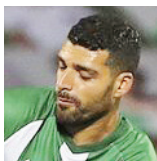




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Industry, mining, trade projects worth over \$5.4b inaugurated in 2 months

TEHRAN – Some 196 industrial, mining and trade projects worth 230 trillion rials (about \$5.48b) went operational throughout the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to June 16.

The mentioned projects have created job opportunities for 10,200 people, Shata reported.

As reported, 95 of the mentioned projects were completely new projects while the other 101 were development plans.

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has implemented a new program called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports", based on which the ministry plans to inaugurate 200 industrial, mining, and trade projects across the country by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (begins on March 20, 2021). **→4**

IAEA vulnerable to members with political motives: former French diplomat

TEHRAN – Iran has reacted strongly to the adoption of a resolution by the IAEA Board of Governors, saying it was drafted by the European trio (France, Germany and Britain) under a pressure from the United States and Israel.

Marc Finaud, the former French Foreign Ministry spokesman, also does not reject outside pressure on the IAEA decisions by some members, telling the

Tehran Times that the body is "vulnerable to attempts by some member states, with their own political agendas, to influence its judgment."

However Finaud says the three European countries party to the 2015 nuclear deal and the entire EU have "a strong attachment to maintaining the JCPOA despite all the current challenges." **→7**

Rouhani says Iran not waiting for U.S. presidential elections

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the International Atomic Energy Agency should maintain its independence and advised the Europeans not to give in to the United States' pressure.

"The agency's credibility is very important for the international system. Iran is still ready for legal inspections of the agency and close cooperation with it within the framework of regulations," he said

during a cabinet meeting.

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. **→2**



ARTICLE
Rahim Hayat Qureshi
Pakistan's ambassador to Iran

The brotherly bond between Iran and Pakistan

As I present my credentials to H.E. President Rouhani, it is a moment to reflect over the longstanding fraternal, cultural and historical bonds between Iran and Pakistan.

There is a famous Hadith on Persia that once Holy Prophet placed his hand on Hazrat Salman Farsi and stated, "Even if faith were near Pleiades, men from amongst the Persians would attain it." He compared the love of knowledge and scientific enquiry of Persia to the Pleiades constellation (commonly known as Al Surya) which represents the vastness as well as the beauty of the Universe. Through this Hadith, the Holy Prophet indicated that there was no difficulty or obstacle big enough that could prevent the Persians from aspiring for the truth.

Since ancient times Persia has been recognized as a center of Knowledge, receiving and spreading information from China and South Asia in the East to Greece and Rome in the West. Persian scientists, writers and thinkers have remarkable contributions in various fields of science such as algebra, physics, chemistry, astronomy and biology. History stands witness to the logarithmic tables invented by Al-Khawarazmi, astronomical encyclopedia compiled by Al-Biruni, theory of evolution explained by Al-Tusi and contributions made by Ibn-e-Sina in the field of medicine. Likewise, Persian poets and philosophers have colored the realm of literature, theology and mysticism. The works of Saadi, Rumi and Hafez have not only illuminated hearts of men and women but also given impetus to spread of Islam in the main lands of Central and South Asia.

Persian Cosmopolitan influence can be traced even today in the South Asian region and Pakistan, which dates back to the Muslim conquest of the Indian sub-continent. The influx of Persian travelers and migrants, for-instance, the famous Mughal Queen Noor Jahan, further accentuated the development of Persian language in the region. **→3**

UN lauds Iran's fight against drug trafficking

TEHRAN – The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

Alexander Fedulov, UNODC's representative to Iran, made the remarks during a video conference held on Tuesday on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as 'World Drug Day', is celebrated annually on 26 June. The theme of World Drug Day 2020 is "Better Knowledge for Better Care."

The observance was instituted by General Assembly Resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987.

The field of addressing the drug problem has been 'plagued' by the misinformation of many kinds. This year's theme aims at improving the understanding of the world drug problem and

at fostering greater international cooperation for countering its impact on health, governance, and security.

According to UNODC's 2020 report, Iran made considerable efforts in drug seizure, as it confiscated 90 percent of opium, 26 percent of heroin, and 48 percent of morphine on the global scale, Fedulov said.

Drug use is a complex health and social problem worldwide, with half a million people dying each year as a result of drug abuse, he lamented, adding, drug use has entered a critical condition, and the international community is determined to tackle the global drug problem.

The conference was also attended by Iran's Drug Control Headquarters Secretary-General Eskandar Momeni, head of the Anti-Drug Committee of Iran's police force General Qassem Rezaei and deputy Attorney General Saeed Omrani. **→9**

Protesters try to pull down ex-U.S. president's statue in DC

Protesters tried to pull down a statue of former U.S. President Andrew Jackson near the White House before being dispersed by police.

Washington, DC, WUSA-TV channel reported that police used pepper spray to move protesters out of Lafayette Square, where the Jackson statue is located.

Videos posted on social media showed that the protesters had climbed on the statue, tied ropes around it, then tried to pull it off its pedestal, al Jazeera reported.

A wave of nationwide rallies calling for racial justice has swept the US since May 25, when George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The statue shows Jackson in a military uniform atop a rearing horse. The 19th-century president's ruthless treatment of Native Americans has made his statue a target of

demonstrators protesting the U.S.'s legacy of racial injustice.

Jackson, in office from 1829 to 1837, owned more than 500 slaves over the course of his life and was a key figure in the Trail of Tears, the forced relocation of at least 60,000 Native Americans.

A helicopter circled over the gathering of hundreds of people on the newly-renamed Black Lives Matter Plaza as officers continued to use pepper spray to disperse the protesters.

The Jackson statue remained on its pedestal on Monday night.

President Donald Trump tweeted late on Monday that "numerous people" had been arrested for "the disgraceful vandalism."

He added: "10 years in prison under the Veteran's Memorial Preservation Act. Beware!" **→10**

Hamas leadership meets Russia's deputy foreign minister in Doha

TEHRAN— A high-level delegation from the Hamas Movement led by its political chief Ismail Haneyya met on Tuesday in the Qatari capital, Doha, with Mikhail Bogdanov, deputy foreign minister of the Russian Federation, and Nur Kholov, the Russian ambassador to the country.

The Hamas delegation also included former political chief Khaled Mishaal and head of the international relations office Mousa Abu Marzouk, according to a press release issued by the Hamas Movement.

During the meeting, the Hamas leaders put Bogdanov and Kholov in the picture of the political developments in the Palestinian arena, especially with regard to Israel's plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.

They affirmed that Hamas and other Palestinian factions reject the Israeli annexation plan and would keep working at all levels on frustrating this plan and other Israeli projects.

The also explained the efforts being made

by the Hamas leadership with other national parties to end the inter-Palestinian division and strengthen the internal front against the occupation and its schemes.

Israeli police assault, detain three Palestinians outside Aqsa Mosque

The Israeli occupation police in Jerusalem on Tuesday evening physically assaulted and detained three Palestinian young men in the area of Bab al-Silsila, one of the Aqsa Mosque's gates in the Old City. **→10**



© Mehr/ Mohammad Dashti

Staying cool in waterfalls

A man jumps from a waterfall to both escape the summer heat and have fun in Haviq district, northern Gilan province, June 22, 2020.

Named Zomorrod Waterfall, it is one of the distinguished natural tourist attractions of the lush green region. Iranian waterfalls are undoubtedly not branded as the world's highest, wildest or prettiest but a feature making them astonishing is that they are in a land with dominating arid and semi-arid plain.

Prehistorical petroglyph bearing Pahlavi script discovered in central Iran

TEHRAN — A prehistorical petroglyph, which bears Pahlavi script written by ordinary people of the time, has recently been found during an archaeological survey in Teymareh region of Khomein county, central Iran.

"This is the sixth petroglyph, engraved with Pahlavi script, which has so far been found in the highlands of Teymareh. And the petroglyph is estimated to date back to 2,200 years ago," IRIB quoted Iranian archaeologist Mohammad Nasserifard as saying on Wednesday.

"The difference between this inscription and other inscriptions of the Pahlavi script discovered in Iran, (which have been inscriptions ordered by monarchs and rulers) is that these manuscripts belong to ordinary people and those who were far from the power and governments," Nasserifard explained.

Pahlavi is a particular, exclusively written form of various Middle Iranian languages. Pahlavi compositions have been found for the dialects/ethnolects of Parthia, Persis, Sogdiana, Scythia, and Khotan.

Talking about the significance of the relics, the top archaeologist said "From the content of their texts, we can learn about the social and anthropological views of the Iranian people who lived in this region about two millennia ago."

"Therefore, the texts of these inscriptions are first-hand documents that can help researchers to discover more about the life of ordinary people who lived in this region some 2,200 years ago." **→8**

Pakistan's ambassador submits credentials to Rouhani

Rouhani calls for close cooperation with Pakistan in border security

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhni has called for expanding cooperation with Pakistan in protecting security in border areas.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Pakistani Ambassador to Iran Rahim Hayat Qureshi during which he received the ambassador's credentials.

Rouhani also called for expanding relations in various spheres.



He also attached great importance to implementation of the agreements between the two countries.

Qureshi described Iran as an important and influential country and noted that Pakistan attaches great importance to ties with Tehran.

Elsewhere, the ambassador said Pakistan considers Iran's security its own security and will continue supporting Iran in international bodies.

In a separate meeting, Rouhani also received credentials of Hungarian ambassador to Tehran Zoltan Varga-Haszonits.

At the meeting, both sides called for expansion of ties between Tehran and Budapest.

Iraqi FM says his first foreign tours will be to Tehran and Riyadh

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein has said that his first foreign visits will be to Tehran and Riyadh.

Hussein made the announcement during a meeting with Jeanine Hennes Plasschaert, the special representative of the UN secretary-general and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Hussein said that the Iraqi government seeks to pursue a balanced policy in establishing relations, especially with neighboring countries.

"The minister noted that the government is keen to pursue a balanced policy in establishing relations, especially with neighboring countries, revealing that his first foreign visits will be to Tehran and Riyadh to enhance bilateral relations and establish prospects for cooperation in the pursuit of common interests," said a report published by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry website.

Reportedly, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi is also planning his first foreign tour with visits to the United States, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Iraqi officials told The New Arab's Arabic-language service that the tour is expected to start next month.

Two government officials, both of whom spoke separately with The New Arab, said the tour may take place towards the end of July.

U.S. unilateralism a serious threat to intl. peace: Ghalibaf

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on Wednesday that the United States' unilateral behavior is a serious threat to the international peace and security.

During a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua, Ghalibaf attached great importance to international cooperation to counter the White House's "unwise actions".

He also praised China's stance and opposition against an anti-Iran resolution issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors.



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.

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

Tehran's Ambassador to China, Mohammad Keshavarzadeh, has said that Iran will not forget China's stance on the resolution by the IAEA board.

"China wants the United States to return to the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal] and the UNSC resolution. The recent stance of China on resolution of the agency [the IAEA] was firm and memorable. We will not forget that," he tweeted on Monday.

He also posted a tweet by a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman who said, "E3 Foreign Ministers released a joint statement on Iran and upholding JCPOA commitments. Having quit JCPOA, the US has no right to ask the UNSC to trigger sanctions snapback. We urge the US to return to JCPOA and the UNSC resolution."

■ 'China is willing to boost relations with Iran'

During his Wednesday meeting with Ghalibaf, Chang also said that China is willing to boost relations with Iran and called for expansion of parliamentary ties.

"The two countries must support each other, as China firmly supported Iran's sovereignty and independence and opposed the United States' unilateral sanctions," he said.

The ambassador also said that Western countries have imposed pressure on Iran and China under various pretexts, however, China has always opposed unilateralism and foreign interference.

Pompeo has vowed to annihilate all of Iran's JCPOA benefits: former French envoy

"Technically this should be feasible" to block U.S. move to extend arms embargo on Iran, Nicoullaud says

By Hamid Bayati

TEHRAN — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has vowed to annihilate all the benefits that Iran could draw from the JCPOA, says a former French ambassador to Tehran.

"This is why, after the sanctions on practically all economic activities, he has pushed for sanctions on Iranian exports of uranium and heavy water authorized by the JCPOA, as well as on all the ongoing nuclear cooperation between Iran and the remaining participants, even if they were clearly useful for limiting different risks of proliferation," Francois Nicoullaud says in an interview with the Tehran Times.

"And now he is trying to restore the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations and lifted in 2015 by the Security Council in the wake of the conclusion of the JCPOA," Nicoullaud adds.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ As you know, foreign ministers of Germany, France, and the UK said after meeting in Berlin that Iran's nuclear program, its ballistic missile tests and "regional activities" remain a serious concern for Europe. The view is similar to the U.S.'s on Iran. So, why is Europe following the U.S. in regard to Iran?

A: First, because most Europeans sincerely believe that these three subjects are indeed sensitive and pose a threat, not only to the U.S. interests, but also to their own interests and security. Are they right? Are they wrong? This is a matter of debate. But we have to also keep in mind that, for about eighty years the Europeans have seen their fate as tightly intertwined with the fate of the U.S. One must always remember that, after World War II, Europe gained its prosperity and its unity thanks to the U.S. security umbrella. This is why the Europeans are so nervous today when Donald Trump criticizes the NATO, withdraws troops from Germany or starts a trade war against European products. And when looking to the future, they certainly don't hope for a weak and derelict America, they want exactly the opposite! Hence the difficulty to introduce a rift between Europe and the U.S., the difficulty to convince the Europeans that they



"The Europeans tend to react by keeping as close as possible to the Americans, like the boxer who keeps close bodily contact with his adversary to escape his hardest blows."

could or should distance themselves from Washington. Of course, if there is today a nascent rift, the blame can be put entirely on Donald Trump, but the Europeans tend to react by keeping as close as possible to the Americans, like the boxer who keeps close bodily contact with his adversary to escape his hardest blows.

■ UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which enshrined the 2015 nuclear deal between world powers and Tehran, envisages easing the arms embargo on Iran starting this October. But earlier this month, the U.S. proposed a draft UN Security Council resolution to "indefinitely" extend the arms embargo against Iran. What are the motives that the United States opposes easing of sanctions against Iran?

A: The answer is very simple. Once and for all, Mike Pompeo has vowed to annihilate all the benefits that Iran could draw from the JCPOA. This is why, after the sanctions on practically all economic activities, he has pushed for sanctions on Iranian exports of

uranium and heavy water authorized by the JCPOA, as well as on all the ongoing nuclear cooperation between Iran and the remaining participants, even if they were clearly useful for limiting different risks of proliferation. And now he is trying to restore the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations and lifted in 2015 by the Security Council in the wake of the conclusion of the JCPOA.

■ Britain, France and Germany say they will not back the U.S. efforts to unilaterally trigger the re-imposition of a UN arms embargo on Iran. How would they be able to do this?

A: Technically, this should be feasible. As you know, the re-imposition of the UN arms embargo against Iran has to go before the UN Security Council in the form of a resolution. This means that the item has to be included in the Security Council's agenda. The agenda has to be adopted by the Security Council before any vote or discussion, and this adoption requires a majority of nine members out of fifteen, with no possibility

of veto by a permanent member as it is a simple procedural matter. If Russia, China, the UK and France are ready to reject the inclusion of the item in the Council's agenda on the ground that the country asking for the re-imposition of UN sanctions is no more a JCPOA participant, they should have no major difficulty in finding five other members to support such a move.

■ The three European countries have also repeatedly underlined their commitment to the 2015 deal. However, they just talk and have not made enough efforts to save this deal. This has in turn persuaded Iran that the JCPOA does not serve its interests. How is it possible to save this endangered deal?

