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Health Minister Saeed Namaki

© File photo



## ARTICLE

**Mahnaz Abdi**  
Head of the TehranTimes  
Economy Desk

## Capital market, a financing platform for startups

**C**reative manpower is the pillar of a knowledge-based economy and an economy with high capacity for job creation, so it is considered the most valuable asset of a country and should be paid high attention.

Today, the role that the creative and innovative manpower play in the modern societies is undeniable and the countries know that how much supporting and developing such source of creativity can bring economic growth for them.

In this regard, the startups come under the spotlight, as they are set up by such manpower.

A look at the global rising trend of investment making in the startups in the recent years indicates that how their importance is increasing in the countries' economies. They are, in fact, becoming some key driving forces for the economies, and therefore, they are now receiving more supports from the governments.

The governments' all-out support to the startups and laying the ground for them to reach their set targets at the shortest possible time is very important, as such support encourages entrepreneurship in the societies.

Like in many other countries, the role of startups in the national economy specially in job creation has been underlined in Iran in the recent years and the Iranian officials are constantly stressing the significance of this role.

"Startup" is now a familiar name in the national economy and for the people, in a way that many of the established startups are not some small companies anymore, while they have been developed so much that they are currently competing with some large companies in the country.

While the startups and their important role in the economy are being more and more recognized, they are receiving more supports as well.

One of the organizations, that have announced their strong support for the startups, is Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO). **→4**

## Department of Environment's protection unit has made notable achievements: commander

By Faranak Bakhtiari

**TEHRAN** — Jamshid Mohabbat Khani, commander of the protection unit of the Department of Environment (DOE), elaborated on achievements of the protection unit and the environmental defenders in a press conference held on Tuesday.

Amendment of gun laws for environmentalists, taking measures for constantly training of forces, providing rangers with high-tech facilities, an annual 300-percent rise in illegal weapons seizure, and the fact that no rangers have died in conflicts over the past 20 months were some of the most notable achievements.

The DOE was initially the Hunting Club of Iran, established in 1956. Later, it developed into an organization overseeing hunting and fishing activities in the country. In 1971 the organization changed its name to its current one.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over

the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the DOE held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas. By the year 2003, the size of the DOE supervised areas reached 11,791,788.225 hectares.

### No rangers died in conflicts in 20 months

Over the past three years, successful measures have been taken in the field of training the forces along with constant supervision, so that in the last 20 months, not only no rangers have been killed in conflicts, but none of them have been sentenced to death.

Some 4 rangers convicted of killing poachers have been sentenced to death, 2 of whom have been forgiven, he noted. **→9**

## Maduro expels EU ambassador after Brussels imposes sanctions

Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro has ordered the European Union's ambassador to leave the country, hours after the EU hit several more Venezuelan officials with sanctions.

The ambassador, Isabel Brilhante Pedrosa, has been given 72 hours to pack her bags.

On Monday the European Council added 11 leading officials to its list of those subject to restrictive measures for "undermining democracy and the rule of law". It accused them of acting against the National Assembly which is led by

opposition leader Juan Guaidó.

Maduro announced the ambassador's expulsion in an address on state television, saying those who "can't respect Venezuela... should leave it". He accused the EU, which has endorsed Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president, of recognizing "a puppet as president".

"What power do they assume they have? Who are they to sanction? Who are they to try to impose themselves on the threat? Who are they? Enough, enough. This is why I have decided to

give 72 hours to the European Union ambassador in Caracas to leave our country," Maduro said, before repeating accusations of "European colonialism".

The European Council -- made up largely of national leaders -- said the individuals targeted were guilty of stripping several assembly members, including Guaidó -- of parliamentary immunity, and of carrying out politically motivated prosecutions, Euro News reported. **→10**

## Art series on Imam Reza (AS) introduced

**TEHRAN** — The Rudaki Foundation introduced three art collections on Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, during a ceremony held at the Rudaki Hall in Tehran on Tuesday.

"Razavi Melodies of Iran", a music album containing religious music, was one of the collections.

The album has been produced by the Imam Reza International Foundation and the Astan Qods Razavi Artistic Center in Mashhad.

The collection contains 10 CDs featuring works by 70 musicians from across the country. **→12**

## Anti-racism protests continue across U.S.

By staff & agencies

Protests against racial discrimination continue across the United States more than a month after death of 46-year-old African American, George Floyd, while in police custody.

A Minnesota judge on Monday warned that he's likely to move the trials of four former police officers charged in George Floyd's death out of Minneapolis if public officials, attorneys and family members don't stop speaking out about the case.

Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill stopped short of issuing a gag order against attorneys on both sides, but he said he likely will if public statements continue that make it hard to find an impartial jury. Cahill said that would also make him likely to grant a change-of-venue motion if one is filed, as he anticipates.

"The court is not going to be happy about hearing comments on these three areas: merits, evidence and guilt or innocence," Cahill said.

It was the second pretrial hearing for the officers, who were fired after Floyd's May 25 death. Derek Chauvin, 44, is charged with second-degree murder and other counts, while Thomas Lane, 37, J. Kueng, 26, and Tou Thao, 34, are charged with aiding and abetting Chauvin.

Floyd died after Chauvin, a white police officer, pressed his knee against the handcuffed 46-year-old Black man's neck for nearly eight minutes. The officers were responding to a call about a man trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill at a nearby store. Floyd's death sparked protests around the world.

### Mississippi state legislature passes bill to remove Confederate symbol from state flag

Meanwhile, The Mississippi state legislature on Sunday passed a bill to remove the Confederate emblem from their flag in a historic referendum on the only remaining state flag to feature the Confederate insignia. **→10**

## Ruhollah Zam faces death sentence for 'corruption on earth'

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Judiciary has announced that Ruhollah Zam, the operator behind the Amad News website and Telegram channel, has been sentenced to death.

"This person's sentence has been issued," Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaeili said on Tuesday. "He has been found guilty."

Esmaeili explained that Zam was charged with "corruption on the earth", a term used to describe capital crimes within the Islamic Republic's judicial system, for 13 of his crimes.

The spokesman added the convict has a right of appeal.

In October 2019, the IRGC announced that Zam had been arrested during a complicated intelligence operation.

Zam launched Amad News in 2015. The channel frequently posted fake news stories and called for violence with the aim of overthrowing the Islamic Republic system.

During the protest rallies in December 2018, he urged the people to take arms against the government.

In its statement, the IRGC said it lured Zam into Iran using "clever, multidimensional and innovative tricks", which even deceived foreign intelligence agencies.

The IRGC also said the French intelligence service was behind Zam's activities, which were also backed by the U.S. and the Zionist regime's spy services.

The IRGC posted the news of his arrest on Zam's Telegram channel with a following of over a million users, effectively taking over the administration of the popular channel. **→3**



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## Croatian FM says nuclear deal should be preserved

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Grlic-Radman said on Monday that the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, is a great achievement of diplomacy that must be preserved.



During a meeting with Parviz Esmaili, the Iranians ambassador to Croatia, Grlic-Radman also called for expansion of relations in various areas with Tehran.

For his part, Esmaili said the two countries are determined to expand ties.

Elsewhere, the ambassador said the European Union has been formed based on "multilateralism, talks and collective participation" and that the Islamic Republic favors the EU's independence.

In videoconference with the non-European ambassadors in Croatia in May, Esmaili urged the EU to support the nuclear deal.

"The European Union's united voice in support for multilateralism and the JCPOA must turn into united determination and act," he said.

The ambassador said that the EU has so far played a positive role in supporting the JCPOA politically, yet it is needed that political support is translated into action.

"Only in this way, the European Union can be a support for international diplomacy, peace, and cooperation," the diplomat pointed out.

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the multilateral nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions on Iran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

The U.S. move was in violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorsed the JCPOA.

Under the JCPOA, Iran promised to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for the termination of economic and financial sanctions.

In May 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. unilaterally quit the deal and imposed sanctions on Iran, Tehran began to gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA to both retaliate for Washington's departure and Europeans' failure to honor their commitments.

On January 5, Iran took a fifth and last step in reducing its commitments and said it would no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear industry, whether concerning the capacity and level of uranium enrichment, the volume of stockpiled uranium or research and development. However, Iran has insisted if the Europeans honor their obligations it will immediately reverse its decisions.

Iran's move is in line with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

President Hassan Rouhani said on May 6 that Iran will return to full implementation of the JCPOA if other signatories do the same.

Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief, said in December 2019 that the signatories to the nuclear deal should adopt a united stance to preserve the deal.

## Iran's special envoy meets Taliban political bureau chief in Doha

**1 →** According to the Associated Press, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar held a video conference late on Monday in which Pompeo pressed the Taliban to reduce violence in Afghanistan and discussed ways of moving a peace deal signed between the U.S. and the Taliban in February forward, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen tweeted.



The call comes as the U.S. peace envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, is touring the region in efforts to advance the deal. He was in Uzbekistan on Tuesday and was expected in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, later in the day or on Wednesday, and was also to travel to Doha, Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office.

## U.S. bullying JCPOA parties to violate it: Iran's FM

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif slammed the U.S. for bullying the parties to the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers to violate the international accord.

"The U.S. isn't merely violating JCPOA and bullying others to do so, too. It also has dishonor of being first in UN history to punish law-abiding countries for NOT violating a Security Council res. I will present Iran's case to the Council @ abt noon ET, Tues," Zarif tweeted late on Monday.

The Iranian top diplomat is scheduled to address a virtual meeting of the UN Security Council on Tuesday in order to highlight the full implementation of Resolution 2231.

The Resolution 2231 is a UN Security Council resolution that enshrined the nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), after it was concluded in 2015.

As one of the achievements of the deal, endorsed by the Resolution 2231, the UN's arms embargo against the Islamic Republic of Iran is to be lifted by October 2020. However, the U.S. is trying to prevent the removal of the arms embargo, even though it is no longer a JCPOA partner after it withdrew from the deal in 2018 and re-imposed the nuclear sanctions against Iran that had been lifted as per the accord.

# E3 believes U.S. has no legal right to trigger UN sanctions snapback: Iran's diplomat

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidnejad has said that France, Germany and the United Kingdom, known as E3, believe that the United States has no legal right to trigger a so-called snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran.

"[U.S. Secretary of States Mike] Pompeo has repeatedly threatened to trigger snapback mechanism if the [UN] Security Council does not support arms embargo on Iran. The three European countries believe that the United States has no legal right to take such action," he tweeted on Monday.

Britain, France and Germany, three countries party to the nuclear deal, said on June 19 they would not back U.S. efforts to unilaterally trigger the reimposition of United Nations sanctions on Iran, but said they wanted talks with Tehran over its decision to remove cap on its nuclear program.

"We firmly believe that any unilateral attempt to trigger UN sanctions snapback would have serious adverse consequences in the UN Security Council," the foreign ministers of the three European countries said in a statement.

"We would not support such a decision, which would be incompatible with our current efforts to preserve the JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal)," they said after discussing Iran



in Berlin.

"We remain committed to the JCPOA and, in order to preserve it, urge Iran to reverse all measures inconsistent with the agreement and return to full compliance without delay," they said, according to Reuters.

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

Under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the arms embargo on Iran expires in October.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if attempts to extend the arms embargo fail. Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a press conference on Monday that Iran plans to take two or three actions if the arms embargo is extended.

Mousavi also said that the U.S. has violated the JCPOA and has no right to trigger snapback of all sanctions.

"The United States is not in the position

to ruin the JCPOA and its achievements," he said.

The U.S. is no longer a party to the nuclear deal, JCPOA, as Donald Trump officially declared the U.S. withdrawal from the multilateral agreement in May 2018.

According to international law, the U.S. no longer has the right to call for the return of UN sanctions.

On June 9, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the United States has clearly withdrawn from Iran nuclear deal and could no longer claim to be a party to the agreement.

