentioned exhibitions are not going to be open for public visit and only expert groups and specialists can visit in compliance with health protocols.

After the successful experience of "Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements" exhibition, the demand for holding specialized exhibitions has increased, the official said adding, these exhibitions will be held under health protocols and will be open only for specialists.

Underlining the important role of the exhibition industry in promoting domestic production and exports, Hosseinzadeh said: "Exhibition industry has a significant role in the development of exports and introducing new markets, so it is not possible to shut down this important sector, but all exhibitions should be held in accordance with health regulations." ➔4

Afghanistan does not seek to weaken ties with Iran: expert

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian analyst Pir Mohammad Molazehi has said that Afghanistan's government does not seek to weaken ties with Iran.

"Afghanistan's government does not seek to weaken ties with Iran, because it needs Iran. Afghanistan is a landlocked country and Chabahar port is the only way for it to reach out and gain access to free waters. That is why it has made investment with participation of India," Molazehi told IRNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He added that Iran and Afghanistan share many affinities and enjoy friendly relations,



The two countries should protect their ties, Molazehi said. Pointing to a visit by Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, to Iran on Sunday, he said the visit is aimed at finding a solution to reduce tension.

Atmar visited Iran as head of a high-ranking political, economic, and security delegation. The visit came a week after Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Afghan Ambassador Abdolghafour Lival over actions of certain anti-Iran groups in Afghanistan.

Rasoul Mousavi, an assistant to Iran's foreign minister and the director-general of the Foreign Ministry Department for West Asia, expressed concerns over repercussions of such 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.

EU says its arms embargo on Iran to remain in force until 2023

By staff and agency

France, Germany and the United Kingdom said in a joint statement published on Friday that the European Union's embargoes on conventional arms exports and missile technology to Iran will remain in force until 2023.

"The E3 remain committed to fully implementing Resolution 2231 by which the JCPOA has been endorsed in 2015. However, we believe that the planned lifting of the UN conventional arms embargo established by Resolution 2231 next October would have major implications for regional security and stability. We recall that the EU embargoes on conventional arms exports and missile technology will remain in force until 2023," said the statement published by the UK Foreign Ministry website.

The statement added, "We wish to address the issue in close coordination with Russia and China as remaining participants to the JCPOA, as well as with all other Security Council Members, as well as other key stakeholders. We will be guided by these objectives: upholding the authority and integrity of the UN Security Council and working toward regional security and stability."

It is noted in the statement that they do not support any unilateral attempt to trigger a snapback of United Nations sanctions against Iran.

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 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.

Judiciary chief: U.S. people's wrath not to abate

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Rayeesi said that the protests in the U.S. might subside a little due to the government and police's brutal behavior but the wrath of the American people of discrimination and racism will not soothe.



"Today, the rights of people are being trampled in the world and the cries of the U.S. and European people against injustice will not be silenced and this wrath will enflame the hegemonic system and will remove them and the day for restoring justice is not far," Rayeesi said, addressing the judiciary officials in Tehran on Sunday.

"Given the brutal behaviors of the police, the mayors, the Trump administration and the hegemonic system, this move may abate in certain areas but this wrath will never disappear because it is against injustice and against those who claim to defend the human rights and are (at the same time) the most severe violators of human rights," he added.

In relevant remarks earlier this month, Rayeesi blasted the U.S. government for cruelties towards the colored people, saying that U.S. President Donald Trump has resorted to force to suppress the protests.

"The U.S. and European people pull down the statues of slavery to show that they want materialization of justice and end of oppression and discrimination, but the unwise U.S. president is after suppressing them by resorting to force," Rayeesi said, addressing a meeting of the Judiciary officials in Tehran.

He said that the U.S. and European people's wrath against cruelty and injustice will not soothe easily, adding that it cannot be suppressed by criminal police and security acts.

"We rest assured that this move will lead to annihilation of cruelty and the oppressors," Rayeesi said.

Iran, Afghanistan sign document for comprehensive cooperation

1 → **'Comprehensive cooperation to help expand ties'**

In a separate meeting with Atmar, Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said that the signing of the comprehensive cooperation helps expand ties between the two neighboring countries.

He also said that the document will mark a fundamental development in relations and will also activate capacities to expand relations.

Shamkhani also said that the Iranians have hosted Afghan refugees for 40 years and will continue supporting them.

The top security official said that the United States has targeted solidarity between the Iranians and Afghans after its failures in the region.

Atmar praised Iran's supports for the Afghan refugees and said that Kabul will not allow a third country undermine relations with Tehran.

Atmar's visit to Tehran came a week after Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Afghan Ambassador Abdolghafour Lival over actions of certain anti-Iran groups in Afghanistan.

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 illegally.

Afghan media outlets have claimed that about 50 Afghan migrants had been beaten and thrown into a river in the border. Iranian political and border officials have refuted the claim, saying the incident happened on the Afghan side of the Harirud River.



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

Iran and Afghanistan have launched a joint inquiry into the tragedy.

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

According to Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi, the confirmed reports received from Iranian border guards show that such an incident has not occurred on the mentioned date and location.

He added that due to weather conditions of the region, not a single Afghan citizen entered the Iranian territory on that date.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand

has blamed illegal traffic of Afghan migrants for the human tragedy.

Iranian diplomats and border guards have carried out investigations which show the Iranian guards were not involved in the incident, Baharvand added.

"Our investigation does not show that the incident in Harirud was caused by interference of the Iranian border guards. However, we considered evidence of the Afghan side important and gave it to the related bodies," Baharvand told IRNA in an interview published on June 7.

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

issue has led to problems caused by human traffickers."

Baharvand also said that Iran and Afghanistan will form a joint border committee.

The deputy foreign minister for international and legal affairs had said on May 27 that Iran and Afghanistan are in agreement on the incident.

Iranian and Afghan political delegations held their last round of talks on the incident in Kabul on May 26.

Also, on June 3 a number of Afghan migrants were killed in a car accident in Yazd province.

Following the incident, Ambassador Lival held a meeting with officials of the province. He said, "We believe that human traffickers and the driver are responsible for the incident."

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

The Afghan Foreign Ministry has announced it will dispatch a high-level delegation to Tehran to investigate the recent incidents for Afghan citizens.

It said the purpose of the team is to draw up a plan to prevent illegal traffic by focusing on ensuring better border security and prevent a recurrence of similar incidents.

The ministry also said the delegation will discuss with Iranian officials the fight against human trafficking on both sides of the border, the beginning of the process of establishing the identity of Afghan citizens and the legalization of immigrant residency, as well as the implementation of the draft law on legal employment of Afghan workers.

Iranian parliament calls on government to stop implementing Additional Protocol in response to IAEA resolution

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's new parliament have issued a statement strongly condemning an anti-Iran resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors, asking the government to stop implementing the Additional Protocol to the NPT.

"The Islamic Consultative Assembly strongly condemns resolution of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors which was proposed by three European countries of England, France and Germany under the pressure of the ruling regime in the United States and the fake Zionist regime. It [the parliament] considers the resolution another example of structural discrimination by the international agency," the statement read.

The statement was signed by 240 MPs.

It called the resolution "excessive demand" when Iran has cooperated with the agency transparently.

"The Islamic Republic has implemented the Additional Protocol voluntarily and not based on its safeguard duties. According to reports of the agency's director general, the agency has carried out most precise inspections, including 30 surprise inspections annually," the MPs said.

The lawmakers also called on the government to stop implementing the Additional Protocol.

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.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday that the resolution

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.

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 proven.

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 will not be accepted by Iran.

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

Nine countries out 35 members to the IAEA board did not vote for the resolution. China and Russia voted against the resolution while Thailand, Mongolia, Niger, South Africa, India, Pakistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan abstained to vote.

Russia considers U.S. attempts to extend Iran's arms embargo 'totally unacceptable': ex-diplomat Sanaei says General Soleimani convinced Putin to enter Syria

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Sanaei, Iran's former ambassador to Russia, has said that Russia considers the United States' attempt to extend arms embargo on Iran "totally unacceptable".

"Russia has already opposed the United States' action and Russian Foreign Minister [Sergey Lavrov] has written a letter to the United Nations' Secretary General [Antonio Guterres] in this respect. This issue is important for the Russians. Russia seeks to preserve the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal] and has always supported keeping the deal. It [Russia] has condemned the United States' unilateral action in quitting the JCPOA and imposing sanctions against Iran. So, I think from Russia's viewpoint, the United States' action in extending arms embargo on Iran is totally unacceptable," he told the Hamshahri newspaper in an interview published on Sunday.

Noting that Iran's relations with Russia is friendly and based on mutual trust, the former diplomat said that Moscow is expected to prevent extension of arms embargo on Iran.

Elsewhere, Sanaei said that extension of the embargos will be synonymous with the death of the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

Lavrov has called the United States' attempts to impose a permanent arms embargo against Iran "ridiculous" and "irresponsible".

In a letter to Guterres and the Security Council circulated on June 8, Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and called for "universal condemnation" of the U.S. attempts, AP reported.

The Russian foreign minister said the United States withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six



major powers and now has no legal right to try to use the UN resolution endorsing the deal to indefinitely continue the arms embargo, which is set to expire on Oct. 18.

He said statements by U.S. State Department officials that the Trump administration doesn't plan to resume its commitments under the nuclear deal but plans to invoke rights allegedly deriving from the resolution endorsing it are "ridiculous and irresponsible."

Lavrov's letter went further in explaining Moscow's strong opposition to an indefinite arms embargo and U.S. use of the "snap back" provision.

"We are proceeding on the basis that the United Nations should not become hostage to the political situation in the United States, which has decided to withdraw from the plan," he said. "There are no valid grounds for raising in the Security Council the issue of an arms embargo against Iran."

Lavrov said the nuclear deal and the Security Council res-

olution "form a single whole" and can't be considered separately. And under Article 25 of the UN Charter, "the United States side is obliged to carry out the decisions of the Security Council, rather than undermine them through its unlawful actions," he said.

The chief diplomat said international courts have held "that a party which disowns or does not fulfill its own obligations cannot be recognized as retaining the rights which it claims to derive from a relationship."

The United States, having violated the Security Council resolution and declined to implement the 2015 nuclear agreement has therefore "forfeited the possibility" of using the "snap back" provisions, the Russian chief diplomat pointed out.

Lavrov called on the U.S. to stop undermining the nuclear agreement and the UN resolution.

He said Russia and "other responsible members of the international community will continue to make every effort" to preserve the nuclear deal.

"The United States must recognize that there are neither legal nor other grounds for its policy of using Security Council mandates to pursue its own selfish interests," Lavrov said.

■ 'Russia proposed to sell S-400 missile system to Iran but Tehran did not agree'

Sanaei also said martyr General Qassem Soleimani "convinced" Russian President Vladimir Putin to enter Syria in the fight against terrorists and foreign-backed militants.

The former ambassador also said that the Russian side "proposed" to sell S-400 missile systems instead of S-300 to Iran but officials in Tehran did not agree due to certain reasons.

Alaeddin Boroujerdi calls IAEA resolution purely 'political'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a former Iranian MP, has said that the decision by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors in approving an anti-Iran resolution is purely "political".

"Undoubtedly, this action is political and the Europeans have shown they lack political independence and cannot stand against the United States," - Boroujerdi, who chaired the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee for successive terms, told ISNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He noted that the resolution was drafted and approved under U.S. pressure.

"Recent developments are in line with the United States' pressure against Iran. So, Iran

must adopt a more serious diplomacy," the veteran politician noted.

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.

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.

Immediately after the ratification of the resolution, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, said, "Iran categorically deplores this resolution and will take appropriate action in response, the repercussions of which would be upon the sponsors of this resolution."

Gharibabadi 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."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad

Zarif has said the three European countries signatory to the 2015 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.

Experts are of the opinion that the resolution was proposed under pressure by the Trump administration and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a fierce opponent of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Tehran voices concern over French ballistic missile test

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has voiced concern over France's recent testing of a ballistic missile capable of carrying several nuclear warheads, saying it runs counter to France's commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In a statement on Saturday, Mousavi said the French Navy's launch of a new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of carrying several nuclear warheads (dubbed M51 missile) was totally in contravention of the spirit and the text of Article VI of the NPT and of France's commitment to nuclear disarmament, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's government expresses concern about such measure, believes that the French government must not ignore its international commitments under the Article VI of the NPT and declaration of the NPT Review Conferences, and calls on Paris to fully honor its international commitments to nuclear disarmament," the spokesman said.

He finally railed against development of nuclear weapons as a threat to international peace and security, noting that renovation and testing of such weapons would undermine the NPT



clear weapons as a threat to international peace and security, noting that renovation and testing of such weapons would undermine the NPT

as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

According to Sputnik News, the French

Ministry of Defense announced on June 12 that it had fired a ballistic missile across the Atlantic Ocean. The M51 submarine-launched missile (SLBM) was monitored by French and U.S. forces, and the test was hailed as a "success" and "essential to French nuclear deterrence" and sovereignty.

Le Téméraire is the second-oldest of France's four Triomphant-class ballistic missile submarines, launched in 1998. Each of the subs can carry 16 SLBMs. In turn, the M51 carries a payload of between six and 10 multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) nuclear warheads, meaning each Triomphant boat could potentially deliver 160 separate nuclear strikes.

Defense Minister Florence Parly hailed the test in a statement on Twitter, saying its success "demonstrates our technological excellence and our attachment to French sovereignty. I congratulate all those whose commitment has made this test a success. Their involvement is essential to French nuclear deterrence and to our sovereignty."

According to the Arms Control Association, a U.S.-based non-governmental group, Paris has 300 nuclear warheads available for use.

Ghalibaf calls talks with U.S. 'poisonous', 'harmful'

Iran won't let IAEA breach legal frameworks: parliament speaker

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The speaker of Iran's parliament has deplored the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors for succumbing to U.S. pressure and passing an anti-Iran resolution, saying the Islamic Republic will never allow the IAEA to violate its legal frameworks.

"The past 17 years have shown that Iran has always had the best cooperation with the agency in terms of its international regulations and national interests, but often has gained nothing in return except for more hostility and ransom demands," Mehr quoted Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf as saying during an open session of the parliament on Sunday.

"But we will not allow the agency to trample [the Islamic Republic's] rights and violate the legal frameworks," Ghalibaf said, adding that Tehran will take the appropriate response to the new move.

Noting that such pressures are aimed at bringing Iran to the negotiating table to serve the interests of the U.S. and the Israeli regime, he reiterated Iran's firm stance and diplomacy of active resistance.

He added that Tehran will never allow Washington and Tel Aviv to materialize their goals in the regional and international arenas.

■ **'Talks with U.S. poisonous, harmful'**

He added that Iran has never been against negotiations



with other countries, however, "We believe talks with the U.S. are poisonous and harmful."

The new parliament speaker also rebuked the European countries that sponsored the anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA board, saying any future talks with the Europeans will also be held with "maximum distrust".