A: It is true that the JCPOA is in a very weak position, mainly because of the incapacity of the remaining participants -- China, France, Germany, Russia, the U.K. -- to provide Iran with the benefits it rightfully expected from this agreement. For Iran's partners, it is not a matter of political will. Frankly, I believe that the governments are eager to help, but the business community simply does not want to take the risk of being sanctioned by the U.S. and governments have no means to compel businessmen to act as the risk is very real indeed. But whatever the difficulties of the situation, there is at least a positive point: Iran's partners have no intention of leaving the JCPOA. So the fate of the JCPOA is entirely in Iran's hands. True, the choice is not easy. What is better for Iran? Remaining in an agreement which offers no benefit, at least in the foreseeable future, or leaving the agreement with the risk of estrangement from five countries which could be helpful later, in better circumstances? There is perhaps a third way, which would be to leave the JCPOA but immediately decide that, until further notice, Iran would keep on abiding by all its provisions on a purely voluntary, unilateral basis. This third solution offers some room of maneuver. But one has to keep in mind that if Iran, one way or another, leaves the JCPOA, it will lose the last benefits of the agreement, such as the end of the arms embargo if the decision takes place before October, or will take the risk of the re-imposition of this embargo if the decision takes place later.

Rouhani says Iran not waiting for U.S. presidential elections

President calls on IAEA to maintain its independence

1 → France, Britain, and Germany, the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, submitted the draft resolution to the IAEA board on June 18. 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.

Rouhani said that China, Russia and certain other countries have acted well.

■ **'IAEA should not divert from its legal path'**

Rouhani went on to say that the IAEA should not take departure from its legal path, noting that the United States and the Zionist regime of Israel are making efforts to mislead the agency.

"Our behavior with the agency have

been friendly and legal. We have always cooperated with the agency, and the agency's inspectors have always been present and inspected (Iran's nuclear sites). Iran's cooperation has been confirmed in 16, 17 reports. Recently, the Zionist regime and the United States put pressure on the agency and I am afraid these deceivers contaminate

the agency, which must have precise and legal judgment," he said.

"The Zionist regime and the United States put pressure on the agency to study activities of 17, 18 years ago (which had been clarified). Our basis is cooperating with the agency, however, the agency must be careful not to be diverted from its legal path," he pointed out.

"Recently, the Zionist regime and the United States put pressure on the agency and I am afraid these deceivers contaminate the agency, which must have precise and legal judgment," Rouhani explains."

'EU's Borrell to spare no efforts to preserve nuclear deal'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — European External Action Service spokesman Peter Stano has said that European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell will spare no efforts to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

In an interview with IRNA published on Wednesday, he said that the EU continues to fully support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in monitoring and verifying the entirety of Iran's nuclear activities.

He noted that the EU also supports all efforts to smooth the path for the IAEA in carrying out its mandate, adding that Iran should cooperate with the IAEA in full and in a timely manner in line with its safeguards agreements.

He underlined that this is separate from the JCPOA, which we strongly support, and EU High Representative Borrell as coordinator continues to spare no efforts to preserve the agreement.

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.

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

propagated through "spying activities".

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

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

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

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

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

Iran, China agree to deepen strategic ties, Zarif says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced on Wednesday that he held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi through a videoconference, saying they agreed to deepen their strategic ties.

"We reached an agreement on deepening of comprehensive strategic cooperation between the two countries, promoting of bilateral 25-year cooperation plan and supporting each other in international issues," he said in a tweet in Chinese language.

He added, "The two sides reiterated their

support for Iran's nuclear deal, multilateralism and international law and opposed practicing unilateralism and weakening Iran's nuclear agreement."

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that Iran and China have drafted a 25-year plan for comprehensive cooperation which proves failure of the plots to isolate the Islamic Republic.

"This plan proves failure of the United States' policies to isolate Iran, sever Iran's relations with the international community and also to harm Iran's will to expand relations

with other countries," Rabiei said during a press conference.

He said that the 25-year plan is based on a win-win approach which "heralds long term cooperation".

"Recognizing cultural commonalities, encouraging multilateralism, supporting equal rights of the nations and insisting on domestic development are parts of this plan," the government spokesman explained.

In a meeting on Sunday, the cabinet of ministers approved the final draft of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan

between Iran and China.

Rouhani said the strategic partnership between the two countries is based on a win-win approach.

"This cooperation is a ground for Iran and China's participation in basic projects and development of infrastructure, including the large 'Belt and Road' initiative, and an opportunity to attract investment in various economic fields, including industry, tourism, information technology and communication," the presidential website quoted Rouhani as saying.

Iran's relationship with UAE improving, says general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military advisor to the Leader, has said Iran's relationship with the UAE has improved and the Islamic Republic is ready for dialogue with Saudi Arabia.

"Our relationship with the UAE has improved and Abu Dhabi's attitudes towards us have changed," the Middle East Monitor on Tuesday quoted Rahim Safavi as saying, citing Al Jazeera.

He also said: "[We] are ready for dialogue with Saudi Arabia without preconditions if they agree to this."

"Riyadh must admit the failure of its war in Yemen and adopt a new policy ... What is happening in Yemen is the futile military chaos that Saudi Arabia bears firstly," he added.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have been at loggerheads over a number of issues including the Saudi war on Yemen and Riyadh's support for Donald Trump's anti-Iran moves.

Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign against Yemen in March 2015 with the aim of eliminating the Yemeni opposition groups who had toppled the government of President Mansour Hadi.



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had vowed to restore the toppled president in a matter of weeks.

In a report on March 24, Amnesty

International said, "Gross human rights violations, including what could amount to war crimes, are being committed throughout the country. By the end of

2019, it is estimated that over 233,000 Yemenis would have been killed as a result of fighting and the humanitarian crisis."

Meanwhile, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has documented more than 20,000 civilians killed and injured by the fighting since March 2015, the amnesty said.

A man-made humanitarian crisis has spiraled with approximately 16 million people waking up hungry every day, the amnesty regretted.

Meanwhile, Hossein Dehghan, a military advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has also made similar remarks, saying Iran is ready to hold talks with Saudi Arabia without precondition.

He said that Iran's relations with the United Arab Emirates is improving and Abu Dhabi's position on Iran has changed, IRNA reported on Monday, citing Al Jazeera.

Dehghan also said that Saudi Arabia should admit defeat in Yemen and adopt new policies.

What is happening in Yemen is military chaos for which Saudi Arabia is responsible, the former defense minister remarked.

Romania should be questioned over Mansouri death: Judiciary

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Deputy Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Eje'i has said the Romanian authorities should answer questions about the death of Iranian fugitive judge Gholamreza Mansouri.

"He (Mansouri) had announced that he wanted to return to Iran and he was in their custody," Mohseni Eje'i said, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

He reiterated that Romania's judicial and law enforcement officials should answer questions about the incident.

On Tuesday, the Bucharest prosecutor's office released a report saying Mansouri had died of violence and also in haste.



It said Mansouri's death was due to a blow by a hard object which did not occur in a natural state, the report said.

Tehran on Friday confirmed the death of Mansouri, who was accused of corruption and taking more than \$500,000 in bribes, in Romania.

It was reported on Friday that Mansouri has been found dead at a hotel in Romania where he had been staying. It was claimed that he had apparently committed suicide.

Iran's Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri has asked his Romanian counterpart to launch a serious investigation into the death of the fugitive judge.

The brotherly bond between Iran and Pakistan

➔ From the Ghaznavid dynasty till the Mughal Empire, Persian became the lingua franca of the region. People from varied ethnicities began acquiring Persian language as well as culture and it rippled out into various parts of the continent with Lahore (capital of Punjab, Pakistan) as its epicenter. Many of the indigenous languages of the region adopted Persian elements in their phonology and syntax. Currently, Pakistan's official language Urdu (which means lashkar or Army) has been derived from Persian, Turkish, Sanskrit and Arabic and is written in Arabic-Persian script.

The cross pollination of ideas, thoughts and culture has gone both ways. Just as Persian influenced South Asia, the latter also inspired Persian poets and philosophers. For instance, the famous 1001 Arabian nights stories are hypothesized to be a compilation of South Asian tales narrated by Persian poets. Furthermore, the style of poetry also called Sabk-e-Hindi or Isfahani in Iran is said to have its roots in the South Asian culture. Its delicacy and subtlety manifests the infusion of South Asian philosophy with Persian thought. Mirza Muhammad Ali Saeb Tabrizi was the prolific poet who introduced the South Asian style of poetry in Persia. He was given the title of "The King of Poets" by Shah Abbas of Safavid dynasty. A verse from his poetry is as follows:

پاکان ستم ز دور فلک بیشتر کشند
گندم چو پاک گشت خورد زخم آسیا
(صائب تبریزی)

The pure ones suffer more from the sky's revolution

"He (Allama Iqbal) believed Iran could serve as a central force uniting comity of Muslim nations."

"From the Ghaznavid dynasty till the Mughal Empire, Persian became the lingua franca of the region."

The wheat is wounded in the mill as it gets pure

By the 19th century it is interesting to note that more Persian dictionaries were being produced in South Asia than in Persia. Many of the eminent Urdu poets such as Mir Taqi Mir, Sauda, Mirza Ghalib and Allama Iqbal have their works in this language. The synthesis of two cultures is also showcased in mosques and mausoleums such as Shrine of Shah-Rukn-e-Alam, Taj Mahal, Deccani mosques and Akbar's tomb. The prolonged cultural relations between the two heritages have fraternized into a bond between Pakistan and Iran today.

The most cherished poet of the East, Allama Iqbal expresses his thoughts about Iran in following verse:

تهران بو گر عالم مشرق کا جینوا
شاید کره ارز کی تقدیر بدل جائے

*If Tehran be the Geneva of the East
The fate of planet may yet change*

He believed Iran could serve as a central force uniting comity of Muslim nations. Interestingly, today Tehran serves as headquarters to the Economic Cooperation Organization comprising of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and the six Central Asian States of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Similarly Iqbal also dedicated the following verse to Iranian youth:

چون چراغ لاله سوزم در خیابان شما
ای جوانان عجم جان من و جان شما

*"I am burning like a tulip's lamp on your path,
O youth of Iran, I swear by my own life and yours."*

The Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has always

appreciated the prominent figures involved in Pakistan's struggle for independence. At many places he has praised the founding fathers of Pakistan namely: Muhammad Ali Jinnah; Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali. He particularly idealized Allama Iqbal because he was concerned about the Muslim world in general. In this regard, he wrote a book titled "Iqbal: Manifestation of Islamic Spirit" presenting his views about the works of Iqbal Lahori; the ideological founder of Pakistan.

Some of the Iranian famous poets have also praised Pakistan's independence struggle. Most prominently, Malik-ul-Shu'arah Bahar who praised Pakistan in following words at the time of its creation:

همیشه لطف خدا باد یار پاکستان
به کین مباد فلک با دیار پاکستان

May God give grace to our brotherly country of Pakistan

May destiny never bring bad things to the country of Pakistan

سزد کراچی و لاہور، قیہ الاسلام
کہ هست یاری اسلام کار پاکستان
ز فیض روح «محمدعلی جناح» بود
محمد و علی و آل، یار پاکستان

Karachi and Lahore deserve to be the citadels of Islam

As Pakistan aims for the propagation of Islam

Because of the of Mohammad Ali Jinnah

The blessing of Prophet Muhammad and his family is on Pakistan

Today, the age-old cultural affinities and similarities are forged by the deep fraternal and friendly relations, which continue to flourish between the governments and the people of the two countries. Both

states are fortunate not to have any dispute amongst them and continue to enhance their bilateral relations which are based on mutual respect and close cooperation.

The two countries continue to support each other on issues of principle and matters affecting the Muslim Ummah as a whole. Supreme Leader and the Iranian government has often voiced support for the longstanding struggle of Kashmiris for self-determination, echoing the verse of Bahar who said:

چو مادری کہ ز فرزند شیرخواره جداست
نجات کشمیر آمد شعار پاکستان

Like a mother who is far from her nursing

Saving Kashmir is the slogan of Pakistan

Likewise, Pakistan has all along fully supported Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which represents a very good example of negotiated settlement through dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Imran Khan and people of Pakistan have voiced their concerns over U.S. sanctions on Iran and actively reached out to the world for their removal.

Having just arrived in Iran and that too during the most difficult time of the Coronavirus outbreak in the world, I have gotten to witness the efficiency and management of Iranian authorities in dealing with the pandemic. These efforts and cooperation of responsible people of Iran is praiseworthy.

During my stay here it will be my endeavor to further strengthen the centuries-old relations between our two countries.

Pakistan-Iran Dosti Zindabad

"The style of poetry also called Sabk-e-Hindi or Isfahani in Iran is said to have its roots in the South Asian culture."

Zarif mocks Pompeo's claim on UN arms embargo

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has ridiculed a claim by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about Iran's plan to purchase fighter aircraft.

"@SecPompeo is so desperate to mislead the world that he claims come October, Iran will purchase fighter aircraft," Zarif tweeted on Tuesday.

He added, "And then send them off to the limits of their ONE-WAY ranges. Perhaps he could also say how they would fly back to Iran having exhausted their fuel."

Zarif attached a photo of an earlier tweet by Pompeo, which claimed that Europe and Asia could be in Iran's crosshairs if it purchases new fighter aircraft.

"If the @UN Arms Embargo on Iran expires in October, Iran will be able to buy new fighter aircraft like Russia's SU-30 and China's J-10," Pompeo wrote.

"With these highly lethal aircraft, Europe and Asia could be in Iran's crosshairs. The U.S. will never let this happen," he added.

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 on Iran 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.

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.

Also on Friday, representatives of the 35-nation Board of Governors at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a controversial resolution to push for intrusive inspections of two old places in Iran which are claimed nuclear activities may have been done there.

The resolution had been proposed by Britain, France, and Germany, known as E3.

In response to the move, Zarif said: "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."

Russia and China have strongly opposed the resolution.

Tehran: Europe played into hands of idiots Trump, Bolton

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), has criticized Europe for playing into the hands of two idiots, namely U.S. President Donald Trump and his former national security adviser John Bolton.

"In his book, #Bolton called #Trump a 'stupid & idiot,' and Trump called him a 'Inadequate stupid'," Shamkhani said via Twitter on Tuesday.



He added, "Why did Europe ignore the common outcome of two incompetent idiots in leaving #JCPOA and played into their ground by presenting an anti-Iranian resolution?"

The remarks came a week the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a controversial resolution demanding access to two old places they claim nuclear work may have been done there.

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 failed to approve the resolution on Thursday due to opposition by Iran and China. However, the resolution was ratified on Friday despite Russia and China's opposition.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Friday that Iran will take appropriate action in response to the move.

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

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi described the resolution as "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.

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

Army chief: Iran to threaten enemy's interests if threatened

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iran's Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi warned the enemies that any threat to the country's national interests will result in reciprocal threats to their own interests.

Speaking at a military gathering on Wednesday, the Army commander said Iran will reciprocally threaten the interests of any enemy that dares to threaten the Islamic Republic's national interests.

He also said that the Army has prepared "practical schemes for the possible scenarios" and is practicing those plans overtly or covertly, separately or in combination.

Highlighting the close interaction and coordination between the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, the general said, "The Army and the IRGC are prepared to combat any possible threat together."

He further unveiled plans to furnish the Army, Navy,



Air Force and Air Defense with new equipment by the end of the current Iranian year (March 2021).

The general further pointed to a recent military exercise that the Navy launched in the Sea of Oman, saying missiles with pinpoint accuracy and a range of 300 kilometers were successfully tested in the war game.

Last week, Iran's Navy launched the naval combat war game in the Sea of Oman and the northern parts of the Indian Ocean and tested new short-range and long-range cruise missiles manufactured by the Iranian Defense Ministry.