"The United States has withdrawn from the JCPOA, and now they cannot claim that they are still part of the JCPOA in order to deal with this issue from the JCPOA agreement. They withdraw. It's clear. They withdraw," Borrell said.

Iran has signaled if arms embargo is extended it may quit the JCPOA. It has also threatened that if UN sanctions are returned it may withdraw from the NPT.

Iran removed limits on its nuclear activities after waiting for a full year. The decision was taken after the Europeans failed to compensate for the U.S. sanctions on Iran. However, Iran has said if the Europeans honor their commitments to the JCPOA, it will immediately reverse its decision.

## China reiterates opposition to extension of Iran's arms embargo

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian has reiterated Beijing's opposition to extension of an arms embargo on Iran.

Based on the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, China opposes the United States' efforts to put pressure on the UN Security Council to extend arms embargo on Iran, he told during a press conference on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

He noted that all agreements of the Security Council, including removal of arms embargo, must be implemented.

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has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

China's UN mission wrote in a tweet in May that the U.S. has "no right" to extend arms embargo on Iran "let alone to trigger" a return of all UN sanctions on Tehran.

"It has no right to extend an arms embargo on Iran, let alone to trigger snapback," China's UN mission tweeted.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in May that Washington's plans to introduce an indefinite arms embargo against Iran have no prospects.

"The stubborn shattering of the JCPOA through new anti-Iranian ideas, which include the proposal to impose an indefinite arms embargo against Iran, simply does not honor the United States. It is clear that this course has no prospects," Zakharova said at a briefing, Sputnik reported.

Those members of the JCPOA, who have maintained a



genuine full commitment to the nuclear deal, will continue to fight for its preservation and sustainable implementation, she said.

"There should be no doubt about this in Washington," she asserted.

## Ukrainian plane crash dossier to be sent to court after investigations: Armed Forces Judicial Organization chief

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Head of the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces said on Tuesday that extensive investigations have been carried out over the Ukrainian plane crash incident and the dossier will be sent to court after investigations are completed.

"We have carried out extensive investigations in this dossier and have reached good results," Shokrollah Bahrami told reporters.

Bahrami also noted that the families of the victims will receive financial compensation for the incident.

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 Qasem 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.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on Sunday that France will start decoding black boxes of the Ukrainian plane.

"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."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had announced on June 22 that Iran will send the black boxes to France.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will send the black box of the Ukrainian airplane to France in the coming few days in order to read its information," Zarif said in a phone call with Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne.

France's BEA air accident investigation agency is known internationally as one of the leading agencies in the world for reading flight recorders, and black boxes have been sent

there in other high profile cases of crashes.

During a meeting with the families of a number of the plane crash victims on Monday, Gholamabbas Turki, the military prosecutor for Tehran Province, said the incident was the result of human error on the part of the air defense unit's operator, ruling out the possibility of a cyberattack or any other type of sabotage.

He said investigations carried out thus far into the incident indicate the occurrence of a number of human errors on the part of the operator who fired two missiles at the plane.

According to Press TV, he added that a mobile air defense unit was responsible for the downing, because its operator had failed to determine the direction of north correctly and, as such, identified the aircraft as a target, which was approaching Tehran from northwest.

Another error, the judicial official said, was that the operator did not wait for his superiors' command after sending a message to the command center and fired the missile on his own decision.

"In the Ukrainian plane crash, no order was given [by military commanders to the mobile unit] to fire [at the target] and when the incident happened, all air defense units were in the position of 'restricted fire' rather than 'fire at will,'" Turki said.

"The blatant mistake made here was that the operator embarked on firing [missiles] without waiting for permission."

Concerning the cause of the incident, the military prosecutor said the possibility of harmful interference, including laser beam and electromagnetic radiation, on the Ukrainian plane has been ruled out, and the initial expert explanation so far indicates that there was no explosion at the time of the crash.

Underlining that no evidence of cyber and any other form of electronic attack, external disturbances in defense and missile systems, and infiltration of systems or networks [by possible hackers] has so far been found, Turki said, "We have not found any evidence of a possible act of sabotage and espionage on the aircraft."

"The traces of missile fragments are obvious on the fuselage. The plane exploded when it hit the ground and its parts were scattered within a large radius from the crash site, which caused us problems in terms of collecting the parts and preserving the scene."

The judicial official said, "On the same night (January 8) a number of people who were manning the air defense system and their superiors were summoned as defendants, and an extensive investigation was carried out that night following which one of the defendants was arrested."

"In the investigation process, five other people were indicted as defendants, who were arrested on the court's order. Then three of the defendants were released on bail after conducting appropriate investigations. Currently, three people are in custody."

## Iran to host virtual Syria talks with Russia, Turkey on Wed.

**(Press TV)** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will host a virtual conference with his Russian and Turkish counterparts on the situation in Syria and the Arab country's peace process on Wednesday.

In a post on his Twitter account on Tuesday, the Iranian Presidential Office's Deputy Chief for Communications and Information Alireza Moezi said the extraordinary meeting among Presidents Rouhani of Iran, Vladimir Putin of Russia, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey would be held on Wednesday.

He added that the participants would "discuss regional and international developments pertaining to Syria."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also said the video conference would see Putin, Rouhani, and Erdogan make "three [public] statements" before discussing Syria in private.

Peskov said the call would take place around 1100 GMT. The talks among the three guarantor states for Syrian



peace would be the first of its kind since September, and would come as the conflict in the Arab country has entered its 10th year.

Earlier, on June 15, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had said that the presidential meeting would be held to facilitate peace in Syria within the framework of the Astana peace process.

Iran, Russia, and Turkey have been leading a peace process for Syria known as the Astana process, because Kazakhstan's capital, Nur-Sultan, formerly called Astana, originally hosted its meetings.

On the auspices of the three countries, the Syrian government and opposition reached a first deal in 2017 and a second one in 2019.

While the two deals have helped significantly reduce fighting in Syria, the conflict has not entirely ended, due in large part to Turkish failure to separate terrorists from what it calls "moderate" opposition groups in Idlib and Ankara's dispatch of thousands of troops and heavy military hardware into the Syrian province to back the militants.



# Region won't be secure by following U.S. orders, Tehran tells S. Arabia, Bahrain

Tehran lashes out at Saudi Arabia, Bahrain for backing Washington's anti-Iran stance

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has strongly criticized Saudi Arabia and Bahrain for supporting Washington's anti-Iran stance, saying stability and security will not be established in the region through obeying the orders of the United States.

"The only way to create stability and security in the region is changing hostile behaviors and moving toward regional cooperation," Mousavi said on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

He criticized certain regional countries that back the U.S. demand that the United Nations extends arms embargo on the Islamic Republic.

Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir and U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook on Monday called on the international community to extend the UN embargo on sales of weapons to Iran, accusing Iran of sponsoring terrorism.

Speaking during a joint press conference in Riyadh, Al-Jubeir said Saudi and U.S. policies on Iran are identical.

"We both see Iran as a grave danger not only to regional stability, but international stability," he said.

"We believe that Iran is the chief sponsor of terrorism and that the international community has to be more firm in dealing with the Iranians and their proxies."

Mousavi said it is "very surprising that countries such as Saudi Arabia, which, themselves are a source of terrorism and extremism and have fueled instability in the region by supporting terrorist groups like al-Qaeda for years, are leveling groundless accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has rid the region of terrorist groups with its responsible behavior."

U.S. envoy Hook visited Saudi Arabia as part of a Mideast tour. Earlier, he paid a visit to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the U.S.-allied United Arab Emirates.

Referring to Hook's trip to the region, Mousavi said the countries supporting the U.S. stance are "those that have, for more than five years, been killing thousands of people, including Yemeni women and children."

"It is time that these countries gave up injudicious remarks and blind obedience to the U.S., which is the symbol of oppression and injustice in the world, and came to realize that security cannot be ensured with obedience to the United States," he stated.

The Riyadh conference also displayed



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weapons, including drones and missiles, which the Saudis claim to have been supplied by Iran to the Houthis in Yemen to be used against Saudi Arabia.

Hook said, "The weapons that we see here today ... are all the evidence we need that the arms embargo on Iran must not be lifted. We need to ensure that Iran has a harder time spreading deadly weapons."

"This is a fraction of the kind of deadly arms that have made their way not only here to Saudi Arabia, but around the Middle East, so this is the right time for the Security Council to do the right and necessary thing," he added.

Later in the day, Hook traveled to Manama, where he issued a joint anti-Iran statement with Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani.

"In recognizing the grave threat posed by Iranian arms transfers in the region, and in Bahrain specifically, the United States and Bahrain call upon the United Nations Secu-

rity Council to extend the arms embargo on Iran before it expires," read the statement.

The UN arms embargo on Iran, which was imposed 13 years ago, is due to expire in October under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2231 that endorsed the country's 2015 nuclear deal.

Tensions remain high between Iran and the United States, leading many to fear that a war may be just around the corner.

Earlier on Monday, Tehran said it has asked Interpol to arrest U.S. President Donald Trump at the top of a list of individuals who are responsible for the assassination of Iran's top general Qassem Soleimani.

"36 individuals who cooperated, collaborated, and participated in the assassination of Hajj Qassem, including political and military authorities of the U.S. and other countries, have been identified," Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alqasi-Mehr said.

Their arrest warrant has been issued and announced to Interpol, he said, adding that

Trump will be facing prosecution even after his term as president.

In response, Hook said that Iran's issuance of an arrest warrant for the U.S. president is a "propaganda stunt".

"Our assessment is that Interpol does not intervene and issue Red Notices that are based on a political nature," he said.

"This is a political nature. This has nothing to do with national security, international peace or promoting stability ... It is a propaganda stunt that no-one takes seriously," Hook said.

On January 3, Trump ordered airstrikes that martyred General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in Baghdad's international airport.

In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a military airbase hosting U.S. forces in Iraq as part of its promised "tough revenge" for the U.S. terrorist attack.

## IRGC commander: Iran able to bring more consecutive defeats to U.S.



**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami said that despite all sanctions and pressures, Iran can inflict a series of defeats on the U.S. in multiple fields.

"We have defeated the world arrogance, spearheaded by the U.S., under the conditions of sanctions and problems imposed on us by the enemies; today, they are facing fundamental problems and we can make them face more serial defeats," General Salami said, addressing a ceremony in Tehran on Tuesday.

He also referred to Iran's great successes and progress despite enemies' psychological warfare against the country, and said, "We have no other option but growing strong."

In relevant remarks earlier this month, General Salami referred to the recent protest rallies across the U.S., saying that Washington's power was decreasing earlier than expected.

"Today, we are witnessing the early and rapid decline of our big enemies, specially the U.S.," General Salami said, addressing a ceremony in Tehran.

He added that while the U.S. was able to conceal its real face before the public opinion in recent years, today its crimes have been disclosed in a way that the American people, themselves, set fire at the U.S. flag.

"All symbols used by the U.S. to introduce itself and display an unreal face

to the world are now collapsing and the U.S. is tearing apart the image that it had created for itself," General Salami said.

Also, in May, General Salami underlined Iran's eye-catching progress in production of different military equipment, and said the country will never surrender to enemies.

General Salami made the remarks, addressing a ceremony to deliver over 100 speed boats to the IRGC Navy in the Persian Gulf.

He hailed Iran's significant progress in the defense sector, warning that the Islamic Republic will give crushing response to enemies if threatened.

"The Islamic Republic has the determination. We will not bow to enemies. We will not retreat. Progress is the nature of our work. Defense is our logic in war but not in the sense of passivity against the enemy. Our operations and tactics are offensive and we have shown it in the battlefield," General Salami said.

The IRGC commander said that a key portion of Iran's maritime power is still "unknown" to others.

"The most important and dangerous part of this power is unknown. Our enemies will see this power the day when they pursue an evil intention against this land. On that day, they will get to see the real firepower of our forces at the sea and in the sky, and the battlefield will turn into a hell for the enemies of Iran and Islam," he warned.

