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Military must promote readiness nonstop



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Support package for non-oil exports ready for implementation

TEHRAN — Iranian Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri has instructed relative organizations and executive bodies to implement the government's support package for promoting non-oil exports in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), IRNA reported on Sunday, quoting head of the country's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

According to Hamid Zadboum, this

year's support package includes resources from the National Development Fund (NDF) amounting at 20 trillion rials (about \$476 million), as well as resources provided in the year's budget bill amounting at 6 trillion rials (about \$143 million) plus part of the revenues from export duties and the increase in the Export Guarantee Fund (EGF)'s capital that was up to 100 million Euros. **→4**

Technology comes to help Asiatic cheetah protection in Iran

TEHRAN — Asiatic cheetahs' habitats in the country will be equipped with satellite surveillance cameras to be constantly monitored online so that protection will increase, IRNA reported.

In order to protect the Asiatic cheetahs, the habitat of these valuable species will be monitored by satellite cameras, Shahaboddin Montazemi, deputy head

of the Department of Environment said.

The world's fastest mammal, capable of reaching speeds of 120 kilometers per hour, once stalked habitats from the eastern reaches of India to the Atlantic coast of Senegal, once their numbers have stabilized in parts of southern Africa, but they have practically disappeared from northern Africa and Asia. **→9**

Kashmir Muslims fear demographic shift as thousands get residency

Up to 25,000 people have been granted domicile certificates in Indian-administered Kashmir since May 18, raising fears of the beginning of demographic changes in the Muslim-majority Himalayan region.

The certificate, a sort of citizenship right, entitles a person to residency and government jobs in the region, which till last year was reserved only for the local population.

Last year on August 5, when India revoked the semi-autonomous status of the region, it also scrapped the local

special citizenship law, guaranteed under Article 35 (A) of the Indian constitution. The move has drawn parallel with the occupied West Bank.

On Friday, Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden said, "India should take all necessary steps to restore the rights of all the people of Kashmir."

"Restrictions on dissent, such as peaceful protests or shutting or slowing down the internet weakens democracy," says a policy paper posted on his website. **→10**

Lebanon's FM summons U.S. envoy over comments on Hezbollah

by staff & agencies

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency is reporting that the country's foreign minister has summoned the U.S. ambassador to Beirut over comments she made recently in which she criticized the Hezbollah resistance group.

The agency gave no further details other than saying that the meeting is scheduled for Monday afternoon. Sunday's announcement came a day after a Lebanese judge banned local and foreign media outlets in the country from interviewing the U.S. ambassador for a year, saying that her criticism of Hezbollah was seditious and a threat to social peace.

Judge Mohamad Mazeh in the southern city of Tyre issued the ruling on Saturday a day after U.S. envoy Dorothy Shea told Saudi-owned TV station Al-Hadath that Washington has "great concerns" over Hezbollah's role in the government.

Mazeh said he acted after receiving a complaint from a citizen who considered Shea's comments to a Saudi-owned station "insulting to the Lebanese people", adding the matter was urgent.

The media outlets which interview Shea "would be contributing intentionally or unintentionally to the blatant aggression on the rights of those who feel insulted from the interview," Mezeh wrote in a decision.

The judge said violators would be penalized with a one-year suspension and asked the Information Ministry to disseminate the order.

Mezeh said Shea's comments incited sectarian strife and threatened social peace.

Several Lebanese officials hailed the ban as "brave", saying Shea had crossed a line by interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs.

Taking to Twitter, Information Minister Manal Abdel-Samad wrote that the judiciary may be reacting to the interference of some diplomats in the country's affairs.

However, "no one has the right to prevent the media from covering news or undermine press freedoms," she wrote.

Abdel-Samad said such complaints should be handled by her ministry and the press bodies.

In a telephone interview with the local MTV station, Shea called the decision "unfortunate".

The resistance movement's popularity for shattering Israel's myth of invincibility in the Arab public opinion has worried Israel and the West. **→10**

Houses of 200 luminaries added to National Heritage list

TEHRAN — House of some 200 Iranian luminaries, who are famous for their works in different areas, have been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Although some of these houses are in the hands of the heirs, about 200 of them across the country have been added to the National Heritage list and are being preserved, Mehr quoted deputy tourism minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian as saying on Sunday.

However being on the National Heritage list can be an opportunity for the privately-owned houses and mansions to become a tourist destination, therefor their owners as well as people need to preserve them properly, the official added.

Despite the limited budget of the ministry, over 2500 national heritage properties were restored and preserved during the previous

Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended March 20), he concluded.

The National Heritage list includes significant monuments, places, buildings, events, etc., officially registered under the National Heritage Preservation Act of 1930.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, which last year transformed into a ministry, has been tasked to maintain and renovate the national heritage.

The county expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Black Lives Matter protest turns deadly in U.S. state of Kentucky

Authorities were investigating a fatal shooting on Saturday night at a park in the U.S. state of Kentucky, where anti-racism demonstrators had gathered to protest against the death of a Black woman, Breonna Taylor.

Reports that shots were fired at Jefferson Square Park came in around 9pm, Louisville Metro police said in a statement, followed by calls that the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department was performing life-saving measures on a male who died at the scene.

Shortly after, police were told of a shooting victim across the street at the Hall of Justice. That person was hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries.

Video posted on social media appeared to show a man opening fire into the park as people scrambled for cover. The footage later showed at least one person bleeding profusely on the ground.

Officers cleared the park and police "are trying to gather as much information as possible in order to identify all who were involved in the incident," the statement said.

According to al Jazeera, no information about arrests, possible suspects and the victims' identities and ages was immediately released. Officials did not immediately release additional information.

"I am deeply saddened by the violence that erupted in Jefferson Square Park tonight, where those who have been voicing their concerns have been gathered," Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer said in a statement.

"It is a tragedy that this area of peaceful protest is now a crime scene."

The park has for weeks been the epicenter for anti-racism Black Lives Matter protests in the city after the police killings of Taylor and George Floyd. **→10**



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New director of Art Bureau inaugurated

TEHRAN — Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman was inaugurated as the new director of the Art Bureau during a ceremony on Sunday.

The Art Bureau is affiliated with the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO), a major organization that promotes Islamic culture and art under the auspices of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Dadman was the former deputy director of the IIDO.

A number of art and cultural officials, including Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and Academy of Persian Language and Literature director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, the minister talked about the role of the bureau in preserving the achievements of the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war, which is called the Sacred Defense in Iran. **→12**

UK Labor calls to ban settlement imports in response to annexation

UK Labor's leadership called for a ban on imported goods from settlements if Israel applies its sovereignty to parts of the West Bank.

Labor's shadow foreign secretary Lisa Nandy called for "concrete action" in response to sovereignty moves in an interview with The Observer published Saturday, with the reported support of Labor leader Keir Starmer.

Nandy, a former head of Labor Friends of Palestine, called Israel's plans "a shameful proposition to which the UK cannot be a silent witness." She accused the UK government of being "conspicuously absent from [the] global response," though its Ambassador to the UN has spoken out repeatedly and the took part in a demarche by 11 countries against the plan.

"This is now urgent," she said. "The government must be clear with the Israeli coalition government that concrete action will follow, including a ban on goods entering Britain from the illegal settlements in the West Bank."

Referring to U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan, which supports Israel extending its laws to the Jordan Valley, all settlements and beyond, Nandy said: "The proposal to unilaterally annex nearly a third of the West Bank is an illegal act, which will undermine the prospect of a peaceful two-state solution for Israel and Palestine and has serious implications for the stability of the Middle East."

Banning settlement products is a "major step," Nandy added, but said that "such a blatant breach of international law must have consequences."

Nandy expressed doubts that the Conservative-led UK government's ministers have the "level of courage" to enact her proposal. **→10**

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Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



France to start decoding Ukrainian plane black box on July 20

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister **d e s k** for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on Sunday that France will start decoding black boxes of the Ukrainian plane, which was mistakenly shot down in January near Tehran on July 20.

"Decoding black box of the Ukrainian plane will start in France on July 20 under supervision of an Iranian team," IRNA quoted Baharvand as saying.



He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's experts will lead the investigation and the decoding will be done under the Iranian team's supervision and guidance. Other countries which are related to this regrettable incident can dispatch delegations to France as observers."

The Ukrainian passenger plane, with 176 people aboard, was mistaken for an invading missile. The tragic incident happened a few hours after Iran fired missiles at a U.S. air base in western Iraq in retaliation for the January 3 assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. Following the retaliation attack, the Iranian military had been put on high alert.

The victims of the crash included 82 Iranians, 63 Iranian-Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

Farhad Parvaresh, Iran's representative to the UN agency, told Reuters by telephone that Iranian investigators have asked France's BEA air accident agency to read black boxes of the Ukrainian plane, Reuters reported on June 12.

"Iran's AAIB recently made a request to the BEA that the recorders should be taken by Iran to the BEA's premises in France to be read in the presence of representatives of other involved countries and ICAO if the BEA is in a position to accommodate this," Parvaresh said.

Military must promote readiness nonstop, says general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Major General Yahya Rahim **d e s k** Safavi, a top military advisor to the Leader, suggested on Sunday that the armed forces must constantly promote their combat readiness.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a conference held to remember the victims of chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in the summer of 1987 by the Saddam regime, Safavi also said due to great deterrence power of the armed forces there is no "shadow of war" on Iran.

He also said, "We need to prepare our centers of public education, universities and also industrial centers to produce medical equipment and necessary vaccines to counter probable chemical threats."

The former IRGC chief also said that chemical attacks against Iran during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s were "crime against humanity".

"Those who gave Saddam [Hussein] chemical weapons and kept silence on his brutal actions, are accomplice to Saddam's crimes," he noted.

The senior general also said that supporters of Saddam's crimes must be tried in the International Court of Justice.

On June 28, 1987, the city of Sardasht in West Azarbaijan Province was attacked with chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein's regime. The tragic event left a deadly legacy. Many people were exposed to the painful long-term effects of chemical weapons, in many cases with lasting disabilities.

■ **'It is essential to create headquarters to counter biological threats'**

During his speech at the ceremony marking the victims of chemical attack on Sardasht, Safavi also said that it is essential to create a center to counter biological and chemical threats.

The center must be at national level to counter and manage possible incidents, he said.

Official: Human rights practically taught to Europeans by Iran's exports of anti-coronavirus equipment

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iran's Deputy Judiciary Chief for International and Human Rights Affairs Ali Baqeri underlined the country's capability to produce and export anti-coronavirus equipment despite sanctions, saying that Tehran taught the Europeans some human rights lessons by sending such equipment to them.

"Our country has been under sanctions for years and the sanctions have sorely increased in the past two years and the area of sanctions have extended against our country by the Europeans and Americans, but despite sanctions we could act successfully by using our past experiences in the (8-year Iraqi-imposed) war and smart management and after a while, we were even able to export anti-coronavirus medical equipment to the European states too," Baqeri said on Sunday.

He added that the European states are as much as the U.S. an accomplice in imposing sanctions against Iran.

Baqeri explained that during his recent meeting with the European countries' ambassadors to Tehran, he has underlined that Iran does not allow human rights to be contaminated with politics.

"We practically taught human rights to these countries by exporting anti-coronavirus equipment to them," he said.

On May 19, Iranian Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari announced his country's self-sufficiency in production of equipment to fight against coronavirus.

"Now, our country does not need imports of equipment to fight against coronavirus and all the country's needs are met indigenously," Sattari told reporters in the Southern city of Bushehr.

He noted that Iran imported a number of equipment to fight against COVID-19 virus on the first days of the virus outbreak but it achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing the hospital and ICU rooms equipment with the efforts of the knowledge-based companies.

Rouhani highlights the need for unity between three branches of government

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President **d e s k** Hassan Rouhani has highlighted the necessity of unity and cooperation among the three branches of the government, namely the executive, legislative and judicial powers.

"Friendly and close relations of the three branches is the only way and there is no second way," Rouhani said during a meeting of the National Headquarters for Fighting Coronavirus.

He also said, "Now is not the time for clash. Now is not the time for clash between the Majlis and the administration; it is not the time for clash between the Judiciary and the administration; these branches must be united and help each other, along with the armed forces and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution at top of them. All should stand beside each other and the people should be present. We will not succeed without the involvement of the people."

Elsewhere, Rouhani congratulated Judiciary Week and said, "The year 1981 was a very difficult year for the people and very bitter incidents took place in that year."



It was the year that a very high-ranking figure of our country, martyr Ayatollah Beheshti, and 72 of his companions were martyred, and some others were wounded."

"The incident was so important that our enemies and the anti-revolutionaries thought they could carry out the final strike on the system and imagined that

Iran-Afghanistan ties should be managed carefully, says ex-ambassador

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Abolfazl Zohrevand, Iran's **d e s k** former ambassador to Afghanistan, has said that Iran and Afghanistan should manage ties carefully and not just limit it to a document for "comprehensive cooperation".

"Preparing and signing a strategic document is important. However, relations between the two countries should be managed precisely. All things should not be linked to the strategic document. We should manage relations and pay attention to volume of positive interaction to avoid propaganda," Zohrevand told ISNA in an interview published on Sunday.

He described a recent visit by Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, as "effective".

"I believe this visit should have been conducted before incidents that occurred in the past two months," he said.

The former ambassador to Kabul suggested that the two countries' cooperation should continue unabatedly. Atmar 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."

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.

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.

Iran has been hosting millions of Afghan refugees since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

According to a report by the UN Refugee Agency in December 2019, some 480,000 Afghan children in Iran are benefitting from education. In 2019 alone, 60,000 new Afghan students found a place in school in Iran.

Iranian human rights body urges maximum use of the youth's abilities in face of maximum pressure

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's High **d e s k** Council for Human Rights

issued a statement on Sunday saying maximum use of youths' capabilities is required to counter the United States' "maximum pressure".

"Adopting a strategy to counter sanctions and taking serious action to use all the unused capacities, especially scientific and practical capabilities of the youth, will result in empowering the country and creating new elements of power," the statement said.

It is noted in the statement that the United States seeks to deceive Iran by proposing negotiations and force the Iranians to relinquish their rights through pressure and sanctions.

"So, trap of negotiations and baton of

sanctions are two sides of the same coin of maximum pressure," it added.

■ **'Iran supports protests against racism in U.S.'**

It is also stated in the statement that Iran considers itself duty bound to back the oppressed people around the world and supports protests against racism in the United States.

"Within this framework, Iran's High Council for Human Rights calls on all the

freedom-seeking people in the world not to leave the people of the United States alone in fighting discrimination and racism," the statement read.

Protests have started across the U.S. and some cities around the world over the brutal killing of an African-American man.

George Floyd died on May 25 after being pinned down by a white officer despite yelling "I cannot breathe".

"Iran's High Council for Human Rights calls on all the freedom-seeking people in the world not to leave the people of the United States alone in fighting discrimination and racism."

Civil defense chief: Europeans should account for Sardasht and Halabja chemical tragedies

TEHRAN (FNA) — Head of Iran's Civil Defense Organization Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali described the chemical attacks by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's regime in the cities of Sardasht in Western Iran and Halabja as a chemical holocaust, saying that the European countries that helped Saddam to produce these weapons should be held accountable today.