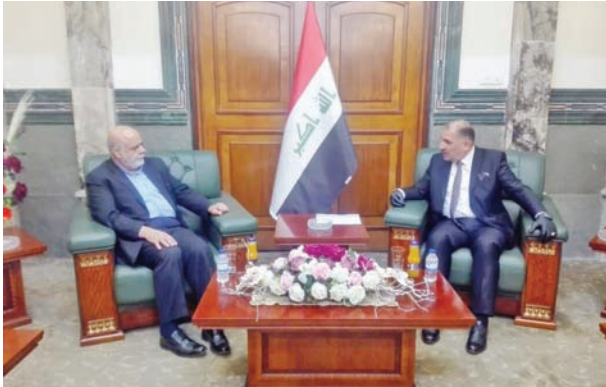
The long-range naval cruise missiles hit the targets at a distance of 280 kilometers. The range of the new homegrown missiles may be extended.

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

Iran, Iraq stress expansion of trade, industrial ties

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi met with Manhal Aziz Al-Khabbaz, Iraq's new minister of industry and minerals, on Tuesday, to discuss expansion of trade and industrial cooperation.

Masjedi congratulated the Iraqi official on his appointment as industry and minerals minister, expressing hope that industrial ties and cooperation between the two countries would expand under his leadership.



Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi (L) and Manhal Aziz Al-Khabbaz, Iraq's new minister of industry and minerals, discuss expansion of industrial and trade ties in Baghdad on Tuesday.

Further in the meeting, both officials urged expansion of ties in various areas including the auto industry, launching joint industrial parks and other industrial and mining areas.

The officials also discussed holding the two countries' joint economic committee meeting and Iran's investment in manufacturing tractors, buses, and minibuses in Iraq.

The economic and political relations between Iran and Iraq has increased significantly in the past few years and the two neighbors are seeking ways to facilitate financial transactions and boost their trade ties.

The two countries have it on the agenda to increase the value of their bilateral trade to \$20 billion by 2021.

Last week, the two sides decided on the ways of implementing an agreement for using Iran's exports revenues in Iraq for importing basic goods from the country.

According to the Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati, under the framework of the mentioned agreement, Iran will use its gas and electricity export revenues which amount at several billion dollars a year in addition to CBI resources in Iraq, for importing its required goods from the country.

Capacity of home appliance production reaches 20m units per year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Acting Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Hossein Modares Khiabani says the country's home appliance manufacturers currently have the capacity to produce 20 million units every year, IRIB reported.

According to Khiabani, the knowledge for manufacturing up to 70 percent of the home appliances in Iran has been indigenized by local companies.



The official noted that for some devices like air coolers, 90 percent of the products are locally-made, but for some others like TV sets the figure is something between 60 and 70 percent.

Mentioning some of the challenges that this sector is currently facing, like the turbulence of the foreign exchange market, Khiabani said despite all the problems, the production of home appliances has increased significantly in the current Iranian calendar year 1399 (started on March 20).

"For example, in the first quarter of 1399, we saw a 150 percent increase in production of washing machines and a 50 percent increase in TV sets production," he said.

Khiabani emphasized that the ministry is trying to solve the problems of the manufacturers by making necessary coordination to supply the foreign exchange revenues from the exports of raw materials to the home appliance manufacturers to import their necessary equipment and materials.

In recent years, Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production in order to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

In this regard, home appliance sector has been one of the major points of focus, since for a long time a big share of this market has been taken by foreign companies.

Accordingly, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the previous calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) this industry's production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

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

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

Industry, mining, trade projects worth over \$5.4b inaugurated in 2 months

1 → As reported, a total of 1.69 quadrillion rials (about \$40.23 billion) has been invested in the mentioned projects that are going to create job opportunities for 41,000 people.

The mentioned program has been defined by the ministry in line with the government's new strategies for developing the country's infrastructure in order to realize the "Surge in Production" motto.

According to the Industry Ministry's news portal, in the first two months of the current year (March 20-June 20), despite all the restrictions created by the outbreak of the coronavirus, and also the U.S. sanc-

tions, industrial production increased in many sectors.

The production of car tires increased by 27 percent, the production of chipboard increased by 30 percent and aluminum ingot production saw a 32 percent increase, while the alumina production increased by 8 percent.

Production of industrial oils also experienced a 15 percent rise and petrochemical production rose 6 percent in the said two months.

As reported, the industry ministry has also taken serious measures for the reopening of the country's borders with the neighbors



in order to help the country's foreign trade back on its normal levels.

Also, in order to supply basic goods for people, 3.5 million tons of wheat were pur-

chased from farmers in the mentioned two months, which was four percent more than the previous year's guaranteed purchases in the same period.

IFB witnesses 28% monthly growth of its index

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), rose 28 percent in the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad (May 21-June 20), IRNA reported.

The index has also risen 115 percent since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

IFX stood at 14,180 points in the end of the third month.

Also, the value of trades at the IFB experienced a growth of 24 percent in the third month, while rising 108 percent since the year start.

As reported, 45.582 billion securities worth 942.612 trillion rials (about \$22.44 billion) were traded in the IFB during the third month.

IFB is one of the four major stock exchanges of Iran, the other three exchanges are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

IFX had also risen 29 percent in the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (April 20-May 20).

The index stood at 11,113 points at the end of the second month, while its performance registered a 69-percent growth since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.



The past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) witnessed a very fruitful performance for the country's capital market.

As TSE Head Ali Sahraei has announced, the value of trades at the Tehran Stock Exchange jumped 2.6 folds, while Return on Investment (ROI) reached 180 percent in the previous year.

While growth and development in the Iranian capital market have been started in

recent years, the previous year was in fact a time of flourishing for the country's stock exchanges.

Different factors contributed to the past year's prominent success in the capital market.

One important factor was proper ground laid in the stock market and providing better conditions for traders.

The other factor was the status of parallel markets, such as those of foreign currency, gold

Incheboroun railway crossing with Turkmenistan reopens

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** —Iran's Incheboroun railway border crossing with Turkmenistan was reopened after four months on Tuesday evening as a cargo train carrying 30 wagons of cement consignment for export to Turkmenistan left Iran, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Rouhollah Latifi said that it was the third border crossing reopened between the two countries after the long time closure, Mehr news agency reported.

The IRICA spokesman also announced that 101 more wagons are waiting to export products to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan through Incheboroun railway border crossing.

Garmsar-Incheboron railway, with a length of 495 kilometers, links Garmsar in the north-central province of Semnan to Incheboron in the northeastern province of Golestan. It extends to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan and links Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and beyond.

Latifi further said that Iran has exported products carried by 120 wagons to Turkmenistan via Sarakhs border crossing since last Thursday.

■ Reopening borders a result of mutual commitment

Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said that reopening the border for trade between Iran and Turkmenistan was the result of mutual commitment, Fars news agency reported.

He underlined that reliability and mutual commitments have played a key role in the reopening of Iran-Turkmenistan shared border.

"With the implementation of hygienic rules, commitment, and regulations during coronavirus pandemic, some of the borders were reopened," Eslami said.

He said that Iran has reopened its borders with Turkey, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan, and trading activities have been resumed.

He reiterated that reliability has been the main reason for Iran-Turkmenistan border reopening.

In a relevant development earlier in June,



Eslami said that Tehran has always sought to strengthen relations with Ashgabat by removing barriers, adding that a new chapter in relations between the two countries has begun after making progress in implementation of joint projects.

"The new Sarakhs Bridge was built based on previous agreements with Turkmenistan, and we were able to complete the bridge successfully despite the difficulties," Eslami said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the bridge.

He reiterated that a new chapter in relations between the two countries has begun due to the success of different joint projects, including Sarakhs Bridge.

"Turkmenistan is one of the routes from the North-South Corridor and part of the Silk Road that continues to China and the transportation via the Silk Road is by both train and truck," Eslami said.

He noted that Iran and Turkmenistan have sought to reach a common understanding and developing mutual cooperation, and said, "This is in line with the goal which the Iranian and Turkmen officials have been seeking."

Iran and Turkmenistan inaugurated a border bridge between the two countries

on June 8.

"Sarakhs border bridge was officially inaugurated in the presence of Iran's minister of transport and urban development, the minister of construction and architecture of Turkmenistan, and the ambassadors of the two countries", the IRICA spokesman has announced.

He pointed out that the inauguration of the bridge has been on the agenda of the two sides in line with reopening the land and rail borders.

In a relevant development in late April, Iranian Ambassador to Turkmenistan Abbas Ali Arbab Khales underlined the willingness of the officials in Tehran and Ashgabat to deepen bilateral relations in different fields.

"Expanding relations and increasing transit cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan in railroads and roads sections and removing restrictions are necessary," Arbab-Khales said during a meeting with the border points committee.

He informed of his full preparedness to help expand different economic relations, especially the potentials that have not been used yet.

The official, focusing on capabilities of

border provinces in areas like construction and agriculture added that these capabilities can act as a good ground for the expansion of relations.

Last October, Ashgabat hosted the 15th Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee meeting.

The event was attended by senior officials from both sides and Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami was the Iranian chairman of the meeting.

Eslami traveled to Ashgabat at the head of a high-ranking economic delegation comprised of representatives from the oil, energy, and foreign affairs ministries as well as the country's private sector.

The minister was also accompanied by several parliament members, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Vice Chairman Hossein Salahvarzi, and Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamejad.

On the sidelines of the committee meeting, the two sides' businessmen and entrepreneurs discussed and followed up on the expansion of economic relations.

■ Boosting exports to neighbors

While Iran's borders are being reopened, the county's trade with its neighbors is being resumed as well.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government is pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year.

The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) says the country is capable of doubling non-oil exports to its neighbors in two years.

Hamid Zadboum has said that considering the future capacities, the TPO has planned increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries to about \$100 billion in a two-year time span, in a way that Iran's share of the regional markets will significantly go up.

Iran shares borders with fifteen countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia whose total value of annual imports exceed \$1000 billion.

Average annual household spending up 21%: SCI

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) said in a report that average annual net expenditure of Iranian urban households in the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020) increased by 21 percent compared to the preceding year.

Based on the report, the annual cost of Iranian urban households was estimated to be 474.379 million rials (about

\$11,300), while the average annual income of a household in the mentioned period was estimated at 541 million rials (about \$12,800), 24.4 percent more than the previous year (1397).

Accordingly, the average annual income growth of urban households was reported to be higher than the average annual total expenditure growth.

According to the SCI data, SCI Iran's inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 19, which marked the end of the previous Iranian calendar year, stood at 34.8 percent.

Back in March, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said that the inflation rate in Iran is predicted to go down to under 20 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20).

‘PSEEZ enjoys high potential for investment’

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Nooshin Rahgozar, the commercial attaché of the Belgian embassy in Tehran, says that Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ) enjoys some high potential for investment making, Shana reported.

As reported by Pars Special Economic Energy Zone Organization, in a meeting with Iraj Khorramdel, the head of the organization, Rahgozar mentioned interest of Belgian companies in developing economic relations and effective presence in the various industrial fields in Iran, and added: “The advantage of Pars Special Zone is considered as a good incentive mechanism for European companies.”

Earlier this month, Khorramdel said the organization is determined to boost investment attraction in the zone during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

“This year we are determined to attract investment in various industrial fields, fortunately many domestic industries are interested in presence and investment in the zone,” he noted.

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

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

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

Emphasizing the need to accelerate the completion of development projects by utilizing the existing capacities in the country, the official said: “Currently, various projects are being developed throughout the country and having 23



major projects under development, Pars Special Economic Energy Zone has a special place in this regard.”

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

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

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

500,000 smart electricity meters installed for big-scale consumers

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Some 500,000 smart electricity meters have been installed for large-scale consumers across the country, IRNA reported quoting an official with Iran’s Power Generation, Distribution and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir).

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of Tavanir Monitoring Center (TMC) on Tuesday, Gholamali Rakhshani-Mehr put the number of the country’s industrial electricity consumers with over 30 kilowatt transmission lines at 400,000 and the number of agricultural wells equipped with electrical motors at 110,000.

TMC, an electricity industry monitoring center, was inaugurated in the presence of Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian in the framework of a weekly project called A-B-Iran.

According to Rakhshani-Mehr, launching TMC is aimed at monitoring the strategic characteristics of energy industry’s subsidiaries as well as monitoring electricity consumption in the country.

He described the monitoring center as one of the main pillars of smartening the electric-



ity sector and said: “Tavanir’s smartening roadmap includes three main players, namely smart consumers, smart power companies and smart governance.”

Back in June 2019, Head of Tehran Power Distribution Company Reza Teimouri had said that 18,650 smart electricity meters were installed for consumers across Tehran.

According to Teimouri, of the mentioned number, 3,242 meters were installed for the agricultural sector.

In May 2019, Mohammad-Ali Validad, the deputy director of the Energy Ministry’s national smart metering program (known as FAHAM), announced that 56,000 agricultural wells were equipped with smart electricity meters.

FAHAM is aiming to monitor the electricity consumption across the country, especially among the large-scale subscribers.

In March 2009 implementation of FAHAM was placed on the agenda of Iranian government and Energy Ministry.

The target was decreasing electricity loss at least one percent per year and 14 percent decrease in overall network loss by 2015.

FAHAM project is funded by Energy Ministry of Iran and is being executed under the supervision of TAVANIR.

Iran is facing a rising demand for electricity and the Energy Ministry has been following new policies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid.

Oil prices transitioning to next phase of cycle

By John Kemp

Brent futures prices have risen by more than 80 percent over the last two months, the fastest increase at any point for more than a quarter of a century, as the market has rebounded from its worst crisis in decades, Reuters reported.

Front-month Brent futures have averaged nearly \$42 per barrel over the last five trading sessions, compared with less than \$23 over the same period in late April, based on daily closing prices from ICE Futures Europe.

Global oil consumption has started to recover as economies emerge from lockdown while production has plunged as a result of policy-driven cutbacks by OPEC+ and price-driven cuts by U.S. shale producers.

The global market has likely moved from a large production surplus in late April into a small production deficit by late June, which will draw down excess inventories and push spot prices to a premium.

Brent’s six-month calendar spread has already strengthened to a contango (discount) of just 50 cents per barrel compared with more than \$10 in late April as crude availability has tightened.



Front-month prices and calendar spreads are both loosely correlated with the oil market’s inventory cycle as well as with each other, as illustrated in the attached chart, which shows front-month changes and spreads since 1993.

In effect, the oil market moves clockwise through the four quadrants, as the cycle progresses from slump through early recovery towards the peak, and then breaks down before

slumping again.

In the early stages of a cyclical upswing, shown in the top left quadrant, front-month prices increase rapidly from a low base, while the contango narrows.

Later in the upswing, top right quadrant, the market heads towards a cyclical peak, front-month prices increase more slowly, while the calendar spread moves from contango into backwardation.

Once the cycle matures, lower right quadrant, price rises will start to stall and the backwardation will soften, as the market passes the cyclical peak and begins to break down.

Ultimately, the cycle will end with prices falling and renewed contango, as production growth again overtakes consumption, shown in the lower left quadrant.

Brent is currently making this transition from an early upswing (top left quadrant, explosive price increases, narrowing contango) into a more mature upswing (top right quadrant, slower price rises, shift to backwardation).

If consumption continues to recover, and OPEC+ and shale producers restrain output, the market should see a slower rate of outright price increases but further tightening of calendar spreads over the next few months.

Oil demand faces new threat as ‘green recovery’ hopes take root

As the world emerges from the economic wastelands of the coronavirus pandemic, hopes are growing that climate-friendly policies and behavior changes will speed the transition away from fossil fuels. But there may be speed bumps along the way.

Political parties, business leaders and environmental groups are calling for a ‘green recovery’ to transform the global economy in the wake of the pandemic. According to Platts, Many believe the push will accelerate the demise of the era of oil.

