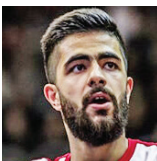




Envoy highlights U.S. failure in anti-Iran bid **3**



Rostock Seawolves complete signing of Yakhchali **11**



"Walnut Tree" exhibit to observe anniversary of Sardasht chemical attack **12**



Today marks martyrdom anniversary of Ayatollah Beheshti and 72 members of the Islamic Republic Party in a terrorist bombing in 1981.

Energy projects worth over \$2b inaugurated

See page 4



File photo

Tehran categorically rejects U.S. report on terrorism

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has said the United States, as the world's most infamous terrorist regime, is in no position to judge other countries.

In a statement on Thursday, Mousavi responded to the annual Country Reports on Terrorism released by the U.S., saying, "The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects and condemns the U.S.'s annual Country Reports on Terrorism because that

regime is blatantly shifting the blame onto others, is utterly insincere, and has double standards in the fight against terrorism."

"The United States of America's regime, known as the biggest state sponsor of terrorism and the main sponsor of the aggressive and occupying Zionist regime, is in no position to claim to be fighting against terrorism and make judgments about this issue," he stated, the Foreign Ministry website reported. **→3**

Unlawful sanctions disrupt Iran's anti-drug fight

TEHRAN — Iran's deputy foreign minister has criticized the U.S. sanctions for hindering Iran's effort and cooperation with other countries in the fight against drug trafficking, saying other countries will not be immune from the consequences.

Mohsen Baharvand made the remarks as he addressed a conference in Tehran

marking International Day against Drug Trafficking and Abuse of Illicit Drugs.

Iran, along with other members of the international community, is celebrating the day, but has made significant strides in the fight against drug addiction by incurring numerous material and spiritual costs and implementing various projects, he highlighted. **→9**

COVID-19 inflicts \$1.4 billion in losses on Iran's hotels

TEHRAN — The outbreak of the new coronavirus has inflicted a loss of 60,000 billion rials (about \$1.4 billion at the official dollar rate of 42,000 rials) on Iranian hospitality industry during the past four months, the president of Iranian Hoteliers Association said on Friday.

"Hoteliers in different provinces of the country have suffered 60,000 billion rials in damage over the past four months following the outbreak of coronavirus [which put a

pause on the travel industry to help curb the disease]," Jamshid Hamzezhadeh said.

He made the remarks during an assembly of Iranian hoteliers, which was held in the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil on Friday, describing the damage as "very severe".

"Although hotels and accommodation centers have reopened, Coronavirus's damage to this section of the tourism industry is still going on." **→8**



ARTICLE

Farrokh Hesabi
Tehran Times journalist

Football disciplinary committee should stand against indiscipline

It is the norm nowadays in the Iranian football to see a player or manager screaming expletives at an official's face with no action taken against them.

Iran Professional League (IPL) started on Wednesday after 118 days. In a postponed game in Ahwaz, Foolad Khuzestan defeated Esteghlal 2-1.

The match was the first to be played in Iran since the coronavirus pandemic halted the season in March and took place behind closed doors.

The game, however, was met with controversy as three red cards for Esteghlal, including two for players and one for the Blues' head coach, Farhad Majidi, led the Tehran-based team to finish the game with two fewer players and a bitter loss.

Esteghlal midfielder Ali Karimi was shown a straight red card just before the break for elbowing the Foolad player.

Farhad Majidi who was left unhappy on the decision of the referee, Mehdi Seyed Ali, went onto the pitch and strongly protested the decision and was shown a red card.

Majidi looked overly frustrated at missing out on three valuable points in their fight to climb up the table.

Esteghlal defender Aref Gholami also was sent off in the 65th minute after receiving his second yellow card.

Esteghlal lost their concentration towards the end of the second half after the incidents and eventually suffered a defeat in a crucial away game.

Following the game, Esteghlal club, in a statement, criticized the referee and threatened the league organization to withdraw from the league.

Respect for the match officials' decisions is an issue that is emphasized in FIFA rules and must be followed by all coaches and players.

The integrity of the Laws, and the referees who apply them, must always be protected and respected. All those in authority, especially coaches and team captains, have a clear responsibility to the game to respect the match officials and their decisions. **→11**

IAEA must obtain information through legal means: international law expert

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN — An international law expert says the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must get information about member states' nuclear program through "legal means".

"It is obvious that the information by the IAEA should be obtained from legal means," Abdollah Abedini tells the Tehran Times as the IAEA Board of Governors adopted an anti-Iran resolution on June 19 under the allegations of undeclared nuclear activities by Iran mostly propagated by Benjamin Netanyahu, one of the fiercest opponents of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Following is the text of the interview:

1: Is the resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on Friday obligatory?

A: No. The resolution does not contain provisions upon which oblige Iran to comply with its pertained duties under Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. In paragraph 2, the

resolution explicitly only just reaffirmed Iran's obligations under Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. The main provision of the Resolutions is addressed in paragraph 4 under which it calls upon Iran to cooperate with the Agency. Such a clear wording is a non-obligatory one of which does not contain any additional obligatory value other than expressly stipulated in the Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol of Iran.

2: Is it possible that the Iran case be referred to the UN Security Council by the IAEA board despite opposition by Russia and China? In the 35-member board, nine countries either opposed or abstained to vote. What does this indicate legally and politically?

A: Under Article 6 of the IAEA Statute, all Board of Governors decisions, except the amount of the Agency's budget, shall be made by a majority of those present and voting. **→2**

South Carolina statue set for removal, protesters topple two in Wisconsin

By staff & agencies

Several more U.S. monuments have been torn down following nationwide demonstrations demanding an end to racial injustice. This time, by city officials as well as at the hands of protesters.

In Charleston, South Carolina, crews worked through the early hours of Wednesday to prepare a statue of former U.S. Vice President John C. Calhoun for removal, Reuters reported.

Calhoun, Vice President from 1825 to 1832, was a known defender of slavery. Protesters had been demanding the statue be taken down.

In Madison, Wisconsin, demonstrators toppled two more statues - even though their ties to a controversial past wasn't immediately evident.

One statue, entitled "Forward," was placed at the Wisconsin State Capitol in 1895 as a sym-

bol of devotion and progress, according to the Wisconsin Historical Society; the other fallen statue was a likeness of Hans Christian Heg, a Union Colonel.

And in Raleigh, North Carolina, crews dismantled a 75-foot pillar that used to hold two statues of soldiers before protesters toppled them last Friday, according to local media.

Monuments honoring certain historical figures have been removed around the world following the May 25 death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the ensuing protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

■ U.S. House passes sweeping police reform bill amid protests

Responding to the anti-police protests that have swept the United States, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed ambitious and far-reaching legislation on police reform. **→10**

Trump's talks offer with Venezuela and Iran doesn't mean policy shift: Argentinian professor

By Hamid Bayati

TEHRAN — The head of the International Relations Area for the Observatory of International Trade at the National University of Lujan in Argentina believes that U.S. hostile policies toward Iran and Venezuela will continue despite Donald Trump's willingness to talk with Tehran and Caracas.

In an interview with Tehran Times/Mehr News Agency, Sebastián Sterzer says it is necessary that Venezuelan President Nicolas

Maduro's government to consider Iran as a "trustful partner".

Five Iranian oil tankers by the names of Petunia, Forest, Faxon, Clavel, and Fortune carried fuel to Venezuela despite the United States' sanctions. The last of them entered Venezuelan waters on June 1.

The tankers carried 1,520,000 barrels of gasoline and diesel fuel to Venezuela.

A sixth Iranian vessel also entered Venezuela's waters, carrying a cargo of food and medical

supplies. The cargo ship, "Golsan", reportedly docked and unloaded at Venezuela's northern port of La Guayra on Wednesday night.

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

Professor Sterzer says it is in the interests of Venezuela and Iran to strengthen their cooperation as the two countries are under heavy sanctions by the Trump administration. **→7**



Ministry of Defence

Air Force receives three fighter jets

TEHRAN — Iran will not need permission by bullying countries such as the United States to advance its defense capability, Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Thursday as he participated in a ceremony delivering three domestically-manufactured fighter jets to the Air Force.

"The foolish American authorities have forgotten that the Islamic Iran has been able to reach the peak of its deterrence power," Hatami said, Mehr reported.

"Definitely, we won't be needing permission from arrogant and bullying states such as America in order to advance our defense industry," he added. **→3**

'Without govt. support private power plants at risk of shutting down'

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — In recent years, due to the government funding constraints and financial pressures, Iranian private companies have taken on the mantle of developing the country's power plants including both large-scale thermal plants and small-scale renewable ones.

According to the country's Energy Ministry, currently over two third of Iran's thermal power plants are owned and operated by the private sector and almost all of the country's renewable power plants are operated by the mentioned sector.

The mentioned companies, however, have been recently wrestling with serious problems since according to them the tariffs based on which the government is purchasing their generated electricity does not even suffice the expenditures, let alone their dues to the National Development Fund (NDF) or the Foreign Currency Reserve Fund which have to be paid in the form of foreign currencies.

Therefore, many such power plants are at the risk of shutting down amid the summer peak consumption period when the country is facing a skyrocketing consumption pattern and blackouts are on the horizon.

Last week, the board members of Iranian Syndicate of Power Generating Companies gathered at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) to discuss the situation and voice their concerns to the representative body of the country's private sector.

In this regard, the Tehran Times had an interview with ICCIMA Energy Committee Hamidreza Salehi to see how the government can support this sector and prevent the drastic consequences of power plants going off. **→4**

Political independence of countries not a 'plaything' for U.S. unilateralism: Vaezi

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has said that the countries' political independence and sovereignty are not a plaything for the United States' unilateralism.



"The United States lets itself to threaten Russia, China and other countries to approve anti-Iran resolution at the [UN] Security Council. Countries' political independence and sovereignty and also percipience of the international community are not plaything for the United States' unilateralism," Vaezi tweeted on Thursday.

Everything must be done to make sure JCPOA is not destroyed: Guterres

By staff and agency

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Thursday that everything must be done to make sure that the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, is not destroyed.

"Well, our position in relation to the JCPOA has always been the same. We consider the JCPOA was a very important step forward in relation to the questions of a nuclear proliferation, and we still believe that everything must be done in order to make sure that the JCPOA is not destroyed," the UN official website quoted him as saying during a press conference.



European External Action Service spokesman Peter Stano has also said that European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell will spare no efforts to preserve the JCPOA.

'Iran, Venezuela remain steadfast in countering unlawful U.S. sanctions'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday that Iran and Venezuela remain steadfast in countering unlawful sanctions of the United States.

"US desperate moves against Iranian individuals - like the one announced by @SecPompeo, aka the #SecretaryofHate — just signal the miserable failure of the so-called "max pressure". Despite US pressure, #Iran & #Venezuela remain steadfast in countering unlawful American sanctions," he tweeted.

His comments came as response to the U.S. action in sanctioning five Iranian captains who delivered fuel to Venezuela.

Five Iranian oil tankers by the names of Petunia, Forest, Fax-on, Clavel, and Fortune carried fuel to Venezuela despite the United States' sanctions. The last of them entered Venezuelan waters on June 1.

The tankers carried 1,520,000 barrels of gasoline and diesel fuel to Venezuela. There was also a team of Iranian engineers and specialists from the oil industry on board heading for the country.

In a message on June 8, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised the crew of the Iranian tankers that shipped fuel to Venezuela, saying, "You did a great job. Your move was jihadi. You brought glory to the country."

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has said that Russia, China, Iran, and Cuba are real friends of Venezuela as they provide all-round help to Caracas.

"Humanitarian aid is coming from China, Russia, Iran, and Cuba. They are [Venezuela's] true friends," TASS quoted him as saying in a speech broadcast by the state TV on June 7.

Conn Hallinan, a columnist for Foreign Policy In Focus, has said that arrival of Iranian fuel tankers in Venezuelan waters was a crack in wall of the United States' illegal sanctions against Caracas.

This action is a step in reducing "pressure" on Venezuela, Hal-linan said, adding the Venezuelan people were in dire need of fuel.

This shipment brought revenue for Iran and from this point of view it was "a crack in wall of the United States' illegal sanctions," he told IRNA in an interview published on June 1.

Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela Hojat Soltani has also said that the United States' unilateral sanctions have lost their efficiency.

"The United States' unilateral sanctions against Venezuela, Iran and a number of other countries have lost efficiency," IRNA quoted him as saying in an interview with the Al-Alam news network.

He also said that arrival of Iranian oil tankers in the Venezuelan waters was an "international victory".

Venezuela's envoy to the UN Jorge Valero has said that Iran and Venezuela will continue fighting U.S. President Donald Trump's hostile policies.

"The people of Iran and Venezuela are two brotherly nations and will continue their war against Trump's hostile policies," ISNA quoted him as saying on June 9 in an interview with Al-Mayadeen TV channel.

'Iran's fuel delivery to Venezuela makes Trump surrender'

In an article published by the Raialyoum newspaper on Tuesday, it is said that fuel and food delivery to Venezuela by Iran has made Trump surrender.

Tehran challenged Trump and his threats by this action, the newspaper said, according to ISNA.

A sixth Iranian vessel entered Venezuela's territorial waters, carrying a cargo of food and medical supplies after the Islamic Republic supplied massive cargos of fuel to the Latin American nation, Press TV reported.

The cargo ship "Golsan" reportedly docked and unloaded at Venezuela's northern port of La Guayra on Wednesday night.

IAEA must obtain information through legal means: international law expert

'IAEA resolution on Iran is declaratory, non-obligatory'



1 → However, Russia and China's negative votes, unlike their positive votes in a similar process as to Iran's nuclear program in 2006, is considerable; the resolution and the two supporting reports issued by the IAEA director-general in March and June 2020 under the agenda of "Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran" deal with the alleged problem that access was not granted by Iran. Thus one may argue that the issue is capable of being referred to the UN Security Council by the IAEA. Nevertheless, such a referral has a special, time-consuming process that needs to be taken gradually and after entering into necessary negotiations by Iran and the IAEA in order to find a solution to the raised questions. On the other hand, Russia and China's negative votes may be repeated in the UN Security Council and impede adopting the potential decision against Iran's nuclear program.

■ Is what adopted on Friday technically a resolution or a statement?

A: It is a widely established principle that there is no importance attached to name or title of the instruments and agreements in international law. As a matter of law, the content of and the scope of consent of the parties concluding the instrument or agreement are among crucial elements that determine the obligatory or non-obligatory of that instrument. As mentioned earlier, the recent (IAEA) board of governors resolution is a decision adopted based on the IAEA Statute and its content reveals the fact that it is a declaratory, non-obligatory decision.

■ The bone of contention that led to such a situation is that the IAEA says Iran has refused to provide access to what it calls "old sites"

under the allegations that nuclear activities may have been carried out there. Allegations of nuclear activity in the claimed sites date back to the pre-JCPOA era. Is it legally acceptable to refer to something that have already been resolved? For instance, the JCPOA resolved issues surrounding the PMD?

A: As a matter of fact, when the IAEA

concludes that certain outstanding questions have been resolved, raising them again would have an adverse impact on the confidence-building relationship between the IAEA and a member state. Nevertheless, since the IAEA has a continuous mission to monitor the declared and undeclared nuclear-related material and activities in the

"As a matter of fact, when the IAEA concludes that certain outstanding questions has been resolved, raising them again would have an adverse impact on the confidence-building relationship between the IAEA and a member State."

Iran says France is undermining NPT Ambassador Gharibabadi urges U.S., France to comply with disarmament treaties

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, has urged the United States and France to comply with their commitments in safeguarding the purposes and objectives of the disarmament treaties, saying France is undermining the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Gharibabadi made the remarks in a statement read before the 54th Session of the Preparatory Commission (CTBTO) on Thursday.

Following is an excerpt of the statement published by website of Iran's Permanent Mission to UN office in Vienna:

The Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to reiterate its long standing and principled position on the need for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. In this regard, we reaffirm our strong support for the objectives of the CTBT, the principal cause of which is to terminate the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons. Most regrettably, more than two decades after the Treaty's adoption, achieving this objective has become ever more elusive.