## Iran holds meeting on U.S. assassination of General Soleimani



**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Iran's Foreign Ministry hosted a meeting on the U.S. assassination of top Iranian commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

In the Monday gathering, hosted by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs and attended by representatives of political, legal, security, military, and judicial organizations, the latest developments surrounding the case of the assassination of Lt. General Qassem Soleimani were discussed.

Speaking about the topics raised in the meeting, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said, "Today, the coordination meeting was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thank God, the honorable Judiciary is working on the case day and night and is studying the evidence that has been gathered. Our intelligence and security forces have so far detected around forty American individuals who have somehow had a role in the assassination, including the ones that ordered, aided and abetted the crime. Some other individuals, including a number of operators of the American drones, have not been identified yet, but this will happen soon."

"Today, we coordinated efforts to handle the work more rapidly, and after the remaining American and non-American individuals with a role in the assassination are detected, the judge will soon indict

them on the basis of undeniable proof and evidence, and the entire (Iranian) Establishment will not desist in its efforts until those individuals are brought to justice," he added.

"Apart from the individuals involved in the crime, and considering that the crime has been an action against our national sovereignty and security, the government of the U.S. and a number of countries whose territory has been used for committing that crime have international responsibility and must be held accountable for their action in violation of the international law, as we will be pursuing the issue in the international circles and organizations."

"Immediately after the U.S. committed that crime, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken the international political measures and has conveyed the Iranian people and government's protest to the international organizations, including the United Nations, the Security Council, and the other relevant international organizations, calling on them to take action in this regard proportional to the area of their responsibilities respectively."

"We have also held meetings with many countries and have informed them about details of the crime, and we are weighing plans to further pursue (the case) at the international level in order to follow it up more by any means possible with new information and evidence."

## Envoy predicts U.S. isolation at UN Security Council meeting

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has predicted U.S. isolation at the UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday.

Takht-Ravanchi said Washington's efforts to extend an arms embargo against Iran is in complete contradiction with the UN resolution 2231, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The international community is after implementation of the JCPOA and observing Resolution 2231, the ambassador stressed, adding that the UN chief and many world leaders have repeatedly expressed their willingness to witness the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Such willingness indicates that the world is against the U.S. stance on the issue, the senior diplomat noted.

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., UK, France, Russia, China and Germany, signed a landmark nuclear agreement, officially called the JCPOA, on July 14, 2015.

However, the U.S. under Donald Trump withdrew unilaterally from the deal on May 8, 2018, and imposed sanctions on Iran at the highest level of its kind.

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

Under the UN Security Council's 2231 resolution, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the arms embargo expires in October.

The Trump administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snap-back of all sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

On the U.S. move to extend the arms embargo on Iran, the Iranian diplomat said it is an unprecedented event that a member of the UN Security council act against a resolution founded by itself.

By pursuing such a policy, the U.S. is after causing chaos in the international order, he added.

Takht-Ravanchi also said he believes the United States pursues annihilation of the JCPOA.

Ridiculously, the U.S. claims that it is still a member of the 2015 deal and can re-impose sanctions on Iran based on resolution 2231, while all know that Washington is no longer a JCPOA participant, he stressed.

Meanwhile, on June 19, France, Germany and the United Kingdom said in a joint statement that the European Union's embargoes on conventional arms exports and missile technology to Iran will remain in force until 2023.

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

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

## No fatalities in terrorist attack on IRGC forces in southwest Iran: MP

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Representative of the people of Zahedan in the parliament has confirmed the news of a terrorist attack in the border province of Sistan-Baluchestan in southeast Iran, saying the attack did not result in fatalities.

"The attack was carried out by the Jaish al-Zolm when two vehicles containing forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps were passing a road, but it did not have any fatalities," Fada-Hossein Maleki said, according to the IRI news.

Maleki referred to the terrorist Jaish al-Adel group (the so-called Soldiers of Justice) as Jaish al-Zolm (Soldiers of Suppression).

Maleki explained that two bombs were planted on the sides of a road, one of which went off when the vehicles were passing.

"With the grace of God, this terrorist attack did not have any fatalities, and only the regional Guards' commander was injured," he added.

## Ruhollah Zam faces death sentence for 'corruption on earth'

**1→** It also posted a photo of Zam in custody, under which it was written: "This is just the beginning".



Back in December 2017, Telegram blocked Amad News for encouraging violence after a request by the Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

However, Zam resumed his activities by launching a new channel called Seday-e Mardom, which is translated as "voice of the people".



## Stock market listing to be eased for private companies

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Iranian Association of Internal Audits (IAIA), Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), and Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Tuesday for launching a single-window system to accelerate the process of private companies’ acceptance to the stock market, IRIB reported.



The signing ceremony was attended by Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, Head of Iran’s Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Hasan Qalibaf, Managing Director of TSE Ali Sahraei and IFB Managing Director Amir Hamouni. The MOU is aimed at creating a single portal for evaluating, assessing and monitoring the financial and technical situation of private sector companies for approving their entrance into the capital market.

As reported, the term of this memorandum is one year and will be extended if the parties agree.

Speaking in the ceremony, Dejpasand also announced the establishment of the country’s real estate stock exchange in the coming week.

According to the official, the Economy Ministry is finalizing the issue with the SEO and the first meeting in this regard has already been held.

Noting that 12 major sectors are involved in the real estate market, the official added: “Many organizations, such as the Mostazafan Foundation, Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, Execution of Imam Khomeini’s Order Headquarters, Social Security and the Islamic Azad University have announced their readiness to put their properties on this market.”

Iranian government has been encouraging the country’s private sector to join the capital market to retract public investments into the market.

Last week, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei agreed with a plan for offering special tax exemptions and incentives to the companies that are accepted to the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year.

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

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

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

## Private sector should be axis of economy: VP

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Es’haq Jahangiri, Iran’s first vice-president, said on Monday that the private sector must be the base of the country’s economy, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the ICCIMA board of directors, Jahangiri emphasized that the government is making serious efforts to support the private sector, adding: “I believe that the private sector should be literally the axis of the country’s economy, and the government is trying to empower the private sector.”



First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri (L) and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie

Stressing the important role of the private sector in the country’s economic growth, the official noted that the private sector should also cooperate with the government in its efforts to provide the country’s foreign currency needs.

Emphasizing the importance of ICCIMA as the connecting link between the country’s private sector and the government, the first vice president said: “The chamber of commerce represents the country’s private sector, and we expect you to hold talks with various government bodies and provide them with operational solutions to solve the problems that the country’s exporters, importers and producers are facing.”

He further called on the ICCIMA board of directors to explore solutions for the currency problems of the country’s exporters and importers, in their meetings with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) officials, and to take necessary measures to remove the obstacles ahead.

In the meeting, representatives of the private sector also underlined the exporters’ concerns and problems and offered solutions to address them.

Jahangiri had earlier said “The government needs private sector for progress and development in the country.”

He said that the government fully supports the private sector, saying “The government should place even more importance on the country’s private sector which is the major driving force behind the economy.”

# New domestically-made wagons, locomotives join railway fleet

**1 →** According to the official, the number of new locomotives and wagons added to the railway fleet in the first three months of the current calendar year (March 20-June 20) has increased by 78 percent compared to the same period last year.

The new additions included 53 freight wagons, two passenger wagons, and two locomotives, as well as eight reconstructed wagons.

Railway fleet has received three groups of new wagons and locomotives since the beginning of the current Iranian year, the first of which was on April 29 when 56 units worth 1.25 trillion rials (about \$29.76 million) were added to the country’s rail fleet; in the second phase, 30 units worth 1.44 trillion rials (about \$34.28 million) were added on May 19.



Meanwhile, in late December 2019, RAI celebrated the addition of 243 domestically-made wagons and locomotives to the country’s fleet.

Valued at 3.4 trillion rials (about \$80.9 million), the mentioned wagons and locomotives were made by three different companies

namely, Wagon Pars, Iranian Rail Industries Development Company, and Foolad Derakhshan Arak Company.

Back in September 2019, another 213 domestically-made wagons and locomotives had been added to the country’s fleet.

## Capital market, a financing platform for startups

**1 →** In a meeting with the chairman of the Fund for Innovation and Prosperity on May 20, SEO Head Hassan Qalibaf-Asl said, “We are ready to put the models proposed by this fund into action and remove any possible problem in this due.”

“We will investigate the proposed models and make the necessary changes in a way to facilitate the entrance of startups to the capital market”, the SEO head reiterated.

Also in a press conference on June 22, the official said, “We are creating the proper condition for the startups, and we are also planning to introduce an index for them in the stock market.”

As previously announced, the mentioned index will be introduced in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 2021).

While entrance of the startups in the capital market indicates that they have passed their high-risk time and also shows that they have transparent financial statements, their presence in this market encourages the other companies of this kind to do so and also attracts the trust of the traditional investors.

The stock market providing a regulated marketplace



for the startups to sell ownership shares directly to the qualified investors will be a great step especially now that strengthening domestic production has become a serious target in the country.

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to boost its domestic production and achieve more and more self-reliance. The previous Iranian year was named the year of “Pickup in Production” and the current year

## Commodities worth \$60m exported from Maku free zone in a year



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Value of exports from Maku Free Trade-Industrial Zone in Iran’s northwestern province of West Azarbaijan hit \$60 million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the managing director of Maku Free Zone Organization told IRIB.

Mohammadreza Abdolrahimi referred to the target of boosting the exports from the free zones by ten percent and said Maku free zone has increased the exports by eight percent.

Saying that there are many capacities for production and exports in this zone, the official reiterated that boosting investment making in Maku will expand the exports especially to the neighboring countries.

As Maku is among the most newly-established and also the largest free zones of the country, there is a high need for creation of infrastructure in this zone, he further stressed.

Maku is one of the seven major free zones of Iran.

Establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country’s oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote the non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the

Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

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

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

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

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

## TEDPIX notches record high of 1.5m points



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), hit a new record high on Tuesday, as it exceeded 1.5 million points, Tasnim news agency reported.

The index gained 64,911 points to 1,546, as 5,799 billion securities worth 100.35 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) were traded through 1,546 million deals at the TSE.

As reported, Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and National Iranian Copper Industry Company were the major contributors to the jump of TEDPIX on Tuesday.

While the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) was full of success for the TSE, the market is also preserving its successful performance in the current year, and the noticeable point in this due is that the other economic sectors are experiencing some declining trend due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We have been witnessing new record highs continuously posted by the exchange since the year start, and climbing to the peak of one million points, something almost unbelievable just some time ago, came true in early May.

In a press conference on Monday, the head of Iran’s Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the amount of liquidity absorbed by Iran’s capital market has reached 500 trillion

rials (about \$12 billion) during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

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

The official further noted that the high amount of liquidity that is entering the capital market has provided some good opportunity for this market.

Under the current condition, the status of the parallel markets such as the markets of foreign currency, gold, and housing seems to has a noticeable effect on the unprecedented growth in the stock market.

While this condition, which has made investment making in the stock market a more profitable choice for the investors, has been a contributing factor for the growth in the stock market in the present year; it began in the past year and is still affecting the capital market.

This status of the parallel markets is predicted to continue, regarding the sanctions condition and some other factors affecting the national economy, and as the Iranian people are getting more acquainted with the stock market activities, and as this market is being developed more and more and attracting more investors, higher jumps and new record highs are also expected for the TSE index in the current year.

## CBI approves Afghan bank for opening branch in Chabahar

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has approved Afghanistan’s Ghazanfar Bank to open a branch in southeastern Chabahar Port, ILNA reported on Tuesday, quoting the head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce.

According to Hossein Salimi, the Afghan bank requested the establishment of a branch in Chabahar to facilitate trade between Iran and Afghanistan and the government has granted the bank its approval and necessary permits and licenses have been issued.