On Friday, the IAEA Agency's Board of Governors adopted a resolution drafted by the UK, France, and Germany calling on Iran to grant the IAEA access to two locations amid

allegations of undeclared nuclear activities.

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.

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 said on Friday that the three European countries 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 said via Twitter.

Tehran criticizes the world's 'deafening silence' over U.S. crackdown on protesters



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran has slammed the "deafening silence" of the self-proclaimed champions of human rights with regard to the U.S. brutality against peaceful protests.

"While the U.S. regime is denying the right of breath to its own people & brutally suppressing the peaceful protests, the 'deafening silence' of the so-called champions of the human rights in Europe & beyond, demonstrates, once again, their insincerity, hypocrisy & double standards," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a Saturday Twitter statement.

In recent weeks, protesters across the U.S. have taken to the streets to condemn the brutal killing of George Floyd, an African-American man, by police.

Floyd died on May 25 after being pinned down by a white officer despite yelling:

"I cannot breathe".

Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Thursday that it is high time for the world to hold the United States government accountable for violating human rights.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Zionist regime in worst possible condition, says adviser

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Zionist regime is currently in its worst possible condition, says Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker.

"The Zionist regime is in the worst conditions today and the Resistance is in the best conditions," Amir Abdollahian said on Saturday in a ceremony commemorating former Secretary-General of Palestine Islamic Jihad Movement Ramadan Abdullah Mohammed Shalah.

If the Zionists doubt it, he said, they can test the Resistance but we advise them not to make this mistake again because they will be forced to retreat more than before and will experience a humiliating defeat.

The former Iran's point man for Arab affairs also advised certain regional countries not to stand on the "nonconstructive side" of the Palestinian issue, saying, "My first word is with the triangle of rulers of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain."



He continued, "This triangle should know that talking about normalizing relations will neither help the security of Saudi Arabia, the Emirates or Bahrain nor the

security of the sensitive, geopolitical and geostrategic region of West Asia."

Amir Abdollahian said if the rulers of some Arab countries do not learn a lesson, such insecurity and aggression can jeopardize the situation of neighboring countries.

"We advise our neighboring countries to focus on power of their people, the Islamic Ummah and the strive for helping the oppressed Palestinian people instead of focusing on the Zionist regime," he underlined.

The adviser added that "all of us believe that victory of Al-Quds is near and definite and we hope that all Islamic countries in the region, instead of moving towards betraying the Palestinian causes, support the oppressed people of Palestine and liberation of Al-Quds."

He said the Zionists and the rulers of Saudi Arabia have put their hopes on U.S. President Donald Trump, who has proven that he does not adhere to the most basic human rights.

Quds Force says to stand by Palestinian resistance

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — General Esmail Ghaani has said his IRGC Quds Force will stand by the Palestinian resistance movement the same way that martyr Qassem Soleimani did.

General Ghaani, who took over as the new commander of the Quds Force after the assassination of General Soleimani by the U.S. in early January, made the remarks in a ceremony held to commemorate the memory of Ramadan Abdullah Mohammed Shallah, the former secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement.

"I offer my heartfelt condolences on the loss of Dr. Ramadan Abdullah Mohammed Shallah, the former secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement who bravely sacrificed his life on the path of struggle and perseverance in the field of resistance and freedom of Palestine and Al-Quds and pray from the Almighty God to bestow forbearance to his bereaved family for this irreparable loss," Ghaani said.

"Dr. Ramazan Abdullah Shallah stood bravely against all the deviations brought about by the enemy on the path of struggle and freedom of Palestinian lands," he noted, according to Mehr.

"We also make sure that we remain with you and all Palestinians like martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and will always take the path of strengthening the Axis of Resistance," Ghaani added.

Shallah died on 6 June 2020 in Lebanon after a long illness that included two years in a coma. His funeral was held in Damascus and was attended by, among others the head of the PJI movement who replaced him, Ziyad al-Nakhalah.

Shallah, who was born in Gaza, had led Palestinian Islamic Jihad from 1995 until 2018 after the assassination of his predecessor, Fathi Al Shkaki.

He was also on the most wanted list of Israel and the U.S. with a reward offered for information leading to his arrest or conviction. The journey of Ramadan Shallah came to an end, with many sources attributing his deteriorating health to natural causes, whilst the Palestinian Authority embassy in Beirut believed there is a possibility he might have been poisoned.

Zonnour elected parliament national security committee chairman

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Cleric MP Mojtaba Zonnour has been elected as the chairman of the new Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

Zonnour, representing the shrine city of Qom in the parliament, also chaired the committee in the previous parliament. The term of the previous ended on May 20.



Earlier this month, he was also elected as the chairman of the newly-established national defense and authority faction of the parliament, while Mohammad Saleh Jokar and Mehdi Sa'adati were elected as first and second deputies of the chairman.

According to ICANA news agency, Abolfazl Amouyee, was also elected as the spokesman of the parliamentary committee. Amouyee represents the Tehran constituency.

Electing chairpersons and vice chairpersons of parliamentary committees are held every year.

Enemies alarmed by Iran's growing defense might: IRGC chief

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Major General Hossein Salami highlighted the high level of Iran's defense preparedness, saying that this has forced our enemies not to think of military options any longer.



The reason that enemies today can no longer think of military option against Iran is our "growing defense might and preparedness", General Salami said on Sunday.

He further pointed to Iran's progress in the defense sector and said, this progress is happening on a daily basis as the Islamic Republic continues to use the existing threats and turn them into opportunities.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great headways in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Back in February 2018, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities, hitting back at the enemies for disputing the country's missile program.

"Without a moment of hesitation, the country must move to acquire whatever is necessary for defense, even if the whole world is opposed to it," Ayatollah Khamenei said at the time.

Iran to dampen fight against drugs transit if intl. bodies fail to support: official

TEHRAN (MNA) — An official with Iran Drug Control Headquarters said on Sunday that despite the fact that Iran is the leading country in the fight against illicit drugs, international organizations have failed to support this fight.

"Negligence of international organizations and European countries will make Iran decrease its activities in [drug] transit sector,"

said Naser Aslani, deputy head of Iran Drug Control Headquarters in international affairs.

"What disaster do you think will happen in Europe if Iran overlooks trafficking of 30 tons morphine and 23 tons heroin?" he framed. Iran broke the record of drug confiscation last year with seizing 950 tons of different illicit drugs, he said.

Today, Afghanistan police only seize

some 200-300 tons of drugs despite the fact that it is the source of consignments, Aslani said, adding, "This shows that Iran is a victim of drugs."

More than 76% of drugs last year have been discovered through intelligence operation which has decreased financial and human costs, the official noted.

International organizations have not

helped Iran with the anti-narcotics operations under the pretext of sanctions, he lamented, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran is fighting against drugs inside the country as well as its transit.

"Based on our religious beliefs, we consider no different between Iranian youth and European youth and we see protecting these people as our duty," he said.

Inflation rate falls 2%: SCI

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on June 20, which marks the end of the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad, stood at 27.8 percent.

The inflation rate has fallen two percent in the mentioned time span from the twelve-month period ended in the last day of the second month, IRNA reported.

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in a statement last month announced that the annual inflation rate for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) is set to be 22 percent.



The statement published on the website of the CBI read, “Given the adopted policies and taken measures and also taking the country’s macro-economic factors into account, the CBI believes that based on the realistic scenarios, the inflation rate in the current year will continue its downward trend.”

Last year, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had said, “Our goal is curbing inflation rate and no estimation shows an inflation rate of over 20 percent for the next year”.

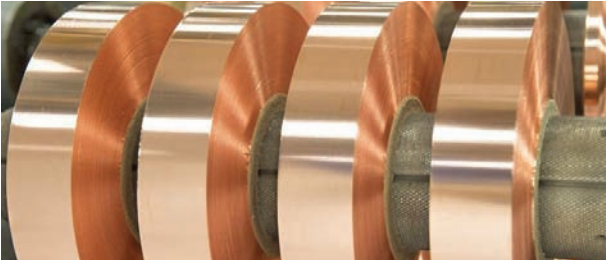
Copper anode output increases 7%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of copper anode in Iran increased seven percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, 61,649 tons of copper anode was produced in the two-month period of this year.

Also, production of copper anode in the country reached 30,959 tons in the second month of the present year, which was 16 percent higher than the output in the same month of the previous 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.

25m tons of basic goods imported in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 25 million tons of basic goods have been cleared from Iran’s customs during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), IRIB reported, quoting the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

According to Mehdi Mirashrafi, 35 million tons of commodities were imported into the country in the mentioned year, of which 25 million tons were basic goods.



Noting that the coronavirus outbreak has decreased the level of trade in the current Iranian calendar year, the official said: “This year, the trend has slowed down, and we hope that with the measures taken by the Central Bank [of Iran (CBI)], the Industry Ministry, and IRICA, we will be able to minimize the deposition of goods in the customs before and after clearance. In this regard, we are going to make a new proposal to the government through the Economy Ministry.”

“There are currently about four million tons of goods stored in the country’s ports, including both basic goods and regular commodities like raw materials, and machinery, so we need to take more specific inter-sectorial measures to facilitate the clearance process,” Mirashrafi added.

According to the official, the main reason for the prolonging of clearance processes has been related to money transfer issues and obtaining ownership documents.

Regarding the reduction of global trade due to the coronavirus outbreak, the IRICA head said: “It is predicted that the volume of trade in the world will decrease by 20 percent due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and Iran and West Asia are not exceptions.”

The official further noted that in the current year which has been called the year of “surge in production” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, IRICA has prioritized export-facilitating policies and strategies.

Iran’s exhibitions to be held on schedule as of July 2

1 → The “Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements” exhibition was held during June 13-16 to showcase the country’s medical and healthcare achievements in the battle against the coronavirus outbreak.

The event was the first physical exhibition since the outbreak of the coronavirus back in March.

As reported, 150 Iranian companies, including several knowledge-based ones, showcased their latest achievements and products related to the containment and prevention of the coronavirus in the exhibition.

All necessary measures were taken to assure the safety and health of both visitors and exhibitors during the event.

Annual exports from free trade, special economic zones hit \$17b

1 → In terms of employment in the free trade zones and special economic zones, Bank said jobs have been created for 186,000 persons in these zones over the past seven years, and for 36,000 persons in the previous year.

The secretary of Free Zones High Council further mentioned the implementation of delayed projects as one of the major programs of this council and said, “We hope that we can put many production and service companies into operation by the yearend.”

Referring to the 310 development projects, which are planned to be implemented in the free zones in the current year, the official expressed hope that these projects will be put into operation by the yearend, creating jobs for 40,000 to 45,000 persons.

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

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

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

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



the other economic sectors.

■ Infrastructure created for more investment making

The secretary of Free Zones High Council also said, “We have started creation of some infrastructure for the production activities since the past year which will increase production and investment making in these zones.”

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

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

Such incentives have encouraged invest-

ment making in these zones.

Putting the value of investments made by the private sector in the free zones at 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) plus \$200 million in the past year, Bank expressed hope that the amount of private sector’s investment making in these zones will increase 50 percent in the current year.

He also said that investment making by the private sector in the free zones has risen 70 percent in the past year from its preceding year.

■ Free zones to materialize “Surge in Production”

Elsewhere in his remarks Bank mentioned “Surge in Production”, which is the motto of the current Iranian calendar year and said the Free Zones High Council has set up Surge

in Production Headquarters and prepared the related bylaws regarding the free zones’ activities to materialize this motto.

Emphasizing the significance of elevating domestic production, the official said, “The government’s policies for boosting domestic production will lead to reduction of imports, and we should increase investment making in domestic production.”

The government is encouraging investment making in the free zones through offering different incentives, and supports these zones in different ways.

On May 13, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri said the business units based in the country’s free trade zones can use the 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) of facilities that the government is providing to compensate the economic damages of the coronavirus outbreak.

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

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

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

Sponge iron export stands at 20,000 tons in 2 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran **d e s k** exported 20,000 tons of sponge iron during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), IRNA reported.

As reported, the two-month export of the product shows 87 percent drop from 158,000 tons of export in the same period of time in the past year.

Although, production of sponge iron in Iran has risen 11 percent during the first two months of this year from that of the previous year.

As reported, 5.552 million tons of sponge iron has been produced during the two-month period of this year, rising from 4.994 million tons produced in the same time span of the past year.

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

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

Meanwhile, sponge iron consumption in the country increased four percent to 26.965 million tons from 25.826 million tons on an annual basis.



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

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

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

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

Agriculture accounts for 8% of Iran’s GDP

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi says the agriculture sector accounts for nearly eight percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) that is about \$40 billion, IRNA reported.

Speaking in a parliament open session on Sunday, Khavazi said over 4.3 million people are currently active in various fields of the mentioned sector.

Pointing to the importance of the agriculture sector in production, job creation and environmental sustainability, the official said: “Despite the irreplaceable role of the agriculture sector in increasing economic resilience and growth in the absence of oil revenues, in recent years maximum investment in this sector has not been more than five percent.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister underlined some of the important goals of the agriculture ministry in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) including the improvement of food security, preservation of water, soil and genetic resources, increasing the sustainable presence of farmers in this sector and the positive balance of the country’s food trade.

Khavazi put the area under cultivation of agricultural products in the country at 18.5 million hectares and said the country’s total production of such products is at about 124 million tons.



According to the official, production of wheat, as the most strategic crop, is estimated to reach 14 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year, while the target for this year has been 13.4 million tons.

He further stated that up to 1.7 million tons of sugar, 560,000 tons of oilseeds, 680,000 tons of legume, 220,000 tons of cotton, 22 million tons of forage plants, 14.3 million tons of potatoes, onions and tomatoes and 8.3 million tons of vegetables are expected to be produced this year.

The horticulture sector is expected to produce 23 million tons of products, including four million tons of apples, 5.4 million tons of citrus fruits, 3.2 million tons of grapes, three million tons of greenhouse products, 1.2 million tons of dates and 1.6 million tons of pomegranates.

“In the horticulture sector, an increase of 4,500 hectares in the area under greenhouse cultivation (from the current level of 18,800 hectares) has been planned,” Khavazi said.

Commodities worth over \$738m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — More **d e s k** than 572,236 tons of commodities valued at over \$738 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IME Public Relations and International Affairs Department announced.

According to the report, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 192,271 tons of various products worth \$370 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 212,616 tons of steel, 3,880 tons of copper, 7,240 tons of aluminum, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 20 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 322,871 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$379 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 64,025 tons of bitumen, 113,000 tons of VB feed stock, 69,714 tons of polymer products, 7,000 tons of lube cut oil, 30,318 tons of chemical products, 2,204 tons of base oil, 400 tons of slaps waxes, 650 tons of insulation as well as 46,560 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 1,093 tons of metal scrap were traded on the IME’s side



market.

It is worth noting that a ton and 20 kg of saffron were traded on the agricultural trading floor.

