



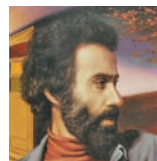
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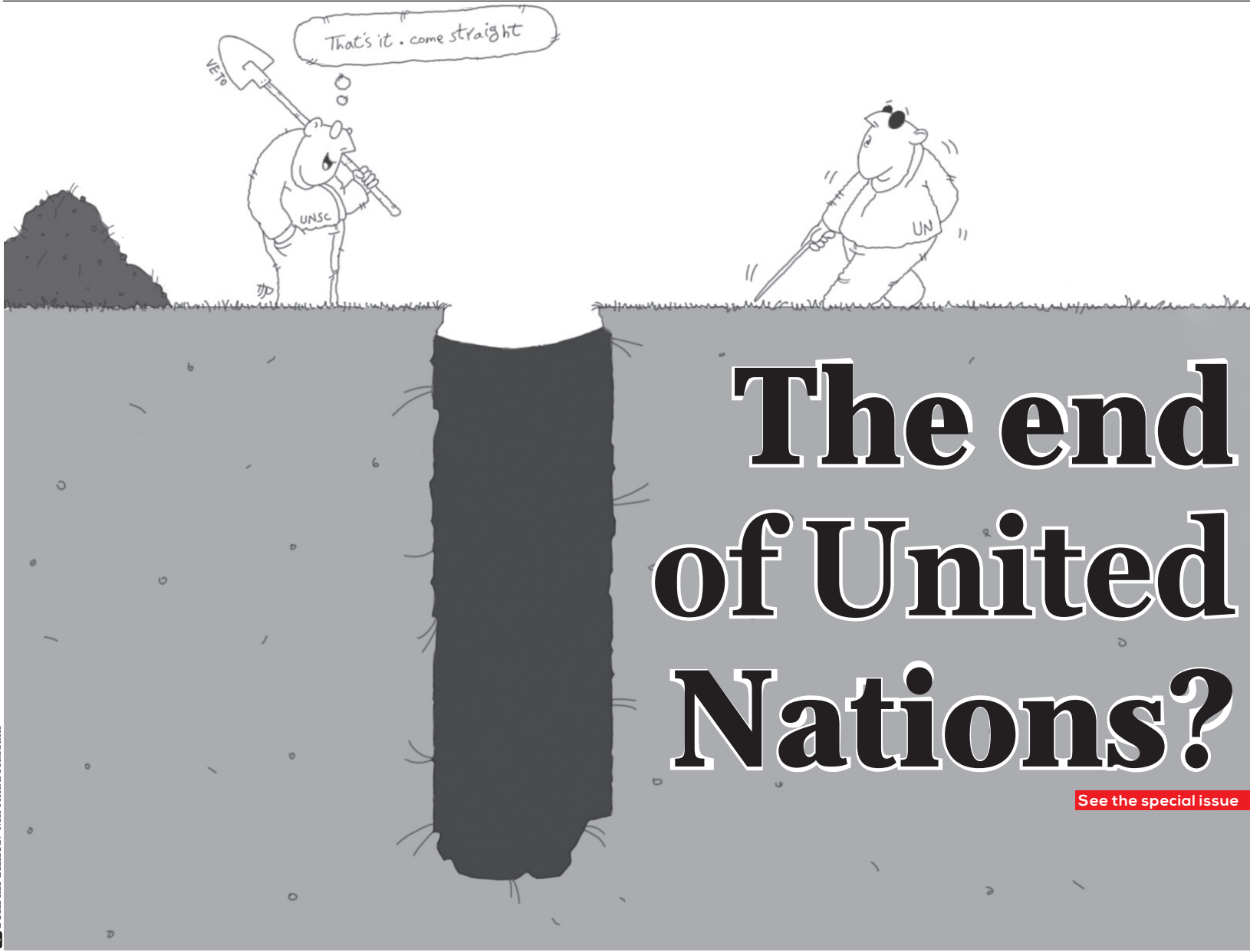
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Do not assume U.S. still aspires to be a world leader, Merkel says

The rest of the world can no longer take it for granted that the US still aspires to be a global leader and needs to readjust its priorities accordingly, Angela Merkel has warned.

"We grew up in the certain knowledge that the United States wanted to be a world power," the German chancellor said in an interview with a group of six European newspapers, including the Guardian.

"Should the U.S. now wish to withdraw

from that role of its own free will, we would have to reflect on that very deeply."

Merkel, the first German leader to have grown up on the eastern side of the iron curtain, has in the past frequently spoken of her admiration for the U.S.'s global influence. When she spoke in front of Congress in 2009, Merkel rhapsodized about the "incredible gift of freedom" bestowed on eastern Germans with the U.S.-supported toppling of the Berlin Wall. [→10](#)

Iran's annual agricultural output expected to hit 128m tons by Mar. 2021

TEHRAN – Iran's agricultural production is expected to reach 128 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), according to the Acting Head of Agriculture Ministry's Economic Affairs Department Shahrokh Shajari.

Speaking in a meeting of Agriculture Ministry's senior officials with First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Shajari put

the country's agriculture production in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) at 123 million tons, ILNA reported.

He pointed to improving the trade balance of agriculture and food sectors, preserving the country's basic resources, improving food security by relying on domestic production, [→4](#)

Arms embargo not to affect Iran's defense power: IRGC chief

TEHRAN — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami said on Saturday that arms embargo will not affect Iran's defense power.

"Today, we are not dependent on foreigners in weaponry systems and we have reached self-sufficiency," Salami said on the sidelines of a visit to an exhibition on the Agricultural Research Education and Extension Organization.

Using domestic capacities and capabilities

are on agenda when the country is under sanctions, the top military official remarked.

Gordon Duff, an American veteran journalist and security and military analyst, has said that Iran's military power is a "nightmare" for hardliners in the United States.

"The reasons why the United States is concerned about Iran's ability to buy conventional arms is that the United States fears Iran from rebuilding its air force." [→2](#)

ASEAN Summit: Malaysia calls on international community to condemn and reject Israeli annexation plan

Malaysia called upon the international community – in particular, the United Nations (UN) Security Council – to condemn and reject the Israeli annexation plan of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the West Bank.

In making the call during the 36th ASEAN Summit, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said that the international community must also ensure that the plan will never be implemented.

He said Malaysia is deeply concerned over the fate of the Palestinians amid the continued volatility in the West Asia.

"Malaysia strongly condemns and rejects Israel's recent announcement to implement its plan to annex parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the West Bank," he said at the Summit, held virtually and hosted by ASEAN 2020 Chair, Vietnam. Muhyiddin joined the Summit from Putrajaya.

The Prime Minister said Kuala Lumpur will continue to stand in strong solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Muhyiddin said the planned annexation further diminishes the prospect of a two-state solution, which is supported by the international community.

"The illegal and unilateral action by Israel clearly calls into question its sincerity towards a peaceful and lasting solution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict," he said.

According to Bernama, Malaysia has long championed the two-state solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Israel's unity government, formed between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his political rival Benny Gantz in May, inked an agreement that will allow Israel to initiate legislation to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank starting July 1.

West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 Six-Day War. It is estimated that about 700,000 Israeli illegal settlers are in the occupied territory.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres, at a virtual meeting of the Security Council on Wednesday, has called on Israel to scrap its plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.

UNESCO-registered Yazd to develop children's tourism

TEHRAN – The historical oasis city of Yazd, which is a UNESCO World Heritage in central Iran, is aimed to develop needed infrastructure and prerequisites for becoming a top destination for children's tourism as well.

The head of the Children's Tourism Committee of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Yazd province (which is named after its ancient capital) announced the beginning of "serious activities for children's tourism" in Yazd and the strengthening of this field with close cooperation and participation of the provincial executives and private investors, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Maryam Nabizadeh made the remarks in a meeting with representatives of several NGOs active in the arena of the children and youth tourism, which was held at the Yazd Municipality on Thursday.

"Children as future makers of our society,

along with their issues in various fields including everyday life, education, and health, should be taken into account more diligently and carefully."

"Yazd can be considered as the capital of children's tourism in the country and this type of tourism can be economically exploited in favor of the [Yazd] province and by bonding children to the field of tourism, it can flourish many infrastructures and attractions," she explained.

Elsewhere in her remarks, the official underlined the need for the participation or increasing cooperation of all travel agencies across the province in strengthening this field of tourism necessary, she also publicized that various programs and projects have been commenced in line with children's tourism.

Some experts say that nomadic tourism, children's tourism, virtual museums, and training guides for cultural heritage sites are among the untapped potentials of the travel sector. [→8](#)

In historic first, the House of Representatives passes D.C. statehood bill

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass a bill approving D.C. statehood on Friday, the first time a chamber of Congress has ever passed such legislation.

Members voted almost entirely along party lines, an outcome that had long been expected in the Democrat-led House, where the bill had majority support.

232 members voted in favor of the bill, while 180 voted against it. Only one Democrat, Minnesota Representative Collin Peterson, voted against the measure, while no Republicans voted to support it.

Outside the U.S. Capitol just before the vote (and after a two-hour debate on the bill), D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton told DCist, "We knew exactly what was going to happen: that the Democrats would vote for freedom and equality and my good Republican friends would vote against it."

The bill passed with 227 co-sponsors. The Senate,

however, is not expected to take up the measure, as it faces tough opposition from Republicans.

Earlier in the day, as lawmakers debated the bill, House Democrats, many of whom were wearing matching 51st state face masks, said the legislation was long overdue.

"By admitting Washington, D.C. as a state, we will admit what we already know to be true," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer. "That its people are our fellow Americans, equal in their pursuit of happiness and their enjoyment of the full rights and privileges of American citizenship, including representation in the Congress of the United States."

Maryland Representative John Sarbanes echoed that sentiment. "For two centuries, the people of the District of Columbia have been disenfranchised, denied fair representation, excluded from our great democratic experiment," he said. [→10](#)

Life story of martyr Beheshti under spotlight in Qaderi's new play

TEHRAN – Dramatist Nasrollah Qaderi plans to write a play about the life story of Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Beheshti, Iran's Judicial Council chief who was assassinated in a terrorist operation on June 28, 1981.

Entitled "Another Ashura", the play has been commissioned by the Art Bureau, an affiliate with the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO).

"In this play, the story goes along with the event of Ashura and it begins with the death of Moham-

madreza Kolahi Samadi, an Iranian dissident accused of planting a bomb at the Islamic Republic party's headquarters and killing Ayatollah Beheshti and over 70 other people," Qaderi said.

Kolahi was a member of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) and was suspected of planting a bomb at the headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) that killed more than 70 officials in 1981.

He added that the story is narrated by the wife of Kolahi, and the mother and wife of

Ayatollah Beheshti.

"All the events are selected from the documents and books about Ayatollah Beheshti as well as the documents about his assassination," he added. Ayatollah Beheshti played a key role in establishing Iran as an Islamic republic in 1979.

On February 3, 1979, the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, appointed Beheshti a member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Council, and he soon became the council's first secretary. [→12](#)



© ISNA / Mehrdad Norbashi

Mes Sungun claim Iran Futsal Super League title

TEHRAN – Mes Sungun defeated Giti Pasand Isfahan in Tabriz's Poursharifi Hall to win Iran Futsal Super League title for the third time in a row.

Mes had defeated their rivals 4-3 in Isfahan last week.

In the second leg, two teams went to penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw in the normal time.

Mes won the match 6-5 on penalties.

Mes will represent Iran in the 2020 AFC Futsal Club Championship in the UAE.

2,350 Iranians recovered from COVID-19 donate plasma

TEHRAN – So far, 2,350 patients who have recovered from coronavirus have referred to blood transfusion centers for plasma donation, Bashir Haji Beigi, spokesman for the Blood Transfusion Organization, has stated.

Currently, in 22 out of 31 provinces of the country, a plan to collect plasma from COVID-19 recovered patients is underway, he noted.

The best time for plasma donation is at least 14 and preferably 28 days after recovery, and donors should age 18 to 60 years, he further explained.

Peyman Eshghi, head of the Blood Transfusion Organization, also said that "After China, Iran is the second country in the world to have a plasma treatment plan for COVID-19, and the United States is one step behind Iran."

Later on, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and some other European countries started plasma treatment and requested Iran to share its experience.

Plasma therapy has so far reduced coronavirus deaths in Iran by 40 percent as proved to be a life-saving method for those recovering from COVID-19.

Convalescent plasma therapy allows someone who has recovered from a coronavirus infection to donate their blood plasma to someone who is critically ill.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 220,180 on Saturday, of whom 10,364 have died and 180,661 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,456 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 125 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

Arms embargo not to affect Iran's defense power: IRGC chief

1 → With three or four dozens Russian SU 35 aircraft, Iran would have a credible air defense capability and a high speed platform for delivering ordnance," IRNA quoted him as saying in an exclusive interview published in May.

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

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

On Thursday, June 25, Hatami also said Iran will not need permission by bullying countries such as the United States to advance its defense capability.

"The foolish American authorities have forgotten that the Islamic Iran has been able to reach the peak of its deterrence power," Hatami said as he participated in a ceremony delivering three domestically-manufactured fighter jets to the Air Force.

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

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.

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

Ashtiani added that the country's power is now sustainable.

Trump admin has no way but revising wrong policies: Vaezi

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has said that the Donald Trump administration has no way but revising wrong policies and making up for past mistakes, especially economic and medical terrorism against Iran.



Vaezi, a former deputy foreign minister, predicted that Trump will lose the November election if he insists on his wrong policies.

"Continuation of practicing discriminatory policy and pushing knee on neck and tightening unilateral sanctions and health and economic terrorism against the Iranian people will not end in Trump's victory in elections, and will just make this administration more isolated. The United States has no way but

revising wrong policies and making up for the past," Vaezi tweeted on Saturday.

IRGC unveils new military gear

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) unveiled four new homegrown military products, including a reconnaissance drone with a service ceiling of 12,000 feet.

In a ceremony on Saturday, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami unveiled the new homegrown products manufactured by the Research and Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization of the IRGC Ground Force.



One of the items was BTR-50 personnel carrier, a modified version of Makran personnel carrier, which enjoys an improved body and a new turret.

The vehicles' turret is equipped with a fire-control system, thermal night-vision cameras, and a laser distant measurement system that can hit surface and aerial targets.

The personnel carrier's turret also has a 30 mm caliber automatic cannon and a 7.62 mm caliber machine gun, controlled by a gunner inside the vehicle.

Another product unveiled by the IRGC was Me'raj-1 drone. The reconnaissance UAV has a service ceiling of 12,000 feet and a maximum speed of 140 km/h. Weighing 35 kilograms, the aircraft has a flight endurance of 10.5 hours and can carry a payload of 5 kg. With a wingspan of 3.6 meters, Me'raj-1 has a range of 1,000 kilometers and a data link system with a range of up to 150 km.

The IRGC chief also unveiled So'ban-1 machine gun, a modified version of Russian-made RPD machine gun.

Another major achievement of the IRGC unveiled this morning is a ground-penetrating radar system used for detection of landmines and roadside bombs.

Mounted on a vehicle travelling at a speed of 10 km/h, the radar system can detect explosives hidden in the ground at a depth of up to 30 cm at a distance of 30 meters.

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

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

Ayatollah Khamenei urges relentless fight on corruption

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that the campaign against economic corruption is at its height and it must continue without connivance.

"Without connivance, fight against corruption, which is at its height, must continue based on law, justice and without aggression and wrong against the innocent people," Ayatollah Khamenei told a gathering of top judicial officials through a videoconference.

Ayatollah Khamenei expressed satisfaction over the measures taken in the fight against corruption since last Iranian calendar year which ended on March 19, 2020.

Under the chairmanship of Ebrahim Raisi, the Judiciary has launched a campaign against financial corruption.

The Leader also attached great importance to transformation of the Judiciary in a balanced way with a focus on people's power.

The Leader called transformation a continuous necessity, managed and combined with new perceptions and new initiatives. "This work should be based on Islamic and religious principles, otherwise the unfounded change will lead to vacillation and chaos."

Ayatollah Khamenei also said transformation is very difficult in practice.

He noted that sometimes resistance is not out of ill-intention but out of incompetence or lack of patience and mood for fundamental changes.

"Of course, the opposition of those



who benefit from the status quo, and the obstruction and machination of the intertwined network of corrupters and executors, also make it more difficult to make a change," he stated.

Elsewhere, the Leader pointed to the important duties of the Judiciary enshrined the constitution, saying it is necessary to observe them.

Ayatollah Khamenei also called the issue of "revival of public rights" important and expressed satisfaction with the recent activities of the Judiciary in this regard, saying, "If prosecutors feel that public rights are being

violated, they should step in and defend the rights of the people."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader said, "Contrary to reality, Westerners in their movies show their courts venues for pure justice, but we do not use artistic and media capacities even in presenting the realities of the country, and sometimes we show the opposite."

Referring to U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks about a 10-year sentence for those who destroy the symbols of slavery and racism, or the separation of immigrant children from their parents, the Leader noted, "Of course,

there is no news of this lawlessness in most Western films."

Leader of the Islamic Revolution also underscored vigilance in the face of enemies' measures against the Iranian nation.

The Leader also pointed to the Coronavirus pandemic and criticized some citizens who consider it as disease finished, adding due to the sacrifices of medical and health personnel, as well as the voluntary efforts of people and the cooperation of the public, Iran was introduced as a successful country in the world, but this was related to the beginning of the outbreak and now, unfortunately, that movement and strive has been neglected by some people and officials.

Ayatollah Khamenei thanked the medical staff for their tireless work and said that the spread of the disease has exhausted health workers, saying it is fair to say that the Coronavirus should not cause economic problems, but if there is a lack of attention and widespread disease, economic problems will increase.

He stressed the need to take care of the country in all areas, including in the face of hostile American and British enemies, as well as in the face of European governments' actions.

"If we do our duties, we will succeed in doing anything by the God's grace and the enemies will be unable to achieve their goals, and the result of the maximum pressure, in their own words, to bring the people to their knees, will be the fists of the Iranian nation on their chests and to push them back."

Expert calls Iran-Afghanistan talks a 'constructive move'

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Nozar Shafiei, an expert on international affairs, has said that the recent talks between Iranian and Afghan officials marked a "constructive move" which "softened the atmosphere" in relations.

"We have to consider the fact that there are both opportunities and challenges in relations. Sometimes the challenges can lead to clashes between two countries, however, it is important for both sides to have wisdom and move towards solving challenges," Shafiei told ISNA in an interview published on Saturday.

He also noted that Iran has hosted Afghan immigrants for 40 years and has provided them with education and job.

"Unfortunately, a commotion started against Iran despite all the services the country provided for the Afghan immigrants," the expert on international affairs said.

Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, visited Tehran at the head of a high-ranking political, economic and security delegation on June 21-22.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Atmar discussed the latest developments in relations. They exchanged views on political, economic, security, cultural cooperation. The two chief diplomats also held talks on issues related to Afghan refugees in Iran.

The two sides agreed on a document for "comprehensive cooperation" which will be finalized in three months.

Zarif and Atmar issued a joint statement agreeing to expand regional cooperation and ensure border security among other issues between the two countries.

"Considering the significance of regional and international consensus on the establishment of peace and security in Afghanistan, the two sides stressed the need to strengthen the regional and international cooperation and consultations and activate the capacities available in the region with the purpose of facilitating the negotiations and supporting the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's establishment," read part of the statement.

Another part of the statement also said, "The two sides held detailed discussions about the recent incidents that have caused human fatalities, and the Iranian side informed the Afghan

side of progress in investigations, and both sides agreed to adopt measures to prevent the occurrence of such incidents."

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), also met with Atmar.

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

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

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

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

Certain groups attacked the Iranian embassy in Kabul under the pretext that some Afghan migrants had drowned while trying to enter Iran illegally.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand has blamed illegal traffic of Afghan migrants for the human tragedy.

Iranian diplomats and border guards have carried out investigations which show the Iranian guards were not involved



in the incident, Baharvand added.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trump's nuclear deal exit costly for U.S.: university professor

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Robin Ramcharan, a lecturer at the Webster University of Thailand and executive director of the Bangkok-based Asia Centre, has said that U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, has been costly for the U.S.

"The American withdrawal from the JCPOA has led to many doubts about the United States' willingness to uphold its international commitments. This is costly to the United States, which is facing the weakening of its friendships around the world," Ramcharan told ILNA in an interview published on Saturday.

He also said, "President Trump, throughout his life, has consistently held the view that the rest of the world exploits the USA and that American leaders have been too weak in securing favorable deals. This partly informs his approach to Iran. He was also determined to undo President Obama's legacy, the JCPOA being a landmark achievement, because of his not so subtle racial prejudice."

Trump withdrew the U.S. from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and imposed the toughest ever sanctions in history on Iran.

Ben Rhodes, former Obama's adviser, said in July 2019 that Trump quit the JCPOA, because Obama negotiated it.

"Did anyone really need a leaked document from the UK Ambassador to know that Trump pulled out of the Iran Deal because Obama negotiated it?" Rhodes tweeted.

Kim Darroch, the former British ambassa-

dor to the U.S., has said Trump seemed to be discarding the Iran nuclear deal for "personality reasons," as the deal had been agreed to by Obama, the Daily Mail reported in July 2019.

Darroch said the Trump administration was "set upon an act of diplomatic vandalism" in its decision to abandon the JCPOA.

Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told IRNA in an interview in October 2019 Trump quit the nuclear deal because Obama signed it.

He said that the U.S. must admit that it made a wrong decision to quit the nuclear deal, urging the White House to return to the pact.

Straw said that the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA had "no logic".

■ 'Transfer of oil to Venezuela was significant'

Ramcharan also said that transfer of oil to Venezuela by Iran was significant both on humanitarian and geopolitical grounds.

"Venezuela is a country in crisis because of mis-governance. The economy is malfunctioning and there is a serious shortage of oil. Iran helped Venezuela to satisfy basic needs of people in their time of internal crisis. The transfer is an example of South-South cooperation but will not be well received by the Trump Administration, which has been trying to isolate Venezuela diplomatically and economically," he said.

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

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. 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, Hallinan 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.