The International Energy Agency and IMF have called for \$1 trillion in spending to revitalize economies and boost employment while making energy systems cleaner and more resilient under a pandemic recovery plan.

Even BP last week cut its long term oil price assumption by 27 percent to \$55/b, citing a growing belief that the pandemic will have a lasting impact on global demand for oil and gas.

BP, which had promised to “reimagine energy” before the outbreak, said the move will slash up to \$17.5 billion from its book value, re-igniting investor concerns over potentially stranded assets from high-cost oil and gas resources.

But energy forecasters are far from agreed on how long-lasting and significant the changes to oil demand will be.

Climate think-tank Carbon Tracker believes that the pandemic has just hastened the inevitable as fossil fuels are already approaching terminal decline as the world’s top energy source.

“We are witnessing the decline and fall of the fossil fuel system,” Carbon Tracker Energy Strategist Kingsmill Bond said. “Technological innovation and policy support is driving peak fossil fuel demand in sector after sector and country after country, and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this. We may now have seen peak fossil fuel demand as a whole.”

■ Peak oil demand

Others acknowledge the prospect of long term oil demand destruction but are more sanguine over the potential for a green revolution emerging from the pandemic.

Rystad Energy, which last week slashed its estimates for the world’s recoverable oil by 282 billion barrels due to COVID-related spending cuts, sees a faster adoption of electric vehicles and more recycling as the main threats to long term oil demand.

While it previously saw oil demand peaking at 107.5 million bpd in 2030, the Norwegian consultants now expect demand to top out up to three-years earlier at around 106.5-107 million bpd.

It notes, however, that road freight expansion as well as growing plastics consumption will likely scupper any chance of a faster swing to alternative energy.

“We haven’t put the global economic motor to

a permanent sleep,” Rystad’s senior oil markets analyst Artyom Tchen said. “It starts roaring again and will drag more people out of poverty, with associated energy consumption growth.”

S&P Global Platts Analytics now sees oil demand about 3 million bpd lower than its previous forecasts out to 2040, with jet fuel and marine fuels suffering the biggest losses. Like Rystad, Platts Analytics sees lower jet fuel demand from less personal and business international air travel as a key threat to demand.

Rather than accelerate peak oil demand, however, Platts believes it could be extended by about a year to 2041 due mostly to the expected resilience of long term petrochemicals demand.

“The strength in demand for the petrochemical sector will become the most important factor in overall growth and many who are calling for peak oil demand in the short term seem to overlook this fact,” Platts Analytics’ head of scenario planning Dan Klein told clients this month.

Iran reaching self-sufficiency in hexane production

ENERGY **TEHRAN (Shana)** — The CEO of Imam Khomeini Refinery (Shazand) said the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was to officially launch a normal hexane production unit in the facility which would render Iran self-sufficient in production of the item.

“The project to produce normal hexane, which is to be officially inaugurated by the president in the coming days via a video conference, will seriously prevent the outflow of currency and import of this item, said Gholamhossein Ramezanpour.

According to the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC), the official said construction of the project started in late November 2018 and its first section which included piping, etc., was put into operation in February of 2019.

He stated that the main purpose of the project was to produce normal hexane, which is used as petrochemical feedstock, and added: “By implementing this project, a large amount of foreign exchange has been prevented from being spent for exporting this item.”

U.S. shale has lost \$300 billion in 15 years

The U.S. shale industry peaked without ever making money. Over the past decade and a half, the shale industry totaled \$300 billion in net negative cash flow, wrote down another \$450 billion in invested capital, and saw more than 190 bankruptcies since 2010, according to a new report from Deloitte.

According to oilprice.com, the U.S. shale industry more than doubled oil production over the past half-decade, a phenomenal increase in output. But “the reality is that the shale boom peaked without making money for the industry in the aggregate,” the consulting firm wrote in a searing indictment of the shale industry.

The financial problems endemic to shale drilling have been known for quite a while, but the Covid-19 pandemic blew up the industry’s growth trajectory. Crashing oil prices and a new reality are now driving a “great compression” for shale.

There has been a lot of ink spilled reflecting on what a post-Covid world looks like. The IEA says that demand will not return to pre-pandemic levels until at least 2022. Some analysts say the pandemic may have brought forward peak oil demand by a few years, while others say peak demand may have already happened.



The specific date is debatable, but most analysts, including Deloitte, say the Covid-19 pandemic is negative for oil in several ways. The fundamentals take a hit – a huge increase in telecommuting, disruption in supply chains and weaker economic growth all sap demand for oil.

More problematic for shale drillers in particular is the fact that financial markets have turned against them. That dynamic was already beginning to unfold in late 2018 and throughout 2019. The latest downturn has intensified the disillusion.

Deloitte estimates that the coming wave of write-downs could reach as high as \$300 billion. While some say that these are “noncash” impairments (and thus not as bad as they seem), Deloitte says that the result will be an immediate increase in the industry’s leverage ratio from 40 to 54 percent.

Worse, at a time when struggling drillers need more liquidity, access to capital is drying up. The latest periodic credit redetermination period brought bad news for companies desperate for a fresh injection of liquidity. Lenders cut borrowing bases this spring by an average of 23 percent, according to Bloomberg and S&P Global Ratings. Two companies that fared particularly poorly were Chaparral Energy and Oasis Petroleum, which saw their credit lines cut by 46 and 44 percent, respectively.

The combination of low oil prices, restricted capital, high debt, and weak growth prospects could translate into another wave of bankruptcies. “You’re on a capital treadmill just to maintain your production and that treadmill moves very fast,” Scott Sanderson, a principal in Deloitte’s Houston office, told the FT.

Roughly 30 percent of U.S. shale operators are “technical insolvent” with WTI trading at \$35 per barrel, the firm estimated in its report. If oil were to drop to \$20 per barrel, the portion of companies that would be insolvent would jump to 50 percent.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg reported on a toxic culture that permeates some shale companies. It is all too common that some shale executives pressure their engineers to inflate the value of their reserves in order to bolster the company’s valuation. It is important to note that often executive compensation is linked to stock performances.

“Interviews with five current and former engineers, who spoke on condition of anonymity, describe an ongoing culture that rewards happy talk,” Rachel Adams-Heard wrote in Bloomberg. “Two of the engineers say executives explicitly told them to inflate reserves.” The article details other examples of punitive action taken against engineers or contractors that make conservative reserve estimates.

Such a culture may or may not be indicative of the entire industry, but it ultimately echoes the larger story of shale – promises that rapid growth, often built on debt, would bring the company and its shareholders riches, at least eventually. But based on Deloitte’s figures – \$300 billion in net negative cash flow for the industry since its inception – that narrative has emphatically fallen apart.

The next step is consolidation. Larger drillers with stronger balance sheets can pick up some of the pieces. But not every shale company is needed in a world of persistently low oil prices and weak demand growth. Deloitte says that only about 27 percent of shale companies would actually offer additional value for buyers. At least half of all shale companies are “superfluous.”

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

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

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TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) -- Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone

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IAEA vulnerable to members with political motives: ex-top French diplomat

Former French Foreign Ministry spokesman says EU has strong attachment to maintaining JCPOA

➡ "This is because their national and regional security is very much dependent on full implementation of the JCPOA by all its parties," says Finaud, a former senior resident fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

Finaud also says the Trump administration intends to make Tehran lose its patience and take steps that finally lead to the collapse of the JCPOA, cautioning that Iran must not fall into the "trap" being set by the White House.

"It is not surprising that the Trump administration is increasing its 'maximum pressure' on Iran, in the hope of pushing Iran to make mistakes and lead to the final collapse of the JCPOA. But it is in Iran's interest not to fall into this trap," notes Finaud who is now serving as a senior member of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors adopted a resolution against Iran on Friday. The resolution is based on alleged documents by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding existence of sites previously not announced by Iran, including the ones in Turqezabad and Abadeh, whose case has been closed under the PMD. The same alleged documents formed the basis of the IAEA's previous report, which eventually led to the passage of an anti-Iran resolution. Iran, meanwhile, has worked extensively with the IAEA in accordance with the NPT and "Additional Protocol". What do you think is the IAEA's goal?

A: As everyone knows, the IAEA does not have any independent means of collecting intelligence and information about compliance with safeguards agreements apart from its inspection system. It is thus vulnerable to attempts by some member states, with their own political agendas, to influence its judgment. As the agency is mandated to verify the implementation of Iran's safeguards agreement, Additional Protocol, and JCPOA, it has a legitimacy in inspecting all sites, including undeclared ones, suspected of hosting illicit material or activities. The JCPOA contains provisions on negotiated access to such sites, so it would be in everyone's interest that such negotiations between



"The IAEA does not have any independent means of collecting intelligence and information about compliance with safeguards agreements apart from its inspection system. It is thus vulnerable to attempts by some member states, with their own political agendas, to influence its judgment."

the IAEA and Iran continue to avoid a minor incident to be blown out of proportion and escalate tensions.

■ The reaction of the IAEA director general and European and Russian officials is that the IAEA does not currently intend to take Iran's case to the UN Security Council. What is your assessment?

A: The resolution adopted by a majority of members of the IAEA's Board of Governors only asks Iran for the IAEA's access to the two contentious sites. In order to refer Iran to the UN Security Council, the board would need to agree, based on strong evidence, which Iran is not complying with its obligations. This is not the case at this stage.

Marc Finaud says Europeans' "national and regional security is very much dependent on full implementation of the JCPOA by all its parties."

■ The approval of the IAEA's anti-Iran resolution came days after UN chief Antonio Guterres reported that the source of the weapons used in the attacks on Saudi Arabia was Iranian. These efforts are made before the end of arms embargo on Iran in the fall, which the U.S. is seeking to extend. How do you assess the timing of these events?

A: It is not surprising that the Trump administration is increasing its 'maximum pressure' on Iran, in the hope of pushing Iran to make mistakes and lead to the final collapse of the JCPOA. But it is in Iran's interest not to fall into this trap. Regarding the UN secretary-general's report, it did mention that the missiles found in Sau-

di Arabia were of "Iranian origin" but it did not accuse Iran of having fired them. This shows that the issue of arms transfers and proliferation to and within the whole Middle East merits a collective effort and a multilateral approach, as proposed by some experts, and cannot rely on singling out Iran.

■ The three European countries - France, Britain and Germany - have announced they will meet next week to support the JCPOA. It seems that the Europeans do not intend to send Iran's case to the Security Council until the outcome of the U.S. election in November, and maintaining the JCPOA is a priority for them. What is your opinion?

A: The three European countries (and the whole EU) have a strong attachment to maintaining the JCPOA despite all the current challenges. This is because their national and regional security is very much dependent on full implementation of the JCPOA by all its parties. A new UN Security Council resolution sanctioning only Iran for its admitted reduced implementation would not gather the support of all the permanent members, as illustrated by the negative vote of the IAEA resolution by Russia and China.

■ Iran has stated that the IAEA resolution is politically motivated and non-technical and does not create legal obligations for Iran. Iran has also stated that implementation of the Additional Protocol is voluntary and temporary in accordance with the JCPOA. Iran appears to be suspending the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol. What is your assessment?

A: Iran has always applied the Additional Protocol unilaterally despite its non-ratification and is committed to ratifying it as part of its JCPOA obligations. Again it is in Iran's interest to continuing applying this commitment to avoid giving anyone a pretext for considering that the JCPOA is dead. Minister Zarif even offered to ratify the Additional Protocol by anticipation in exchange for sanctions relief. This shows that there is some room for negotiation, perhaps with the help of European countries or neutral countries like Switzerland, Austria, or Finland.

IAEA susceptible to U.S.' pressure: Prof. Entessar

Iran believes that the IAEA Board of Governors has referred and given credence to the information obtained by espionage activities or to the claims raised by inauthentic sources, i.e. the US and the Zionist regime, to adopt the recent resolution against Iran.

Rafael Grossi says Iran has denied the agency access to two "suspected" former sites, while the Islamic Republic asserts that it cannot give access to IAEA, merely due to baseless claims made by the enemies.

It is against its right to preserve sovereignty and IAEA regulations, Iran says, underlining that the Islamic Republic will never allow the agency to violate its legal frameworks.

To shed light on the issue, Tehran Times interviewed Professor Nader Entessar.

Here is the full text of the interview with him:

■ Do you consider the recent IAEA resolution a consequence of E3-US cooperation? Will the US and EU be able to hit their set target?

The US and E3 have always cooperated with each other in their Iran policies and the passage of the recent IAEA resolution was very much along these lines. Also, the US was successful in gaining the support of a number of regional and Arab countries as well as some other countries of the Global



South that voted for the recent IAEA resolution against Iran.

■ Do you think that the US is seeking to refer Iran's case to UNSC in a bid to impose international sanctions against the country? Iran has been under the toughest sanctions in the past years. What will be the impact of probable sanctions on Iran?

Yes, I do. The US believes it has the upper hand if Iran's

case goes to the UN Security Council. Of course, if the UN reimposes international sanctions against Iran, the US will have an easy path towards achieving its goals. The role of China and Russia will be much more crucial this time around than in the previous rounds of UN-imposed sanctions on Iran.

■ In case the IAEA continues its current stance towards Iran, how Iran-IAEA positive cooperation will be affected?

At a minimum, Iran may suspend its voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol. Beyond that, the simple truth is that Iran's Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA gives the country little wiggle room to maneuver around the IAEA resolutions. The IAEA, like almost all international organizations, is susceptible to US pressure, which at times could be suffocating.

Will E3-US' efforts and measures make a change in Iran's stances? Will the Islamic Republic retreat from its principles and rights?

I am not in a position to provide definitive answers to this question.

The answer to this question will have to be given by those in charge of making the Islamic Republic's foreign and security policies. Whatever decisions Iran makes in this regard, must be in the interests of the country's national security.

Group of Republicans, who claim Trump is a 'national security risk', set to endorse Biden

A number of Republicans who previously served as U.S. national security officials under Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush are currently forming a coalition to publicly back Joe Biden in the upcoming election, anonymous sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The group will reportedly include "at least two dozen officials" who will publicly oppose Donald Trump's re-election bid, suggesting that it would "endanger" U.S. national security. According to the report, the initiative is co-authored by two former staffers in the George W. Bush administration: John Bellinger III, former legal adviser to the National Security Council and State Department, and Ken Wainstein, the 43rd president's homeland security adviser.

Robert Blackwill, who served as U.S. Ambassador to India from 2001 to 2003 and U.S. National Security Council Deputy for Iraq from 2003 to 2004, is also reportedly expected to join the group. All three former officials have previously publicly opposed Donald Trump's candidacy. Some other officials, not previously involved in national security matters, may also take part in the initiative, sources say.

The group's public endorsement of Biden is expected to be announced in the upcoming weeks, possibly after the Democratic

National Convention in August, when the former U.S. vice president will be formally endorsed as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate.

According to Donald Trump, his approval rating in the Republican Party is currently 96%. The U.S. president, however, has drawn sharp criticism from some Republican figures in recent weeks over his handling of the ongoing protests in the United States following the death of George Floyd and the coronavirus pandemic, with the former secretary of state under George W. Bush, Colin Powell, publicly announcing his support for Joe Biden in the November election.

Trump is now facing a challenge from Joe Biden in the upcoming vote, as the presumptive Democratic nominee is said to be leading over him in national polls by 12 points, a six-point jump from last month. This comes as more than 60% of Americans surveyed in a Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll said that Joe Biden would be a better candidate for solving issues related to race and policing.

According to the most recent survey by Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll, presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden is currently leading over President Donald Trump in the run-up to the November election. However, there are still more than four months ahead of the national vote.