“Currently, we have some problems in transferring currency and trade with Afghanistan, and the establishment of this branch would be a great help to the trade exchanges

between the two countries and can act as a financial channel,” Salimi added.

Noting that India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran would have a stronger trade relationship through this bank, the official said: “Fortunately, the port of Chabahar is exempted from the U.S. sanctions, and with the prosperity of the port, Afghan traders have become very active in this region.”

According to Salimi, the bank would provide service to both Iranian and Afghan companies which are active in bilateral trade between the two nations.

Last week, Iran’s Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian confirmed that an Afghan bank would open its branch in Chabahar Free Trade Zone soon. The minister, however,

hadn’t named the bank.

Back in February, the Secretary General of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce Mozafar Alikhani had announced that two Afghan banks were to open branches in Chabahar.

Iran and Afghanistan have strong economic ties and many Afghan traders are familiar with the patterns of trade and consumption in Iran.

Afghanistan is a major export destination of Iranian products, and as Iran is seriously pursuing the objective of boosting non-oil exports to its neighbors, making the exporters acquainted with this country’s markets is an agenda.



# Tehran Refinery to go through annual overhaul next week

**ENERGY TEHRAN** — Tehran desk Refinery's annual overhaul program, which was postponed due to the outbreak of coronavirus, is set to begin in the upcoming week in accordance with health protocols, head of the refinery's Planning, Maintenance and Repair Department said on Tuesday.

As reported by IRNA, the overhaul of Isomax and North Hydrogen units is planned for 28 working days beginning from Wednesday, July 15, Mohammad-Baqer Feizabadi said.

According to Feizabadi, all the operations will be carried out in complete compliance with health and safety standards including using face mask by the workforce, as well as regular disinfection of caravans, public places, and work sites.

He noted that the overhaul program was scheduled to begin sooner, but due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and the need to comply with health protocols



the implementation of this year's plan was postponed.

Recharging the catalysts of the reactors of Isomax Unit and reformer furnace of

Hydrogen Unit, replacement of damaged parts of the 2V-409 tower, as well as replacement of pig tailings, and repair of the roof insulation of the Hydrogen Unit are among the major operations that are set to be carried out in this 28-day program.

To accelerate the process, 500 additional experienced personnel will be participating in this year's operations under the supervision of the company's main employees.

As reported, the IsoMax No. 2 Unit, with a nominal capacity of 15,000 barrels per day, converts the Isofide from the vacuum distillation tower into high-value, high-quality products. This unit converts the received feedstock through a nickel catalyst into light gases, liquefied petroleum gas, light and heavy naphtha, jet fuel and high-quality gas oil.

Also, Hydrogen Unit No. 2 has a nominal capacity of one million cubic meters per day. The feedstock for this unit is supplied by gases from catalytic converters and natural gas.

## Developing Persian Gulf fields to avert South Pars output fall

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — As Iran's Petropars starts developing Phase 11 of the giant South Pars gas field with a view to making first recovery in 2021, Iran would be soon completing development of all phases of this offshore field which it shares with neighboring Qatar.

South Pars saw its output reach 700 mcm/d in 2019 and Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh's promise of Iran outperforming Qatar in South Pars recovery came true.

Now, in a bid to guarantee sustained production from South Pars that supplies more than 75% of Iran's gas, pressure fall-off in coming years has to be avoided.

Mohammad Meshkinfam, CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), has said developing other fields in the Persian Gulf would help avoid a sudden drop in the South Pars production rate in coming years.

Reservoir pressure fall-off and reduced output in South Pars is unavoidable in coming years. Therefore, POGC, which is tasked with developing Persian Gulf gas fields, has to remedy the situation. Apart from South Pars; North Pars, Farzad A, Farzad B, Golshan, Ferdowsi, Kish and Belal are the fields that POGC is tasked with their development. However, the point with developing all these blocks is that some of them are jointly-owned with other countries and therefore maximum recovery from them would be highly significant for the Petroleum Ministry. Sustainable production for at least 25 years has to be guaranteed from now.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) envisages a short and a long-term solution to prevent pressure fall-off in the reservoir and guarantee sustainable production in the South Pars field.

Acid job, perforation, workover of wells, drilling new wells, and laying new pipes



between platforms are among short-term solutions, while concentration on the development of blocks surrounding South Pars is a long-term solution.

Based on the planning made, the gas produced in Belal field whose development agreement was signed with Petropars last year, and the gas produced in Phase 1 of the Kish gas field would be transmitted to the platforms of SP12 to offset possible production cut in this phase.

Furthermore, comprehensive studies and planning have been under way to guarantee sustainable gas production at South Pars. Infill drilling, installing compressors, extending offshore pipelines and building new platforms are among options.

South Pars holds 14.2 tcm gas, i.e. 8% of the world total gas reserves, and 18 billion barrels of condensate. Iran holds a 15% share in this field.

Until 2013, Iran was producing below 300 mcm/d of gas from its sector of the joint field. However, Iran brought its production to 700

mcm/d by 2019. Relying on this volume of production, Iran did not have to worry about any gas supply cut in recent years. The country even envisaged exporting gas and producing liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Pressure fall-off is a natural phenomenon. Preventive measures are needed now. Drop in production in this field; however, may not be tangible enough.

Gas recovery from south Pars is based on the gas expansion mechanism. In other words, gas production from this reservoir would be synonymous with a gradual decline in the reservoir pressure, which is natural in all gas reservoirs. However, such natural and sustained decline in the gas pressure would continue until it reaches the minimum pressure needed for the transfer of gas from sea to onshore refinery. After that, due to the impossibility of any further decline in pressure, gas production will start falling until the well stops producing.

Meshkinfam said that pressure fall-off started ever since production began in all

South Pars platforms.

Except for Platform A and Platform C of SP12, its gas production currently stands at 82 mcf/d and 230 mcf/d, respectively.

When new platforms of SP11, SP13, SP14 and SP22-24 come online, the initial drop will not be tangible, but after five years, Iran will reach a point where such decline in output would matter.

### SP12 output falling

Pressure fall-off in SP12 will be faster than that of other phases. Like many other oil and gas fields, South Pars is a non-homogeneous field with its own specific reservoir thickness and features. In the central parts of the field, gas layers are thicker, while the reservoir rock is more suitable for gas storage and transmission. However, as we approach the phases closer to the reservoir, the gas column will become less thick while the reservoir features will be weaker. On the basis of this rule and based on information gained from the appraisal wells drilled in SP12, it was forecast from the very beginning that production from the platforms of this phase would happen in a shorter period of time.

SP12 was officially inaugurated in 2014. It has since been producing gas. However, Meshkinfam has said as gas production from Platform C of SP12 is nearing its end, this platform would be detached from this current location to be installed in SP11 in 2021. Furthermore, the gas produced at SP12 would be transferred to the onshore refinery of this phase through connecting this platform to the existing offshore pipeline.

Meshkinfam has reiterated that the remaining seven wells would be drilled after the operation of production platform so that the envisaged 1bcf/d output would materialize.

## OPEC secretary general: oil not out of the woods just yet

The oil markets are not "out of the woods" just yet, OPEC's Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo told a virtual panel organized by the Canada-UAE Business Council, cited by The National.

The UAE's Energy Minister Suhail Al Mazrouei, also on the panel, echoed the sentiment, saying that the oil industry was "still in the woods."

The sober statement comes even as OPEC has taken unprecedented action to draw down

global oil inventories.

"One of the major concerns of the industry was that as a result of the double shock on supply and demand, the industry was going to exhaust storage capacity, both onshore and probably offshore," Barkindo said, after oil prices crashed in April as lockdowns stymied demand and taxed available storage constraints all over the world—both onshore and offshore.

Barkindo added that had the available storage capacity been allowed to be exhausted,

the oil markets would have headed toward a "total crush."

Barkindo said that according to preliminary numbers, the total inventory build in the region was 1.3 billion barrels above the five-year industry average, compared to 403 million barrels above the five year average during the last oil market downturn between 2014 and 2016.

Back then, Barkindo added, it took four years to drawdown the oil inventories back

to the five-year average.

This time around, the measures OPEC is taking to drawdown the inventories are more dramatic, as the group pledged to cut its production across May and June, and then again in July. But compliance to the production quotas are still just 87 percent, thanks to laggards such as Nigeria and Iraq, who have promised to make up for any overages after the rest of OPEC has completed their production cuts at the end of July.

## Tighter markets end lucrative oil trade

By Tsvetana Paraskova

From a super contango in April, the Brent Crude futures curve has flattened and flipped to backwardation for the nearest months, wiping out was is seen as one of the most lucrative oil trades. Production cuts from Saudi Arabia to the U.S. shale patch, combined with recovering oil demand, have changed in recent weeks the oil futures curve more to the liking of the OPEC+ group.

From a super contango in April, the Brent Crude futures curve has flattened and flipped to backwardation for the nearest months, wiping out the most significant financial incentive for oil trading houses to profit from the price structure a when oil demand crashes.

During the 'peak lockdown' period when every major economy except China was under lockdown in late March and early April, the oil market was in a state of super contango. In this market situation, front-month prices were much lower than prices in future months, pointing to a crude oil oversupply and making storing oil for future sales profitable. Traders rushed to charter supertankers for floating storage for several months to a year so they could sell the oil at higher prices later.

In the middle of June, production cuts and an uptick in oil demand helped the Brent Crude price structure flip to backwardation, signaling a tightening of the physical oil market.

Backwardation — the opposite of contango — is the market situation that typically occurs at times of market deficit. In backwardation, prices for front-month contracts are higher than the ones further out in time.

Backwardation is currently only seen for the next two to three months, but analysts expect the full Brent futures curve to be in backwardation by the end of the year thanks to recovering



demand. Bank of America (BofA) Global Research, for example, sees inventories in most regions beginning to draw down in the second half of this year, and the full Brent futures curve could flip by the end of the year to backwardation.

A backwardated futures curve is definitely the preferred market structure for OPEC and its allies, which rely on higher front-month prices to help draw down excess inventories and record floating storage, which would push oil prices higher if demand continues to improve.

At the same time, the new shape of the oil futures curve is already discouraging what was the most lucrative trade in the oil market two months ago at the peak of the demand loss.

"Quite simply the contango is no longer there, so it does not make any economic sense to enter into a new floating storage trade, unless the deal was locked in when the contango was sufficient to cover freight costs," Richard Matthews, an analyst who monitors the trade at E.A. Gibson Shipbrokers, told Bloomberg. This new phase in the oil market is in stark contrast to the

wild rush for chartering oil tankers, either for floating storage incentivized by the super contango, or for the record volumes of Saudi oil that flooded the market in April.

Floating storage has started to recede from record-highs in April in almost every region as demand began to recover from the record plunge.

According to estimates from the International Energy Agency (IEA), floating storage of crude oil dropped in May by 6.4 million barrels to 165.8 million barrels, from its all-time high of 172.2 million barrels in April.

Estimates by Bloomberg showed earlier this month that floating storage of North Sea oil had started to shrink as most of Europe lifted their lockdowns.

Tanker operator International Seaways said last week that it estimates 160-180 million barrels are being stored on ships currently. The strong oil contango earlier this year made it profitable to store oil, "creating a demand for time chartered ships for storage, further reducing ship supply and increasing rates," the tanker operator said in a presentation to its annual meeting of stockholders.

In recent weeks, however, the contango has decreased, and the short-term floating storage of crude oil is declining, International Seaways notes.

For tanker owners, the vanishing of the contango and the record cuts from OPEC+ is bad news for tanker demand and rates. They knew that the super trades with the super contango would not last long and would have to eventually face a new market reality with OPEC+ withholding supply to decrease the glut and increase oil prices.

For OPEC+ and for tanker operators alike, continuous demand recovery would be excellent news — if it holds.