MEK remains under U.S., Europe auspices: Tehran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has marked the 39th anniversary of an act of terror that killed over 70 senior figures by the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) terrorist group, saying the MEK has since remained under the auspices of the U.S. and Europe.

“39yrs ago, today, Iran Chief Justice Ayatollah Beheshti & 72senior figures were assassinated by US-, Saddam-backed MEK terrorist cult. Since then, MEK has remained under US/Euro auspices, letting it horribly kill&maim 10000+Iranians,” Mousavi tweeted on Saturday.

“Their blood on terrorist MEK supporters’ hands!” he added.

The MEK was established in the 1960s to express a mixture of Marxism and Islamism. It launched bombing campaigns against the Shah, continuing after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, against the Islamic Republic. Iran accuses the group of being responsible for 17,000 deaths.

Based in Iraq at the time, MEK members were armed by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to fight against Iran during a war that lasted for 8 years in the 1980s.

In 2012, the U.S. State Department re-



moved the MEK from its list of designated terrorist organizations under intense lobbying by groups associated with Saudi Arabia and

other regimes opposed to Iran.

A few years ago, the MEK operatives were relocated from their Camp Ashraf in Iraq’s

Diyala Province to Camp Hurriyet (Camp Liberty), a former U.S. military base in Baghdad, and were later relocated to Albania.

Last year, Germany’s Der Spiegel revealed that members of the MEK undergo horrific training in a camp in Albania, a country that has turned into a hub for anti-Iran activities by hosting the MEK.

On Thursday, Mousavi termed 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.”

He also said the United States, as the world’s most infamous terrorist regime, is in no position to judge other countries.

The remarks came in response to the annual Country Reports on Terrorism released by the U.S.

Mousavi added that “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.”

Turkish figure says anti-Iran sanctions ‘unacceptable’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Fatih Arbakan, Turkey’s new leader of the Welfare Party, has termed as unacceptable the U.S. sanctions against Iran amid the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Arbakan further said that the sanctions have revealed the United States’ real identity to the world, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Evaluating Iran and Turkey’s campaigns against terrorist groups in the Iraqi Kurdistan, Arbakan said Turkey has carried out a series of air and ground operations against the

PKK positions in the Qandil and Sanjar regions in Syria-Iraq corridor and Iran is also fighting against PJAK in northwest borders of the country.

“Stability of Iraq is of high importance for Iran and Turkey with respect to some security issues” he maintained, adding that superpowers of the world are using PKK and PJAK terrorist groups for reaching their own goals and interests.

Arbakan described Iran as one of Turkey’s key oil suppliers, mentioning that Turkey imports 27% of its oil and 17% of gas needs from Iran.

Sanctions, politicization affecting international co-op in drug fight, official says

TEHRAN (Mehr) — Director-General of International Relations Office of Drug Control Headquarters of Iran said that the U.S. sanctions, politicization, and selective approach have adversely affected the concept of international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The issue of drugs is a global scourge



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

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

On the occasion of ‘International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Traffic-

ing’, which is observed annually on 26 June, we reached out to Dr. Amir Abbas Lotfi, Director General of International Relations Office of Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran to know more about Iran’s role in the fight against drug trafficking.

Here are the comments that he shared with Mehr News Agency.

“The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the United Nation specialized agency dealing with drugs and crimes. Based on UNODC annual report, more than 70 percent of opiates global seizure is made by Iran Law Enforcement Agencies,” said Lotfi.

“During the past Iranian year (beginning 20 March 2019), Iran’s drug seizure has been exceeded more than 950 tons of different types of narcotics and psychotropic substances,” he added.

Lotfi went on to say, “This number shows a 20 percent increase as compared to the last year’s corresponding period. It also indicates a kind of achievement and a new record for Iran Law Enforcement Agencies due to the fact that it was the first time throughout the history of Iran’s fight against world drug trafficking.”

“This was consisting of 808 tons of opiates (opium, heroin, and morphine) and almost 17 tons of methamphetamine (crystal). It’s noteworthy; this year’s methamphetamine seizure shows more than 200 percent increase since the last year,” he said.

“Iran is the main partner to the UNODC’s policy and programs in West Asia. Also due to the tremendous endeavors that Iran made in this way, UNODC exec-

utive directors repeatedly called Iran as a flag-bearer of international fight against drugs,” the Iranian official noted.

Lotfi continued, “Those have been said, we acknowledge that global problems merit global solutions. Therefore, we are of the view that the international community and every party to international conventions should do its role, based on the principle of ‘shared responsibility’ to create a better future and drug-free world.”

“UNODC is a UN specialized agency dealing with drugs and crimes. The anti-drug international regime is based on three international conventions, which the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) as a quasi-judicial body is acting like a guardian and monitoring international compliance toward these three conventions. Iran has established strong ties with UNODC,” he said.

“Its office in Tehran has started its work since 1999 and implemented four rounds of partnership joint programs with the relevant government bodies,” Lotfi added.

The Iranian official went on to say, “This year (2020), we will finalize the fourth program and by 2021, we will enter the fifth phase of the program.”

“As I mentioned earlier, coping with humanitarian challenges like drug abuse and smuggling are relied on international cooperation,” he stressed.

“Unfortunately, sanctions of the U.S., politicization, and selective approach have adversely affected the concept of international cooperation in this sphere along with other humanitarian issues,” Lotfi added.

Commander: Border guards firmly standing against terrorists, drug traffickers

TEHRAN (FNA) — Commander of the Law Enforcement Police’s Border Guards Brigadier General Ahmad Ali Goudarzi has said that his forces are firmly safeguarding the country’s borders against the terrorists and drug traffickers.

“My comrades in the Western and Northwestern borders of the country are bravely standing against the anti-revolutionary groups and enemies, and we are running serious confrontation against terrorists and those who are after sowing discord between us and the neighboring states, specially the friendly and brotherly country of Turkey,” General Goudarzi said on Saturday.

He also described prevention of drug trafficking as one of the important priorities of the Iranian border guards, and said Iran discovers and seizes 90% of the trafficked opium, 46% of morphine and 23% of heroine in the world.

General Goudarzi said that 3,800 Iranian forces have been martyred and 12,000 others have been wounded in fight against drug traffickers.

In relevant remarks earlier this month, Iran’s Border Guard Commander and Head of Anti-Narcotics Committee, Brigadier General Qassem Rezayee said that the anti-narcotics battle of Iran’s police is unrivaled in the world, adding that



the Western governments have had the least cooperation with Iran in this field.

Rezayee made the remarks, addressing a meeting held via video conference marking the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Alexander Fedulov was also present in the virtual meeting.

Iran’s unrivaled anti-narcotics activities are aimed at

bringing peace to people and humanity, Rezayee said.

He said that during operations against drug smugglers, over 3,800 of Iranian security and army officers have lost their lives.

Presently, everybody knows that Iran is pioneer in combat against drug trafficking, the official noted.

However, we expect Western governments to support their people because illicit drugs are used by arrogant powers as a terrorist instrument to impose (their policies) on world, Rezayee said.

“Although Iran has spent several hundred thousand dollars for closure of its eastern borders and is one of the main partners for UNODC, the Western states have made the least cooperation on securing fund for fighting drug traffickers,” he said.

About Iran’s Police anti-drug activities on border areas especially on joint border post with Afghanistan, the official said that seizure of narcotics has had 66 percent increase compared with last year.

During the first three months of the Iranian year started on March 20, Iran’s police have disbanded 260 drug trafficking networks, the general stressed.

Iran has a balanced approach to fighting narcotics, says envoy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, says Iran has a balanced approach in fighting narcotics, which prioritizes preventive measures.

“Iran has a balanced, intelligent approach in the field of narcotics; the country has put preventive measures and plans to raise awareness about the negative impacts of drug abuse high on its agenda in a bid to reduce the demand for narcotics in the society,” Gharibabadi wrote on his Instagram page on Friday, according to Mehr.



He made the remarks on the occasion of “International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”, which is observed annually on 26 June.

“In this vein, more than 1.6 individuals were referred to over 9,000 healthcare centers in the country in the past Iranian year,” he added.

Gharibabadi pointed out that 30 Iranian forces were martyred last year in 2,319 operations against drug trafficking.

The Islamic Republic’s forces also dismantled over 1,886 narcotic rings in the past year and confiscated over 950 tons of different drugs, he added.

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

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

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

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

In an address to a special commemorative event of the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UNODC) on Friday, Gharibabadi warned that the policy of certain countries to decriminalize and legalize drug use is undermining international anti-narcotics efforts.

“Any approach with the purpose of decriminalizing and legalizing certain types of drugs would undermine international efforts to achieve a drug abuse-free world,” he said.

The Iranian envoy deplored the far-reaching negative impacts of drug abuse on development and stability across the world, calling for closer international cooperation, tangible support, and increased national and regional efforts to overcome the challenge posed by drugs.

“A balanced stance on the basis of the international conventions on drugs must be the guideline and criterion for all national, regional and international arrangements,” Gharibabadi added.

Iran rebukes Washington for horrible human rights violations

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has rebuked the United States for its history of horrible, deadly violations of human rights both at home and in other countries.

“From 26 June to 2 July every year, Iranians recall horrible, deadly violation of human rights by the American regime,” Iran’s Foreign Ministry tweeted on Friday.

“In the next 7 days named as #USHumanRightsWeek, we will shed light on the US actions undermining basic rights of people at home, in Iran & elsewhere,” it added.

The ministry also noted that the U.S. regime is leading a global campaign including economic, medical terrorism against the Iranian people.

“From depriving Iran of its own financial resources for making ends meet, to banning delivery of the COVID19-related supplies for saving Iranians’ lives, the US regime is desperately leading the global campaign to use economic, medical terrors agnst Iranian #HumanRights,” the Foreign Ministry wrote in another tweet on Friday.

Iran has been among the countries hit hard by the novel coronavirus that first showed up in China in late December 2019, before spreading across the globe.

The United States’ sanctions against Iran have proven to be a significant obstacle to Iran’s efforts to defeat the coronavirus.

In a letter to the G-20 economic powers on March 24, Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary-general, called for rolling back international sanctions regimes around the world.

Guterres said sanctions are heightening the health risks for millions of people and weakening the global effort to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

“I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity, not exclusion,” he said.

“Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world,” the UN chief said.

Renowned American scholar Noam Chomsky has said it is “sheer sadism” that the United States maintains sanctions on Iran during the coronavirus pandemic.

“The sanctions are illegitimate in the first place, and maintaining them during the pandemic is sheer sadism,” Chomsky told IRNA in an interview published on May 2.

Over 203,000 cars manufactured in a quarter

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian carmakers manufactured 203,146 vehicles during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), IRNA reported, citing the data released by Codal website.

Of the mentioned figure, 96,490 vehicles were manufactured by Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), 79,520 by SAIPA Group, and 27,136 by Pars Khodro.

Based on the data previously released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Iranian carmakers manufactured 126,535 vehicles during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20).

The ministry's data indicate that car manufacturing has fallen 3.3 percent during the two-month period of this year, from that of the previous year.

As previously reported, three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group and Pars Khodro, manufactured 863,263 vehicles during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

During the previous year, IKCO manufactured 393,812 vehicles, of which 35,953 were produced in the last month Esfand (February 20-March 19).

Production by SAIPA stood at 363,379, of which 23,696 vehicles were manufactured during the last month.

Pars Khodro manufactured 106,072 cars during the past year. Production in Esfand reached 9,300 vehicles.

Iran has been following a program for supporting domestic manufacturing of auto parts since due to the U.S. sanctions the country's automakers have been facing some problems in supplying their needed parts and equipment.

'ICCIMA ready to implement judiciary's constructive plans'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) says the chamber, as the consulting body of the government's three branches, is ready to implement the judiciary's plans for national development.



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie

In a letter to the Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi on the occasion of the National Judiciary Day, Gholam-Hossein Shafeie voiced the private sector's appreciation for the measures taken by the judiciary for the improvement of the business environment in the country.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, in his letter, Shafeie called for the revision of some outdated regulations which are currently creating problems for the business activities of the private sector, saying: "It is hoped that the country's laws and regulations, which sometimes need to be revised over time and due to the changing business paradigms, will be reviewed and amended by the judiciary."

The official also mentioned the implementation of a program called "commercial courts" by the judiciary which is aimed to deal with trade-related cases exclusively, and said: "The implementation of the "Commercial Courts" program, which specializes the reviewing, supervising and judging of economic and commercial cases, can have significant constructive and preventive effects in this area, and I hope that it will become operational soon."

"We hope that the country's production sector, which is constantly trying for the national development, would be supported by the judiciary in taking necessary measures for the realization of the "Surge in Production" motto," the official said.

'Holding specialized exhibitions reinvigorates businesses'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The vice chairman of Iran's Association of Doors and Windows Manufacturers has said holding specialized exhibitions under the current condition will improve the business environment and reinvigorate business activities.

Vahid Jalalipour also mentioned holding such exhibitions as one of the major approaches for boosting production, Public Relations Department of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) reported on Saturday.

"Holding one specialized exhibition is better than holding several general exhibits", he reiterated.

Jalalipour further elaborated on the status of doors and windows manufacturers' activities and said these manufacturers have no plan for the exports at the moment due to the fluctuations in the prices of raw materials.

Saying that 4,000 production units are currently active in the doors and windows industry of the country, he said that 30,000 persons have direct jobs and 60,000 persons have indirect jobs in the industry for the moment.

He further lamented that inflation and also the construction industry status over the past two years have made a severe damage to the doors and windows industry of the country.

He stressed that doors and windows manufacturers are in serious need of the government's support, and the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), and Iran International Exhibitions Company should support them.

The vice chairman of Iran's Association of Doors and Windows underscored that all of the doors and windows manufactured under the supervision of this association comply with the national and international standards, and have been exported to many countries including Venezuela, South Africa, Algeria, Belgium, Britain, Australia, Oman, UAE, Iraq, Afghanistan, and CIS countries.

As reported by IIEC, Iran's 12th Doors & Windows Technology International Exhibition will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during July 2-5.

In an interview conducted by the Public Relations Department of Iran International Exhibitions Company on June 23, Farhad Aminian said that the health protocols will be observed at the highest level during the 12th Doors & Windows Technology International Exhibition, in a way that the exhibitors and visitors will have the least concern about the coronavirus pandemic.

The industrialists and traders are highly welcoming the windows and doors exhibit, so this edition of the exhibit will be held in an area of over 21,000 square meters, Aminian further underscored.

He also stressed that this exhibition, which has a special focus on the presence of the domestic producers and industrialists, highlights the domestically-made products and local technology.

Iran's annual agricultural output expected to hit 128m tons by Mar. 2021

1 → and improving productivity as some of the most important strategies of the Agriculture Ministry for the current Iranian calendar year.

Referring to the development of value chains in the agricultural sector, Shajari said: "Development of new irrigation systems and greenhouses to improve water productivity, development of aquaculture, especially shrimp and fish farming at sea, and development of medicinal plants cultivation are among the

plans underway in this regard."

According to the official, production of grains reached 83.5 million tons in the previous year and the figure is expected to reach 86 million tons in the current year.

As for the horticulture sector, the production of this sector reached 23 million tons in the past year and the output is expected to increase by 1.7 million tons in the current year.

Noting that one of the major indicators of the development of the agricultural sector is the

Value of trades at IME rises 95% in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) went up 95 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IME Public Relations Department reported.

As reported, 870,896 tons of commodities valued at \$1.452 billion were traded at IME in the past week, showing also a 65-percent growth in terms of volume.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 417,887 tons of various products worth close to \$914 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 401,914 tons of steel, 5,450 tons of copper, 9,575 tons of aluminum, 130 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates, 600 tons of zinc, 200 tons of lead ingot as well as 19 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 450,697 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$542 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 149,000 tons of VB feed stock, 124,790 tons of bitumen, 78,159 tons of polymer products, 35,852 tons of chemical products, 960 tons of insulation, 58,000 tons of lube cut oil, 1,200 tons of slaps waxes, 1,412 tons of base oil



as well as 1,323 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 2,305 tons of metal scrap were traded on the IME's side market.

It is worth noting that 500 kg of saffron were traded on the agricultural trading floor.

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

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

Exports to Turkey underway via road, railway



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The chairman of Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce told IRNA on Saturday that Iran's export to Turkey is continuing via the roads and railway.

Mehrdad Sa'adat said that the number of trucks waiting in Bazargan Border to enter Turkey indicates that Iran's export to its neighbor is increasing, adding that Iran's transit of commodities via Turkey has also risen noticeably after the reopening of this border.

Earlier this month, land borders between Iran and Turkey reopened after more than three months.

On the first day of border reopening, 150 Iranian trucks entered Turkey, according to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Rouhollah Latifi said that the mentioned trucks entered Turkey via three land borders of Bazargan, Sero, and Razi.

Also, 35 Turkish trucks entered Iran as the borders reopened, Latifi announced.

The long-awaited measure came more than a week after Iranian and Turkish presidents discussed the reopening of air and land borders between the two countries now that the pandemic has slowed down.

Iran sees trade with Turkey as key in efforts to confront the U.S. sanctions that have sought to undermine Tehran's oil exports. Petrochemical products account for a major share of Iran's exports to Turkey although the U.S. bans have made it difficult to settle payments between businesses in the two countries.

Turkey also relies on Iran as a major

market for its manufacturing goods, including industrial machinery and garment, while it also sends to Iran some sizable shipments of crops and fruits that are not cultivated in the country.

As announced by the IRIC spokesman, Iran and Turkey exchanged 6,300 wagons of commodities via railway during a 70-day period from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

According to Latifi, Iran's exports to Turkey via railway stood at 3,072 wagons of goods and its imports from the neighboring country reached 3,228 wagons during the mentioned period of time.

IRICA Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi held a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Riza Tuna Turagay, via video conference on May 5, to discuss reopening of trade borders with the implementation of health and safety protocols.

Readiness to exchange health protocols for reopening trade borders, importing goods from Sarisu trans-boundary market, implementation of the third phase of e-Tir electronic project in all customs offices of the two countries, online exchange of information and X-ray in shared borders were among the important topics of discussion in the said meeting.

Mir-Ashrafi urged Turagay to take all the necessary measures to ensure the reopening of the two countries' borders since the Turkish borders with its other neighbors were open at the time.

In late February, Turkey closed its border with Iran as a preventative measure against the deadly coronavirus outbreak.



value-added, the official said in most years, the growth of value-added in the agricultural sector has been more than the growth of the country's non-oil Gross Domestic Products (GDP).

"The value-added growth of the agricultural sector last year was 8.8 percent, despite the negative growth of the domestic value-added," he said.

80% of Iran's trade border points reopened

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's acting minister of industry, mining and trade announced that the country's 80 percent of trade border points, which had been closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, have been reopened, IRNA reported.

Hossein Modares Khiaabani also said that the country's export of products has returned to the normal status following the borders reopening.

The spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said on Friday that Iran's border crossings with its neighbors are being opened one by one as the corona-related restrictions ease in the region.

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 Armenia 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 Bajgiran, Lotf-Abad and Incheh Baroun are closed."

Every day 30 wagons of goods are exported 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.

TEDPIX gains 46,822 points on Saturday



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), climbed 46,822 points to 1.466 on Saturday, IRNA reported.

Over 5.82 billion securities worth 95.425 trillion rials (about \$2.27 billion) were traded in the TSE on Saturday. The first market's index rose 36,651 points and the second market's index climbed 84,715 points.

TEDPIX has risen 190,000 points during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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.

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."

The official further noted that the high amount of liquidity that is entering the capital market has provided some good opportunity for this market, as it's being developed and flourished, for the enterprises, as they're securing their required funds, and also for the government.

Mentioning the prosperous status of the capital market in the present year, Qalibaf-Asl underlined that the current status of this market is not at all comparable with that of the past three years and even the previous year.

He put the amount of financing through the capital market at 2.6 quadrillion rials (about \$61.9 billion) in the past Iranian calendar year 1398 and said the figure was one quadrillion rials (about \$23.8 billion) just in the first quarter of the present year. Financing through this market stood at 1.2 quadrillion rials (about \$28.5 billion) in the calendar year 1397.

The SEO head also put the value of trades at Tehran Stock Exchange and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), at 8.3 quadrillion rials (about \$197.61 billion) in the previous year, while the figure was 7.8 quadrillion rials (about \$185.71 billion) in the first quarter of this year.

Qalibaf-Asl further said that the number of trading accounts opened in the stock market in the past year was 820,000, adding that 1.6 million accounts have been opened in the first three months of the current year.

'Iran functioning as an energy hub in the region'

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri has said the country has developed into an electricity hub in the region, having power exchanges with many of its neighbors.

"We are an energy hub in the region and we seek to have electricity exchange with all the neighboring countries," Haeri told ILNA.

Commenting on the trend of electricity exports to the neighboring countries, the official said: "We now have electricity exchanges with Turkmenistan, exports to Iraq are underway, we also have exports to Afghanistan."

He noted that the Iranian power network is connected to Turkmenistan and Iraq networks and the country both exports and imports electricity from Turkmenistan.

"Exports to Iraq continue, and a two-year contract was signed during the Energy Minister's recent visit to Iraq," he said pointing to electricity trade with Iraq.

"We have a good relationship with Iraq in terms of energy exchange," he said. "During the minister's visit to Baghdad, we received 50 percent of the country's electricity dues.... We are trying to establish banking connections in order to receive the rest of the debts as well."



He also mentioned the exports to Afghanistan, saying: "In the past few years, we have exported some electricity to parts of this country, and its amount varies between

100 and 120 megawatts (MW)."

The official finally noted that the country's total electricity exports vary depending on the hot and cold seasons of the year, but electrical communication with neighboring countries continues.

Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity reached 85,500 megawatts [85.5 gigawatts (GW)] in April.

Currently, combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share in the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants.

According to Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian the ministry plans to inaugurate 12 thermal power plants with a total capacity of 2,100 MW as well as hundreds of solar and wind farms and other small scale power stations in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to the minister, following a program called "A-B-Iran", the Iranian Energy Ministry is going to inaugurate 250 major water and electricity projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) during the current year.