Yemen on latest raid: All missiles, drones hit intended targets in Saudi Arabia

Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement has said that all missiles and drones used in the army's latest raid precisely hit their targets in Saudi Arabia, warning of further strikes on more sensitive locations inside the kingdom if it fails to end the bloodshed in Yemen.

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a senior member of Ansarullah's political bureau, made the remarks on Tuesday shortly after Yemeni Armed Forces conducted large-scale attacks on a the headquarters of the Saudi Defense Ministry and general intelligence agency as well as King Salman Air Base, among other military targets in the capital Riyadh and Najran and Jizan regions.

However, the Saudi-led coalition waging war on Yemen claimed it had successfully intercepted the drones and missiles coming from Yemen.

Speaking to Lebanon's al-Mayadeen TV channel, Bukhaiti said all Yemeni missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) used in the operation had "reached their targets in Saudi Arabia, and none of them were shot down."

The Riyadh regime, he said, was trying to cover up the losses it has suffered in the raids, adding that the military operation led Saudi Arabia and the UAE — a key party to the coalition — to change their position.

"The Yemeni weapons are continuously making progress, and the next strikes will be more painful and against more sensitive targets," he noted.

Bukhaiti said Yemen was not betting on a mere hope that Saudi and Emirati rulers would someday have their conscience awakened, "but rather on the enhancement of our defense capabilities."

The latest Yemeni attacks lie within the framework of the nation's right to self-defense, Bukhaiti said.

Also speaking on Tuesday, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces, stressed that the operation came in response to the "unjust embargo and brutal aggression" against Yemen.

He vowed to conduct more such raids against the kingdom until the siege is lifted and its offensive comes to an end.

Similarly, Yemeni Minister of Tourism Ahmad al-Aly warned of more "surprises" given "qualitative" progress in the country's military power, saying the Yemenis cannot remain silent in the face of Saudi crimes.

"Saudi Arabia has started looking for a savior, and we tell them that the only savior is an end to the aggression against Yemen," he said.

Europe complicit in allowing drug trade: Canadian prof.

By Payman Yazdani

Being a neighbor to one of the biggest producers of drugs in the world has caused the Islamic Republic of Iran to shoulder a heavy burden as one of the main routes for drug transport.

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking and thousands of Iranian forces have been so far martyred to protect the world from the danger of drugs. Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug trafficking over the past decades.

Iran has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab, and Central Asian countries.

The war on drug trade originating from some regional countries has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police officers over the past four decades.



According to reports, in 2018 alone, Iranian forces carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers, seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Tehran has always asked for international help in such operations, noting that the other countries, especially European states, should take responsibility and play a positive role in this fight or face its threats themselves.

The issue of drugs is a global scourge and there is the need for wide-scale cooperation at the international level so as to tackle this problem. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted an interactive approach with the global community concerning the issue of drugs and has virtually indicated that it spares no efforts in enhancing cooperation with other countries and international organizations in the campaign against illicit drugs.

On this basis, Iran has always voiced its resolve for countering illicit drugs and reducing its harms at the global level. Iran's performance in countering drug trafficking has been effective in maintaining the security of different regions of the globe.

On the eve of 'International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' observed annually on 26 June, the geopolitical and economic dimensions of the drug trafficking were discussed with Michel Chossudovsky, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa.

Addressing the geopolitical and economic dimensions of the drug trafficking Chossudovsky said, "Despite President Trump's announced U.S. troop withdrawal, the Afghan opium trade continues to flourish. This multibillion-dollar operation is protected by U.S.-NATO occupation forces on behalf of a nexus of powerful financial and criminal interests."

"In 2004, the proceeds of the Afghan heroin trade yielded an estimated global revenue of the order of 90 billion dollars. Today a rough estimate based on U.S. retail prices suggests that the global heroin market is above the 500 billion dollar mark. This multibillion-dollar hike is the result of a significant increase in the volume of heroin transacted Worldwide coupled with a moderate increase in retail prices."

"Based on the most recent (UNODC) data (2017) opium production in Afghanistan is of the order of 9000 metric tons, which after processing and transformation is equivalent to approximately 900,000 kg. of pure heroin."

Referring to the role of the U.S. waged war on Afghanistan which resulted in an increase in opium production in the country, he noted, "The 2001 war on Afghanistan served to restore as well as boost the multibillion-dollar drug trade. It has also contributed to the surge in heroin addiction in the U.S. Opium production had declined by more than 90 percent in 2001 as a result of the country's drug eradication program. Immediately following the invasion and the occupation of Afghanistan by U.S.-NATO troops, the production of opium regained its historical levels."

He went on to say, "The 2017 Afghanistan Opium Survey released in May 2018 by UNODC confirms that the farm areas allocated to opium are of the order of 328,000 hectares with opium production in excess of 9,000 tons."

Answering a question about the reasons behind an increase in production of the opium in Afghanistan after being occupied by the U.S., Chossudovsky said that big money coming from the drug trade and political dimensions of the issue are the two main reasons behind the increase.

Referring to the political dimension of the issue he said for example George Bush, former U.S. President's family including his son and brother had good personal relations with heads and members of drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia.

Commenting on the significance of Iran's role in the fight against drug trafficking, he said that as Iran shares a long border with Afghanistan so it plays a significant role in fighting drug trafficking on behalf of the international community and in protecting its national interest.

He added that people of Afghanistan that share historical relations with the Iranian people are victims of the international drug cartels.

On the seriousness of the European countries which are target market of the narcotic drugs in the fight against drug trafficking and fulfilling their international commitments in supporting Iran in the fight against drug trafficking, Chossudovsky believes European countries and generally the western countries not only have done nothing to fight drug trafficking but also they have been complicit in allowing drug trade.

He also added that the CIA which is behind allowing the entrance of the narcotic drugs to the U.S. is using drugs as a tool to marginalize the black people community of the country.

Chossudovsky further said that due to increasing of synthetic drugs all over the world, pharmaceutical factories also have significant responsibility and role in combating drugs.

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research.

Iranian airlines start selling Tehran-Istanbul tickets

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Some Iranian airline companies have resumed selling tickers for Tehran-Istanbul flights, the secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines has said. “The flights are scheduled to be operated as of Mordad 11th (August 1),” Mehr quoted Maqsoud As’adi-Samani as saying on Tuesday.



Flights to Turkey will be resumed after nearly four months of suspension over the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the Turkish Airlines has also commenced selling tickets for Tehran-Istanbul services on July 16, he noted.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on Iran’s civil aviation sector with reports showing that airlines lost hundreds of millions of dollars because of flight cancellations during the busy New Year travel season in late March.

Some 1.37 million Iranian tourists visited Turkey during the first eight months of 2019, accounting for 4.4% of all international arrivals in the country.

Online meeting held on home-based handicraft, kilim workshops

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Carpet Museum of Iran hosted on Tuesday an online meeting on weaving kilim and running small handicrafts businesses, CHTN reported.

While weaving kilim has mostly been the profession of the nomads for many years, now it can be considered as a home-based business for other people as well, the museum’s director Parisa Beyzaei said.

Launching a weaving kilim workshop can be done with a small amount of money and a short period of training with no need for any technology, she added.

She also noted that setting up these workshops can lead to more job opportunities as well as better income.

Carpet experts Zahra Parhizkari and Aqil Sistani also delivered speeches during the meeting, introducing Shiriki Pich Kilims of Sirjan.



Sirjan, which was named the world city of hand-woven kilim by the World Council of Handicrafts in 2017, is located in the southeastern province of Kerman.

High quality and innovations in patterns and colors of Shiriki Pich Kilims make them popular.

Unlike common kilims, which are made without using knots, Shiriki Pich of Sirjan is made by knotted weaves and considered something between carpets and kilims.

This kilim is rarely woven based on a premade pattern. Therefore almost all Sirjan kilims are unique and no two similar pieces can be found.

The choice of colors using in the kilims is depended on the mood and emotions of the weavers, who are mostly nomad women that weaving is their daily routine as well as their main source of income.

Iran, one of the friendliest countries

By Rita Alves

(Part: 3/4)

About Tehran, I didn’t quite appreciated the architecture, however the city as some positive aspects, such as the mountains in the North part of the capital, not very far and great for a hike on the weekends or a picnic. Also there are many green parks, however still not enough because it is possible to feel the pollution. The Tabiat Bridge is quite nice for a view of the mountains on clear



People cross the Tabiat Bridge in north-central Tehran.

days and on both sides there are green parks. The last day in Iran ended with a local dinner, and before that a teahouse and the last landmark seen was Azadi Tower (with views of the mountains), just laid there on the grass, trying to enjoy and keep in my memories the ambience.

Another great moment was before arriving Shiraz, we passed a salt lake and since it was Friday (which is weekend in Iran), there were families and friends having a great time riding four wheels, playing games and as usually having picnics.

Prehistorical petroglyph bearing Pahlavi script discovered in central Iran

→ 1 Back in May, Nasserifard proposed a bold hypothesis on a variety of petroglyphs that are scarred in the region, saying “some prehistorical residents of the Iranian plateau migrated to the Americas.” His assumption is based on evidence from similarities between the petroglyphs and cave painting symbols in central Iran and the ones found in the Americas.

“After years of exploring ancient paintings inside Iran’s caves and mountains and other parts of the globe, amazing achievements have been made in this regard,” Nasserifard said.

“The ancient paintings of cave walls and mountains in Iran have been compared with ones in other parts of the world, their similarities in appearance and motifs have been ‘amazing’, according to quotes by professors Jan Brouwer and Gus van Veen,” Nasserifard explained, adding “His research and findings are presented to enthusiasts and researchers for the first time.”

“Appearance similarities, artistic styles, and uniform themes of ancient petroglyphs and cave paintings of this land (Iran) reveal many missing links in human history and arts one of which is the resemblance of ancient artifacts in Iran with ones found in the American continent.”

Earlier in March, a team of entomologists and archaeologists concluded that a previously-founded petroglyph showcases a six-limbed creature with the head and arms of a praying mantis. The rare 14-centimeter rock carving was first spotted in the Teymareh rock art site during surveys between 2017 and 2018, but could not be identified due to its unusual shape.

Jan Brouwer and Gus van Veen have examined the Teymareh site estimating its carvings were made 40,000-4,000 years ago. Prehistoric rock art provides insights into past eras and cultures as archaeologists classify the tools for the carvings by specific eras. Incising tools include flint, metal, or thigh bones of hunted prey.



Sports Museum to be among the best: Tourism minister

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan has said that the Sports Museum will become one of the best museums in the country.

He made the remarks during the inauguration ceremony of Iran’s Hall of Fame at the museum on Tuesday.

Iranian athletes have made many sacrifices to make Iranians proud during the history, and their glories needed to be shown to the public, he said.

He also noted that the museum narrates the history of Iranian sports, and in the future it will be added to its honors and will definitely be one of the best museums in Iran.

The memorial bust of Iranian sports champions will be installed in the Hall of Fame at the Sports Museum in the coming weeks.

Last year, the Sports Museum opened in the National Olympic Committee headquarters in Tehran to display Iranian athletes’ medals, jerseys, statues, and sporting memorabilia.

Archaeologists in search for Seleucid relics in Laodicea Temple

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A new round of archaeological exploration has been commenced at the enigmatic Laodicea Temple in the city of Nahavand, west-central Hamedan province with the aim of finding Seleucid era (312 BC-63 BC) relics.

The project also aims at solving the problems of the residents of the districts near the site, who haven’t been allowed to construct buildings for over 50 years, ISNA quoted provincial tourism chief Mohsen Janjan as saying on Wednesday.

Previous excavations uncovered capital column heads, their shafts, and bases as well as striking pieces of engraved pottery, yet the archaeologists believe that the core an ancient Greek temple is buried beneath many residential units built by the locals on the site over the years.

In 1943, archaeologists discovered an 85x36 centimeter ancient inscription of 30 lines written in Greek calling on the people of Nahavand to obey the laws of the government. The inscription indicated the existence of the Laodicea Temple, which had been built by the Seleucid king who ruled Asia Minor, Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC), for



his wife Queen Laodicea.

Two other inscriptions as well as four bronze statuettes have been unearthed at the site, which are on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. A number of capitals and bases of the temple’s columns excavated over the years are currently being

used as decorations in Nahavand’s Hajian Bazaar and several other parts of the city.

Antiochus was the most distinguished of the Seleucids. Having made vassal states out of Parthia in present-day northeastern Iran and Bactria (an ancient country in Central Asia), he warred successfully against

the Egyptian king Ptolemy V and in 198 BC obtained possession of all of Palestine and Lebanon.

He later became involved in a conflict with the Romans, who defeated him at Thermopylae in 191 BC and at Magnesia (now Manisa, Turkey) in 190 BC. As the price of peace, he was forced to surrender all his dominions west of the Taurus Mountains and to pay costly tribute. Antiochus, who early in his reign had restored the Seleucid Empire, finally forfeited its influence in the eastern Mediterranean by his failure to recognize the rising power of Rome.

The Seleucid Empire was a Hellenistic state ruled by the Seleucid dynasty which existed from 312 BC to 63 BC; Seleucus I Nicator founded it following the division of the Macedonian Empire vastly expanded by Alexander the Great. Seleucus received Babylonia (321 BC) and from there expanded his dominions to include much of Alexander’s near-eastern territories. At the height of its power, the Empire included central Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and what is now Kuwait, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

Zanjan crafters blend genuine Persian arts with nanotechnology

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Crafters in the northwestern Zanjan province have started using nanotechnology in producing handicrafts, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

The technology is mostly used in knife and filigree industries, which are two main handicraft products of the province, to prevent the products from rusting and oxidizing, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand said.

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

The use of nanotechnology by knowledge-based companies to improve the quantitative and qualitative level of handicraft

products can lead to a better market as well as attract more tourists, the official added.

When the target market is international, the products need to follow international standards, he explained.

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

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

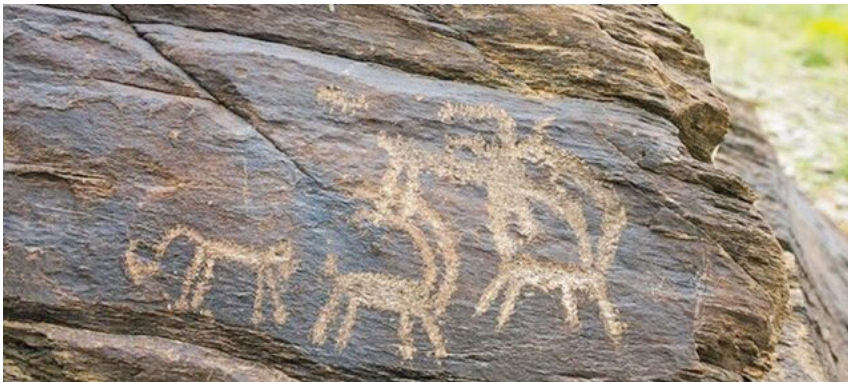


Ancient rock-carved motifs constitute open-air museum in west-central Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A new survey by Iranian cultural heritage experts and officials has shed new light on hundreds of ancient rock-carved motifs, which are scattered near Maryanaj, constituting an open-air museum across west-central Iranian town.

“These rock carvings are situated near a road that crosses Doost-Ali Valley of the town of Maryanaj in Hamedan province and they have already been in this area. Fortunately, during the visit of the experts, it was determined that they were not harmed [drastically],” ISNA quoted deputy provincial tourism chief as saying on Tuesday.

“We are mulling over if we can transfer the rock-carved arts into a museum in such a way that does not inflict harm to them,” Ahmad Torabi said.



“Another option is that the rock-carved objects to remain in their original place to preserve their cultural values. Moreover,

they are situated along a touristic road and if they are placed at a museum they might lose their unique charm.”