Unfortunately the international community recently witnessed a destructive approach towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation Treaties by some of Nuclear States. In fact, modernization and testing nuclear weapons undermine the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as well as threaten the international peace and security. As the latest instance, launching a new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of carrying several nuclear warheads (M51) by a French submarine on 12 June 2020 is incompatible with France's international obligations.

Unilateral and illegal withdrawal from many international agreements, including INF, OST, and the JCPOA has become a policy practice for the United States that is contrary to multilateralism and undermines the international peace



and security. In this connection, my delegation expresses its deep concern on reports that senior officials of the United States have discussed the possibility of conducting nuclear test explosions, which if carried out, would not only be considered as a vivid breach of the global moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions, but also severely undermines the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, thereby the international peace and security. We further noted with grave concern that the U.S. Senate panel approved \$10 million budget to prepare for such a nuclear test. My delegation calls upon the U.S. and France to comply with their commitments in safeguarding the purposes and objectives of the disarmament Treaties.

"In fact, modernization and testing nuclear weapons undermine the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as well as threaten the international peace and security."

'An international organization like IAEA must not rely on spying information'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Diako Hosseini, director of the World Studies Program at the Presidential Centre for Strategic Studies, has said that an international organization such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must not rely on spying information.

"Continuation of such matter will lead to unending spectrum of claims for inspection of Iran's sites which is contrary to framework of the agency and the legal procedures," Hosseini told IRNA in an interview published on Thursday.

He also said, "New resolution of the Board of Governors can start a new process against

Iran and lead to increase in tension between Iran and the agency and change the path of Iran's nuclear agreement."

However director of the World Studies Program at the Presidential Centre for Strategic Studies noted that the resolution is not obligatory.

"But it can lay the grounds for return to a situation before the signing of the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal], from both aspect of ruining diplomatic achievements of the JCPOA and also return of the sanctions which were removed or suspended under the nuclear deal," he added.

The 35-member IAEA board of governors

passed a resolution on June 19 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 (AEOI), 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," Kamalvandi said in an article published on June 20.

Kamalvandi wrote, "In fact, any request for transparency or complementary access

member States' territories, it seems making request to obtain information or visit the relevant locations by the IAEA is not justified legally and practically after concluding in this way regarding Iran in 2015 that "[T]he Agency has found no credible indications of the diversion of nuclear material in connection with the possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme."

■ Is demanding a country to accept or do something based on allegations or espionage activities justified?

A: The IAEA is authorized to receive from various sources or to collect by own means the necessary information as to any nuclear activities that fall within its competence. It is obvious the information should be obtained from legal means. In any way, due to special competence of the IAEA with respect to nuclear activities inspection in member States, it seems that a kind of inspection, the so-called "anywhere and anytime", has been granted based on the Additional Protocol to the IAEA. However, such a competence is far from unlimited and the IAEA should provide the necessary justifications, information and the determined time and place that would be subjected to inspection. For example, according to Article 9 of the Safeguards Agreement between Iran and the IAEA in 1974, "[T]he Agency shall secure the consent of the Government of Iran to the designation of Agency inspectors to Iran" or "ensure protection of industrial secrets or any other confidential information coming to the inspectors' knowledge", or under Article 3 (D) "the activities of the Agency shall be carried out with due observance of the sovereign rights of States."

On the issue of the process for the appointment of the Executive Secretary of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, as mentioned in the informal consultation, you are willing to check with the incumbent Executive Secretary Dr. Lassina Zerbo for his availability to run and consult with the States Signatories on a consensual arrangement in this regard. My delegation is supportive of your idea and assures you of its full cooperation with a view to reach a satisfactory arrangement in this regard.

With regard to the election procedure adopted in 2012, we believe that still more consultations are needed on the possible amendment of some elements of the procedure. We are of the view that, to guarantee an all-inclusive and most appropriate arrangement, the Preparatory Commission should avoid taking any hasty approach.

In this context, we would like to emphasize that the Vienna spirit and the principle of consensus should prevail in this process. Furthermore, with a view to facilitating a consensus, informal "straw polls", may be carried out as many times as it deemed necessary during consultations and before entering into "election stage". It should also be notified that to ensure all-inclusiveness of the process, it is advisable that none of the States Signatories should be excluded from the consultations or appointment process.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to stress that the exceptional nature of the current session of the Commission, including the abbreviated agenda and virtual format, must not set any precedent for the future work of the sessions, nor be considered as an amendment to the existing established rules, norms or practices of the CTBTO.

Saudi Arabia lost the war to Iran: ex-Yemeni minister

By staff and agency

Former Yemeni Minister of Transportation Saleh Algabwani said on Thursday that Saudi Arabia has lost the war in Yemen to Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He tweeted, "When we evaluate the performance of the regional powers in the Yemeni war, we find that the beneficiaries are Iran and the UAE, however the loser is Saudi Arabia."

Hossein Dehghan, a military advisor to

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said in an interview with Aljazeera 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 military advisor remarked, IRNA reported on Monday.

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 its website 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.

Envoy highlights U.S. failure in anti-Iran bid

Takht-Ravanchi warns it would be ‘a very, very big mistake’ if Trump tries to reimpose UN sanctions

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majid d e s k Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, indicates that the U.S. has failed to garner support for its anti-Iran resolution at the UN Security Council.

“Yesterday, US briefed #UNSC on the extension of arms embargo on Iran and called for Council’s unity,” Takht-Ravanchi tweeted on Thursday.

He added, “@StateDept note on the briefing mentioned NOTHING about the reaction of UNSC members. Perhaps reason was their UNANIMOUS call for full implementation of #JCPOA & UN-SCR 2231.”

It came a day after the U.S. briefed the UN Security Council on a resolution, which called for a 2015 arms embargo against Iran to be extended.

The U.S. resolution claimed that lifting the arms embargo could have “major implications” for security and stability of the Middle East region, urging the UN body to “prohibit the supply, sale or transfer, direct or indirect ... of weapons and related materials” to Iran.

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

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

Takht-Ravanchi has also said that the U.S. resolution will be defeated and



“If that (return of UN sanctions) happens, Iran will not be under constraint as to what course of action it should take.”

warned it would be “a very, very big mistake” if the Trump administration then tries to re-impose UN sanctions.

He said restoring UN sanctions will end the nuclear deal between Iran and major powers and release Tehran from all its commitments.

“If that happens, Iran will not be

under constraint as to what course of action it should take,” he told reporters on Thursday. “All options for Iran will be open.”

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.

On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif 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.

Tehran categorically rejects U.S. report on terrorism

Iran cites economic and medical terrorism against Iranians as examples of U.S. terrorist measures

1→ History of the past couple of decades clearly shows that the United States of America, as acknowledged even by a number of American officials, has had a role in the creation of some terrorist groups or has supported those groups and their terrorist activities, Mousavi noted.

“Trump has also admitted openly in his election campaign that the previous U.S. administrations have created ISIS and other terrorist groups,” he said.

The spokesman further slammed the U.S. regime’s cowardly and terrorist move to assassinate Lt. General Qassem Soleimani as a brazen example of the U.S. regime’s terrorist crimes, saying, “The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the biggest victim of terrorist actions, which have been taken mainly with the U.S. government’s direct and indirect supports, and with more than 17,000 people martyred in this path, is always at the forefront of the fight against terrorism at the global and regional levels.”

Mousavi finally denounced the U.S. regime’s unilateral sanctions, economic terrorism, and medical terrorism against



Foreign Ministry says the U.S. as the world’s most infamous terrorist regime is in no position to judge other countries.

people of Iran as the latest example of the U.S. regime’s terrorist measures against independent nations in the world.

In the Country Reports on Terrorism 2019, the U.S. Department of State has hailed the maximum pressure campaign against Iran, saying the U.S. and its allies impose new sanctions on Iran for what it called Tehran’s support for terrorism.

“As part of the maximum pressure campaign against the Iranian regime – the world’s worst state sponsor of terrorism – the United States and our partners imposed new sanctions on Tehran and its proxies,” the report said.

It added, “In April, the United States designated Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), including its Qods Force, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) – the first time such a designation has been applied to part of another government. And throughout the year, a number of countries in Western Europe and South America joined the United States in designating Iran-backed Hizballah as a terrorist group in its entirety.”

John Bolton can stomach Kim Jong Un’s North Korea, but not Iran

(Foreign Policy) — Former U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton’s revenge book hasn’t revealed much that is new. It mostly adds details to already-known episodes of President Donald Trump’s mismanagement of world affairs. But there is one exception: the story of Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s efforts to sabotage Trump’s would-be diplomacy with Tehran. This episode reveals something crucial and until now not fully appreciated: Netanyahu’s ferocious opposition to the Iran nuclear deal had little to do with the deal itself and everything to do with the very idea of the United States striking any deal with Iran. The same is true for Saudi Arabia. Whomever occupies the White House next year must address head-on the Israeli prime minister and the Saudi crown prince’s commitment to keeping the United States bogged down in conflict with Iran.

Bolton boasts about his extensive coordination with Pompeo and Netanyahu to scuttle mediation efforts by French President Emmanuel Macron and to, at all costs, prevent a meeting between Trump and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif during the G-7 summit in Biarritz, France, in 2019.

Desperate to block any opening between the United States and Iran, Bolton instructed his staff to prepare a flight for him to return to Washington in protest. The idea of the Americans and Iranians talking to each other so offended Bolton that he prepared a two-sentence letter of resignation if the meeting were to go ahead. He had no such letter in hand before Trump’s summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. In fact, Bolton himself participated in that meeting and shook Kim’s hand—demonstrating that as hawkish as he is on North Korea, he views Iran as a separate sort of pariah altogether. He had already succeeded in scuttling an effort by Republican Sen. Rand

Paul to get Zarif to visit the White House. Pompeo assured Bolton that he would follow his lead in resigning if Trump met with Zarif, though, publicly, Pompeo continues to insist that his goal is to get the Iranians to “come to the table.”

Bolton appears to have had no qualms about working with a foreign leader to undermine the expressed desire of the U.S. president he was supposedly serving. When Netanyahu tried to dissuade Trump from meeting with Zarif, Trump’s son-in-law and advisor Jared Kushner blocked the Israeli prime minister’s attempts to reach Trump, as he believed it was inappropriate for a foreign leader to try to dictate to the U.S. president whom he should and shouldn’t speak to. Bolton had no such trepidation and instead accused Kushner of being a “Democrat.”

But behind the banal palace intrigue that Bolton details lurks a geopolitical reality that the United States must come to terms with. The Netanyahu government and the Israeli security apparatus—albeit not all parts of it—were not opposed to former President Barack Obama’s nuclear deal because of its alleged flaws. They were then and now remain opposed to any deal with Iran due to its geopolitical implications.

Bolton’s account indicates that there simply wasn’t anything the Obama administration could have done to placate Netanyahu and the Saudi regime. It wasn’t that Obama was insufficiently sympathetic to Israeli and Saudi security concerns or that his bad rapport with Netanyahu and the Saudi royals fueled their misgivings about the nuclear talks.

After all, in Trump, Netanyahu found a very different U.S. president. In Trump, he had a president willing to break with all his predecessors in acquiescing to almost all key Israeli demands: moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing Israeli control of the Golan Heights, accepting Israeli annexation of Palestinian land, and even promising Ne-

tanyahu that the United States will support Israel if it chooses to start a war with Iran.

Both Presidents George W. Bush and Obama had pressed Israel not to take military action and only offered U.S. backing if the Iranians initiated the fighting. It is then no surprise that the Israeli prime minister has hailed the former reality TV star as the “the greatest friend that Israel has ever had in the White House.”

It is hard to imagine a bigger pushover in the White House from Netanyahu’s standpoint. Yet, he repeatedly worked with Bolton and Pompeo to prevent even a single meeting between Trump and the Iranians, fearing that it would lead to an agreement between Tehran and Washington that would dial back their animosity.

Netanyahu’s calculation is not terribly difficult to understand. Israel’s longest-serving prime minister and many within the Israeli security establishment have feared that U.S.-Iranian diplomacy ultimately would lead to an agreement that would reduce U.S.-Iranian tensions without necessarily decreasing the Israeli-Iranian animus proportionally. With Iran largely moving off of the United States’ radar, the U.S. government would be freed to shift its focus and resources away from the Middle East, leaving Israel “abandoned” to deal with Iran without the automatic backing of the United States. This would reduce Israeli maneuverability in the Middle East and affect the configuration of the regional balance of power in a way that negatively impacts Israeli interests.

Supremely confident that he could bend Washington’s will to his own, Netanyahu opted to prevent U.S.-Iranian diplomacy and sabotage any potential negotiations—even at the expense of damaging his relations with Obama or Israel’s relations with the Democratic Party.

The calculation of the House of Saud was very similar. Saudi Arabia’s partnership with

the United States has allowed it to enjoy a position in the region that its own power never could justify. But for that benefit to be enduring, the United States must remain committed to keeping a large military presence in the region to check Riyadh’s rivals. A U.S.-Iranian accommodation would not only jeopardize Saudi Arabia’s beneficial position, but it would also force Riyadh to confront Tehran alone—something it lacks the military and political competence to do.

In that sense, Saudi Arabia’s anxiety about losing U.S. backing is more understandable. Israel is a powerful nuclear-equipped nation with one of the most sophisticated militaries in the world.

For the United States—whether led by Trump or by his rival candidate Joe Biden—this implies that any effort to square the circle of diplomatically resolving the dispute with Iran while satisfying Saudi Arabia’s and Israel’s geostrategic needs simply may not be possible.

Bolton’s inside account has inadvertently clarified that Washington must choose between either satisfying its own interest in bringing U.S. troops home from the Middle East and avoiding an unnecessary war with Iran or satisfying Netanyahu and the Saudi royal family’s interest in keeping the United States trapped in a cycle of enmity with Iran that keeps the region’s balance in their favor.

The reality is that none of the United States’ core interests warrants a major U.S. military presence in the Middle East (West Asia), let alone U.S. military domination of the region. Retaining such a force structure in order to sustain a partnership with Israel and Saudi Arabia gets the very purpose of alliances backward. However problematic or erroneous their approach may be, Israel and Saudi Arabia have defined their interests vis-à-vis America and are pursuing them unapologetically. The U.S. government should do the same.

Bolton: JCPOA exit was my happiest moment in Trump admin

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** —Former U.S. National Security d e s k Adviser John Bolton has said the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal “was my happiest moment, probably of the whole time” in the Trump administration.

“I probably should have left the administration then,” Bolton told Fox News’ Special Report with Bret Baier in an interview on Tuesday.



He said U.S. President Donald Trump undercut his own hard-line Iran policy, telling Baier, “We did put enormous pressure on Iran but when it came down to it by near the end of my tenure, Trump’s still looking for that deal, wanted to meet with the Ayatollahs, wanted to meet with [Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei, wanted to meet with the Iranian Foreign Minister [Mohammad Javad Zarif].”

Bolton said Trump’s “mixed signals” made it “very, very difficult if not impossible to really affect the kind of change that was necessary in Tehran.”

Trump abandoned the nuclear deal in May 2018 and imposed the harshest ever sanctions in history on Tehran. However, Trump has been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran.

The U.S. president has announced that his administration is putting “maximum pressure” against Iran to bring Tehran to the negotiating table to rewrite the JCPOA.

Trump ousted Bolton on September 10, 2019.

Bolton was notoriously famous for his ultra-hawkish stance toward Iran.

Explosion at gas-storage tank in Parchin had no casualties: Defense Ministry

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A massive explosion in a gas d e s k storage tanker near the Parchin complex in east of Tehran early on Friday had no casualties, the Defense Ministry reported.

Images showed an orange light went viral at around 00:30 am local time on Friday (08:00 p.m. GMT on Thursday), Mehr reported.

Rumors were circulating that the blast had occurred in an ammunition depot but later it was rejected by the ministry.