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

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

‘Coordination among maritime organizations a must in face of U.S. sanctions’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s **d e s k** Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Head Mohammad Rastad said close coordination and collaboration among the country’s maritime organizations is a necessity for defeating U.S. sanctions on this sector.

Speaking on the occasion of the international Seafarer Day (which is on June 25), Rastad referred to the new sanctions imposed by the U.S. on the country’s shipping lines, and said: “In this regard, we need more serious and closer interaction between maritime agencies and organizations to use all their capacities for improving the activities in this sector and minimize the impacts of the sanctions.”

The official noted that in a video conference meeting with the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and his management team, PMO has criticized the United States’ illegal threats and sanctions for being contrary to international laws and conventions.

Iranian sailors are being threatened while pursuing their legal duties under international maritime conventions and regulations, he said.

Rastad further noted that such unconventional behavior on the part of the United States poses a direct threat to maritime safety; this needs to be rectified and prevented by IMO and other international

regulatory agencies.

“We discussed the need for ensuring maritime safety and environmental protection as major duties of the International Maritime Organization and finally for the first time we were able to convince this organization to investigate the U.S. threats to Iranian shipping activities from a legal point of view”, he noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the PMO head referred to the negative impacts of the coronavirus outbreak on the world’s maritime transportation, and said: “We are going through a challenging situation, but it is universal. Corona has cast a heavy shadow over the world economy, and as a result, trade between countries and demand for maritime transportation has declined.”

According to the official, shipbuilding orders fell by at least 60 percent in the first three or four months of 2020, compared to the previous year.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Treasury Department designated 121 tankers, container ships and other vessels owned or tied to Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) for additional secondary sanctions.

The sanctions came as Iran delivered five tankers loaded with fuel to Venezuela despite strong opposition from the United States.

‘Developing water, electricity sectors prerequisite for economic growth’

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN – Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri says developing the water and electricity infrastructure is a necessity for the country's economic growth, the portal of Energy Ministry (Paven) reported.

“Water and electricity are the main prerequisites for improvement which determine the pace of development in the country, so these two sectors must be miles ahead of other industries,” Jahangiri said in a meeting with the Energy Ministry's senior officials on Saturday.

He underlined the significance of the energy sector's role in the country's economic prosperity and said: “The Energy Ministry is responsible for one of the most important areas in the country's economy.”

Mentioning some of the challenges that the ministry is facing, the official said, there are still issues that need to be dealt with even 40 years after the Islamic Revolution.

“Despite more than 83,000 megawatts of power plant capacity in the country, the Ministry of Energy is still concerned about blackouts during the peak consumption periods in the summer; of course I thank the minister for his efforts to manage the situation in recent years,” he added.

Referring to the current situation in the country [the U.S. sanctions and the economic pressures due to the coronavirus outbreak] Jahangiri said: “This situation does not mean a dead end which we cannot pass through.”

Referring to last year's floods, the first vice president added: “The pressure of these disasters, including coronavirus, sanctions and drought, has been tremendous on the Energy Ministry but you managed to pass through them successfully.”

He further underlined the ministry's efforts for supplying drinking water to rural areas across the country and noted: “Supplying drinking water for people is the most important issue, and we have approved this strategy and ensure people that we provide them with sustainable drinking water.”

The Energy Ministry has been implementing new programs



Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri (L) and Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian in a meeting of the ministry's senior officials in Tehran on Saturday

in the past few years for accelerating the development of the country's energy sectors including water and electricity.

In this regard, following a program called “A-B-Iran”, the Energy Ministry inaugurated 227 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion) across the country in the previous Iranian calendar year

(ended on March 19).

According to Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, the ministry is going to inaugurate 250 major water and electricity projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), under the same program.

NDF to provide €50m for supplying drinking water to rural areas

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said the National Development Fund (NDF) is going to provide the ministry with €50 million of funding for supplying drinking water to rural areas across the country.

Ardakanian noted that using this fund, clean water will be provided for more than 700,000 people in rural areas during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), IRIB reported on Sunday.

According to Ardakanian, under the A-B-Iran program and using the NDF funds, 859 villages with a population of 54,000 people were connected to the sustainable water network last year.

The Energy Ministry has been implementing a scheme called A-B-Iran [the acronyms A and B stand for water, electricity in Persian] since the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), under which it inaugurates some water, electricity projects across the country every week.

Ardakanian also mentioned the recent



developments in electricity exports to Iraq and said “We have received half of the

dues, which is about 800 to 900 million dollars.”

“We have started a new project with Iraq, according to which, with the help of our country's engineers and contractors, we will reduce the losses of the Iraqi electricity network, which is currently 50 percent, to 20 percent in three years, which means a 30 percent increase in the country's electricity production.”

The losses of the electricity distribution network in our country have fallen below 10 percent, and the experiences in this area are to be used in the neighboring country as well, the minister said.

Ardakanian further noted that the implementation of the A-B-Iran program is going to continue in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) and this year the ministry is going to inaugurate 250 major water and electricity projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion).

The official said during this program 227 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion) went operational across the country in the previous year.

OPEC's no.2 is planning to develop huge gas reserves

Iraq is finally moving ahead with plans to develop its associated and non-associated gas resources in the next two to three years, according to a statement last week from its Deputy Oil Minister, Hamed Younis. In total, he said, the Oil Ministry is looking at projects to develop 1.2 billion standard cubic feet per day (scf/d) of associated gas out of the 2.7 billion scf/d produced as an adjunct to oil excavation. It is also looking to develop a number of standalone gas fields, beginning with the combined estimated 700 million scf/d production of Akkas and Mansouriyah. There are three very good reasons why it should do so but, given its history on achieving objectives in this area, whether it will accomplish anything at all is a moot point. The first reason is political, in so far as it needs to have some evidence to show the U.S. that it is intending to reduce its dependence on Iran for electricity and gas imports at some point in the future. As highlighted by OilPrice.com, this long-running arrangement between the two countries has been an equally long-running source of intense irritation to the U.S. To reprise briefly, Washington made it very clear in April that unless Iraq showed the U.S. some compelling evidence that it was intending to reduce its imports of Iranian electricity and gas then there would be no more waivers for Iraq after the 30-day one made in April expired.

At the same time, more names in Iraq – connected to the perennial sanctions-busting activities that have marked the two countries' relationship since the original sanctions were introduced – would be added to the relevant blacklists. Moreover, financing and security support would be cut and the prospects for the absolutely vital oil infrastructure project – the Common Seawater Supply Project – would be severely damaged, with no chance of ExxonMobil returning to it. This announcement of new gas projects from Iraq is part of the set of reassurances that Baghdad gave Washington in this regard.

The second reason that Iraq should implement these gas plans is financial, in that not developing its non-associated gas fields is akin to leaving money in the ground. Although Iraq does not have gas reserves on the same scale as neighboring Iran (with its supergiant non-associated South Pars resource) it does have nearly 135 trillion cubic feet of gas, the 12th largest in the world according to the EIA, with about three-quarters of this associated. Clearly, global gas prices are currently low but that will not always be the case and it will take at least as long to develop the gas fields as it takes for the world gas price to recover.

For the same reason, it makes good sense to stop flaring the gas associated with oil field development, as this is akin to burning money, which Iraq can ill-afford. Only last month, Iraq's economic parliamentary committee suggested that

international oil companies (IOCs) be paid with crude oil rather than cash or cash-equivalents as a means to reduce near-term state expenditure. It also proposed delaying payments of foreign debt, introducing salary cuts of 60 percent for various state sector employees, and reducing all non-essential spending.

Despite pumping at least 4.65 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in February - above its OPEC+ quota of 4.46 million bpd – and exporting around 3.4 million bpd of crude that month, and almost the same in March, Iraq's oil-related revenues had fallen by nearly 50 percent at that point. This is in line with the collapse in oil prices and the fact that about 90 percent of Iraq's government revenues still come from oil, hence the requests to the IOCs. Worse still is that the perennial disagreements persist between Baghdad and Erbil over the deal struck in 2014 for Iraq to send budget disbursements to the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan in exchange for oil supplies sent back from it to Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO).

This financial straightening poses severe danger to Baghdad very shortly, with new Prime Minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, requiring IQD12 trillion (\$10 billion) just to pay the next two months' salaries of more than four million employees, retirees, state beneficiaries, and the food relief for low-income families, which together constitutes the majority of households in Iraq. It is believed in Iraqi government circles that any failure to pay any of these obligations could result in the sort of widespread protests that occurred at the end of last year.

The third reason that Iraq should implement these gas plans is longer-term strategic in that flaring gas and not developing non-associated gas resources means that Iraq's precious oil reserves have to be used instead to generate domestic power. This means that the oil used for power generation cannot be monetized through export (even now at a much higher rate than the average US\$1-2 per barrel lifting cost) to boost Iraq's near-empty state coffers nor can it be used to help Iraq reach its long-planned crude oil production target of 7 million barrels per day (it was to have been achieved by 2022).

As it stands, Iraq ranks as one of the worst three offenders for flaring associated gas in the world, after Russia, burning off around 16 billion cubic meters last year. Not only does this cost the economy billions of dollars in lost revenue and contribute to the frequent power outages in Iraq, particularly during the summer months, but it also is not in the spirit of the United Nations and World Bank 'Zero Routine Flaring' initiative aimed at ending this type of routine flaring by 2030



that Iraq joined in 2017.

Aside from the gradual development of Iraq's non-associated gas fields of the 400 million scf/d Akkas and 300 million scf/d Mansouriyah in the first instance, covered in detail by OilPrice.com, Younis highlighted that the initial focus of the efforts to capture associated gas would fall on Nasiriyah (200 million scf/d), Halfaya (300 million scf/d), and Ratawi (400 million scf/d), with the remaining 300 million scf/d (of the total 1.2 billion scf/d) coming from other fields.

Although he provided no further salient details, this single announcement links back to a deal agreed in principle in 2018 between Baghdad and U.S. oil services provision giant Baker Hughes to harness 200 million scf/d from the Nassiriya and Gharraf oilfields (and other oil fields north of Basra), and adjunct deals made at around the same time. These, according to a senior oil and gas industry source who works closely with Iraq's Oil Ministry, are to be the broad template that the Oil Ministry will now attempt to follow.

The first stage would involve the advanced modular gas processing solution being deployed at the Integrated Natural Gas Complex in Nassiriya to dehydrate and compress flare gas to generate over 100 million scf/d of gas. The second stage would involve the Nassiriya plant being expanded to become a complete natural gas liquid facility that would recover 200 million scf/d of dry gas, liquefied gas, and condensate. All of this output would go to the domestic power generation sector, with Baker Hughes at that time stating that addressing the flared gas from the two fields would allow for the provision of 400 megawatts of power to the Iraqi grid.

Why Big Oil won't be buying up struggling companies

By Alex Kimani

Under normal circumstances, energy downturns create a perfect opportunity for deep-pocketed oil and gas heavyweights to land prime assets on the cheap. A good case in point: the last oil bust of 2016 was followed by a sizable number of huge M&A deals in the sector including the \$60B tie-up between Royal Dutch Shell (NYSE:RDSA) and BG Group, Canadian Oil Sands and Suncor Energy, as well as a handful that fell through including the proposed merger between Halliburton (NYSE:HAL) and Baker Hughes (NYSE:BKR). But these are hardly normal circumstances and don't expect the oil price rout to trigger a wave of M&A activity any time soon.

That's according to Cowen analysts via Barron's who have said that the majority of Big Oil executives will likely be too gun-shy to pull the trigger on the numerous distressed assets that are becoming available as the downturn drags on.

M&A disaster

The Cowen team, led by Jason Gabelman, has pointed out how the last M&A wave turned into a disaster for the acquiring companies.

In April, Royal Dutch Shell cut its dividend to US\$0.16 per ordinary share from US\$0.47, for a 66% cut. That marked the first time the company cut the dividend since WWII, a testament of just how severe the oil massacre has been, which is what Shell blamed in its press release. However, another culprit could be to blame for the dramatic cut: the company's 2016 acquisition of BG Group, which set it back \$60B.

Occidental Petroleum's \$55B leveraged purchase of Anadarko has become the poster-child of oil and gas mergers gone bad. The deal has turned into a complete disaster, leaving the company in deep distress over its mountain of debt and water cooler wisecracks of how it could itself get acquired at a fraction of what it paid for Anadarko. Cowen also pointed to BP Plc.'s extremely high debt, though it might have less to do with its 2018 merger with BHP Billiton for \$10.5B and more to do with its Deepwater Horizon oil spill which has cost it a staggering \$65B in clean-up costs and legal fees over the years.

BP's debt-to-equity ratio of 0.78 is way higher than the oil and gas sector's average of 0.47, and the highest among the oil supermajors. So far, BP has maintained its juicy dividend (fwd yield of 10.64%) but keeps piling on debt after recently taking on \$12B in hybrid bonds, thus raising genuine questions about its sustainability.

Cowen though says that oil majors like Chevron and Total with relatively strong balance sheets could go for cheap assets such as GALP Energia or BP's stake in a gas project in Oman.

Evidence coming from the oil and gas M&A space so far appears to support Cowen's sentiments.

In April, a report by Enverus (formerly DrillingInfo) revealed that U.S. upstream M&A deals for the first quarter only amounted to \$770 million, less than 1/10th the average deal amount recorded quarterly over the previous decade.

The largest dollar transaction was a deal by Alpine Energy Capital, which purchased Approach Resources' Midland Basin assets for \$193 million. That compares very poorly with the \$55 billion Occidental-Anadarko merger or the \$9 billion tie-up between Marathon Oil and Andeavor Logistics, both consummated last year.

Further, Enverus said that only ~\$4.7B in upstream deals were available in the market by the end of the quarter, the majority of which were located in the Eagle Shale. There's a very real possibility that 2020 could be the slowest in the history of mergers in the sector if the other three quarters track Q1 numbers closely.

Shale opportunities

Instead of mergers, oil and gas companies prefer to maintain the all-important dividend or cut capex in a bid to preserve liquidity. This is a trend we clearly witnessed during the last earnings season.

Not everybody shares Cowen's bearish M&A outlook though. Goldman Sachs analyst Michele DellaVigna has told Barron's that the highly fragmented U.S. shale industry could be a candidate for a spate of consolidations.

DellaVigna, though, has conceded that we are unlikely to see a repeat of the megamergers of the 1990s; however, he says there's a financial case to be made for mergers especially in a sector like U.S. shale that has previously lacked cost discipline:

“The oil industry has delivered its best corporate returns in periods of consolidation, financial tightening and rising barriers to entry. We believe this environment (and shareholder pressure for de-carbonisation) could engender a similar phase of consolidation and capital discipline, as in the late '90s.”

Russian energy ministry expects average oil price of \$35/b in 2020: report

The Russian energy ministry expects the average Urals price to be \$35/b in 2020, minister Alexander Novak said in an interview with German daily Handelsblatt published June 20.