“These objects are called ‘shepherd motifs’, which are in the shape of scratches [on the surface] in various themes and motifs such as animals, plants, and geometric patterns,” he explained.

Noting that such motifs can be seen all over the Zagros highlands, he added “Unfortunately, human interventions destroy the artifacts more than natural erosion.”

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world’s greatest cities. It was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC. Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan’s attractions to name a few.

UN lauds Iran's fight against drug trafficking

1 → Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that Iran seized totally 814,477 kilograms of different types of narcotic drugs in 2019.

He said that 656,258 kg (more than 80 percent) of the seized narcotic drugs were opium.

"Other major drugs seized by Iran, include Hashish (73,928 kg), morphine (18,185 kg), heroin (17,414 kg), and methamphetamine (13,570 kg)," the ambassador explained.

"Through 2319 clashes with drug traffickers, Islamic Republic of Iran dismantled 1,886 rings and networks involved in the transit and supply of narcotic drugs in 2019. Five brave and courageous Iranian anti-drug agents were martyred in 2019 while fighting with traffickers," he added.

Iran, which has a 900-kilometer border with Afghanistan, has been used as the main conduit for smuggling Afghan drugs to narcotics kingpins across the world, especially Europe.

Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades.

The country has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

The war on drug has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police forces over the



past four decades.

Hossein Rahimi, a police chief, has said three gangs of international drug trafficking have been recently disbanded in the capital

city of Tehran, and 27 dealers were arrested, over 1 ton of narcotics was discovered.

Since the beginning of this year (March 21), 163 international traffickers were ar-

rested and 6 tons of drugs were seized, he noted, adding, police detections of drugs have increased by 25 percent compared to the same period last year.

Addiction recovery center for girls opened with 20 persons capacity



SOCIETY TEHRAN — The first residential-educational center in the country for protecting adolescent girls who have recovered from addictions or lived in families with addicted parents was inaugurated on Wednesday.

"When I start competing in martial arts, I feel like the opponent is all the problems and misfortunes of my life. I confront her in such a way that I finally come out victorious. My opponent never knows that I looked at her as a problem and during this time I learned to fight my problems. I kind of knock her out so she never forgets," a girl recovered from addiction said.

Akbar Rajabi, the director of the Toloo Bi-Nashan Association which has set up the center, said: "Now our girls have a black and brown karate belt and are trying for high-ranking."

"We introduced this program with the hashtag 'My daughter, God's smile' among the people, so that the support for girls, especially the vulnerable ones, will stick to their minds."

"Girls are dear and we must protect them against harm. That's why we did our best to make it look like a house of their own. With the same warmth, comfort, and security."

Yellow and blue curtains, colorful furniture, and wallpaper all reflect the tastes of a group of girls who are now more comfortable with their new home to keep going."

On the table at the entrance to the House of Angels, there are paintings and the championship certificate of girls who were once addicted or damaged.

■ House of 20 angels

The center has the capacity for about 20 people, and the necessary permits have been obtained from the Welfare Organization.

Currently, 15 girls aged 8 to 18 live in the center; they study, learn languages, take up sports, and strive to have a better future.

Niloufar Khansari, the center's director, said that the girls at the center share a common pain which is addiction. They are often born into families with either a parent or both addicted. While some girls have experienced a period of drug use through living in such conditions, now all of them have quit and considered a different path for their future.

In the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015- March 2016), Mehr House, where addicted women stayed to recover and quit drug addiction, was established, she said, adding, then the number of girls gradually increased.

Then we decided to expand the center, and finally, the House of Angels was inaugurated, she added.

A sum of 5 billion rials (nearly \$120,000 at an official rate of 42,000 rials) has been spent on the construction of the center, which has been paid by the benefactors and philanthropists.

She further said that we have different plans with the girls. Some of them are interested in cooking and cannot wait to cook cakes and pastries in the kitchen's oven.

The work is supposed to be divided among the children and they will be involved in maintaining the peace and se-



curity of the home, she concluded.

■ Social indicators for girls improving

Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, has said statistics show that the situation of girls in Iranian society is improving in different areas, including health and education.

"Supporting girls who have dropped out of school is another plan that has been implemented in 17 provinces across the country. 11,000 girl students trained to be familiarized with civic activities to promote social participation, regional exhibitions to introduce the artistic activities of female students have been held.

The Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents approved, a bill banning child marriage girls under the age of 13 will soon be approved," Ebtekar stated.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Iran to hold first national online project Olympiad

The first round of online project Olympiad will be held in Iran in the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), Fatemeh Mohajerani, an official with the Ministry of Education has said.

The project Olympiad will focus on special subjects and is very much like Khwarizmi International Award the only difference is that the Olympiad will be carried out online, IRNA news agency quoted Mohajerani as saying on Sunday.

The participants can submit their projects online via a website and a jury will evaluate them, she added.

اولین المپیاد مجازی برگزار می شود

فاطمه مهاجرانی رئیس مرکز ملی پرورش استعدادهای درخشان و دانش پژوهان جوان گفت: سال آینده اولین المپیاد مجازی با عنوان «المپیاد پروژه ای» برگزار می شود.

فاطمه مهاجرانی روز یکشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: این المپیاد یک موضوع خاص را به عنوان یک مساله تعریف کرده و به آن می پردازد و در واقع شبیه جشنواره خوارزمی است با این تفاوت که نیازی به حضور افراد نیست بلکه به صورت مجازی برگزار می شود. وی افزود: شرکت کنندگان و نخبگان از طریق یک پورتال، طرح ها و موضوعات خود را ارسال می کنند تا مورد داوری قرار گیرد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“cerebro-, cerebr-”

■ **Meaning:** brain

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

PHRASAL VERB

Think something through

■ **Meaning:** to think carefully about the possible results of something

■ **For example:** The policy has not been thought through properly.

IDIOM

Get over something

■ **Explanation:** to begin to feel better after a very upsetting experience

■ **For example:** She never got over the death of her son.

Iran, Japan discuss joint project on women's empowerment

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Iranian Vice Presidency for Women's and Family Affairs and the Japanese Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) held the third meeting of a joint project on women's empowerment through videoconference on Tuesday.

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation has worked over the past 10 years to promote constructive ties with Iran through a range of projects including joint research, mutual visits and dialogues on different issues such as women's empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Masoumeh Ebtekar, vice president for women's and family affairs; Morteza Rahmani Movahed, ambassador of Iran to Japan; and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the meeting, IRNA reported.

Nobuo Tanaka, chairman of the SPF; Atsushi Sunami, president of the Ocean Policy Research of the SPF; Mitsugu Saito, Japanese ambassador to Iran; and several directors of the SPF joined the meeting from Japan.

A review of joint actions conducted last year, proposals on the type of cooperation in the post-corona period, and the creation of appropriate conditions for employment and women's entrepreneurship and the experiences of both sides were among the issues discussed during the meeting.

During the video conference, a joint research report on the comparative study of women entrepreneurs in Iran and Japan, women and information and communication technology, as well as a joint project report on home businesses were presented.

The meeting also discussed plans for the role of women in the post-corona period, the development of home-based businesses using the experiences of the Indonesian government, and women's access to information and communication technology for economic growth.

FAO calls for innovative policies in Asia-Pacific to ensure food security amid COVID-19

FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific warns that the global pandemic caused by COVID-19 requires a greater coordinated response on many policy levels, particularly to ensure food and nutrition security of billions of people in the vast Asia-Pacific region.

According to a policy brief released by the FAO Regional Office, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to food and nutrition security in Asia and the Pacific, as the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic and the lockdowns threaten both economic and physical access to food.

While the slowing global economy has caused widespread job losses, collapsing incomes, and falling remittances in Asia and the Pacific, FAO says that this convergence of factors may make food, particularly nutritious food, less affordable for some, especially the poor as well as vulnerable groups such as women, children and the disabled.

Furthermore, despite the fact that over the last couple of months, agricultural production and food supply have been less affected and international food market prices have remained generally soft, the Organization warns that any disruptions to and possible breakdowns of marketing, logistics and trading systems – due to the pandemic – could make food unavailable in some locations at some times.

The report also indicates that the situation in countries that are engaged in conflict, sheltering large numbers of refugees, or experiencing particularly severe natural disasters is more fragile, as these nations are more likely to be severely affected by COVID-19, experiencing the worse food insecurity and malnutrition.

Addressing such grave concerns, FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific calls on the region's countries to focus on:

- Controlling the spread of the virus and implementing physical distancing to reduce fear among all labourers, including those working in food supply chains.
- Expanding social protection, in the short-term as part of countries' economic stimulus measures, to cover more people and provide more generous benefits to ensure food access for all, while also reducing the administrative burden needed to access the funds.
- Necessity of working together for Governments and the private sector to solve disruptions in food supply chains when they arise.
- Avoiding export restrictions in international trade to make sure supply chains continue to function.
- Building resilience into food systems to safeguard them against future economic and health shocks as part of stimulus measures to ensure food access.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

NASA seeks contact with Mars robot

(January 23, 2004)

NASA officials say that they will try again later today to regain contact with a robot vehicle on the planet Mars. Engineers lost contact with the robot named Spirit just as its mission on the red planet was starting. From NASA headquarters in Pasadena, David Willis reports:

NASA is currently hoping that **orbiting** spacecraft will be able to **wake the rover up**. At the moment it's neither obeying commands nor sending data - 'a very serious **anomaly**', in the words of one NASA scientist.

Ground control won't actually be able to communicate directly with the robot for several hours, until **day breaks** on the red planet and Mars is visible from the earth.

Officials say they intend to proceed **gingerly**; they don't want to send the robot too many commands and potentially worsen the situation. But they must first identify whether it's a **software** or **hardware** problem that has caused the robot to **fall silent**. They point out **there is a precedent for this** - the Pathfinder mission was delayed six years ago when communication was lost for a period.

■ Words

orbiting: going round, or circling a planet

wake the rover up: get the moving robot to start responding to signals from Earth

data: information, usually in the form of facts or statistics which can be analysed

anomaly: something which is different to what is normal or expected

ground control: NASA Space headquarters here on Earth

day breaks: sunrise

gingerly: carefully and perhaps nervously

software or hardware: to do with the computer programmes or the computer machinery

fall silent: here - stop sending signals

there is a precedent for this: this has happened before
(Source: BBC)

Large rally held in Tel Aviv to protest Israel's annexation plan

A large number of people have staged a rally in Tel Aviv to protest the Israeli regime's plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

About 2,500 people gathered in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square on Tuesday evening to protest the decision.

Celebrities, activists, entrepreneurs, and security experts were in attendance and delivered speeches, The Jerusalem Post reported. Amos Yadlin, a former general in the Israeli air force and the ex-head of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate, reportedly spoke about the security risks that the annexation would entail.

"I can assure you, one-sidedly annexing 30 percent of Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] will not bring any strategic advantages, but it will bring with it grave security risks, international pressures, and failures of legitimacy and morals," Yadlin warned.

He said annexation would hurt cooperation with Jordan and the Palestinian Authority and draw "vital military force away from the northern front with Iran and [the Lebanese resistance movement of] Hezbollah."

Jordan is one of the only two Arab countries that have open diplomatic relations with the Israeli regime.

According to Press TV, the Palestinian Authority has already terminated all agreements with Israel and the United States over the annexation plan, a brainchild of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has set July 1 as the date for the start of cabinet discussions on the annexation plan.

Reem Younis, an entrepreneur who attended the Tuesday rally, also criticized the plan, emphasizing that the measure "is an economic catastrophe for both sides [the Israelis and the Palestinians]. It will ruin everything we've worked to build together."

Protesters try to pull down ex-U.S. president's statue in DC

➔ 1 Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt was at the scene on Monday night, and issued a statement saying: "Let me be clear: we will not bow to anarchists. Law and order will prevail, and justice will be served."

On June 1, law enforcement officers forcefully cleared peaceful protesters from Lafayette Square so Trump could stage a photo op at a nearby church.

■ **Protesters Graffiti Black House Autonomous Zone in D.C.**

After being a vocal critic of Seattle's autonomous zone, President Donald Trump plans to squash any attempts protesters have to set a similar one up in Washington, D.C.

On Monday, protesters spray-painted "BHAZ" on the historic St. John's Church, located less than 200 feet from the White House. An acronym for the "Black House Autonomous Zone," videos and photos of the areas showed people setting up barricades tagged with "BLM," "F**k the Cops" and "BHAZ."

Trump posted on Twitter that there will "never be an 'autonomous zone' in Washington, D.C.," as long as he remains in the White House. If there are attempts at establishing one, Trump wrote they "will be met with serious force."

Syria air defenses repel Israeli strike on Hama

Syrian air defenses have repelled an Israeli airstrike in the western-central province of Hama, only a few hours after they confronted similar acts of aggression elsewhere in the country.

Syria's official news agency SANA cited an unnamed military source as saying that the Israeli military carried out airstrikes at several locations in the cities of Salamiyah and al-Sabboura at 00:45 a.m. local time on Wednesday (21:45 GMT Tuesday).

The Syrian air defense systems intercepted a large number of the missiles before they could reach their targets.

SANA said the Hama strike did not cause any casualties but caused material damage in the areas hit.

Late on Tuesday, Syrian military positions were targeted by Israeli strikes in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr and the southwestern province of al-Suwayda.

The Syria Defense Ministry confirmed that two Syrian army soldiers had lost their lives and four others had sustained injuries during these strikes.

Early on Tuesday, Syrian air defense units also managed to intercept an unknown drone attack over the city of Jableh, south of the strategic western city of Latakia. The unidentified aircraft had made an unsuccessful attempt to hit a Russian airbase in the region, according to Press TV's correspondent there.

The Israeli strikes on Syria are viewed by observers as an attempt to weaken the Damascus government as it increasingly gains the upper hand in its fight against foreign-backed militant and terrorist groups.

Resistance News

Hamas leadership meets Russia's deputy foreign minister in Doha

➔ 1 According to eyewitnesses, police officers savagely beat and brutalized the young detainees before hauling them to a detention center in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Earlier, the Israeli military and security forces launched dawn arrest campaigns in different areas of Jerusalem and the West Bank.

On Tuesday afternoon, police forces shot dead a young man called Ahmed Erekat as he was driving his car on a road near Jerusalem.

The Israeli police justified the deadly shooting, which happened at the Container checkpoint in the east of the holy city, by claiming the driver attempted to carry out a vehicular attack.

The victim is the nephew of Saeb Erekat, secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Palestinian officials rejected the police's account of Erekat's death.

Ahmad was "executed" by the Israeli police, his uncle Saeb told AFP, holding Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu responsible for the crime.

He dismissed the police allegation of an attempted car ramming as "impossible," saying that Ahmad was due to be married later in the week.

"This young man was killed in cold blood. Tonight was his sister's wedding," Saeb said.

"What the occupation army claims, that he was trying to run someone over, is a lie," he added.

UN Security Council meets as calls grow against Israel's annexation plans

Letter by 1,080 parliamentarians from 25 nations urges leaders to prevent Netanyahu's controversial land seizure.

Meanwhile, United Nations chief Antonio Guterres has called on Israel to abandon plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, saying such a move would be a "most serious violation of international law".

The UN secretary-general made the comments in a report to the Security Council on Tuesday, a day before the 15-member body holds its twice-yearly meeting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said it could begin the annexation process from July 1.

In the document, Guterres said an Israeli annexation would be "devastating" for hopes of fresh negotiations and an eventual two-state solution.

"This would be calamitous for Palestinians, Israelis and the region," he said, adding that the plan threatened "efforts to advance regional peace".

Guterres's comments came a day after thousands of Palestinians protested in Jericho against the Israeli plans, in a rally also attended by dozens of foreign diplomats.

The Palestinian leadership proposed last week a plan that seeks to create a "sovereign Palestinian state, independent and demilitarised", with East Jerusalem as its capital.