Defense Ministry Public Relations Officer Davud Abdi said that the blast took place at an industrial gas storage facility in the public area of Parchin.

“Fortunately, the explosion did not cause any casualties,” Abdi said, adding that the fire resulting from the blast was also controlled after prompt action by firefighters.

Abdi said details of the explosion would be duly announced by relevant authorities.

Hamidreza Goudarzi, an official in charge of security and police affairs at the office of the Tehran provincial governor, has said police investigators have been sent to the site to study the cause of the incident.

Air Force receives three fighter jets

Iran not needing U.S. permission to progress: defense chief

1→ Hatami said the delivery of the three Kowsar fighter jets to the Army Air Force carried a message to the enemies, the U.S. in particular, that the U.S. sanctions have worked to the contrary.

When Kowsar jets were delivered to Iran Air Force, an important message was carried across the world that all freedom-seeking nations will be independent and self-sufficient if they resist, General Hatami said.

Today, there are all technical capabilities available inside the country for the construction of the air force infrastructure, the minister added.



In remarks earlier this year, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in order to prevent a war, Iran must increase its military power, noting that being militarily vulnerable would prompt the enemy to take action against the country.

“In order to prevent war and in order to put an end to threats we must become powerful,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The Leader went on to say, “We are not seeking to threaten any country or nation, rather we are after protecting the country’s security and preventing threats.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also said reliance on domestic capacities and turning threats into opportunities are the chief reasons for the successes of the Air Force.

Companies newly accepted to stock market to get special tax incentives

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei has agreed with a plan for offering especial tax exemptions and incentives to the companies that are accepted to the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year, IRNA reported.

As reported, President Hassan Rouhani has urged the Economy Ministry to take the necessary measures following the leader's decision.



Although the Iranian stock market is a newly developed market and people have only recently gotten acquainted with its activities, this market has been booming in recent years.

In the past Iranian year 1398, the performance of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is the main stock market of Iran, was unprecedented, as its main index, TEDPIX, which had closed at 178,000 points at the end of the calendar year 1397, climbed to 512,000 points at the end of last year.

The recent developments of this market have encouraged the government to focus more on this sector as a potential source of capital for offsetting oil revenue shortages.

Many domestic companies have already offered their shares in the market, while much more are getting ready to join.

TEDPIX gains 190,000 points in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has risen 190,000 points during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IRNA reported.

As reported, the index stood at 1.419 million points, showing a 15-percent weekly increase.

TEDPIX has also climbed 28.77 percent in the past Iranian calendar month (April 21-June 20) from its preceding month.

The index gained 283,868 points to 1,270,627 during the past month.

As reported, the first market's index rose 31.58 percent and the second market's index went up 24.46 percent on a monthly basis.

Although, the value of trades at the TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange, fell 31 percent in the past month.

Some 166.408 billion securities were traded through 22.416 million deals at this market, which shows a 22 percent drop in the number of securities and a 26 percent fall in the number of deals.

In a press conference on Monday, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the amount of liquidity absorbed by Iran's capital market has reached 500 trillion rials (about \$12 billion) during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

Hasan Qalibaf-Asl also said, "It is while the total amount of liquidity entered into this market stood at 300 trillion rials (about \$7.14 billion) during the past year."

Number of real estate deals rises 80% in Tehran in a month on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The number of real estate deals in Tehran city has risen 80 percent during the past Iranian calendar month (May 21-June 20) compared to the same month in the past year, IRNA reported.

Although, 11,046 housing deals made in the past month indicates one percent fall compared to its preceding month.

Meanwhile, the average price of one square meter of house in Tehran has risen 20 million rials (about \$476) to 190 million rials (about \$4,523) in the past month.

The number of real estate deals in the country had fallen 70 percent in the last month of the past Iranian calendar year, Esfand (ended on March 19), which was the highest drop that this sector has experienced over the past three years, according to Hesam Oqbaei, the vice-chairman of Iranian Real Estate Agencies.



"Last year, when house prices experienced a 100-percent growth, rent prices rose by as much as 30 percent. Of course, this year we anticipate that rent growth will not reach inflation and will stay below the inflation rate," according to Hesam Oqbaei, the deputy head of Tehran Real Estate Association.

The housing market is experiencing inflation and rise in prices, both in terms of rentals and sales, but the rise in prices is not going to be like the last year's sudden surge, he said on May 2.

According to the official, 37 percent of the country's urban population are tenants, who are from the low and middle classes of the society and their salary increase has been up to 22 percent, so if the rent prices were supposed to grow along with the house prices people won't be able to afford it.

Noting that the government planned to provide financial facilities for the low-class tenants last year, Oqbaei said: "Now is the time to grant financial facilities, because the transfer season has begun and it is time for the government's last year's proposal to become operational."

Oqbaei underlined the lack of balance in supply and demand as the main reason for the upward trend in housing prices and said since there are not enough bank facilities available to homebuyers, more people will stay as tenants and the demand for house rents increases, so consequently rent prices will also rise in areas where there is an imbalance between supply and demand.

Rouhani inaugurates energy projects worth over \$2b

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated three energy projects worth \$2.14 billion in three provinces via video conference on Thursday, Shana reported.

Miandoab Petrochemical Plant, with the annual production capacity of 140,000 tons of heavy polyethylene, was one of the inaugurated projects.

This project, which was put into operation in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, plays a significant role in materializing Iran's second petrochemical leap.

During the inauguration ceremony, of this project, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said that Iran will achieve a three-digit figure of petrochemical output for the first time in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 2021).

The minister said that 17 projects are planned to come on stream in this year which will boost petrochemical production capacity of the country by 25 million tons.

As the managing director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) has recently stated, all the goals set, based on the country's Sixth Five-year National Development Plan, for the petrochemical sector will be realized by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 20, 2022).

Behzad Mohammadi said in mid-June



Gohr-Jask oil pipeline for transferring 1m barrels of oil for exports to Jask oil terminal in southern Hormozgan province

that the current Iranian calendar year is a golden year for the petrochemical industry.

Normal hexane production project inaugurated in Imam Khomeini Refinery

Rouhani also inaugurated a project for the annual production of over 190,000 liters of normal hexane in Imam Khomeini

Refinery in Shazand County of the central province of Markazi, which is one of the country's top refineries.

Iran's annual need for the normal hexane is 30,000 tons, and as the country's production capacity of the product has reached 50,000 tons, the export of 20,000 tons of normal hexane is now possible, which is a

‘Without govt. support private power plants at risk of shutting down’

1 → According to Salehi, the government currently owes the power plant owners over 300 trillion rials (about \$7.4 billion), and if the government pays those dues many of the problems of the mentioned companies will be solved.

"Considering the fact that the value of rial is getting lower compared to the U.S. dollar and euro, and since power plants sell their electricity in rials, they are gaining much less than what they have to pay back to the NDF or Foreign Currency Reserve Fund," Salehi said.

Asked about the Oil Ministry's recent proposal for paying contractors' dues with oil, the expert said of course any payment would be a step forward from the current situation, however, there must be a third party or a mediator who would be able to sell this oil abroad and turn it to foreign currency for the companies, otherwise it won't be a "great" solution.

The idea for bartering oil for dues first was introduced in summer 2019 when the oil ministry proposed to pay the dues of oil companies that worked on oil and gas development projects with oil.

Then the idea was welcomed by the gov-



ernment and expanded to other sectors like electricity.

In spring 2019, the government's regulatory body prepared a draft based on which, nearly 400 trillion rials (about \$9.52 billion) worth of oil was going to be given to the private

companies in return for the electricity that they provided for the national network, or for the services that the contractors provided for the Energy Ministry.

"Unfortunately, the program has not even been implemented for the oil companies which

significant step in this year that is the year of "Surge in Production".

In the past few years, Iranian think-tanks and energy experts have been repeatedly stating that the country should increase its refining capacity in order to lessen the economy's reliance on crude sales. In this regard, one of the main strategies of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in recent years has been focusing on the country's refineries.

Gohr-Jask oil pipeline to transfer 1m barrels of oil for exports

Gohr-Jask oil pipeline project was the third project inaugurated on Thursday.

The pipeline will transfer one million barrels of heavy and light crude oils per day to Jask oil terminal in the southern Hormozgan Province to be exported.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the project, the oil minister said this project was one of the most strategic projects in the Rouhani administration.

Zanganeh said a total of \$300 million has so far been invested in the project while another \$800 million to \$850 million is needed for its full operation.

"We hope that exports from Jask will begin as the government's most strategic project by the end of this [calendar] year," the minister noted.

work under the Oil Ministry, so we can only be hopeful that it will go through this time," Salehi said in this regard.

The energy expert further mentioned the recent developments in the capital market and emphasized it as a great opportunity for the energy sector to tap into, for managing financial issues.

"Another measure that government can take to support this sector is to back them in entering the capital market," he stressed.

According to the official, the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) requires those companies which are willing to enter the market to provide heavy guarantees and since most of the mentioned power plant companies are not able to provide such guarantees the government can step up and provide the SEO with the required guarantees so that the companies could offer their shares at the market and attract public investment.

"There are many well-known energy companies that are already active in the market and energy companies have proven that can earn the people's trust and be trustworthy, so the government needs to trust them as well," he added.

Iran moving away from exporting raw minerals to create more added value

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Deputy Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Darius Esmaili says over 90 million tons of iron ore was produced in the country during the previous Iranian calendar year of which only seven percent was exported.

The reduction in the exports of iron ore comes as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei urged the government to prevent the exports of raw minerals in order to be processed in the country for making products with more added value.

Following the leader's remarks, the government levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) as from September 23, 2019.

According to Esmaili, 10 years ago Iran exported more than 20 million tons of unprocessed iron ore and the figure fell to a maximum of six million tons last year.

The deputy minister noted that exports of the mentioned commodity have also fallen to 500,000 tons in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

The official further stated that Industry Ministry's goal is to reduce the iron ore exports to zero and in this regard the 25-percent duty was levied and the mining deputy of the ministry has been allowed to prevent iron



ore exports all together in case of necessity.

He said the Industry Ministry even considers the exports of steel ingots as raw material export and is planning to reduce the exports of such commodities as well.

"We are constantly targeted by sanctions, so we need to count on our own domestic market and focus on domestic production; export should be the target for the end of the production chain, and that is the policy of the Industry Ministry," he stressed.

According to the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), in its outlook plan for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (2025-2026) the country has envisaged production of 55 million tons of steel per annum, and to achieve this target the country requires to extract 160 million tons of iron ore concentrates.

Iran's trade borders with neighbors continue to open: IRICA

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's border crossing with its neighbors are being opened one by one as the corona-related restrictions ease in the region, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

According to Rouhollah Latifi, the country's borders with Iraq including Mehran and Khoramshahr water crossings are open and operating.

For the southern water borders including those with UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman,

there are no problems with commercial vessels; however, each of these countries has imposed limitations for wooden ships and trade with these countries is taking place under health protocols, the official explained.

As for the borders with Iraq's Kurdistan Region, the crossings are operational based on their normal routine, he added.

The Razi and Bazargan railway borders are also active, and trade with Turkey is underway through this way, Latifi said.

The official said that the Iran and Arme-

nia border is also open for trade, adding: "The border between Iran and Nakhchivan is also active and the railway, road and sea borders with Azerbaijan are open as well."

He further referred to the country's northern sea borders, including Astara, Anzali, Hassan Roud, Noshahr, Amirabad and Fereydoun, and said: "Limited exchanges are underway with Turkmenistan through railway, but road crossings with the country including Bajgir, Lotf-Abad and Incheh Baroun are closed."

Every day 30 wagons of goods are export-

ed to Turkmenistan from Sarakhs border, he added.

He pointed out that the borders with Pakistan are completely active, saying Mir-javah border is fully active during the week, and Sistan-Baluchestan Province's border markets with the country are also active.

Referring to the Georgian border, he said: "The Georgian border is currently closed."

"Russia has also imposed restrictions on exports of goods such as wheat for all countries including Iran, until July 11th," he added.

Daily gas supply to power plants up 5%

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) is currently supplying 253 million cubic meters (mcm) of natural gas to the country's power plants on a daily basis, five percent more than the average daily supply in the previous Iranian calendar month (ended on June 20), the spokesman of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said.

"The figure stood at 240 mcm last month," Mohammad Asgari told IRNA on Thursday. According to the official, gas supply to power plants reaches its maximum level during the summer peak consumption period.

As reported, currently all the country's gas and thermal power plants are connected to the national gas network, however, in the cold seasons, with the increase in gas consumption by the domestic sector, the supply to the power plants will be reduced and replaced with liquefied fuel.

Referring to the daily consumption of 542 million cubic meters of gas in the country, Asgari noted that consumption by the households and the business sectors has reached 162 million cubic meters due to the arrival of the hot season.

Earlier in May, Caretaker Manager of



Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC) Mehdi Jamshidi Dana had said that during the peak consumption period in summer

power plants would need 310 mcm of gas per day, a figure that could be easily met by the National Gas Company given its

network capacity.

According to the official, all the fuel needs of the power plants connected to the national gas network are currently met unless they are going through minor repairs in their gas sector.

Currently, 85 power plants across the country are using natural gas as fuel.

Back in May, Jamshidi Dana announced that the transmission capacity of the national gas network was raised to one billion cubic meters per day (bcm/d).

Noting that several projects were carried out last calendar year (ended on March 19) to increase the country's gas network capacity, the official said: "Many of the mentioned projects have been implemented in the ninth national line, most of which will be operational this year."

The official had previously said that 61 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas was supplied to the country's power plants during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Iran is currently producing over 810 mcm of natural gas daily which is mostly used inside the country for the domestic sector and also as fuel for the power plants and a small portion is also exported to the neighboring countries like Iraq.

Jask to become major oil export hub for Iran

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani underlined the strategic importance of the Goreh-Jask crude oil pipeline, saying: "Today is the day of trust for Iranian oil customers and Jask will become an important hub for Iran's oil exports."

Making the remarks on Thursday, during the ceremony of launching Miandoab Petrochemical Plant, normal hexane production unit of Shazand refinery in Arak and the official start of construction of Goreh-Jask crude oil pipeline to Makran oil export terminal, the president said: "At the beginning of the 11th administration, we were thinking about the Goreh-Jask Pipeline project, which is of great importance in terms of national security. I have always been concerned that the administration comes to an end without implementing this project."

He noted that a pipeline factory for sour oil and gas was to be built by a foreign company in Iran at first, but the project was halted due to the sanctions in 2018. "When this project was stopped, we doubted whether we could entrust domestic industries with the task."

The president considered it very important for Iranian companies to build the metal sheets needed for the project, saying, "Today, all foreign companies that wanted to help us in this regard and stopped their work, the imposers of the sanctions, the Americans and the Zionists, are well aware of the fact



that they cannot prevent the Iranian nation from moving in the direction of production and technology."

Rouhani said that to build the Goreh-Jask pipeline, Iran will need 1,000 kilometers of pipelines, which will be built by three Iranian companies, adding: "Of these 1,000 kilometers, about half of it, or 404 kilometers, are prepared, manufactured and gradually delivered, and laying the pipes has begun."

He continued: "The sanctions, despite all

the problems and misfortunes that befell the country, are also opportunities in some areas, prompting us to achieve and finalize such great projects with the help of our workers, technologists and researchers."

■ Historic day of Iran's energy sector

Explaining why the Goreh-Jask pipeline is strategic, the president said: "Many countries in the region have been able to find an alternative to exporting crude oil rather than the Strait of Hormuz, so that they can export

their oil in other ways in times of danger to the strait."

Rouhani said that the only country that had remained without an alternative for its oil exports was the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He continued: "This project is the most important project not only in terms of economy but also in terms of national security, economy and energy. Our customers can rest absolutely sure. The one who buys oil from us wants to ensure that they can buy oil in any situation; today is the day of confidence for our buyers."

Emphasizing that today is a very important day in the history of our country's energy history, the president stated: "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is able to build a thousand kilometers of pipeline in this project from Bushehr province and Goreh region to Hormuzgan and Jask is a very important achievement, which shows the capabilities of the Iranian nation, researchers and industrialists in the oil and energy sector."