According to Platts, Russia's 2020 budget is based on an oil price of \$42/b, officials said previously. Novak said he currently only expects oil services providers, who have been hit hard by Russia's significant oil production cut under the OPEC+ agreement, to require state support.

“We have very flexible taxation for oil producers, dependent on the oil price,” the report quoted Novak as saying. “Our oil companies can continue to produce even when the oil price is low, thanks to reserves and then low taxes.”

He added that large Russian oil and gas companies will continue investment programs, with some cuts of up to 20 percent, but no fundamental changes.

Novak added that he does not expect oil demand to return to pre-crisis levels in the near term.

“Certainly not this year,” Novak said. “We hope that it will happen in 2021. But maybe it will take two or three years. Because people will fly less, drive less, travel less and do more online. The economy will grow again, but the demand for oil from transport will remain lower.”

Russia does not currently see a need to deepen oil production cuts under the OPEC+ agreement, but the group will continue to discuss the situation monthly, Novak said.

“In July the agreement will result in two million fewer barrels of oil on the market than originally planned,” Novak said. “Then we'll see. There is a lot that is unclear: consumer demand, and whether there will be a second wave of coronavirus that many expect. That would again disrupt markets considerably.”



Third Announcement

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

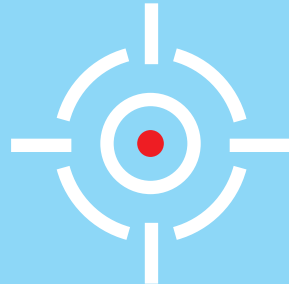
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INSIDE THE AMERICA

Protests in U.S. signify changing the ‘paradigms of thought’ through youth activism and religion: American scholar

“Ayatollah Khamenei’s letter transcends Western youth and embraces the human”

By Amir Mohammad Esmaeili

TEHRAN — A senior lecturer in African and African-American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis tells the Tehran Times that widespread protests following George Floyd’s death could be considered as “a sign of changing the paradigms of thought through youth activism and religion”.

On Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s letters to the youth in the West, El Hadji Samba Amadou Diallo also says, “I draw two important lessons from the first letter: young people must refuse to be confined to geographic and mental borders.”

Diallo, who has a PhD in history and social anthropology, says he thinks that Ayatollah Khamenei’s first letter written on January 21, 2015 “speaks to all youths”.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Protests over police brutality and the death of George Floyd continue to rage across the United States. What is your view about the protests?

A: We might first place the killing of George Floyd by police in Minnesota in the global context of the current health crisis. I would say of general psychosis related to the Coronavirus pandemic. People around the world, including a large number of youth, were under stay at home orders. They were even more connected than ever to their electronic devices. In this atmosphere, any event becomes easily shared on social networks. That is the reason why the killing of George Floyd spread quickly in various countries and cities of the world. This is what prompted people to leave their homes and go to the streets to express their sorrow. There have always been demonstrations, but the ongoing ones are unique in terms of their impact on the world. To someone such as me who lived in France for years before coming to the U.S., seeing these protests in a global context is very important. In France, it has reawakened the visible calls for justice for Adama Traoré.

In the U.S., from the end of slavery to the present day, the situation of Black people remains far removed from that of whites, who visibly enjoy enormous privileges in terms of education, job opportunities, healthcare, and housing. This logic of exclusion from society is reproduced from one generation to another with changes that seemingly benefit only a few Blacks.

Now, placed in this context of a perpetual quest for resources and social equality and for a better life in a basically capitalist and unequal society, your question answers itself. Because not only will the protests continue in the future, they will gain momentum. You have seen the impressive number of non-Blacks on the streets calling for respect for others in a world where the issues of the times are more focused on human health. There will be further protests if Derek Chauvin’s trial is judged unfair by the people on the street.

■ Donald Trump talks about imposing law and order, and his hardline approach towards the protesters has been widely criticized for inciting violence. What is your take on his behavior?

A: There are times when a President must empathize with his citizens, or at least with the families of the victims. We saw former vice president Joe Biden went to Floyd’s home and meet with his family in Houston. The president did not show the same empathy. In addition, by not denouncing this abuse of police violence in public, politicians promote a greater divide. In other words, to remain silent on these odious acts of killing is another form of violence (unreal, virtual, symbolic), which will one day turn into physical violence with more human deaths. For sure, violence breeds more violence.

■ There is a statement that refers to



In the U.S., from the end of slavery to the present day, the situation of Black people remains far removed from that of whites, who visibly enjoy enormous privileges in terms of education, job opportunities, healthcare, and housing.

the United States as a contradiction. Its founding principles embrace the ideals of freedom and equality, but it is a nation built on the systematic exclusion and suppression of communities of color. From the start, so many of this country’s laws and public policies, which should serve as the scaffolding that guides progress, were instead designed explicitly to prevent people of color from fully participating. What are the reasons behind this? And what is the possible solution?

A: As I said earlier, the social and economic disparities between Blacks and whites are the result of an exclusive type of institutional, political, and social system. The classification of the few African slaves who arrived on the coast of Virginia and Maryland in 1619 was also based on their social origin and religion (non-Christian and pagan), rather than only on their skin pigmentation, their blackness. Later on, because of the growing number of Africans on the Eastern soil of America, European colonial masters from Britain, the Netherlands, France, and the Iberian Peninsula assigned them the qualificative “Negroes,” a derogatory term that was in their imagination for a long time. Those slaves became changeably Blacks, African-Americans, African-descended people, Black Americans, Black Natives, etc. What is important to learn from this story is the social construction of race, with the main objective of controlling the dominated groups and enforcing distance from them through multiple institutionalized laws and social norms. But how do those deemed inferior or oppressed perceive themselves? This is a tangential question.

The U.S. Constitution proclaims free and equal people, but everyone is aware this designation was not intended for enslaved Africans, but rather for the European settlers and their descendants. Many Blacks support the idea that individuals are not equal if there is a discrepancy in employment, food securitization, good schooling, housing, and healthcare. If we analyze the problem from the point of view of the one who suffers from

ill treatment, then there is much to do in America. There is poverty in America, contrary to what I believed when I was in Senegal and saw the U.S. on TV, but I also heard about the so-called Black violence in America.

The solution to this is that all levels of government in combination with civil society must invest in education. Concerned citizens must equally vote overwhelmingly for the candidates they think can help change institutions. Additionally, prison sentences are disproportionately heavy for many Blacks; it is necessary to revise the laws which incriminate them and ruin their future as full citizens.

■ Have you ever heard about Ayatollah Khamenei’s letters to the youth in the West?

A: Yes, I have read both of his letters.

■ What is your thought on them? What impact has these letters had on the youth in the West?

A: The first letter of Imam Ali Khamenei addressed youth in the Western world, especially in Europe and North America, but I think he speaks to all youths. It dates from January 21, 2015, ten days after the attack on Charlie Hebdo journalists by two young over-armed French brothers. I don’t know to what degree the letters have impacted youth in the West; I need to read more quantitative works on the subject. However, I draw two important lessons from the first letter: young people must refuse to be confined to geographic and mental borders, as he put it, and young Muslims as well as young Blacks may resort to violence to solve a problem, but they are not inherently violent. Briefly said, violence is not exclusive to any particular religion, race, or ethnicity. You see that his letter transcends Western youth and embraces the human.

The second letter dated back to November 30, 2015. It is more sociological, in that it distinguishes different forms of violence, the most important one being state violence. States and their leaders organize various forms of violence, be it terrorist attacks—and Ayatollah Khamenei delved deeply into that matter—or the exclusion of certain categories of citizens from existing in the world. In this letter we

The U.S. Constitution proclaims free and equal people, but everyone is aware this designation was not intended for enslaved Africans, but rather for the European settlers and their descendants.



■ Do you believe that the U.S. and Saudi funding for United Nation’s programs affect the international body’s decisions?

A: The previous Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, had said publicly that Saudi Arabia put undue pressure on him to remove them from his list. However, the special representative of the secretary-general on

sense hints of dialogues on the use of violence between the intellectual Ali Shariati and the postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon, whose ideas Shariati spread in Iran by translating part of his work into Persian. I read Shariati’s letters to Fanon about whether religion can be an incentive for political revolution and social change. Fanon did not see how this could be possible, but predicted an Islamic awakening in the world and the rise of the question of minorities after decolonization.

■ What will be the future of these movements in the West?

A: Recently, the world’s media have made extensive mention of Ferguson in 2014, when Michael Brown was killed by a police officer. There were protests in the city of St. Louis, where I live, but they faded away because of the weakness of spontaneity. Protests will also continue across the country and around the world more likely, if the police officer who killed George Floyd is found not guilty of murder. In general, protests happen from time to time, gathering hundreds or thousands of people, but true change lies in the hands of the decision-makers; institutions that make social injustice possible must change. For example, people are talking more about defunding the police and investing in education and other forms of community.

■ There are various claims about the effects of these protests on the result of the November presidential election in the U.S. Please tell us your opinion.

A: Regarding the election in November, I think that Americans will vote en masse either to approve Donald Trump’s policies or to show that they aspire to change. I cannot tell what will happen, since things can change from one moment to another, and individuals are free in their choices. For sure, these protests will influence the ballot, either by the participation rate, especially that of Black voters, by high abstention on the part of minority groups, or the evangelical votes to boost the political ideals of Trump, who has already appealed to them by carrying a copy of the Bible in front of a church. The results will show America’s true face to the world. At the same time, they will provide another way of understanding American politics and reality on the ground. Let’s wait and see.

■ How do you assess the mainstream media policies? What about social networks such as Twitter and Facebook?

A: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have relayed the news to a wider audience and exposed the protests. The new technologies of communication and social networks present an opportunity for the younger generations of protesters. Now, how to seize this opportunity and make a meaningful change in the lives of people is the greatest challenge they face. The Black Lives Matter movement is all over the world due to the role of those media outlets. Whether we want it or not, they can circumvent states’ censures and connect protesters of different nationalities and languages for the same cause. Used more as pedagogical tools than for entertainment, social media can be an agent for change in the world.

■ Could we consider these protests as an “awakening” among American people, especially the younger generation?

A: Even in America, the category of youth is changing at a rapid pace. Who are the protesters in American streets? In America, the designation “youth” is assigned to those under 25, while it represents a more flexible group in some other countries, where it can go up to 45. Those who protested in America went beyond the “youth” age set, which means that protesting is trans-generational in the context of racial equality, or in a “supposed” post-racial society. The awakening is not exclusively for youngsters, it is for all people desirous of equality and social justice.

Why, after 155 years of legislation freeing enslaved African Americans, is racism still an issue in the United States? Although the basic timeline of the Civil War is straightforward and can be recited by an average American high school student, there are still a great number of contradictions that don’t always get told when that period of American history is discussed, and it is those inconsistencies that continue to feed the current race crisis in the US. Abraham Lincoln was elected president on Nov. 6, 1860 and almost immediately the Southern states began to secede from the Union as a result. By January of 1861, seven states had left the Union and President Lincoln was attempting to salvage the situation, to preserve the Union, when he declared, “I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists”. This doesn’t exactly match with the general portrayal of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator. Fast forward to September 17th, 1862, the bloodiest day of the Civil War, when the Battle of Antietam was fought. As a result of the Union advantage gained from that battle, Lincoln issues a “Preliminary” Emancipation Proclamation on September 22nd, threatening that he would order it if the rebelling states



did not return to the Union by the New Year. He made good on the threat and the proclamation took effect on January 1, 1863. However, this “emancipation” was only to be applied to the enslaved persons inside the Confederacy—approximately 3 million of the nearly 4 million slaves in the whole of the United States at that time. The slave states that had not seceded were not affected by this Proclamation. African Americans in those States obviously did not warrant emancipation, it seemed. In fact, despite the general perception of the Northern states being “anti-slavery”, slavery was not abolished in the nation’s capital until April 16, 1862—almost a year after the war that was supposedly based upon the notion of abolition.

On April 9, 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia, effectively marking the end of the Civil War.

In his final speech on April 11th, Lincoln suggested limited voting rights for “very intelligent” African-American men and those who had served in the military. On April 14, 1865, Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth fatally

Five word phrase ‘except as punishment for crime’ would open the doors for mass incarceration of that century and the following century. Racial discrimination and criminal justice author Michelle Alexander wrote in 2010 that “More black men are behind bars or under the watch of the criminal justice system [today] than there were enslaved in 1850.”

Guterres tries to protect certain governments from accountability: Human rights activist

“Security Council resolutions that should be mandatory are subject to political factors”

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Children’s Rights Advocacy Director at Human Rights Watch is of the opinion that UN Secretary General António Guterres makes efforts to protect powerful countries and their allies from being held accountable for their performance, citing the United States and its close allies Israel and Saudi Arabia as examples.

“It appears that he is trying to protect powerful governments from accountability,” Jo Becker tells the Tehran Times.

Human Rights Watch has criticized Guterres, saying he ignores the UN’s own evidence and taking Saudi-led coalition off his “list of shame” for violations against children in Yemen. The HRW says this has happened despite the fact that at least 222 children were killed or maimed by the Saudi-led attack on Yemen in 2019.

Becker says the UN “list of shame,” which came shortly after the Guterres report on children and armed conflict in 2019, omits the Saudi-led coalition which have been pounding Yemen relentlessly since March

2015

This is the text of interview:

■ How do you evaluate the UN’s “list of shame”? Why do you think it was shameful?

A: The secretary general’s report and “list of shame” is full of discrepancies that damage its credibility. For example, he has removed the Saudi-led coalition from his list for killing and maiming children in Yemen, even though his reports say the coalition was responsible for 222 child casualties last year.

He also de-listed Myanmar’s army for recruiting and using child soldiers, even though his report says they recruited and used over 200 children last year.

These are shameful decisions that ignore the UN’s own evidence of violations against children.

He also did not list Russian forces in Syria, U.S. forces in Afghanistan, or Israeli forces in Palestine, even though his report documented hundreds of child casualties by these forces.

It appears that he is trying to protect powerful governments from accountability.

children and the armed conflict meant that the current secretary general was not under such pressure this year.

■ How many kids have been killed during the Saudi-led war in Yemen? And why are Western countries silent about the number of child casualties in Yemen?

A: As mentioned, the report states that the Saudi-led coalition was responsible for 222 child casualties last year. That includes both children who were killed and those that were injured.

I believe that some Western governments have spoken out about child casualties in Yemen, but don’t have any examples handy.

■ Do you think that the UN is able to pass mandatory resolutions to protect children? Or does it need some structural changes?

A: The Security Council’s resolutions are supposed to be mandatory, but we also see that it is subject to political factors. Powerful countries try to shield themselves and their allies.

We are urging the secretary general to adopt a better process to develop his list, to ensure it is accurate and based on evidence.