"Prohibition of the production and stockpiling chemical of weapons in the world must have executive requirements," Brigadier General Jalali said on Sunday, addressing the National Conference on Chemical Defense held in Tehran.

"Today we still witness the use of chemical weapons against the people. For example, ISIS used chemical weapons against the Iraqi people, and everyone knows what countries created the terrorist group," he added.

He went on to say that the conventions prohibiting the production and accumulation of chemical weapons are not being implemented, and the United States and European countries are producing and stockpiling them, so an organization like the International Atomic Energy Agency must be set up in the chemical field to prevent this.

The official also criticized the performance of international institutions such as the fact-finding commit-



tees for chemical attacks because they do not disclose the behind-the-scenes production and sale of chemical weapons.

The National Conference on Chemical Defense was held in Tehran on Sunday on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the chemical attack on Sardasht with the attendance of senior military officials of Iran, including

the senior aide and adviser to Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Major General Yahya Rahim-Safavi.

Tens of thousands of Iranians were killed and wounded by chemical weapons during the 1980-1988 Iraqi imposed war on Iran. Around 100,000 Iranians are still living with the effects, which include long-term respiratory problems, eye and skin problems as well as immune system disorders, psychological disorders, genetic disorders, and probably cancers.

Sardasht is a city in Northwestern Iran. According to the 2006 census, its population was 37,000. It lies in the West Azarbaijan province. It was the first city in which civilians were attacked with chemical weapons by former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein during the imposed Iraqi war on Iran.

The population of Sardasht is Kurdish. Sardasht is also known for the many villages around it and their reliability on the city's market.

On June 28, 1987, Iraqi aircraft dropped what Iranian authorities believed to be mustard gas bombs on Sardasht, in two separate bombing runs on four residential areas.

Sardasht was the first town in the world to be gassed. Out of a population of 20,000, 25% are still suffering severe illnesses from the attacks.

Sanctions, Gen. Soleimani assassination won't demoralize nation: Zarif

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said the U.S. sanctions on Iran and its assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani will not demoralize the Iranian nation, Mehr reported.

"The U.S. policy has brought nothing but disgrace to that country," Zarif said in a video conference held late on Saturday to mark a deadly chemical attack by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on the Iranian city of Sardasht in West Azarbaijan Province in 1987.

He said the U.S. has failed to observe any human rights principles, either by providing chemical weapons to Iraq against Iran in the 1980s or imposing sanctions and pursuing economic terrorism against the Iranian people.

The U.S. government is continuing this path amid the global fight against the coronavirus which has affected the entire world, he said.

Zarif added that the U.S. is creating obstacles in the way of supplying medicine to Iran through its "inhumane sanctions".

However, he said, as the Islamic Republic managed to stand against Iraq's chemical weapons, it has also succeeded in fighting the virus despite all sanctions.

"The Iranian people have truly witnessed such moves during the [Iraq's] imposed war, and the economic war, economic terrorism and state terrorism of the United States of America," the foreign minister noted.

Zarif also said the Islamic Republic has not forgotten and will never forget the support and complicity of the U.S. and Europe in the horrible chemical attack by Saddam



Zarif says the Islamic Republic has not forgotten and will never forget the support and complicity of the U.S. and Europe in the horrible chemical attack by Saddam on Sardasht 33 years ago.

on Sardasht 33 years ago.

'Sardasht was peak of Saddam regime's brutality'

"[The] Sardasht [chemical attack] was

the peak of the Saddam regime's brutality," he said. "Sardasht was a symbol of the brutality of individuals who recognize no boundaries to reaching their goal and

resort to various inhumane methods to reach their goal."

He also lashed out against the UN Security Council for its silence during Saddam's crimes against the Iranian people.

"Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran several times and Tehran reported it to the United Nations and the Security Council," he explained, adding that while the UN reports showed that Iraq had used chemical weapons against Iran, the UN Security Council did not condemn the heinous crime.

June 28 is the National Day of Campaign against Use of Chemical and Microbiological Weapons in Iran. It marks the anniversary of the dastardly chemical attacks on the northwestern Iranian city of Sardasht by the Saddam regime in June 1987.

On this day, Iraqi aircraft dropped mustard gas bombs on Sardasht in two separate bombing runs on four residential areas. The number of victims was initially estimated as 10 civilians dead and 650 civilians injured.

Iraq frequently used chemical weapons against Iranian civilians and soldiers during the war.

The U.S., the UK, Germany, Italy, and Holland were among the countries that provided Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist Iraq with the equipment and material to build chemical weapons.

Iraq made the most of its acquisitions by launching over 350 large-scale chemical attacks along the Iran-Iraq border between 1980 and 1988 on soldiers and civilians alike, using mustard gas, and the nerve agents VX, Tabun, and Sarin.

Amoli Larijani appreciates Leader's support amid allegations

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Former Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani has expressed gratitude to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for his support in the midst of the Judiciary's fight against corruption that has brought his former deputy and himself under the spotlight.

In a letter addressing the Leader, Amoli Larijani said those who suffered losses during his tenure as the Judiciary chief have found the recent anti-corruption developments as an excuse to retaliate against him.

"Fighting corruption, whether within the Judiciary or outside of it, has been one of the establishment's basic approaches since its foundation," he wrote in his letter, according to IRNA.

"I've said before, and again I tell Your Excellency, that I have never supported a corrupt person and will never do so," Amoli Larijani added.

Ayatollah Khamenei on Saturday hailed the Judiciary's anti-corruption measures, saying the battle against the "virus of corruption" should



continue "without negligence".

Expressing his satisfaction with the Judiciary's measures over the past year, the Leader said, "The fight against corruption, which has reached its peak in this period, should strongly continue without negligence and on the basis of rights, justice and law, with

no encroachment and oppression of innocent people."

He also said the movement to fight corruption, which may be witnessed now in the Judiciary during Ebrahim Raisi's term, began during the time of Amoli Larijani.

Amoli Larijani had started this effort from both within and outside of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Khamenei added.

Amoli Larijani's former deputy, Akbar Tabari, was arrested in July 2019 for large-scale financial and legal misdeeds. His trial in recent weeks has led to allegations leveled at the former Judiciary chief.

Since August 2018, the Judiciary has been holding public trials of individuals involved in major economic corruption cases.

Ayatollah Khamenei has permitted the Judiciary to take special measures in order to confront economic corruption and called for "swift and just" legal action against financial crimes.

The Leader has described the "outright and unequivocal" approach toward economic corruption as one of the Judiciary's major duties, stressing that confronting the corrupt must be decisive and effective.

Iran should continue to boost power to face 'madmen', says Singaporean professor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — An international relations expert believes Iran should continue to build its "all-round power to face the madmen" — whether in the United States or Israel.

"Strategically [U.S. President Donald] Trump knows the JCPOA is good for the U.S., the Middle East, and the world," Bilveer Singh, the associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the National University of Singapore, said in an interview with ILNA published on Sunday.

"But for political reasons — to please his conservative, white American and Jewish constituents who are very influential in the U.S. — he wants to destroy it," Singh said.

He said Trump has been prepared to undermine U.S. interests for the sake of his political agenda and the lobbies that support him, especially Israel.

"This is irrational but that is U.S. politics for us, and laughable but something that will ensure the Middle East remains on the boil; my advice, Iran should continue to build its all-round power to face the madmen, be in the U.S. or Israel."

Asked if the U.S. government would eventually be able to renew a UN arms embargo on Iran, Singh said the U.S.



president is very weak and poor in foreign policy and he has been led by his pro-Jewish friends to be anti-Iran and

pro-Israel.

"As long as Trump pursues anti-Tehran policies, which means being pro-Israel and why the shift of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, it is something natural that Trump does without much thinking," the professor opined.

He went on to say that Europe has a better sense of Iran than the U.S., but the Europeans are too weak and divided and they will not confront the U.S. but remain silent.

"The key is China and Russia. If Moscow and Beijing can extend arms to Iran, and Iran develops local arms industries, then the U.S. embargo will be meaningless."

"I think Iran must play good politics at home [be strong through good leadership and united people], and good foreign policy by being able to undermine U.S. goals in the Middle East and winning strong friends to undermine U.S. interests, especially in Moscow and Beijing," the associate professor suggested.

"The key is China and Russia. If Moscow and Beijing can extend arms to Iran, and Iran develops local arms industries, then the U.S. embargo will be meaningless."

IRGC unveils advanced military equipment

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) unveiled three new domestically-manufactured military equipment as part of efforts to enhance the country's defense might.

In an interview with Tasnim, the director of the Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization of the IRGC Ground Force, General Ali Koohestani, said one of the unveiled products is "Qare'a", a lightweight composite material disposable rocket launcher designed to target fortifications.

He said the 8-kilogram launcher enjoys the technology of soft launching which is a method of launching a missile in such a way that the rocket motor ignites outside of the launch tube; the missile is ejected non-explosively.



The weapon is produced in an 80mm caliber version and its effective range is 250 meters, the general said.

He added that the second product is the "Nafez-2" (Penetrator) anti-armor launcher.

The man-portable recoilless launcher weighs 19 kilograms. It can use anti-armor and anti-fortification ammunition, he stated.

Another major achievement unveiled recently by the IRGC is a high-precision sniper rifle dubbed "Ashtar", the general said.

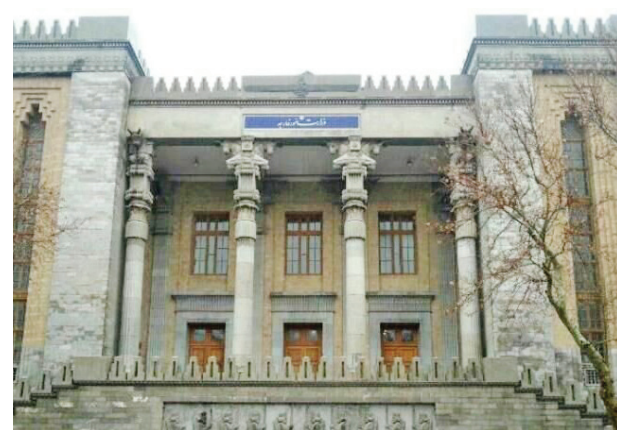
Ashtar has a caliber of 7.62x64 millimeters. Its effective range is 800 to 1000 meters and it has a zoom scope of 24X, he added.

Iran says will never forget U.S., Europe complicity in Sardasht attack

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran will never forget the United States and Europe's complicity with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's chemical attack on the Iranian city of Sardasht, says the Foreign Ministry.

In a tweet on Saturday to mark the anniversary of the Sardasht chemical attack, the Foreign Ministry wrote, "It's been 33yrs since chemical attack in Sardasht. We did & will never forget the support & complicity of US/Europe in the horrible attack by Saddam."

It added, "We did & will never forget the UNSC silence on this heinous crime. We rebuild whatever they destroyed #AmericanHumanRightsWeek."



On June 28, 1987, when Iraq's war against Iran was at its peak, the Saddam regime dropped chemical weapons on Sardasht, northwest Iran. It is categorized as one of the most adverse humanitarian crimes after the First World War.

As a result of this war crime, some 130 out of 12,000 people residing in Sardasht lost their lives while more than 8,000 others suffered injuries. Although 33 years have passed since the attack, people are still suffering from its consequences.

The materials for producing chemical arms, provided by Western states, had a long-term chronic effect, especially on children for years to come. Even today, 33 years after the event, many residents of Sardasht are suffering from the horrid effects of the nerve-agent chemical attack, and struggling for their lives.

Germany, Italy, the UK, the U.S., the Netherlands, and several other countries provided the Iraqi dictator with the equipment and material to build chemical weapons apparently because they didn't want Iran to be the winner of the eight-year war.

In recent days, 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 against Iranian #HumanRights," the Foreign Ministry wrote in another tweet on Friday.

Envoy praises Iran's multiple plans for ceasefire in Yemen

TEHRAN (FNA) — Yemeni Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim al-Dulaimi said that Iran has proposed several plans to establish ceasefire in Yemen and hold inter-Yemeni talks.

Dulaimi told the Arabic-language al-Masirah news channel that Iran's plans were based on the principle of non-interference of foreigners in the talks.

He added that the aggressive Saudi-led coalition has raised allegations of Iran's meddling in Yemen as a pretext to continue war against the Arab country.



Al-Dulaimi also underlined the UN failure for its wrong management of humanitarian talks in Yemen, saying that the regional organizations are not qualified either to mediate in any talks.

Saudi Arabia and its allies, including the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan, launched a brutal war against Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The aggression initially consisted of a bombing campaign but was later coupled with a naval blockade and the deployment of ground forces to Yemen. Hundreds of thousands of people have died since the war began, says Yemen's Health Ministry.

The Saudi-led war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The United Nations (UN) has said that a record 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of food, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger.

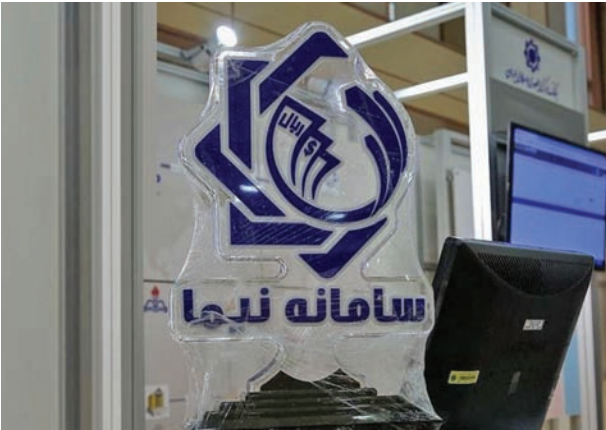
Despite Riyadh's claims that it is bombing the positions of the Ansarullah fighters, Saudi bombers are flattening residential areas and civilian infrastructures.

According to several reports, the Saudi-led air campaign against Yemen has driven the impoverished country towards humanitarian disaster, as Saudi Arabia's deadly campaign prevented the patients from travelling abroad for treatment and blocked the entry of medicine into the war-torn country.

NIMA supplies €429m to importers, up 92% in week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) supplied €429 million to the country’s importers in the week ended on June 25 to register a 92 percent increase compared to the previous week, ILNA reported.

According to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), NIMA supplied €3.3 billion for the imports of basic goods and raw materials since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to June 27.



The system, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops, and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to the domestic forex market.

It was inaugurated to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

Last week, CBI announced that NIMA managed to return over €30.075 billion of non-oil export revenues into the country’s economic cycle since it was launched in April 2018 up to June 19, 2020.

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

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

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

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

Exports from Markazi province top \$120 million in three months

TEHRAN (MNA) — About 1,165 tons of non-oil goods worth \$120 million were exported from the central Iranian province of Markazi during the first three months of the current fiscal year (March 20- June 20), a senior official at the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration said.

“The figures show 47 percent and 23 percent decline in terms of value and volume, respectively, compared with the corresponding period of last year,” Director-General of Markazi Customs Administration Esmaeil Hosseini also said on Sunday. Exports mainly included hydrocarbons, linear low-density polyethylene, polypropylene, high-density polyethylene, glass, crystalware fruit juice, and potato chips, he said.