Iran sells gasoline to Venezuela at market price: Zanganeh

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh says the recent gasoline cargoes sent to Venezuela were sold at the market price to the country and were not for free, IRNA reported.

They paid a fair price and provided the necessary guarantees for the future payment, he said, adding that a part of the money has already been received.

Some think that Iran gave the gasoline to the South American country for free, which is untrue; what we are doing is commercial, not charity, he added.

Reacting to the U.S. sanctions on the Iranian captains who took the gasoline to Venezuela, Zanganeh said it

was not unexpected; first, they tried to bribe them, but they refused their offer. Then they threatened and sanctioned them.

The oil minister further noted that the continuation of the exports to Venezuela depends on the negotiations between the two countries.

Recently, five Iranian oil tankers docked at Venezuela's port after passing the Caribbean Sea to help the friendly nation of Venezuela deal with a shortage of fuel was caused after the U.S. unilateral sanctions against the country.

The Iranian shipment comprised of 1.53 million barrels of gasoline and alkylate to help jump-start the

oil refineries in the Latin American state of Venezuela amid a fuel crisis.

The Venezuelan oil industry is targeted by severe U.S. sanctions and the country's refineries are mostly shut down due to maintenance problems.

The Latin American country is still in desperate need of gasoline and other refined products to keep the country afloat amid the economic collapse resulted from the U.S. sanctions.

Venezuela's state-owned PDV is now working to repair its main oil refineries, with help from Iran and China, to help replenish the domestic market as the Iranian supply starts to run out.

Knowledge-based companies contributing to Caspian Sea oil exploration operations

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Khazar Exploration and Production Company (KEPCO) is cooperating with domestic knowledge-based companies for the Caspian Sea oil exploration operations, Head of KEPCO's Department of Geology Farid Taati said.

According to Taati, exploration operations are currently underway in the region, Shana reported on Saturday.

KEPCO, which handles exploration operation in the Caspian Sea region in northern Iran, signed research-based deals with domestic companies in the Iranian calendar year of 1398 (ended in March 2019) to carry out exploration operation in the area, the official said.

The signed deals include a contract with Pars Geology Research Center for exploring the mechanisms of formation of mudflats and their effects on the creation of hydrocarbon reservoirs using remote sensing technology in South Caspian Basin and another with Tavana Energy Company for modeling of sedimentary basin and determination of the delta yield range and reservoir rock



expansion in the Southern Caspian region, he explained.

Referring to the 20 percent progress of

these projects, the official said: "Part of the mentioned research projects is at the sea for which most of the activities are carried out

with the help of remote sensing technologies and satellite images and using seismic lines."

Back in December 2019, KEPCO Managing Director Ali Osouli said that his company was going to cooperate with knowledge-based companies specialized in deep-water explorations and also with the neighboring countries for executing exploration projects in the region.

Founded in January 1998, KEPCO is a subsidiary of NIOC which is mainly focused on oil and gas exploration and development operations in the South Caspian Basin in Iran's territory.

The company is in charge of all the contracts signed by local and international companies regarding the exploration and development of hydrocarbon reserves in the area including the pertinent environmental matters.

The Caspian Sea is divided into three regions in terms of oil and gas reserves: Northern, Middle, and Southern Caspian. The Southern Caspian, which is in Iran's territory, is the deepest with oceanic depths of over 1,000 meters (3,300 ft).

Norway wants more renewable power for oil platforms, major industry

Norway could cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 4 million tons per year, or nearly 8 percent of the total, by providing more renewable electricity for major industrial plants and offshore oil and gas platforms, two government agencies said on Friday.

While Norway is a major producer of petroleum, it has also signed up to the Paris Agreement on climate change, pledging earlier this year to cut its domestic emissions of greenhouse gases in half by 2030.

By the mid-2020s, half of all oil and gas output in Norway could come from platforms receiving renewable power from land, rather than from generators run on diesel or natural gas, petroleum industry regulator NPD said.

"There are significant possibilities for more electrification in Norway, but it also means we must invest more in Norway's power supply in the time ahead," Minister of Petroleum and Energy Tina Bru told a news conference.

Norway produces 2 percent of global oil and is Europe's second biggest supplier of natural gas. Its greenhouse gas commitments cover only domestic emissions, however, and not those from fossil fuels extracted from its territory and used by others.

Offshore platforms at the Troll,



Oseberg and other oil and gas fields could be hooked up via subsea cables to the mainland grid, as has been the case in recent years for several new developments, most notably the giant Johan Sverdrup field.

Norway produces nearly all of its electricity from hydropower dams and wind farms.

Projects being developed by the offshore oil industry could cut CO2 emissions from operations by 1.7 million tons, the NPD said, while seven land-based plants could cut them by 2.3 million tons, the Water Resources and Energy Directorate said.

Equinor's Mongstad oil refinery, the Hammerfest liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant and the Kaarstoe petroleum processing and export terminal are among the facilities which could increase the use of renewable power, the reports showed.

Saudi Arabia's oil price war cost the kingdom \$12 billion in one month

Despite record oil exports in April as Saudi Arabia flooded the market with excess oil, the value of the Kingdom's crude exports plunged by \$12 billion from April 2019 levels as the lowest oil prices in years hit revenues.

In April, the value of Saudi Arabia's oil exports plummeted by 65.4 percent, or by \$12 billion (45.3 billion Saudi riyals), dragging down the value of the total merchandise exports of the world's top oil exporter, oil-price.com reported citing data from Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Statistics.

The value of Saudi oil exports plunged by 23.5 percent compared to March, the statistics office said.

The share of oil exports in total exports fell from 77.4 percent in April 2019 to 64.7 percent in April 2020.

China was Saudi Arabia's main trading partner for merchandise trade in April 2020, with Saudi exports to China valued at \$1.9 billion (7.16 billion riyals).

Saudi Arabia made good on its promise to flood the market with oil after the collapse of the previous OPEC+ deal in early March, exporting a record 10.237 million barrels per day (bpd) in April 2020, up from 7.391 million bpd in March, data from the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI) showed last week.

OPEC's largest producer also saw oil export revenues fall in Q1 2020, by 21.9 percent to \$40 billion, when Brent Crude prices fell by as much as 60 percent.

Under the OPEC+ deal sealed in April,



Saudi Arabia is reducing its oil production to 8.5 million bpd in May, June, and July, restricting exports to some customers in Asia, and significantly cutting shipments to the United States. Even though oil prices are now higher than they were in April, reduced oil shipments are set to continue impacting Saudi oil revenues, a main source of income for the Kingdom's budget.

Saudi Arabia's economy is set to shrink much more this year than initially expected, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said earlier this week in an update of its projections from April. According to the IMF, the Saudi economy will crash by 6.8 percent this year, compared to an initial estimate of a 2.3-percent decline, as "disruptions due to the pandemic, as well as significantly lower disposable income for oil exporters after the dramatic fuel price decline, imply sharp recessions" in Saudi Arabia as well as in its key partner in the OPEC+ deal, Russia.

Iran petchem output to hit 3-digit realm

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the country's petrochemical output would reach 100 million tons per year by March 2022.

Zanganeh, on Thursday, addressed a ceremony which was held to officially launch Miandoab Petrochemical Plant, and normal hexane production unit of Shazand refinery in Arak, inauguration construction of Goreh to Jask crude oil pipeline and an export terminal in Makran region in the presence of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in a live video conference.



"Miandoab Petrochemical Complex is the first of 17 projects in the second leap of the petrochemical industry that will be inaugurated this year," Zanganeh said.

Noting that the value of Iran's petrochemical production would increase from \$12 billion in 2013 to more than double to \$25 billion by the end of next calendar year, he added: "As the Supreme Leader in a meeting with producers on May 6 stressed completion of the projects and acceleration of the completion of the value chain, the value of these products will reach \$37 billion by the end of 1404 (March 2026)."

The Minister of Petroleum stated that West Ethylene Pipeline was approved in 2002 to be laid from Assaluyeh, southern Iran, to Tabriz, northwestern Iran, as the longest ethylene line in the world with a length of 1,660 km.

He stressed: "This year, about 2 million tons of ethylene will be transferred through the West Ethylene pipeline, and Miandoab Petrochemical Project is one of the projects en route the pipeline."

The official further announced Iran's ethylene output would reach 7 million tons per year by March 2021 of which 2 million tons would be injected into the West Ethylene pipeline.

Revival of Libya's war-torn oil industry to be slow and costly

Libya's oil industry is crumbling after more than nine years of neglected maintenance amid a civil war that's killed thousands and destroyed towns across the country, Bloomberg reported.

The lack of basic, nuts-and-bolts servicing has left pipelines corroding and storage tanks collapsing. Remedial work at wells alone could cost more than \$100 million, the head of the state-run National Oil Corp. told Bloomberg, and that's money the government can ill afford.

The damage means that Libya, despite having Africa's largest crude reserves, will struggle to ramp up production quickly even if the conflict abates soon. Fighters are poised now for what could be a decisive battle at Sirte, a city just a two-hour drive from the so-called oil crescent -- a cluster of export terminals for most of the nation's crude.

Libya produces about 90,000 barrels a day. That's a fraction of the 1.6 million that companies such as Eni SpA and Repsol SA pumped in partnership with the NOC before the ouster of strongman Moammar Al Qaddafi in 2011 and the catastrophic war that followed. Until now, the NOC has usually succeeded in restoring operations quickly after regaining control of oil facilities shut due to fighting. That resilience, however, is fraying.

"The longer we wait, the greater the damage and the higher the cost," NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanalla said in a written response to questions. "It is a tragedy for the people of Libya that political game-playing has been allowed to cause such damage to our country's critical national infrastructure."

The political turmoil has left Libya divided between a United Nations-recognized government in the capital Tripoli, where the NOC has its headquarters, and a competing administration based in the east. Since January, when supporters of the eastern-based commander Khalifa Haftar shut most of the country's oil fields and ports, daily output has plunged by more than a million barrels.

Libya's oil and gas network

The Tripoli government of Fayez al-Sarraj, backed by Turkey, appears to have the upper hand on the battlefield. Its troops repulsed Haftar's western offensive and have advanced as far as Sirte, on the central coast, which the rebels still control. When Haftar, who has support from Russia and Egypt, called a cease-fire this month, the government rejected it, saying it would first capture Sirte and an air base called Jufra.

Armed groups forced Libya's biggest oil field of Sharara to stop production twice this month, and they also closed the nearby El-Feel deposit. Both the southwestern fields had only just re-opened after halting in January.

The NOC's lack of access to Sharara prevented workers from injecting chemicals into a pipeline to stop corrosion. A 16,000-barrel tank that handles overflows, or surges, collapsed last month as a result, Sanalla said.

"We are deeply concerned about corrosion in the pipelines," he said. "Due to the disruption of exports, crude oil has stayed in the pipelines, which has environmental and other implications that will not be easy to address."

Eighty leaks

Harouge Oil Operations, a joint venture between the NOC and Canada's Suncor Energy Inc., blames corrosion for at least 80 leaks at its facilities from January to May, Sanalla said. Harouge exports crude from Libya's third-largest oil port at Ras Lanuf.

"Throughout the last nine years, Libyan production has been able to rebound," said Mohammad Darwazah, an analyst at consultant Medley Global Advisors. "But many fields require urgent maintenance, and damage sustained to storage depots at the eastern terminals has not been fully repaired, limiting how quickly fields can ramp up."

Prolonged shutdowns have reduced the pressure that wells need to spout oil. On earlier occasions when Sharara re-opened, it took just a few days to restore production to around 300,000 barrels a day. This time, the field will need around three months to recover, according to the NOC.

How to pay for the repairs is an open question; the NOC said Sunday that blockades of fields and ports by Haftar's supporters have deprived Libya of \$6 billion in potential oil revenue since January.

"Sustained under-funding of the state operator and multiyear delays to field and asset maintenance will make the challenge of a resumption greater this time around," said Bill Farren-Price, a director at consultant RS Energy Group Canada Inc.



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The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	6/029/038	Tender No.:FP/20-99/034 Indent No.: 08-22-9845079	66,000,000,000

Tender descriptions:

Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Based on minimum scoring (50 Points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
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- Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

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	Closing date	● 14Days after the last time of Purchasing.
	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

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Value of guarantee	3,288,000,000 Rial / 24,243 Euro	Regarding Tender No FP/20-9/034
Type of guarantee	✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ Submitting of original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.	
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U.S. has become a Gangster State: American Scholar

By Alireza Hashemi

The protesters in America are revolting against the whole system of governance that has become a corrupt police state, and people are gradually coming to understand that the only solution is revolution, an American scholar said.

Kevin Barrett, an Arabist-Islamologist who has appeared many times on Fox, CNN, PBS and other broadcast media, made the statement in a recent interview with Tehran Times on the consequences of protests held across America following the murder of George Floyd on May 25.

Over a month after Floyd's killing, anti-racist protests still continue in America, with some people taking down historic statues as perceived symbols of racism and oppression in the country.

Big demonstrations were held across the country on June 19, known as the Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The Iranian people would like to know how would you interpret Floyd's death: an isolated case of officers mistreating criminals or a sign of systematic anti-black racism?

Obviously each individual case of U.S. police brutality has its own specific circumstances. In this case, the killer and victim may have known each other, and the killer may have had a grudge. But whatever the individual circumstances, there is a larger context in which police routinely murder and violently abuse Americans, mostly black Americans, as a kind of institutionalized practice. The culture of American policing tolerates this ongoing series of atrocities and mass murder. One important factor is the training U.S. police receive from Israel. They are conditioned to behave like a brutal occupation army waging war on a "racially inferior" civilian population. Why does the U.S. let its police get trained by the genocidal state of Israel? This is a national scandal, yet discussion of it is suppressed in the U.S. mainstream media, which is mostly owned and dominated by rich Jewish Zionists.

■ During the last couple of years, we have frequently heard of pro-black protests in the U.S. Are we witnessing a surge in pro-black activism? If yes, then what's the reason?

The underlying reason for the upsurge in black anger and activism is the economic transition to outsourced production and automation, which has eliminated most working-class jobs, affecting both black and white working people. The ruling elite tries to distract from this problem by fostering a racial divide. So people like George Soros fund anti-racist groups, not because Soros hates racism, but because he and other billionaires want people to focus on race issues rather than economics, to further the elite's divide-and-conquer strategy. The elite is trying to turn the world into a one-world-government slave plantation, and to achieve this they need



to control the narrative and prevent ordinary people from understanding what is going on.

■ Some U.S. officials lamented the tragedy and the officer responsible for Floyd's murder is to be put on trial. So why don't the protesters give up?

The protesters are angry not only about the individual incident, the murder of George Floyd, but about the ongoing culture of police abuse in general. I also think they are in revolt against the whole system of authority and governance here in the USA, which has lost its legitimacy as the country has transitioned from a flawed democracy to a completely corrupt banker-owned empire and militarized police state. There has been no legitimate government in the USA since the 9/11 coup by neocon Zionists (or perhaps even since the 1963 JFK coup, also by Zionist organized crime figures and their friends in the security apparatus). The Jeffrey Epstein scandal highlighted the way all significant U.S. leaders are criminals, pedophiles, and sexual perverts who are "owned" by the organized crime linked intelligence agencies, led by those of Israel. People are coming to understand that the USA has become a gangster state, and the only solution is revolution.

■ Did Donald Trump act as a responsible president? What's the buzz about his tweet?

Trump is the arsonist who throws gasoline on fires that he himself starts. He ran for president as an out-and-out racist, and he governs by stoking the flames of racial hatred. His end-game may be a plan to cancel the November elections and remain in office as a dictator. By stoking an insurgency or even civil war, Trump is setting the stage for declaring

a state of emergency and canceling elections. He thinks he can win a civil war scenario because his supporters, though a minority, are better armed than his opponents.

■ How do you assess the behavior of the U.S. corporate media? Did they provide their audience with fair, realistic coverage of the developments?

The corporate media provides fairer coverage of this issue than it does in many other areas. Compared to other countries with protests/insurgencies, such as France with its yellow vests, the U.S. media seems actually not too bad. But that is probably only because the media's owners have not ordered their organizations to lie about this issue, the way they do about so many others.

This, at least, was my first impression. But upon reflection, it occurs to me that the wall-to-wall media coverage of the protests, from a perspective sympathetic to the protestors, may actually serve the agenda of the billionaire elite that owns the media. How? By diverting and channeling the anger of ordinary Americans, who had just spent two months under virtual house arrest due to COVID-19, and who had been robbed of more than 6 trillion dollars by the biggest banks and corporations in the rigged "bailout." The billionaire elite doesn't want ordinary working Americans to understand that they are the victims of the biggest robbery in the history of the world, carried out under cover of COVID. So they changed the topic of conversation to "race." Now blacks and their sympathizers can blame whites, while some whites will blame blacks, and neither side will see that they should be uniting to overthrow the bankers who created the COVID pandemic in order to steal trillions of dollars and consolidate their domestic and global wealth and power.

■ How does the police treatment of the protests compare to similar protests in other countries? Is the U.S. well placed to lecture other governments on how to treat the opposition?

American police have traditionally been the most brutal in the world (not counting the Israeli thugs who "police" Palestinians.) The French police have also become very brutal in their assaults on the Yellow Vests. It is odd how these two "democracies" have such incredibly brutal police forces, whereas the "Communist dictatorship" in China has a much more restrained police force, as do most other wealthy and mid-range countries.

■ How will Floyd's murder affect the future of America? Is this a milestone or something?

It is too early to tell. The worst-case scenario is that the nation could descend into anarchy and civil war, followed by a "restoration of order" through extreme tyranny. The unlikely best-case scenario would be a revolution to restore legitimate governance, which would entail overthrowing and imprisoning the entire current class of elites, not just government officials, but also the bankers and CEOs who own them.

Trump attacks on mail-in ballots will cost Republicans

By Scott Norvell

As own goals go, President Donald Trump's continued fixation on and bad-mouthing of mail-in voting ahead of the United States' November general election may end up being one of the factors that cost him - along with many other players on the Republican team - the match.

In a town hall meeting aired on Fox News Thursday night, Trump said an audience member's query about the topic was "the most important question I'll be asked".

Repeating a trope he has hammered away at for weeks now, Trump attacked state officials in California and elsewhere who are, he claimed, mailing out "millions and millions" of ballots that could be counted fraudulently, going so far as to claim that a country like China could "print millions of ballots using the exact same paper" in an attempt to interfere in the election.

The allegation - echoed by Trump's Attorney General, William Barr in an interview with National Public Radio on Thursday - was widely ridiculed as preposterous by people who actually know about such things. Safeguards such as bar codes and signature checks, not to mention the fact that ballots in each voting jurisdiction in the US often look dramatically different from locale to locale, would make such an undertaking all but impossible to carry out.

Regardless, Trump persists. The president, in what has been seen as an attempt to call into question the outcome of the vote in case he loses, is clearly dead set against the prospect of states making it easier for their citizens to vote because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mail-in voting is a "scam," he's tweeted. It's "dangerous". It's "crazy". It's "fraudulent". The Democrats are "trying to steal another election", he wrote.

If another of Trump's intentions is to convince his own voters not to participate in November if they are still worried about COVID-19, anecdotal evidence has emerged that he



is doing a pretty good job.

In the battleground state of Pennsylvania, which passed a law last year allowing anyone to vote by mail for any reason, about 1.9 million people requested mail-in ballots for the primaries this year. In 2016, the number was 107,000. And 71 percent of them have been Democrats, according to an analysis by the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper.

In Northampton County, Pennsylvania - one of three counties in the state won twice by former President Barack Obama before flipping red and siding with Trump in 2016 - the chairwoman of the local Republican Party, Lee Snover, said they are not pushing people to vote by mail.

"Our county kind of is a Trump county. We're kind of listening to Trump on this," Snover told the Inquirer. "He's spoken about it. He's tweeted about it. He doesn't want us to do it."

"More than one person", she added, has told her that "Trump doesn't want us mailing in, [so] I'm not mailing it in".

In Florida, Democratic Party officials crowded this week about the avalanche of requests for mail-in ballots there. Since the March primary in that state, they said in a statement, Democrats have convinced 350,000 voters to sign up to the programme, compared to the 160,000 voters signed

up by Republicans.

The trend, the party said, "should be cause for alarm at the Florida GOP headquarters".

Robert Stein, a political science professor at Rice University in Houston, Texas, has been surveying voters' attitudes toward mail-in voting there since shortly after the pandemic erupted. Generally speaking, he found, Democrats prefer mail-in voting and Republicans favor doing so in person.

Interestingly, Stein reports, only one day after Trump started tweeting against mail-in voting, the pollsters noticed a drop in the percentage of Republicans who said they were in favor of remote voting - from 41 percent to 34 percent. Initially, Stein was puzzled because so many Republicans there have voted by mail in past presidential elections.

But, he said, "Republican voters follow the lead of their party and president."

The thing is, voters are not following the lead of their party. They are following the lead of the president. Outside of Trump's West Wing/Capitol Hill echo chamber, Republican officials across the country are almost uniformly in favor of mail-in voting.

Despite the reticence from local GOP leaders in Northampton County and elsewhere, the state Republican party in Pennsylvania has gone all out to promote voting by mail, calling it both safe and smart.

"Democrats will use the new mail-in ballot to greatly increase their turnout," the party correctly predicted on its website earlier this year. "Republicans would be smart to do the same so that we have the advantage."

Trump's incessant drumbeat against the messaging of his own party would be remarkable were it not so predictable. Through words and actions throughout the campaign, the president has made it clear that the election is not about the Republican Party's prospects. It's about Trump's prospects.

US Senators, members of Congress and other down-ballot Republicans be damned.

Trump wrongly diverted billions to build wall: Appeals court

A federal appeals court on Friday ruled against the administration of United States President Donald Trump in its transfer of \$2.5bn from military construction projects to build sections of the U.S. border wall with Mexico, ruling it illegally sidestepped Congress, which gets to decide how to use the funds.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with a coalition of border states and environmental groups that contended the money transfer was unlawful and that building the wall would pose environmental threats.