## OPEC has cut oil output by 1.25m bpd in June, says Petro: Logistics

OPEC has cut oil output in June by 1.25 million barrels per day (bpd) from May levels as it works to implement a supply restraint agreement with Russia and other allies, according to estimates from tanker-tracking company Petro-Logistics.

OPEC and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, agreed to cut supply by a record 9.7 million bpd from May 1 to offset an oil price and demand slump triggered by the coronavirus crisis. OPEC's share of the cut is 6.084 million bpd.

"Excluding Iran, Libya and Venezuela, which are not part of the curtailment agreement, OPEC-10 supply remains about 1.55 million bpd away from full compliance," Petro-Logistics said in an email.

"Iraq, Nigeria and Kuwait are the main countries that have lowered their supply since May, with more limited cuts by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Angola."

## Iraq lowers June oil exports, still pumps above OPEC+ target

Iraq's oil exports have fallen by almost nine percent or 310,000 barrels per day (bpd) in June, loading data and industry sources showed, suggesting OPEC's second-largest producer has delivered about three-fifths of its pledge in an OPEC-led supply cut deal.

Southern Iraqi exports in the first 28 days of June averaged 2.90 million bpd, tanker tracker Petro-Logistics, Refinitiv Eikon and an industry source found. That is down 200,000 bpd from May's official southern exports figure.

"This is the lowest level of Basra exports in five years," Daniel Gerber, chief executive of Petro-Logistics, told Reuters. "But Iraq still needs to cut by a further 300,000 bpd to achieve full compliance."

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, known as OPEC+, began a record supply-cutting deal in May to bolster oil prices hammered by the coronavirus crisis. Iraq is cutting output by 1.06 million bpd under the deal.



The June figures imply Iraq is making progress, but has yet to fulfil its pledge completely. Iraq has told OPEC+ it will make up for over-production in May and June through larger cuts in later months.

In May, Iraq delivered 38 percent of its pledged cut, a Reuters survey found, much lower than top exporter Saudi Arabia. If exports in June hold steady, adherence has risen to 60 percent, based on Reuters calculations.

"Down yes, but not anywhere near the quota," the industry source said of Iraq's June exports.

The south is the main outlet for Iraq's crude, so a good part of its OPEC+ cut should show up in lower exports.

Iraq says it is in the country's interest to comply with this deal. Baghdad was reluctant to join previous OPEC-led supply cut efforts that began in 2017, and was at times OPEC's least compliant member.

Exports from northern Iraq have also fallen in June. So far, total northern exports are about 370,000 bpd, down about 110,000 bpd from May, tanker data shows.

This would be in line with Iraq's request to Kurdish authorities to export a maximum of 370,000 bpd in June.

## NTT to join Japan's renewable-energy sector with \$9b investment

Japanese telecommunications group Nippon Telegraph & Telephone will enter the country's market for renewable energy, investing more than 1 trillion yen (\$9.3 billion) by 2030 to boost capacity and establish its own transmission network, Nikkei has learned.

According to Nikkei, NTT aims to generate 7.5 million kilowatts of electricity -- the equivalent of 12 percent of the nation's renewable-energy capacity as of 2019.

The former state telecom monopoly becomes the first company with the ability to operate on a national scale to enter Japan's power distribution market since it was fully deregulated in 2016. As renewable energy gains momentum worldwide, the entry of deep-pocketed NTT alters the competitive dynamics.

Investing close to \$1 billion a year until 2025, NTT will expand its current power generation capability 25-fold. Once complete, the company would have more generating capacity than regional provider Shikoku Electric Power, which powers all of Japan's smallest main island.

NTT will sell directly to customers. Most of the company's 7,300 telephone exchanges nationwide will be used as "mini generators" and be equipped with storage batteries for renewable energy. From there, power will be provided to factories and offices nearby through existing grids or NTT's own lines.

NTT will team up with Mitsubishi Corp. to serve more than 14,000 convenience stores operated by Lawson, a subsidiary of the trading house.

NTT will also develop large solar and offshore wind power plants. Group electricity unit NTT Anode Energy will lead and expand the operations.

Japanese regional utilities have priority for use of existing transmission lines, creating a barrier to entry. NTT will get around this by creating its own transmission network.

NTT sees new business opportunities from combining existing communications data with data on electricity use. Renewable energy also offers a new pillar of business at a time when its mainstay communications operations face slow growth.

The target of 7.5 million kilowatts of renewable energy significantly exceeds the 2 million kilowatts to 3 million kilowatts that Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings plans to develop by the early 2030s. NTT's current generating capacity is 300,000 kilowatts.

Meeting NTT's target would help Japan toward its goal of having renewables make up 22 percent to 24 percent of its power generation mix. It may disrupt the dominance of existing electric companies and ultimately lead to lower energy costs.



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National Iranian Drilling Company	8/222/485	Tender No.: FP/04-98/189 Indet No.: 08-22-9845104	18.730.000.000

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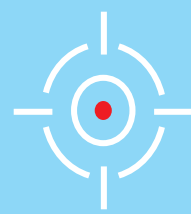
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**Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output**

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

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# U.S. is one of the most aggressive countries in modern era: Lebanese academic

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — A Lebanese political researcher believes that the United States is one of the “most aggressive” regimes in the modern world.

“The U.S. is one of the most aggressive countries that has waged wars against other nations in modern era, and the structure of the American system is based on repression, domination, abolition and controlling other nations,” Tariq Aboud tells the Tehran Times.

The United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. It has also slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in violation of the 2015 nuclear deal which is endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The current U.S. president has also deepened racial rift in the American society through his inflammatory remarks and decisions. The country has been the scene of anti-racism protests since May 25 when a black American, named George Floyd, was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis.

“The regulations allow the white people to dominate and control other segments of the U.S. population; the colored, immigrants, and others,” Tariq says.

The discrimination against the blacks dates back to centuries ago. It dates back to the time when the United States was established.

“What is happening in America is a historical accumulation of discrimination against the people of color, as racism is deep-rooted in the American political system, and even in the constitution,” Aboud explains.

According to the Lebanese academic, Washington also supports repressive regimes in the third world, including those in Latin America and even in Africa.

People in certain cities across the world held rallies in protest against the death of George Floyd. Some senior officials in the world also condemned police brutality against the people of color. However, certain countries, including Arab rulers who are supported by Washington, remained silent.



Aboud says certain countries in the Arab world have acquiesced to the U.S. hegemony and do not dare to challenge Washington.

“It comes in the natural context, because many Arab regimes have accepted American hegemony, and they have no authority to oppose American administration,” Aboud remarks.

Arab states are undemocratic and their history is full of oppression against opponents let alone protest racism in the U.S., the researcher says.

“Since the Arab regimes are undemocratic, they are not unfamiliar with the suppression methods and using violence against their opponents,” Aboud points out.

However, he says, silence toward racism and indifference toward the death of George Floyd was not just limited to Arab countries.

“We saw this terrible silence towards systematic racism (in the U.S.) which is not limited to the Arab regimes. We also witness many regimes that claim to defend democracy in Europe and elsewhere, are sitting on the fence.”

Since his arrival at the White House, Trump’s approach toward Arab states has been degrading and sometimes insulting.

Aboud also says the United States under Donald Trump cannot even be trusted as an ally.

“You can’t bet on Trump as an ally. What happened recently to Egypt on the Grand Renaissance Dam (al-Nahda Dam) crisis showed clearly that the Americans have no allies,” the Lebanese researcher comments.

“For Egypt to be left alone to face its problems and preventing it from the waters of the Nile, which is a life matter for the Egyptian people, reflect Washington’s policies in belittling its allies, even if it considers them allies,” according to Tariq Aboud.

Answering a question about possibility of reform in Arab countries, Aboud says, “The Arab peoples have been repressed in the course of history, in a way that they have lost initiatives for reform, and what happened in the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ in 2011, accumulated despair rather than improve the situation.”

He argues that the “civil wars in both Yemen and Libya and the war on Syria have formed a terrible image of uprisings.”

## Attack on Hashd Al-Shaabi base was a propaganda act: al-Nujaba

### “Such mistakes can push the country towards an unknown destiny”

**TEHRAN** — On Thursday night, the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service, in coordination with the U.S. embassy, attacked the base of the Brigade 45 of Hashd Al-Shaabi run by Kataib Hizbollah resistance forces and arrested a number of them.

Following the Iraqi society’s fury over the action and fierce reactions by the Iraqi political and security circles, the forces were released on Monday, al-Nujaba’s Centre for Communications and Media Affairs in Iran reported.

Nasr al-Shimmari, the spokesman for the al-Nujaba Islamic Resistance Movement, told the Mehr news agency that the Thursday attack lacked the characteristics of a military action.

“It was an operation against the Hashd al-Shaabi logistic base that only included 13 military forces acting as guards,” al-Shimmari said.

Noting that the operation was carried out with use of 20 armored vehicles, al-Shimmari reiterated, “We believe that this act was a big mistake that could lead to the confrontation between security forces, and the repeat of such mistake can push the country towards an unknown destiny.”

On the strategic negotiations between the U.S. and Iraq, he said, “Indeed, it is a play for legitimizing the presence of the American occupation forces. It is also an attempt to circumvent the Iraqi Parliament’s enactment on the expulsion of all foreign forces from Iraq and putting an end to the international coalition formed under the pretext of the fight against Daesh.”

The deputy secretary-general of al-Nujaba also said, “This futile act of media propaganda and the voices bought by the U.S. never demonstrate the will of the Iraqi public.”

The text of the interview is as follows: ■ As you know, the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism forces recently attacked one of Hashd Al-Shaabi’s bases, an attack that the Americans were informed of. What is your assessment of this move, and why was such a decision made?

A: Initially, it should be emphasized that what happened on Friday in Baghdad can’t be called a military attack. Yet, it was solely an operation against a logistic back-up base of Hashd Al-Shaabi in which 13 military forces were present. They were acting as guards. On the other hand, this operation was carried out using a large number of forces, including 20 armored forces, and finally, all the forces in the base were arrested.

But our assessment of this act reveals an-

other big mistake that was possible to lead to a confrontation between security forces in a critical time when the Coronavirus pandemic is being spread, Turkish forces have violated the Iraqi sovereignty and occupied some parts of Iraq. The collapse of the economic status should also be added to these two issues that are in line with the wishes of the American forces, which are both occupiers and illegitimate due to the ratification of the Parliament.

The big and evident contradiction here is that some people claim Iraq needs the supports of the U.S.; however, the occupiers ask Iraqi forces to protect them against the attacks of the Resistance. A question that arises here is that if the American occupiers are unable to defend themselves, how can they maintain Iraqi security?!

In sum, it should be stressed that a big mistake was committed against Hashd Al-Shaabi that has returned dignity and sovereignty to Iraq with a caravan of martyrs and sacrificing blood. Such mistakes can push the country towards an unknown destiny.

■ The bases of Kataib Hizbollah are continuously struck by Americans. Why do Americans are worried about the settlement of the Resistance forces in the Syrian-Iraqi borders in the al-Anbar governorate?

A: From the American perspective, the IPMF and Iraqi Islamic Resistance groups are a part of the Resistance Axis and are increasingly expanding. Thereby, Americans have become focused on the Iraqi-Syrian borders and the expansion of their military bases in these areas. Nonetheless, this approach is raised from their stupidity, as even the Saddam regime failed to fully control Iraqi-Syrian borders despite his high level of dominance, and thus Americans never manage to achieve this target.

But, the reason for Kataib Hizbollah being attacked more than other groups is that this group controls a vast operational region in the border areas, a fact that worries and enrages American occupiers. However, it shouldn’t be forgotten that Kataib Hizbollah is one of the principal groups fighting the American



forces both before occupation of Iraq in 2011 and following their return under the pretext of the fight against the ISIS in 2014. Besides, Kataib is a group that has had a fixed and firm position negating the occupiers, and it avoids participation in any political process in Iraq until the Americans intervene in this procedure.