Hosseini noted that the province offers its products in 52 international markets; Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan were the top export destinations of Markazi during the said three months.

According to the official, some 25,839 tons of goods worth \$55.12 million were imported to the province from 38 in the first three calendar months of the current fiscal.

China, Turkey, the EUA, India, and Taiwan were the top exporters to the Iranian province during the period under review, he said.

Markazi province, consisting of 12 counties and home to 1.41 million people, is one of Iran’s major industrial and agricultural hubs.

The province’s exports topped 1.8 million tons with a value of \$977.6 million during the past fiscal year (ended March 19) to witness an 18 percent increase in terms of volume and a 4 percent decline in terms of value year-on-year.

China industrial profits increase for 1st time since November

The profits of Chinese industrial enterprises rebounded in May for the first time since November 2019, signaling the economy is continuing to recover from the coronavirus shutdowns

Industrial profits rose 6 percent to 582.34 billion yuan (\$82 billion) last month from a year earlier, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed Sunday. That compared with a decline of 4.3 percent in April.

Profits contracted 19.3 percent in the first five months of the year to 1.84 trillion yuan, and were down 39.3 percent at state-owned enterprises and 11 percent at private companies, according to the statement.

The improvement in May was due to smaller cost increases and higher profit at the refining, power, chemical, and steel sectors, the bureau said in a separate statement.

“Domestic growth momentum continued to improve in May and likely into June, led by stronger property activities and infrastructure investment,” Wang Tao, chief China economist at UBS Group AG in Hong Kong, wrote in a note before the data release. “We still expect policies to remain supportive, especially in light of the potential headwinds and high degree of uncertainty.”

Support package for non-oil exports ready for implementation

1 → The official expressed hope that by allocating the above-mentioned resources, achieving the predetermined goals for the development of non-oil exports in the current calendar year will be facilitated.

Back in May, the acting minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, Hossein Modares Khiabani, said increasing non-oil export to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian

government is pursuing in the current year.

He added that the ministry was planning to increase the value of the country’s non-oil exports to its 15 neighbors up to \$50 billion.

“Our goal is to be able to meet five percent of our neighboring countries’ needs, which would amount to more than 50 billion dollars a year considering the total import of all the 15 countries which is at least 1 trillion dollars annually,” he said.

Annual steel ingot output expected to exceed 30m tons



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of steel ingot in Iran is expected to surpass 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), IRIB reported, quoting Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili.

Speaking to the state TV on Saturday evening, Esmaili said Iran is currently the world’s 10th biggest steel producer and the country is planning to rise to 8th place by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).

The official said the Industry Ministry has it on the agenda to increase the country’s steel ingot production to 55 million tons by 2025, for which 160 million tons of iron ore is required annually.

“Given the country’s 2.8-billion-ton iron ore reserves, we need new explorations in this field, because when the annual steel ingot production capacity reaches 55 million tons, the current production levels of iron ore can only supply the industry for 12 to 13 years,”

the official stated.

He further noted that over 90 million tons of iron ore were produced in the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) of which only seven percent was exported.

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

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

The ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

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

Chabahar’s strategic role in developing Iran-India-Afghanistan ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) —Thanks to its strategic position, Chabahar Port can play a key role in boosting Iran’s political and economic relations with Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Chabahar, the sole Iranian oceanic port, is an important area on the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman shores and in North-South Corridor.

It is located in the East-West transit path and is of importance concerning transit and trans-ship.

Chabahar has turned out to be a vital area for sending Indian products to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

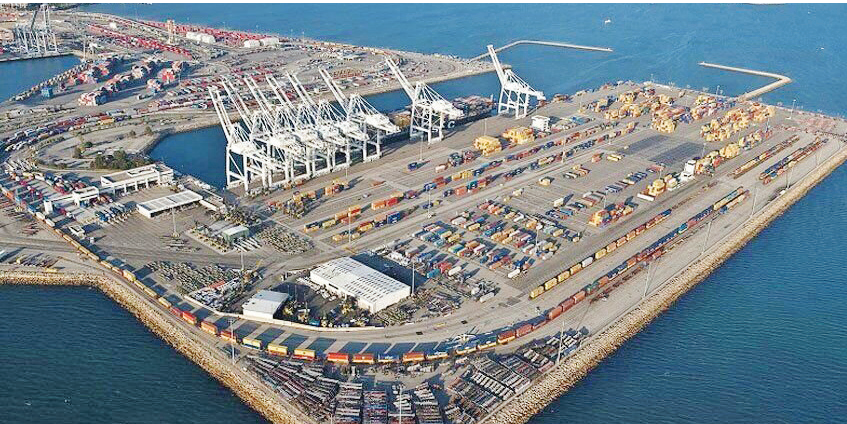
The Indian government has allocated about \$14m budget for developing Chabahar Port in 2020-2021 which had a two-fold rise compared to the last year.

Growth in the allocated budget indicates India’s commitment to developing the port and New Delhi determination for changing Chabahar Port into a connecting point.

Due to its strategic position and its access to international high seas, Chabahar is important for Iran’s trade interactions with other regional countries.

■ Chabahar and its importance for Indians

Experts in regional issues believe that due to its strategic position, Chabahar Port is im-



portant for Indians.

In the wake of India’s dispute with its neighbors like Pakistan and China, it has decided to adopt a new path to have access to Western and Central Asian states.

Chabahar Port facilitates India’s access to Afghanistan through the sea.

Iran’s Chabahar Port is considered as a rival for Gwadar in Pakistan and the Indian side believes it can help balance maritime power with Pakistan in the region.

Strategically and from New Delhi leaders’



The official expressed hope that the mentioned goal would be realized before the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (which starts in March 2021), saying that the

Institute for Trade Studies and Research and also Trade Promotion Organization are currently developing detailed plans to achieve this goal.

TPO to host Commodity-Country Desk meetings with Kuwait, Oman



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) is going to hold meetings of its Commodity-Country Desk on trade with Oman and Kuwait this week, director-general of TPO’s office of Arabian and African countries, Farzad Piltan, said.

As reported by the website of TPO on Sunday, the meetings are going to be focused on discussing the exports of industrial and mineral products, construction equipment and kitchenware to the mentioned countries, in order to increase the exports of such products.

According to Piltan, the meetings will be attended by representatives of government agencies and major exporting and importing companies, as well as representatives of the adjacent provinces.

In addition to reviewing the market of the mentioned products in Kuwait and Oman, opportunities and export strategies, latest political situation, security and economic conditions, as well as laws, regulations, obstacles, and challenges for developing exports to these countries are also going to be discussed, the official said.

The value of Iran’s trade with its Arab

trade partners in the region stood at about \$22 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19).

The country exported about \$12.5 billion worth of commodities to the mentioned countries in the said period, while importing about \$9 billion.

The mentioned trade partners include Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

In terms of exports, Iraq was ranked Iran’s top export destination with about \$9 billion worth of goods exported to the country, followed by the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Bahrain.

As for the imports, the UAE ranks the first with \$8.7 billion worth of exports to Iran, followed by Oman, Iraq, and Jordan with \$167 million, \$131 million, and \$21 million of imports respectively.

According to Iran’s trade data for the previous year, among the mentioned countries, the UAE ranked second among Iran’s top trade partners and Iraq was the fourth while Oman was ranked 18th, Qatar 34th, Kuwait 39th, Syria 41st, and Lebanon 62nd, Jordan 63rd and Bahrain 88th.

connection to the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean through Chabahar Port reinforces Iran’s role in the regional diplomacy and economy.

It is of strategic importance to Afghanistan since the country is landlocked and needs access to high seas for its economic growth.

Undoubtedly, Chabahar Port has a significant influence on developing Iran-Afghanistan economic development.

Thanks to the fact that over three million Afghan refugees are living in Iran, developing trade ties has solved refugees’ problems and has helped cement relations between Iran and Afghanistan.

Chabahar, as Iran’s only ocean port, plays an important role in developing trade, exports, and imports and in fishing as well.

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei’s special attention and the efforts made by President Hassan Rouhani’s government have accelerated development of Makran Coasts, especially Chabahar Port, in a way that five big ships carrying basic goods, including wheat, barley, soybean, and corn berthed in one week.

The geographical location and the current atmosphere in Iran for developing Chabahar Port have made the Iranian port play a major role in national and international arenas.

China’s exporters find virtual trade fair is no match for real thing

China’s attempt to shift the world’s largest trade fair online this month has demonstrated that for some things, it’s hard to replace meeting face-to-face.

The Canton Fair, usually held in the southern megacity of Guangzhou twice a year, managed to get some 25,000 exhibitors to sign up for an online opportunity to ‘meet’ global buyers. This took place through a virtual architecture built by Tencent Holdings Ltd featuring live streaming, translation and conferencing technology.

But for many of the exhibitors interviewed by Bloomberg News over the past week, catching — and holding — the attention of browsing visitors online is much more difficult than in a physical setting. Communicating and following-up on leads afterwards was also more tricky in the virtual system.

“The online format definitely can’t replace the real fair for now, and I can’t see it happening even in one or two years,” said

Yvonne Xu, a sales manager of Hangzhou Sinosky Industrial Ltd., a manufacturer of apparel and fashion accessories.

That is a sobering thought for technology optimists who hope that global commerce can shift quickly to operating online in an era where the coronavirus has curtailed global travel. China also needs sales now, as exports are down almost 8% this year so far and are scarcely expected to recover while the global economy remains in lockdown.

Like many other exporters, Xu’s company trained their salespeople in the weeks running up to the fair in order to be familiar with live video merchandising techniques. They also hired foreign models to make hundreds of photos for the online catalog. But the enormous hits they had expected from clients didn’t materialize.

Xu felt the virtual trade fair was still a new thing that hasn’t yet been accepted by foreign clients. In the real-world exhibition, customers come into a booth and can quickly spot the goods that

interest them. In the live-streaming show, however, a salesperson would spend at least 1 or 2 minutes on each product and clients move on quickly if nothing catches their eye immediately.

While there’s a lot of visitor traffic, it is more difficult to get in touch with the clients compared with the old model, said Lilian Ho, a manager at the shoe making company Wenzhou Steed International Industry Co. Ltd. “We have pages of visitor logs, but we can’t reach out to them as there are only names. Maybe that’s because of privacy concerns, but all I need is just an email address,” Ho said.

Ho missed the traditional fair, where a face-to-face conversation could quickly address clients’ questions, and salespeople would get hundreds of business cards for follow up later. In the virtual sphere, if a client doesn’t get a response within 30 seconds or so, they will likely exit, and it’s impossible to find them unless they leave their contacts or come back themselves.

Exports from PSEEEZ surpass \$1b in 3 months

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEEZ), in Iran's southwestern port city of Assaluyeh, reached \$1.09 billion in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), an official with the PSEEEZ said on Sunday.

According to Amir-Abbas Hamidi, the acting head of the PSEEEZ's Customs Department, some 4.4 million tons of commodities were exported from this region during the mentioned time span, Mehr News Agency reported.

"The exports of non-oil products from South Pars Customs Department is experiencing an upward trend despite the limitations and restrictions imposed by the U.S. against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Hamidi said.

South Pars Special Economic Energy Zone, as the capital of energy in Iran, is considered as the hub of Iran's non-oil exports, he added.

The exports mainly included methanol, propane, butane, light- and heavy polyethylene, gas condensates, ammonia,



sulfur, styrene, and crude oil during the period, while the main export destinations were China, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea, India, Japan, Hong Kong,

Indonesia, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Egypt, and Kuwait.

Also in the mentioned period, over 4,622 tons of commodities, worth \$105.82

million, were transited through this zone, showing a 29 percent hike in terms of value as compared to the same period of last year.

Earlier this month, PSEEEZ's newly appointed Managing Director Iraj Khorramdel said the company is determined to boost investment attraction in the zone during the current Iranian calendar year.

"This year we are determined to attract investment in various industrial fields, fortunately, many domestic industries are interested in presence and investment in the zone," Khorramdel said.

PSEEEZ is home to several petrochemical complexes that receive gas and gas condensate feedstock from the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

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

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

Industrial sector's power consumption at record high of 5GW

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Electricity consumption by Iran's industrial sector reached 5,013 megawatts (5.013 GW) on Saturday evening, to register an unprecedented record, IRNA reported.

The country's total electricity consumption reached 54,275 MW on the mentioned day, which indicates that the country's power consumption is following a steep upward trend, the Energy Ministry's data showed.

The figure increased by more than 4,000 MW on the mentioned date compared to the same period last year.

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

Earlier this month, the Energy Ministry warned of the unprecedented increases in power consumption across the country.

Last week, Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri said the country's electricity consumption is expected to reach 60,000 megawatts (60 gigawatts) during the summer peak period.

The deputy minister underlined the Energy



Ministry's annual overhaul program as one of the main strategies of the ministry to realize a "zero blackout" goal during this period and

said every year nearly 5,000 MW capacity is added to the total overhaul program.

"Since last summer, 1433 megawatts of

nominal capacity and 900 megawatts of practical capacity have been added to the country's power generation capacity," he said referring to the country's nominal electricity generation capacity.

"Since two years ago, we have been implementing a series of serious programs for consumption management, and we are committed to continuing these programs," he said.

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

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

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

Jask to become major oil export hub for Iran: Rouhani

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

Speaking in the ceremony for launching some energy projects on Thursday, Rouhani said: "At the beginning of the 11th administration, we were thinking about the Goreh-Jask Pipeline project, which is of great importance in terms of national security. I have always been concerned that the administration comes to an end without implementing this project."

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

The President considered it very important for Iranian companies to build the metal sheets needed for the project, saying, "Today, all foreign companies that wanted to help us in this regard and stopped their work, the imposers of the sanctions, the Americans and the Zionists, are well aware of the fact that they cannot prevent the Iranian nation from moving in the direction of production and technology."

Rouhani said that to build the Goreh-Jask pipeline, Iran will need 1,000 kilometers of pipelines, which will

be built by three Iranian companies, adding: "Of these 1,000 kilometers, about half of it, or 404 kilometers, are prepared, manufactured and gradually delivered, and laying the pipes has begun."

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

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

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

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

Emphasizing that today is a very important day in the history of our country's energy history, the President stated: "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is able to build a thousand kilometers of pipeline in this project



from Bushehr province and Goreh region to Hormuzgan and Jask is a very important achievement, which shows the capabilities of the Iranian nation, researchers and industrialists in the oil and energy sector."

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

As OPEC+ cuts deeper, Norway's giant new field pumps flat out

As OPEC and its allies make their deepest cuts yet to crude production, Norway's giant Johan Sverdrup oil field is exporting more than ever before.

Crude loadings from the field are set at a record 4.4 million barrels, or 465,000 barrels a day, in August, according to a loading program seen by Bloomberg. That's compared with 429,000 barrels a day expected in July.

Norway's state-controlled energy company Equinor ASA pledged to slash production from the Johan Sverdrup field by 20% in June, as the country moved ahead with historic oil-output cuts in cooperation with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies. The curbs are aimed at rebalancing the oil market and eliminating a glut.