The ruling was the latest twist in the legal battle that has largely gone Trump's way. Last July, the Supreme Court allowed the \$2.5bn to be spent while the litigation continued, blunting the impact of the latest

appeals court action.

The administration has already awarded much of the money, including a \$1.3bn job in Arizona that was announced last month.

Trump visited Yuma, Arizona, on Tuesday to mark the completion of the 200th mile of border wall during his administration, much of it with the transferred military funds that the 9th Circuit panel found illegal.

After the \$2.5bn transfer of military funds, the Pentagon diverted another \$3.6bn that an appeals court in New Orleans ruled in January could be spent.

■ **Individual liberties**

The 9th Circuit ruled that the Trump administration not only lacked the authority to authorise the transfer of funds, "but also violated an express constitutional prohibition designed to protect individual liberties".

The vote was 2-1 with judges appointed by former President Bill Clinton in the majority and a Trump nominee dissenting.

The panel said the government was proceeding with border wall construction without ensuring compliance with any environmental regulations, thereby harming the interests of Sierra Club members who visit the border region for hiking, bird watching and other recreational activities.

The panel also held that the government failed to show that construction would halt the flow of illegal drugs. It said the administration had cited drug statistics but didn't address how the wall would have an impact on the problem.

"The executive branch's failure to show, in concrete terms, that the public's interest favors a border wall is particularly significant

given that Congress determined fencing to be a lower budgetary priority and the Department of Justice's data points to a contrary conclusion," the majority wrote.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who led a 20-state coalition of attorneys general that sued the administration, praised the court decision.

"Today, the court reminded the president - once again - that no one is above the law," Becerra said in a statement.

"While the Trump administration steals public funds to build an unauthorized wall at the southern border, families across the country are struggling to pay their bills. They deserve to know that their hard-earned dollars are going where Congress intended - to benefit them and their communities."

(Source: AP)

U.S. sanctions, politicization affecting intl. coop. in fight against drug trafficking: Lotfi

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

On the occasion of 'International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking', which is observed annually on 26 June, we reached out to Dr. Amir Abbas Lotfi, Director General of International Relations Office of Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran to know more about Iran's role in the fight against drug trafficking.

Here are the comments that he shared with Mehr News Agency/ Tehran Times.

"The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the United Nation specialized agency dealing with drugs and crimes. Based on UNODC annual report, more than 70 percent of opiates global seizure is made by Iran Law Enforcement Agencies," said Lotfi.

"During the past Iranian year (beginning 20 March 2019), Iran's drug seizure has been exceeded more than 950 tons of different types of narcotics and psychotropic substances," he added.

Lotfi went on to say, "This number shows a 20 percent increase as compared to the last year's corresponding period. It also indicates a kind of achievement and a new record for Iran Law Enforcement Agencies due to the fact that it was the first time throughout the history of Iran's fight against world drug trafficking."

"This was consisting of 808 tons of opiates (opium, heroin, and morphine) and almost 17 tons of methamphetamine (crystal). It's noteworthy; this year's methamphetamine seizure shows more than 200 percent increase since the last year," he said.

"Iran is the main partner to the UNODC's policy and programs in West Asia. Also due to the tremendous endeavors that Iran made in this way, UNODC executive directors repeatedly called Iran as a flag-bearer of international fight against drugs," the Iranian official noted.

Lotfi continued, "Those have been said, we acknowledge that global problems merit global solutions. Therefore, we are of the view that the international community and every party to international conventions should do its role, based on the principle of 'shared responsibility' to create a better future and drug-free world."

"UNODC is a UN specialized agency dealing with drugs and crimes. The anti-drug international regime is based on three international conventions, which the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) as a quasi-judicial body is acting like a guardian and monitoring international compliance toward these three conventions. Iran has established strong ties with UNODC," he said.

"Its office in Tehran has started its work since 1999 and implemented four rounds of partnership joint programs with the relevant government bodies," Lotfi added.

The Iranian official went on to say, "This year (2020), we will finalize the fourth program and by 2021, we will enter the fifth phase of the program."

"As I mentioned earlier, coping with humanitarian challenges like drug abuse and smuggling are relied on international cooperation," he stressed.

"Unfortunately, sanctions of the U.S., politicization, and selective approach have adversely affected the concept of international cooperation in this sphere along with other humanitarian issues," Lotfi added.

Forgotten craft of Namad-mali revived in Zanjan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Namad-mali (literally meaning felt beating), a handicraft field that was obsolete, has been revived in Deh Bahar Village, Tarom county in the northwestern Zanjan province, CHTN reported on Saturday.



Namad-mali was one of the main professions of the people in this region for many years, but it had been fallen into oblivion, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand said.

Reviving this field of handicraft will help the younger generation to use their creativity in producing modern and attractive felt products, he added.

Namad-mali is a traditional craft being practiced in Iran to make namad, a traditional rug, out of woolen fabrics by rolling and pressing them.

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

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

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

Decades-old silo on agenda for national heritage list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – An almost fifty-year-old wheat silo in Birjand, the capital of South Khorasan province, is planned to be inscribed on the national heritage list, a provincial tourism chief has said.

The silo, which was built by a Romanian company in 1971, has the capacity to store 5,000 tons of wheat, Ali Shariatimaneh said on Saturday, CHTN reported.



Identifying the buildings and structures, which were built with new designs and materials during the period of the entry of industry into Iran, is one of the duties of the cultural heritage departments in each province, he added.

Located in eastern Iran, South Khorasan province is home to many historical and natural attractions such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Polond Desert.

It is also known for its famous rugs as well as its saffron and barberry which are produced in almost all parts of the province.

Ancient relics of Iran: 17th-century stone-paste dish from Kerman

(Louvre museum) – This beautiful dish with its attractive graphic decoration was made in the city of Kerman, a major ceramic production center during the Safavid period, located in the Kerman province in the south-east of Iran.

The simple yet striking decoration consists of a large rosette in the center of the dish; this rosette is composed of six central palmettes (eslimi) surrounded by six smaller palmettes of the same shape, connected by slender floral scrolls. These stylized split palmettes are a regular feature of Persian manuscripts—especially in illuminations—from the 15th century onward, though their origin remains obscure



The white decoration stands out against the uniform blue ground of the dish. A special technique called “champlève” was used to achieve this contrasting effect: the dish was coated with a thick layer of smooth slip, which was then scraped away to allow the pure white of the paste to show through, creating the desired pattern. The dish was coated with a transparent glaze which added an effect of depth to the decoration and smoothed the surface.

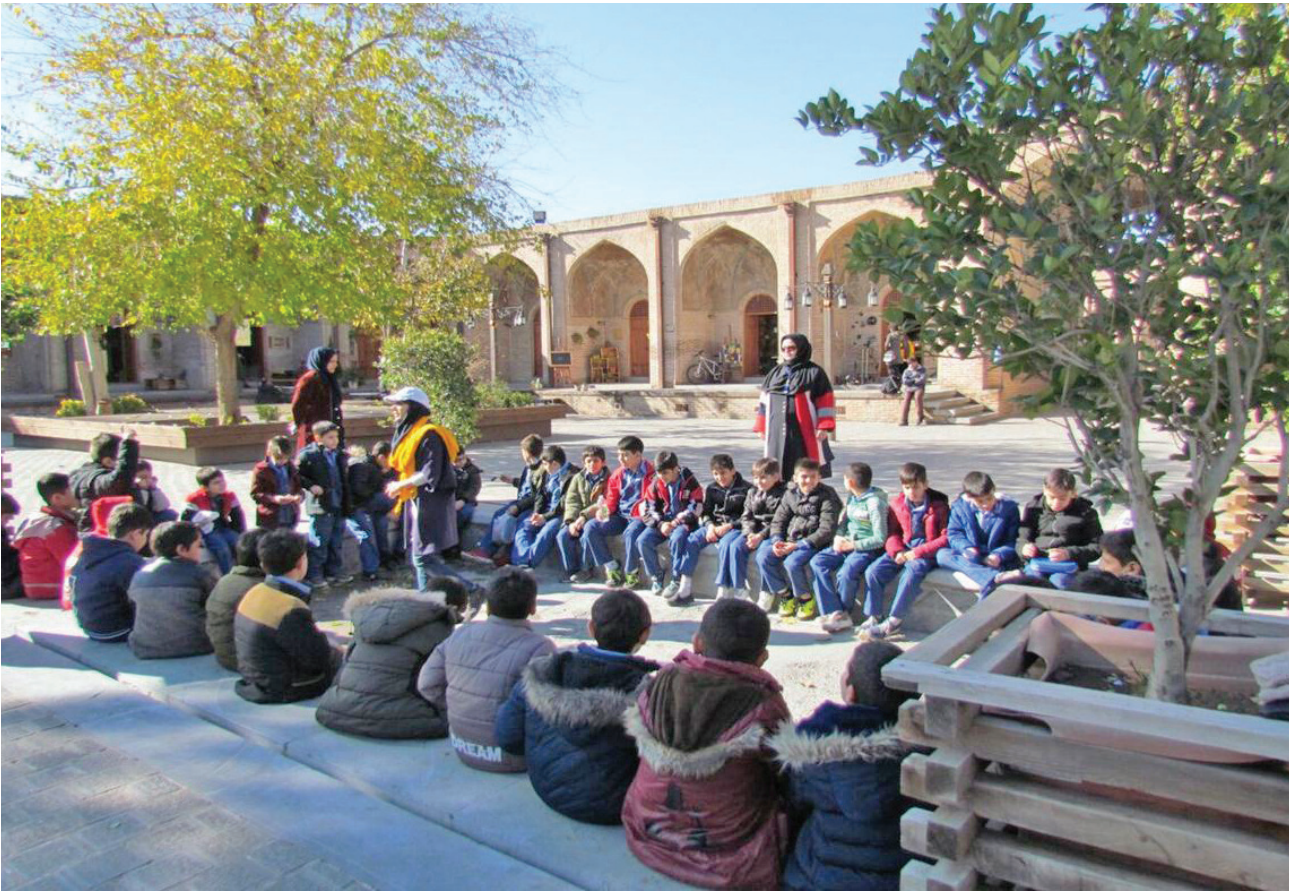
UNESCO-registered Yazd to develop children’s tourism

→ 1 With its winding lanes, the forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains. Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

Iran is a treasure house for some of the most gorgeous Islamic architecture on the planet. Seemingly at every turn, Islam’s historical commitment to aesthetic beauty and exquisite architecture reigns supreme. The sublime, turquoise-tiled domes and minarets of Isfahan’s Naqsh-e Jahan (Imam) Square gets so many appreciative gasps of wonder, and rightly so, but there are utterly magnificent rivals elsewhere, in Yazd and Shiraz among others.

Regarding its people, Iranians are world-famous for being courteous, warm, friendly, welcoming, and eager to show off their country to foreigners. Foreign travelers are continuously astounded by the warmth of Iranians, treated with nothing but sparkling smiles and offers of help of any kind.

The country embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.



flydubai to resume Iran flights

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The “flydubai”, legally named Dubai Aviation Corporation, is scheduled to resume its Iran services as coronavirus-related restrictions are being eased across the globe.

The official procedures needed for reusing Iran-UAE flights have been returned to normal and [Iranian] airlines can apply directly to the UAE national airline and receive a permit, the Iranian embassy in Abu Dhabi announced, IRNA reported on Saturday.

“Upon the request and follow-up [discussion] of this embassy to issue a flight permit for passengers from Iran, the flight permit from Iran to the United Arab Emirates (Lar to Dubai) has been issued”.

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs [and International Cooperation] has announced that the flight procedures on the Iran-UAE route have been returned to normal and airlines can apply directly to the UAE’s national airline and obtain a license, the embassy explained.



The government-owned budget airline has announced that flights are available to be booked on flydubai.com,

initially to Iran and several other destinations.

“Flights are available for booking from today and will operate from 07 July. We are initially planning to operate to 24 destinations and we will continuously add destinations and flight frequencies to the network and we expect this to increase to 66 destinations over the course of the summer. This, of course, will be dependent on countries being able to open up and accept international travel,” the airline’s website quoted Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer of flydubai, as saying on Wednesday.

Passenger traffic at Iranian airports was plunged by 80 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20) in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, IRNA reported in May. The pandemic also resulted in a decrease of 70 percent and 79 percent respectively in the number of flights and cargo transport, the report added.

Six properties in Semnan added to National Heritage List

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Six historical sites in the north-central Semnan province have been inscribed on the National Heritage List, IRNA reported.

Khurian Oil Facilities, Aliabad Castle, Dehkhoda School, Khankhodi Bathhouse, Mahdishahr Bathhouse, and Sorkheh Brick Making Plant are the items registered on the list.

So far, over 1500 archaeological and historical sites have been identified across the province through excavations and surveys conducted by Semnan Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, of which 856 items have been inscribed on the National Heritage List.

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat) and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.



Fire incidents engulf tourist attractions in Khuzestan

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Maysan Mozif and the historical entrance gate of Marashi Mansion in southwestern Khuzestan province have been engulfed in fire in separate incidents, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Located in Dasht-e Azadegan, Maysan Mozif was completely burned down on Thursday, cultural heritage expert Qassem Kasir said.

The mozif, which is one of the tourist attractions of the province, was set on fire due to some tribal dispute that had nothing to do with the owner, which caused over one billion rials (almost \$25,000) damage, he added.

Mozif, which is a kind of traditional guest house, is an arched shaped structure made entirely out of bamboo sticks. Doorway of a mozif is deliberately designed smaller so that guests would be required to bow to enter which would oblige them to honor those who are inside. Once in, guests are confronted with a huge room fully covered in Persian carpets and adorned with colorful cushions. Arabic coffee is served in the mozifs.

Fortunately, the other incident in Shushtar has inflicted



no damage to the main building of the 300-year-old mansion, but its historical entrance gate was completely destroyed in the fire on Friday, he explained.

He also noted that the cause of the fire is under investigation. Earlier this month, a fire broke out at the UNESCO-regis-

tered site of Susa in the province, but it inflicted no damage to the historical site.

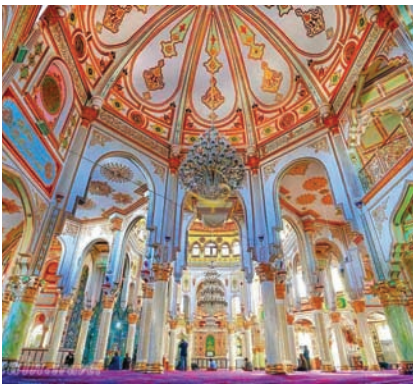
Susa was once the capital of the Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the Achaemenian king Darius I and his successors from 522 BC. Part of Susa is still inhabited as Shush on a strip of land between the rivers Shaour (a tributary of the Karkheh) and Dez.

Weed growth and dry vegetation, as well as heat and wind, caused the fire.

The cultural heritage officials of the province also announced that due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country and the lockdown of the historical sites, the small number of employees, who attend their workplaces in the historical sites across the province, couldn’t monitor the whole areas every day.

During previous months fires broke out at the ancient Hegmataneh Hill in the west-central Iranian province of Hamedan and Rab’-e Rashidi, a 14th-century educational complex in northwestern East Azarbaijan province, which could be a cause for concern for the country’s tourism industry.

Shafei Jameh Mosque: a place of worship notable for atmospheric interior design



TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Photos show the lavishly-decorated prayer hall of Shafei Jameh Mosque, which stands tall in the ancient city of Kermanshah in western Iran.

Graced with eye-catching architecture, the Sunni Muslims’ place of worship, is predominantly notable for having atmospheric hypostyle halls, intricate stucco, and sets of faience. The latter is a form of different-colored tiling sandwiched together to create the design.

The mosque was completed in 1945 under the auspices of Sunni benefactors. In fact, its interior design is in some ways like its Turkish counterparts. Verses of the Holy Quran have

been inscribed on the stucco. The ceilings are impressively adorned by geometric patterns while encircling arched windows and letting in the sunlight during the day.

The mosque, however, has somehow modest exterior when it comes to extravagant use of ornamentation. It has several modest domes and two minarets.

Visitors to the mosque can also revel in the nearby Tarikeh bazaar, a traditional marketplace stretched along labyrinth alleys. Kermanshah is a cradle of civilization due to its antiquity, rich culture, and Neolithic sites that yielded rich collections of stone tools and fossil bones.



Drought may reverse Lake Urmia's revival in coming years: experts

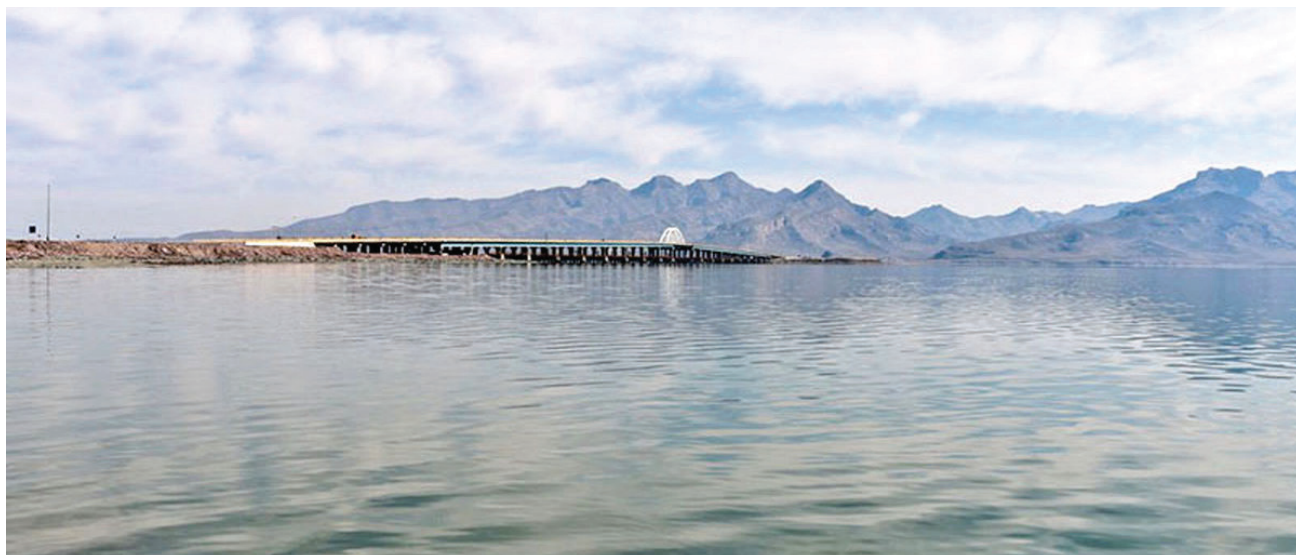
ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Two Iranian scientists have warned that Lake Urmia's revival trend may probably reverse over the coming years due to drought spells, though the lake has been filled mostly by the above-normal rainfall since the past crop year (September 23, 2019).

In an article entitled "analyzing the Lake Urmia restoration progress using ground-based and spaceborne observations" Peyman Saemian from the Institute of Geometry, Stuttgart University, Germany, and Omid Elmi from the Faculty of Geography, Bristol University, England suggested that due to the recent above normal rainfalls, the lake's water level stabilized, while the revival process may not be sustainable, and with the onset of drought in the coming years, the trend will be reversed.

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive permanent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

The study aims to monitor these restoration endeavors using spaceborne and ground-based observations. The water storage change of the Lake Urmia catchment is quantified using the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) and GRACE Follow-On satellite observations, which gives us a holistic view of hydrological components.

The analysis shows a positive trend of 14.5



cm/yr, 204 km²/yr, and 0.42 km³/yr in the time series of lake's water level, lake water area, and water volume from 2015 to 2019 which indicates a short-lived stabilization of Lake Urmia.

This has been achieved mainly due to an increase of 0.35 km³/yr in inflow from rivers to the lake, predominantly driven by anomalous precipitation events in 2016 and early 2019. However, the long-term trend from 2003 to 2019 still shows negative values of 22 cm/yr, 200 km²/yr, and 0.72 km³/yr for the water level, the surface area, and the water volume of the lake, respectively.

The stabilization seems to be fragile,

however, since most of the increase in the water volume of the lake has spread over the large shallow southern region with high evaporation potential during hot seasons. Furthermore, due to the high correlation between the lake's water level and precipitation, the recovery observed in 2016 and the first half of 2019 might not continue in case of a long drought period.

Achieving sustainable rehabilitation requires countless efforts, such as preventing the lake's water flow from entering the agricultural land. The results of this study showed that Lake Urmia's condition stabilized with a positive trend due to heavy rainfall and there is a fear that this trend will be reversed by

drought in the coming years.

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.

Golestan Forest: Iran's oldest national park shares spectacular landscape



ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Golestan National Park or Golestan Forest, located in the northeastern province of Golestan, is the oldest national park registered in Iran and a unique refuge for wildlife, which offers a wide spectrum of flora and fauna.

Being one of the oldest national parks around the world, it has been listed as one of the top fifty ecosystems in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1930.

Stretched to 87,402 hectares, it is home to one-seventh of Iran's plant species, one-third of all birds and half of the country's mammals, as hosting 1,350 plant species and 302 wildlife species.

Wildlife species living in the area include Persian Leopard, Brown bear, jackal, Persian ibex, wolves, wild cat, Caspian Red deer, wild boar, gazelle, mountain goat, fox, and coyote. And plant species growing in the region consists of several endemic ones such as Alma saffron, Persian Ironwood.

In the past, the Asiatic cheetah also lived in the area of Mirzabaylu plain, but the last cheetah was seen in the area at least 40 years ago. Of course, in October 2014, a cheetah was observed in this plain, but no one could photograph it.

Golestan National Park weather varies from very humid to semi-arid with precipitation of less than 200 to 1000 mm. Temperatures in Golestan National Park vary from -25 degrees to +35 degrees depending on the different months of the year. The highest absolute temperature reported in the park was 42 C in the southeast of the park.

So far, 150 species of birds have been identified in Golestan National Park. Golden Eagle, eastern imperial eagle, saker falcon, falcon, and bearded vulture are among the endangered birds of the park. Other birds of Golestan National Park include common pheasants, shrikes, griffon vulture, rosy starling, typical warblers, wheatears, finches, and common blackbirds.