The 13th amendment was passed in 1865 and it stipulated that:

“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States...” but that five word phrase ‘except as punishment for crime’ would open the doors for mass incarceration of that century and the following century. Racial discrimination and criminal justice author Michelle Alexander wrote in 2010 that “More black men are behind bars or under the watch of the criminal justice system [today] than there were enslaved in 1850.”

The Fourteenth Amendment was adopted on July 9, 1868, as part of the Reconstruction era actions, making former enslaved Africans into American citizens and affording them equal protection under the law. But yet again, this did nothing to solve the issue of discrimination because Jim Crow laws and Black Codes were also put in place in the Southern States and the obviously unbalanced and unjust pretense of “separate but equal” became the order of the day for freed men and women, creating separate facilities for everything from water fountains and train seating to schools and where Black families could live, with horrific often lethal punishments for even the most minor infractions.

June 19th, 2020 was the 155th, anniversary of Juneteenth, and we can clearly see from the protests and unrest in the streets of America that still the inequities continue.

Clay-jar tombs, holding child corpses, unearthed in northwest Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Two ancient clay-jar tombs, embracing child corpses, have recently been unearthed near Gerd Ashvan village, West Azarbaijan province, northwest Iran. “In Gerd Ashvan, two burial places were found embedded in pottery jars, which was a common tradition during the Copper and New Stone Ages,” IRNA quoted archaeologist Mahnaz Sharifi as saying on Saturday.



“Burial of children in jars or large bowls was a widespread tradition in large areas from the Caucasus to northwestern Iran. And similar examples have been reported in Alchan Tappeh, Gara Hill in Mesopotamia, South Caucasus, amongst other places,” Sharifi, who led the archaeological excavation at Gerd Ashvan, said.

Jar-burials are human burials where the corpse is placed into a large earthenware and then is interred. Jar-burials are a repeated pattern at a site or within an archaeological culture. When an anomalous burial is found in which a corpse or cremated remains have been interred, it is not considered a “jar burial”.

Jar-burial can be traced to various regions across the globe. It is noted to have been practiced as early as 900 BC, and as recent as 15 CE-17th centuries. The origin of this practice is considered to be the different concept of death held by these cultures. In such societies, death is held to involve a slow change, a passage from the visible society of the living to the invisible one of the dead.

Types of jars and additional components vary from location to culture. Different shapes of jars can indicate the prestige or societal level of the deceased, or it can be a commonplace jar. Funerary offerings are sometimes placed in or around the jars, thus revealing more information about the value different peoples have for certain items.

Isfahan exports \$39m of handicrafts in year

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Handicrafts exports from the central province of Isfahan reached some \$39 million during the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended March 19), CHTN reported.



Over 1200 crafters were also trained in different fields of handicrafts including cutting precious and semi-precious stones, enamel, qalamkari (printing on cotton or silk fabric with a tamarind pen using natural dyes), hand-woven kilim, and traditional jewelry during last year, provincial tourism chief Fereydoun Allahyari said on Sunday.

Some 61 high-quality works by artisans in the province were also awarded the National Seal of Excellence during the last year, he added.

Dozens of Iranian handicrafts have gained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence during the past couple of years.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces.

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

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

Over 3,000 crafters trained in Lorestan

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A total of 3,050 crafters were trained in the western province of Lorestan during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 19), provincial tourism chief has said.

Hand-woven kilim, woodworks, wicker works, cutting precious and semi-precious stones, and metal works are parts of handicrafts fields taught in these courses, CHTN quoted Seyyed Amin Qasemi as saying on Sunday.

4,500 crafters were also trained by taking free courses on Mashteh-bafi, a kind of hand-woven textile, with the aim of promoting this local and nomadic art, he added.

For the time being, over 52 fields of handicrafts are practiced in almost 3500 workshops across the province, which generates 36,000 job opportunities, the official explained.

Lorestan is one of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran and mainly acts as a gateway to the neighboring Khuzestan province which hosts UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.

The province is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring, living with a nomad or rural family.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Bisheh Waterfall, Snow Tunnel, Poldokhtar ponds, Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, Soltani Mosque of Borujerd, Shapouri Bridge, and Shirez Canyon are amongst tourist sites of the mountainous province.

Iran to introduce tourist attractions in 10 languages

→ 1 Referring to foreign arrivals, Teymouri said that international tourism could be recovered soon because it is mostly relying on potential travelers and pilgrims from the neighboring countries.

“Given the policies of the country’s tourism industry over the past two years to focus on tourism markets in the neighboring countries, the possibility of recovering and reviving international tourism in the shortest possible time is predictable.”

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.

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!

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,



Iranian and Chinese nationals pose for a photo in the UNESCO-registered Imam Square of Isfahan, central Iran.

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.

Achaemenid clay tablets, Iron Age relics, and skeleton to go on show at Qazvin museum

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A batch of recovered Achaemenid-era (550-330 BC) clay tablets, which were on loan from Iran to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago since 1935, along with an Iron Age collection composed of a human skeleton and burial relics, will be displayed at a museum in the city of Qazvin.

The Iron Age relics have recently been unearthed from a millennia-old cemetery situated in Sagz Abad plain of Buin Zahra county, Qazvin province, west-central Iran, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The Achaemenid batch comprises 40 tablets (or their fragments), which is a subset of tens of hundreds of tablets been returned home last year from the Institute after 84 years. The artifacts were recuperated with a great deal of effort made by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and the presidential office for legal affairs.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to



Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and to India.

In February 2018, and following years of ups and downs, the fate of those clay tablets, which reveal the economic, social and religious history of the Achaemenid Empire and the larger Near Eastern region in the fifth century BC, was left in the hands of a U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of Iran.

Archaeologists affiliated with the University of Chicago discovered the tablets in the 1930s while excavating in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire. However, the institute has resumed work in collaboration with colleagues in Iran, and the return of the tablets is part of a broadening of contacts between scholars in the two countries, said Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

Once the capital of the Persian Empire under Safavids from 1548-98, Qazvin is currently a major tourist destination with wonderfully restored historical sites, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options. Famed for carpets and seedless grapes.

Historical fortress to receive care nine decades after getting heritage status

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Almost nine decades after being placed on the National Heritage list, the historical Abunaser fortress in Shiraz, southern Fars province, will receive some protective measures such as building fences to shield the precious monument from further degradation.

Located six kilometers east of Shiraz, on top of a hill, the abandoned fortress and its towers, which are made of stones, bricks, and mortar, can be seen easily.

Also known as Takht-e Soleyman (“The Throne of Solomon”), the monument dates back to Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE) and it was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1931.

Nine decades later, such a magnificent cultural heritage has turned to a place for construction waste and a shelter for drug addicts and homeless people.

Lack of financial and human resources, as well as lack of coordination between cultural heritage-related bodies such as the



municipality, were some of the problems that prevented this place from being properly

preserved, ILNA quoted provincial tourism chief Mosayyeb Amiri as saying on Sunday.

Khoy, an ancient town of sunflowers, snowcapped mountains

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Khoy may not be on every traveler’s radar, but it is a natural fit for eco-tourists as it offers loads of scenic hikes, panoramic views besides colorful geological features. Khoy has long been a melting pot of cultural exchange.

The ancient town is a destination for those who are interested in its virgin nature, genuine culture and architecture. Therapeutic warm-water spas, salt mines and Christian centers are among its other charms.

The ancient town, which is situated in northwestern Iran, is encircled with vast sunflower farms under the shadow of snowcapped towering mountains. It is also teemed with centuries-old mosques, churches, caravanserais, bathhouses, fortresses, and ramparts, each telling their own tales.

The town is also a destination for lovers of Persian literature, who come visit the mausoleum of Shams Tabrizi, a renowned Iranian poet and mystic who lived between 1185 and 1248.

The economy of its surrounding regions is primarily based on agriculture; various fruits, grains, timber productions, and sunflowers. The latter is what Khoy is nicknamed for.

Located in near the ancient Silk Road in West Azarbaijan province, Khoy was enormously fortified at different eras



A sunflower farm is seen adjacent to the ancient town of Khoy, northwest Iran

of its history, most recently by a decree of Qajar rulers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

During bitter times of its history, Khoy was occupied by foreign military forces; for instance in 1911 when the county was in odds with the then Ottoman Empire, and some points during World War I and II by Russians.

Here is a brief introduction to some of the city sites:

- Motalleb Khan Mosque which is a 13th-century huge and roofless structure of plain brickwork. The mosque is said to have world’s largest mihrab that is a semicircular niche in its prayer hall.

- The entrance to this mosque may be hidden behind the hustle and bustle of street-vendor stalls, just few meters from Imam Khomeini Square.

- Darvazeh Sangi which comprises a well-preserved arched gate to the city. Made of black and white stone slabs, it is part of the former city walls.

- St. Sarkis Church that is believed to date from the 4th century though most of what visitors see there date back to Safavid era when it dominantly underwent restoration works.

- Shams-e Tabrizi Minaret, named after the 13th-century poet, is another attraction of Khoy. The centuries-old monument is somehow hidden in the maze of some alleys northeast of Qamsal Square.

- The city’s bazaar complex features a labyrinth of interconnected covered passages with a myriad of shops. The complex dates back to Safavid-era (1501–1736) and contains four caravanserais as well.

Ashuradeh Island's unique biodiversity decorates northern Iran

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Ashuradeh, Iran's sole island in the Caspian Sea, is a unique valuable part of Miankaleh Wildlife Sanctuary in northern Iran, which has a great share of the country's biodiversity.

Ashuradeh's surface is 800 hectares (2,000 acres). It is located on the eastern end of the Miankaleh peninsula in the county of Behshahr of Mazandaran Province of Iran, 3 kilometers from Bandar Torkaman and 23 kilometers from Gorgan.

The island can be reached via Bandar Torkaman. Ashuradeh is one of the main areas for fishing sturgeon, the species that provide caviar, over 40 percent of Iran's caviar is produced near the Island.

Ashuradeh was introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

The island is covered with raspberry bushes, thorns, and pomegranate trees, and is home to wildlife species of jackals, foxes, rabbits, and hosts a variety of native and migratory birds throughout the year.

Wild boar and species of wild horses which drink saltwater and have a very short lifespan also live on the island.

An island that has been haunted by several wildfires in the summer and the many encroachments and abuses before and after it due to the shortcomings and misunderstandings of those in charge of preserving natural resources.

The beating heart of Miankaleh has been suffering from the implementation of tourism, cultural, and educational projects along with small and large constructions on its sensitive body.

The rich and unique habitat in the Cas-



pian Sea is related to this island; the flow of water and natural sediments backed by the island, which, like a dam, has turned this part of the Caspian into a unique and important reproduction habitat for some marine species.

Due to the rich biodiversity, the region is one of the few remaining habitats of the endangered Caspian Seal, the smallest seal in the world.

Being an impressive bird-watching destination, the island displays a variety of bird species such as otters, all kinds of fish-eating ducks (common goldeneye and Mergus), pelicans, flamingos and cormorants, common pheasants, partridges, mute swan, tundra swan, and coots.

Gorgan Bay was designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use

of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value) along with Miankaleh Wetland.

The bay and its surrounding area are recognized as a valuable ecological complex in the world which had a direct impact on the livelihood of local communities in addition to conserving the marine life cycle.

Iranian hero dies fighting Zagros forest wildfire

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Alborz Zare'ei, a 38-year-old environmental enthusiast and climber, who was helping extinguish a wildfire in the southwestern part of the country, lost his life after 18 days of suffering from burn wound infection.

On May 28, a wildfire broke out in several protected areas in the provinces of Khuzestan, Bushehr, Lorestan, Kohgiluyeh, and Boyer-Ahmad, including Khaeez protected area.

Being impassable had made fire-fighting operation almost impossible and only helicopters could reach the area, so Zagros forests were burning for almost 6 days or more.

Lack of aerial firefighting equipment made the locals join hands and extinguish the fire, which was raging through valuable oak trees and animals.

Alborz also volunteered to defend nature and extinguish the fire in Gachsaran highlands, but due to inhalation of fire fumes and severe wounds lost his life on Friday evening, June 20.

Some 300 hectares of forests and rangelands in Gachsaran county turned into ashes, as well as 200 hectares of forests



in Kohgiluyeh, IRNA news agency reported.

The firefighting operation in the protected areas of Khaeez has left 6 injured so far.

Khaeez, measuring 28,000 hectares, was registered as a Protected Area in 1998, due to its unique forest life and animals. It lies in Khuzestan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad provinces in southwestern Iran.

Khaeez consists of natural forest resources and is the habitat of over 1,500 wild goats and other wildlife such as leopards and caracals, also called Persian lynx.

Zagros Mountain forest steppe ecoregion with an area of about 6 million hectares (3.5 percent of Iran) is ranging northwest to southeast and roughly paralleling the country's western border. The forests constitute 40 percent of the country's forested area and are stretching over 12 provinces. These forests have also been called western oak forests, due to the dominance of oak species.

According to the Science Direct Western, oak forests are home to many species including, the Persian squirrel which is the indicator species of this region. Persian squirrels and oak trees have symbiotic relationships, in which forests provide ecological requirements of Persian squirrels such as food and shelter and, in return, the Persian squirrel contributes in seed germination and forests' regeneration.

A wide variety of wildlife, including wolves, leopards, and even the Persian fallow deer, which was once thought extinct, have made their homes in the mountains.



Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project finalized

1 → World Wetlands Day is observed annually on February 22, emphasizing on the importance of the wetlands and sustainable use of these valuable ecosystems.

According to the Ramsar Convention, wetlands remove water pollutants, control storms, curb climate impacts absorbing 30 percent of land-based carbon, share

a great biodiversity helping human life, store and supply water, and help 1 billion people to make a living worldwide.

Moreover, wetlands are home to 40 percent of all species, and provide a great part of food supply, while being an important source of flourishing tourism in the countries.

Iran also has a great share of wetlands, as 105 wetlands are in Iran stretching 3 million hectares of lands.

Chief of the Department of Environment (DOE) Issa Kalantari has said in order to restore wetlands in the country a budget of 600 trillion rials (nearly \$14 billion) is required.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Persian leopard to receive artificial insemination next week

For the first time, a Persian leopard will undergo artificial insemination in Tehran Zoological Garden next week.

"The precious female leopard has lost a hand being injured in a hunting trap in Golestan province, who is being kept in the Garden," Mehr quoted Iman Memarian, Tehran Zoological Garden director, as saying on Monday.

Referring to European Endangered Species Programs (EEP), he noted that EEP is a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA).

نخستین لقاح مصنوعی پلنگ ایرانی هفته آینده در تهران

لقاح مصنوعی پلنگ ایرانی برای نخستین بار در کشور طی هفته آینده در باغ وحش تهران انجام می‌شود.