It also leaves the door open to border modifications between the proposed state and Israel, as well as exchanges of land equal "in size and volume and in value - one to one".

The Palestinian proposal came as a response to U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial plan that gave a green light for Israel to annex large swaths of the occupied West Bank, including settlements considered illegal under international law, and the Jordan Valley.

Unveiled in late January, Trump's plan proposed the establishment of a demilitarised Palestinian state on the remaining patchwork of disjointed parts of the Palestinian territories without occupied East Jerusalem. The plan has been rejected in its entirety by the Palestinians.

The Security Council meeting, to be held by video conference, will be the last major international meeting on the issue before the July 1 deadline.

"Any decision on sovereignty will be made

only by the Israeli government," Israel's UN envoy Danny Danon said in a statement on Tuesday.

"We must send a clear message," one envoy told AFP news agency, adding that it was "not enough" to simply condemn Israeli policy, and raising the possibility of a case before the International Court of Justice.

For decades, Israel has enjoyed bipartisan U.S. support that enabled it to ignore international criticism and numerous UN resolutions over its occupation of Palestinian territories.

When Trump in late 2017 shifted U.S. policy by recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital, 14 of the 15 Security Council members adopted a resolution condemning the move - but the U.S. used its veto.

A similar resolution was then presented in the UN General Assembly (UNGA), where no nation has veto power - it passed with 128 votes in favour, nine against and 35 abstentions.

Diplomats, however, seemed to rule out the idea that Israel could face sanctions over the planned annexation, as were imposed by certain countries after Russia's annexation of Crimea.

"Any annexation would have quite big consequences for the two-state solution in the peace process," another ambassador told AFP on condition of anonymity.

N. Korea suspends plans for military action against S. Korea

North Korea has announced it will suspend "military action plans" against South Korea, after a meeting of the governing party's Central Military Commission presided over by leader Kim Jong Un, the official KCNA news agency said on Wednesday.

The video conference meeting on Tuesday also discussed documents outlining measures for "further bolstering the war deterrent of the country", KCNA reported.

The committee members "took stock of the prevailing situation" before deciding to suspend the plans, the report said, without elaborating.

Political tensions between the two Koreas have been rising over Pyongyang's objections to plans by defector-led groups in South Korea to fly propaganda leaflets across the border. North Korea is also suffering under economic sanctions that it wants eased as part of denuclearization talks that have been stalled for months.

North Korea claims the defectors' campaigns violate an

agreement between the two aimed at preventing military confrontation, and has accused them of insulting the dignity of North Korea's supreme leadership.

In recent weeks, North Korea has blown up a joint liaison office on its side of the border, declared an end to dialogue with South Korea, and threatened military action.

Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, warned last week of retaliatory measures against South Korea that could involve the military, although she did not elaborate.

The General Staff of the Korean People's Army later said it had been studying an "action plan" that included sending troops into joint tourism and economic zones, reoccupying border guard posts that had been abandoned under an inter-Korean pact, taking steps to "turn the front line into a fortress", and supporting plans for North Korea to send its own propaganda leaflets into South Korea.

North Korea's military was seen putting up loudspeak-

ers near the Korean Demilitarized Zone, a military source told Reuters on Tuesday. Yonhap news agency reported on Wednesday that the loudspeakers were being removed.

Yoh Sang-key, spokesman of South Korea's Unification Ministry, said Seoul was "closely reviewing" North Korea's report but did not elaborate further. He also said it was the first report in state media of Kim holding a video conferencing meeting.

Al Jazeera's Rob McBride, reporting from Seoul in South Korea, said the North's actions follow a now-familiar pattern of "increase in tensions with a lot of vitriol, rhetoric and threats only for it all to be dialled down".

"It seems North Korea has achieved its interim objective, in terms of getting international attention and reminding the United States where the Korean Peninsula is. It has certainly unnerved South Korea - that may lead to more humanitarian aid, which South Korea can give despite international sanctions," he said.

Greece slams Turkey's 'gunboat diplomacy' in Aegean



Greece's foreign minister accused Turkey Wednesday of undermining stability and security in the eastern Mediterranean and causing problems with all of its neighbors, while also violating Greek airspace and territorial waters daily.

Nikos Dendias slammed Turkey's actions in recent months in the Aegean Sea, which separates the two countries, saying Ankara must "abstain from its illegal gunboat diplomacy." Dendias was speaking during a visit to Greece's northeastern border with Turkey, and was accompanied by the European Union's foreign policy chief.

NATO allies and neighbors Greece and Turkey have long had difficult relations, and the two countries have come to the brink of war three times since the 1970s. Divided over a series of issues, including territorial disputes in the Aegean, relations have become increasingly strained in recent months< AP reported.

Earlier this year, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared the borders with Europe were open to migrants living in Turkey who wanted to head into the European Union. Although Turkey also shares a border with EU member Bulgaria, it was only on the Greek land

border crossing that tens of thousands of migrants gathered, demanding to be allowed to cross.

Dendias described the action as "the exploitation, on the part of Turkey, of the hopes of tens of thousands of civilians for a better life ... misled through a disinformation campaign orchestrated by Turkish officials at the highest level."

Dendias and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell toured the border crossing area in the Evros region where the migrants had gathered in late February.

"It's very clear that we are determined to protect the external borders of the European Union and to strongly support Greece's sovereignty," Borrell said.

Borrell said his visit to Greece had been planned but had been pushed forward after recent incidents involving Turkey "in order order to show our solidarity and to show how much we share your concerns."

Greece and Turkey are also in dispute over oil and gas exploratory drilling rights in the Mediterranean, with Greece, Cyprus and Egypt outraged at a Turkish agreement with the UN-recognized government in Libya laying claim to rights of a swathe of the Mediterranean that they say infringes on their sovereign rights.

U.S. facing 'critical' coronavirus surge



Coronavirus infections are surging across large parts of the United States, the top US infectious disease expert has warned, as the death toll in Latin America passed 100,000.

The developments highlighted how far away the world remains from ending the pandemic, six months into a crisis that has claimed nearly 500,000 lives and devastated the global economy.

Even in Europe, which has been loosening travel restrictions following a brutal few months when it was the epicenter of the pandemic, there have been major setbacks, AFP reported.

Germany Tuesday reimposed lockdowns on more than 600,000 people following a cluster of infections at a slaughterhouse, while world men's tennis number one Novak Djokovic tested positive after hosting an exhibition tournament in the Balkans.

In the United States, White House advisor Anthony Fauci warned the next two weeks would be "critical to our ability to address... surgings" in Florida, Texas and other states.

The United States has already recorded more deaths than any other nation, with nearly 800 more fatalities Tuesday taking its toll past 121,000.

However President Donald Trump, whose handling of the crisis has been widely criticized as erratic, is determined to fast-track efforts to restore normality.

He continued to stoke controversy Tuesday, doubling down on weekend comments he wanted to slow testing because so many confirmed infections made the United States look bad.

"I don't kid," Trump said, after a White House official described his initial comments as just a joke.

With the parts of the United States unable to contain the pandemic, the European Union was considering blocking US travelers as it reopens its borders to tourism, the New York Times reported.

Reflecting the sentiments of many around the world, New York food shop manager Ian Joskowitz said he was determined not to think about the dangers of the virus as he tried to continue running his business.

"If I thought about it too much, I probably may have a problem doing this. So I put it out of my mind," Joskowitz told AFP.

"With my employees, I have an agreement with them. They keep coming in. I'll continue to do everything humanly possible to keep them safe."

Russia holds massive military parade in Moscow on eve of referendum

Russia has held a massive military parade in Moscow to celebrate its annual Victory Day, on the eve of a national referendum on extending President Vladimir Putin's time in office.

The parade, marking the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union's World War Two victory over Nazi Germany, had to be rescheduled from its original date on May 9 due to the new coronavirus outbreak.

It kicked off in Moscow's Red Square on Wednesday, with the participation of an estimated 14,000 Russian troops, as well as tanks and aircraft.

Under coronavirus-related restrictions, access to Red Square and the president was limited, however.

Journalists have been limited to a press center, and

visiting participants were quarantined before the event.

Dozens of World War II veterans, who are now more than 90 years, were also sequestered in sanatoriums outside of Moscow for two weeks before the event.

"They are in wonderful conditions there," a Kremlin spokesman said.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin called on people to avoid crowding the streets to catch sight of the passing military hardware and "watch it on television."

"There shouldn't be any crowds, there shouldn't be spectators there," he said.

Foreign leaders, including Chinese President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron, who had been invited to the event, have canceled their attendance due

to the epidemic.

More than a dozen large cities have also canceled parades or will hold them without any crowds.

Russia reported 7,425 new infections on Tuesday, taking the total reported cases of COVID-19 in the country to 598,878. There have been 8,359 confirmed deaths related to the disease countrywide.

A national vote on the country's constitution was suspended on April 22 due to the outbreak. It will now be held online from June 25 until July 1.

The changes would allow President Putin two more six-year terms if re-elected.

Under the current constitution, Putin is banned from seeking re-election when his mandate ends in 2024.

Iran's Taremi reveals Andres Iniesta is his idol

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran international striker Mehdi Taremi has revealed former Spain midfielder Andres Iniesta has always been his football idol.

The 28-year-old forward currently plays at Primeira Liga club Rio Ave and has caught the eyes of Portugal giants after glittering performance in the league. He has scored 11 goals so far and sits third in the top scorers table.

In an interview with Spanish news agency EFE, Taremi has confessed that he is a fan of Iniesta and also revealed that he has opted to play at Primeira Liga in consultation with former Iran coach Carlos Queiroz.

"I am a fan of Iniesta for a long time. I have seen many of his games on television, looking for news about him. He is technically good and very strong in midfield," Taremi said.

"I joined Rio Ave on the advice of Carlos Queiroz, despite the fact that I now earn less money than if I had stayed in Qatar's Al Gharafa," he added.

The Iranian player also said that he hopes that the Iranian women will be allowed into stadiums to watch football matches.

"It is normal for women and men to go to a stadium to watch a soccer match. The Iranian loves soccer and lives with soccer. About 90,000 fans come to the stadium



to watch Persepolis match. They support their players, wherever they go. I played in

Persepolis several years and with the help of my teammates I achieved a lot of glory

for my people and my country," Taremi concluded.

FFIRI Statutes not fully complied with FIFA's requirements



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — FIFA, in a letter sent to the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), has provided some explanation about the recently drafted FFIRI Statutes.

The Iranian football federation sent the amended draft status to FIFA in early June, after FIFA threatened the federation to the possible global suspension over the problematic provisions of the current statutes.

In the letter received on June 23, the international governing body of football has set a short deadline for the FFIRI to implement some necessary changes to make its statutes fully comply with FIFA's requirements.

According to some reports, FIFA has accepted some proposed changes by the FFIRI such as removing the Min-

ister of Sports and Youth and his deputy from the FFIRI General Assembly and, instead, agreed to their presence as honorary members.

However, FIFA still has raised significant objections to the drafted statutes which need to be amended and revised within the stipulated deadline of June 28, 2020.

FIFA had previously banned FFIRI from holding its elections due to concerns over potential government interference in its affairs.

If the draft statutes of the FFIRI is approved by FIFA, the federation's officials can take further steps to complete the process of the amendment of the FFIRI Statutes and plan to hold an extraordinary assembly and then hold the presidential elections of the federation in upcoming months.

Korea Republic's Ji determined to realize Olympic dream

Korea Republic have represented Asia at the FIFA Women's World Cup on three occasions but their international prominence has yet to extend to the Women's Olympic Football Tournament.

The Taegeuk Ladies have tried and failed on six occasions to win their way to an Olympic Games, and current superstar Ji So-yun is desperate to end that barren run.

Korea Republic are just 180 minutes away from a breakthrough with a play-off against China PR standing in their way of maiden Olympic qualification.

The two-legged showdown, originally scheduled for March, has twice been postponed due to COVID-19, with February 2021 confirmed as the new dates.

"We have tried hard in qualifying for the past Olympic Games only to disappoint on each occasion," the 29-year-old Chelsea midfielder Ji told FIFA.com. "Now we have a chance.

"To be honest, I think this is a good opportunity for us to qualify for the Olympics for the first time. I hope my dream of participating in the Olympics will come true.

"I respect the Olympic spirit of contributing to world peace through sports," added Ji in reference to International Olympic Day. "I would like to commemorate the birth of the Olympics with all those who love sports."

With an incredible 61 goals from 125 international appearances, Ji is Korea Republic's all-time top-scorer and the second most-capped player.

Her 14-year international career has been littered with highlights including



finding the net in competitions ranging from the EAFF (East Asian) Championship, the AFC Women's Asian Cup and even the Women's World Cup, where she was on target in a 2-2 draw against Costa Rica at Canada 2015.

The only thing missing from the resume is an Olympic goal.

Ji, however, is all too aware they face a massive challenge against China. They lost 1-0 against their neighboring rivals in the 2019 Four Nations Tournament, before playing out a goalless draw in last December's East Asian Championship.

"We have faced up against China many times and we know each other very well," Ji said. "So the final result may largely depend on which side makes fewer mistakes."

The team's progress under new boss Colin Bell has provided Ji with added confidence. Since taking over last October, the former Republic of Ireland women's team coach has injected new blood into the side.

With the fresh faces providing added impetus, the team excelled during Asia's third round of Olympic qualifying by winning their group in confident fashion.

(Source: FIFA)

Tennis Australia to take 'learnings' from Adria Tour shutdown - official

Tennis Australia will take "a fair few learnings" from the abandoned Adria Tour, a senior TA official told Reuters on Wednesday, after the exhibition series ended abruptly amid a slew of COVID-19 infections to players and staff.

World number one Novak Djokovic confirmed he had contracted COVID-19 on Tuesday, becoming the fourth player infected during the Balkan series, which featured heaving crowds and players partying without social distancing.

"There were a fair few learnings that have come out of that (Adria Tour)," TA's Chief Operating Officer Tom Larner said.

"And whilst, certainly the whole event was actually really well-intentioned in terms of raising money for charity, the execution was clearly not great, as were the processes in place."

The U.S. Open is the next Grand Slam on the calendar, to be held as scheduled from Aug. 31 in New York, with no crowds and under strict biosecurity protocols.

Australia, with 7,500 infections and 103 deaths, has been relatively successful in containing COVID-19 but fears of a second wave are growing with several clusters breaking out across Melbourne, the Australian Open's home city.

Professional tennis returns in Australia this weekend with the AS450,000 (\$311,000) UTR Pro Series and TA are taking no chances. The series will be held at closed venues and players interaction will be limited, measures that could be in place at Melbourne Park in January if necessary.

"I think it will be great preparation for us and the playing group," Larner said of



planning for the series.

"We obviously knew, as the government indicated, that there's a risk of the virus flaring up again in Australia.

"We've been working with our chief medical officer Carolyn Broderick in the development of our biosecurity plan... how we keep players safe and how we ensure there's minimal cross-over or interaction."

Social restrictions have eased in Australia but Victoria has reimposed some after the COVID-19 spike in Melbourne.

Sports events in Victoria remain closed to the public but other states with lower infection rates are allowed to have crowds of up to 20,000 attend venues.

Larner said Australian Open organisers had no scenario planning which involved moving the Grand Slam or other warmup events to other parts of the country to reduce COVID-19 risks or give fans access to tennis.

He added that organisers were confident they could allow fans to safely attend the Australian Open even without COVID-19 being eradicated in Melbourne so long as their movement and spacing could be controlled effectively.

(Source: Eurosport)

Vasco Evora officially named Sepahan goalkeeping coach

Tasnim — Vasco José Pedrosa Évora was officially named as new goalkeeping coach of Iranian football team Sepahan.