However, today, and in dealing with the attack against Kataib Hizbollah, we all regard ourselves as the soldiers of this resistant, mujahid, and brave group. Furthermore, we will stand by it until all the American occupying forces are expelled from Iraq.

■ It seems that within strategic negotiations with Iraq the U.S. is seeking to achieve its desired results to debilitate the Hashd Al-Shaabi. However, this can lead to a big sedition in Iraq that would undermine the Iraqi security forces. Through such a plan, the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service will also suffer a great damage. In your opinion, what is the chief purpose of the U.S.?

A: The strategic talks between the U.S. and Iraq is a play for legitimizing the presence of the American occupation forces. It is also an attempt to circumvent the Iraqi Parliament’s enactment on the expulsion of all foreign forces from Iraq and putting an end to the international coalition formed under the pretext of the fight against Daesh. Still, such attempts are nothing against the law passed by the

**“The big and evident contradiction here is that some people claim Iraq needs the supports of the U.S. Yet it raises a question that when the American occupiers are unable to defend themselves, how can they maintain the Iraqi security?!”**

## Trump comes under fire as U.S. virus death toll passes 126,000

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported 2,545,250 cases of new coronavirus and said that the number of deaths had risen to 126,369 as of Monday night.

The United States recorded at least 42,000 coronavirus infections in the 24 hours to Monday as the country confronts a rapid surge in the respiratory disease known as COVID-19.

Several state governors have reimposed lockdowns on businesses such as restaurants and bars as the White House claimed the rise in cases is due to record levels on “expanded testing” and not community spread.

In California, Los Angeles, which has become a new epicenter in the pandemic as coronavirus cases and hospitalizations surge, reported an “alarming” one-day surge in America’s second-largest city that put it over 100,000 cases.

Los Angeles county closed all beaches for the Independence Day holiday weekend due to the startling rise in coronavirus rates in the county, while the state of Arizona closes bars,

gyms, and movie theaters for at least 30 days.

Nearly 20 states paused or rolled back the reopening of businesses due to a rapid rise in coronavirus cases.

California counties are dialing back plans to reopen some businesses after observing an increase in hospitalizations and a decrease in compliance with social distancing guidelines.

“We will take action to close bars wineries and breweries that do not serve food beginning midnight Wednesday morning,” San Diego County’s Public Health Officer Wilma Wooten said Monday. “Now more than ever, it is vital that we all take precautions to guide our personal and collective health.”

Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak paused the state’s reopening, with his office saying the governor “will sign an emergency directive extending the length of Phase 2 through the end of July, due to the trends in COVID-19 infection rates, the time needed for expanded contact tracing to identify trends,

and to see the impacts of the Governor’s new face-covering directive.”

■ **Nearly half of U.S. virus deaths recorded in care facilities**

According to the latest count from the Kaiser Family Foundation, long-term care facilities, and similar institutions account for 45% of coronavirus deaths in the United States.

The survey found more than 52,000 deaths occurred in nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, memory care facilities, adult care centers, or other long-term care facilities in 40 states, plus Washington, DC.

KFF’s survey finds more than 10,000 facilities in 43 states plus Washington, DC, have confirmed cases of Covid-19.

According to the data, the states with the highest number of deaths in nursing homes were New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.

(Source: Press TV)

## Israel land grab bid in disarray amid coalition rift, waning U.S. support

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s highly-contentious scheme to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian territory appears to be in disarray as his key coalition partner Benny Gantz and a group of U.S. lawmakers signal their opposition to the move.

Netanyahu has set July 1 as the date to begin moving forward with the plan to impose the Tel Aviv regime’s “sovereignty” over about a third of the West Bank, including settlements and the fertile Jordan Valley.

Gantz said, fighting the coronavirus pandemic, and its economic fallout should precede any political decisions regarding the West Bank.

Gantz said fighting the coronavirus pandemic, and its economic fallout should take precedence over any political decisions regarding the West Bank.



A source in Gantz’s party quoted him as telling a U.S. delegation, made up of American Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, White House Special Envoy Avi Berkowitz and mapping expert Scott Leigh, on Monday that the July 1 target date was “not sacred.”

“The only holy thing at the moment is getting people back into the workforce and taking care of coronavirus,” Gantz was quoted as saying. “Before making any political moves, we need to help the public to get back to earning a living with dignity.”

In his Monday comments Elsewhere, Netanyahu admitted the “complicated” nature of the West Bank annexation, Israel’s Kan public broadcaster reported.

“I have a positive and topical line of communication with the Americans, and when I have something to report, I’ll report [it],” he said. “This is a complicated process with lots of diplomatic and security considerations that I can’t get into. We said that [annexation] would be after July 1.”

Donald Trump gave Tel Aviv the green light for the land grab in his self-proclaimed “deal of the century,” which was unveiled in January to legitimize Israel’s occupation re-drawing West Asia map.

However, the U.S. has remained undecided on whether to formally support the annexation measure sought by Netanyahu under the current circumstances.

A senior White House official told NBC News on Sunday that Friedman, Berkowitz, and Leigh held several days of meetings in Washington that also involved Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law, and senior adviser on the matter.

“There is yet no final decision on the next steps for implementing the Trump plan,” the source said.

■ **U.S. lawmakers threaten Israel with conditional aid** In another development on Monday, a group of U.S. lawmakers voiced concerns about the planned annexation, calling for using a “combination of pressure and incentives” to prevent it, including imposing conditions on American military aid to Israel.

The letter addressed to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is signed by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders as well as Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Pramila Jayapal of Washington, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Betty McCollum of Minnesota.

Should the Israeli government move forward with the planned annexation with this administration’s acquiescence, we will work to ensure non-recognition as well as pursue conditions on the \$3.8 billion in U.S. military funding to Israel, including human rights conditions,” it added.

The letter also threatened “withholding funds for the off-shore procurement of Israeli weapons equal to or exceeding the amount the Israeli government spends annually to fund settlements, as well as the policies and practices that sustain and enable them.”

■ **Jordan reiterates opposition**

Separately on Monday, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi once again condemned the Israeli annexation plan in telephone conversations with his European counterparts.

Safadi and Belgian Foreign Minister Philippe Goffin discussed over phone efforts to reach an effective international stance to prevent the Israeli measure and protect the peace process, according to a statement released by Jordanian Foreign Ministry.

Goffin, for his part, stressed Belgium’s rejection of the annexation plan and commitment to the so-called two-state framework as “the only means to reach an end to the conflict.”

In another phone call, Safadi exchanged views with his Spanish counterpart, Arancha Gonzalez Laya, on the need to intensify attempts aimed at halting the Israeli annexation.

(Source: Press TV)

**As the deadline draws close, Israeli minister of military affairs Benny Gantz, who heads the Blue and White party, suggested on Monday that the annexation plan should be postponed while Israel is dealing with the coronavirus outbreak.**

**The discussions, which took place prior to the trio’s trip to Israel, were “productive” but inconclusive, he said, alluding to concerns about how the Israeli annexation could affect Trump’s Middle East plan.**



## IranAir to launch Bojnurd-Ashgabat service

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Iran’s flag carrier, IranAir, is going to operate round flights connecting Bojnurd, the capital of northeastern North Khorasan province to Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, IRNA reported on Monday.



“In a yesterday meeting held between provincial officials, IranAir’s managing director and its board of directors, round flights between Ashgabat and Bojnurd were finalized based on one of the memoranda of understanding the two countries signed last year,” Governor-General Mohammad-Ali Shojaei said on Tuesday.

Though North Khorasan province may not be the first choice of travelers but its tourism is getting momentum. For the time being, some 150 eco-lodges are active across the northeastern province to serve nature lovers, holidaymakers, and sightseers. Most foreign tourists pass straight through North Khorasan in transit between Mashhad and Gorgan, but if one has time to explore, it’s worth diverting south from the capital, Bojnurd, towards its pristine villages and natural settings.

## Abpakhsh projected to be named national city of wickerwork

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Abpakhsh, a small city in Dasht-estan county, southwestern Bushehr province, is planned to be named as the national city of wickerwork, provincial tourism chief Mohammad-Hossein Arastuzadeh said on Tuesday, CHTN reported.



Having the most palm trees in the province, which provides the raw materials, and practicality of products make wickerwork one of the popular handicrafts fields in the province, he added.

Abpakhsh wickerwork has also gained the National Seal of Excellence and the products are exported to Persian Gulf littoral states via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer), the official explained.

Various Iranian cities and villages have been named as national hubs of handicrafts.

The cities of Zanjan for filigree, Kashan for traditional textile, Iranshahr for needlework, Abadeh for wood carving, and the village of Fash for crafting indigenous musical instruments are among them.

## Ancient relics of Iran: Vase decorated with bulls and horses in high relief

(Part: 1/2)  
**(Louvre museum)** — This bronze vase is decorated with two friezes of animals whose forequarters are projected in high relief. The upper frieze shows reclining bulls, the lower frieze, horses. This type of decoration already existed in the Jemdet Nasr period and in the early 2nd millennium in the same region, on vases made of bitumen mastic. Another possible influence lies in northern Iran, at Marlik, where pots made of precious metal were crafted in similar fashion.

### ■ A decoration of horses and bulls

The decoration of this cylindrical bronze vase is composed of two levels: on the lower level, a frieze of four walking horses, on the upper level a frieze of four reclining bulls. The bulls lie facing left, their tails pulled up over their backs. Their bodies are shown in profile, with their heads turned to the right. The four horses, with short, thick manes, harnessed and with a little bell around their necks, walk in the opposite direction, from left to right. The heads and necks of these eight animals are in high relief and sculpted using the repoussé technique. At the top and bottom of the vase is a cable motif, also executed in repoussé.

### ■ Earlier examples dating from the early second millennium

The first vases decorated with animal friezes in high relief were made in the Jemdet Nasr period (ca 3000 BC) in Mesopotamia, notably in Uruk. In Elam, a number of items of ancient tableware (early 2nd millennium) also feature animals sculpted in more or less high relief, depending on the part of the body represented.

This is particularly the case of certain vases in bitumen mastic, several specimens of which are in the Louvre Museum, including a mouflon-shaped bowl (sb2740). This vase is decorated in similar fashion, with three mouflons. Two of the sheep’s heads are sculpted in high relief, the rest of their bodies in low relief.

# Excavation sheds new light on mysterious capital of Medes in Ecbatana

→ 1 were unearthed during the 22nd archaeological season recently carried out in Tepe Hegmataneh (also known as Ecbatana) .... In this season we seem to have succeeded to answer an old question: ‘Are there any signs of the Median period in Hegmataneh?’ Yes, we have discovered relatively satisfying signs of Median architecture and pottery,” ISNA quoted senior Iranian archaeologist Mehrdad Malekzadeh as saying on Tuesday.

The 70-day archaeological season came to an end late in June aimed at exploring and re-examining the stratigraphy of the hill, to shed a new light on its lowest layers which are deemed to be related to the [early] settlement on Hegmataneh hill and the foundation of its [ruined] fortress and towers, the archaeologist explained.

The Greek historian Herodotus described the city in the 5th century BC as being surrounded by seven concentric walls. Ecbatana was captured from the Median ruler Astyages by the Persian king Cyrus the Great in 550 BC, and it was taken from the last Achaemenian ruler by Alexander the Great in 330 BC.

“We focused on exploring a place in front of the current and temporary Hegmataneh Museum, where French experts had opened a workshop in 1913, known as the Chaal Shotor (“Camel’s Hole”), we carved three trenches measuring 2.5 by 2.5 meters.... and at a depth of 320 cm, we found the remains of a stone wall.”

“We realized that this wall appeared about four meters lower than the architectural relics that [Iranian architects] Dr. M.R. Sarraf and Dr. Masoud Azarnoush had excavated in Hegmataneh in previous archaeological seasons,” he said.