دامپزشک و مدیر باغ وحش تهران در گفتگو با خبرنگار مهر ایمان معماریان یادآور شد: ما یک پلنگ ایرانی ماده داریم که متأسفانه یک دستش را در تله شکارچیان در استان گلستان از دست داده است و باغ وحش تهران آن را نگهداری کرده است. وی توضیح داد: برنامه اروپایی تکثیر و حفاظت EEP برنامه‌ای است که تحت نظر اتحادیه باغ‌وحش‌های اروپا تکثیر گونه‌های در حال انقراض را نظارت می‌کند.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dys-”

■ **Meaning:** bad

■ **For example:** All the siblings in their extremely **dysfunctional** family lost contact as adults.

PHRASAL VERB

Leave somebody/ something behind

■ **Meaning:** if a person, country, or organization is left behind, they do not develop as quickly or make as much progress as other people, countries, etc.

■ **For example:** In class, a child with poor eyesight can soon get left behind.

IDIOM

Your guess is as good as mine

■ **Explanation:** I do not know either; I have no idea. Typically said in response to a question

■ **For example:** A: “Where’s Hank?” B: “Your guess is as good as mine. He didn’t say anything to me.”

First dinosaur eggs were soft like a turtle's

New research suggests that the first dinosaurs laid soft-shelled eggs — a finding that contradicts established thought. The study, led by the American Museum of Natural History and Yale University and published today in the journal *Nature*, applied a suite of sophisticated geochemical methods to analyze the eggs of two vastly different non-avian dinosaurs and found that they resembled those of turtles in their microstructure, composition, and mechanical properties. The research also suggests that hard-shelled eggs evolved at least three times independently in the dinosaur family tree.

“The assumption has always been that the ancestral dinosaur egg was hard-shelled,” said lead author Mark Norell, chair and Macaulay Curator in the Museum’s Division of Paleontology. “Over the last 20 years, we’ve found dinosaur eggs around the world. But for the most part, they only represent three groups — theropod dinosaurs, which includes modern birds, advanced hadrosaurs like the duck-bill dinosaurs, and advanced sauropods, the long-necked dinosaurs. At the same time, we’ve found thousands of skeletal remains of ceratopsian dinosaurs, but almost none of their eggs. So why weren’t their eggs preserved? My guess — and what we ended up proving through this study — is that they were soft-shelled.”

Amniotes — the group that includes birds, mammals, and reptiles — produce eggs with an inner membrane or “amnion” that helps to prevent the embryo from drying out. Some amniotes, such as many turtles, lizards, and snakes, lay soft-shelled eggs, whereas others, such as birds, lay eggs with hard, heavily calcified shells. The evolution of these calcified eggs, which offer increased protection against environmental stress, represents a milestone in the history of the amniotes, as it likely contributed to reproductive success and so the spread and diversification of this group. Soft-shelled eggs rarely preserve in the fossil record, which makes it difficult to study the transition from soft to hard shells. Because modern crocodilians and birds, which are living dinosaurs, lay hard-shelled eggs, this eggshell type has been inferred for all non-avian dinosaurs.

The researchers studied embryo-containing fossil eggs belonging to two species of dinosaur: Protoceratops, a sheep-sized plant-eating dinosaur that lived in what is now Mongolia between about 75 and 71 million years ago, and Mussaurus, a long-necked, plant-eating dinosaur that grew to 20 feet in length and lived between 227 and 208.5 million years ago in what is now Argentina. The exceptionally preserved Protoceratops specimen includes a clutch of at least 12 eggs and embryos, six of which preserve nearly complete skeletons. Associated with most of these embryos — which have their backbones and limbs flexed — consistent with the position the animals would assume while growing inside of the egg — is a diffuse black-and-white egg-shaped halo that obscures some of the skeleton. In contrast, two potentially hatched Protoceratops newborns in the specimen are largely free of the mineral halos. When they took a closer look at these halos with a petrographic microscope and chemically characterized the egg samples with high-resolution in situ Raman microspectroscopy, the researchers found chemically altered residues of the proteinaceous eggshell membrane that makes up the innermost eggshell layer of all modern archosaur eggshells. The same was true for the Mussaurus specimen. And when they compared the molecular biomineralization signature of the dinosaur eggs with eggshell data from other animals, including lizards, crocodiles, birds, and turtles, they determined that the Protoceratops and Mussaurus eggs were indeed non-biomineralized — and, therefore, leathery and soft.

“It’s an exceptional claim, so we need exceptional data,” said study author and Yale graduate student Jasmina Wiemann. “We had to come up with a brand-new proxy to be sure that what we were seeing was how the eggs were in life, and not just a result of some strange fossilization effect. We now have a new method that can be applied to all other sorts of questions, as well as unambiguous evidence that complements the morphological and histological case for soft-shelled eggs in these animals.”

WORDS IN THE NEWS

King Norodom Sihanouk's website

(January 12, 2004)

One of Cambodia's most unusual internet sites has been growing in popularity. The reason - it features almost daily messages from King Norodom Sihanouk himself. It shows the popularity of the king but may also reflect a continuing political deadlock in the country.

The compositions of a King. The website of Norodom Sihanouk **details** not only his music, but the films of Cambodia's head of state. His royal website was set up a year ago, but **site managers** say its popularity has **jumped** and they've **passed the milestone** of one hundred thousand hits. The 81 year old king also receives ten emails a day.

The increasing popularity of the web site - norodomsihanouk.info - might **reflect the fact** that the communicative king is using it to comment on the political crisis in the country, with no new government formed since general elections last July. His messages - sometimes worried, sometimes **mocking** - appear on the site as handwritten notes in French, with frequent comments on the political and other problems of his kingdom, including corruption, **deforestation** and, recently, the subject of his own death and **the vexed question of his successor**. Local commentators believe he's the only head of state to use the internet daily as a means of communicating with his subjects as well as people outside the country. The royal site also details royal activities - state visits, aid to the poor - and some of Cambodia's modern history. The beloved Sihanouk has seen much of Cambodia's recent trials as a king, a politician and an exile, including independence from the French, the rule of the genocidal Khmer Rouge, democratic elections - and, perhaps in the near future, **genocide** tribunals.

■ **Words**

details: lists, gives full information about
site managers: the people in charge of the web site
jumped: increased by a large amount in a short time
passed the milestone of: exceeded the important number of
reflect the fact: indicate
mocking: laughing at and making fun of people
deforestation: the destruction of all the trees in a particular area
the vexed question: the very difficult problem
his successor: the person who will take over from him – in this case, the person who will become the next monarch
genocide: the murder of a whole community or a whole race of people

(Source: BBC)

Kremlin: Putin concerned about arrangements with U.S.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is concerned about how much he can trust arrangements with U.S. President Donald Trump amid protests in the United States, the Interfax news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on Saturday.

U.S. and Russian envoys are due to discuss "mutually agreed topics related to the future of arms control" in Austria next week, the U.S. State Department has said.

Referring to Trump, Peskov said Putin needs to understand that "agreements with his political counterpart can be trusted".

There is a growing unpredictability in steps by Washington and this is worrying world capitals, Peskov was quoted as saying.

"And it is important for President Putin to understand that he has a vis-à-vis (Trump) who can responsibly engage in a dialogue with him on how to amend this situation," Peskov said.

Putin says he may seek another term if constitutional changes passed

Vladimir Putin is considering running for a new term as Russia's president if voters approve constitutional changes that would enable him to do so, Russian news agencies quoted him as saying in an interview Sunday.



Russia will hold a nationwide vote from June 25 to July 1 on proposed changes to the constitution, including an amendment that would allow Putin to seek two more six-year terms as president when his current mandate ends in 2024, Reuters reported.

Opponents say the reforms are designed to allow Putin to keep power until 2036 and amount to a constitutional coup. The Kremlin says they are needed to strengthen the role of parliament and improve social policy and public administration.

"I do not rule out the possibility of running for office, if this (option) comes up in the constitution. We'll see," Putin was quoted as saying in an interview with state TV that was shown in Russia's far east before airing in western Russia. "I have not decided anything for myself yet."

Resistance News

Maher Salah: Annexation plan will not pass

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Hamas's chief abroad Maher Salah on Saturday said that the annexation plan is a heinous crime equal to the occupation of Palestine, stressing that it will not go unanswered.



Speaking at an interview with al-Aqsa TV, Salah said that Hamas completely rejects the annexation and is willing to engage in national joint action aimed at thwarting the Israeli move.

Salah praised Jordan for rejecting Israel's planned annexation of large parts of the West Bank and Jordan Valley despite Israeli and American pressures.

He stressed that the Palestinian people who have resisted the occupation over the years, made heroic sacrifices, and forced their enemy out of the Gaza Strip are undoubtedly able to foil this new settlement project.

Refugees

On World Refugee Day, Salah said that nearly two thirds of the Palestinian people are classified as "refugees", which provides a glimpse of the tragedy that has befallen them due to the occupation.

He stressed that Hamas rejects all projects and attempts that aim to drop the Palestinian refugees' right to return and resettle them in an alternative homeland.

The Hamas leader also shed light on the suffering endured by Palestinians living in refugee camps abroad, especially in Lebanon where they have restricted access to work, education and health care, and are constantly dragged into internal conflicts.

Jerusalem

Salah warned that Jerusalem is being subjected to systematic attacks targeting its Arab and Islamic identity and aiming to force its Palestinian residents out through pressure policies, including entry bans and home demolitions.

He added that the Palestinian masses who regularly come from Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Palestinian territories occupied since 1948 and defy Israeli restrictions to pray at al-Aqsa Mosque are qualified enough to confront these attacks.

Normalization

Salah said that normalization with Israel is a threat that cannot be underestimated.

He underlined that normalization is a moral and political crime, and a betrayal not only of Palestinian martyrs and prisoners, but of all Arabs who have sacrificed their lives over the years for the sake of Jerusalem and Palestine.

Detained Palestinians in Saudi Arabia

The Hamas leader stressed that the Palestinian detainees held in Saudi prisons did nothing wrong and their only crime was supporting their people in Palestine.

He pointed out that liberating them and Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails is a top priority for Hamas at the moment.

Trump's rally was pranked by teenagers who reserved tickets with no intention of attending

Trump's rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma was not quite the crowning achievement of the pandemic that he had hoped.

The president ranted a raved for nearly two hours about all manner of subjects but didn't say anything new or revelatory in that time, making it a potential waste of time for everyone involved.

According to Independent, perhaps the most embarrassing thing of the entire event was the relatively small turn out at the Bok Centre which has a capacity of just under 20,000.

In the weeks leading up to the event both Trump's campaign manager Brad Parscale and his press secretary Kayleigh McEnany and Trump himself had bragged that they had received more than one million requests for tickets.

Multiple shots of the barely full arena soon emerged on social media with many mocking the president for thinking that he could attract such a crowd in the middle of a pandemic.

The pop star Pink, who played the Bok



Centre in 2018, claimed that she sold out the venue in just under five minutes.

Parscale has since attempted to push back on the embarrassing crowd size by trying to point out that there were no families or children at the event who would have been deterred away by protesters outside the building.

To make matters worse, this was a free rally so there would have been an even greater incentive for people to show up. However, suggestions have begun to float around social media that Trump's team were fooled by teenagers on TikTok and K-pop fans who were mocking the president by reserving tickets for themselves but had no intention of turning up.

CNN reports that TikTok user Mary Jo Laupp started this campaign after she posted a video encouraging people to get tickets and leave Trump alone in the arena. Images and videos have since appeared online from teenagers who claimed to have had tickets to the rally confirmed with no intention of actually attending.

Libyan official: Egyptian president playing war drums

Remarks by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is "playing the drums of war," a member of the Libyan High Council of State said late Saturday, Anadolu Agency reports.

Al-Sisi alluded to the possibility of sending "external military missions if required," and said that "any direct intervention in Libya has already become legitimate internationally," while in Matrouh, near the Libyan border.

After the comments, Abdurrahman Shater said in a tweet that Egypt has intervened in Libya's internal affairs for four years.

He said his country's security and democracy have been in danger since al-Sisi insisted on bringing in military troops that Libyans did not accept.

"Take your hands off us, do not repeat the tragedy in Yemen," he told al-Sisi.

Meanwhile, the MPs and the government have been asked to respond to al-Sisi's threats.

Al-Sisi told his army to "be prepared to carry out any mission here within our borders, or if necessary outside our borders."

"Sirte and Jufra are a red line," he said.

Al-Sisi stressed that "any direct interference from Egypt [in Libya] has now acquired the international legitimacy, either with the right to self-defense, or at the request of the only legitimate elected authority in Libya, which is the House of Representatives [Tobruk]."

However, the UN recognizes the government headed by Fayez al-Sarraj.

The government launched Operation Peace Storm against warlord Khalifa Haftar in March to counter attacks on the capital and recently regained strategic locations, including Tarhuna, Haftar's final stronghold in western Libya.

The Libyan government has condemned the military support by Egypt, the UAE, France and Russia for attacks by Haftar's militias on Tripoli which began April 4, 2019.

Yemen accuses UAE-backed separatists of staging a coup in Socotra

Yemen says Southern Transitional Council (STC) fighters have staged "a full-fledged coup" in the strategic island of Socotra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"The militias of the so-called Transitional Council in the Socotra carried out a full-fledged coup that undermined state institutions in the province," Yemen's official news agency reported, quoting an unnamed government official.

According to al Jazeera, by the end of Saturday, the separatist group, which is backed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), had taken control of most of the remote province from forces of Yemen's fugitive government headed by President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

"These militias launched an attack with various medium and heavy weapons, targeting state institutions and citizens' properties, and stormed government camps and headquarters as well," the official said.

"The government will not accept this

absurdity."

The secessionist STC also arrested several military personnel and civilians opposed to the presence of UAE-funded militias on Socotra, the officials said. Those arrested included Brigadier Abdel-Rahman al-Zafrani, commander of the air force in the province, they said.

No casualties were reported, said the four security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

The STC fighters were the on-the-ground allies of the UAE, once Saudi Arabia's main coalition partner in the years-long war against the Houthi rebels, who control vast swaths of territory in the country's north.

The STC raises the flag of the former communist state in the south and has pushed to again split the war-torn country in two, as it was from 1967 to 1990.

UK accused of selling arms to Saudi Arabia a year after court ban

The government stands accused of ignoring a landmark court ruling restricting UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

In a judgment handed down a year ago, the court of appeal ruled it was "unlawful" for the government to have allowed the sale of arms to the kingdom for use in Yemen, where independent estimates suggest a Saudi-led coalition has been responsible for the deaths of more than 8,000 civilians since 2015, Guardian reported.

The ruling barred the government from approving any new licenses to Saudi Arabia and forced it to review the decisions on existing ones, a process the Department for International Trade said would take it "up to several months".

But, a year on, these licenses continue to operate, allowing for the export of fighter jet components and aircraft maintenance. The aerospace giant BAE, the UK's largest arms exporter to the kingdom, confirmed in its 2019 report that it continues to fulfil its 2018 Typhoon support services contract.

Now, in a letter to international trade secretary Liz Truss,



her Labor shadow Emily Thornberry and members of other opposition parties claim, "we are left to assume that – despite being ordered to review these licenses by the courts, and having 12 months to do so – your department has simply chosen not to comply".