■ Iran petrochemical revenues to hit \$25b

The Iranian President further underlined the inauguration of 17 new petrochemical projects by the end of the current Iranian calendar year in March 2021, saying once the projects become operational, Iran's petrochemical export revenues would exceed 25 billion dollars from currently \$12b.

India pushes up cost of fuel to boost revenues



Indian oil companies have raised fuel prices for 19 consecutive days as Narendra Modi's government struggles to boost coffers depleted by the Covid-19 pandemic, Financial Times reported.

After an almost 12-week price freeze imposed during the coronavirus lockdown, companies including Indian Oil Corporation have increased pump prices steadily. On Thursday, diesel and petrol prices in New Delhi hit Rs79.92 and Rs80.02 a liter (\$1.05 and \$1.06) respectively, prompting the opposition Congress party to call for a nationwide protest next week.

The global oil price has risen recently but the cost at the pump has been driven higher by new taxes imposed by cash-strapped state and central governments. Taxes now account for more than 50 percent of the final price Indian consumers are paying for fuel.

Modi's government relies on petrol and diesel taxes as an important source of income and has more than doubled revenue from duties on fuel since coming into power in 2014.

"Any boost to revenue will be more than welcome for the government. The revenue situation looks pretty bleak," said Shilan Shah, senior India economist at Capital

Economics in Singapore.

"Obviously the impact of the shutdown will cause tax revenues to plummet."

Customers at a petrol station in New Delhi on Thursday were frustrated by the rise in prices.

"It's an unnecessary hike, the international crude price is so low, this is not the way to balance the budget," said RK Sinha, a motorcycle driver who works in the aviation industry. "I think prices should be reduced."

Asia's third-largest economy is on track to contract for the first time in more than 40 years after reporting growth rates of 6-7 percent before the virus struck.

The IMF revised down its 2021 growth outlook for India on Thursday, saying the economy would contract 4.5 percent next year. The fund cited the disruption caused by India's long lockdown, which triggered an exodus of migrant workers to their villages, as one of the reasons for the contraction.

The surge in coronavirus infections is frustrating India's efforts to restart its economy. The nation of 1.37bn people has the fourth-highest number of coronavirus cases in the world and on Thursday 16,922 new cases were reported.

Oil recovery may gather pace in H2, says OPEC chief



Oil and gas markets recovery is likely to gather pace in the second half of the year as countries further ease lockdown restrictions and demand rises, said OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, expressing cautious optimism that the worst is over.

According to Trade Arabia, the huge and unprecedented oil market imbalance that faced the industry in April in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic required an unparalleled response from producers, said Barkindo, taking part in the online Adipee Energy Dialogues.

Underlining the importance of the two-year agreement, signed by Opec and non-Opec oil producing countries in the Declaration of Cooperation (DOC) on April 12, and revaluated earlier this month on June 6, Barkindo said he was confident that more stability would return to oil markets in the second half of the year, but more work is required to draw down existing oil inventories to help rebalance markets.

"As we see countries begin to open up, we will see demand start to come back," Barkindo said. "I remain optimistic but cautious the worst is over and a recovery will be in full swing in the second half of this year, with stocks beginning to be withdrawn. However, what shape the recovery will take,

whether a V shape, W or inverted hockey stick, is still uncertain.

"Nevertheless, I am hopeful by the end of this year we will begin to see some further semblance of stability restored to oil markets. Then we will be in a position to move into the next phase of sustaining that stability. Hence the importance of the two-year duration of the historic agreement signed by the Opec Plus group of countries and non-Opec producers."

Setting out the scale of the "unprecedented demand destruction" suffered by oil markets in April, Barkindo said oil demand had fallen by 20 to 24 million barrels a day, from a high of 100 million barrels per day, as economic and societal lockdowns, in response to the Covid-19 coronavirus, ravaged the global economy. It led to the largest single supply adjustment in history with OPEC and non-Opec producers adjusting oil output, including from those outside of the DOC, by almost 20 million barrels a day.

Stressing the criticality to the global economy of restoring stability to oil markets, Barkindo said he had seen projections that forecast a contraction of nearly 20 percent, or \$1.5 trillion, in energy investments as a result of the volatility and uncertainty around markets.

Miandoab petchem plant using Iranian-made catalysts

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iran has just launched a major petrochemical plant which is fed by locally-developed catalysts: Miandoab Petrochemical Plant.

Davood Reza Rabbani, the CEO of Bakhtar Holding Company, told a ceremony to launch Miandoab Petrochemical Plant on Thursday that all of the holding's assets were spent on developing the petrochemical industry.

He said Miandoab Petrochemical Plant was built by tapping the company's local resources.



According to him, currently, there are 8,000 people employed in the companies governed by the holding, which will increase to 16,500 people by launching new projects.

Miandoab Petrochemical Plant's construction began in 2016 with 140,000 tons of annual production capacity and came online last week.

Bakhtar Holding Company accounts for 10% of the country's petrochemical export revenues which is expected to reach 15% next calendar year, Rabbani added.

He further said that the plant would operate with locally-made catalysts for the first time in the country.

Renewable energy breaks UK record in first quarter of 2020

Renewable energy made up almost half of Britain's electricity generation in the first three months of the year, with a surge in wind power helping to set a new record for clean energy, the Guardian reported.

The government's official data has revealed that renewable energy made up 47 percent of the UK's electricity generation in the first three months of the year, smashing the previous quarterly record of 39 percent set last year.

The government's renewable energy data includes electricity from the UK's windfarms, solar panels and hydro power plants as well as bioenergy generated by burning wood chips instead of coal.

The "substantial increase" in the UK's total renewable energy output was chiefly driven by a growth in electricity generated by solar panels and windfarms which climbed by more than a third over the last year, according to the government's energy analysts.

The report added that the startup of new windfarms combined with the UK's unusually wet and windy weather at the start of the year — particularly storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge — helped to generate record wind power generation.

Offshore windfarms powered the largest increase in renewable energy in the first quarter of the year, climbing by 53 percent compared with the previous year, while onshore wind generation grew by a fifth.

In total, wind power generated 30 percent of the UK's electricity in the first quarter, beating the previous record of 22.3 percent set in the final months of 2019.

Rebecca Williams, of Renewable UK, said the renewable energy industry's records were bound to be broken again in the years ahead as the government worked on "a massive expansion of renewables as part of the UK's green economic recovery".

Britain last week set a new coal-free record of more than two months for the first time since coal-fired power generation began during the Industrial Revolution, following a surge in renewable energy due to bright, breezy weather and low demand during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Williams said the government's record quarterly data showed the clean energy transition "written very large indeed" because the records had been set at the coldest time of year "when we need it most".

The rise of renewable energy combined with a steady supply of nuclear power, which made up about 15 percent of the UK generation mix, drove fossil fuel power plants to a new record low in the first quarter.

Gas-fired power plants made up less than a third of UK generation in the first quarter compared with over 40 percent in the first months of 2019, and coal-fired power made up 3.8 percent of electricity generated in the UK.

China Gas fuel sales growth slows as lockdown batters demand

China Gas Holdings Ltd, one of China's largest independent piped gas distributors, said on Friday gas sales in its latest financial year rose just 2.9 percent, a sharp fall from the previous year as the coronavirus pandemic hit fuel demand.

Total gas sales were 25.4 billion cubic meters in the year ended March 31, equivalent to roughly 8 percent of China's total gas demand, but the rate of growth collapsed from a 32 percent surge in the year earlier period, Reuters reported.

"Adversely impacted by COVID-19, negative growth for energy consumption kicked in for the first quarter of 2020 as energy demand derived from industrial, commercial and transportation sectors contracted noticeably," the firm said its filing to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

The group, which earlier said total revenue rose by 0.3 percent to HK\$59.54 billion (\$7.68 billion), noted gas sales to households had grown by a quarter and it had added 5.4 million new residential users last year, an increase of 6.3 percent. Gas sales to industry rose 5.2 percent, while those to the commercial sector contracted 9 percent.

Sales to the fuel retail sector, including liquefied natural gas and compressed natural gas filling stations, fell 16 percent to 1 billion cubic meters, as transportation came to a near halt during coronavirus-related lockdowns.

Sales of liquefied petroleum gas, used for cooking and as petrochemical feedstock, dropped by an annual 4.2 percent to 3.83 million tons.

The company said it had completed construction of a gas transmission pipeline network with a total length of 402,381 km.

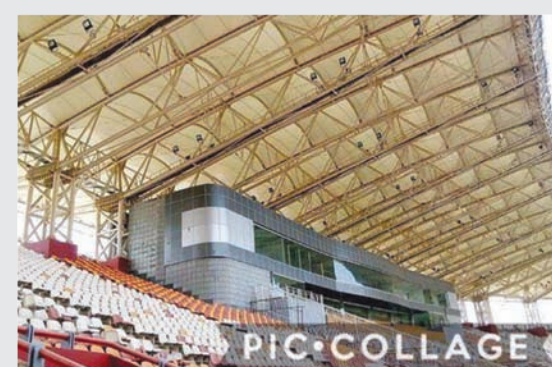
China Gas' Hong Kong listed shares have fallen 6.8 percent so far this year, versus a 14 percent fall in the broader Heng Seng Index.

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Chokehold on Diplomat exposes Israel's special type of Apartheid

By Jonathan Cook

An Israeli diplomat filed a complaint last week with police after he was pulled to the ground in Jerusalem by four security guards, who knelt on his neck for five minutes as he cried out: "I can't breathe."

There are obvious echoes of the treatment of George Floyd, an African-American killed by police in Minneapolis last month. His death triggered mass protests against police brutality and reinvigorated the Black Lives Matter movement. The incident in Jerusalem, by contrast, attracted only minor attention – even in Israel.

An assault by Israeli security officials on a diplomat sounds like an aberration – a peculiar case of mistaken identity – quite unlike an established pattern of police violence against poor black communities in the U.S. But that impression would be wrong.

The man attacked in Jerusalem was no ordinary Israeli diplomat. He was Bedouin, from Israel's large Palestinian minority. One-fifth of the population, this minority enjoys a very inferior form of Israeli citizenship.

Ishmael Khaldi's exceptional success in becoming a diplomat, as well as his all-too-familiar experience as a Palestinian of abuse at the hands of the security services, exemplify the paradoxes of what amounts to Israel's hybrid version of apartheid.

Khaldi and another 1.8 million Palestinian citizens are descended from the few Palestinians who survived a wave of expulsions in 1948 as a Jewish state was declared on the ruins of their homeland.

Israel continues to view these Palestinians – its non-Jewish citizens – as a subversive element that needs to be controlled and subdued through measures reminiscent of the old South Africa. But at the same time, Israel is desperate to portray itself as a western-style democracy.

So strangely, the Palestinian minority has found itself treated both as second-class citizens and as an unwilling shop-window dummy on which Israel can hang its pretensions of fairness and equality. That has resulted in two contradictory faces.

On one side, Israel segregates Jewish and Palestinian citizens, confining the latter to a handful of tightly ghettoized communities on a tiny fraction of the country's territory. To prevent mixing and miscegenation, it strictly separates schools for Jewish and



Palestinian children. The policy has been so successful that inter-marriage is all but non-existent. In a rare survey, the Central Bureau of Statistics found 19 such marriages took place in 2011.

The economy is largely segregated too. Most Palestinian citizens are barred from Israel's security industries and anything related to the occupation. State utilities, from the ports to the water, telecoms and electricity industries, are largely free of Palestinian citizens.

Job opportunities are concentrated instead in low-paying service industries and casual labor. Two-thirds of Palestinian children in Israel live below the poverty line, compared to one-fifth of Jewish children.

This ugly face is carefully hidden from outsiders. On the other side, Israel loudly celebrates the right of Palestinian citizens to vote – an easy concession given that Israel engineered an overwhelming Jewish majority in 1948 by forcing most Palestinians into exile. It trumpets exceptional "Arab success stories", glossing over the deeper truths they contain.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Israel has been excitedly promoting the fact that one-fifth of its doctors are Palestinian citizens – matching their proportion of the

population. But in truth, the health sector is the one major sphere of life in Israel where segregation is not the norm. The brightest Palestinian students gravitate towards medicine because at least there the obstacles to success can be surmounted.

Compare that to higher education, where Palestinian citizens fill much less than one percent of senior academic posts. The first Muslim judge, Khaled Kaboub, was appointed to the Supreme Court only two years ago – 70 years after Israel's founding. Gamal Hakroosh became Israel's first Muslim deputy police commissioner as recently as 2016; his role was restricted, of course, to handling policing in Palestinian communities.

Khaldi, the diplomat assaulted in Jerusalem, fits this mold. Raised in the village of Khawaleh in the Galilee, his family was denied water, electricity, and building permits. His home was a tent, where he studied by gaslight. Many tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens live in similar conditions. Undoubtedly, the talented Khaldi overcame many hurdles to win a coveted place at university. He then served in the paramilitary border police, notorious for abusing Palestinians in the occupied territories.

He was marked out early on as a reliable advocate for Israel by an unusual

combination of traits: his intelligence and determination; a steely refusal to be ground down by racism and discrimination; a pliable ethical code that condoned the oppression of fellow Palestinians; and blind deference to a Jewish state whose very definition excluded him.

Israel's Foreign Ministry put him on a fast track, soon sending him to San Francisco and London. There his job was to fight the international campaign to boycott Israel, modeled on a similar one targeting apartheid South Africa, citing his own story as proof that in Israel anyone can succeed.

But in reality, Khaldi is an exception, and one cynically exploited to disprove the rule. Maybe that point occurred to him as he was being choked inside Jerusalem's central bus station after he questioned a guard's behavior.

After all, everyone in Israel understands that Palestinian citizens – even the odd professor or legislator – are racially profiled and treated as an enemy. Stories of their physical or verbal abuse are unremarkable. Khaldi's assault stands out only because he has proved himself such a compliant servant of a system designed to marginalize the community he belongs to.

This month, however, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself chose to tear off the prettified, diplomatic mask represented by Khaldi. He appointed a new ambassador to the UK.

Tzipi Hotovely, a Jewish supremacist and Islamophobe, supports Israel's annexation of the entire West Bank and the takeover of Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. She is part of a new wave of entirely undiplomatic envoys being sent to foreign capitals.

Hotovely cares much less about Israel's image than about making all the "Land of Israel", including the occupied Palestinian territories, exclusively Jewish.

Her appointment signals progress of a kind. Diplomats such as herself may finally help people abroad understand why Khaldi, her obliging fellow diplomat, is being assaulted back home.

Jonathan Cook won the *Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism*. His books include *'Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East'* and *'Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair'*. He contributed this article to *The Palestine Chronicle*.

Israel's checkpoints are places made for its colonial violence

By Ramona Wadi

For Palestinians, Israel's military checkpoints are made for its colonial violence and perpetual dehumanisation of the occupied population. In the latest grotesque spectacle of extrajudicial killing, Ahmed Erekat, a 27 year old Palestinian man and nephew of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Secretary General Saeb Erekat, was killed by Israeli soldiers after losing control of his vehicle close to a checkpoint at Abu Dis. Erekat was on his way to pick up his sister as her wedding was taking place that evening. Israel claims that his intention was a car-ramping attack.

Yet again, justice will probably be elusive as Israel's security narrative will determine the outcome of any investigation if, indeed, one takes place. Israel does not question its extrajudicial killings policy, which provides the backing for state, soldier and settler impunity when it comes to eliminating Palestinians.

PLO Executive Committee Member Hanan Ashrawi condemned the killing and

called upon the international community to hold Israel accountable. However, the "dysfunctional international community," as Ashrawi aptly described it, will once again abdicate its responsibilities. It has, after all, justified the concept of killing Palestinians through the colonial narrative itself. Aside from rhetorical "regret", Palestinians can expect nothing more.