The park holds a share of 3 species of amphibians and 24 species of reptiles.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ☞

All-Iranian COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released within month

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qane'ei as saying on Monday.

Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted.

Patients suspected to coronavirus are currently being identified by diagnostic kits that have entered Iran in the form of assistance and purchases by the World Health Organization, China and UNICEF, he said.

So, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology decided to manufacture the kits domestically, he noted.

Existing imported kits are sufficient for the next two months but after this period we will be faced with shortages of kits, however, the domestic ones will enter the market, he concluded.

کیت‌های ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ ماه آینده روانه بازار می‌شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیت‌های تشخیصی کووید ۱۹، فروردین ماه وارد بازار می‌شوند.

مصطفی قانع، دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیت‌های آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانش‌بنیان برای ساخت این کیت‌ها قرارداد منعقد شده است.

تشخیص، مهم‌ترین راه ورود به درمان بیماری کرونا است. در حال حاضر بیماران مبتلا به کرونا به وسیله کیت‌های تشخیصی که در قالب مساعدت و خرید از طریق سازمان بهداشت جهانی، کشور چین و یونیسف وارد ایران شده‌اند شناسایی می‌شوند؛ اما ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری با انتشار فراخوانی از دانش‌بنیان‌های توانمند دعوت کرد تا به حوزه ساخت این کیت‌ها ورود کنند.

به گزارش از مرکز ارتباطات و اطلاع رسانی معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، وی افزود: کیت‌های وارد شده تا دو ماه آینده کافی هستند اما بعد از این مدت با کمبود کیت‌های تشخیص کرونا مواجه خواهیم شد. به همین دلیل با کمک توانمندی‌های داخلی این نیاز را مرتفع می‌کنیم.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-an, -ian”

■ **Meaning:** a word ending used to form nouns and modifiers that shows something belongs to a group, place, etc.

■ **For example:** I like to learn how to cook **Mexican** food.

PHRASAL VERB

Hand something out

■ **Meaning:** to give something to each person in a group; distribute

■ **For example:** Could you start handing these books out please?

IDIOM

Browned off

■ **Explanation:** if you are browned off, you are bored, fed up or disheartened

■ **For example:** “Tom is browned off with his job.”

Relief Foundation doubles charity centers nationwide

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has so far established 3,900 charity centers across the country to help the needy, which will reach up to 8,000 by the end of this year (March 19, 2021).

Morteza Bakhtiari, head of the Foundation, said that according to statistics, about 300,000 orphans are currently covered by 710,000 supporters registered by the Foundation.

In May, Bakhtiari said that Iranian beneficiaries contributed 9.1 trillion rials (nearly \$216 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support orphans in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20).

He went on to point out that some 2,400,000 families in the country are currently supported by the Foundation.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empower financially struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

Climate crisis: Arctic warming is causing ‘spider baby boom’, scientists warn

Temperature records are being obliterated in the Arctic amid run-away heat, which along with wildfires and ever-earlier snow-melt are all causing major concern among scientists.

This rapidly changing climate, due to the pronounced effect of the Arctic amplification phenomenon, is causing longer summers and shorter temperatures.

Alongside the existential threats a warming world poses to many species - including our own - researchers are also noticing other unforeseen impacts, the Independent reported.

One of these is a “spider baby boom”. A new study reveals that species such as the wolf spider are already adapting to the warmer conditions in the Arctic, and as a result have been able to hatch two clutches of offspring during the summer, instead of the usual one.

Researchers have previously reported the impact of the changing climate meant plants bloom earlier in the season, while some species have moved farther north and into more mountainous regions.

But a team of researchers led by Toke Høye from the Arctic Research Centre and Department of Bioscience at Aarhus University has now shown that changes are also occurring in the reproduction of invertebrates.

The data for wolf spiders goes back almost 20 years. Researchers at the Zackenberg Research Station in north-eastern Greenland have caught and studied the species as part of the Greenland Ecosystem Monitoring programme.

The spiders were caught in small pitfall traps set up in different vegetation types.

The researchers counted the number of eggs in the individual spider's egg sacs and compared this information with the time of the season that the animal was caught. By looking at the distribution of the number of eggs in the egg sacs throughout the season, the researchers said it became clear that in some summers the spiders produced two egg sacs - a recognised phenomenon in warmer latitudes, but not one which has previously been observed in the Arctic.

“We now have the longest time series of spiders collected in the Arctic. The large amount of data allows us to show how small animals in the Arctic change their life history in response to climate change,” said Dr Høye.

The data indicates the earlier the snow disappears from the ground, the greater the proportion of spiders which can produce a second clutch of hatchlings.

“These changes have not been [documented before] and evidence suggests that the phenomenon plays an important role for Arctic insects and spiders,” Dr Høye said.

The researchers said they see the spiders' ability to adapt to the new conditions as a response to climate change.

Wolf spiders feed on small organisms such as springtails in the soil. If there are more spiders - or insects - in the future Arctic, it can have an influence on the food chains on land.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

UK higher education vote

(January 28, 2004)

The British government managed to win a vote in parliament on 27th January on a key piece of domestic policy. The government's majority was cut from 161 to 5 in the vote on higher education funding, which has been seen as a major test of the authority of the Prime Minister Tony Blair. This report from Jon Devitt: Mr Blair had to use all his **powers of persuasion** to win this vote, and only just succeeded. He **staked his authority** on the plans to change the way higher education is funded.

After weeks of **cajoling and concessions** aimed at critics within his own party, his **majority** of a hundred and sixty one was **slashed** to just five. Throughout the day before the vote, senior ministers had **rallied behind** the prime minister, in particular, the chief finance minister Gordon Brown, who it's thought persuaded some of the main rebels to back Mr Blair at the last moment.

Questions are being asked about the prime minister's tactics in **bringing forward** such an unpopular **measure**, and it remains to be seen what **political debts** he may have to repay at a later date.

This victory though, however **slim**, will be a relief to the prime minister. He has already received an advance copy of the Hutton report into the death of the weapons scientist David Kelly.

Words

powers of persuasion: an ability to make people do something by giving them a good reason for doing so
staked his authority: risked the power he has to control people
cajoling and concessions: forcing people to do something they don't want and agreeing to do things that you don't want
majority: the number of Members of Parliament the government has over all opposition parties
slashed: considerably reduced
rallied behind: begun to support
bringing forward: proposing so that it can be discussed
measure: an action taken to achieve a particular result
political debts: favours he has been granted and will have to return or pay back
slim: narrow, small

(Source: BBC)

‘False U.S. reports about Russia in Afghanistan led to threats against diplomats’

False information about Russia and Afghanistan, published by the U.S. media, has already led to direct threats against Russian diplomats, the Russian Embassy in Washington said on Saturday. “Baseless and anonymous accusations [published by nytimes] of Moscow as mastermind behind killing of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan have already led to direct threats to the life of employees of the Russian Embassies in Washington D.C. and London,” the embassy said in a Twitter post.

New York Times reported on Friday that an unidentified unit of Russian military intelligence allegedly incited militants of the Taliban movement (outlawed in Russia) to attack servicemen of the international coalition in Afghanistan.

According to Russian diplomats, the paper has been inventing false stories in the absence of real reasons to blame Russia. Moreover, the embassy said the authors of the article “obviously lack information on cooperation between Russia and U.S. on the Afghan peace process, on Syrian, North Korean, Venezuelan, Iranian agendas.”

“We demand the relevant U.S. authorities take effective measures to ensure the fulfillment of their international obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961,” the embassy said.

U.S. intelligence has concluded that the Russian military offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants in Afghanistan to kill American troops and other coalition forces, the New York Times reported on Friday.

Citing officials briefed on the matter, the Times said the United States determined months ago that a Russian military intelligence unit linked to assassination attempts in Europe had offered rewards for successful attacks last year.

Extremist militants, or armed criminal elements closely associated with them, are believed to have collected some bounty money, the newspaper said.

Macron ‘confident’ of progress in Russia ties after Putin talks

French President Emmanuel Macron is confident of progress in key areas with Russia, including notably the crisis in Libya, his office said after a video conference summit with Russia’s Vladimir Putin.

Macron is “confident that we can make progress with Russia on a number of subjects,” a senior French presidential official told reporters, citing “a common interest in the stabilisation of Libya and the reunification of its institutions.”

Macron has in recent months pursued a policy of rapprochement with Russia, reaching out to Putin over key areas of disagreement such as Ukraine, in an approach that has discomforted some EU allies.

Their talks came after Macron this week bitterly attacked Turkey’s intervention in the Libya conflict, which has tipped the balance away from rebel strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Russia backs Haftar, and France is also suspected of favoring him -- although Paris insists it is neutral in the conflict.

Haftar has endured a series of defeats in recent weeks as Turkey ups its support for the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), raising doubts about the strongman’s future.

In the talks, Macron expressed “all the worries that the reinforcement of the Turkish presence in Libya cause,” the official said.

But the official added that Macron also raised with Putin “foreign interference in Libya” including the presence of mercenaries from the Wagner group, a Russian paramilitary organization reportedly run by a confidant of Putin.

Resistance News

UN expert urges EU to act decisively against Israel

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — A UN rights investigator urged the European Union (EU) on Friday to consider taking decisive punitive measures against any Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories in the occupied West Bank.

Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, said the EU should back up its warnings against Israeli plans with “a decisive menu of counter-measures.”

That was a reference to possible economic, trade and other sanctions the EU recently implied to take if Israel annexed parts of the West Bank.

Lynk said that Israel’s intended annexation would “lead to a marked worsening of the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and daily lives of millions of Palestinians.”

He said the planned annexation after July 1 was a continuation of Israel’s “illegal extension of sovereignty over Palestinian and Arab lands over the past decades, underlining that now the international community was more alert to severe violations of international law.

“What would be left of the West Bank would be a moth-eaten Bantustan, which would be the end, not the beginning, of a genuine Palestinian state. This would be a modern form of apartheid, a political anomaly in the 21st century,” he highlighted.

The expert emphasized that the international community, and particularly the EU, needed to take concerted action to counter the Israeli plans and ensure accountability for such grave breaches of international law.

“We have reached a point where resolutions without resolve can no longer contribute to reaching the just and durable peace and human security that Palestinians and Israelis deserve,” he said.

He called on the EU to necessarily pressure Israel to abide by the international law and to detail the political, diplomatic and economic consequences that would affect Israel if it defied the international will.

Any amount of annexation is contrary to the UN Charter, and a fundamentally illegal act, he pointed out.

“Should Israel proceed with any form of annexation after 1 July — even if it is ‘annexation-lite,’ consisting of several settlement blocs instead of the announced 30 percent of the West Bank — the European Union must lead the world in imposing accountability measures,” Lynk underscored further.

Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu announced last month that his government would formally annex the Jordan Valley and all settlement blocs in the West Bank.

The West Bank, including east Jerusalem, is seen as occupied territory under international law, making all Jewish settlements there as well as the planned annexation illegal.

Iraqi leaders say raid on Kata’ib Hezbollah HQ ‘dictated by U.S.’

Senior Iraqi leaders say the US was behind the Thursday raid on the headquarters of Kata’ib Hezbollah, which raised serious questions about Iraq’s direction under the new government.

Kata’ib Hezbollah is an anti-US unit operating under Hashd al-Sha’abi - an Iraqi umbrella group also known as Popular Mobilization Forces (PMU) which includes more than 40 militia groups fighting Takfiri terrorism.

“The late Thursday night’s operation against Hashd al-Sha’abi had been dictated by the United States. There are foreign interventions and bids to harm the PMU,” Qais al-Khazali, leader of Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq which is part of the PMU, said in a statement released on Friday.

He advised Iraqi officials not to engage in a confrontation with Hashd al-Sha’abi as the anti-terror group represents people from all strata of the Iraqi society.

“No one can prevent the resistance fighters from battling US forces in order to drive them out of Iraq if they do not withdraw through peaceful means,” Khazali pointed out.

He stressed that no resistance faction has ever targeted Iraqi government institutions inside Baghdad’s heavily fortified Green Zone.

■ **Don’t play into US hands: Nujaba official**

A senior official with Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba also called upon Iraqi



authorities not to play into the hands of US military forces, warning against further raids on PMU headquarters.

Nasr al-Shammari, the deputy secretary-general and official spokesman of the movement, touched on numerous sacrifices made by Kata’ib Hezbollah in the campaign against Daesh terrorists, saying members of the group must not be targeted.

According to Press TV, Shammari cited efforts by certain parties in Iraq to stoke sedition in Iraq, saying the Thurs-

day raid was “a desperate attempt” that would have “unpredictable consequences for its planners”.

■ **Iraq’s Counter Terrorism Service must fight Daesh’**

Meanwhile, Friday prayers leader of Najaf Sayyid Sadr al-Din al-Qabanchi denounced the raid on Kata’ib Hezbollah and detention of more than a dozen members of the anti-terror group.

Iraq’s elite Counter Terrorism Service, he said, must fight Daesh and other terrorist sleeper cells instead of targeting

Hashd al-Sha’abi fighters.

Qabanchi also advised the Iraqi government to address the country’s problems, such as the ongoing Turkish military offensive, economic woes and the coronavirus pandemic, rather than target anti-terror groups.

Hashd al-Sha’abi 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 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.

On March 27, the New York Times newspaper reported that the Pentagon had ordered a secret directive, which called on US military commanders to prepare a campaign against Kata’ib Hezbollah.

In April, a member of the Iraqi parliament’s security and defense committee had warned about ulterior motives behind the redeployment of US troops to various military sites across the Arab country, saying Washington was drawing up plans to target PMU and its affiliates.

Hashd al-Sha’abi fighters have played a major role in the liberation of areas held by the Daesh terrorists ever since the Takfiri group launched an offensive in the country, overrunning vast swathes in lightning attacks.

Do not assume U.S. still aspires to be a world leader, Merkel warns

→ 1 But even during Barack Obama’s presidency Merkel saw her government repeatedly chided for its low military spending – criticism that intensified under Donald Trump, who recently confirmed plans to withdraw 9,500 American troops from bases in Germany.

In an interview with the Guardian, Germany’s Süddeutsche Zeitung, France’s Le Monde, Spain’s La Vanguardia, Italy’s La Stampa and Poland’s Polityka, Merkel said the U.S. military presence in central Europe was in the U.S.’s own interest.

“American troops in Germany help to protect not only Germany and the European part of NATO but also the interests of the United States of America,” the chancellor said.

Talking of Germany’s military spending, Merkel said: “We in Germany know that we have to spend more on defence; we have achieved considerable increases in recent years, and we will continue on that path to enhance our military capabilities.”

But “reflecting very deeply” for Merkel does not appear to amount to an endorsement of what the French president,



Emmanuel Macron, has called European “strategic autonomy”, the ability to defend the continent without reliance on the U.S.

In historic first, the House of Representatives passes D.C. statehood bill

→ 1 But Republicans argued the move was a political ploy to gain Democratic seats in Congress and ran counter to the Founding Fathers’ intentions.

Georgia Representative Jody Hice said, “If the nation’s capital city were situated within a state, the federal government could be subject to undue influence of that state, and that’s not the intent of our federal government. That’s not the intent of this district that’s been set aside, and yet that’s exactly what would happen under this bill.”

Pennsylvania Representative Fred Keller moved to recommit with instructions, the last chance to change the bill before the House voted on it. The motion

included provisions requiring D.C. to comply with certain parameters around issues like Second Amendment rights and sanctuary city policies, among others.

The motion failed, with members also voting largely along party lines: 182 votes in favor and 227 votes against it.

In a press conference ahead of the historic vote on Thursday, Mayor Muriel Bowser, who was joined by Hoyer, Norton, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson, made her case for D.C. statehood and called out federal overreach.

Bowser said “the whims of a federal government can encroach on our even

limited autonomy, and it can do so in ways that are threats to all of the American states and all of the American people. The way we say ‘no’ is to make D.C. a state.” While D.C. has a population of more than 706,000 people, which is more than Wyoming and Vermont and pays federal taxes, it lacks voting representation in Congress and does not have the control over its own affairs that states do.

In 1971, the District got its first-ever nonvoting delegate to Congress. The 1973 Home Rule Act instituted the District’s current structure of governance and gave D.C. the power to elect a 13-member city council and its own mayor.

According to NPR, last week as House

Democrats announced the date of the vote, Hoyer voiced his support for statehood and criticized the District’s federal coronavirus relief package, which gave D.C. less than half the money states got, despite having more coronavirus cases than 19 of them.

Hoyer looked ahead to the next steps for the bill on Thursday, stating that he and Pelosi are “not just committed to getting it through the House, we’re committed to getting it to be law.”

Bowser echoed that sentiment. “While it is my great pleasure to be the mayor of my hometown, [I was] born here without a vote, but I swear I will not die here without a vote.”

N .Korea: ‘Only option left to counter nuclear with nuclear’

North Korea says Washington has left Pyongyang with no choice but to “counter nuclear with nuclear” in a bid to confront hostile U.S. policies against the Asian country.

“In order to eliminate the nuclear threats from the U.S., the DPRK government made all possible efforts either through dialogue or in resort to the international law, but all ended in vain,” North Korean state news wrote in an essay, using an abbreviation for the country’s official name.

“The option left was only one, and that was to counter nuclear with nuclear,” it added.

The 5,000-word article documented the history of North Korea’s grievances with the U.S., South Korea and its allies and came a day after all of these countries marked the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War.

It also came just days after the North said it was suspending “military action plans” against the South after it had blown up a liaison office used for talks between the two countries in a North Korean border city.



The two Koreas were on a path of rapprochement beginning in January 2018 before U.S. intransigence to relieve any of the sanctions on the North effectively killed diplomacy.

Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan to agree Nile dam deal ‘in two weeks’

Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan will agree a deal to fill the giant Blue Nile dam in two to three weeks, following mediation by the African Union to broker a deal to end a decade-long dispute over water supplies.

Tortuous negotiations over the years have left the two nations and their neighbour Sudan short of an agreement to regulate how Ethiopia will operate the

dam and fill its reservoir, while protecting Egypt’s scarce water supplies from the Nile river.

Ethiopia’s water minister, Seleshi Bekele, said that consensus had been reached to finalize a deal within two to three weeks, a day after leaders from the three countries and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who chairs

the African Union (AU), held an online summit.

The announcement late on Friday was a modest reprieve from weeks of bellicose rhetoric and escalating tensions over the \$4.6bn Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which Ethiopia had vowed to start filling at the start of the rainy season in July.

According to al Jazeera, Ethiopia has hinged its development ambitions on the mega-project, describing the dam as a crucial lifeline to bring millions out of poverty. Egypt, which relies on the Nile for more than 90 percent of its water supplies and already faces high water stress, fears a devastating impact on its booming population of 100 million.

FFIRI's Statutes in accordance with FIFA regulations: official

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** —Head of desk Legal and Regulations Compliance Committee of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), Ahmedreza Barati, says that the most of the articles of the FFIRI's draft Statutes are in accordance with FIFA regulations.

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

According to the some reports, FIFA has accepted some proposed changes by the FFIRI such as removing the Minister of Sports and Youth and his deputy from the FFIRI General Assembly and, instead, agreed with their presence as honorary members.

Barati believes that the process of correspondence between FFIRI, FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) over the amendment of the statutes is completely normal.

"Because of the outbreak of the pandemic coronavirus all over the world, it is not possible to hold face to face meetings, and as a result, we have had to follow the process of negotiation over the revision of the statutes through videoconferencing, emails and letters, given the circumstances," he said.

In response to some reports that the FFIRI had not sent the draft statutes to the member of the FFIRI Assembly, Barati said: "All the members of the FFIRI's board of directors are fully aware of the details of the statutes and oversee the amendment process."

"FFIRI's assembly as a key pillar of the federation, has the final authority to approve the statutes, and obviously nothing would be approved without the assembly members' opinion. But at the same time, the way that allows the members to participate in amending the statutes must be subject to the regulations of the current statutes.

"According to the current FFIRI statutes, the text of the draft Statutes will be sent to the



members of the assembly 21 days before the General Assembly meeting," Barati added.

Head of FFIRI's Legal and Regulations Compliance Committee confirmed that the most of the provisions of the FFIRI's draft Statutes are in accordance with FIFA regulations.

"There is currently one major disagreement between the Iranian football feder-

ation and FIFA about the legal nature of the federation. According to the Article 1 of the amended Statutes, the FFIRI is a "non-governmental public organization", while FIFA is not yet convinced by such a title. We are working to resolve this issue through negotiation. It is normal that FIFA, as the international governing body of football, would be sensitive about the member

associations' Statutes."

FIFA had previously stopped the FFIRI from holding its elections due to concerns over potential government interference in the organization.

President Mehdi Taj resigned from his position in December, with Heydar Baharvand is currently the Acting President of the governing body.

Ajax eye Alireza Jahanbakhsh



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ajax desk have set their sights on signing Brighton & Hove Albion winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh, De Telegraaf reported.

The Iranian winger joined Brighton in 2018 from AZ Alkmaar but has failed to impress at Falmer Stadium. He has made only eight Premier League appearances this season.

Ajax are looking for a dynamic forward this summer, and according to De Telegraaf they have now set their focus

on Jahanbakhsh. The 26-year-old is reportedly open to an Eredivisie return.

An official bid has not been lodged yet, but with Hakim Ziyech off to Chelsea, the Dutch giants are in need of a winger and the team director of football Marc Overmars has apparently been in contact with the player.

Jahanbakhsh cost Brighton €25 million two years ago, and it's unclear how much Ajax would have to pay for him. That fee could decrease significantly if Brighton are relegated this season.

Luka Bonacic returns to Zob Ahan



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Luka desk Bonacic has returned to Iran once again. The 65-year-old Croat has been appointed as Zob Ahan coach for rest of Iran Professional League (IPL) season.

His main task is to save Zob Ahan from relegation since the Greens are just six points above the drop zone.

Bonacic will lead Zob Ahan in eight matches, starting with a game against Shahr Khodro in Mashhad on Sunday. He has most recently coached Varazdin

in the Croatian First Football League.