They warn the government that its apparent failure to

comply "creates the illogical situation where a UK company that applies for a license today will have that application rejected, but another company that was granted its license prior to 20 June last year may export exactly the same arms without restriction".

The UK has licensed the sale of arms worth over £5.3bn to Saudi Arabia since the Yemen campaign began. Andrew Smith, of Campaign Against the Arms Trade, said: "The UK government has consistently put arms company interests ahead of the rights and lives of people in Yemen. The government has proven that it cannot be trusted to implement its own rules."

A government spokeswoman said: "The UK assesses all export license applications on a case-by-case basis in line with our strict licensing criteria. We will not issue export licenses where to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria, including where we assess there is a clear risk that equipment might be used for internal repression."

Germany, France criticize Israel over West Bank annexation plans

Germany and France have called on Israel to halt its plans to annex large swathes of the occupied West Bank which Palestinians consider as part of their future independent state.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and his French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian, urged the Tel Aviv regime to renounce its controversial plan.

After meeting with Maas in Berlin, Le Drian said, "Our goal is still to prevent any annexation in violation of international law in the first place."

The French foreign minister stressed that the annexation would increase "instability in the West Asia".

Maas said Israel's annexation plans were "of great concern" to him and Le Drian. The issue, he said, should be brought to the forefront once more.

The pair announced intensive talks between EU partners and neighboring countries such as Jordan.

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 West Bank on July 1, in accordance with US President Donald Trump's so-called deal of the century.

The American president officially unveiled his much-con-

demned West Asia (Middle East) plan in January at the White House with Netanyahu on his side, while Palestinian representatives were not invited.

Back in late 2017, Trump enraged Palestinians by recognizing the whole Jerusalem al-Quds, both its eastern and western parts, as Israel's "undivided capital," a highly-provocative move he took in the face of historic Palestinian demands that the city's eastern part serve as the capital of their future state.

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

It enshrines the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital" and allows the regime to annex settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley, which Israel occupied in 1967.

Annex now, as world occupied with coronavirus

According to the Israeli ministry of intelligence, now is the best time to implement the annexation plan, as Arab countries would not protest the move.

The daily Israel Hayom announced on Friday that it had obtained a copy of a position paper presented to Israeli intelligence minister Eli Cohen which cited the advantages

of the annexation.

The annexation "improves the starting conditions of future negotiations with the Palestinians for Israel and crystallizes the cost of Palestinian rejection of peace talks, and therefore could spur [the Palestinians] back to the negotiation table in an effort to halt additional phases," the paper reportedly says.

"After a wave of diplomatic protests, mainly by governments, the annexation won't rouse the Arab street against the regimes. The absence of agitation in the streets will make it clear to Arab leaders that the Palestinian issue isn't a threat to them."

According to the document, the annexation would provide a platform for the Arab regimes to improve ties with Israel without waiting for an Israeli-Palestinian arrangement.

On Thursday, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi unexpectedly visited the West Bank where he warned against the annexation plans.

"Annexation is unprecedented for the peace process, and it will kill the two-state solution and will destroy all the foundations of the peace process," Safadi said after meeting with his Palestinian counterpart in the city of Ramallah.

He said the plans would "deprive all peoples of the region of their right to live in security, peace and stability."

Trump calls anti-racist protesters 'thugs'

Eric Trump refers to racial justice protesters as 'animals'

→ 1 Similar protests and marches, ignited by the May 25 death of George Floyd, in at least a dozen other US cities were peaceful on Saturday.

Crowds of protesters gathered outside a police precinct in Atlanta and a woman sang "America the Beautiful" while waving a burning American flag.

In New York, protesters marched over the Brooklyn Bridge into Manhattan's Foley Square while groups rallied in different parts of Washington, DC, and near the White House.

The demonstrations come one day after Trump warned on Twitter that "protesters, anarchists, agitators, looters or lowlives" outside his rally could be treated roughly.

The rally aimed at reigniting Trump's reelection bid was originally scheduled for Friday, which was Juneteenth -- the day commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

The President rescheduled the event in response to criticism but has largely remained silent on the issue of systemic racism and has resisted changes proposed in the wake of the protests.

Protesters gathered in Tulsa near the entrance of the site where Trump will hold a rally on Saturday.

Republican Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma told Fox News on Saturday that he expected Trump to speak about race, adding that "only the President can speak to this issue unlike any other American can speak to this issue."

"It would be important for the President to make a very clear statement that we are one nation under God, indivisible," Lankford said.

Both the ongoing nationwide protests and Trump's Saturday rally have generated concerns about the potential spread of coronavirus.

Meanwhile, speaking at the his father's campaign rally in Tulsa, the president's son Eric Trump referred to Black Lives Matter protesters as «animals».

Telling supporters that there is no family other than the Trumps that will work harder for them, he said they will preserve «the moral fabric of the country».

Iran expert Cheraghpour talks about COVID-19 impacts on football

By Farrokh Hessabi

TEHRAN — Iran football expert, Jalal Cheraghpour, has said that carelessness toward coronavirus outbreak and its effects on the sports, especially football, will make it impossible to hold the next season of the Iran Professional League (IPL).

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, the former coach of Iran national team said: “The outbreak of coronavirus is a global phenomenon and it’s not just about one or more specific countries. No one can predict what will happen in the future because it is a new pandemic and of course, a very different one.”

“There is a kind of fear among all people, including athletes about this disease. The football players may not be fully fit physically, emotionally, and mentally as they were before, but it can happen for all of the players and not some of them,” Cheraghpour added.

The former coach of the Iranian clubs such as Esteghlal Ahvaz and Niroye Zamini believes that people should get used to living, exercising, and competing alongside the coronavirus and the resulting fear.

“Football will be different from before. Without spectators, it is like friendly games rather than official matches. But we should get used to this kind of football.”

Cheraghpour also talked about the resumption of the IPL which is scheduled to resume on June 24 despite some clubs are planning to lobby against the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI)’s attempts to restart the league.



“We still are in the first phase of the pandemic coronavirus and it’s not over yet. According to the officials, there are possibilities of the second Covid-19 wave to occur in the country. So, it is better to

continue football sooner rather than later. Some teams are opposing the resumption of the games because of the costs they have to pay and some are making up other excuses to close the league.

“The most important point is that we have to complete the competitions of this season and be aware that we may lose the next season of the league with the slightest carelessness,” he said.

Speaking about Iran national team and their new head coach, Dragan Skocic, Cheraghpour said: “Iran has played at a high level for many years with Carlos Queiroz at the helm. Skocic has worked in Iranian football for many years and is familiar with the general atmosphere of our football. However, he has nothing new to offer to our national team.”

After Queiroz’s departure, the FFIRI turned to Marc Wilmots, but after some disappointing results in the current round of Asian qualifiers for Qatar 2022, the Belgian was replaced by the Skocic.

“Skocic is a manager of the Eastern European football and there is nothing new that he wants to give our football comparing what Queiroz has done in the Iranian national team. This is Skocic’s first time in charge of a national team. I hope that he will succeed with the Iranian national team,” Cheraghpour added.

“I hope that he will succeed with the Iranian national team, although even after passing the AFC’s second qualifying round for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, our very hard work will be in the third round where the best teams of Asia will compete in two groups of six teams and just top two teams of each group will qualify for the World Cup. Honestly speaking, it is so difficult for us to qualify for the 2022 World Cup, considering the current situation of the national team,” he concluded.

FFIRI responds to four clubs over coronavirus concerns

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), in a statement, responded to four Iran Professional League (IPL) teams’ claims about the resumption of the matches, insisted that the four teams are not allowed to decide for 140 teams in the different leagues of the Iranian football.

In a letter sent to the Iranian football federation last Monday, four teams, namely Tractor, Machine Sazi, Shahr Khodro, and Nesaji criticized the decision over the restart of the league and even threatened to withdraw from the competitions.

“The Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters have repeatedly stressed the need to follow health protocols as well as coexist with the pandemic virus in recent days, given the rising outbreak of the virus, a process that is followed by all the people of different jobs in society.” the FFIRI said in the lengthy statement.



The football federation also referred to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s order about the continuation of sports activities within the framework of health and safety protocols in the country, as well as the message of the president of FIFA, Gianni Infantino, regarding the priorities of resuming football with encouraging everyone that health comes first.

“It is also emphasized that the FFIRI and the League Organization have taken the necessary measures to resume the league based on the licenses and guidelines issued by the country’s authorities.”

“Let’s not forget that football in Iran is not just about the IPL matches. The clubs in League One, Two, and Three are planning to resume their matches as soon as possible. So, in this process, four clubs will not be able to decide on more than 140 clubs,” the statement reads.

The Iran Football League Organization announced that IPL, which was halted four months ago, will resume on June 24 with a match between Foolad and Esteghlal.

Asian Classics: IR Iran vs USA (1998 FIFA World Cup)

From the moment the draw for the 1998 FIFA World Cup Finals was made, the world waited with baited breath for the historic meeting between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America.

the-AFC.com looks back at a match that captured global attention and ended with a first-ever Iranian World Cup win.

It was on a cold, miserable December evening in Marseille that the heat was cranked up six months before the FIFA World Cup when Iran and the USA were drawn together in Group F of the 1998 Finals.

It resulted in a run of sensational headlines in the lead up to what was to be a remarkable game at a packed-out Stade Gerland in Lyon.

For an Iranian side that had secured a ticket for their country’s first appearance at the FIFA World Cup since 1978 just qualifying for the Finals was a momentous occasion, but Team Melli went to France in a state of uncertainty that bordered on turmoil.

Badu Vieira, the coach who had qualified them for France in dramatic fashion against Australia in Melbourne the previous November, was long gone, replaced initially by Tomislav Ivic.

Ivic had led Team Melli to overseas friendlies in Hong Kong and in Europe, only for the affable Croatian’s reign to come unstuck. During a fractious camp in Italy the former United Arab Emirates coach was removed after a 7-1 defeat in a closed doors game against AS Roma, with Jalal Talebi appointed in his place.

The former Geylang United coach was given only three weeks to fine tune his squad for the country’s first appearance at the FIFA World Cup finals in 20 years, but that did not dampen the hopes of the nation that a golden generation of talent could make a significant impact.

Less than two years earlier, Iranian fans had seen their team undergo a resurgence within the Asian game. A squad boasting Ali Daei, Karim Bagheri, Khodadad Azizi and Mehdi Mahdavi had captured the imagination at the AFC Asian Cup Finals in 1996 before sealing their place in France. After thrilling and enthralling in equal measure, expectations were high.

Those dreams of success suffered a serious blow, however, in the opening game of their France 98 campaign against Yugoslavia. With first choice goalkeeper Ahmedreza Abedzadeh suspended for the match at Saint Etienne’s Stade Geoffroy-Guichard, understudy Nima Nakisa was drafted in as the Persepolis stalwart’s replacement.

It was to prove decisive. Nakisa was poorly positioned to deal with Sinisa Mihajlovic’s low free-kick 17 minutes from time, with the resulting goal scuppering hopes of the Iranians taking something from the opener to immediately heap pressure on Talebi and his team ahead of the June 21 showdown with the Americans.

Not that the game needed any further hyping. While the Iranians and the United States were ranked in the

third and fourth group of seeds prior to the tournament, their relatively lowly status within the tournament was irrelevant once game time approached.

The eyes of the world were set squarely on Lyon and the two protagonists for a game the President of the United States Soccer Federation, Alan Rothenberg, had called “the mother of all games”. With both teams having lost their opening games – the United States had earlier lost to Germany - each needed the three points.

Any potential on-field issues between the players was quickly defused by FIFA, which designated June 21 Fair Play Day and had both starting lineups come together before kick-off for a group photograph, with the Iranian players handing bouquets to their American counterparts.

The crowd inside the Stade Gerland, however, was heavily and vociferously in favor of Talebi’s team, although they were made to endure several heart stopping moments throughout the opening exchanges as the US took the initiative.

Barely three minutes had gone by before Brian McBride rattled the Iranian woodwork, his powerful header thumping off the bar after Claudio Reyna’s out-swinging free-kick. Moments later Cobi Jones was in on the action, bursting down the left only to see his cutback go across the face of goal.

With 12 minutes left in the half Reyna was unlucky not to open the scoring with a fine shot which hit the post. It was a miss the Americans were to rue as, seven minutes later, the Iranians went in front.

Javad Zarinecheh’s clipped cross from the right found Hamid Reza Estili unmarked in the penalty area and the midfielder’s header looped over Kasey Keller and into the net, prompting Estili to race off in celebratory delight.

“Everyone reminds me of that goal,” said Estili several years later. “People from five to even 95 admire me for that goal. Many Iranians who are living abroad proudly confess that they’re Iranian. That victory unified all Iranians.

“In the midfield, Bagheri had more freedom to join the forwards than I did. At that moment I saw Bagheri was still in our half. When Mahdavi and Zarinecheh were on the right flank I saw a place between Azizi and Daei. I ran into the box and headed the ball and it went in.”

Once in front, the Iranians never looked like relinquishing the lead. In the 84th minute Team Melli doubled their advantage when Mahdavi burst into the American half before smashing his low shot past Keller and into the bottom corner.

The US were given a sliver of hope three minutes from time when McBride’s downward header slipped through substitute Naim Sadavi’s legs and defender Mohammad Khakpour was unable to hack the ball clear before it crossed the line.

But it was too little too late for the Americans as Team Melli clinched a historic victory and the United States crashed out of the tournament with a game to play.



“It was amazing for us and amazing for the Iranian nation,” said Talebi after the game. “It was important we win, not because we were playing America but because Iran had never won a game in the World Cup before. It is just a shame that one team had to lose.

“In the changing rooms we were all crying,” said Mahdavi. “All I can think about was what it must be like in Tehran with all the people in the streets. When I scored and I saw the ball going into the net I thought about my people.”

The win in Lyon was not only historic, it meant the Iranians went into their final game of the group phase with hopes of advancing to the knockout rounds of the World Cup for the first time. There was only one issue: three-time champions Germany stood in their way, with a squad boasting the talents of Lothar Matthaus, Jurgen Klinsmann and Olivier Bierhoff.

With Daei, Bagheri and Azizi already playing in the Bundesliga and others, including Mahdavi, being courted by German clubs, the meeting with the European giants was another game of mammoth proportions for the Iranians.

In the end a 2-0 defeat – following goals from Bierhoff and Klinsmann – knocked Talebi and his team out of the World Cup and it would be another eight years before the Iranians returned to the Finals, in Germany in 2006.

Before then, however, there was to be another meeting with the United States and this time on American soil. On January 16, 2000, a little more than 18 months after the clash in Lyon, the two countries met at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, playing out a 1-1 draw in front of more than 50,000 fans.

Mahdavi was on the scoresheet that day, too, while the game also led to Azizi joining Major League Soccer side San Jose Earthquakes.