Shifting attention towards the systematic repression and violence by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints is of paramount importance. These sites — there are hundreds of them, both "fixed" and "temporary" — have been normalised by the international community as necessary for Israel's "security" and "self-defence". Military checkpoints, however, are reminders that Israel has misappropriated Palestinian rights, notably freedom of movement, to maintain colonial control of the land and people, and are an integral part of Israel's theft of Palestinian territory.

Delays, inspections, random refusals of permits, detentions, verbal abuse and physical harassment are all tactics employed against

Palestinian civilians by Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints. Behind the fake security narrative, however, is the link between colonialism and surveillance, a tactic of Israel's which has been employed, normalised and refined since 1948.

The international community will not question Israel's use of checkpoints as it has normalised the colonial framework necessary for the Zionist state's survival. Furthermore, constructing the imagined democratic state that Israel claims to be severs the link which the international community should be making between checkpoints and Israel's colonial existence. While human rights organisations such as B'Tselem have regularly insisted upon an analysis of checkpoints within the framework of human rights violations, the international community has simply adopted the Israeli security narrative wholesale, turning Palestinians into collateral damage without listening to their stories and affirming their political and human importance.

Making what remains of Palestine un-

liveable is the ultimate aim of Israeli colonialism, and the international community has ensured that Israel can use all of the normalised human rights violations at its disposal. Creating a power imbalance in terms of space and psychological manipulation is the norm at Israeli checkpoints. Each day is a replica of routine measures which focus on elimination, rather than facilitating a semblance of normal living. For Palestinians, there is no escaping the violent threat posed by the checkpoints within a colonial framework. On the contrary, the threat manifesting into action is probable, as has been witnessed; documented; and, on other occasions, exposed in news headlines. Checkpoints enable colonial violence; Ahmed Erekat is sadly and simply the latest visible victim of Israel's fake security narrative.

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

Trump's talks offer with Venezuela and Iran doesn't mean policy shift: Argentinian professor

➔ "I think during these hard times for both countries, there is a moment to strengthen their cooperation. Both countries were being affected because of U.S. sanctions, so there is not enough space to find partners abroad."

Under his "maximum pressure" policy, Trump has introduced the harshest sanctions in history against Iran. It has introduced at total ban on Iran's oil exports.

Sterzer says, "Considering how important is oil for both countries, taking into account what was happening in this year with oil prices, there was a necessity for Nicolas Maduro's regime to consider Iran as a trustful partner."

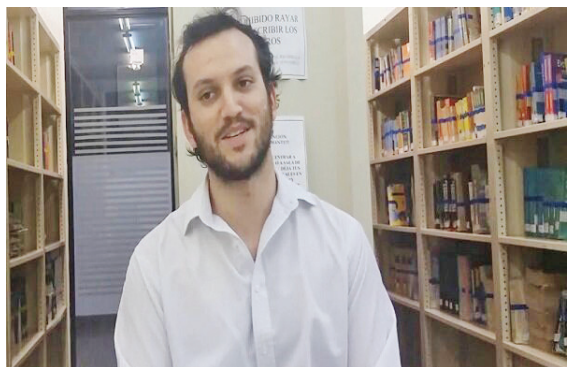
He suggests it is necessary that trade ties between Iran and Venezuela to include other items including food and medicine.

"The example with oil is also available for other items, especially food and pharmaceuticals," the professor points out.

Despite U.S. hostile policies toward Venezuela, in an interview with Axios published on Sunday, Trump said he "would maybe think about" meeting Maduro. However he changed tack in a tweet on Monday.

"My Admin has always stood on the side of FREEDOM and LIBERTY and against the oppressive Maduro regime! I would only meet with Maduro to discuss one thing: a peaceful exit from power!" Trump wrote.

Washington has been one of the chief allies to Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido but that support has waned as the National Assembly president's challenge to Maduro's



authority has lost impetus.

Guaido caused a stir 18 months ago declaring himself acting president after the opposition-controlled parliament decreed Maduro a usurper over his 2018 re-election.

The U.S. was one of the first of more than 50 countries to recognize his claims and the Trump administration ramped up sanctions on Maduro and his inner circle in an effort to

"Honestly, I don't expect any changes about Trump-Maduro relationships."

starve him of revenue and force his resignation.

After initially drawing huge crowds in anti-Maduro rallies, Guaido's star has dimmed over the last year. In January he even faced a challenge to his position as National Assembly leader from an opposition legislator and former ally – an issue that has never been resolved.

Professor Sterzer says except Iran and Venezuela the Trump administration is also dealing with other local and international issues.

"The U.S. is dealing with other issues, internally, like the economy, Floyd's issue, and health crisis because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Apart from this, the U.S. is also busy with China. In other words, too many open fronts to deal with. However, it doesn't mean both Venezuela and Iran are not more important. At least, for this moment, they are adopting a 'wait-and-see' approach."

The Argentinian professor says he is quite sure that sanctions against Iran and Venezuela "will continue".

The professor is also of the opinion that remarks by Trump that he is ready to meet with the Venezuelan president "is just a political strategy".

"We could see the same with Kim Jong-un and North Korea as well. The fact he was saying that, I mean, sharing his 'goodwills' to talk with his 'enemies', doesn't mean that there is a shift in his foreign policy" the professor points out.

He adds, "Honestly, I don't expect any changes about Trump-Maduro relationships."

Annexation is still inadmissible, even by Israel

By Daud Abdullah

Israel's project to annex 40 per cent of the occupied West Bank is hanging in the balance. Without the long-awaited green light from the Trump administration, it will remain stalled. After his abysmal mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic and Black Lives Matter protests, recent polls show the president is consistently trailing behind his democratic rival, Joe Biden. A foreign policy fiasco in Palestine could quickly end the incumbent's dream of a second term in the White House. This explains why he has been dragging his feet on the planned annexation.

If events within the US have painted the image of a president driven by dark forces of discrimination and inequality, support for Israel's annexation policy will certainly shed more light on it. By endorsing Israel's annexation plan Trump has unwittingly called into question his slogans 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again.'

How can a country become great when it cannot defend its founding values in the face of unreasonable demands from a protectorate?

The challenge which confronts Trump is not peculiar to his administration; it is one that has troubled successive administrations since the late 19th century. They could not uphold the principle that prohibits the acquisition of territory by force. Even when they did, it was always applied partially and selectively.



When 15 Latin American states adopted the principle in April 1890 at the First International Conference of American States, the US voted against its resolution. Washington's hegemonic ambitions in the region was arguably the reason for its decision.

Fast forward to 1938 and Germany's annexation of Austria followed by the invasions of 10 other European countries. On this occasion, conquest and annexation became so unacceptable that the US and Britain launched the Atlantic Charter.

It declared their "desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned" and that they "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

After the bloodletting of World War II, the principle of inadmissibility became a cornerstone of international law and relations. The UN, which to all intents and purposes is a victor's club, affirmed in its charter that:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

■ Israeli exception

Today, all these principles have been thrown out of the window in the face of Israel's threat to annex part of the occupied West Bank.

A full-page advert published in Israeli newspapers in April signed by 220 retired generals, admirals, and leaders from Mossad, Shin Bet and the police has failed thus far to deter Benjamin Netanyahu from pursuing his annexation plan.

This month, 47 UN human rights experts called on the international community to oppose the plan. They warned of the lessons of the past; criticism without consequences can often have devastating consequences. Europe could have spared itself the mass killings and wanton destruction if it did not appease Germany's annexation of Austria.

If Israel's Western allies fail to prevent the impending annexation in Palestine, the Middle East may itself witness a major catastrophe. Michael Lynk, the 7th UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in the Palestinian Territories, could not have been any clearer when he cautioned that under no circumstances should an occupying power, Israel included, "acquire the right to conquer, annex or gain sovereign title over any part of the territory under its occupation."

This dreadful situation has reinforced the Palestinian realisation that freedom will not be handed to them by the US and its Western allies. It has to be won.

Wherever they are currently domiciled, Palestinians must have observed with bewilderment last week's visit by France's Emmanuel Macron to London. He braved the coronavirus pandemic to commemorate the 80th anniversary of General Charles de Gaulle's appeal to the French resistance to liberate their land from the clutches of the occupying power. The German occupation was then in its second month.

Did it ever cross Macron's mind that the Palestinian people who have been subjected to the longest military occupation in modern times also have a right to resist? Of course not. While some rights are inalienable to certain people, they can only be selectively and partially accorded to others.

Even as the clock ticks down to the eleventh hour, NATO, the UN and EU continue to dither about what to do with Israel. They, like Netanyahu, are also awaiting the green light from Washington. Cynics in the Middle East see things differently; they fear that the ditherers and bystanders are awaiting another round of mayhem so their industries and banks will profit from the sales of weapons and reconstruction of devastated countries. As for the inevitable human suffering and deaths, they are mere collateral damage.

Dr Daud Abdullah is MEMO Director.

The Bahamas to lift travel restrictions for Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Bahamas is scheduled to lift travel restrictions from Iran and other previously excluded countries such as China, the Republic of Korea, and some European states, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Wednesday.



The lifting of the travel ban from these countries will take effect on July 1, when The Bahamas reopens its borders to commercial air carriers, Eyewitness News reported.

In addition to health assessments and screening at the points of entry, the government requires all individuals, with some exceptions, to have a negative COVID-19 PCR test from an accredited facility within 10 days of entry to gain entry into the country.

The test results and 'Bahamas Health Visa' must be presented upon arrival, the report said.

The Bahamas continues to enjoy a slowed rate of cases, having only confirmed four new infections since late May.

Tens of historical areas, relics identified in western Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A total number of 65 centuries-old areas and relics have been found during an archeological season, which recently came to end in Sirvan plain, western province of Ilam.

“65 historical and cultural items, dating back to a time from the prehistorical times to Islamic era, have been identified and documented during an archaeological survey carried out in the historical site of Sirvan,” CHTN quoted Iranian archaeologist Shahla Ahmadi as saying on Wednesday.



“The study was carried out in an area covering 412 square kilometers to complete the archeological map of the country, which resulted in identifying and recording ancient artifacts and establishments, and relative knowledge of the periods of human settlement in the region.”

The lion's share of the newly identified objects dates from the Sassanid era (224–651), she said.

“Historical Tepes (hills), sites, ruined structures, cemeteries, caves, and rock shelters were amongst areas with cultural values that have been identified/ documented recently.”

The historical site of Sirvan, which is estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224–651), was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 2001.

Iran under Sassanian rule (224-651 CE) witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that during the Sassanid era the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Iran, one of the friendliest countries

By Rita Alves

(Part: 4/4)

And let's not forget the sand storm in Yazd, it was my second experience with a sand storm, the other one was in the desert in Jordan. In Yazd, after we visited the Old City, we went to a traditional hotel to have some drinks and we went to the rooftop to see the views.

The sky started to get dark and we saw a brownish cloud coming from one side; it was quite fast and we started to feel dust in our face, so I put my camera away and after just few minutes, we had to go downstairs to the hotel courtyard which had the roof covered with a thick plastic (at least it didn't flew away). The sky turned completely brown and then a storm came and it started to pour down. The storm took some time to pass and afterwards the temperature went down and was much cooler.



A view of Yazd

Now that I am back from Iran, I can say that it is one of the safest and friendly countries in the world, because I went there and I had the experience of travelling in the country. But, I find it difficult to pass that to others, people are so wrong about Iran. I remember a man that was asking us to tell our friends to come to Iran, “We are not bad people” – he said with tears coming to his eyes. So, pay a visit to this beautiful and friendly country, you won't regret it.

COVID-19 inflicts \$1.4 billion in losses on Iran's hotels

→ 1 He said that the country's tourism industry suffered some 100 percent losses from the pandemic over the last four months, adding “Part of this loss and damage must be compensated by the government.”

He called on the government to show sympathy and provide support with the suffered investors in the tourism industry, especially the hoteliers' community, adding that the private sector in the tourism industry should be able to provide services in the post-COVID-19 period.

He had earlier asked the government to exempt the tourism industry from paying taxes, as hotels, travel agencies and accommodation centers have lost revenues due to total shutdown amid the virus spread.

The rebound, according to experts, will be much more noticeable once the Iranian government agrees to grant proper bailouts and economic relief packages to the beleaguered travel industry being brought to a virtual standstill.

On one hand, the government has announced it will bail out those which are grappling with fiscal problems by offering loans with a 12-percent interest rate. On the other, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has suggested a rescue package for tourism businesses.

“Such amount of bailouts will not compensate for much of the losses as the virus pandemic has brought tourism to a standstill for two months,” Amir-Pouya Rafiei-Shad who presides over Tehran province's Tour and Travel Agencies Association said in



A view of Tehran with Espinas Palace Hotel in the foreground

April.

“Last [Iranian calendar] year was a bumpy ride for Iran's tourism as it suffered from flooding in the spring, protests [over

petrol prices] in November, and the fatal Ukraine International Airlines plane crash in January,” Rafiei-Shad explained.

On April 20, Iran lifted intercity travel

bans days after President Hassan Rouhani unveiled a “Smart Social Distancing Initiative” as a new phase of measures to prevent the virus spread.

Over 5.7m overnight stays recorded across Iran in month

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — More than 5.7 million overnight stays, mainly by domestic travelers, were recorded across Iran during the month of Khordad (May 21 – June 20), deputy tourism minister has announced.

“A total of 5,703,679 people made overnight stays during the month of Khordad at authorized accommodation centers such as hotels, traditional lodging houses, eco-lodge units, pilgrim's guest houses, apartment hotels, guest houses, and tourist centers,” ILNA quoted Vali Teymouri as saying on Thursday.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health has announced new guidelines and instructions to ramp up the safety of travels across the coronavirus-hit country.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Teymouri referred to national



days-off in Khordad, which made the Iranian month fit for more travels, saying “During Khordad, over 11,000

Iranian expert uses nanotech to protect exquisite works



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian microbiologist Leila Shokrzadeh has made a nanosensor which can indicate the presence of fungi that cause erosion in buildings and storage tanks used to keep exquisite works, ISNA reported.

Although organizations and institutions in charge of preservation and restoration of historical relics have taken steps to repair the damage caused by fungal erosion, there hasn't been an effective and appropriate way

to show these factors before the destruction of the manuscripts, the report added.

With this nanosensor, the presence of these fungi and microorganisms can be identified before destruction and followed by preventive measures.

Thousands of exquisite artworks including manuscripts of Quran and Persian poets' major works, dating back to different historical eras, are being kept in several Iranian museums as well as Iran National Library and Archive (INLA).

Facebook bans trade of Iranian antique artifacts



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Facebook has banned the sale of historical artifacts, including Iranian carpets, on its platforms in an attempt to prevent priceless items looted or stolen from being sold online, IRNA reported on Thursday.

Published photos of stolen historical artifacts on Facebook and Instagram were one of the reasons which led to the decision, the report added.

Several reports confirmed that the loot-

ers were using the platform to identify and sell illegally excavated antiquities mostly from the countries in West Asia.

“We've long had rules preventing the sale of stolen artifacts,” public policy manager at Facebook Greg Mandel said on Tuesday and added “To keep these artifacts and our users safe, we've been working to expand our rules, and starting today, we now prohibit the exchange, sale or purchase of all historical artifacts on Facebook and Instagram.”

Historical Abyaneh village unaffected by fire incident

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A fire that broke out across gardens of Abyaneh village in the central province of Isfahan on Wednesday has inflicted no damage to the historical texture of the village, CHTN reported.

Preliminary reports indicate that 15 hectares of gardens of the historical village have been engulfed in flames, the director of the historical site Hossein Yazdanmehr said.

Although the volume of fire was too high, it was contained and successfully extinguished by firefighters as well as volunteer forces that prevented the spread of fire to the historical and valuable texture of the village, the official added.

Dominated with reddish hues and lost in the labyrinth of heights, Abyaneh village is one of the oldest in Iran. It is an example of human adaptation to nature, wherein one can redraw the boundaries of time and feel a flavor of ancient Iranian culture and civilization.

Nested at the foot of Mount Karkas, Abyaneh is at a distance of about 80km to Kashan and 40km to Natanz in Isfahan Province. It draws thousands of domestic and foreign tourists year-round, mainly when it hosts special



feasts and ceremonies.