It's the first time Norway has agreed to be part of coordinated international efforts to cut oil output since 2002, as the market



grapples with cratering demand amid the coronavirus pandemic. The government had previously said production would be limited to 1.609 million barrels a day in June and 1.725 million a day throughout the second half of 2020.

Volumes for Sverdrup will be capped at about 376,000 barrels a day this month, according to a revised permit obtained by Bloomberg through a freedom of information request. That's down from a peak of 470,000 in April.

If companies produce less than their permits allow, they may roll the difference forward, from June to the third quarter, or from June and the third quarter to the fourth quarter. Equinor will be allowed to pump about 416,000 barrels a day from the field in the third and fourth quarters.

Russia, a key member of OPEC+, has curbed exports of medium sour Urals to the lowest in a decade and even frequent quota-flouters, such as Iraq, have fallen into line with their pledged reductions. Russia's exports of its flagship Urals crude oil grade are set to plunge next month, by 40% from June levels, to about 785,000 barrels a day.

Earlier this month, Total SA made an unusual foray into the North Sea crude market as a recovery in Europe's fuel demand gathers pace at a time when the number of cargoes available from other producers are being curbed.

Peak fuel demand will occur within 10 years

By Irina Slav

It has been a tough few months for the oil industry, and there's more pain on the way as the industry struggles with disruptive forces that could completely transform it. Now, according to Bloomberg, oil and gas companies have one more thing to worry about: peak fuel demand.

In an outlook for road fuels published earlier this month, Bloomberg forecasts that gasoline demand will peak in 2030, with diesel following three years later. As a result, demand for crude oil from the road transport sector is seen peaking in 2031, at 47 million barrels daily.

That's higher than Bloomberg's 2019 projection, which saw oil demand from light and heavy-duty vehicles peaking at 45.1 million bpd.



To fully realize the implications of this trend, here is some context. As of 2019, road transport accounted for more than 40 percent of overall global oil demand. What's more, road transport has accounted for more than half of total oil demand growth over the past two decades. Peak demand for road transport fuels, therefore, is a harbinger of peak oil demand.

The immediate outlook for fuel demand is also not rosy, with the lockdowns and international movement restrictions erasing ten years' worth of demand growth, according to Bloomberg. This effect will likely be temporary; as lockdowns ease, demand for fuels begins to recover, even though it remains doubtful whether it will recover fully to pre-pandemic levels.

So, what are the culprits behind this looming slump in fuel demand? First, there is fuel efficiency: a factor that, according to BP, will improve so much that energy consumption in the transport sector will only rise by 20 percent by 2040. BP made that forecast last year, long before the coronavirus. Now, those changes could accelerate.

Besides fuel efficiency, there are also the alternatives to internal combustion engines, as well as ride-sharing services, Bloomberg said, identifying both as disruptive forces for the long-term future of the oil industry. Electric vans and hydrogen heavy trucks are at the core of the disruption as regards alternatives to ICE vehicles.

Just how important these alternatives are for the future of oil demand becomes evident in this 2017 report by the International Energy Agency, which notes that heavy trucks, at the time, accounted for as much as a fifth of global oil demand, or some 17 million barrels of crude oil daily. Heavy trucks also accounted for half of the world's diesel demand at the time.

And now there are electric trucks and hydrogen trucks. The clearest evidence yet of these new trucks' transformative influence on the transport industry was the stock market debut of Nikola—the company that makes both battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell trucks, aiming to change the face of freight transport. With it, it could change the face of the oil industry.

But it's too early to lament the oil industry with its two-pronged upstream/downstream revenue stream organization. The oil industry is not oblivious to fuel demand forecasts and is already preparing for a future in which the transport sector will not be the king of fuel demand.

Last year, Wood Mackenzie projected that demand for oil from the transportation industry will peak before 2030. At the time, Wood Mac analysts cited the growth in popularity for electric cars, higher fuel efficiency standards, and consumer preferences. Refiners were beginning to shift towards higher production of petrochemicals at the expense of fuels.

Now, the industry has been hit hard by the coronavirus lockdowns—an unforeseen event that that all but shattered oil demand. But another blow is brewing, too. After the pandemic revealed how we could reduce CO2 emissions by staying at home, a number of international agencies are calling for a so-called green recovery, including the International Energy Agency.

The IEA wrote in a report last week that "The world has an 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' to pour investment into clean energy and create millions of new jobs." The IEA has drafted a plan on how to take advantage of this opportunity and, unsurprisingly, transport reforms are a big part of this plan. These, the IEA proposes, should include financial incentives for drivers to switch from ICE cars to EVs or at least upgrade to more efficient ICE cars. The plan also includes investments in high-speed railways and improved public transport.

This plan—and other plans, mostly by European governments—will likely speed up the rate of decline in fuel demand, and we may see peak diesel before the end of the decade if all those alternatives live up to the promise. If the green recovery incentive schemes work, too, EVs will overtake ICE cars earlier than forecast before the crisis. All we have to do is wait and see how those ifs work out.

Covid to keep more oil underground, forcing drillers to change

Hundreds of billions of barrels of oil stranded by weak demand could accelerate companies' pivot to cleaner energy, or threaten their long-term survival.

BP PLC raised the possibility of stranded oil assets when it announced this month it would take the biggest writedown on the value of its business in a decade. But it wouldn't be the only oil company to leave crude in the ground as the pandemic ravages energy consumption. About 282 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is at risk of being stranded as the virus hastens peak demand, according to Rystad Energy AS.

"It does start to have significant implications for how some of these companies are making their investment decisions," said Jennifer Rowland, an analyst at Edward D. Jones & Co. "Some companies are starting to make investment decisions today and starting to pivot either towards shorter-cycle projects like shale or pivot towards renewables."

BP has already acknowledged that production will decline in the long term, and said whatever is pumped in 2050 "will have to be de-carbonized." And French oil major Total SA has already started its pivot to renewables. Will other companies follow suit? If they don't, they may have trouble getting access to the financing they need to keep the drills running over the next few decades, as lower demand locks their resource in the ground, according to Rowland.

"There is going to be skepticism about what really is the terminal value of a lot of those assets," she said. "It makes their investment proposition that much more of a challenge."

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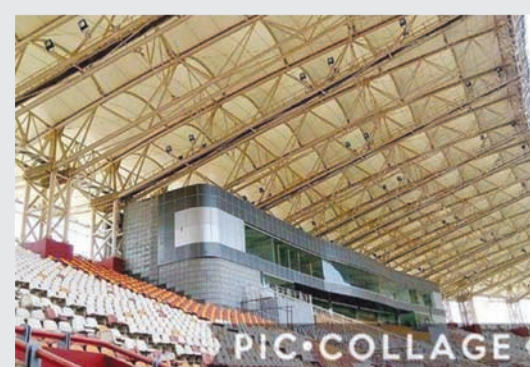


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Martin Luther King was right: the world does bend towards justice...

By Martin Love

Back 65 years ago when television was in its childhood if not infancy in the U.S. one TV game show had contestants going for a grand prize of \$64,000, which in those days was a tremendous sum of money (not any longer, really), so any big issue or question that had not yet been resolved gave rise to the common cliché of “the \$64,000 question” as to how it might pan out.

Another regular television drama series back then featured the surprise award of a million bucks to some lucky fictitious family that had been deemed exemplary by a character named “John Bearsford Tipton” (a name literally created to suggest wealth!), a generous fictional multi-millionaire who sent his agent to announce the award. It was all innocent fun to see lives suddenly transformed to extreme good fortune, how they reacted, how suddenly grateful the family became.

This TV menu sampler was well before big lotteries sprouted, in part to raise taxable revenue for various state governments in the U.S. Nowadays, U.S. network television features reams of crime, corruption, violence and mayhem, plus “news” programs heavily slanted and propagandized to one side or another of the political spectrum. Evil characters abound, and often they are foreigners, say “Arabs” or “Iranians” for examples, or other Asians farther east, or Africans and poor citizens of Latin America.

One question obviously is whether human nature, or at least American human nature, has over the course of several decades become so badly corrupted and purged of sweet innocence and benevolence to be confronted in the media with such dreck and social illness. Frankly, it's hard to imagine that human nature has EVER changed so dramatically anywhere.

One possible answer is that the rise of such sorry media “entertainment” possibly corresponds with the blatant, in-your-face rise of U.S. “imperialism” and its notions of U.S. exceptionalism, especially since the fall of the Soviet Union when American “leaders” got it in their corrupted heads that they could rule the world militarily and economically and cast foreign peoples and cultures that have objected to U.S. “imperialism” in action as simply some objectionable “other” that had to be dominated, reduced and demonized for the benefit of an ever narrower, very wealthy



U.S. “elite”. Now, remarkably, with recent administrations in Washington, and especially Trump's, the “other” has been expanding to include many Americans, too: the entrenched poor, people of color, immigrants, religious minorities such as Muslims and virtually anyone at the mercy of the almighty government.

The spark of the murder by Minneapolis police of a Black man in May, along with other incidents of racism and racial abuse by the militarized police, has awakened many Americans this past month to the degree of their repression, and change is definitely in the wind, but it's going to take a long time before real change takes hold while the battle lines are more or less clearly drawn.

At one extreme is the potential for real “revolution” similar to Iran's revolution 40 years ago, which is still unlikely, and at the other are years of seeming decline, chaos

and adjustments where very slowly better, fairer, brighter Americans somehow begin to get their hands on the levers of power at least at the local level and begin to reject business and government and various social ills as too long evident catering to the few, as it has been becoming for over 30 years.

This latter evolution at least has a certain inevitability about it, so in some respects, if much of the rest of the world can avoid precipitous actions that could ignite further U.S. hostilities whether wars or more attempts to strangle countries with sanctions, there is some reason for optimism and hope in the longer run. Racism is real in the U.S. and always has been since America's inception even if many have attempted to reject and expunge it. And racism is part and parcel of imperialism, so if imperialism dies, so too perhaps does rampant racism.

The spark of the murder by Minneapolis police of a Black man in May, along with other incidents of racism and racial abuse by the militarized police, has awakened many Americans this past month to the degree of their repression, and change is definitely in the wind, but it's going to take a long time before real change takes hold while the battle lines are more or less clearly drawn.

Are U.S. and China heading into a new cold war?

With tensions continuing to rise between the U.S. and China, experts warn that the two rivals are potentially heading towards a new “cold war” that could damage the global economy.

President Donald Trump has raised the possibility of a “complete decoupling” from China. Decoupling, the process of breaking the deeply intertwined economic links between the two countries, would represent a major change in U.S.-China relations.

Inconsistent messaging from the White House, coupled with the coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's drive to limit Hong Kong's autonomy, has led to frictions between the world's two largest economies far beyond tariffs or targeted sanctions.

“Unlike the first Cold War where the primary contest between the United States and the Soviet Union was a geopolitical one ... both systems, both constellation of countries, didn't have much to do from a trade and financial point of view. That is not the case today,” Alan Dupont, chief executive of risk consultancy Cognoscenti Group, told CNBC.

“That is why I think the ramifications of this conflict — this worsening rivalry between the U.S. and China — (are) going to be potentially very serious,” he added.

Relations between the two rivals have deteriorated to their worst in decades since Trump took office in 2017. The U.S. and China have engaged in a destabilizing trade war, with each slapping new tariffs on the other since 2018.

More recently, U.S.-China relations plunged even lower after Washington accused Beijing of keeping the world in the dark over



In this file photo U.S. President Donald Trump (L) and China's President Xi Jinping leave a business leaders event at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on November 9, 2017.

the coronavirus pandemic and hiding the outbreak's extent.

China is America's largest trading partner and next to Mexico and Canada, is the third-largest export market for the U.S. China has for long been a key test of America's foreign policy, its national security, and preservation of interests.

But President Trump has exploited and manipulated this crucial relationship almost entirely to serve his political and personal interests, according to a damning new memoir by his former national security advisor, John Bolton.

Despite the recent tough talk, there has

been no coherent and consistent policy on China. Administration officials have been divided by factional infighting and conflicting policy goals, with security hawks often clashing with Wall Street advocates and free traders.

President Trump himself has been sending conflicting messages, which appear to be designed to boost his reelection prospects.

Even in the midst of the trade war, Trump casually offered to reduce tariffs on Chinese goods in order to secure a deal with Beijing that would make him look good in November.

The president also reportedly pressed China to buy U.S. agricultural products so

that he would poll well in Midwestern states. The fact is that current attitudes and policies at the top of the U.S. “establishment”, or many of those found in Trumpism, in the GOP and also in parts of the Democratic Party, probably cannot be pushed much further and will likely be forced to recede. The narrow “establishment” seems to be slowly losing the very means to continue to project itself not just at home but around the world. There are hordes of factors, not least of which is that the U.S. is fast losing what popularity it has had, alienating even some of its Western allies in its overweening efforts to maintain power and control.

One case in point are U.S. efforts to kill Germany's access to ready and inexpensive energy supplies from nearby Russia via Nord-stream II, which after a year of sanctions and delays will probably be completed by the end of this year. Another factor among others may be inherent in Iran's courageous push-back against U.S. sanctions and threats, this seen lately in Iran's shipments of fuel and oil field supplies to beleaguered Venezuela. And it's obvious China and North Korea and others are going to try to stand strong against U.S. diktat and aim at a minimum to carve out some breathing space between themselves and U.S. imperialism.

But perhaps the biggest factor is simply that the U.S. has been living way beyond its means since the Vietnam War, and when it went off any semblance of a gold standard in 1971 and the U.S. dollar became purely fiat (along with every other currency), U.S. debt and money printing have become so enormous that the dollar simply cannot maintain its grip on the world's financial architecture much longer, probably not for another decade at the most. Some kind of major “reset” is ahead, and it's a reset that will include the loss of U.S. financial dominance, and thus its ability to project so much economic and military power.

One can even thank the wild emergence of Covid 19 and its mismanagement by Trump, where fiscal deficits are now set to expand into the several trillions unless the U.S. drastically reduces spending, which in itself will dramatically change American life, bending towards initial poverty, like nothing else. The other “bending” was cited by Martin Luther King before he was assassinated decades ago: that the human world no matter what in the long term, to its credit, “bends” towards justice.

France's Assa Traore emerges as global figure in anti-racism movement

Until the death of her brother Adama in French police custody four years ago, Assa Traore had never been someone who campaigned for a cause.

Today, the 35-year-old mother of three is an international figure in the fight against police violence and racism, thrust into the heart of the debate by the death in Minneapolis last month of George Floyd.

And on Sunday, Assa Traore, who has been dubbed the French Angela Davis, will receive a BET award, a prize awarded by an American television channel to African-American or minority figures.



“A reward for everything we have done in four years and which gives us strength for the future,” Traore told AFP, dressed in her “Justice for Adama” t-shirt.

For four years, she has campaigned, organized demonstrations, spoken out publicly and given numerous interviews.

Supported by a solid “committee” of 20 relatives and activists, she tirelessly demands “truth and justice” for Adama, who died in police custody in 2016 in a Paris suburb.

Her “truth” is that her brother was “killed” by the police -- but the investigation is still going on.