Little, though, can compare with the thrill of that night in Lyon for Team Melli and their fans, who had to wait another 20 years before seeing the team win at the FIFA World Cup again when, in Russia two years ago, they handed Morocco a 1-0 defeat.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran coach Dragan Skocic arrives in Tehran

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team coach Dragan Skocic returned to Tehran after more than three months.

He left Tehran in mid-March after the training of the national team was canceled due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

The Iran Professional League will resume on Wednesday and Skocic is supposed to monitor the competitions since Iran national football team prepare for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

The “Persian Leopards” will have to win their four remaining matches to book a place at the qualification’s next stage.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC), in consultation with FIFA, has announced the proposed match dates for the remaining matches of Round 2 in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Asian Qualifiers after the competitions were canceled due to coronavirus.

Matchdays 7 and 8 are now scheduled to take place on October 8 and 13, 2020 respectively while Matchdays 9 and 10 are due to kick off on November 12 and 17, 2020.

Iran sit third in Group C, five points behind Iraq.

Ali Karimi chosen as best foreign player of UAE league

Tasnim — Ex-Iran national football team captain Ali Karim, who played in Emirati club Al Ahli from 2001 to 2005, has been named as the best foreign player in the UAE Pro League.

In a poll conducted by Albayan website, the Iranian midfielder along with Chilean midfielder Gorge Valdivia, who played for Al Wahda, was named as the best foreign player in the league with 25 percent of the votes.

Karimi played 69 matches for Al Ahli and scored 45 goals in a four-year career.

The former Bayern Munich player helped the Emirati football team win UAE Cup twice in 2002 and 2004.

Karim Ansarifard to leave Al-Sailiya: report

Tasnim — Iran international forward Karim Ansarifard will reportedly leave Qatari club Al-Sailiya at the end of the season.

The 30-year-old striker joined Al-Sailiya from Nottingham Forest in July 2019 on a one-and-a-half-year contract.

Now, the Qatari site Al Rya has reported that Ansarifard will leave the team at the end of the season.

He had been reportedly linked with a move to Persepolis.

Lakers owner calls for unity against racism on Juneteenth

LA Lakers owner Jeannie Buss said on Friday, the Juneteenth holiday, that she is no longer willing to ignore hate and called on white people to come together and acknowledge the racism that exists in the United States.

Juneteenth 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.

Thousands marched through U.S. cities on Friday, capping nearly four weeks of protests and national soul-searching sparked by the death of a Black man, George Floyd, under the knee of a white police officer in Minneapolis.

In a post on Instagram, Buss shared a picture of a note containing offensive language from a person named Joe, who described himself as a “huge Lakers fan”, that she said she received on Monday.

The note, which opens with the words “Dear whore”, tells Buss to “go to hell and join Kobe Bryant.”

The picture here contains three words that have been blacked out with a marker pen, including what appears to be a strong racial slur as well as the surname of the person who sent it.

“After much thought, I decided to share this letter I received on Monday so that everyone can see the hate is real and living out there. This is happening in our world TODAY. Its real and it exists,” Buss said in a post accompanying the picture.

“I have received letters like this over the years. The advice I always got? “Ignore it.” I did. But not anymore.

“On this day, Juneteenth, I ask my white friends to join together, acknowledge the racism that exists in our country and around the world, and pledge to stop ignoring it. We all must do better.”

(Source: Reuters)

Iraqi football legend Radhi dies from COVID-19

Iraqi football legend Ahmed Radhi died Sunday from complications linked to COVID-19, the health ministry said, just hours before he was to be flown for treatment in Jordan.

Radhi, 56, scored what remains Iraq’s only World Cup finals goal in 1986 against Belgium.

He had been hospitalized last week in Baghdad after testing positive for coronavirus but had checked out on Thursday after his condition improved.

But he relapsed a few hours later and was readmitted but passed away early Sunday.

In a video reportedly from his hospital bed on Saturday, Radhi could be seen struggling to breathe as medics in full protective gear try to treat him.

“Sometimes it’s hard to breathe but that’s normal,” he could be heard telling the medical team, his voice strained.

Radhi, a striker, led Iraq to victory in the Gulf Cups of 1984 and 1988, when he was voted Asian footballer of the year.

In the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, he scored against Belgium but Iraq went on to lose the match 2-1 and exited the tournament in the group stage without a point.

He fled Iraq in 2006 after its Olympic Committee head was kidnapped during the height of the sectarian violence that followed the US-led invasion of 2003.

(Source: Besoccer)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be not ashamed of a small donations; for, despair is much less than that.

Imam Ali (AS)

Tehran orchestra, world-renowned musicians team up to remake “Morghe Sahar”

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Tehran Philharmonic Orchestra has released a video of the memorable Iranian song “Morghe Sahar” (“The Bird of Dawn”) in collaboration with a number of world-renowned musicians such as German violist Tabea Zimmermann and German-Egyptian double bass player Nabil Shehata.



A photo of the video “Morghe Sahar” recorded by the Tehran Philharmonic Orchestra.

The idea of recording the video came from conductor Arash Guran nearly three months ago to encourage people in the battle against coronavirus during the home quarantine. “I felt I should do something, create a piece that speaks of the present time and can help improve the circumstances,” Guran told the Persian service of ILNA on Sunday after the release of the video.

“Morghe Sahar”, composed by Morteza Neydavud based on a poem by Malek ush’Shora Bahar, is a good example of the music created during Iran’s Constitutional Revolution. Bahar composed the poem in prison.

The piece was first sung in 1927 by Iranodolleh Helen or Jalal Tajesfahani. Moluk Zarrabi is also one of the early singers of the piece. The song was then performed and recorded by several other singers, including Nader Golchin, Mohammadreza Shajarian and Hengameh Akhavan.

In the video, the song has been performed by Iranian vocalist Homayun Shajarian, son of Mohammadreza, and Lebanese singer Abeer Nehme.

Imamyar Hasanov, Sioned Williams, Jan Mrácek, David Peralta Alegre, Tobias Feldmann, Roman Kholmatov, Lynn Chang, Paniz Faryousefi, Pedram Faryousefi, Coraline Groen, Muriel Razavi, Rebecca Young, Brannon Cho and Alessio Pianelli are among the overseas musicians collaborating in recording this video directed by Hamid Shavarean.

“I wanted to have top musicians of the world to record this video,” Guran said and added, “Undoubtedly, members of the orchestra and I felt very honored by working with all these great musicians.”

The project has been carried out under the title of “Beyond the Quarantine” and the orchestra has dedicated it “to all the people of the world whose love goes beyond borders and races.”

Due to the pandemic, the musician recorded their parts separately and Iranian musician Reza Farhadi mixed and mastered all the recordings.

Cannes Film Market to present Iran’s “Headless”

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Borderless Art Institute will offer Iranian director Kaveh Sajjadi Hosseini’s new film “Headless” at the Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film), which is the rendezvous for professionals in the global film industry.

Due to the pandemic, the market will be organized online this year from June 22 to 26.

Elham Korda and Mehdi Kushki are the main actors of the film co-written by Payam Larian, Sadeq Khoshhal and Kaveh Sajjadi Hosseini.

In addition, Paris-based Memento Films International will offer Iranian director Asghar Farhadi’s new film “A Hero” at the Cannes Film Market.

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 as yet.

Iran publishes rare copy of Nezami Ganjavi’s Khamseh

➔ The copy published by the Iranian Academy of Arts dates back to the reign of Shah Tahmasp (1524–1576), the Safavid king who commissioned artists to inscribe and illuminate the book.

A large number of cultural officials, including manager of the academy, Alireza Esmaeili, Academy of Persian Language and Literature director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, and Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini, came together for a ceremony in Tehran to unveil a copy of the book.

Speaking at the ceremony, Esmaeili said that out of the venerable Persian texts some received significant attention by calligraphers and illustrators during the Safavid era such as the Khamseh and the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp.

“The publication of this copy can help revive, preserve and promote the precious, old tradition of book designing and act as a source of inspiration for contemporary artists of our country,” he added.

“This copy has been published in collaboration with the Tehran Municipality to revive the cultural identity of Iran, making more Iranian citizens interested in classic Persian literature,” he said.

Haddad-Adel expressed thanks to the academy over the publication of the book and said, “In older times, a group of calligraphers, illustrators and miniaturists gathered to create such a precious book. This indicates the depth of the art and cultural activity of this land, and the fine cultural management of Iran in those days.”

Mojtaba Hosseini also offered his appreciation to the academy over the



This image shows a copy of Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi’s Khamseh unveiled by the Iranian Academy of Arts on June 20, 2020. (IRIB/Ahmad Belbasi)

publication of the book, and said, “Art is the light and the mirror; a light to show the future, and as much as this light is bright we will have a brighter future, giving us hope

for more beautiful days to come.”

Folios of the book bearing beautiful miniature paintings are on view in an exhibition at the academy.

Nezami Ganjavi, who lived during the 12th century, is the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature who brought a colloquial and realistic style to the Persian epic.

Tehran gallery makes debut with “Photography 99”

Samadian, Saeid Sadeqi, Sadeq Tirafkan, Mehdi Pakdel and Niyusha Tavakolian, are on display at the exhibit.

“Works by the veteran photographers are on view beside photos by newcomers, and I am happy to have been able to organize such an exhibit,” curator Farbud said on Sunday.

The photos in color and black and white are on display in separate halls. In addition, separated sections have been dedicated to displaying nature and documentary photos and works by photojournalists, he added.

“When the photos by each photographer were placed on display on the walls, a kind of relation appeared between the photos, leading to a form of visual communication,” he said.

“All the photos have been placed in small frames for display since we planned to showcase the personal narrations of Iranian photographers and show how a large number of photographers have their different viewpoints towards photography and their topics,” he explained.

“And that is why it seems the displayed photos do not

have any commonality, but they can put next to each other considering their style of personal narration,” he said.

He added that the exhibit was scheduled to open in March but was postponed due to the outbreak of coronavirus in the country.

“I believe the quarantine in the early days of the pandemic was hard for everyone, however, the artist could overcome the situation since they could work in their personal ateliers. On the other side, the photographers were also able to continue their activities and record part of the visual memory of the society,” he asserted.

Honare Tehan Gallery has inaugurated the exhibit “Photography 99” under the management of Majid Saeidi, and part of the sale is scheduled to be dedicated to charity.

The exhibit, which opened on Friday, will run until July 20 to provide more time for the visitors to avoid crowds and observe social distancing.

The gallery can be found at 3 Nikushahr Dead End, Iranshahr St.



Art aficionados visit the photo exhibition “Photography 99” at Honare Tehran Gallery on June 19, 2020.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Honare Tehran Gallery is playing host to a collection of photos selected by Fereidun Farbud in an exhibition titled “Photography 99”.

Photos by over 90 veteran photographers, including Abbas Kiarostami, Maryam Zandi, Kamran Shirdel, Seifollah

Premiere of animation on Commander Soleimani set for his martyrdom anniversary

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — The Saba Art and Cultural Institute announced on Sunday that its animation on the life of Commander Qassem Soleimani will premiere on the anniversary of his martyrdom.

The IRGC Quds Force chief was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

Mohammad-Ali Safura is the director and producer of the mid-length animated movie, which will cover the life of the commander from his childhood to his martyrdom in the air raid.

The movie is a part of a Saba animated series named “40 Martyrs”, which recounts the life stories of 40 Iranian martyrs who lost their lives during the 1979

Islamic Revolution and the 1980s Iran-Iraq war.

The series’ first season, which is composed of seven episodes, will be aired by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) during the 30th anniversary of the Iran-Iraq war in September, Saba Animation Department director Mohammad-Rahim Livani said.

It takes two months for the crew of series at the Saba Animation Department to make one episode of the animation project.

Earlier in February, the BOX startup factory of the Sharif University of Technology announced that it was producing a large collection of animations on Soleimani.



Commander Qassem Soleimani in an undated photo.

Resistance festival to honor innovative filmmakers with Rasul Award

A R T **TEHRAN** — The 16th edition of the Resistance International Film Festival announced on Sunday that it will honor innovative filmmakers with the Rasul Award named after war film director Rasul Mollaqlipour.

“The award has been launched in memory of Rasul Mollaqlipour in order to encourage directors to introduce innovations in their films on the Islamic Revolution and the Sacred

Defense [Iran-Iraq war],” the organizers announced on Sunday.

To select the winner of the first edition of the award this year, a team of experts will review all movies produced by Iranian filmmakers over the past 40 years.

Mollaqlipour, whose films directly or indirectly centered on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, died of a heart attack at age 51 in 2007.

In the early years of his filmmaking career, Mollaqlipour focused on stories about the war, so initially, he was regarded as a Sacred Defense filmmaker.

Later, he began to criticize the postwar situation in his films – an attitude that was not officially welcomed.

His films including “Journey to Chazzabeh”, “The Burnt Slip”, “The Poisonous Mushroom” and “M for Mother” were

acclaimed at Iranian festivals.

The Resistance International Film Festival is scheduled to take place in Tehran from September 21 to 27.

The organizers plan to allocate a special section to films on health workers this year in honor of the medical workers on the front line of the campaign against COVID-19.

Photo: A poster for the Rasul Award at the Resistance International Film Festival.

Timothy Rice’s “Music in Bulgaria” appears in Persian

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of “Music in Bulgaria: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture” by Timothy Rice, a professor of ethnomusicology at UCLA, has been published by Mahoor Publications in Tehran.

Behnaz Shayeeg has rendered the book into Persian. The book is packaged with a CD containing examples of the music discussed.

Music in Bulgaria is one of several case-study volumes that can be used along with Thinking Musically, the core book in the Global Music Series.

Thinking musically incorporates music from many diverse cultures and establishes the framework for exploring the practice of music around the world. It sets the stage for an array of case-study volumes, each of which focuses on a single area of the world. Each case study uses the contemporary musical situation as a point of departure, covering historical information and traditions as they relate to the present.



Front cover of the Persian translation of “Music in Bulgaria” by Timothy Rice.

Music in Bulgaria presents a focused introduction to the rich and varied tradition of Bulgarian music. Taking readers on a tour of the country’s musical landscape, it explores ways in which Bulgaria’s rural traditions affect the expression and interpretation of its music and examines how Bulgaria’s

history has influenced its music over many decades.

The book also shows how musical traditions have been preserved and have flourished despite the social changes brought about by the post-WWII era of industrialization, modernization and urbanization. Timothy Rice demonstrates how Bulgarian music, in addition to being an art and an entertainment, is deeply embedded in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the country. He analyzes how this music has spread to other cultures and how it has made its mark on new forms of popular music. Brief lessons on how ethnomusicologists conduct their research are also included.

Written in a lively style accessible to both students and general readers, “Music in Bulgaria” features vivid eyewitness accounts of performances, interviews with performers and glossaries of Bulgarian and musical terms. Incorporating numerous listening examples and other activities that help readers learn to listen, sing and dance to Bulgarian music.