It is an open-air anthropology museum that showcases architecture and traditions from the Sassanid era (224–651)

onwards, for instance, an ancient temple, the ruins of a fortress, a mosque with a unique altar from Seljuk period (ca. 1040–1196) to name a few.

Its distinctive architectural facet, variety of deeply-rooted-in-time rituals, apparel of inhabitants, and rows of earthen houses dotted on the slope contribute to its charm. The roofs of some houses serve as the courtyard for others higher up on the hill.

The residents are deeply committed to honoring their traditions. Females wear traditional clothing, consisting of a scarf with floral motifs and pleated pants.

Even today their costume, way of life, and their ancient dialect are still practically unchanged so that there lie ample reasons for travelers even though the anthropologists to hear for the village.

Aside from the village, which was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 1975, 32 historical monuments inside the village have been also registered on the list.

Iran also eyes a possible inscription of Abyaneh village on the UNESCO World Heritage List in the near future.

Unlawful sanctions disrupt Iran's anti-drug fight

➔ Over the past year, more than 950 tons of narcotics were seized, a record in the history of drug detection, and the spending of several hundred million dollars in the two areas of supply and demand reduction are among Iran's measures to achieve a world free of drugs, he explained.

He went on to say that drugs are not a problem that a country can solve on its own.

Iran emphasizes the pivotal role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as an international authority in the fight against narcotics and expresses its concern over any approach that contradicts the mission of this organization or leads to interference in its current mission, he highlighted.

It is expected that in line with the principle of shared responsibility, as well as joint cooperation, we will once again have the technical and financial support of UNODC programs in both border management and countermeasures, he noted.

Iran's anti-narcotics measures are not merely restricted to its borders, they have regional and international effects due to its geographical location, he added.

International diplomacy is based on cooperation to resolve regional and global problems, while the imposition of illegal sanctions and unilateral coercive measures has prevented the implementation of international cooperation, especially in the fight against drugs, he lamented.

Failure to provide the necessary equipment in the field of border management and confiscation of drugs due to sanctions will disrupt the fight in a way that other countries will suffer from the consequences, he stated, adding, the responsibility for the consequences of this is disrupting the international fight against drugs lies



with those who impose these illegal rules by putting pressure on the international community.

Iran's will to fight against narcotics trafficking focuses on the need to avoid politicization and unilateralism and pay attention to international cooperation to achieve the goals and to build a better tomorrow for all human beings, he concluded.

Alexander Fedulov, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) representative to Iran, has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking,

IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

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.

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.

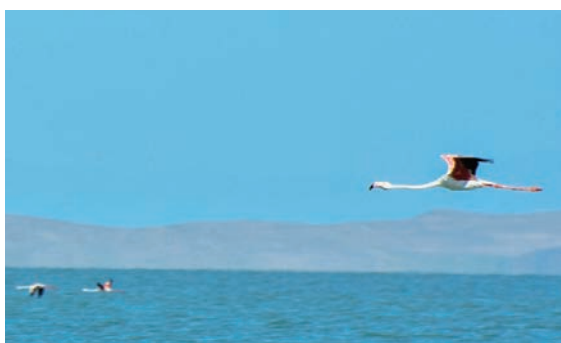
Since the beginning of this year (March

21), 163 international traffickers were arrested 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.

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.

Reviving Lake Urmia hosting large flocks of flamingos



ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Large flocks of flamingos are returning to Lake Urmia as the lake is being revived after years of dryness, ISNA reported on Thursday.

Accordingly, flamingos have migrated to their former habitat, Lake Urmia, for food. The number of them on the shores of the lake has been announced to be

around 20,000.

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia was once the largest salt-water lake in West Asia.

However, decades of long-standing drought spell excessive dam construction, and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation, as well as increased water demands in the agriculture sector, shrank the lake drastically.

In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one-tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

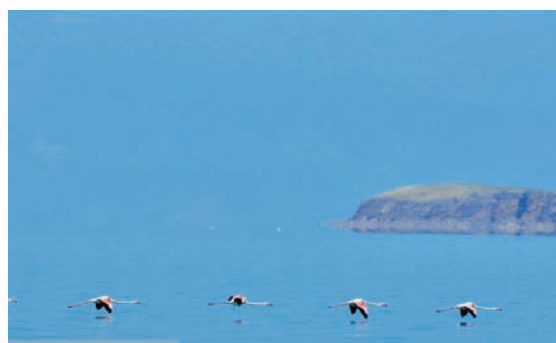
With the complete implementation of two water transfer projects, Lake Urmia will be completely restored by the Iranian calendar year 1406 (March 2027-March 2028), Issa Kalantari, Department of Environment (DOE) chief two weeks earlier announced.

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province said that the lake's level has reached 1,271.87 meters, which is 37 centimeters higher than the last year's level.

The lake's water volume was estimated at more than 4.620 billion cubic meters, which indicates an increase of 1,010 billion cubic meters compared to the last year and 1.7 meters since 2014.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve the Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level of 1274.10.

The lake was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets, and ducks, and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had



bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

These days, life has returned to Lake Urmia. The lake now has so much water that tourists can swim in its shiny water and birds and aquatic species such as flamingos and Artemia have returned to it, but it still has a long way to completely survive.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

SDSs mitigation plan to take effect next year

Sand and dust storm (SDS) mitigation plan will be implemented in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan as of the next Iranian calendar year (beginning March 21), Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

A total fund of \$150 million from the National Development Fund has been proposed to counter dust storms in Sistan-Baluchestan province, IRNA quoted Issa Kalantari as saying on Tuesday.

Referring to the SDSs hitting southeastern part of the country causing the residents severe health problems, he noted that the president is pursuing the issue and as long as the fund is provided the plan will go into effect.

طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای سیستان از اول سال آینده اجرایی می شود

رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای منطقه سیستان و بلوچستان از ابتدای سال آینده اجرایی می شود.

عیسی کلانتری روز سه شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: برای مبارزه با گرد و غبار این منطقه رئیس جمهوری تقاضای ۱۵۰ میلیون دلار اعتبار از صندوق توسعه ملی کرده است.

وی بیان کرد: توفان ها و گرد و غبار مساله جدی در منطقه سیستان است و مردم سالها با این مشکل مواجهه و از آن رنج می برند و رئیس جمهوری به شدت پیگیر حل این مساله هستند. طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای منطقه سیستان به محض تایید منابع مورد نیاز اجرایی می شود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-bound”

■ **Meaning:** a word ending shows that something is restricted by or confined to

■ **For example:** **Deskbound** executives can't grasp production problems.

PHRASAL VERB

Hammer away

■ **Meaning:** to keep saying something because you want people to understand or accept it

■ **For example:** I keep hammering away at this point because it's important.

IDIOM

Bring someone to heel

■ **Explanation:** if you force someone to behave in a disciplined manner, you bring them to heel

■ **For example:** The boy had always behaved badly, but the new headmaster managed to bring him to heel.

Coronavirus: 110 Iranians return home from Tajikistan

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A flight taken to Tajikistan brought back 110 Iranians to the country amid the coronavirus pandemic, IRIB news agency reported on Thursday.

Following the coordination of the Iranian Embassy with Tajik government officials, the second group of Iranians who applied to return to their country, have been brought back on Thursday evening, Mohammad Taqi Saberi, Iranian ambassador to Tajikistan said.

Earlier, 137 Iranians also returned to Iran on May 12 with arrangements, he stated.

Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and strict regulations on the return of foreign nationals, many Iranians in Tajikistan, including tourists, students, and businessmen, have had difficulty returning to the country.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 217,724 on Friday, of whom 10,239 have died and 177,852 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,628 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 109 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

Dolphins learn foraging skills from peers

Dolphins can learn new skills from their fellow dolphins. That's the conclusion of a new study reported in the journal *Current Biology* on June 25. The findings are the first to show that dolphins are not only capable of learning new ways to catch prey, but they are also motivated to learn from peers, not just from their mothers, the researchers say.

“Our study shows that the foraging behavior ‘shelling’ -- where dolphins trap fish inside empty seashells -- spreads through social learning among close associates,” says Sonja Wild, who conducted this research for her doctorate at the University of Leeds. “This is surprising, as dolphins and other toothed whales tend to follow a ‘do-as-mother-does’ strategy for learning foraging behavior.”

Another aspect that makes the findings especially intriguing is that shelling represents only the second reported case of tool use in dolphins. The dolphins of Shark Bay, Western Australia, are also known to use marine sponges as foraging tools to help them catch prey, according to the researchers, according to Science Daily website.

Wild and her colleagues made the discovery during boat-based surveys in Shark Bay between 2007 and 2018. In almost 5,300 encounters with dolphin groups over that time, they identified more than 1,000 different Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*). They also caught a select few in the act of shelling 42 times.

“During shelling, dolphins chase their prey -- usually a fish -- into empty shells of giant gastropods, insert their beak into the shell, bring it to the water surface and then shake it about to drain the water out of the shell, so that the fish falls into their open mouth,” Wild explains.

The researchers saw 19 different individual dolphins perform this shelling behavior. They note that there are surely more ‘shellers’ in the population than they saw, since the whole event may only take a few seconds and could easily be missed. The question then was: how had this new way of foraging spread from one dolphin to the next?

To find out, the researchers used social network analysis, taking into account the social network, genetic relationships, and environmental factors. Their analysis concluded that the shelling behavior spreads socially primarily within -- rather than between -- generations, providing the first evidence that dolphins are also capable of learning from their peers, not just their mothers.

“The fact that shelling is socially transmitted among associates, rather than between mother and offspring, highlights the similarities between cetaceans [the group including dolphins, whales, and porpoises] and great apes in the way cultural behaviors are passed on,” says Michael Krützen, University of Zurich, who initiated the study.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Bird flu

(January 26, 2004)

The World Health Organisation has said it's taking the rapid spread of a deadly new strain of bird flu, H5N1, very seriously. It has warned there's definitely potential for a serious human outbreak. This follows confirmed outbreaks in Thailand, South Korea, Cambodia, Japan and Vietnam. This report from Jill McGivering:

The list of countries known to have the relatively new and **deadly strain** of bird flu is rapidly growing. The focus now is on Indonesia where tests will soon confirm whether or not the bird flu which killed several million chickens there is the often fatal H5N1, already confirmed in 5 other countries in the region. Reports of **an outbreak** in Laos are also being **investigated**.

A spokesman for the World Health Organisation told the BBC it was clearly **spreading**, causing serious concern. As new information was emerging, it was becoming clear, he said, the strain had been around in the region much longer than first thought. That **multiplied the risk** of human infections, he added, and of the virus **mutating**, perhaps by attaching itself to human flu, and becoming far more deadly. So far seven people have died, six of them in Vietnam, after being infected with the strain.

But so far there's no evidence of direct human to human **transmission**. Were that to happen, the death rate amongst people could multiply dramatically.

This new strain first appeared in Hong Kong in 1997. Scientists then went on to create a **prototype vaccine** but that's now become **redundant** because the virus has since mutated. Between 10 and 20 million chickens across the region have died or been killed in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus.

■ **Words**

deadly strain: a variety of the disease that may be fatal, i.e. cause death

an outbreak: a sudden occurrence of something, usually unpleasant

investigated: looked into, examined

spreading: beginning to affect wider areas

multiplied the risk: considerably increased the possibility

mutating/mutated: if an organism mutates, it changes its original genetic make-up and develops new characteristics; for example, if a virus mutates, it may no longer respond to drugs or vaccines in the same way as before

transmission: here - passing of the virus, infecting

a prototype vaccine: the first version of the vaccine; a vaccine is a substance which is given to people to prevent them getting the disease

redundant: here - ineffective and therefore not usable

(Source: BBC)

U.S. State Dep. counterterrorism report ‘disappointing’: Pakistan

Pakistan’s government says it is “disappointed” by a U.S. State Department report on the country’s counterterrorism track record, with a foreign ministry statement declaring the report “self-contradictory and selective”.

Earlier this week, the State Department issued its annual country reports on terrorism for 2019, singling Pakistan out for particular criticism.

“We are disappointed with the U.S. State Department’s Annual Country Report on Terrorism for 2019, which is self-contradictory and selective in its characterization of Pakistan’s efforts for countering terrorism and terrorist financing,” the Pakistani foreign ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

The United States has long accused Pakistan of tacitly supporting the Afghan Taliban and its allies, including the Haqqani Network (HQN) armed group, in their fight against U.S.-led NATO forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

The two countries have also worked together against other armed groups, including al-Qaeda, in the region, in a relationship that has been marked by continued engagement despite sustained mistrust, al Jazeera reported.

Matters reached a low point in January 2018, when U.S. President Donald Trump cut more than \$1.1bn in security assistance to Pakistan, accusing the country of supporting the Afghan Taliban.

Pakistan has consistently denied the allegations, although in 2016 the then Pakistani foreign affairs adviser Sartaj Aziz had admitted that the government did have limited influence over the group.

Elements of the Afghan Taliban’s leadership have been based out of a town outside the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta for years. In May 2016, then Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor was killed in a U.S. drone attack in Pakistan while en route to Quetta.

The U.S. State Department report this week repeated those concerns.

“Pakistan continued to serve as a safe haven for certain regionally focused terrorist groups,” it said. “It allowed groups targeting Afghanistan, including the Afghan Taliban and affiliated HQN, as well as groups targeting India, including LeT [Lashkar e-Taiba] and its affiliated front organisations, and JeM [Jaish e-Muhammad], to operate from its territory.”

Haniyeh seeks Muslim unison in face of Israel’s annexation plan

Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, has called on political leaders in the Arab and Muslim world to join hands in defense of the Palestinian cause, and devise mechanisms to stop Israel’s plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank.

“We believe in the role and historical responsibility of political parties and organizations across the Arab and Muslim world for Palestine and its just cause, protection of Palestinian lands as well as support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation,” Haniyeh wrote in a letter addressed to more than 120 heads of political parties and bodies in the Arab and Muslim countries.

He called for urgent action to confront the Tel Aviv regime’s “criminal and racist” decision to expropriate swathes of Palestinian land in the West Bank, Jerusalem al-Quds and the Jordan Valley, Press TV reported.

Haniyeh demanded the safeguarding of the Islamic and Christian sanctities, and the adoption of measures against Judaization of Jerusalem al-Quds and the partition of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Israeli PM announces partnership with UAE ‘to fight coronavirus’

Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are set to publicly announce cooperation over what he described as the fight against the novel coronavirus, amid attempts by a number of Arab countries to normalize diplomatic relations with the Tel Aviv regime.

Speaking at an air force graduation ceremony on Thursday, Netanyahu said the impending measure stemmed from “prolonged and intense contacts.”

“This collaboration will be in the areas of research and development and technology, in areas that will improve health security throughout the region,” he said.

Channel 12 news reported that Mossad chief Yossi Cohen had helped broker the new agreement.

Resistance News

Hamas: Armed resistance at the forefront of options to face annexation

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Head of Hamas’s foreign relations office Mousa Abu Marzouk has affirmed that the armed resistance is at the forefront of options to confront and thwart the Israeli annexation plans.

“The Israeli annexation plans are a new crime and persistence in stealing the Palestinian land resources,” Abu Marzouk said in press remarks to assabeel.net, stressing that Hamas “will work on frustrating them with all available tools and means.”

“The Palestinian state that we want and the Palestinian people want — and such endeavor is backed by our Arab and Islamic nations and the world’s free people — is a country from the river to the sea, so the future of the Palestinian state lies in its complete liberation,” the Hamas official said.

He underscored that the Palestinian people have options at the popular, diplomatic and legal levels, including the armed resistance, to respond to such Israeli step and force it to backtrack on its new acts of theft.

In a similar context, al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, had described the Israeli decision to annex the Jordan Valley and parts of the West Bank as “a declaration of war against the Palestinian people.”

In a video message, Abu Obeida, spokesman for al-Qassam Brigades, vowed that the armed wing of Hamas would remain a “loyal guard defending the Palestinian people, their lands and holy sites.”