Having become a full-time activist, she never returned to her job as a community worker and lives with her three young children in an apartment on the outskirts of Paris.

For a long time, the “Adama fight” remained a local battle, unnoticed outside France. But the death of George Floyd has catapulted it into the global consciousness.

Thousands of people demonstrated in Paris in early June and hundreds of others took to the streets across France, inspiring a new generation.

“Assa, we're all fans of her with my friends. Girls in the neighborhoods are getting politicized thanks to her,” said 24-year-old Samira, in Paris for her first demonstrations.

■ 'She is a legend'

Committee member Youcef Brakni puts her on an even higher plane, saying that an Assa Traore comes around “once every 50 years!”

“It's like Simone de Beauvoir, Angela Davis, she smashed everything in her path,” he said, referring to the late French feminist writer and the US political activist.

“Now the average Frenchman knows her. When she walks on the street, people stop her.”

Assa's “fight” has taken flight with several American newspapers running profiles while music star Rihanna, who has over 84 million followers on Instagram, shared a post saluting the Frenchwoman.

“Black activism is built on a legacy of courageous people who fight injustice around the world,” said Rihanna.

The day after her brother's death, Assa Traore “naturally” became a spokesperson for the family, her older brother Lassana told AFP last year.

“She is a little bit like a mother who lost her son,” he added, because she “took care of her little brothers, took the family in her arms” after their father had died in 1999.

Their father, of Malian origin, had 17 children by four different women - two white and two black, creating what Assa calls a family of “all colors, all religions”.

Since 2016, her speech has become more political.

“In the name of my brother, I will change everything I can change,” she told AFP Saturday.

This pushed her to lead a demonstration against the policy of President Emmanuel Macron in 2018, parading alongside the “yellow vests” and more recently with the caregivers.

In 2019, she co-wrote a book with the left-wing sociologist Geoffroy de Lagasnerie, won over by her “completely new way of speaking about society, racism, social classes”.

Actor Omar Sy and figures from the world of French rap have all become her supporters.

But Traore has also stirred controversy with calls for rebellion. “In Africa, they will overthrow a president, they will enter palaces. It happens like that in Africa, why should it not happen like that in France? We are ready, we can make a beautiful revolution,” Le Figaro newspaper quoted her as saying during a 2018 protest.

Her appeal has circulated on a video on Twitter.

A senior police officer gave a more nuanced picture last year admitting with grudging admiration that Assa Traore “embodies cleverly an anti-system movement that lacked a charismatic standard-bearer”.

Since 2016, four of Traore's brothers have been imprisoned, some for violence that followed Adama's death, others for crimes unrelated to the case.

“She is a legend, but the facts are cruel,” added the police officer.

All are “political prisoners”, Assa insists. “They (the police) turned the Traores into soldiers in spite of themselves.”

(Source: AFP)

Chinese company announces promising results for possible vaccine tests to prevent corona

China National Biotec Group announced today that the results of human experiments for one of the possible vaccines to prevent the coronavirus indicate that it may be safe and effective.

“According to preliminary data, the experimental vaccine developed by a Beijing-based branch of company stimulated the production of high-level antibody to all participants who received it in the first phase of a two-phase clinical trial involving 1120 healthy people,” Reuters reported.

Chinese authorities have allowed companies and research centers to test eight human vaccines in China and abroad, in a move that puts Chinese companies ahead in the race to develop a vaccine to prevent the disease that has killed nearly half a million people all around so far.

It is the second possible vaccine produced by the company that yields encouraging results in clinical trials.

U.S. directly interfering in Lebanon's affairs, President Aoun says

President Michel Aoun has censured Washington's “direct” interference in Lebanon's internal affairs, against the backdrop of comments by U.S. Ambassador to Beirut Dorothy Shea.

“The Americans are directly interfering in the Lebanese domestic affairs, and this is unacceptable,” Aoun said in an exclusive interview with the Beirut-based and Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network on Sunday.

He cautioned the U.S. envoy over making more caustic remarks against the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, emphasizing that the group represents the Lebanese society and enjoys popularity among people.

Earlier in the day, Lebanon's Foreign Minister Nassif Hitti summoned Shea over her anti-Hezbollah criticism.

Al-Mayadeen reported that Hitti was to meet with Dorothy Shea at 3:00 p.m. local time (1200 GMT) on Monday to inform her that, under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, an ambassador must not interfere in the domestic affairs of another country, and that her speech



must not seek to pit Lebanese people against each other.

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is an

international treaty that defines a framework for diplomatic relations between countries.

On Saturday, Lebanese judge Mohamad Mazeh in the southern city of Tyre banned local and foreign media outlets in the country from interviewing the U.S. Ambassador for a year, after Shea told Saudi-owned al-Hadath television news network that Washington has “great concerns” over Hezbollah's role in the government.

Hezbollah's growing popularity in the Arab and Muslim world after the resistance movement shattered the Israeli military's myth of invincibility during the 33-day military offensive on Lebanon back in the summer of 2006 has been a matter of serious concern for the Tel Aviv regime and its Western allies.

The resistance movement's heroic defense, as well as its vehement opposition to any foreign intervention in Lebanon's domestic affairs, has turned the group into a major stakeholder in the country's political and military domains.

Scottish archaeologist David Stronach, famed for intensive Iranian studies, dies at 89

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Scottish archaeologist David Stronach, who was director of the British Institute of Persian Studies in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s, has died aged 89.



Died on June 27, Stronach is most famed for conducting archaeological excavations at the UNESCO-registered Pasargadae that was once the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great who reigned mighty Persian Empire from 559 to 530 BC, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Born in 1931, he was an emeritus professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

He was educated at Gordonstoun and Cambridge University, from which he obtained a Master of Arts in 1958. He was also the recipient of the 2004 Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Gold Medal for “Distinguished Archaeological Achievement”.

Ardebil province to boost tourism infrastructure

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A budget of 520 billion rials (over \$12 million) has been allocated to boost tourism infrastructure and implement related development projects in the northwestern Ardebil province.

The budget will be spent on the development of Alvares Ski Resort, Kowsar Geopark, and Aznav and Andabil tourist sites as well, Ardebil’s Governor General Akbar Behnamjou said on Sunday, CHTN reported.



Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition, it is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is believed to be as old as the Achaemenid era (ca. 550–330 BC). Some Muslim historians attribute the foundation of Ardabil to the king Peroz I of the Sassanid Empire. It suffered some damages caused by occasional raids of Huns from the 4th to 6th century CE.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands of travelers every year.

Ancient relics of Iran: Proto-Elamite tablet with seal mark

(Part: 1/2)

(Louvre museum) – The invention of writing corresponded to the economical needs of a society at a time when the development of cities was giving rise to increasing number of exchanges and transactions. This form of writing was inscribed on a soft material,



clay. The first tablets date from the Late Uruk period, in Mesopotamia, and the Proto-Elamite period in Iran. They often bear the mark of one or two cylinder seals, proof that an administrative check or an agreement between two parties had taken place.

■ A large tablet

This tablet is the largest from the Proto-Elamite period, corresponding to the earliest urban development in the late 4th millennium BC, in the Fars region (southwestern Iran), the present regional capital of which is Shiraz. It bears traces of three different types of administrative tools: writing, accounting and glyptics, a major art form of the period, corresponding to the use of seals. There are inscriptions of both writing and numeral signs on both sides of the tablet.

■ The emergence of a new writing system in the Fars region

Writing emerged in Iran nearly three centuries after being invented in southern Mesopotamia. This writing system, developed in the Fars region and called Proto-Elamite for this reason, is totally independent from the writing in use at Uruk.

Discover Ghadamgah, a millennia-old place of worship embedded beneath rock cliff

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The creation of rock architecture across the Iranian plateau is influenced by the religious, geographical, and political atmosphere of their time.

Such structures are mostly formed by dominated empires of the time. Sometimes a place of worship has continued to be served in later periods but is has been changed in their functions. Experts say one of the reasons that have attracted man to mountain and rock cliffs in different schools was the religious traditions of the community.

Ghadamgah, which is the main focus of this article, is a millennia-old subterranean temple that was repurposed to be a mosque. The temple is said to be a place of worship where the ancient Mithraism rituals observed before the advent of Islam.

The place of worship, which sometimes is referred to as a cave, is situated at the upstream of Ghadamgah’s graveyard, near Badamyar village, from environs of Azarshahr in the northwestern West Azarbaijan province. It is located some 200 meters from a historical cemetery of the same name.

Apart from being called a temple, mosque, or a cave, the dwelling is of high importance in terms of architecture as well as cultural and anthropological values. It was recorded in a list of country’s natural cultural heritage with register number 779 in the Iranian calendar year 1347 (1968).

Currently named Azarshahr Mosque, by many locals, the structure is a travel destination as well, attracting thousands of visitors to the region per annum.

According to the sanctity of mountains and rocks in the ancient religions, especially in Mithraism, valuable temples and places of worship have emerged in the mountains. Their obvious characteristic is circular dome-shaped spaces; simplicity, the arrangement of spaces, and the way of creating light that corresponds with the tradition of Mithraism



in Iran.

Mehr Temple in Maragheh, Dashkasan in Zanjan, and Ghadamgah Temple in Azarshahr are the rock temples in the northwest of Iran that signs and symbols on them indicate the performance of Mithraism duties in these temples.

The outside perspective of the Ghadamgah temple is very modest and at the first glance may not even attract the attention of pas-

sersby. This perspective is a small opening beneath a rock shelter.

The main area of Ghadamgah is one of the coolest and most attractive spaces that can be thought about in an ancient edifice. This space that totally is drilled in the cave is a cone with a base diameter of 15 to 15.70 meters. Cone height is 12.30 meters and the diameter of light well is 105 cm. The walls have been cut on a regular basis from the

bottom to top of the cone.

The main area of the Qadamgah Temple is one of the coolest and most attractive spaces that can be thought about an ancient edifice. This space that totally is drilled in the cave is a cone with a base diameter of 15 to 15.70 meter. Cone height is 12.30 meters and diameter of light well is 105 cm. The walls have been cut on a regular basis from the bottom to top of the cone.

Exceptional Iranian Quran sells for over £7m at Christie’s

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A rare manuscript of a 15th-century Iranian Quran has recently sold for £7,016,250, almost 12 times more than its estimated price, in an auction held in London by the Christie’s.

Written in naskh on heavy colored Chinese paper, the magnificent manuscript belongs to the Timurid dynasty (1370–1507), which was a Sunni Muslim dynasty or clan of Turco-Mongol origin descended from the warlord Timur (also known as Tamerlane).

The colors used in the Quran include deep blue, turquoise, pink, purple, orange, green, and cream. The text, catchwords, and marginal medallions are illuminated in gold, blue, and white.

The auction took place at Christie’s Art of the Islamic



and Indian Worlds Including Oriental Rugs and Carpets on June 25. It also included 35 Iranian artworks.

Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie’s is a British auction house. Its main premises are in London and New York City.

Earlier last week, a gold-illuminated Divan of Hafez, one of the earliest copies of the work of the 14th-century illustrious Persian poet, sold for 375,000 GBP in an online auction held in London by the Sotheby’s.

The luxurious manuscript of Hafez’s seminal work went under the hammer at Sotheby’s, bringing an end to the dramatic story of the text’s theft and rediscovery. The stolen manuscript was dramatically discovered earlier this year by a Dutch art sleuth.

Sacred Defense Museum extends visiting hours

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Sacred Defense Museum in north-central Tehran has extended the end of visiting hours from currently 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. during holidays and weekends, ISNA reported.

The night visit of the museum has been made possible under the condition of observing health protocols with the aim of attracting more domestic and foreign visitors, the report added.

Sacred Defense Museum on a landscaped site of 21 hectares is a gigantic war memorial with its collections concentrated heavily on the 1980-1988 Iran–Iraq war, also known as Sacred Defense.

A total of seven halls lead through the history of the sacred defense in forensic detail. The Hall of Butterflies greets visitors on arrival, the place is dedicated



to martyrs and victims of the war filled with personal belongings found on the

various battlefields.

Outside, a patchwork of domestical-

ly-manufactured armaments such as rockets, tanks, and artillery pieces are on show. The complex has vast garden areas, water features, and children’s play areas as well.

Sacred Defense Museum is equipped with a state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contribute to its charm.

The recreation of the liberation of the city of Khorramshahr by the means of virtual exhibits and video projections is amongst the main features of the museum where stands a replica of the Khorramshahr mosque adorned with creamy and turquoise patterned tiles.

A strategic port city in western Iran, Khorramshahr fell into Iraqi hands on October 26, 1980. It recaptured by Iranian forces on May 24, 1982.



Crumbling but still fabulous: UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleyman

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** –Photos depict scenes from the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleyman (“Solomon’s Throne”), a ruined sanctuary in northwest Iran, which is still a source of charm for avid holidaymakers, history buffs and archaeologists.

The deserted sanctuary bears testimony to various eras of the nation’s history. It is situated in the southeastern highlands of West Azarbaijan province overlooking a lake with a backdrop of a snowcapped mountain range.

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the surrounding landscape of the sanctuary was probably first inhabited sometime in the 1st millennium BC. Some construction on the mound itself dates from the early Achaemenian dynasty (559–330 BC), and there are traces of settlement activity from the Parthian period.

Inspired by natural context, the rich harmonious sanctuary draws domestic and foreign travelers who want, even for minutes, revel in a calm atmosphere.



Iran's Hara forests, a key biosphere and protected wetland

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Hara forests, covering an area of 27,310 hectares in southern Iran, is a key biodiversity site due to its remarkable Avicennia mangrove ecosystem.

The core area of the reserve is a marine zone. The major topographic features of the region include a wetland with a series of small islands (mud hills), mangrove forests, tidal marshes, and shallow coves.

Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They store water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustainable development by supplying all our freshwater.

Wetlands play a major role in protecting the land against floods and the impacts of storms. They provide food and diverse habitats which support genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity. Wetlands play a key role in the life cycles of many species and in annual migration patterns.

Unfortunately, wetlands are being degraded and lost due to pollution, overexploitation, climate change and human population growth. In recognition of these challenges, the RAMSAR Convention, an international treaty, was adopted in 1971.

Ramsar Wetlands are sites inscribed on the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") under the



Convention on Wetlands.

Designated a Ramsar site, the Hara biosphere reserve is located in the Mehran River delta in the south of Iran. It is situated near the Straits of Khuran between Qeshm Island and the Persian Gulf.

Sea snakes take advantage of Hara aqueous habitats for feeding, breeding, and subsistence. A species of Xerophilous snake (Echiscarinatu) in the region is found on

the northern coast of the region, and the critically endangered Hawksbill sea turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata) is found in the coastal waters of the reserve.

The Strait of Khuran, in which the reserve is located, is a Ramsar site, which provides a habitat for the pelican (pelecanus crispus) during the winter months and acts as a regular feeding place for the green turtle (Chelonia mydas) — both globally threatened species.

The area is a major habitat for migratory birds in the cold season, and for reptiles, fish, and varieties of Arthropoda and bivalves. Venomous aquatic snakes are also indigenous to the forests.