“Dr. Sarraf did not go below that surface level he had worked on, and Dr. Azarnoush also believed that the first ridge of architectural remains in Hegmataneh hill was staring (in that specific location), while we managed to show that there are relics about four meters below that surface.”

According to a scientific article co-authored by Azarnoush, Tepe Hegmataneh, which located in the eastern edge of Central Zagros mountain range, faces some tricky questions: When and by the order of whom, a “Standard Architectural Pattern (SAP)” was built there? Or, what was the function of SAP?

French Assyriologist Charles Fossey (1869 – 1946) directed the first excavation in Tepe Hegmataneh for six months in 1913. Erich Friedrich Schmidt (1897 – 1964), who was a German and American-naturalized archaeologist, took some aerial photos from Hamedan between 1935 and 1937.

“Specialized tests, such as radiocarbon dating, have not been performed on the newly excavated materials yet, and by performing physical and chemical tests, we can express with a more reliable coefficient of the history of the obtained cultural materials,” Malekzadeh added.

Regarding the importance of Tepe Hegmataneh, Malekzadeh noted “Hegmataneh hill is one of the most important archeological sites [of the ancient times] such as Rome, Athens, Alexandria and Babylon.”

Herodotus writes: “Deioces bade them build for him a palace worthy of the royal dignity and strengthen him with a guard of spearmen. And the Medes did so: for they built him a large and strong palace in that part of the land which he told them [...]. He built large and strong walls, those which are now called Ecbatana, standing in circles one within the other. And this wall is so contrived that one circle is higher than the next by the height of the battlements alone. And to some extent, I suppose, the nature of the ground, seeing that it is on a hill, assists towards this end; but much more was it produced by art, since the circles are in all seven in number. And within the last circle are the royal palace and the treasure-houses.

The largest of these walls is in size about equal to the



circuit of the wall around Athens; and of the first circle the battlements are white, of the second black, of the third crimson, of the fourth blue, of the fifth red: thus are the battlements of all the circles colored with various tints, and the two last have their battlements one of them overlaid with silver and the other with gold. These walls then Deioces built for himself and round his palace, and the people he commanded to dwell round about the wall.”

According to the Greek historian Xenophon of Athens (c. 430-c.355), Ecbatana became the summer residence of the Achaemenid kings. Their palace is described by the Greek historian Polybius of Megalopolis. He writes that the city was richer and more beautiful than all other cities in the world; although it had no wall, the palace, built on an artificial terrace, according to Livius, a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

An inscription, unearthed in 2000, indications that Achaemenid king Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358) built a terrace with columns in Ecbatana. Some twelve kilometers southwest of Hamadan is Gandj Nameh, where Darius I and his son Xerxes had inscriptions cut into the rock.

Polybius, a Greek historian of the Hellenistic period noted for his work The Histories, tells that the builders used

cedar and cypress wood, which was covered with silver and gold. The roof tiles, columns and ceilings were plated with silver and gold. He adds that the palace was stripped of its precious metals in the invasion of the Macedonian king Alexander the Great, and that the rest was seized during the reigns of Antigonus and Seleucus. Later, Ecbatana was one of the capitals of the Seleucid and the Parthian Empires, sometimes called Epiphaneia.

With the outbreak of World War I, the archaeological excavations were stopped at Ecbatana. The first Iranian expedition worked in Tepe Hegmataneh for 11 successive seasons under supervision of Sarraf from 1983 to 2000, these excavations led to discovering some parts of an enclosure and SAP in central, southern and western workshops.

Sarraf could not find reliable answers for the already mentioned questions. Second round of excavation (12th to 15th seasons) was undertaken by Azarnoush for four seasons from 2004 to 2008, the aim of these excavations was “to clarify the dating and stratigraphically sequence of the site”.

Ecbatana is deemed to be remaining a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, for decades or even centuries to come as the site of the ancient city lies partly within the modern city of Hamadan, which has never been excavated before.

**According to ancient Greek writers, Ecbatana was founded in about 678 BC by Deioces, who was the first king of the Medes. The city was subsequently the summer residence of the Achaemenian kings and one of the residences of the Parthian kings. It is deemed to be remaining a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, for decades or even centuries to come as the site of the ancient city lies partly within the modern city of Hamadan, which has never been excavated before.**

## Five properties added to national heritage list

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Five natural spots and landscapes have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The properties are located in the provinces of West Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Ilam, and Kermanshah in north-western and western parts of the country, said Mostafa Purali a senior official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Registering these properties on the national heritage list is the first step to protect and preserve them, the official added.

Baba Yadegar trees in Kermanshah province, and Vizhdarvan Valley and Talisman cave, both in Ilam province have been inscribed on the list.

Located in Rijab region, Baba Yadegar a mau-



soleum of one of the companions of Sultan Sahak, a Kurdish religious leader.

Vizhdarvan Valley is popular for its pristine nature and eye-catching view and is located near the beautiful Cham Gordan dam.

Situated on the heights of Manesht mount, Talisman cave was identified in 1990. The cave is a habitat for predators in the region.

The list also includes Khoranj stones in Piranshahr County, West Azerbaijan province, which are huge, standing stones with unique shapes, and old Juniper trees, a kind of evergreen tree which is prevented from being cut off, in Shamsabad village, Ardebil province.

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

## Avaj holds potential to become a tourism hub

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Avaj city in the northwestern province of Qazvin has the potential to become one of the tourism hubs of the country, the governor-general of the province has said.

With several hot mineral springs, Avaj has the capacity to become a spa region, CHTN quoted Hedayatollah Jamalipur as saying on Monday.

Creating tourism infrastructure and attracting investors are needed to reach this goal, the official added.

He also noted that Qazvin province as well as other provinces in the country has numerous tourist attractions, which need to be promoted properly.

Based on ancient relics found in historical sites of the city, Avaj dates back to the Medes period (9th to 7th centuries BC).

Besides its hot spas, the city enjoys several natural sights as well as historical monuments including Shahdareh waterfall, Ghaleh Kord cave, Mount Aqdagh, Kharaqan



towers, and Avaj suspension bridge. Qazvin was once capital the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a

wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums and a handful of decent eating options. For most travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

Also known as the castle of the Assassins, the 12th-century Alamut castle is nestled on top of a peak. It was once a shelter for the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124) who was a spiritual leader of an Islamic sect. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book “The Valleys of the Assassins”.

Qazvin is also home to one of the biggest roofed caravanserais of the country, Sa’d-al Saltaneh caravanserai. Dating back to the Qajar era, it’s a place for discovering tens of Hojreh or shops, cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It’s a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, culinary and hospitality of Iran.



# Homegrown COVID-19 vaccine ready for human trial

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iran will soon start human trial of a domestically-produced vaccine for the coronavirus, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Tuesday.

“Iran has taken very effective measures towards producing a vaccine for COVID-19 and will test the vaccine on humans in the near future,” IRNA quoted Namaki as saying.

“I have followed up on producing the vaccine by Iranian scientists closely over the past four months. The animal testing of the vaccine has been made successfully and the clinical trial phase of the human testing will start soon,” he explained.

Sourena Sattari, Vice President for Science and Technology, said in April that two types of diagnostic kits are now mass-produced by Iranian knowledge-based companies. The first one is the RT-PCR tests, 8 million of which are being produced per month while the other is serology-based tests that a total of 400,000 are being manufactured monthly and is expected to reach up to 2 million.

At present, 40 advanced ventilators are manufactured daily in the medical equipment sector, he explained.

Knowledge-based companies can produce any medicine effective in countering coronavirus or approved by the scientific committee within a week to 10 days, he noted.

Plasma therapy has so far reduced coronavirus deaths in Iran by 40 percent as experts in the country have discovered a life-saving method for those recovering from COVID-19.

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



Health Minister Saeed Namaki

someone who is critically ill.

In an attempt to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, the national headquarters for coronavirus fight has approved that wearing face masks in public and crowded places is compulsory.

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, Sadat Lari said. Alireza Delavari, Tehran University

of Medical Sciences vice-chancellor, said that “People’s cooperation in preventing the transmission of coronavirus has decreased, and this will increase the incidence of disease and the number of hospitalizations and will cause problems for the treatment system.”

Referring to the increase in the prevalence of the virus, he noted that “Using a mask and observing social distancing are the most important factors in preventing corona, which is unfortunately not observed in large

shopping centers, private companies, and even government offices, subways and buses.

Over the past 24 hours, 2,457 new cases of COVID-19 were identified in the country, of which 1,435 were hospitalized, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Tuesday, adding that the total number of patients in the country reached 227,662.

Unfortunately, 147 patients lost their lives over the past 24 hours.

The total number of COVID-19 deaths in the country reached 10,817, she said.

## Department of Environment’s protection unit has made notable achievements: commander

**1 → Over 90% of wildfire set unintentionally** Mohabbat Khani pointing out that wildfires are mostly caused by unintentional human error, said that over 90 percent of wildfires are ignited by humans unintentionally while setting fires in nature, smoking, and releasing plastic and glass containers.

Some 10 percent of the wildfires are anthropogenic that most of the arsonists are arrested, he highlighted.

**■ Rangers to be equipped with high-tech facilities** Mohabbat Khani went on to say that installing cameras on rangers’ uniform is another plan that can be effective in documenting while helping the defenders to prove conflicts with poachers to the judiciary, he highlighted.

He explained about the establishment of a wireless system, saying that the new wireless devices have a GPS that can be used to track and monitor the forces in the event of an accident, and the rangers can contact all the country’s police stations.

The system will be launched this year so that all 644 wildlife protection stations will be connected online, he noted.

Stating that the DOE is also trying to promote protection in the maritime areas, he noted that “to do this, we will soon launch air monitoring system over the maritime areas and wetlands in the country.”

Fishermen’s boats are generally faster than the maritime rangers’ boats, which is why we have a problem preventing crime, and we have prioritized equipping the boats, he emphasized.

Last year, a number of cars were provided to the stations, but since rangers are often chasing the poachers, the vehicles must be replaced, which is on the agenda, he also said.

We have so far trained 1,800 rangers through online courses, he said.

**■ Lack of rangers to be compensated to some extent**

Criticizing the lack of workforce for environmental protection, he said that the number of rangers in Iran is one-tenth of the global standard, which is a ranger for every 12,000 hectares, while it should be a ranger



per 1,000 hectares.

We are falling short of some 5,000 rangers, as 8,500 rangers are needed to protect the country’s natural resources and environment, however, there are 3,200 rangers working in the country, he explained.

Last year, some 250 rangers were employed to meet a part of the need, and we plan to increase the number of employment, he stated.

He went on to state that 50 marine rangers will soon be recruited and trained, then they will be active in 7 provinces.

Referring to the recent fires haunted the southern and southwestern protected areas of the country, he stated that blowers have proven effective both for preventative fire control and for extinguishing fires so that 50 blowers were provided to the rangers in the past two days.

And another 150 will be delivered to the ranger stations over the next two weeks, he noted.

**■ Cyber police cooperation made social media unsafe for environmental criminals**

Cyber police have been cooperating with the DOE to monitor and deal with environmental crimes in cyberspace along with combating animal abuse, he noted.

He also said that over the past three months, we have followed up on 100 cases of environmental violations in cyberspace, and so far 50 of which have been filed

and violators have been arrested.

Violators should be warned that we are monitoring cyberspace for environmental crimes and making cyberspace unsafe for them, he emphasized.

**■ Illegal weapons seizure increased by 300% compared to last year**

This year, detection of illegal fishing has increased by 751 percent, detection of illegal bird hunting by 201 percent, and mammal hunting by 41 percent, he said, noting that this shows that protection and control measures are promoted.

Also, dealing with poachers before the crime has increased by 70 percent and dealing with the illegal trade of wildlife has increased by 108 percent, he added.

He went on to emphasize that illegal weapon seizure was one of the main obsessions so that it increased by 300 percent compared to the last year.