“We will make the enemy bite its fingers in regret for such criminal decision,” he said.

Iraqi forces raid Kata’ib Hezbollah base in Baghdad

U.S. suspected of role after headquarters of Kata’ib Hezbollah raided

By staff & agencies

The headquarters of an anti-terror group within the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), better known as Hashd al-Sha’abi, have come under attack in Baghdad, raising suspicions about the U.S. role in Iraq.

More than a dozen members of Kata’ib Hezbollah were reportedly detained during the raid in southern Baghdad in the early hours of Friday. Initial reports said several commanders of the anti-U.S. group, which is integrated into Iraq’s security forces, were among those arrested.

Their fate remains unclear, with some unnamed officials saying they are in the custody of Iraqi security services. Other informed sources said some the detainees had been released.

An Iraqi official initially told Reuters news agency that at least three of the group’s detained commanders had been transferred over to the U.S. military.

A number of local media outlets also reported that American forces were involved in the raid.

One tweet by a PMU member claimed that Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi had apologized to the anti-terror group’s head Hadi al-Ameri over the incident.

The Arabic-language al-Sumaria television network, citing an unnamed security source, reported on Friday that all 13 PMU members who had been detained are now free.

Back on April 6, a member of the Iraqi parliament’s security and defense committee warned against the ulterior motives behind the redeployment of U.S. troops to various military sites across the Arab country, saying Washington was drawing up plans to target



PMU commanders.

“The withdrawal of U.S. forces from a number of military bases does not come in line with the parliamentary resolution calling on the government to push out foreign troops from the country. It is rather part of redeployment plans for American forces inside Iraq,” Karim al-Muhammadawi told Arabic-language al-Masalah news agency in an exclusive interview at the time.

He added, “The real intention behind the redeployment of U.S. soldiers in Iraq remains unknown. But it is assumed to be related to the deployment of the forces to fortified bases, especially after the installation of Patriot missile systems there. The U.S. is purportedly seeking to launch

precision strikes against Hashd al-Sha’abi positions and intends to assassinate commanders associated with them.”

On March 27, the New York Times newspaper reported that the Pentagon had ordered a secret directive, which called on U.S. military commanders to prepare a campaign against Kata’ib Hezbollah, which is part of Hashd al-Sha’abi.

But the United States’ top commander in Iraq had warned that such a campaign could be bloody and counterproductive.

Lieutenant General Robert P. White wrote in a blunt memo that a new military campaign would also require that thousands more American troops be sent to Iraq.

Hashd al-Sha’abi fighters have played a major role in the liberation of areas held by

Daesh terrorists ever since the Takfiri group launched an offensive in the country, over-running vast swathes in lightning attacks.

In November 2016, the Iraqi parliament voted to integrate the PMU, which was formed shortly after the emergence of Daesh in Iraq in 2014, into the military.

The popular group, however, is a thorn in the side of the United States which is widely believed to be managing an array of militant groups, including Daesh, to advance its Israel-centric agenda in the region.

In 2009, the U.S. State Department blacklisted Kata’ib Hezbollah and imposed sanctions on the group which has been the frequent target of American airstrikes in Iraq.

According to Press TV, Iraqi lawmakers unanimously approved a bill on January 5, demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops following the U.S. assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq’s PMU, and their companions.

Later on January 9, former Iraqi prime minister, Adel Abdul-Mahdi, called on the United States to dispatch a delegation to Baghdad tasked with formulating a mechanism for the move.

The 78-year-old politician said Iraq rejected any violation of its sovereignty, particularly the U.S. military’s violation of Iraqi airspace in the assassination airstrike.

The U.S. has refused to withdraw its troops, with President Donald Trump balking at the idea with the threat to seize Iraq’s oil money held in bank accounts in the United States.

Pentagon chief seeks to reassure NATO over U.S. troop plans

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper sought Friday to reassure allies at NATO that Washington will consult them on any future troop movements, after President Donald Trump surprised partners at the military alliance by announcing the withdrawal of thousands of personnel from Germany.

At a time when videoconferencing has become the norm due to the coronavirus, Esper paid a short in-person visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels, a week after several allied defense ministers expressed concern about the unpredictability of US troop plans in Europe and amid a draw down in Afghanistan, AP reported.

“I welcome that the US is consulting with allies, while

making clear that the US commitment to European security remains strong,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in a joint video statement before holding talks with Esper. Both men arrived at their lecterns wearing face masks.

Media are not generally permitted to enter NATO headquarters because of virus-related restrictions.

Last week, Trump said that he is ordering a major reduction in troop strength in Germany, from around 34,500 personnel down to 25,000. Members of his own party have criticized the move as a gift to Russia and a threat to US national security. Germany is a hub for US operations in the Middle East and Africa.

Trump said this week that the troops could be moved

to Poland.

Germany wasn’t notified of the move, which came after Trump branded its NATO ally “delinquent” for failing to pay enough for its own defense, by not meeting a goal set in 2014 for members to halt budget cuts and move toward spending at least 2% of gross national product on defense by 2024.

Esper reaffirmed that message, saying that “I continue to urge all of our allies to meet their target goal of 2% of GDP. We’ve moved a good distance here in the last few years but there’s much, much more we need to do to ensure our collective security.”

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo again took aim at Germany.

South Carolina statue set for removal, protesters topple two in Wisconsin

→ 1 The legislation seeks to ban neck holds of the kind that killed George Floyd and would lift legal obstacles that shield police from lawsuits. It would authorize \$2.5bn for independent investigations of police abuse and open avenues for replacing some police in communities with social workers.

Broadly backed by U.S. civil rights groups, the Democrat-drafted House bill attempts to put into law the demands of protesters who have rallied across the U.S. for police reforms. It is opposed by police unions and President Donald Trump.

“In America today, a Black American is three times more likely to be killed by police compared to a white person,” said Representative Jim McGovern, a leading House Democrat.

“Police shoot, arrest and imprison more people in our country than in similar advanced nations. It’s the exception when an officer who broke the law when committing a fatal shooting is convicted of a crime. It’s not the norm,” McGovern said.

The legislation passed roughly along party lines in a vote of the full House on Thursday night, but what happens next is unclear. The House bill will stall unless Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Congress, who are far apart on key issues in the bill, can find a way to work together.

The White House warned on Wednesday that President Trump would veto the measure. In a policy statement, the Office of Management and Budget called the Democratic bill “over-broad” and “excessive” and said



it would “fail to bring law enforcement and the communities they serve closer together”.

According to al Jazeera, the Senate on Wednesday failed to muster enough votes to take up a Republican-backed policing bill that would authorize nearly \$7bn in new grants for police. Civil rights groups came out strongly against the measure and Democrats refused to let it come to the Senate

floor for debate.

Speaking at the White House on Wednesday, Trump said Democrats “want to weaken our police”.

“They want to take away a lot of the strength from our police and from law enforcement generally, and we can’t live with it. We can’t live with it,” Trump said at a news conference.

The National Association of Police Organizations, a coalition of police unions and associations with 240,000 members nationwide, said in a letter to House legislators that opening the door to potential lawsuits would have a “chilling effect” on police.

And, chokeholds “are a vital tool to have when use of deadly force is justified”, the police letter said.

U.S. watchdog: Afghanistan gov’t weakened ahead of Taliban talks

A watchdog in the United States has warned that “systemic” corruption within the Afghan government is weakening its bargaining position in upcoming peace negotiations with the Taliban, even as the armed group said it was ready and had compiled its agenda for the long-awaited talks.

John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, said the Taliban and other fighters underscored the government’s corruption, using it to “undermine public support for the government, garner recruits to their cause and weaken the government’s

bargaining position during future peace negotiations”.

“It is the most insidious threat the Afghan government faces because it saps the support of citizens who are trying to go about their daily work, feed their families, and live free of fear and intimidation,” Sopko told a monitoring group known as Integrity Watch Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, about 50 civil society activists in Kabul rallied on Thursday against corruption, urging the International Monetary Fund to rescind a \$220m loan given last month to the Afghan government to help mitigate the impact of

the coronavirus pandemic, al Jazeera reported.

Afghanistan has reported more than 30,000 cases, including 675 deaths, but testing is severely limited, and experts say the number of infections is likely much higher.

The protesters said the government has already wasted billions of international money. Najibullah Azad, who led a group of lawyers, doctors and economists in the protest, said government corruption is devouring international money and that he feared the IMF’s \$220m would disappear.

Inside the America

TEHRAN— All across America, people of conscience are trying to tear down statues that memorialize and honor a hateful history of oppression. Most notably in the news is the attempt to bring down the statue of Confederate War hero and former president General Andrew Jackson, located in Lafayette Square, directly in front of the White House. That particular statue is 168 years old, but the current resident of the White House has also hung two portraits of Andrew Jackson as well as placing a miniature of that same statue in the Oval Office. Donald Trump, it seems, is a big fan of former U.S. President Andrew Jackson and is seeking the maximum penalty against persons who intend to harm or destroy these so-called “historical monuments”.

Trump tweeted a warning that a ten year prison sentence awaited persons guilty of the “disgraceful vandalism” on the “magnificent statue”, referring to the 2003 Veteran’s Memorial Preservation Act. Arizona Republican Senator Tom Cotton chimed in to urge the President to even deploy federal troops to protect the statue and “stop the mob”.

It is not surprising that persons who have risen to power on the backs of the labors of others would consider a statue to the institutions of slavery and genocide a fitting marker glorifying our nation’s history—like all the other land owning gentry, Jackson’s wealth was due to the efforts of his slaves. And he is not the only slave-holding president. Twelve of the earliest presidents owned enslaved persons

and eight of those owned slaves during their terms as president. Only presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams did not own enslaved people. This makes it somewhat difficult to honor any early president without also honoring slavery, it seems. And considering how the 13th amendment has been turned into the perfect clause to create the For Profit Prison Industrial System, it is obvious that slavery is still being practiced by legislators today. If the intention behind protecting these memorial statues is an issue of honoring and protecting our veterans, why do they hide behind a red-herring pretense when there’s so much neglect and so little concern for those who have “served their country”? Why do they pretend to not notice the dissatisfaction that is demonstrated by vet participation

(or even organization) is seen in a large portion of post Viet Nam war protests? Like the detractors of Colin Kaepernick, who intentionally misrepresents his protest message, the persons who want their memorials protected while continuing to allow Black Lives to be endangered throw up a false agenda of caring about veterans in order to keep society polarized. They believe that by sending the message that all the protesters care about is tearing down white society, instead of acknowledging that policies in place hurt the impoverished of all colors. Nonetheless that understanding has already been reached by many in American society and we can see it by the numbers of White, Latino, Asian and Indigenous participants in the recent uprisings.

Iran's 'Greatest' Hassan Yazdani seeks wrestling immortality

With an Olympic gold medal, two world titles, and over 500k Instagram followers, Hasan Yazdani is an Iranian hero. But can he gain redemption over the one man he is yet to beat?

Freestyle wrestling is Iran's national sport, so when Hassan Yazdani pinned down the 74kg gold medal at the Rio 2016 Olympics, he became an instant national hero.

He moved up to 86kg, which better suited his growing frame, taking out the world championships gold medal at his new weight division in 2017 and 2019.

Yazdani became known as The Greatest and Fearless back home, while his Instagram account swelled to over 500k followers. Quite simply, he could walk the streets of Iran like he was The King... which is incidentally another one of his nicknames there.

"The truth is that I hope I am worthy of these nicknames," he told Tehran Times. "Each one is valuable for me and so I hope I can live up to the nicknames and the expectations of my great fans. I always want to keep their hope, so I accept them all and just hope that I am worthy."

■ Unconventional style

Growing up in wrestling-obsessed Iran, it wasn't long before Yazdani found his way to the mat.

"I started wrestling at 12. In our country, wrestling, especially in my town, is a popular sport," said the Jouybar-born grappler. "We also have popular traditional wrestling and as a child, I used to go watch. I became interested early in life and eventually participated and stayed with it."

He quickly became renowned in his town for his unconventional style. While most wrestlers in his category are short and stocky in stature, the reigning 86kg world champion cut a more lanky physique.

This extra limb length allowed him to execute more double-leg takedowns, whereby his opponent is put down on the mat.

■ Winning Olympic gold

Yazdani's natural gifts and strength of character were on full display in the Rio 2016 final, where he came back from a daunting 6-0 deficit to defeat Russia's much-fancied Anuar Gedue.

"I was thinking positive and I was thinking of winning, not even one percent of the time on the mat did I think of losing," he revealed. "My mind was clear, I wasn't concerned about injuries. I had my coaches and God by my side, which helped me to stay focused and earn the win."

■ Rivalry with USA's David Taylor

While Yazdani would have hoped for a



seamless transition to the bigger 86kg weight category, he was instead brought back to earth with a literal thud.

At the 2017 Wrestling World Cup on home turf in Iran, he came up against the USA's David Taylor, and a new rivalry was born.

After taking an early lead, Yazdani succumbed to Taylor's superior hand fighting ability and leg attacks, which prevented the Olympic champion of six months from performing his trademark counters.

With Yazdani a year more experienced at his new weight, the stage set for a grand re-match at the 2017 world championships. However, Taylor failed to win his place on the USA team after losing to J'den Cox at the notoriously competitive USA wrestling trials. Yazdani went on to become world champion, but wrestling fans still yearned for a direct bout between the duo.

They got their wish in the qualification round of the 2018 world championships in Budapest. After getting the better of Taylor in the opening exchanges, Yazdani surrendered a 6-2 lead to Taylor, who eventually progressed with an powerful 11-6 victory, and became 2018 world champion. Such comebacks have earned Taylor his own

wrestling nickname of Magic Man.

But a serious knee injury prevented Taylor from defending his title at Nur-Sultan in 2019, which was almost inevitably reclaimed by Yazdani.

■ The Greatest V Magic Man

Despite the pair's intense previous bouts, the foundation of their rivalry is respect.

That was evident in a tweet in 2019, where Taylor wished Yazdani a speedy recovery after the Iranian suffered a serious knee injury of his own during training.

"I always think about respecting all my opponents and I always wish them the best in health and personal success. No matter if they are my direct opponent or not, I wish they are in a great situation so we can put on a great show for fans."

"It's been about two months since my surgery. I am back training hard, but not like the competition training. Right now, during the pause, I am working on bodybuilding, weights, and slowly training. Overall, my knee is good and not bothering me."

With an extra year to recover from his injury before Tokyo 2020, a third match-up between the pair at an Olympics is a truly mouth-watering prospect.

Given that Yazdani has already secured his place at the Games, and Cox' decision to move up a weight category at the USA trials (making Taylor's route to Olympic qualification a touch less competitive), the stars seem to be aligning for a third clash.

■ "My plan is to compete at the 2024 Olympics if my body allows it."

Despite having already amassed an Olympic title, three world championship medals, an Asian Games gold medal, and three Wrestling World Cups, Yazdani is still only 25.

Regardless of what happens at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021, he has already outlined his plan to keep wrestling until the Paris 2024 Olympics.

"I hope I can achieve the best medals during my wrestling career for as long as my body allows me," he said. "Ideally, I want to have the most medals, both Olympic medals, and world medals. My plan is to compete at the 2024 Olympics if my body allows it."

If Yazdani was able to keep competing until the next Olympics, perhaps a new nickname is in order for Iran's favorite wrestler: The Timeless.

(Source: Olympic Channel)

Football disciplinary committee should stand against indiscipline

➔ But in recent years in Iranian football, objections against refereeing decisions have increased dramatically. Players, coaching staff and even the managers of the team argue with the match officials in an unpleasant way during the match and even continue to criticize them in

the media in the following days.

Some managers even start their mind games in the press before a ball has been kicked. It conveniently deflects attention from their own shortcomings or acceptance of losses.

The lack of decisive disciplinary action in recent years against such behaviors has led to an increase of on-field objections in every Iranian football season. It seems that the Disciplinary Committee of the Iranian Football Federation should take serious measures in this regard.