Birdlife includes herons, flamingos, pelicans, and angler eagles. Another important feature of these forests is the appropriate and suitable seabed conditions for the ovulation of fish in the Persian Gulf.

Technology comes to help Asiatic cheetah protection in Iran

1 → The subspecies "Acinonyx jubatus venaticus", commonly known as the Asiatic cheetah, is critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with fewer than 50 believed to remain in Iran.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN's) Red List of Threatened Species, most cheetah subspecies are considered vulnerable as all populations of them are on the decline.

Cheetahs are found across Africa especially in northern part of it; and a scattered population of them can be found across eastern and southern Africa, once they had been found in a wide range of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

In 2010, Cheetah Conservation Fund designated December 4 as the International Cheetah Day.

The Iranian cheetah population seems to be in trouble; incidental killing of cheetahs by people or livestock guarding dogs, habitat fragmentation and loss of biological corridors and prey base depletion, mining activity and road construction were among the main factors that threatened the lives of these valuable species.

Baqer Nezami, conservation of Asiatic cheetah project manager, has said that cheetah population in the country



is affected by many factors and unfortunately not only did not improve after 18 years of conservation plan implementation but it is currently dropping.

There are no accurate statistics on the population of cheetahs in the country since the last time the camera traps installed to determine their distribution 10 years ago, which has never been repeated, but it seems that there are 30 individuals in Iran, he stated.

During past years, herd dogs have always been the major contributors to the cheetah fatalities and have caused the most casualties, with other factors affecting the population of cheetahs as well, he lamented.

Cheetahs need a large area to live in, so they cannot be kept in one place or area, even for example, Khar Turan National Park, which covers more than 1.4 million hectares, is not a permanent habitat for the cheetahs, he noted.

Referring to prey population as a threatening factor, he said that over the past years, the population of prey has improved to some extent due to an increase in populations of small- to medium-size animals, such as gazelles, hares, Persian fallow deer and birds.

Nearly one-third of the protected areas are cheetah habitats, and in all of these areas, prey population has been improved and poaching have declined in comparison to other areas, he added.

North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Isfahan, Kerman and Yazd are 6 provinces in which the cheetahs breed, and other areas are where the cheetahs probably go in some seasons and come back to the breeding habitat again to regenerate, which causes most of the cheetahs to die whether while crossing the roads or in conflict with human or poachers, he explained.

Unknown currents in Southern Ocean have been observed with help of seals

Using state-of-the-art ocean robots and scientific sensors attached to seals, researchers in Marine Sciences at the University of Gothenburg have for the first time observed small and energetic ocean currents in the Southern Ocean. The currents are critical at controlling the amount of heat and carbon moving between the ocean and the atmosphere -- information vital for understanding our global climate and how it may change in the future.

Two new studies, one led by Associate Professor Sebastiaan Swart and the other led by Dr Louise Biddle, both working at the University of Gothenburg, use highly novel techniques to collect rare data in the ocean both under and near the sea ice surrounding Antarctica, according to Science Daily website.

■ Ocean currents have significant effect

These papers present for the first time

upper ocean currents of approximately 0.1-10 km in size. These currents, which are invisible to satellite and ship-based data, are seen to interact with strong Southern Ocean storms and with physical processes occurring under sea ice.

"Using the data collected by the seals, we're able to look at the impact these upper ocean currents have underneath the sea ice for the first time. It's a really valuable insight into what was previously completely unknown in the Southern Ocean," says Dr Louise Biddle, Department of Marine Sciences, University of Gothenburg.

The winter had assumed to be a "quiet" time due to the dampening effect of sea ice on the ocean's surface. However, the two studies show that these upper ocean currents have a significant effect on the ocean during winter.

■ Unprecedented high-resolution measurements

Some of the findings by Sebastiaan Swart and his team gives further insight how these observed ocean currents work. Their study highlights that during times when there are no storms and winds are weak, upper ocean currents start to become much more energetic. This energy enhances the rate of ocean mixing and transport of properties, like heat, carbon and nutrients, around the ocean and into the deep ocean.

"These new ocean robots, so-called gliders, which we control by satellite for months at a time, have allowed us to measure the ocean at unprecedented high resolution. The measurements have revealed strong physical linkages between the atmosphere and ocean. It's pretty amazing we can remotely 'steer'

these robots in the most far-flung parts of the world -- the ocean around Antarctica -- while collecting new science data," says Associate Professor Sebastiaan Swart, Department of Marine Sciences, University of Gothenburg.

■ Fill a critical knowledge gap

Together, these studies contribute to improving our understanding of small-scale ocean and climate processes that have impacts globally. These kinds of observations are a critical knowledge gap in the ocean that has an impact on various processes occurring at global scale, such as ecosystems and climate.

"We are excited to grow this research capability at the University of Gothenburg. This is really a world-leading direction we should be taking to collect part of our data in marine sciences," says Sebastiaan Swart.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

A total of 1,015 educational projects worth 14 trillion rials (nearly \$330 million) will be inaugurated across the country, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools, has announced.

The projects will be inaugurated by the next 10 days, on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to Rakhshanimehr, the projects include 4,168 classrooms, 11 swimming pools, and 32 gyms.

About 14,000 classrooms have been built so far this year (started March 21, 2019), compared with some 10,000 last year, he concluded.

افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور گفت ۱۰۱۵ پروژه آموزشی با اعتباری به میزان ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان در سراسر کشور به بهره‌برداری می‌رسد.

به گزارش ایسنا، مه‌الره رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل و یکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد.

به گفته او، این پروژه ها شامل ۴۱۶۸ کلاس درس، ۱۱ استخر، و ۳۲ سالن ورزشی هستند.

رخشانی مهر ادامه داد تاکنون در سال ۹۸ حدود ۱۴ هزار کلاس درس افتتاح شده است در حالیکه در سال ۹۷ حدود ۱۰ هزار کلاس افتتاح شده بود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“galacto-, gala-, galact-”

■ **Meaning:** milk

■ **For example:** The Milky Way is the *galaxy* which is the home of our solar system.

PHRASAL VERB

Grasp at something

■ **Meaning:** to try to hold on to something

■ **For example:** His foot slipped and he grasped at the top of the wall.

IDIOM

Bring nothing to the table

■ **Explanation:** to have nothing of interest to offer the other side in a negotiation

■ **For example:** We'll never reach an agreement if we don't all bring something to the table.

Iran makes face mask compulsory to contain pandemic

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — In an attempt to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, wearing face masks has been made mandatory in public and crowded places, ISNA news agency reported.

The national headquarters for coronavirus fight has approved that in order to prevent disease transmission people must wear face masks indoors or in gatherings, from July 5 to 21.

And if necessary, the plan will be extended until August.

Using a face mask prevents coronavirus transmission up to 80 percent, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

The provinces of Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kordestan, Hormozgan, West Azarbaijan, and Khorasan Razavi have the highest prevalence of COVID-19, she announced.

The new cases of infection in the provinces of East Azarbaijan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, Lorestan, and Golestan is alarming.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 222,669 on Sunday, of whom 10,508 have died and 183,301 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,489 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 144 died, Sadat Lari said.

700km-long lightning bolt sets new global record, WMO confirms

A single flash of lightning, over 709km (440 miles) long has set a new distance record, the World Meteorological Organisation has confirmed.

The "megafash" stretched from north eastern Argentina, across southern Brazil and over the Atlantic Ocean.

Also confirmed was a separate bolt which beat the record for the longest duration for a single lightning flash, the Guardian reported.

Both the records were verified with new satellite lightning imagery technology, the WMO said.

Both of them more than double the previous records measured in the United States of America and France.

The WMO said the new distance record was set on 31 October 2018. The 709km the flash reached is equivalent to the distance between Boston and Washington DC in the US or between London and the border of Switzerland near Basel.

The duration record was set on 4 March 2019 over Argentina, when the flash lasted for 16.73 seconds.

"These are extraordinary records from single lightning flash events," said Professor Randall Cerveny, chief rapporteur of Weather and Climate Extremes for the WMO.

"Environmental extremes are living measurements of what nature is capable [of], as well as [of] scientific progress in being able to make such assessments. It is likely that even greater extremes still exist, and that we will be able to observe them as lightning detection technology improves."

Until the announcement of the new records, the previous record for the longest detected distance for a single lightning flash was 321km (199.5 miles) on 20 June 2007 across the US state of Oklahoma. Both the previous and new record used the same maximum great circle distance methodology to measure flash extent.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

BBC Independence

(January 30, 2004)

Two of the BBC's most senior executives resigned following the publication of the report into the events surrounding the death of Dr David Kelly, a government scientist. This report from Keith Adams:

The BBC now finds two seats empty at its **most senior managerial level** - those of its **chairman** and its **director general**. Even though the resignations resulted from a conflict between the government and the corporation - it is now the government which will **appoint** a new BBC chairman. And it is that new chairman who will help **appoint** a new BBC **director general**. The Scottish National politician, Alex Salmond, is among those who question the government's role in filling the posts.

"**Who on earth under the current circumstances** is going to trust the Prime Minister to appoint a chairman of the board of governors, who'll then appoint the next **director general**? Are we really to believe with the two top men at the BBC fallen because basically they'd dared to criticise the government on a sensitive issue, then this is going to be an appointment that's going to **inspire public confidence**."

The BBC is funded by a fee paid by each household in the UK that has a television. The government is just beginning a review of that system - as it does once every ten years. The **charter review**, as it's called. Some fear the BBC could go too far in trying to please the government following the Kelly affair, because it relies upon the renewal of the charter for its funding.

Following its battle with the BBC, the government knows it must avoid any perception that it's interfering with the corporation. In accepting the corporation's apology on Thursday, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, made reference to the broadcaster's impartiality. He said the BBC should probe and question the government in every proper way. His Culture Minister, Tessa Jowell, who is overseeing the review of the BBC's charter, says it's impossible for the government to threaten the corporation's independence. "The BBC is **constitutionally independent** and will continue to be so, and what is important now is that, in the wake of Gavin Davies's and Greg Dyke's resignations - honourable resignations - that the BBC moves forward and does so because it is the principal, most important, **public service broadcaster** in the country. It is envied around the world and it is cherished by the people of this country."

■ **Words**

most senior managerial level: the highest stage in the hierarchy of an organisation
chairman: here, the person in charge of the BBC's Board of Governors
director general: here, the person in charge of the executive side of the BBC

appoint: if you appoint someone to do a job you formally choose them to do it

Who on earth: a forceful way of asking a question
current circumstances: given what is happening at the moment
inspire public confidence: make people feel they can trust it
charter review: the formal examination of the document setting out how the BBC is organised and financed
constitutionally independent: according to the way in which it is organised

public service broadcaster: a not-for-profit organisation transmitting radio and TV programmes

(Source: BBC)

Lebanon’s FM summons U.S. envoy over comments on Hezbollah

→ 1 Hezbollah has defended Lebanon against two wars waged by Israel, the U.S.’s closest regional ally, in the 2000s. The heroic defense as well as the group’s stiff opposition to foreign intervention in Lebanon’s internal affairs has turned it into a major stakeholder in the country’s political and military spheres.



Its military engagement in the Syria war has also turned it into a seasoned force, with many Western observers describing Hezbollah as the most powerful Arab army. The U.S. and its Persian Gulf allies have imposed sanctions on Lebanese economic assets and figures for alleged cooperation with Hezbollah.

UK Labor calls to ban settlement imports in response to annexation

→ 1 Irish lawmakers have attempted to legislate a ban on Israeli goods from the West Bank in recent years, but European Union trade policy was one of the obstacles to the proposal becoming law. The UK is no longer part of the EU, and sets its own trade policies, but Israel was one of the first countries with which the UK – Israel’s third-largest trading partner after the EU and U.S. – signed an agreement to ensure continued trade in case of a no-deal Brexit.

A UK diplomatic source said earlier this month that formal sanctions on Israel in response to annexation are unlikely, and in fact the UK seeks to increase scientific cooperation with Israel. However, the source said, there remains a concern that there will be private boycott initiatives from UK companies and universities. Last week, Starmer fired his party’s shadow education secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey for sharing an article that claimed Israel trained US police in the methods that resulted in the killing of George Floyd, which is false. Starmer demoted Long-Bailey, saying “the article contained anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.” “I’ve made it my first priority to tackle anti-Semitism, and rebuilding trust with the Jewish community is a No. 1 priority for me,” Starmer said.

Black Lives Matter protest turns deadly in U.S. state of Kentucky

→ 1 The Saturday night shooting was at least the second during nearly a month of protests in Louisville over Taylor’s death.

Seven people were wounded on May 28 when gunfire erupted near City Hall, prompting a statement from Taylor’s mother asking people to demand justice “without hurting each other”.

Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, was killed in her Louisville home in March by police who were serving a no-knock warrant. Protesters have been calling for the officers involved in her death to be charged. One of the officers was recently fired.

Kenneth Walker, Taylor’s boyfriend, was originally charged with attempted murder after he fired a shot at one of the officers who came into the home. Walker has said he thought he was defending himself from an intruder.

The no-knock search warrant that allows police to enter without first announcing their presence was recently banned by Louisville’s Metro Council.

Resistance News

Massive demonstration in Gaza against annexation

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— Hundreds of Palestinian citizens formed a human chain across Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, to protest Israel’s annexation plan. The protesters waved Palestine flags and raised banners condemning the annexation and affirming that the West Bank and Jordan Valley are Palestinian land.

Israel intends to annex the Jordan Valley and large parts of the West Bank next July, amid warnings that the move would undermine efforts for peace and a two-state solution in the region.

The intended annexation will include over 30% of the West Bank’s area, according to researchers.

IOF injures 7 Palestinians in protests over annexation

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— At least seven Palestinians were injured when Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened fire at protesting citizens in Atouf village in the northern Jordan Valley.

Abdullah Besharat, head of Atouf’s village council, said that a Palestinian citizen suffered a rubber bullet injury, while six others choked on tear gas during the attack.

Besharat said that the confrontations flared up when the IOF stopped and detained dozens of Palestinians, who were heading to Bardala village to take part in a popular conference against the annexation, at al-Hamra and Tayasir checkpoints.

Kashmir Muslims fear demographic shift as thousands get residency

→ 1 ‘Kashmir becoming another Palestine’

“The decision to provide non-Kashmiri residents with a domicile certificate is certainly the beginning of the end. This is the beginning of Kashmir becoming another Palestine,” Badar-ul-Islam Sheikh, a 29-year-old resident of the main city of Srinagar, told Al Jazeera.

“It is sad. It is horrible. I fear that time will come that we will not even feel safe in our homes,” he said. “We have been silenced.”

According to a census conducted by India in 2011, out of 12.5 million total population, Muslims comprise 68.31 percent and Hindus 28.43 percent in Kashmir.

Article 35 (A) had barred outsiders, including Indian nationals from other states, from settling and claiming government jobs to maintain the demographic balance in the region, which has seen decades of armed rebellion against the Indian rule.

On Friday, a picture of the domicile certificate issued to Navin Kumar Choudhary, a bureaucrat originally from the Indian state of Bihar, went viral on social media.