Bonacic is familiar with Iran football since he has worked in many Iranian clubs, namely Foolad, Gostaresh, Sepahan, Mes and Esteghlal Ahvaz.

He replaced Miodrag Radulovic in Isfahan based football team after the Montenegrin coach didn't return to Iran due to coronavirus fears.

Bonacic has already worked in Zob Ahan in 2012-13 season. Local coaches Hassan Esteki and Mohammad Salsali will assist him in Zob Ahan.

Liverpool urge fans to celebrate title safely amid COVID-19 fears

Liverpool have condemned the behavior of fans who gathered in Liverpool city center for a second night on Friday to celebrate their team's Premier League title win and urged them to stay at home due to fears of a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Local media reported that fans launched fireworks at the Royal Liver Building, with a fire breaking out on the balcony of the landmark owned by Farhad Moshiri, the majority shareholder of the side's local rivals Everton.

Liverpool's 30-year wait for their 19th English top-flight title ended on Thursday after second-placed Manchester City were beaten by Chelsea.

Thousands of fans turned up at Anfield stadium on Thursday to celebrate, and Merseyside Police issued a dispersal order on Friday after crowds gathered for a second night at the city center near the Mersey Ferry terminal.

"Our city is still in a public health crisis and this behavior is wholly unacceptable," Liverpool, Merseyside police and the Liverpool City Council said in a joint statement.

"The potential danger of a second peak of COVID-19 still exists and we need to work together to make sure we don't undo everything that has been achieved as a region during lockdown.

"When it is safe to do so, we will all work



together to arrange a victory parade when everyone can come together to celebrate."

The police said on Twitter that the dispersal order would remain in force until Sunday.

Liverpool mayor Joe Anderson urged fans to return home after pictures of the crowd near the Mersey Ferry terminal emerged on social media.

"I appreciate LFC fans want to celebrate but please, for your own safety, and that of others, go home and celebrate at home," Anderson said on Twitter.

"People are asking why we are not moving the fans on, or taking action to prevent them gathering. Councils simply do not have the power to do this. If you know someone who is there, please message them and ask them to come home."

(Source: Reuters)

Zidane on Real Madrid future: This job wears you out

Zinedine Zidane has admitted the Real Madrid job "wears you out," saying he has no desire to coach for another 20 years.

Madrid and Barcelona are locked in a frantic La Liga title race, level on points -- with Zidane's team top thanks to their head-to-head record -- with seven games left to play over just three weeks.

"I won't coach for 20 years. I'll retire before that," Zidane said in a news conference ahead of Real Madrid's game with Espanyol on Sunday. "I'm an unusual coach, anything could happen. I'm not planning anything. It's the day-to-day that excites me. For how long, I don't know.

"In my head I've always been a player. I played for 18 or 19 years, and after that when people asked me if I'd be a coach, I said no. Then I decided to become one. This really wears you out. It won't be 20 years, that's for sure."

Madrid have been in good form this month, winning four out of four matches since La Liga's return, while rivals Barca have already dropped points in a 0-0 draw with Sevilla.

Part of that success has been an impressive defensive record, with just 21 goals conceded in La Liga this season,



the fewest of any team.

"[Ramos and Varane] are the best pair around," Zidane said. "What they do is exceptional. I like to play football, but defence is the most important thing today. We have an advantage with the defence we have, and we have players who are committed. But defending isn't about four or five players. We've shown strength and attitude as a team."

Ramos has also contributed in attack, scoring eight league goals this season -- his best-ever tally -- including a free kick in Madrid's 2-0 win over Mallorca on Wednesday.

Ramos and Zidane played together in the 2005-06 season, which was Zidane's last as a player and Ramos' first at the club.

(Source: ESPN)

Iran female athletes make glories in world, Olympic Games

IRNA — Glory of colorful medals gained by the female athletes of Iran from different Olympic, world and Asian Games, show that women's position has strengthened over the past seven years since the incumbent Government took office.

It was a record for Iran's sports history when nine Iranian women were qualified for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games for the first time.



And surprisingly, another record was broken by Kimia Alizadeh winning bronze medal at the 2016 Olympic games in taekwondo. Her medal was the first in the Olympic history of Iranian women.

Also in 2019, Poupak Basami, Iranian woman who had taken part in the 2019 IWF World Championships in Pattaya, Thailand, broke her national records and stood at the sixth place.

Participation of Iran's female weightlifters in the world competitions had international reactions as International Weightlifting Federation congratulated Iran for sending four female weightlifters to this year's world championships.

Meanwhile, Mansourian sisters well-known to the world for their Wushu capabilities have brought several gold and other colorful medals from the world competitions to the country in recent years.

Additionally, in December, the Iranian women's Alysh team clinched the championship title at the 2019 world alysh competitions held in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan.

The victory was the first in history achieved by Iran's female alysh wrestlers, and it made Iran be proud of its powerful women.

Another unforgettable victory was gained in 2018 when Iranian women won gold medal in kabaddi at the Asian Games in Jakarta.

In 2015, Iranian woman- Najmeh Khedmati- won the first ever shooting gold medal of Women's 10m Air Rifle at the 2015 Universiade games (World University Games) in South Korea.

Also in 2014, Iranian athlete Leyla Rajabi was awarded silver medal at the Women's Shot Put Final in South Korea.

All those medals and achievements have gained by the Iranian women who participate in the international competitions while wearing Hijab.

The names of other Iranian women who have helped Iran improve position of its sports in the international events have not written but they are many.

Skocic needs support for achieving success in Iran: Jahanbakhsh

MNA — Brighton's and Iran winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh said that the new coach of National Team Dragan Skocic needs the support of fans and media.

"It's not the time to talk about the appointment of the new coach. Iran are not in good condition and Skocic cannot succeed without the support from players, media, and fans of Iranian football," Jahanbakhsh told Mehr News Agency on Saturday.

The Croatian Skocic took the reins at Iran in February after parting company with Iranian top-flight team Sanat Naft. He replaced Belgian Marc Wilmots who had failed to obtain good results and had problems with the Iranian federation regarding payment issues. Skocic's appointment had brought some backlash as some fans and experts believed that he may not be capable of managing Iran as he has no experience in national teams. Meanwhile, others believe that his experience as a coach in an Iranian club and his familiarity with the country can lead to his success.

"I have met him just once but I think his familiarity with Iranian football will come to his help," Jahanbakhsh added.

"I believe all players will show support for Mr. Skocic. A young and energetic generation is now in Iran. We have the best players regarding their capabilities and talents."

Iran is third in Group C, five points behind Iraq and must have to win their four matches to qualify for the 2022 World Cup qualification next stage.

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

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

Mahdi Javid named Iran Futsal league top scorer

Tasnim — Mes Sungun forward Mahdi Javid became the top scorer of 2019-2020 Iran Futsal Super league.

Javid was chosen as top goal scorer with 31 goals.

It's for the fourth successive season he becomes the top goal scorer.

On Friday, Mes Sungun won the title of the Iran Futsal Super league after defeating Giti Pasand in Tabriz.

Miro parts ways with Shahr Khodro

Tasnim — Ukrainian forward Myroslav Dmytrovych "Miro" Slavov has parted company with Iranian football club Shahr Khodro.

Shahr Khodro completed the signing of the 29-year-old forward from Latvian football team Riga in winter transfer window.

Miro failed to impress since joining the Mashhad-based football team. He didn't score in the team.

Shahr Khodro sits sixth, 12 points behind Iran Professional League (IPL) leader Persepolis.

The team will meet Zob Ahan on Sunday.

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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

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Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Most of those who lose their wisdom, do so because of being dazzled by greed, and shutting their eyes against fact.

Imam Ali (AS)

Life story of martyr Beheshti under spotlight in Qaderi's new play

→1 He also became the leader of the newly founded Islamic Republican Party (IRP), which was the most important group in the Majlis – parliament.



Martyr Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Beheshti in an undated photo.

Considered one of the most powerful men in Iran, Beheshti played a leading part in the U.S. hostage crisis. Kolahi was sentenced to death in absentia after fleeing the country in 1981. He was gunned down in front of his home in the Dutch town of Almere in December 2015.

“Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life” published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of “Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life” co-written by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles has been published by Torang Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Qasem Yusefi.



Cover of the book “Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life” co-written by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles.

According to the Japanese, everyone has an ikigai—a reason for living. And according to the residents of the Japanese village with the world's longest-living people, finding it is the key to a happier and longer life.

Having a strong sense of ikigai—the place where passion, mission, vocation and profession intersect—means that each day is infused with meaning. It's the reason we get up in the morning. It's also the reason many Japanese never really retire (in fact there's no word in Japanese that means retire in the sense it does in English): They remain active and work at what they enjoy, because they've found a real purpose in life—the happiness of always being busy.

In researching this book, the authors interviewed the residents of the Japanese village with the highest percentage of 100-year-olds—one of the world's Blue Zones. Ikigai reveals the secrets to their longevity and happiness: how they eat, how they move, how they work, how they foster collaboration and community, and—their best-kept secret—how they find the ikigai that brings satisfaction to their lives. And it provides practical tools to help you discover your own ikigai. Because who doesn't want to find happiness in every day?

Director Jalal Fatemi to make “Bird” about poet Sohrab Sepehri's childhood

A R T **TEHRAN** — The childhood of the Persian blank verse poet and painter Sohrab Sepehri will be portrayed in a movie titled “Bird” by children's filmmaker Jalal Fatemi.

“The screenplay of the project has been written based on a memory narrated by Sepehri's family,” said Fatemi who is Sepehri's nephew.

“The story of the film is focused on Sepehri's childhood until when he decides to leave his hometown of Kashan, starting his journeys around the world to pursue his higher education,” he stated and added that the story of the film actually intends to show how Sepehri acquired his reputation as a poet and artist.

Fatemi, whose movie “Nokhodi” was selected as best film and won special jury prize at the 24th Hamedan International Film Festival for Children and Young Adults in 2010, said that it's difficult at present to attract an investor into such a project, which its target groups are children and young adults.

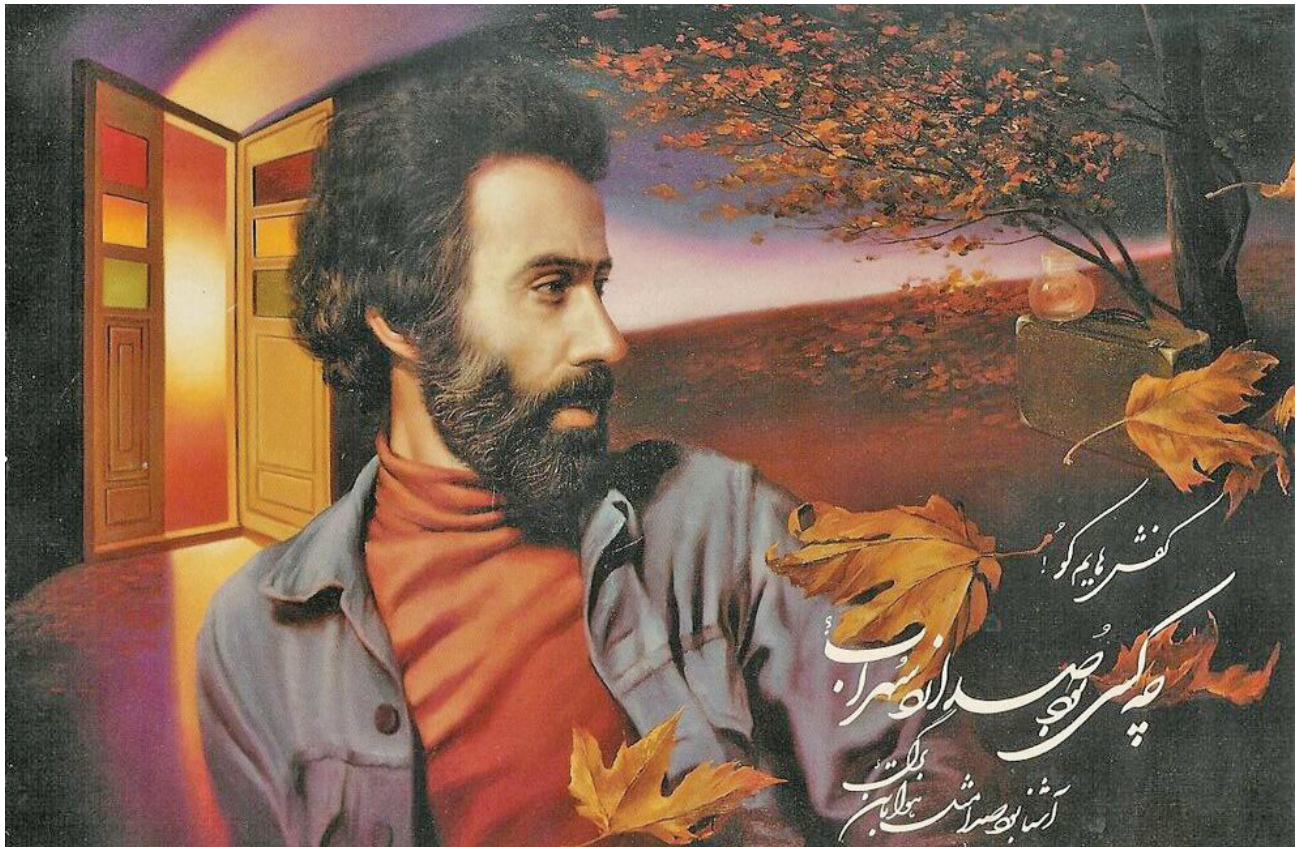
“This period of Sepehri's life is really exciting and funny and we should not deem the movie as mystic, because it will portray the normal life of the poet,” he said.

“Before her death, my mother published five books to amend mystical misinformation about Sohrab and made her best endeavors to tell the true-life story of the poet, which has been reflected in the screenplay of ‘Bird,’” noted Fatemi.

Earlier in 2018, filmmaker Ali Qavitan announced his new film “Sohrab's Dream” that traces the mysticism and philosophy of Sepehri's poetry.

Due to his striking resemblance to Sepehri, Qavitan himself played the role of the poet and painter who was one of Iran's most influential literary figures over the past five decades.

The film, which has not premiered yet



A portrait of the Persian poet Sohrab Sepehri.

was shot on location in Kashan.

Born in 1928, Sepehri is second only to poet Nima Yushij, who is known for his pure style of blank verse.

As a talented artist and a gifted poet, Sepehri came to prominence with the publication of

his collection “The Water's Footfall” in 1965.

His works have been translated into the English, French, Italian and Spanish languages.

His paintings have been the most expensive works sold at the Tehran Auction over the

past few years.

Sepehri died of leukemia in Tehran in 1980. His grave is located in the courtyard of the mausoleum of Imamzadeh Sultan Ali ibn Muhammad Baqir (AS) in the village of Mashhad-e Aradahal near Kashan.

Adaptation of Saramago's “Death with Interruptions” to go on stage in Tehran



Members of the troupe Seganeh perform “Women's Auschwitz” at Tehran's Shahrzad Theater on November 9, 2019. (Reza Javidi)

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Iranian troupe Seganeh plans to perform an adaptation of Portuguese writer José Saramago's “Death with Interruptions” in Tehran during summer.

“Invasion” will be staged at Da Theater, writer and director Ali Safari said on Saturday.

The novel centers around death as both a phenomenon, and as an anthropomorphized character. A key focus of the book is how society relates to death in both of these forms, and likewise, how death relates to the people she is meant to kill.

“The situation in ‘Invasion’ is similar to the one currently underway in the world,” Safari wrote in a statement for the play.

“The play provides a new insight into

immortality in the viewpoint of people in various layers of society; those people who feel happy for the immortality and forget the effective use of death on life,” he added.

He has previously directed “Cronus” about the leader and youngest of the first generation of Titans, the divine descendants of Uranus, the sky, and Gaia, the earth in Greek mythology.

He also has staged “Women's Auschwitz” about women in the Auschwitz concentration camp operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during World War II and the Holocaust.

“Death with Interruptions” was first released in 2005 in its original Portuguese. A Persian translation of the book by Habib Gohari-Rad was published by Radmehr in 2010.

“Hiking with Nietzsche” at Persian bookstores



Front cover of American writer John Kaag's book “Hiking with Nietzsche: On Becoming Who You Are”.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — American writer John Kaag's book “Hiking with Nietzsche: On Becoming Who You Are” has recently been published in Persian.

Maryam Payman is the translator of the book published by Khazeh in Tehran.

Originally published in 2018, “Hiking with Nietzsche” is a tale of two philosophical journeys in the Swiss Alps: one made by John Kaag as an introspective teenager, the other seventeen years later in radically different circumstances - as a husband and father with his wife and small child in tow.

Kaag travels to the peaks above Sils Maria where Nietzsche routinely summered, and where he wrote his mysterious landmark work, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”.

Both trips are made in search of the wisdom at the core of Nietzsche's philosophy, yet they bring Kaag to radically different revelations about the human condition.

Entertaining, intimate and thought-provoking, “Hiking with Nietzsche” explores not only Nietzsche's ideals but how his philosophy relates to us in the 21st century. It is about defeating complacency, balancing sanity and madness, and coming to grips with the unobtainable. As Kaag hikes into the high places, alone or with his family, but always with Nietzsche, he finds that the process of climbing and the inevitable missteps give one the chance, in Nietzsche's words, to “become who you are.” Even when we think it's too late to change, this most controversial of thinkers can inspire the rediscovery of meaning.

Filmgoing less risky than other activities in pandemic: “No Place for Angels” director

A R T **TEHRAN** — Sam Kalantari, the director of the acclaimed documentary “No Place for Angels” about the national Iranian women's hockey team, has said that the risk of going to movie theaters is less than many other activities during the pandemic.

“The team knows the film might not be welcomed by the audience, however, coronavirus might be staying with us for months and even years, therefore with favorable conditions in the theaters that observe health protocols and selling tickets for only 50 percent of their capacities, the risk of going to movie theaters seems to be less than other current activities,” he said.

He added, “Out of several talks with producers, we decided to screen the film in these days when the movie

theaters opened after about four months of closure during the coronavirus pandemic, and of course, we are also planning for online screening after three weeks of screening in movie theaters.”

He said, “The current situation of the society needs an inspiring film that tells the story of some strong girls and women of the country and also injects a good feeling into the society.”

“No Place for Angels” received the special jury award at Cinéma Vérité, Iran's major documentary film festival, which is organized by the DEFC in Tehran every year.

It was also picked as best documentary at the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival in Tehran.

Movie theaters resumed activities on June 20 after a

four-month-long closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Peyma Qasemkhani's comedy “Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army” and Mohammad Kart's directorial debut “Butterfly Swimming” are the two films currently on screen.

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

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

ICRO director, Russian ambassador meet in Tehran

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Russian Ambassador Levan Dzhagaryan and the director of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), Abuzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman, have met in Tehran, discussing the expansion of cultural relations.

Ebrahimi-Torkaman said that dialogues on Islam and Christianity is a good way to expand cultural relations

with Russia and added, “We believe these dialogues have always been successful.”

Dzhagaryan also emphasized the need to reinforce the religious dialogues, which help increase cultural relations between the two countries.

The two sides also discussed the expansion of cultural relations through cultural agreements.



Russian Ambassador Levan Dzhagaryan (L) and ICRO director Abuzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman meet in Tehran.

The UN: 75 years of false expectations and failure



Andrew Korybko
Moscow-based American political analyst

■ The disunited nations

The 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN) presents a symbolic moment to reflect on what a failure the organization has been. Its establishment created false expectations among the international community that all nations will finally be treated equally irrespective of their size, but in reality, the UN is dominated by the five most important victors of the Second World War that sit on its Security Council (UNSC) and were also coincidentally or not the first five countries to obtain nuclear weapons.

Those countries pursue their own self-interests; some more ruthlessly than others, but all apart from the US do so under the guise of “international law”. That concept has proven itself to be ephemeral since the UN’s crucial flaw is that it lacks any credible enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with its Charter. The lack of UNSC approval for any given action no longer restrains certain countries which usually exploit the Charter’s self-defense clause as a loophole for justifying their unilateral actions or those it does via “coalitions of the willing”.

■ The 19th-century great power chessboard

The UN hasn’t been successful in resolving the Palestine, Kashmir, and Nagorno-Karabakh disputes, among many others, proving what a failure it’s been over the years. UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions are symbolic because they lend important political support to one’s cause, but they’re not legally binding, and even if they were, once again, no credible enforcement mechanisms exist to ensure compliance. The UN, while being useful as a talking club, is useless when it comes to resolving major crises.

It’s useful for countries to have a place to talk with one another and make their cases before the international community, but believing that the UN is anything more is nothing but a self-delusion by whoever holds such views. The UNSC won’t ever officially acknowledge this because they essentially regard the world as a 19th-century Great Power chessboard where the Great Powers cut deals with one another at the comparatively smaller countries’ expense while justifying their actions by claiming that they’re needed to “support stability”.

■ The sanctions example

Truth be told, the three Western members of the UNSC are the ones that are mostly guilty of this, but it can’t be overlooked how the other two countries agreed to impose sanctions on Iran over a decade ago for ex-

ample in what was clearly a diplomatic move that came about as a result of backroom deal-making with their peers. At the end of the day, the cold reality is that all countries put their interests before everyone else’s, but few openly acknowledge this because it’s regarded as “politically incorrect” to do so.

There’s a certain logic inherent in that too since each one of them should consciously be aware of the fact that anarchy reigns supreme in accordance with the Neo-Realist paradigm of International Relations but that it’s much more “politically convenient” to pretend that one’s government sincerely believes in the so-called “rules-based order” of the Neo-Liberal model as represented by the UN in order to disarm their rivals and dupe the rest of those states that aren’t smart enough to realize the strategic game that so many others are playing.

■ Anarchy reigns

Dismantling the UN isn’t the answer since that would only exacerbate international anarchy, though institutional reform also isn’t the answer unless it results in the creation of credible enforcement mechanisms, which is highly unlikely since no country or coalition thereof is presently willing (nor predicted to be for the indefinite future) to go to war with the U.S. every time that it violates international law. They simply don’t have the political will, nor trust others to truly support them if they do. Anarchy reigns, and true trust is non-existent.