Rostock Seawolves complete signing of Yakhchali



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — German basketball club Rostock Seawolves announced the signing of Iranian guard Behnam Yakhchali.

Yakhchali spent last year with Nanjing Monkeys in the Chinese Basketball Association. He averaged 16.1 points, 5.2 rebounds and 3.2 assists over 11 games.

"From my point of view, Behnam is the best guard in Asia and has great international experience. He is also a complete player who has no real weaknesses in his game," Rostock coach Dirk Bauermann said.

"In addition, he always works hard and puts the team's success above all else. We are very happy that we were able to bring a player of this quality to Rostock," he added.

The 24-year-old basketballer has also played for Iranian teams Shahrdari Gorgan, Petrochimi and Jahesh.

Yakhchali has been also a member of Iranian international program for some years. Yakhchali has regularly played for Iranian senior team since 2012 and previously for U19 National Team back in 2013.

Arsalan Kazemi advances to FIBA Dunk of the Decade final



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian basketball player Arsalan Kazemi booked a place at the FIBA's Dunk of the Decade final.

He defeated his Brazilian rival Rafael Mineiro after earning 55 percent of votes. Kazemi will meet Carlos Morais from Angola in the final match.

FIBA has launched an interactive Dunk of the Decade bracket, asking fans to help in selecting the best slam dunk from its national team competitions.

Featuring the most memorable dunks

of the period between 2010 and 2020, the voting includes a total of 32 entries from a wide range of global and continental competitions, with all FIBA regions represented.

The bracket will culminate with the Final, which is set to conclude at 11:59 PM GMT on Sunday, June 28.

Fans participating in the voting will have a chance to win an official FIBA ball, with the winner of the contest to be announced following the conclusion of the bracket.

to the Netherlands in their opening match, a moment of Iraj Danaeifard inspiration gave Iran their first ever FIFA World Cup point in Cordoba.

Appearing on the left flank, Danaeifard tricked his way past a defender, then slipped the ball under goalkeeper Alan Rough from an acute angle, becoming the first man from his country to find the back of the net on the world's biggest stage.

The fans can vote for their five favorite FIFA World Cup goals. Poll ends at 11:00 (UTC +8) on July 3.

(Source: the-afc)

Danaeifard's goal nominated for Asia's Greatest FIFA World Cup goal

Iraj Danaeifard's goal against Scotland in the 1978 FIFA World Cup has been nominated as Asia's Greatest FIFA World Cup goal.

They are the goals that made entire nations roar. Every four years, the FIFA World Cup makes football the centerpiece of the world and ignites the hopes of millions of fans.

This June and July, the AFC.com celebrates Asia's contribution to the greatest show on earth by reliving 20 of the continent's best FIFA World Cup goals.

Appearing in the Finals for the first time, and having lost



Foolad defeat nine-man Esteghlal: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Foolad football team defeated Esteghlal 2-1 in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

The match was the first to be played in Iran since the coronavirus pandemic halted the season in March and took place behind closed doors.

Rouzbah Cheshmi gave the visiting team a lead just 12 minutes into the match in Ahvaz's Foolad Arena but Foolad Malian defender Moussa Coulibaly levelled the score with a header in the 27th minute.

Esteghlal midfielder Ali Karimi was shown a straight red card just before the break for elbowing the Foolad player.

Esteghlal defender Aref Gholami was sent off in the 65th minute after receiving his second yellow card.

With 10 minutes remaining, Mojtaba Najarian scored the winner for the hosts.

Foolad are fifth with 36 points, one place behind Esteghlal on goal difference.

Persepolis lead the table with 47 points.

Allahyar Sayyadmanesh to leave Fenerbahçe

PLDC — Iranian winger Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, who joined Fenerbahçe with great hopes at the beginning of the season, will leave the Turkish football team.

He has not had much of a chance this season in the Super League and will part company with Fenerbahçe, haberturk reported.

Iran's Esteghlal agreed on an \$850,000 fee with Fenerbahçe for the transfer of Sayyadmanesh in May 2019. He signed a five-year contract with the Turkish club.

He was loaned to TFF 1. League club Istanbulspor on 2 September 2019 on a season-long loan.

Fenerbahçe defender Murat Saglam will also leave the team at the end of the season, the site reported.

Karim Ansarifard linked with Persepolis: report

Iran international forward Karim Ansarifard has reportedly been linked with a move to Persepolis.



The 30-year-old will leave Qatari club Al-Sailiya at the end of the season.

Ansarifard was a member of Persepolis football team in 2012-13 before joining Tractor.

He has also played in Spanish football team Osasuna and Panionios and Olympiacos of Greece.

According to Al Kass, Ansarifard is on the verge of returning to Persepolis.

(Source: Al Kass)

Davarzani attends FIVB Finance Commission

Volleyball.ir — Mohammadreza Davarzani, head of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF), attended the FIVB Finance Commission via videoconference on Thursday.

The financial report 2019 was approved by the members in the session.

The members also discussed about the FIVB digital strategy, with this being a priority for 2020-2022.

Davarzani, Habu A. Gumel from Nigeria, Kuwait's Essa Hamzah Al Failakawi, Bouchra Hajji from Morocco, Mexican Alberto Arreola Sanchez, Louis Timba from Cameroon, Turkey's Özkan Mutlugil, Brazilian Marco Tullio Texeira and Achilles Mavromatis from Greece participated in the online videoconference.

Esteghlal forward Motahari sidelined for a month

Tasnim — Esteghlal striker Arsalan Motahari has been sidelined for a month due to the hamstring injury.

In the match against Foolad on Thursday, Motahari was substituted in the 70th minute after suffering a hamstring injury.

He will be sidelined for the next 3-4 weeks.

His absence would be a significant blow since Esteghlal is going to book a place in next year's AFC Champions League.

Esteghlal players Morteza Tabrizi and Reza Azari have already missed the rest of the season due to torn ACL.

Persepolis GM Rasoul-Panah tests positive for COVID-19

IRNA — General Manager of Persepolis football club Mehdi Rasoul Panah has tested positive for the coronavirus.

The members of Persepolis football club were tested for coronavirus and Rasoul Panah was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Persepolis doctor Alireza Haghighat has confirmed Rasoul Panah's coronavirus case.

The death toll from COVID-19 in Iran reached close to 10,000, while more than 172,000 positive cases have recovered from the disease.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who remembers the length of the journey, prepares himself for it.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ Paintings by Marjan Mohammadi and Salumeh Darabian are on display in an exhibition at Chahardah Gallery. The exhibit named "The Silence of Anxiety" runs until July 3 at the gallery located at 14 Khark St. off Enqelab Ave.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Elina Zavvar is currently underway at Farmanfarma Gallery. The exhibit named "Sympathy Is All We Need" will run until July 16 at the gallery located at 2nd Araabi St., North Kheradmand St. off Karim Khan Ave.

■ Atbin Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Babak Yaquti. The exhibit named "Mangaavam" will continue until July 7 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

■ Paintings by Naghmeh Nabaei are on display in an exhibition at Saye Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Slowness of the Third Decade" will run until July 8 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

■ Paintings by Mahya Giv are currently on view in an exhibition at Aran Gallery. The exhibition will run until July 17 at the gallery that can be found at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

■ A group of painters, including Sadeq Adham, Reza Bangiz, Yazdan Saadi, Jalal Shababang and Manuchehr Niazi, is showcasing their works in an exhibition at Shamideh Gallery. The exhibit titled "Summer Color" will run until July 17 at No. 8, 1st Dead End off Sanjabi St. near Madar Square.

Multimedia

■ Paintings, photos, and sculptures by Amir Rahsaz, Dana Nehdaran, Maryam Qanbari, Rokhsana Fazeli, Maryam Rahimi, Hamid Ajami and dozens of other artists are currently on display in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery. The exhibit entitled will run until July 7 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Negar Gallery is hosting an exhibition of artworks in various media by Qader Mansuri, Ali Rahim, Ehsan Ziai, Marjan Aqamiri and several other artists. The exhibition named "Phoenix" will run until July 7 at the gallery located at 154 near Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Blvd.

Sculpture

■ Morteza Basravi is displaying his latest sculpture in an exhibition Iranshahr Gallery. The exhibit named "Inside, Outside and Back Inside" will run until July 13 at the gallery located at 1/69 Sepand St., Azodi St. off Karim Khan Blvd.

■ Tehran's CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures by Aref Rudbari. The exhibition named "Gomesh" will run until July 7 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

"Walnut Tree" exhibit to observe anniversary of Sardasht chemical attack

A R T TEHRAN — An exhibition of the stills of the acclaimed Iranian drama "Walnut Tree" will open at the Zemestan Gallery of the Iranian Artists Forum on Sunday to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy of Iraq's chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987.

The stills have been taken by Majid Talebi on the set as the movie was being directed by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian last year. "Walnut Tree" was made based on the true story of the profound tragedy of Iraq's chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987.

It tells the story of Qader Mulanpur, a man who was away when his family was affected by the chemical attack in a village near Sardasht. His effort to save his pregnant wife and their three children are in vain and they die one by one from the fatal wounds sustained as a result of the chemical attack.

On June 28, 1987, Iraq bombarded the Iranian town of Sardasht and the surrounding region with chemical weapons, killing over 1000 and injuring over 8000 civilians, many of whom were permanently disabled.

Members of the film's crew are scheduled to attend the opening ceremony of the exhibition, which will run until July 13.

The star of the Oscar-winning movie "A Separation", Payman Maadi, who portrays Qader Mulanpur in the film, has commented about the photo exhibition.

"Recording these moments inspires us



A poster of the 38th Fajr Film Festival for director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's drama "Walnut Tree".

how to recall the tragedy because recalling is the duty of those who were not at the place, those who have not seen and even those who have not heard about it," said Maadi who won the Crystal Simorgh for best actor for

his role in the film during the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February. "After seeing these photos, hope that we close our eyes for moments, stop hearing and keep silent, let the imagination clear up for

a bit the dark aspects of the catastrophe," he added.

"Walnut Tree" also won Mahdavian the Crystal Simorgh for best director at the Fajr festival.

Poet Alireza Raheb dies from coronavirus



Iranian songwriter Alireza Raheb in an undated photo.

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian writer Alireza Raheb, the poet of the acclaimed collection "Part-Time Love", passed away from COVID-19 at Tehran's Atieh Hospital on Thursday. He was 53.

"Raheb posted on his Instagram page on Wednesday saying that his COVID19 test has been positive and that he has been battling with the virus for about two weeks and he has to go to the Atieh Hospital as he is having problems breathing and needs further treatment," poet Shahab Darabian has said.

Raheb trained many students in poetry and songwriting out of the talented youth in the country through the establishment of the Vandad Literary Association, Darabian said.

He added that he supported many

youths in the poetry and literature fields.

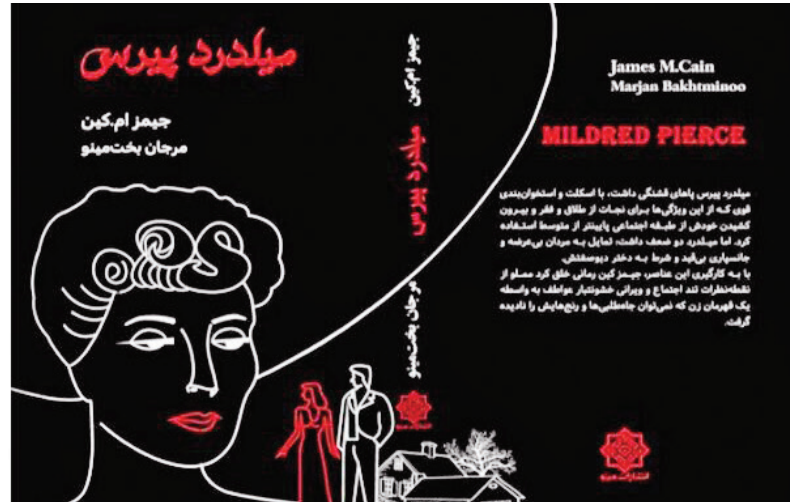
"His love and support for the young poets and songwriters had drawn the attention of many youths to his literary association, having established a new and modern style in the contemporary poetry and songwriting of the country," he added.

Raheb was born in Tehran. He was a graduate of law from the University of Tabriz. He began composing poetry in the 1980s, and due to his having lived 10 years in the city of Tabriz in East Azarbaijan Province, he had a good command of the Azari language.

While he was in Tabriz, he had the opportunity to meet several literati such as Abdollah Vaez and Manuchehr Mortazavi.

"Part-Time Love" and "Two Cups of Chehel-Giah Distillate" are among the poetry books published by Raheb.

James Cain's "Mildred Pierce" published in Persian



Cover of the Persian version of James M. Cain's "Mildred Pierce".

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of American author James M. Cain's book "Mildred Pierce", who is the author of the bestseller "The Postman Always Rings Twice", has been published by Minoo Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Marjan Bakhtminoo.

In "Mildred Pierce", noir master Cain creates a novel of acute social observation and devastating emotional violence, with a heroine whose ambitions and sufferings are never less than recognizable," writes Amazon on its website.

Mildred Pierce had gorgeous legs, a way with a skillet, and a bone-deep core of toughness. She used those attributes to survive a divorce and poverty and to claw her way out of the lower middle class.

But Mildred also had two weaknesses: a yen for shiftless men, and an unreasonable devotion to a monstrous daughter.

Although Cain himself vehemently opposed labeling, he is usually associated with the hard-boiled school of American crime fiction and is seen as one of the creators of the "roman noir".

He was born into an Irish Catholic family in Annapolis, Maryland, the son of a prominent educator and an opera singer. He inherited his love for music from his mother, but his high hopes of starting a career as a singer himself were thwarted when she told him that his voice was not good enough.

After graduating from Washington College where his father, James W. Cain served as president, in 1910, he began working as a journalist for The Baltimore Sun.

DEFC holds virtual meetings with international festivals' reps

A R T TEHRAN — Managers of Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) have held several virtual meetings with representatives of several international film festivals during the Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film) organized online this year from June 22 to 26 due to the pandemic.

The meetings were held with representatives from 14 festivals, including the Sundance Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, International Film Festival Mannheim Heidelberg, the El Gouna Film Festival of Egypt and the Montreal International Animation Film Festival.

The international department of the DEFC has uploaded a number of the center's latest productions in Cinando, a premier online network for film professionals, while it has also submitted copies of its latest productions to film distributors, organizers of the world festivals, producers and documentarians.

All the information and details about the productions are also available on Cinando in addition to a series of information



A logo for Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center.

about Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival for documentary cinema, which can be found at the Doc Corner of the market.

Paris-based Memento Films International offered Iranian director Asghar Farhadi's new film "A Hero" at the Cannes Film Market this year.

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

Farhadi who is scheduled to shoot the film on location in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz in July has not given any details about the film's plot as yet.

In addition, Iranian director Kaveh Sajjadi Hosseini's new film "Headless" was offered at the market by the Borderless Art Institute.

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

Folios of rare Quran manuscripts on view at Niavaran complex

A R T TEHRAN — Folios of 40 rare Quran manuscripts are on display in an exhibition at the Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex in Tehran.

The exhibition has been organized by the Malek National Library and Museum, one of Iran's major centers for rare Persian and Arabic manuscripts, to commemorate birthdays of Imam Reza (AS) and his sister Hazrat Masumeh (SA).

The folios, which are preserved at the Malek museum, all feature Fatehah, the opening sura (chapter) of the Holy Quran.

The exhibit entitled "Forty Mirrors" presents the evolution

of Quranic calligraphy in addition to the other related arts of illumination and bookbinding.

Located in the vicinity of Bagh-e Melli, the Malek Museum is affiliated with the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum and Library in Mashhad.

Hossein Aqa Malek (1873-1973) was the owner of the Malek National Museum. The museum was once Malek's private mansion. He handed it over to the government to convert it into a museum.

The show will be running until July 2 at the complex located in the Niavaran neighborhood.



Copy of a rare Quranic manuscript on view at the Malek National Library and Museum in Tehran. (IQNA/Hassan Aqamohammadi).