In April this year, amid the coronavirus lockdown, the government notified domicile laws making an unspecified number of outsiders eligible for residency and jobs.

According to the new law, any person who has lived in the region for 15 years, or has studied in the region for seven years and passed his class 10 or class 12 examination is eligible for domicile certificate.

Also, children of Indian government employees who have served in the state for 10 years are eligible to settle and claim local residency rights. The law applies even if the children have never lived in Kashmir.

Out of 66, top bureaucrats serving in the region, 38 are outsiders belonging to other Indian states. Many other outsiders serve in various central government institutions like banks, post offices telecommunication facilities, security institutions, and universities.

■ ‘Disastrous’ for the region

Khurram Parvez, a human rights activist based in Srinagar, said the move was “disastrous” for the whole region.

“It appears government is in some kind of hurry. Within weeks so many people applied,” he told Al Jazeera.

Kashmiri politicians across the divide have said the revocation of special citizenship rights was aimed at reversing the Muslim majority character of the region, which is



now directly ruled from New Delhi.

The local legislature, which was directly elected by the people, was suspended in the wake of the scrapping of Article 370 last year.

“All our misgivings about the new domicile rules in J&K are coming to the fore,” tweeted Omar Abdullah, the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, which was earlier a state and now a federally administered region.

Omar was jailed following the removal of the region’s autonomy in August last year along with most prominent Kashmiri leaders who opposed the stripping of the region’s special status by the Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was released almost eight months later, in March.

“We in @JKNC [Jammu and Kashmir National Conference] opposed the changes because we could see the nefarious design behind the changes. The people of J&K on both sides of the Pir Panjal mountains will be the sufferers of these domicile rules,” he tweeted on Friday.

But the Indian government says the move to change the status of Kashmir was done to integrate the Muslim-majority region with the rest of the country in order to bring development.

Pakistan’s ministry of foreign affairs said in a statement that India’s latest step was a vindication of the country’s “consistent stance that the major intention behind the Indian Government’s illegal and unilateral

actions of 5 August 2019 was to change the demographic structure of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and turn Kashmiris into a minority in their own land”.

“This has long been part of the RSS-BJP’s ‘Hindutva’ agenda,” the statement added.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency on the condition of anonymity, a government official said, since May 18, when the rules were notified, 33,000 people had applied for the domicile certificates. Out of them, 25,000 people have been granted residency rights, he said.

■ Most certificates issued in Jammu region

As many as 32,000 applications were filed in 10 districts of the Hindu majority Jammu region in the south. The highest number of 8,500 certificates has been issued in the Doda district, which has a delicate demographic balance, with Muslims comprising 53.81 percent and Hindus 45.76 percent.

Up to 6,213 domicile certificates have been issued in Rajouri district, which has 62.71 percent Muslim population. Authorities have distributed 6,123 residency certificates in Poonch, a border district comprising 90.44 percent Muslim population.

In the Kashmir region, which is about 96.4 percent Muslim population, 435 certificates have been issued so far, out of the total 720 applications.

As of now, it is not clear how many outsiders, like Choudhary, have been issued domicile certificates. The 25,000

new citizens also include Hindu refugees, who had settled in the region at the time of partition of the sub-continent in 1947. They had migrated from territories, now part of Pakistan. But due to Kashmir’s residency laws and special status they were not granted local residency rights.

Parvez, the human rights activist, said the local government, which takes orders from New Delhi, has threatened to penalize officials Rs 50,000 (\$660) if a domicile certificate is not issued within stipulated 14 days, adding that it would be difficult to verify the claims of applicants within such a short period.

“If you compare it with northeastern state of Assam, [where the ruling Bharatiya Janata party] BJP [government] wants every application to be scrutinized by officers,” Parvez told Al Jazeera, referring to the state where nearly two million people were left out of a 2019 citizenship list.

“[In Assam] people also had the right to object to anyone’s application. But here neither officers nor anyone else has a right to object to domicile right,” he said.

“The government has already warned those who oppose will have to go to the jail,” Parvez said people were not in support of the law but cannot oppose “under the pressure of gun and state violence”.

“It will only complicate conflict and make things ugly,” he said.

Kashmir is held by India and Pakistan in parts and claimed by both in full. A small sliver of Kashmir, called Aksai Chin, is also held by China.

Currently, India and China are engaged in a deadly border standoff since the beginning of May. On June 15, 20 Indian soldiers were killed in border fights, creating the worst tensions between Beijing and New Delhi in nearly 50 years.

Since they were partitioned in 1947, New Delhi and Islamabad have fought three wars - in 1947, 1965, and 1971. Two of them have been over Kashmir.

Kashmiri rebel groups have been fighting for independence or unification with neighboring Pakistan. They enjoy broad-based popularity in the Kashmir valley.

According to several human rights organizations, thousands of people have been killed since 1989, when India sent tens of thousands of troops to the region to quell the armed rebellion.

Taliban reject claims Russia aided fighters in attacks on U.S. troops



The Taliban rejected a newspaper report claiming their fighters had received rewards from Moscow’s spies to kill U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The New York Times reported Friday that bounties offered by a notorious arm of Russia’s military intelligence service gave incentives to Taliban fighters to target U.S. forces, just as US President Donald Trump tries to withdraw troops and end America’s longest war.

“The nineteen-year jihad of the Islamic Emirate is not indebted to the beneficence of any intelligence organ or foreign country,” the Taliban said in a statement issued in Kabul.

According to AFP, the group also denied previous U.S. accusations it was given arms by Russia.

“The Islamic Emirate has made use of weapons, facilities and tools ... that were already present in Afghanistan or

are war spoils frequently seized from the opposition in battles.”

The Taliban said home-made explosives accounted for most of the casualties among U.S. forces.

The group reiterated it was committed to an accord signed with Washington in February that paves the way for withdrawing all foreign forces from Afghanistan by mid next year.

Earlier on Saturday Russia also denounced the New York Times report.

The “baseless and anonymous accusations,” published by the newspaper, had “already led to direct threats to the life of employees of the Russian Embassies in Washington DC and London,” the Russian Embassy in Washington wrote on Twitter.

“Stop producing #fakenews that provoke life threats, @nytimes,” it added in a later tweet.

Thousands flee homes as Myanmar army plans ‘clearance operations’

Thousands of people have fled their homes in Myanmar’s western state of Rakhine, as local officials warned them that the army was preparing “clearance operations” in the region, in what was quickly reminiscent of 2017-18 operations that led to attempted genocide against Rohingya Muslims in the region.

Citing a lawmaker and a humanitarian group, Reuters reported Sunday that a local administrator had warned village leaders in a letter on Wednesday that the army was planning “clearance operations” against “terrorists.”

“While this is being done, if the fighting occurs with AA terrorists, don’t stay at the villages but move out temporarily,” it said, referring to the Arakan Army — a group from the largely Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group that seeks greater autonomy for the western region.

Colonel Min Than, Rakhine State’s border affairs and

security minister, verified the letter to Reuters.

The letter did not specify where the order came from, but Min Than said it was an instruction from his ministry — one of three Myanmar government ministries controlled by the army.

He said that the administrator had misinterpreted the order from his ministry and that the operations would only take place in a few villages, not the dozens mentioned in the letter.

The UK-based rights group Burma Human Rights Network said the residents of 39 villages had begun to flee since the order was issued in Kyauktan on Wednesday, citing local sources.

Journalists are barred from most of Rakhine State, and the government has imposed an internet shutdown on most of the region, making information difficult to verify.

Yemen’s UNESCO body decries UN removal of Riyadh from child-killers blacklist



Yemen’s national commission for the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has urged the world body to reconsider its decision to remove the Saudi-led military coalition from its blacklist of child-killers and instead refer such crimes to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In a statement, the Yemeni commission censured the UN’s recent pro-Saudi move, describing it as a major failure for the world body and its humanitarian principles.

The UN decision ignores the confessions of members of the Saudi-led coalition regarding massacres of Yemeni kids and the legal reports issued by the UN’s own bodies that prove the coalition’s involvement in the killings, starvation and beatings of Yemeni children, it further said.

The UN decision is a sign of “mercy” for the atrocities of the Saudi regime and its allies, paving the way for the military coalition to commit even more crimes with impunity and disregard of international law, said the commission, Press TV reported.

It said the move proved discrimination in the UN’s approach toward children’s rights and will have a negative impact on the future generations’ view of the history and the role of the United Nations, it added.

The decision would undermine the UN Yemen envoy’s efforts to end the years-long conflict and a deadly blockade of the Yemeni children, it said, calling on regional and international organizations to stand by Yemeni children and protect their rights against Saudi atrocities.

Zaw Zaw Htun, the secretary of the Rakhine Ethnic Congress, a humanitarian group, said at least 1,700 had fled to the neighboring Ponnagyun Township.

Another 1,400 are sheltering in a nearby village and are in dire need of food and other supplies, said regional parliamentarian Oo Than Naing from Rathedaung Township.

Min Than, the border affairs and security minister, said 80 people had fled Kyauktan to elsewhere in Rathedaung.

He also said the operations could last up to a week and “those who remain will be those who are loyal to the AA.” On Saturday, government spokesman Zaw Htay said in a statement on Facebook that the army had been instructed not to use the term “clearance operations,” which was used back in 2017 to describe operations against Rakhine’s Rohingya Muslims.

No need to worry about FIFA's objections: Kafashian

S P O R T S TEHRAN — First deputy vice-president of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), Ali Kafashian, believes that FIFA's objections to the FFIRI's draft statutes are not a cause for concern.

Elsewhere, the FFIRI's head of Legal and Regulations Compliance Committee, Ahmedreza Barati, has recently said that the most of the articles of the FFIRI's draft Statutes are in accordance with FIFA regulations. According to Barati, Article 1 of the FFIRI statutes states that the legal nature of the federation is a non-governmental public organization, which FIFA is not yet convinced of, and this is still a matter of controversy.

Kafashin, in an interview with ISNA, said: "The amendment of the FFIRI statutes should have been completed three or four months ago, but it did not happen. I think the draft amended statutes has been written in such a way that the independence of the football federation has been preserved."

Believing that the football federation is under the current laws of the country and FIFA respects this issue, Kafashian added: "The non-governmental public nature of the FFIRI in this Statutes is following country's laws. While respecting FIFA rules, we must also consider our own domestic rules. The FFIRI Statutes preserves the independence of the federation, and the members of the FFIRI assembly decide on football."

Recently there have been rumors that



the FFIRI has been suspended due to FIFA's objections to the nature of the Iranian football federation, which Kafashian says

it is not a cause for concern.

"No need to worry. It's normal. The football federation belongs to the people, and

the assembly of the federation decides on the matter of football. We have to convince FIFA to resolve the issue," he concluded.

Iran the best Asian team in FIVB World Ranking



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran national volleyball team remained the best Asian team at the FIVB Men's Senior World Ranking released on Sunday.

The ranking remained unchanged since its previous edition as the world keeps fighting against the spread of the novel coronavirus and all international fixtures were put on hold.

The Persians are eighth in the world ranking with 279 points as Brazil remain

as the top-ranked team in the world with a total of 427 points.

Poland are second with 384 points in the ranking.

The U.S. and Russia are third and fourth with 365 and 317 points, respectively.

Here are the Top 10 teams:

1. Brazil, 427, 2. Poland, 384, 3. USA 365, 4. Russia 317, 5. Argentina, 291, 6. France 291, 7. Italy 288, 8. Iran, 279, 9. Japan 269, 10. Canada 255

Iran's Women Futsal World Tournament participation in doubt



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran will have to participate at the 2020 Women's Futsal World Tournament but it's not clear whether the Iranian football federation will send the team to the competition.

The competition is scheduled to be held in Brazil in December.

Iranian women, two-time Asian champions, have participated in the prestigious tournament three times so far.

Iran and Japan will be Asian's representatives in the tournament.

The Women's Futsal World Tournament is an international women's futsal competition for national teams, organized by national associations and the World Futsal Association.

The first edition took place in 2010 in Spain and was won by Brazil. The tournament has known no other winners besides Brazil, after the country's victories in the first six editions.

The tournament is endorsed by national associations such as the Japan Football Association, Iranian Football Federation and National Football Federation of Guatemala.

A tournament of firsts: FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 will break new ground

Australia and New Zealand have been selected as joint hosts of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 in a landmark decision by FIFA on Thursday.

■ **More teams, revenue, fans**

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 will be groundbreaking in more ways than one way. It will be the first with 32 teams, up from the 24 nations who competed at last year's Finals in France, won by the United States. That means more matches and more revenue to be ploughed back into women's football.

The sports-mad host nations are expecting 1.5 million spectators, which would be another record, while prize money is set to be most ever offered, reflecting the growth of the game.

It will be the first women's World Cup co-hosted by cooperating nations and the first to take place in the southern hemisphere.

■ **Why Australia and New Zealand?**

The votes of FIFA council members saw Australia and New Zealand garnering 22 ayes to Colombia's 13.

It followed FIFA's evaluation report ranking Australia and New Zealand higher in stadiums, team and referee facilities, accommodation, commercial opportunities and competition-related event sites.

The two countries already have considerable experience in hosting major sporting events, with frantic last-minute



lobbying, led by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, helping get the bid over the line.

■ **How will it work?**

The tournament will be played in 12 cities along Australia's famed coastline and across rugged New Zealand.

Four groups will be located in each country with the opening match scheduled for Auckland's legendary Eden Park - home to rugby heavyweights the All Blacks.

Quarters and semis will take place across both countries before the final at Sydney's ANZ Stadium, which hosted the opening ceremony of the 2000 Olympics when 110,000 people crammed in.

Match scheduling will likely involve lunchtime and

evening kickoffs to cater for global audiences.

■ **Does it make financial sense?**

Australia and New Zealand's bid was the most commercially viable of the final three in contention, ranking above Japan - who withdrew out this week - and Colombia.

This was largely due to predicted record ticket sales and significant government support, with the two nations committed to contributing a combined Aus\$110 million (US\$76 million).

Sale of broadcast rights are expected to surge while Australia and New Zealand can expect a major boost in tourism revenues as they recover from the coronavirus pandemic. More than one billion people are expected to watch the event.

■ **What will be the legacy?**

Women's football has seen incredible growth over the past decade and FIFA recently doubled its investment in the women's game over the next four years to US\$1 billion and has a goal of 60 million women playing globally by 2026.

A successful 2023 tournament is considered crucial to help further build its image and bolster participation. Football Federation Australia also sees the event as a driver for social change, creating role models for young girls and helping promote equal pay and gender equality.

(Source: AFP)

Leicester could play home matches at neutral venue due to coronavirus infection rise

Leicester City could be forced to play their remaining three Premier League home games at a neutral venue away from the King Power Stadium, sources have told ESPN, if the UK government imposes a local lockdown due to a surge in coronavirus infections in the city.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel told the BBC on Sunday that Leicester could be subjected to localized lockdown measures, including tight restrictions on movement, after

658 new cases of coronavirus were recorded in the area in the two weeks up to June 16. Health Secretary Matt Hancock has also said that "all options" are being considered.