The lesson to be learned by Iran’s loyalty to the Resistance is that it’s indeed possible to find powerful examples of comprehensive cooperation between states in spite of the international system’s prevailing anarchy.

Since International Relations are driven primarily by interests in accordance with the Neo-Realist model, it therefore follows that the path forward is for all countries to first become consciously aware of this if they aren’t already (e.g. some have been brainwashed as a result of long-running Neo-Liberal information warfare campaigns) and then to take all responsible measures needed to improve their credible deterrence capabilities and methods of advancing their interests through all means possible.

■ Every state for themselves

That’s not to say that every country should intend aggressive intentions to go to war with their rivals, but there’s no denying the fact that the resultant “security dilemma” of these aforesaid moves will likely trigger a serious threat perception



All countries have the responsibility to educate their public about the illusory nature of “international law”.

from those states which could conceivably be on the receiving end of such policies. No value judgment should be made about this since it’s neither “good” nor “bad” but simply “is”, whether one “wants” reality to be this way “or not”.

Going forward, all countries have the responsibility to educate their public about the illusory nature of “international law” so that they don’t become victims of the ongoing Neo-Liberal information warfare campaign and end up with false expectations that could then be weaponized by external forces for strategic ends once people inevitably realize the cold reality of International Relations. It’s literally every state for themselves, but that doesn’t preclude the possibility of them cooperating with one another in advancing their shared interests.

■ The importance of ideological interests

Partnerships, coalitions of the willing, and other temporary arrangements will continue to define International Relations as states compete with one another, even with their formal “allies” as is seen by the disagreements within NATO between the U.S. and Turkey over armed Kurdish groups in Syria. The only real alliances that are possible are those between states that share the same ideological goals that convince them to sacrifice material, short-, and medium-term interests in pursuit of their larger shared ones.

It’s a lot easier said than done to form such ideological alliances since no member’s commitment to them can be known for sure until they’re put to the test. In addition, gradual changes of perception within each member state (whether naturally occurring and/or the result of external information warfare) can lead to their leadership reconsidering the wisdom of remaining with the said ideological alliance. Nevertheless, such networks are the most efficient for mitigating the anarchy of the international system.

■ The resistance solution

As a perfect case in point, Iran consistently

proves its sincere commitment to its Resistance allies by continuing to help them in spite of the fact that some have argued that such support would be better invested within the country itself, especially considering its ongoing economic hardships brought about by the U.S. increasingly strict sanctions regime. It’s not for pursuit of material, short-, or medium-term gain that Iran supports Syria and Hezbollah, but in order to fulfill their shared long-term anti-Zionist vision of liberating Palestine.

The lesson to be learned by Iran’s loyalty to the Resistance is that it’s indeed possible to find powerful examples of comprehensive cooperation between states in spite of the international system’s prevailing anarchy. Ideology is the interest that usurps all others since it can convince countries to sell their geostrategic and economic interests to foreign patrons like the U.S., but it can also inspire them to work together despite the odds and hardships involved like the Resistance does in order to shape the future according to their shared vision.

It’s useful for countries to have a place to talk with one another and make their cases before the international community, but believing that the UN is anything more is nothing but a self-delusion by whoever holds such views.

Andrew Korybko is (Expert in the relationship between the U.S. strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China’s Belt & Road Initiative, and Hybrid Warfare)

UN has turned blind eye to rights violations in tyrannical regimes in West Asia: Indonesian academic

“We need structural reform in the UN to meet independent countries’ demands”

THRAN — Yon Machmudi, the head of the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Indonesia, says human rights violations are rampant in dictatorial regime in West Asia but they face no “condemnation by the UN” because they are supported by great powers in the West.

“They just let those human rights violations happen because of some regimes’ strong relationship with the superpowers,”



Machmudi tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ Some critics accuse the United Nations of being biased in dealing with human rights issues, as it turns its face away from the crimes practiced against citizens in some dictatorial Arab countries.

A: I believe that there is a kind of bias regarding the issue of human rights by the United Nations. We can see many violations of human rights in the Middle East (West Asia), but there is no such condemnation by the UN. It is because of the interests of some countries which support tyrannical regimes, particularly the dominant members of the UN, and the superpowers who evade their responsibilities. They just let those human rights violations happen because of some regimes’ strong relationship with the superpowers. That is why the UN cannot extend justice and enforce the law regarding human rights violations.

■ Do you believe that the UN stands on the side of justice, while there are countries that are contributing to and funding it in a greater proportion, such as the U.S. and Saudi Arabia?

A: Regarding UN funding, we see that powerful countries have a large proportion of the UN’s financing. However, there are a variety of factors; for instance, the U.S. supports some regimes in the West Asia, which have attitudes against humanity and human rights, and there is oppression by theses dictatorial regimes. At the same time, the UN cannot enforce justice in such a situation. For example, the U.S. imposed new restrictions on refugees, while there is no enforcement to ask countries like the U.S. to commit to human rights. Since some countries such as the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have more contributions, they try to determine the organization’s priorities.

■ What is the reason for the UN’s failure in the Palestine issue?

A: No doubt about it, the UN failed to carry out its mission in West Asia. While all issues regarding Palestine should be discussed in the Security Council of the UN, some members of the council are always against any resolution condemning Israel.

Today, there is no reason to rely on U.S. commitment to peace in Palestine and acting as a mediator. The U.S. already

“Since some countries such as the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have more contributions, they try to determine the organization’s priorities.”

stands by Israel’s side and is no longer neutral and committed to peace. So, we see no firm commitment to support the freedom and independence of Palestine. That’s the case we have to deal with to solve the Palestine crisis because all sides have their own interests in this conflict; For instance, Arabs have their own national considerations. We need a side who has no interest in this conflict to spread peace in this region, while the UN couldn’t help because of U.S. pressure.

■ The term “United Nations” was first used by U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt during World War II to refer to the Allies. Does it indicate that the UN is biased when it deals with powerful countries?

A: The UN was established after World War II based on the agreement of the allied powers, including the U.S., France, Britain, China, and the Soviet Union. In fact, the UN represents powerful countries who want to rule the whole world and dominate the UN, based on their understanding of international relationship, their resources, and arms. That’s why we need structural reform in the UN to meet independent countries’ demands. It requires a significant change to allow other countries out of the allies to have an active contribution and role.

■ Unlike the General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council does not have true international representation. Wouldn’t it be more reasonable if the number of permanent members would be increased to include non-nuclear powers too to democratize the organization?

A: It is necessary to expand the members of the security council while now we have just five permanent members who determine the dynamics of political decisions in the council. There is no doubt that we can’t tackle global problems by relying on five countries. We need to change this mechanism to give the other members the same right to have a pivotal role in decision-making in the Security Council to bring peace, harmony, and prosperity to this world.



Stephen Lendman

Headquartered in New York with offices in Geneva, Vienna, The Hague, and Nairobi, the UN is supposed to be an intergovernmental organization that champions peace, opposes war, and represents the rights, interests, and welfare of all nations and people everywhere equitably.

Established in 1945 to prevent the scourge of another devastating global war, the world body was largely co-opted to serve U.S.-led Western interests. Its secretary general and other key officials are installed by Washington with input from its imperial partners.

Instead of pursuing a new era of world

The UN secretary general and other key officials ignore U.S./NATO/Israeli aggression, state terror, and other high crimes of war and against humanity.

The United Nations: An imperial tool

If the world body was a nation, it would be a failed state, its principles breached, ordinary people everywhere betrayed.

UN consistently supports powerful interests over peace, equity, justice, and the rule of law — abandoning its own charter principles it breaches time and again by its actions.

Aggrieved millions have no ally at UN headquarters or its satellite branches. Imperial USA and its partners are free to bludgeon, exploit, and otherwise abuse them with impunity. If the world body was a nation, it would be a failed state, its principles breached, ordinary people everywhere betrayed. Its affirmation of human rights and dignity, of equal rights for all, of promoting social progress, tolerance, peace, stability, security, and economic advancement are empty words. The world body’s legacy reflects failure even though UNICEF, UNESCO, and other agencies at times provide aid in areas of health, education, food assistance, refugees, and social development. It’s never enough, timely, or with resolve to support troubled people adequately in times of need. It’s done nothing to beat swords into plowshares,

its primary mandate over all others, along with upholding the rule of law.

Time and again, the UN fails to challenge U.S.-led Western and Israeli interests — even when the rule of law is breached, notably not when ordinary people are grievously harmed. Instead of upholding UN Charter principles, the world body is guilty of breaching them time and again. If its operations were shut down, its staff released to seek other employment, its facilities used for other purposes, the state of the world would be largely unchanged.

Its epitaph would read something like the UN never really tried to make a difference, to improve the state of the world for everyone. Its secretary general and other key officials just pretend to support charter ideals. They devote most world body resources and their energy to serving powerful interests over everyone else. Given how it operates, it won’t be missed if shuts down sine die with no intention to resume what stopped.

The UN consistently supports powerful interests over peace, equity, justice, and the rule of law.

Stephen Lendman is American award-winning author, syndicated columnist and Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

Though UN has failed in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has secured peace among great powers: CIS-EMO director

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN — The United Nations is expected to play a constructive role in the problematic and complex West-Asian context.

It seems that the principle of state sovereignty, which is a central concept in the post-world wars era, is now being redefined by the behavior of superpowers and new international coalitions.

While West Asia has become an arena of paradoxes, and more conflicts within and between countries, many external powers now have a fundamental role in this chaotic situation, which indicates the collapse of sovereignty.

In this regard, Stanislav Byshok, who is executive director at the CIS-Europe Monitoring Organization (CIS-EMO) in Russia, believes that "although the UN has failed in settling the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has notable achievements in securing peace among great powers."

The text of Tehran Times' interview with Stanislav Byshok is as follows:

■ There are some reports indicating corruption at the UN. They confirm a strong connection between the distribution of foreign aid payments and UN decisions and resolutions. What is your comment?

A: Like any other institution, especially having big budgets, the UN is not immune to corruption. However, even having a certain amount of corruption on a higher level, the world in general, as we see, has been doing pretty well since the UN's inception in 1945. Actually, better than in any other period in history. It doesn't mean there are no conflicts needed to be resolved or cases of inhumanity to be stopped or people to be fed and provided with fresh water. There's a lot to be done, by sovereign nations on their own and by the concerted effort of the international community—including climate change. Yet as of today, we're heading in the right direction as humanity.

■ Do you believe that the UN is unbiased when it deals with powerful countries?

A: The United Nations, as an organization, is a direct successor to the failed League of Nations, its very name is reminiscent of that of its predecessor. On paper, both organizations should have been a community of equals. However, in practice, it's clear that great powers have more say in important issues than minor ones. At the same time, these very great powers also carry more responsibility to global well-being than small countries—and this fact shouldn't be overlooked. For example, the financial contribution of great powers to the UN, with its many projects relating to humanitarian issues, far exceeds that of the rest of the international community.

Some would say that it's just natural and by no means a virtue worth mentioning, that the wealthier nations should pay more. Perhaps it's so, but why, then, get appalled at the fact that those contributing more have also more say in meaningful decisions? In democracies or those countries maintaining a democratic facade, when you have an election or a referendum on a national level, one person has one voice, no matter their wealth, education, or origins. As it comes to an international or even global level, represented by the UN, the story's getting more complicated indeed.

■ Can we conclude that the UN has been unsuccessful in its mission to maintain international peace and security over the



last decades, especially in regard to the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts?

A: The UN has failed in the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, giving way to the almost unilateral military activities of the U.S. in these areas. That said, it would be unfair if we ignored the fact that the UN has succeeded in its chief goal: to secure peace among great powers. As we know, there has been no direct clashes between great powers since 1945. Whether this achievement should be attributed to the UN or other factors, like nuclear weapons or general rejection of war in the populations of great powers, is an issue of debates and speculations.

■ Do you agree with this view that a structural change in the UN will make it more competent?

A: Speaking of the UN, we'd better always keep in mind that this organization consists, not of some states, but of all the countries that exist today. Unlike in the cases of NATO or the EU, which comprise a smaller portion of world states and may pursue their separate policies vis-a-vis other countries or organizations, the UN is global. What follows is a paradox: the quality of being a UN member-state gives a country virtually nothing, but it is generally obligatory. It's like having a passport—you can't live a normal life without it, but it gives you no privileges about your fellow nationals.

Speaking of any fundamental structural change to the UN, it's challenging to come up with some non-nonsensical ideas to be accepted by all the great powers and the majority of minors. It's somewhat fashionable to question the UN's efficiency and claim the organization itself is obsolete or irrelevant. However, if we look at general numbers and global trends from 1945, when the UN was launched, to the present day, the world's doing pretty well. The average life expectancy is up—infant mortality is down, the average household income is up—the crime rate is down, general literacy is up—global conflicts down, the world population is up—poverty's down, etc. Skeptics would say that all that happened "naturally" or "by itself"

with no connection to the UN's activities. It's impossible to test this argument since we've all been living in "a UN world" since 1945—and we haven't had "a non-UN world" during the same period.

■ To democratize the world body, don't you think that it would be more reasonable to increase the permanent members of the UN Security Council to include non-nuclear countries?

A: It's an ages-long issue between what's known in International Relations as status-quo states and revisionist states. Wealthy and powerful states want to expand their wealth and power or at least to preserve a current status-quo—a state of the global international order in which the states in question are at the top. At the same time, those less wealthy and powerful, once they have grown enough—economically, militarily or politically, begin to challenge the current state of global affairs—seeking what they usually call a more just global order, thus becoming revisionist states.

The question of democracy is a tricky one, indeed. For example, there are non-democratic states, with no trace of observing human rights and fundamental freedoms at home, who claim they're entitled to democratic treatment abroad—for example, as members of the UN. Would that be fair to treat a non-democracy democratically? On the other hand, some countries are definitely democratic and respect human rights at home but act unitarily and at times aggressively abroad. Is it fair to call these countries fully democratic, given their foreign-policy track record? Debates of that sort seem to be rather important in case one wants to reform the UN fundamentally.

■ An objection by a veto-wielding power may cripple a possible armed or diplomatic response to a crisis by the UN. In view of this fact, what's your opinion about veto power?

"If we look at general numbers and global trends from 1945, when the UN was launched, to the present day, the world is doing pretty well. The average life expectancy is up, infant mortality is down,... global conflicts down, etc."

A: Veto power is a legacy of WWII, on which legacy the world order of today primarily rests—or so they say. From the current point of view, Germany, Japan, or India seem to be no less worthy of being permanent members of the UN Security Council, and thus having a veto right, than France. However, I see no reason why extending the number of the UN Security Council permanent members or substituting veto power with some qualified majority, would make the work of the institution more productive. Moreover, the latter would encourage factionalism, which doesn't seem to be a normal situation.

The issue of joint international action, diplomatic or military, is problematic indeed. That's the chief reason certain countries opt for acting unilaterally when they don't want to wait or disagree with some other UN member states on a given subject. Given that the UN is neither a nation nor a world government, it doesn't have an army of its own. All the UN troops are military personnel provided by this or that member state. If a state doesn't want to participate in certain operations, it can withdraw its troops with no meaningful repercussions. Powerful states can afford more disobedience than weak ones—as it has always been. If a group of minor states

There's a silver lining to these dark clouds of pessimism—nowadays, states go to war more rarely than in was the case previously.

can't defy a powerful state "outside" the U.S., how could they succeed "inside"?

There's a silver lining to these dark clouds of pessimism—nowadays, states go to war more rarely than in was the case previously.



Marvin Zonis

The United Nations in West Asia

When one contemplates the role of the UN in West Asia, one thinks immediately of its role in the ongoing and intractable conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. In what their many decades-long conflict over control of land and their ability to govern that land, the UN has failed to bring any resolution of that conflict.

As a result, it is easy to excoriate the UN's role in West Asia. But that characterization would be entirely unfair. In fact, the UN operates in the region in many different but essential ways.

One of the least known and minor services it performs is to facilitate postal mail flows between countries. The Universal Postal Union enforces postal standards and determines the share of the postage on any piece of mail to go to the sending country and the receiving country.

Of course the UN serves the region in so many more significant ways. Country teams from the UN operate in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinians territory, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the UAE and Yemen.

The country teams range from the UN Development Program to the International Atomic Energy Agency to the International Labor Organization to the UN Women's Organization to the UN Children's Fund to the World Meteorological Organization to the Food and Agricultural Organization. These agencies work towards the economic development, the educational development, the human rights, and the increased human development of the citizens of the host countries. In that sense, the UN is an unmitigated good for the region.

From the point of view of Iran, of course the UN looks very different. The UN votes for and enforces sanctions on Iran that deprive the country of the revenues and trade necessary for the protection and well-being of the Iranian people. But it is well to remember that those sanctions and the work of the IAEA come from the UN Security Council rather than from the multitude of agencies of the organization. The Security Council is a tool of its veto wielding members—the U.S., Russia, China, the UK, and France. Every one of those countries have voted to empower the UN to carry out their wishes.

Marvin Zonis is Professor Emeritus at the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago

Five corners of the world where the United Nations failed to resolve conflicts

The United Nations has succeeded in ending some conflicts and wars; however, it had catastrophic failures, which resulted in protracted conflicts and the death of millions of innocent civilians. Here are the top five times the United Nations failed to do what the world expects it to do since its inception:

1- Syria

The United Nations has been unable to prevent the world powers from interfering in Syria. It hasn't been able to confront Arab countries that have been sending terrorists to Syria. America's interventionist policies and conspiracies that hatched by some Arab regimes since the start of the Syrian crisis led to the deaths of about 600,000 civilians, the displacement of about 5 million Syrians, while the Syrian catastrophe continues, and the United Nations is watching.

2- Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka witnessed a bloody civil war that lasted from 1983 until 2009; the fighting forced 196,000 people to flee and led to the detention of more than 50,000 civilians. Independent experts urged the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate allegations of war crimes, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged that he was "disappointed" by the situation. Still, the United Nations has made no attempts to mediate on behalf of the civilian population. From January to April 2009, more than 65,000 civilians were killed in the so-called "safe area."

3. Palestine

At the beginning of the presentation of the Palestinian issue to the United Nations in 1947, the Security Council did not interfere to resolve the conflict and left it to be dealt with by the General Assembly.

Despite its importance to international peace and security, the UN evaded its primary responsibility in maintaining international peace and security.

It intervened after a year, but neither could oblige Israel to withdraw to the pre-June 6, 1967 borders nor put an end to ongoing Israeli violations against the Palestinians.

4- Lebanon:

The Security Council has not succeeded in preventing aggressive wars and repeated attacks on Lebanon by Israel.

Even though its resolutions have always been late and unfair for Lebanon, it could not force Israel to implement them because of US pressures.

5. Iraq

After the late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invaded Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations Security Council imposed severe economic sanctions on Iraq, depriving the country of food and medicine resources.

According to the statistics of the United Nations itself, Over a million Iraqis have died due to the sanctions. Then came the American invasion of Iraq recently, in which the United Nations took a bystander position.



Basic idea of UN is euro-centric, says Iranian sociologist

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization whose mission is to establish peace and security in the world. This is what stated in the preamble to its charter and its first article. Since its establishment, expectations were high on the UN's pivotal role in maintaining global stability and security by adopting a holistic vision towards international conflicts. Many mechanisms have been designed to make this goal achievable, the most important of which is the peacekeeping force. They have succeeded in settling some struggles between the permanent members of the Security Council. However, the organization has not been successful in resolving disputes in many parts of the world. For example, in Palestine and North of Africa conflicts are still going on.

To discuss the UN's history and its ability in settling the conflicts throughout the globe, the Tehran Times interviewed Javad Miri, professor of sociology and religious studies at the Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Given its charter, do you think that the UN has succeeded to fulfill its missions?

A: When asking if the UN as a global institution has been successful or not, and when measuring the success of the UN, you have to consider the background idea behind the establishment of the UN. I think the UN has been successful in preventing conflicts and potential wars in Europe and America. It was born after World War II and after the "League of Nations" collapsed in 1948. But in what kind of world order it was born? In the previous world order, we had the British empire, the Russian empire, which later became the Soviet Union, and the French empire. After the collapse of this order, which can be called the old order, the new order was born, as European nations and states went to annihilate each other and the whole globe as well.

So, what to do in this mess? They knew they had to establish a new order which prevents conflicts and wars in the mainland Europe and even America. They started to export their wars to other regions through sparking proxy wars.

Hence, if you ask whether the UN has successfully contained wars and conflict, the answer is both yes and no. "Yes," because since 1948 up to this very day, especially in Western Europe and America, we didn't witness any real danger or any wars. And "no," because the UN never successfully contained the conflicts on a global level as written in its charter. It totally failed. The UN has not been able to stop even a single struggle in the non-European or non-Euro-Atlantic context. For example, in 1948,

“The striking point is that superpowers, chiefly the U.S. and European states, are trying to export their conflicts into these other non-European countries and simultaneously do their best to deform the state apparatus in many West Asian countries.”



Palestine was occupied. At the same time, Israel founded and expanded to the point that today it talks about owning some parts of Jordan and Egypt and even Lebanon to be included in Israel. Also, there are continuous conflicts in Africa that often are not mentioned in the media because they are different conflicts at a different level. There are even genocides in various remote parts of Central Africa or Balkan, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The striking point is that superpowers, chiefly the U.S. and European states, are trying to export their conflicts into these other non-European countries and simultaneously do their best to deform the state apparatus in many West Asian countries. This strategy applied in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and now they are actively trying to repeat this pattern against Iran, while the UN is all silent.

Since more than a decade ago, the U.S. and European countries have been trying to deform the Iranian state, using forms of sanctions. They also have cut the banking system. This is unprecedented in history since 1948. Even at the peak of conflicts between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, no such behavior was witnessed. Given all these facts, one should ask where the UN stands on all these accounts. So, I would like to say it was totally unsuccessful.

■ Do you think that the UN is biased when it comes to powerful countries?