The 41-year-old Portuguese coach replaced his compatriot Rui Tavares in the Isfahan-based football club.

Evora's contract will run until the end of the season.



He has already worked at Portuguese clubs Arouca, Belenenses SAD, Sporting B and Leiria.

Evora also was goalkeeping coach of Burkina Faso national football team in 2016.

Iran Professional League resumed on Wednesday with a match between Foolad and Esteghlal.

Sepahan will meet Gol Gohar Sirjan on June 29.

Persepolis sit top of the table with 47 points, 10 points above Sepahan and Tractor.

Omid Noorafkan joins Sepahan

IRNA — Omid Noorafkan penned a three-year contract with Iran's Sepahan football team on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old midfielder was playing in Sepahan on loan from Charleroi last season.

Sepahan acting president Manouchehr Nikfar had traveled to Belgium to negotiate with Charleroi's officials over Noorafkan's transfer.

Noorafkan had joined the Belgian team in 2018 on a three-year contract.

Sepahan sit second in the Iran Professional League, 10 points adrift of top.

Iran wants to host FIVB Age Groups World Championships

Tasnim — Iran volleyball federation has shown interest in hosting U-21 and U-19 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship.

Head of Iran volleyball federation Mohammad Reza Davarzani has talked to director general of International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Fabio Azevedo over the issue.

Iran has submitted its bid for hosting the events and hopes that the world federation accepts one of them.

In the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's U-21 World Championship which was held in Bahrain, Iran won the title.

And in the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U-19 World Championship held in Tunisia, defending champion Iran finished in fifth place.

Taremi scores as Rio Ave defeat Vitoria Setobal

Persian Football — Rio Ave football team secured an away win over Vitoria Setobal thanks to goals from Mehdi Taremi and Gelson.

In the match, held in Estadio Do Bonfim, Tiago gave the host a lead in the 25th minute but two minutes later, Taremi equalized the match from the penalty spot.

Vitoria Setobal forward Zequinha was sent off in the 54th minute.

With 10 minutes remaining, Gelson scored the winning goal for the visiting team.

Rio Ave moved up to fifth place with 44 points with this win. Vitoria Setobal remained 12th with 30 points.

New York City Marathon canceled due to COVID-19

The New York City Marathon originally scheduled to be held on Nov. 1 has been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, race organizers said on Thursday.

The New York Road Runners (NYRR), in partnership with the mayor's office, said the decision to cancel the world's largest marathon was made due to novel coronavirus-related health and safety concerns for runners, spectators, volunteers and staff.

"Canceling this year's TCS New York City Marathon is incredibly disappointing for everyone involved, but it was clearly the course we needed to follow from a health and safety perspective," NYRR Chief Executive Michael Capiraso said in a statement.

The 26.2-mile race (42km), which traverses all five boroughs of the city and had 53,640 finishers in 2019, is the second of the six World Marathon Majors to be cancelled this year due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Boston Marathon, originally due to be held in April and then postponed until September, was cancelled for the first time in its history.

The Tokyo Marathon went ahead on March 1 with elite runners only. London was postponed to Oct. 4 from April 26 and Berlin organizers said their race will not get ahead in September but did not say if it would be postponed or cancelled altogether.

The Chicago Marathon has not announced any changes to their scheduled event in October.

(Source: Reuters)

Cape Town City chairman John Comitis explains why they can't keep Ayanda Patosi in the PSL as he attracts huge interest from three different countries.

The left-winger is currently back in Cape Town training with The Citizens following the upheaval caused by the coronaviruses but will be leaving Mzansi soon.

Foolad Khuzestan FC are also believed to be hoping to secure a permanent deal for the 27-year-old, who had been playing in Iran on loan.

"Ayanda Patosi is our player, we still have a contract with him for a few years, but he is definitely going back to the Middle East," Comitis tells KickOff.com.

"There's a lot of demand for him and we are going to look after him nicely and he will probably be gone in the next two weeks.

"Yes, he is in the country and he's going to train with us, he's done the test [for Covid-19] like anybody else, and we are waiting for permission [to return to training].

"Then the minute we get a chance, he's gone overseas.



He's got three countries looking for him. I'm waiting to see which one is going to be the most interesting for him... Iran, United Arab Emirates and [South] Korea.

Comitis says the reason he is not keeping the player is because they cannot compete with the financial might

of the overseas teams.

"He is very happy, and we cannot compete with the money that they pay him. And he gets a ridiculous amount of money there, which is good for him, and we know we cannot get in his way.

"At some point he will be playing for us again hopefully. We've got another three years with him [left on his contract]. We'd like to do a permanent deal for him, but we are waiting for the right deal.

"We are not worried about having him here, we'd love to have him back in the starting line-up, so this is a great relationship we have with him and a clearer understanding."

Asked if he has received any offers for the player from PSL teams, Comitis replied: "We are not interested in local."

After earning much acclaim playing in for Lokeren in Belgium, Khayelitsha-born Patosi has not yet managed to convince the national selectors to give him more chances.

(Source: kickoff.com)

Patosi on ridiculous money overseas

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
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» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
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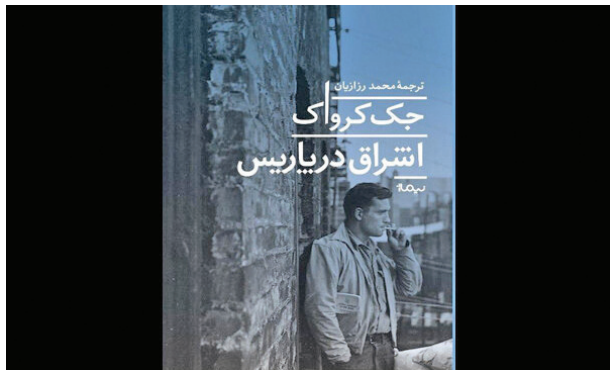
GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The worst co-religionist brother is he who brings trouble to others.

Imam Ali (AS)

Jack Kerouac's "Satori in Paris & Pic" appears in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of American writer Jack Kerouac's book "Satori in Paris & Pic" has been published by Nimaj Publications in Tehran. The book has been translated into Persian by Mohammad Razzazian.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Jack Kerouac's "Satori in Paris & Pic".

"Satori in Paris & Pic" contains Kerouac's last novels, showcasing the remarkable range and versatility of his mature talent. "Satori in Paris" is a rollicking autobiographical account of Kerouac's search for his heritage in France, and lands the author in his familiar milieu of seedy bars and all-night conversations. "Pic" is Kerouac's final novel and one of his most unusual. Narrated by ten-year-old Pictorial Review Jackson in a North Carolina vernacular, the novel charts the adventures of Pic and his brother Slim as they travel from the rural South to Harlem in the 1940s.

Kerouac was a leader of the Beat movement whose most famous book, "On the Road" had broad cultural influence before it was recognized for its literary merits.

Living in New York in the late 1940s, Kerouac wrote his first novel, "Town and City", a highly autobiographical tale about the intersection of small-town family values and the excitement of city life. The novel was published in 1950 with the help of Ginsberg's Columbia professors, and although the well-reviewed book earned Kerouac a modicum of recognition, it did not make him famous.

Kerouac's New York friend in the late 1940s was Neal Cassady; the two took several cross-country road trips to Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver and Mexico City.

These trips provided the inspiration for Kerouac's next and greatest novel, "On the Road", a barely fictionalized account of these road trips packed with love, drugs and jazz.

Kerouac's writing of "On the Road" in 1951 is the stuff of legends. He wrote the entire novel over one three-week bender of frenzied composition, on a single scroll of paper that was 120 feet long.

"On the Road" captured the spirit of its time as no other work of the 20th century had since F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby".

PAKSAT stops broadcasting iFilm English channel over liabilities

A R T **TEHRAN** — IRIB World Service announced on Wednesday that PAKSAT, a Pakistani satellite capacity that provides service for TV broadcasters in West Asia, South Asia, Africa and Europe, has stopped broadcasting Iran's iFilm English channel over its liabilities.

With hundreds million viewers, iFilm is one of the popular channels of IRIB World Service in Pakistan and India.

The deadline for paying liabilities was June 20 and PAKSAT stopped its service for the channel on Tuesday evening.

PAKSAT earlier stopped broadcasting the Sahar TV Urdu channel after the IRIB channel failed to make payments to clear its arrears.

The liabilities of Al-Kawthar TV to Eutelsat, a European satellite operator providing coverage over the entire European continent, West Asia, Africa, Asia and the Americas, have also closed IRIB's Arabic-language channel.

Iran's Press TV, an Iranian news and documentary network that broadcasts in the English and French languages, is also dealing with the same problem.

Over 200 MPs in the Iranian parliament have criticized the issue of the chain cutoffs of IRIB channels and asked the government to cover IRIB's debt liabilities to international satellite operators.

Earlier last week, a group of over 100 officials signed a petition asking the government to allocate a special budget for paying the IRIB's debts.

Writer Jamshid Khanian nominated for Hans Christian Andersen Award

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Children's Book Council of Iran has nominated writer Jamshid Khanian for the 2022 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

Khanian was nominated for his influential role in the formation of adolescent fiction stories, and his focus on peace, friendship, love and respect in his stories.

"Emphasis on man's everyday concerns like immigration, isolation, death and identity, as well as the problems of the elderly and adolescents, and his special attention to middle-class families are among other topics highlighted in Khanian's stories," the council has said.

Khanian is a researcher and a playwright. Among his credits are "A Half Day in the Interrogation Room" and "Compass". He is also the author of several stories, including "Money" and "Where Is My Joseph", which have been translated into English, Russian and Polish.

The council has also nominated him for the 2021 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious Swedish honor to promote children's and youths' literature in the world.

Khanian was honored with a lifetime achievement award at the 36th Fajr International Theater Festival in 2018.

IBBY presents the Andersen award to a living author and illustrator whose complete works have made a lasting contribution to children's literature.

Writer Farhad Hassanzadeh received a



Iranian writer Jamshid Khanian delivers a speech in an undated photo.

nomination for the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

The winners of the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award were Jacqueline Woodson from the U.S. as an author and Albertine

from Switzerland as an illustrator.

Woodson has a prolific body of writing from picture books to young adult literature, all of which feature lyrical language, powerful characters and an

abiding sense of hope.

Albertine creates books with multiple levels of interpretation, with drawings made with infinite precision that are lively and full of humor.

Iran's cultural attaché meets Aristotle University of Thessaloniki's dean



A view of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iran's cultural attaché in Greece, Mohammad Helmi, has met with the dean of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Dimitra Papadopolou, to discuss expansion of cultural and academic relations between the two countries.

The two sides signed an agreement to begin teaching Persian language and literature at the university to bring the two nations closer to one another.

Papadopolou said that the agreement, which comprises all the cultural and academic fields, is complete and practical.

He added that so far the university has signed agreements with several centers across the world, but the agreement with Iran will be a useful one

especially with the students studying at the Theology Faculty.

Helmi also said that the agreement will help increase academic relations between the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and top universities in Iran such as the universities of Tehran, Shahid Beheshti and Allameh Tabataba'i.

He also pointed to the fine potential of Iranian religious centers in Iran especially in the city of Qom, and said that the academic and research centers are active in this city and the students of theology can make the best use of them.

Helmi next donated a collection of 70 reference books in the various languages of Arabic, English and Greece to the Faculty of Theology at the university.

"Coriolanus" to go on stage in Tehran again



Members of director Mostafa Kushki's troupe perform "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Tehran Independent Theater on July 17, 2016. (Tehran Picture Agency/Milad Beheshti)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mostafa Kushki will restage William Shakespeare's play "Coriolanus" at the Tehran Independent Theater next month.

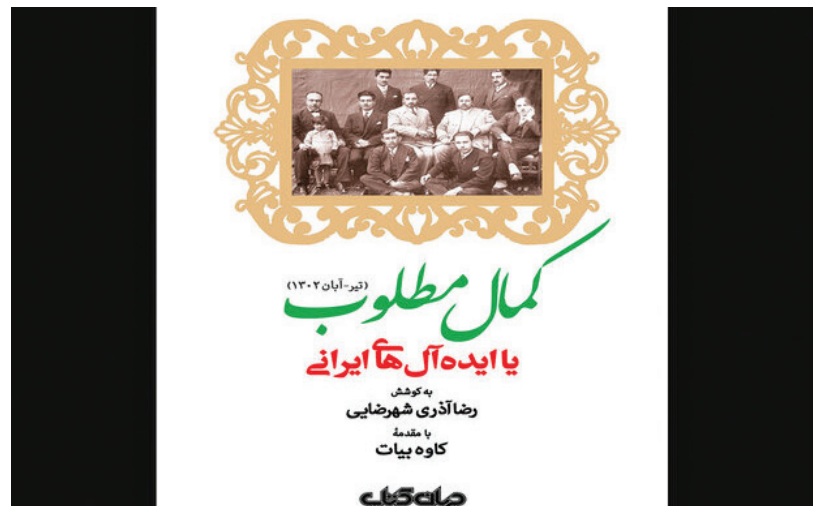
The Tehran Independent Theater Company performed "Coriolanus" at the International Theater Festival of Kerala (ITFOK) in the Indian city of Thrissur in January.

The play was also staged in Tehran twice in 2016 and 2019.

The five-act play "Coriolanus" is a tragedy by William Shakespeare, believed to have been written between 1605 and 1608. The play is based on the life of the legendary Roman leader Caius Marcius Coriolanus.

In the play, Roman General Coriolanus fails to win the support of his people and loses the position of Consul. He then allies with his enemy Tullus Aufidius and swears to take revenge on his city.

"Ideal Perfection" on origins on modern despotism in Iran published



Front cover of the book "Ideal Perfection or Iranian Ideals".

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A book titled "Ideal Perfection or Iranian Ideals" that reviews how Iran was engulfed in despotism in the early 20th century despite its Constitutional Movement has been published.

Published by Jahane Ketab, the book also provides answers to this question why Iranian intellectuals compromised with the despotism.

Nineteen articles compiled by Reza Azari Shahreza'i answer the questions.

The book begins with a preface by Kaveh Bayat, an expert on contemporary Iranian history and a translator of dozens of books on the history of Iran.

One of the articles has been written by the renowned Iranian scholar Saeed Nafisi (Naficy).

Mahmud Farahi-Davasaz, Rashid

Yasemi, Rahim Safavi, Abbas Egbal Ashtiani and Mirza Lofollah Qomi are among the scholars whose articles were selected to be published in the book.

The articles have been authored over five months from June through October in 1923.

The front cover of the book bears a photo depicting a group of top writers and founders of a number of early Iranian newspapers as one of the manifestations of democracy in Iran.

"When a society is corrupted and needs severely grab its people's throats, they rise up. Those who are themselves corrupted lament about the rule of corruption and begin to find a solution, however, they fail to distinguish the proper way and if they can, they are not willing to pursue it," part of an article in the book reads.

IRIB producing series on Daesh



Sima Tirandaz acts in a scene from "Safe House".

A R T **TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) is producing a drama series on the atrocities of the Daesh terrorists. Over 70 percent of the project named "Safe House" has been completed, IRIB announced on Wednesday.

Ahmad Moazzami is the director of the series, which intends to show Daesh terrorists' threats against peace in the region.

Qorban Najafi stars as a Daesh person named Abu Amer and Omid Zendegani,

Sima Tirandaz and Parviz Fallahi are other members of the cast.

"It's difficult to ignore my hatred of Daesh, playing the role of a member of the group, but I did my best in this role," Najafi has said.

"To reach the character, I never watched any documentary or other film about Daesh, because I cannot bear their violence," he added.

Abolfazl Safari is the producer of the series, which is expected to be aired during the second half the Iranian calendar year beginning September 22.