Leicester, who are due to host Chelsea in the FA Cup quarterfinal on Sunday, must still complete seven league games this season, with three due to be played at home.

Brendan Rodgers' team are scheduled to host Crystal Palace on July 4 and Sheffield

United on July 15 before a final-day encounter with Manchester United that could yet prove to be crucial for both teams' ambitions of securing Champions League qualification.

Sources have told ESPN that all 20 Premier League clubs agreed to use neutral venues in the event of a team being unable to use their home ground.

Prior to the restart of fixtures on June 17, three games involving Liverpool -- their trips

to Everton and Manchester City and home game against Palace -- had been considered for neutral venues amid concerns over safety and public health before local authorities allowed the fixtures to go ahead as planned.

But any imposition of a local lockdown in Leicester in the coming days would see their remaining home games come under scrutiny due to public health concerns.

(Source: ESPN)

Iran Taremi, Rezaei nominated for best forward of ACL2017 Team

Iranian players Mehdi Taremi and Kaveh Rezaei have been nominated for the best forward of the ACL2017 Team.

After deciding the top goalkeeper, the best defense in front of him and the playmakers in midfield, the-afc.com has eight players of the 2017 AFC Champions League Best XI confirmed, so now it's time to complete the jigsaw by voting for the men to lead the line up front.

So, there are the eight players in contention for the three places in attack.

■ **Mehdi Taremi**



With Persepolis needing a victory to advance to the knockout rounds, Mehdi Taremi's hat-trick in the final group stage game against Al Wahda was one of the standout performances of the tournament as the Azadi Stadium side sealed a return to the last 16.

Then, with Al Ahli still in the contest in the second leg of the quarter-finals, Taremi held his nerve to slot home a late penalty and secure the Tehran side a place in the last four for the first time; however, he was subsequently ruled out of both games against Al Hilal.

■ **Kaveh Rezaei**

Kaveh Rezaei's goal-scoring form in the first half of 2017 ultimately paved the way for a move to Europe as he fired Esteghlal into the knockout rounds for the first time since 2013 with four goals in six group stage games.

When Rezaei remained calm to net a stoppage-time penalty and secure a 1-0 first-leg win over Al Ain in the last 16 things looked good for Esteghlal, only for them to succumb to a 6-1 defeat in the return meeting, with Rezaei scoring a consolation before departing for Belgium.

The Iranian duo will have to compete with Omar Khribin, Hulk, Rafael Silva, Shinzo Koroki, Alan and Yu Kobayashi in the poll.

Last-gasp Ceballos fires Arsenal into FA Cup semis

Substitute Daniel Ceballos fired Arsenal into the FA Cup semi-finals with a stoppage-time goal that sealed a 2-1 win over Sheffield United at Bramall Lane on Sunday.

John Lundstram had an early header ruled out for offside for Sheffield United, who went behind when Chris Basham fouled Alexandre Lacazette in the penalty area and Pepe rattled home the spot-kick in the 23rd minute.

The game looked to be heading for extra time when David McGoldrick equalized in the 87th minute, hooking home a volley after Arsenal failed to clear a corner, but Ceballos popped up to slot home the winner.

Arsenal joined Manchester United in the last four. Leicester City face Chelsea and Newcastle meet Manchester City later on Sunday in the last two quarter-finals.

(Source: Reuters)

Murray withdraws from third-place match at Battle of the Brits

Andy Murray has withdrawn from his third-place playoff match against Cameron Norrie in the Battle of the Brits exhibition tournament, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) said on Sunday.

Former world number one Murray, 33, returned to action following a seven-month injury layoff at the charity event organized by his brother Jamie this week.

The three-times Grand Slam champion played four matches in five days, beating Liam Broady and James Ward on the way to the semi-finals where he lost to Dan Evans on Saturday.

Ward will take Murray's place in the match against Norrie.

(Source: Reuters)

Taha on a double mission with Lebanon

Head coach Jamal Taha has a double mission in the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 -- to take Lebanon to the third round as well as ingest young players into the squad.

"Our mission is not easy at all but our target is to revitalize the national team.

"The basic idea is to change the structure of the team and reduce the average age and make it 24 years old in order to build a special team for the future," said Taha.

Taha said he will be giving young players a chance at international action to build their confidence but asserted the target is still to do well in the Asian Qualifiers.

Lebanon are third in a tight Group H, level on eight points with Korea Republic and DPR Korea. Turkmenistan lead the standings on nine points.

"We will be calling up 25 players who were born between 1995 and 1998 on Monday," explained the former Al Ansar midfielder. "We want to give confidence to these players."

"It will be very hard to prepare the team physically, especially with the stoppage of football in Lebanon for an entire season due to economic difficulties and the COVID-19 pandemic."

The former coach of Shabab Al Sahel, Al Ansar and Tadamon Sour was, however, hopeful of Lebanon's Asian Qualifiers chances.

"There is nothing impossible in football," said Taha. "Our next match against Turkmenistan will be very important and we will be fighting in order to get the three points."

"We will try our best to adapt with the current situation and I will try to improve the level of the national team."

(Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A believer divides his day and night into three parts: he spends some of it in communion with God; another part in repairing his life and needs; and the third part in providing his body and soul with legitimate and admirable joys.

Imam Ali (AS)

New director of Art Bureau inaugurated

→1 “The Sacred Defense is our Iranian treasure and does not match any part of the history. It is a treasure which requires a deep excavation,” he said.

“The bureau has been active in publishing books with the central themes of the Sacred Defense and Islamic Revolution, while many books have been translated by the organization,” the minister said.

The bureau also developed the poetry of Sacred Defense, and poets like Qeisar Aminpur, Hamid Sabzevari and Seyyed Hassan Hosseini were active members of the bureau, while it also helped produce many films on the Sacred Defense,” he added.

Haddad-Adel for his part pointed to the motto “Surge in Production” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and said, “We need to take the necessary measures for the realization of the motto in the field of art productions. We should provide necessary artistic products for people from all walks of life.”

He added, “Seminaries can step in and help the bureau end the problems of art. The bureau should take steps and produce illustrious artworks.”

The 32-year-old Dadman is a graduate of industrial engineering from Sharif University of Technology. He is currently a student at the Meshkat Islamic Sciences Seminary.

He is the son of Rahman Dadman, who served as the minister of roads and transportation under president Mohammad Khatami from January 14, 2001 until May 18, 2001 when he died in an air crash.

Dadman replaced Mohsen Momeni-Sharif who held the position from May 2010.

DEFC ready to screen movie on tragedy of Sardasht chemical attack

» **TEHRAN** — “Where the Winds Die”, an animated movie about Iraq’s chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987, has been completed and will be ready for screening within the next two months.

Pejman Alipur is the director of the short movie produced at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC). “It’s a symbolic and formalistic animation,” Alipur had said earlier.



A scene from Iranian director Pejman Alipur’s animated film “Where the Winds Die” about Iraq’s chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987.

“The film has a poetic look at the daily life in Sardasht three months before the chemical attack, the moment when the attack happened and years after the tragedy,” he added.

“Filmmakers have demonstrated little regard for the chemical attack on Sardasht, and they have mostly focused on the Halabja 1988 chemical attack. Therefore I have always been looking for an idea about the issue to turn it into a film,” Alipur stated.

Iraq bombarded Sardasht in West Azerbaijan Province with chemical weapons on June 28, 1987, killing over 1,000 and injuring over 8,000 civilians, many of whom were permanently disabled.

Director Hassan Fat’hi focuses on Qajar king’s favorite Jeyran in new series

» **TEHRAN** — Director Hassan Fat’hi has focused on Jeyran, Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah’s favorite in the harem, in his new series, whose shooting will start in the near future, producer Esmail Afifeh said on Sunday.

“History has always been a source of inspiration for everybody and Nasser ad-Din Shah has previously been the subject of several movies and series,” he added.

The series will be produced for the home video network. “The rise in people’s regard for the platforms providing video on demand (VOD) service and the platforms’ development will help foster film productions,” he stated.

Ehsan Javanmard, the writer of “The Lady of the Edifice”, a popular series directed by Fat’hi a few years ago, is writing the series entitled “Jeyran”.

Parinaz Izadyar, a star of Fat’hi’s popular series “Shahrzad”, will also star in the new project.

Jeyran, originally called Khadijeh, was the daughter of Mohammad-Ali, a gardener and carpenter in the village of Tajrish near Tehran during the reign of Nasser ad-Din Shah, who had 84 women in his harem.

Due to her large dark-hued eyes, the shah renamed her Jeyran, which means gazelle in the Azerbaijani language. She was then honored with the royal nickname “Forugh us-Saltaneh”, which literally means “the light of the kingdom”.

There are different stories about her first meeting with Nasser ad-Din Shah. Historian Abbas Amanat has said that Jeyran was among the dancers that were invited to the court on various special royal celebrations and the shah met her among the entourage



Director Hassan Fat’hi in an undated photo. (ISNA/Abdolvahed Mirzazadeh)

of his mother, Mahde Olya.

In his memoir, poet Taqi Daneshvar has said that the shah met her on one of his trips for hunting around Tajrish.

Fat’hi’s latest movie “Intoxicated by Love”, a co-production between Iran and Turkey about the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi and Shams-i

Tabrizi, the wandering sage who later became the mentor of Rumi in the 13th century CE, will be completed by the end of summer.

Iranian-Georgian actress Diana Habibi joins “Night, Interior, Wall” cast



Iranian-Georgian actress Diana Habibi (L) co-stars with Navid Mohammadzadeh in a scene from “Night, Interior, Wall”.

» **TEHRAN** — Iranian-Georgian actress Diana Habibi has made her debut in cinema by joining the cast for Iranian director Vahid Jalilvand’s new project “Night, Interior, Wall”.

She co-stars with Navid Mohammadzadeh, the winner of the Orizzonti Award for Best Actor at the 74th Venice Film Festival in Venice.

Habibi has been selected from among students attending Jalilvand’s workshops.

In “Night, Interior, Wall”, the peaceful world of a blind man named Ali is affected by the ill-timed entry of a woman into his life.

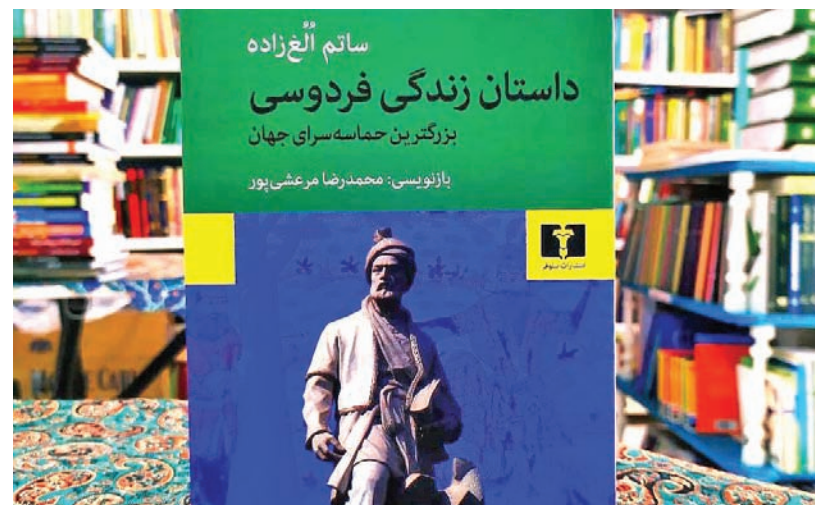
The shooting of the film has recently begun as the crew is obligated to observe the health protocols for film projects during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mohammadzadeh, who starred in Jalilvand’s acclaimed drama “No Date, No Signature” portrays Ali in the movie, also starring ALireza Kamali, Saeid Dakh and Danial Kheirikhah.

He won the Orizzonti Award for Best Actor for his role in “No Date, No Signature” during the 74th Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy in 2017.

Produced by Ali Jalilvand, the film also brought his brother, Vahid, the best director award at the festival.

Tajik writer Satim Ulugzada’s novel on Persian poet Ferdowsi published in Tehran



A copy of the Persian version of Tajik writer Satim Ulugzada’s novel “Firdavsi”.

» **TEHRAN** — “Firdavsi”, a novel by Tajik writer Satim Ulugzada on Persian poet Ferdowsi, has been published in Tehran.

Mohammadreza Marashipur is the translator of the book published by the Nilufar publishing house.

Ferdowsi is the poet of the Shahnameh, the epic masterpiece of Persian literature. Persian literati believe that the Shahnameh can be considered as a preserving force keeping the culture and customs of the Iranian people alive.

In a verse from the book, Ferdowsi wrote, “I toiled much over thirty years, by the Persian language I remade Iran.” It refers to the fact that Ferdowsi spent

30 years writing the Shahnameh over a millennium ago.

Ulugzada helped lay the foundations of Soviet Tajik prose and drama through his commitment to literature as art and as a means of recording and fostering social progress and through his searching analysis of the individual personality and collective psychologies.

His literary interests were wide-ranging, as his translations from Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goldoni and numerous Russian authors suggest. They allowed him to judge Tajik literature from a broad perspective and measure his own creativity against native and foreign masters.

Henri Bergson’s “Laughter” published in Persian

» **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of “Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic” written by French philosopher Henri Bergson has been published by Nilufar Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Mahasti Bahreini.

In this great philosophical essay, Bergson explores why people laugh and what laughter means.

Written at the turn of the twentieth century, “Laughter” explores what it is in language that makes a joke funny and what it is in us that makes us laugh.

One of the functions of humor,

according to Bergson, is to help us retain our humanity during an age of mechanization. Like other philosophers, novelists, poets and humorists of his era, Bergson was concerned with the duality of man and machine. His belief in life as a vital impulse, indefinable by reason alone, informs his perception of comedy as the relief we experience upon distancing ourselves from the mechanistic and materialistic.

“A situation is always comic,” Bergson notes, “If it participates simultaneously in two series of events which are absolutely independent of each other, and if it can be interpreted with two quite different

meanings.”

Bergson was one of the most famous and influential French philosophers of the late 19th century-early 20th century. Although his international fame reached cult-like heights during his lifetime, his influence decreased notably after World War II.

He was also a master literary stylist, of both academic and popular appeal, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927.

“Creative Evolution”, “Matter And Memory”, “Time And Free Will”, “An Introduction To Metaphysics” and “The Two Sources Of Morality And Religion” are among Bergson’s credits.

IIDYCA theaters to reopen Wednesday

» **TEHRAN** — The theater halls of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDYCA) will resume activities on Wednesday after several months of shutdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Director Behnaz Mehdikhah will be staging “My Fantastic World” at IIDYCA Bustan Hall, with favorable conditions in the theaters that observe health protocols and sell tickets

for only 50 percent of their capacities.

“My Fantastic World” centers on the life of an actor whose black and white life in childhood turns into a colorful one like a rainbow after a rain storm.

The play takes the audience into the childhood of the actor in a village, exploring the beauty of nature where roosters crow, birds sing, children swim in the river and sleep on the roofs under the glittering stars.



Behnaz Mehdikhah acts in the play “My Fantastic World” at the 26th International Theater Festival for Children and Young Adults in Hamedan in November 2019. (Abdolrahman Rafati).