A: Taking a very neutral approach to the UN's mission statement, one realizes that the idea is that all nations would be present in the global context, and each state or nation is represented by its state functionally. It is ideal, and I am not going to doubt it. But the actual aspect of the UN is not fulfilling what the ideals are telling. For example, if any country deviates from the parameters and pre-requirements of the U.S. or certain EU countries, namely Germany, France, and

England, it will face sanctions and even war. It means that at the ideal level, the UN is an assembly for all nation-states in the world. Still, when it comes to the UN's actual practice, it tries to safeguard the national interests of the U.S. and EU and, to a certain extent, China and Russia. The question is whether we will assess the border or limit of national interest of the U.S.? The geographical distance between the Persian Gulf and the U.S. is more than ten thousand kilometers. But Americans say this zone is included in their broad definition of "national interest." This means that the national interests of the U.S. contain half of the world. The question is, how we assess the borders of a nation? Geographically speaking, the stretch of the land in the imaginative way that the U.S. has designed, makes it impossible for any international organization to be neutral.

The UN is obliged to fulfill the requirements of the U.S. and Western countries in most cases. That's because the borders of American national interests link to economic structures of the world and the economic order of the globe. It is inconceivable, and any country which deviates from this route and undermines the national interest of the U.S. and other Western countries perceived belongs to them will face sanctions or even war. Take the oil and the Hormuz Strait, for example, which are within the Iranian sovereignty. If Iranians try to apply complete sovereignty on the Hormuz Strait, the abovementioned countries will claim it dangerous for their national interest. Imagine if Iranians or Russians would try to establish a military base in the Gulf of Mexico on the pretext of preserving national interests. The UN would undoubtedly stand against this decision based on these countries' distance from the Gulf of Mexico. A similar case has happened for the U.S. and some other Western countries, and the UN is all silent about it.

■ Do you think that the UN needs to undergo structural reform?

A: What we call "the United Nations" is born out of a kind of unilateralism which was based on a bipolar world as they said. Nevertheless, after 1991, we cannot talk about the bipolar system. Now we live in a kind of chaotic global system. As such, if we look back at its philosophical foundations, the idea of a United Nations organization is rooted in thoughts of thinkers like Im-

manuel Kant. To obtain universal peace, he believed, the world needs a universal assembly containing only sovereign nations. Such construction makes it possible to settle disputes through dialogue and consensus. But when you dig deeper, you find out that what Kant actually meant from "sovereign countries" is only European countries, not even America. This fundamental philosophical basis behind the UN's establishment as an assembly of nations proves the whole idea of the UN to be Euro-centric in essence. Other countries out of European orbit are not considered civilized and sovereign.

The UN, in its recent form, established in New York. Its structures, funding system, and election procedures are very biased, while the world is entering into a multipolar or even a chaotic place.

We are now at the latest phase of what we call the "American Dream" based on a world order linked to the dollar system and an American version of seeing the globe, but this dream has almost collapsed. In the next ten or twenty years, we will have specific centers of power. Five or six blocks are going to have a closer relationship, and there could be a consensus between these different blocks. But it is hard to foresee how this new order is going to form a new world. It is difficult to predict the UN's position as an international organization within this new world order. But, for sure, the U.S. will not be the center of that order.

■ Do you think Islamic countries and Western powers should engage in a dialogue to reshape the UN?

A: Some believe that unless another world war is embarked, there will be no other chance to reconstruct this organization's old structure.

“The UN never successfully contained the conflicts on a global level as written in its charter. It totally failed.”

Dialogues are helpful when you are at the same level of power. It would be best if you had a powerful military and economic presence on a global scale. However, we don't need war, and we don't look for conflict. Indeed, historically speaking, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never started a fight but instead defended itself in imposed wars. Those wars were imposed against us because multinational companies need raw materials, cheap labor, and easy access to energy sources. So, what we need to do internally as Islamic countries is to empower ourselves. It means empowering our nations through education and a good economy. Then, step by step, we can go for regional cooperation. For instance, there is a possibility for making a sort of confederation and regional cooperation between Central Asian countries, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other countries around the Persian Gulf and even the Indian Ocean based on historical common grounds in this area.



Rodney Shakespeare

The anniversary of the United Nations; maybe an end to unipolarity

Believe it or not, the United Nations was established to prevent war. Or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say, to prevent war being waged by certain nations. And even that is not true. Maybe it should be to allow war to be waged by a privileged group but not by others. Oh dear! It's all so difficult!

Yes, it is — and the difficulty starts in New York where the UN is headquartered, making it easy for the American spy agencies to employ their usual tactics (including bribery, blackmail and threats) to 'persuade' others to do their bidding whether openly in a vote or, more often, in some sort of hidden arrangement.

Surely not! The UN is (I quote) "an intergovernmental organisation that aims to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international co-operation, and be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations." That's the optimistic theory, of course, for a world of heavily competing nations, backed by immense military forces and — to be fair — if the UN did not exist the situation would be worse and there would be a demand that the UN be, again, invented.

History, moreover, indicates that the UN, for all its faults, is at least an improvement on its predecessor — the League of Nations founded in 1920 after the First World War. It, too, aimed not only to prevent war but also to improve the conditions of labour, treat native habitants fairly and end human trafficking and the arms trade.

The League, however, failed. It had no armed force to enforce its resolutions; the USA was never a member; the Soviet Union joined late and was soon expelled; and Germany, Japan, Italy and Spain all withdrew. The League, did not, and could not, stop the Second World War.

So perhaps we would be wise not to condemn the UN for its patent faults (which include a heavy weighting in favour of certain powers and extraordinary phenomena such as brutal, crucifying, beheading regimes such as Saudi Arabia being allowed to chair the Human Rights Council) and, instead ask if something better might be established in the future. There are several ways of approaching this question but an obvious one is by observing that a unipolar world is one in which the USA can, and does, use its military, economic, diplomatic and — don't forget — its blackmailing and coercing power to create a New World Order i.e., one in which the USA shoves everybody else around and, indeed, will attack them if they show any indication of wanting a degree of independence. Putting it bluntly, if a country does have the military, economic and diplomatic power, it can shove everybody else around particularly if it is spending about 40% of the world's total on arms (with a likely higher percentage because of many substantial, undeclared programmes). Moreover, by its effective control of the SWIFT banking system and ability to sanction individuals, companies and countries in various ways, the USA is in a strong position to be a nasty bully — and get away with it.

However, the world is changing, and subtly — and sometimes not so subtly — power is being seen to shift away from the USA and its heavily subservient allies to a more complex multipolar world with new groupings and alliances and, in particular, new economic and military powers. A simple way of seeing this is just to look at the population numbers of modernising countries remembering that technology quickly becomes available to all. There's China and India, of course, and Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil, Nigeria and Bangladesh. In the list of countries by population the USA is third but look at the total population of the others!

Moreover, Russia is huge geographically and huge in its resources and technological skills and is fed up with being sanctioned by an arrogant USA just as Iran has been heavily sanctioned for daring to want its oil industry controlled by Iranians and have an independent existence. NB. A true independence is the one thing that the USA never allows and those who wish for independence quickly find themselves surrounded by military bases (it's roughly forty around Iran). Ah yes! Military bases! The USA has over eight hundred and is able to maintain them because of the privileged position of the American dollar in world trade. In practical effect, other countries pay for the maintenance of the American bases.

Yet, change is happening and change, like bankruptcy, starts slowly before happening all at once! And the USA is profoundly bankrupt. For starters, it is now heavily over-indebted and, secondly, its claimed gold reserves are probably completely false (which is why no audit is allowed of Fort Knox). Thirdly, its moral leadership (think water boarding, for example, and the appointment of Gina Haspel to the CIA) does not exist; and, fourthly, its political leadership is some sort of apparently impossible travesty in which a vainglorious, narcissistic, orange-faced president is surrounded by swaggering vicious war-mongering goons (e.g. Pompeo) and the whole shebang is so utterly chaotic that it even managed to oust John Bolton!

Yes, slowly, not always surely but, increasingly, inevitably, the world is moving away from uni-polarity and, at some point, will create something new. Let us hope that the new, manifesting itself in various ways including a new international institution, will be positive and creative and not something dominated by an arrogant USA bent only on its own narrow interests (including the Zionist occupation of the lands of others, of course,) and those of a corrupt financial system now succeeding in putting the whole world into un-repayable debt so that some sort of economic collapse is increasingly inevitable.

Rodney Shakespeare is former Visiting Professor of Binary Economics at Trisakti University, Jakarta, Co-founder of the Global Justice Movement and author of several books on money, the real economy, and social and economic justice.

UN needs structural changes: Iranian professor

“It is undeniable that the UN is biased”

TEHRAN — An Iranian professor of political science is of the opinion that the United Nations should undergo structural changes.

"I believe that the UN needs structural changes," Imad Abshenas tells the Tehran Times.

Abshenas says, "The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization that its mission is to establish peace and security in the world, and this is the main goal for which it was founded, and this is what was stated in the preamble to its charter and in its first article."

On the history of the UN and its competence in settling conflicts throughout the globe, the professor and senior journalist said, "The UN was unsuccessful not only in the past decade but in its whole history. Although the UN's main aim is to maintain peace in the world, we have seen that since World War II until now, the UN was not successful in resolving the conflicts."

Abshenas said the UN has not been able to settle disputes in many parts of the world. For example, he said, conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are still raging.

"When it comes to Iraq and Afghanistan, we see that the country was invaded by the U.S. and UK without UN Security Council permission, and they didn't care about the UN's alerts in attacking Iraq. In Afghanistan, also, after 20 years, the UN cannot help settle the conflict."

"Since the United Nations was established, it was expected to play a pivotal role in maintaining global stability and security, by adopting a holistic vision to international conflicts,... But now the UN is under control of powerful countries with the veto power in the Security Council and the authority to stop any resolution."



Answering a question about whether the UN is biased when it deals with powerful countries, he said, "The UN is under the influence of Western powers, especially the U.S., in all its activities. In many cases, this influence is considerable; for example, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, when it comes to Israel, none of the resolutions of the Security Council Israel was abided by while all the resolutions were passed on other countries should be abided by. So, it is undeniable that the UN is biased, especially in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Commenting on the idea of democratization of

“Either the veto should be taken away, or the UN should expand the members who have veto power.”



No place for justice in UN dictionary: Lebanese journalist

By Mohammad Ali Esmaeili

TEHRAN - Mohamad Kleit, a Lebanese journalist specialized in international affairs and geopolitics, tells the Tehran Times that the United Nations celebrates its 75th anniversary, while this international organization has failed to achieve justice.

"Considering Israel is the 'U.S. pampered baby', metaphorically speaking, any international resolution would be negligible if it doesn't preserve Israeli interests, even if those interests were ethnic cleansing against Palestinians, preservation of the illegal and inhumane blockade on the Gaza Strip and building illegal settlements on the Palestinian soil in the West Bank," says Kleit, who is deputy editor at U-News Agency.

On the future of the United Nations, Kleit notes, "I personally see that the role of the UN will be minimized considering that major powers are out their taking what they want with disregard to any UN resolution or the disruption of global stability."

The text of the interview with Mohamad Kleit is as follows:

■ The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War with several objectives primarily the prevention of war and maintaining peace in disputed areas. But the UN has failed to prevent war and fulfill peacekeeping duties many times throughout its history. In your opinion, what have been the main causes of this passivity?

A: The United Nations' passivity is basically caused by the strong political powers controlling some of its major and most critical decisions; particularly by the United States of America which spent \$10 billion in 2018 (almost 30% of UN's peacekeeping operations are funded by the United States). This affects United Nations and its Security Council's decisions in areas that the U.S. is directly involved in, for example Syria, Yemen, Iraq in 2003, and others.

It also acts as a pressure force on political issues, most recently the Israeli atrocities against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, where Israel doesn't abide by any Security Council decision nor UN resolutions ever since the entity joined the UN. This is because the U.S. has close ties and joint interests in Israel, thus it is not dealing with the Palestinian cause in an objective manner, where the U.S. always sides with Israel, consequently belittling any UN resolution, regardless how righteous and just it is.

■ Ever since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, Palestinians have been fighting against what a UN investigator once described as Israel's ethnic cleansing. Today Israel controls dominantly over Palestine territories. It also has imposed a crippling blockade on Gaza and is continuing its construction of illegal settlements on occupied lands in defiance of several UN resolutions calling for an end to those activities. What is your take on it?

A: As in other areas of turmoil and disruption, the UN has its hands tied because of the U.S. financial advantage over its regular budget. This poses a threat and jeopardizes any resolution issued by the UN in matters the U.S. would consider part of its so-called "national security", which, as history taught us, extends across the world far from the U.S. national borders.

Now considering Israel is the "U.S. pampered baby", metaphorically speaking, any international resolution would be negligible if it doesn't preserve Israeli interests, even if those interests were ethnic cleansing against Palestinians, preservation of

the illegal and inhumane blockade on the Gaza Strip, building illegal settlements on the Palestinian soil in the West Bank, or even detention of Palestinian children for investigation while mistreating prisoners of opinion and protests.

History has also taught us that Israel has never once abided by any UN resolution that isn't fully in its favor, even when it's waging an occupation like the one in 1982 in Lebanon or bombing civilian sites in Syria that is being internally war-torn since 2011. It also, rudely, disrespects any UN resolution that is internationally consented, like Resolution 1701 to end the 2006 war on Lebanon that was unanimously approved by the United Nations Security Council on 11 August 2006, where each sides of the war (Lebanese Resistance Movement and Israel) goes back to their international borders before the war started in July, yet Israel, until this day, violates Lebanese airspace with fighter jets and occasionally targets civilian, scientific, and military targets in Syria from the Lebanese airspace.

■ Saudi Arabia has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to crush the popular Ansarullah movement and reinstate former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who is a staunch ally of the Riyadh regime. Many experts accuse the UN silence regarding Saudi Arabia's aggression and argue that the UN has failed to send humanitarian aid and support to civilians amid a blockade imposed on the war-torn country. What is your thought?

A: Justice is a negligible term in international books; it is only used when the elite nations preserve their interests on the expense of smaller powers, or helpless nations in that case. The Saudi-led coalition, that is supported militarily and politically by (just to name a few) the UAE, USA, UK, France, Israel, Egypt, Bahrain, and other nations, launched a war on Yemen in 2015 that has been described by the UN itself as "one of the worst human catastrophes in modern history." The war started on the request of the ousted Yemeni president



Abed Rabu Mansour Hadi, who took Aden for refuge after a large-scale protest in the capital Sana, where a coalition of Yemeni parties rule now, most prominently Ansarullah led by Abdul Malek al Houthi. Now considering Ansarullah's opposition to Saudi Arabia's control over Yemen (Saudis controlled and interfered in Yemen's politics and economy for over 40 years during the reign of Ali Abdullah Saleh and then Mansour Hadi), which would jeopardize what they call "national security", thus they launched a full-scale war on Yemen that has led to the death of well-over 30,000 persons and displaced millions, while 19 million are suffering from poverty and in danger of famine.

What did the UN do? They didn't call out who was clearly responsible for this catastrophe, yet they called for a political solution back in 2016 in Kuwait that would indirectly preserve the Saudi Arabia's interest while acknowledging the newly formed government in Sana. The talks failed because of the continuation of hostilities until 2018 in Stockholm, where another round of talks happened to mark a breakthrough, yet the war is still ongoing with more complications and disasters to put in short.



"They (UN) didn't call out who was clearly responsible for this (Yemen) catastrophe, yet they called for a political solution back in 2016 in Kuwait that would indirectly preserve the Saudi Arabia's interest while acknowledging the newly formed government in Sana."

The United Nations: A disappointing past and a challenging future



Mohammad Hassan Khani

For many centuries, generations after generations of humankind have been seeking and hoping to find a mechanism by which they can eliminate or limit the acts of aggression and war, and to build a kind of relationship among nations across the world based on lasting peace and justice. In late 19th century and early 20th century and specially by the relative success of the Hague Conferences (1899-1907) and then establishment of the League of Nations this ray of hope got a chance to boost, and millions of people around the world thought this newly born international institution is the one that they and their ancestors have been waiting for. However the event of the Second World War proved that this optimism was wrong.

Yet the members of international community did not

give up their dreams and soon they invested their hope again in a new international organization called the United Nations and put their signatures under its charter which promised to "...save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained". This was a promise that the UN in general, and its Security Council in particular simply failed to keep.

Now as the organization celebrates the 75th anniversary of its establishment, many observers across the globe remain very much skeptical of its ability to live up to the

During the past seven decades the UN has been miserably either unable to prevent many bloody wars and conflicts, or merely has been a silent witness to the huge pain and suffering imposed on many nations who found themselves victims of unjust and brutal policies of certain powers including illegitimate economic sanctions.

goals of many of its founding members. During the past seven decades the UN has been miserably either unable to prevent many bloody wars and conflicts, or merely has been a silent witness to the huge pain and suffering imposed on many nations who found themselves victims of unjust and brutal policies of certain powers including illegitimate economic sanctions. It is a tragedy to see how the cause of JUSTICE has fallen victim of power politics and national interests of few countries even within the UN framework.

Having said that, one can hardly deny the fact that in spite of its many shortcomings, and criticisms towards it, yet the United Nations has had many achievements, and has the potentials to represent the collective will of international community and to defend the rights of the majority of nations in the face of aggressive behavior of the few. Unless the United Nations structure and specially its Security Council undergo a meaningful reform, it would be very difficult, almost impossible to imagine how it can play the role that its founders pledged in introduction of its charter three quarters of a century ago. The UN is now facing many challenges among which the U.S. unilateralism seems to be the most important one threatening the underlying principle of the UN system which is equal rights of all nations according to international law and multilateralism.

Mohammad Hassan Khani is Graduate of Peace Studies Department at Bradford University in UK, currently an Associate Professor of International Relations at the Faculty of Islamic Studies and Political Science at Imam Sadiq University in Tehran

The end of United Nations?

UN privileges status quo over both peace and justice, American scholar says

Kevin Barret says "the status quo is not peace, it is war"

TEHRAN — Kevin Barret, an American Arabist-Islamologist scholar who has been known as one of America's best-known critics of the war on terror, says the United Nations cannot be considered as "a genuinely democratic international organization", arguing it has instead been as an "instrument of American and Western soft power".

"I would argue that the UN does not privilege peace over justice. Instead, it privileges the status quo over both peace and justice. And the status quo is not peace, it is war," Barrett tells the Tehran Times.



Author of 'From Yahweh to Zion' says that the biggest failure of the United Nations has been its "acquiescence to the Zionist genocide of Palestine" and although the UN occasionally has condemned Zionist regime, but Israel "has flouted all such resolutions with the support of the U.S."

The following is the full text of the interview:

■ The United Nations was set up in 1945 as an international umbrella organization with several objectives primarily including the prevention of war and maintaining peace in disputed areas. However, the UN has failed several times across the world, from the disaster of the UN peacekeeping missions in Rwanda and Bosnia in the mid-1990s to the UN silence on the Yemen genocide by the Arab coalition, the UN track record has been spectacularly unimpressive. What have been the main causes of these failures?

A: The United Nations was created by the victors of World War II, led by the then most powerful nation, the United States. It was never really meant to be a genuinely democratic international organization. Instead, it was conceived as an instrument of American and Western soft power. Its purpose was to endorse Western wars of aggression and neocolonialism and give them a thin veneer of fake international legitimacy. That is what happened when U.S. President Truman took a bribe of \$2 million in cash in a suitcase (an enormous sum in those days) from his Jewish mafia friend in return for pushing through the U.S. and UN endorsements of the creation of so-called Israel. UN member states were bullied and bribed into going along with this genocidal act.

The same was true with the UN endorsement of the U.S. war on Korea. Though member states occasionally pushed back against the U.S. and Zionist bullies, they had no power to actually prevent any wars or acts of aggression and resource theft. The three biggest problems are 1) the U.S. and its occupied "allies" are overrepresented on the Security Council, which unlike the General Assembly actually has (theoretically at least) a modicum of real power; 2) the UN depends on funding from rich countries led by the U.S., and tends to obey its paymasters; and 3) there is no real enforcement mechanism, so powerful countries can ignore any UN dictates they don't like, which is what Israel has consistently done, with U.S. support.

■ Tehran Times: As you pointed it out one of the biggest failures has been Israeli occupation since 1948. How can this passivity be explained?

A: The UN's acquiescence to the Zionist genocide of Palestine represents the international community's biggest failure since World War II. Though the UN has condemned Israel in 45 resolutions, demanding that the Zionists allow refugees to return and be compensated for their losses and suffering, that they pull out of occupied territories, dismantle settlements, stop stealing Palestinian resources, give up its nuclear weapons, and start behaving like a normal country, Israel has flouted all such resolutions with the support of the U.S. The first time the U.S. ever withdrew its support for Israel at the UN was at the end of Obama's term in 2016. Unfortunately, Obama's parting gesture was only symbolic.

■ The United Nations came into being in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security. Some experts argue that we could easily replace "international peace and security" by "status quo". In other words, "international justice" has no voice among the UN's purposes and the UN Security Council has the primary responsibility in maintaining status quo- to benefit big powers. Could we say that the UN is a place where "peace" has privilege over "justice"?

A: I would argue that the UN does not privilege peace over justice. Instead, it privileges the status quo over both peace and justice. And the status quo is not peace, it is war. The U.S. has been at war for more than 90% of its history. During the time of the UN's existence, the U.S. has perpetrated what historian William Blum called "the American Holocaust," killing tens of millions of innocent people in wars and regime changes all over the world. During the same period, Israel has waged a nonstop war of terror against the Palestinian people. The UN has accepted this status quo. It has supported war and injustice, not peace and justice.

■ The United Nations entered 2020 with the expectation that global humanitarian — and financial — problems are set to worsen. Although the UN is marking its 75th anniversary, it is dealing with serious challenges, including climate change, health pandemics, inequality and conflicts. In your view, what is your prediction of the UN performance?

A: I don't think the United Nations will develop into a real organization until it faces a crisis of epic proportions, which may happen in the near future with the collapse of the U.S. empire. Once the world is officially and effectively multilateral, the international institutions will have to change to fit the new reality. At that point, the UN could develop independent funding and enforcement mechanisms, abolish the Security Council, and become fully democratic, and able to enforce a modicum of peace and justice.