**■ 1,654 hectares of protected areas affected by bushfire this year**

Pointing to the damage caused by recent fires, he said that “during the first three months of this year, 56 wildfires occurred in protected areas and burnt some 1,654 hectares.

Meanwhile, during the same period, 82 fires occurred in 620 hectares of protected areas, indicating that the number of fires has decreased but the area involved in the fire has almost tripled, he lamented.

**■ Amendment of gun laws for environmentalists**

Referring to the amendment of the laws on the use of weapons for the rangers in armed conflicts, he said “Before, the rangers hold weapons only to survive, but now the environmental defenders are allowed to use weapons.”

He stressed that the use of weapons is the last resort and only when the lives of defenders are in danger and it must be proven that there has been no other way to save the life of the ranger.

If two rangers encounter offenders and one does not have a weapon and his life is in danger, the other ranger who has a weapon can defend his colleague, he concluded.

## Voluminous Taxus baccata spotted in Hyrcanian Forest

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The thickest-ever Taxus baccata L. (European yew) in Iran, which is said to be one of the most voluminous in the world, has been found in the northern Hyrcanian Forest.

The tree is 192 centimeters in diameter, 30 meters in height, and is some 1,200 years old, said Mohammad-Sadeq Tahmasbpour, the head of the natural resources and watershed management department of the city of Babol, Mazandaran province.

Taxus baccata L. is a tertiary relict in the region and a long-lived dioecious tree with high ecological and economic importance in the Hyrcanian Forest.

There are eight Taxus species and two hybrids in the world and Taxus baccata L. is the single representative in Iran, according to the Journal of Medicinal Plants.

Certain compounds found in the bark of yew trees have been discovered to have efficacy as anti-cancer agents.

Spanning from the south of Azerbaijan to about 850 km eastward to the provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan, the Hyrcanian Forest are witnesses of the ancient forests of the world estimated to be survived for a long period spanning 35 and 50 million years.

Due to their vast expanses, the Hyrcanian Forest has a significant impact on oxygen production and natural air purification.

It contains very rich ecosystems due to the particular orographic and climatic situation (precipitation rich, warm-temperate, high moisture from the Caspian Sea and damming effect of the Alborz Mountain range).

The forest contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity with 69 mammal species and 304 bird species, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. It also contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

## Alpacas may hold key to immunity against coronavirus, researchers say

Tiny antibodies found in alpacas could hold the key to neutralising the virus that causes Covid-19 and aid in suppressing a second wave of infections, scientists have said.

A study carried out by scientists in Sweden and South Africa have used the tiny antibodies, which are roughly a tenth of the size of a normal antibody and called nanobodies, from an alpaca named Tyson to prevent the virus from “binding” or infecting a person, the Independent reported.

Tyson, a 12-year-old alpaca in Germany, was immunised with virus proteins by scientists at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Earlier this month, the team isolated the nanobodies from Tyson’s blood that bind to the same part of the virus as human antibodies and could block the infection.

Gerald McInerney, head of the team at the Swedish institute, told Reuters: “We know that it is the antibodies that are directed to the same very, very precise part of the virus that are important and that is what we have engineered with this antibody from Tyson. “In principle, all the evidence would suggest it will work very well in humans, but it is a very complex system.”

The nanobody “directly interferes” with the Covid-19 virus’ ability to infect a host by targeting its “spikes”, therefore “potently” neutralising it, according to The Telegraph.

The authors of the research, from the department of Microbiology, Tumour and Cell Biology at Karolinska, wrote: “The current coronavirus pandemic has drastic consequences for the world’s population, and vaccines, antibodies or antivirals are urgently needed.

“Neutralising antibodies can block virus entry at an early step of infection and potentially protect individuals that are at high risk of developing severe disease.

“When available, specific antiviral drugs or antibody therapies will be used to protect individuals at risk and their widespread use will allow immunologically naive populations to exit lockdown more safely,” they added.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Sydney Riot

(February 16, 2004)

Aboriginal residents in the district of Redfern in Sydney, Australia rioted after the death of a teenager. They believed the police were responsible for the death of a 17 year old boy Thomas Hickey. Redfern has been at the heart of Sydney’s **Aboriginal** community for generations. Large sections of property, known locally as the Block, were bought with the help of the federal government in the early 1970s. The **inner city district** is within sight of the centre of Sydney. Over the years thousands of people came from **all corners of this vast continent** looking for work and to meet up with relatives and friends. The disturbances **have come against a backdrop** of widespread poverty and a dependency on welfare in many native communities across the country. Aborigines are the most disadvantaged group in Australia. They die on average twenty years younger than their **white counterparts** and suffer **disproportionately high rates** of ill health, imprisonment and unemployment. Large numbers of people have **self-destructed** through the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

Relations between the police and many young Aborigines are often **strained** at the best of times. **What is certain** is this violent episode will be a **major setback** for efforts to improve relations between black and white Australians.

### Words

**Aboriginal:** a member of one of the tribes which were living in Australia when Europeans arrived  
**inner city district:** an area inside the city  
all corners of this vast continent: all parts of Australia (a country which is also a continent)

**have come against a backdrop:** happened at a time when there is  
**white counterparts:** white people similar in age and other characteristics  
**disproportionately high rates:** surprisingly and unreasonably large amounts  
**self-destructed:** destroyed themselves, became ill and died  
**strained:** pushed beyond normal limits  
**what is certain is:** a phrase used to introduce a fact  
**major setback:** a major setback is something that makes your position worse than before

(Source: BBC)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Iran will defeat COVID-19, we believe: Chinese envoy

Chinese Ambassador in Iran, Chang Hua, has said he believes that Iran would overcome the crisis of coronavirus outbreak.

“We believe that by sending humanitarian aid, Iran will overcome the crisis,” he said in a meeting with Mahmoud Reza Peyravi, secretary general of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, IRNA reported.

The envoy praised Iran’s Red Crescent Society as the first organization affiliated with the Red Cross and the Red Crescent societies which sent humanitarian shipments of aid to the Chinese people.

A delegation of Chinese medical experts arrived in Tehran on Saturday with a cargo of aid to help combat the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

## سفیر چین: باور داریم ایران بر بحران کرونا غلبه خواهد کرد

سفیر جمهوری خلق چین در تهران ابراز امیدواری کرد ایران بر بحران شیوع ویروس کرونا غلبه خواهد کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، چانگ هوا روز دوشنبه در حاشیه دیدار با محمودرضا پیروی دبیرکل جمعیت هلال احمر ایران گفت: ما باور داریم که با ارسال کمک های انساندوستانه از سوی دوستان دولت ایران از بحران این بیماری عبور خواهد کرد.

دبلمعات ارشد چین در ادامه ضمن قدردانی از جمعیت هلال احمر ایران به عنوان نخستین سازمان بشردوستانه عضو جمعیت های ملی صلیب سرخ و هلال احمر که محموله های کمک را برای مردم چین ارسال کرد، گفت: ما هم با شدت گرفتن ویروس کرونا در کنار ایران هستیم.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “cryo-, cry-”

■ **Meaning:** freezing or cold

■ **For example:** You can return to most normal activities the day after **cryosurger**.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Nail somebody down

■ **Meaning:** to force someone to say clearly what they want or what they intend to do

■ **For example:** Before they repair the car, nail them down to a price.

## IDIOM

### Cream of the crop

■ **Explanation:** the best people or things in a particular group

■ **For example:** As usual, the cream of the crop of this year’s graduates were offered the best jobs.



## Maduro expels EU ambassador after Brussels imposes sanctions

→ 1 Those on the list include Luis Parra, who heads an assembly rival to the one headed by Guaidó.

Earlier this month Venezuela's Supreme Court, which is loyal to Maduro, created a new elections commission which critics say is stacked with the president's supporters. It comes ahead of parliamentary elections expected this year.

Last year Juan Guaidó declared himself interim president and has been backed by the EU and the United States.

The EU decision brings to 36 the total number of Venezuelan individuals under sanctions, which includes a travel ban and a freeze on assets.

European leaders said they would "continue working to foster a peaceful democratic solution in Venezuela, through inclusive and credible legislative elections".

The EU first introduced measures against Venezuela in November 2017, which it said were not designed to harm the country's population.

Venezuela is a once-wealthy oil nation experiencing a declining economic and political crisis that has driven roughly five million people from the country amid shortages of basic goods, soaring inflation and broken hospitals.

While the United States has led the push to oust Nicolás Maduro with sanctions, leaders in Europe and Canada have also thrown their support behind Guaidó, in a coalition of nearly 60 nations.

However, Maduro remains in power with control over the military and international support from allies including China, Russia, Iran and Cuba.

## Anti-racism protests continue across U.S.

→ 1 The bill will now go to Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, a Republican, who has said he would sign it into law. Renae Eze, a spokesperson for Reeves, told CNN Monday "once the Legislature sends the final bill to his desk and he's had the opportunity to review it, Governor Reeves will sign the bill in the coming days."

The legislation -- which cleared the state House in a 91-23 vote and the state Senate with a 37-14 vote -- comes as Mississippi lawmakers have been weighing a change to their flag for weeks amid ongoing racial justice protests across the country. The flag, first adopted in 1894, has red, white and blue stripes with the Confederate battle emblem in the corner, CNN reported.

The bill establishes a commission to develop a new flag design without the Confederate emblem that includes the phrase "In God, We Trust." Mississippi state voters would then vote on the new design this November.

State Rep. Jeramey Anderson, a Democrat from Moss Point, applauded its passage Sunday as a "historic moment."

"I thank those who came before us, who with courage and resolve nurtured the Civil Rights Movement that helped bring us to this day," he tweeted. "What a beautiful moment of unity."

That message was echoed by Democratic state Rep. Zakiya Summers, who tweeted, "I just through the deuces to the state flag that's at the entrance of the house chamber!"

And NAACP president Derrick Johnson told CNN's Wolf Blitzer Sunday evening, "This is a long time coming."

"Finally, Mississippi decided to be one of the 50 states, and not the one state standing alone still bearing the emblem of a segregated society," he said.

Sunday's vote came after the Mississippi House and Senate passed a resolution on Saturday to begin the process of changing the flag.

## Johnson says COVID-19 has been a disaster for Britain

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged Monday that the coronavirus pandemic has been a "disaster" for Britain, as he announced a spending splurge designed to get the country - and his faltering Conservative government - back on track.

As the UK emerges from a three-month lockdown, Johnson has lined up big-money pledges on schools, housing and infrastructure, in an attempt to move on from an outbreak that has left more than 43,000 Britons dead - the worst confirmed death toll in Europe, Ap reported.

"This has been a disaster," Johnson acknowledged Monday. "Let's not mince our words. I mean, this has been an absolute nightmare for the country and the country's gone through a profound shock.

"But in those moments, you have the opportunity to change and to do things better," he told Times Radio. "This is a moment now to give our country the skills, the infrastructure, the long-term investment that we need."

## Resistance News

### Israeli army carries out limited incursion into southeast of Gaza

**INTERNATIONAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— Israeli army heavy-duty vehicles on Wednesday morning infiltrated limitedly into the northeast of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip under protection from other military units.

According to local sources, six bulldozers escorted by other army vehicles advanced from an Israeli military post behind the border fence towards agricultural plots of land in the east of Abasan town.

Soon later, the vehicles embarked on carrying out bulldozing and digging activities in the area, amid sporadic gunfire.

## KAN: Netanyahu may postpone annexation plan

**INTERNATIONAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu is likely to postpone his West Bank annexation plan which he already announced his intent to launch in July 1, according to Israel's KAN channel.

Netanyahu implied the possibility of such decision during a recent meeting attended by members of the Likud party, KAN said.

The Israeli premier were cited as saying during the meeting that there were political and security considerations behind his decision not to launch the plan in July.

# From pandering to Putin to abusing allies and ignoring his own advisers, Trump's phone calls alarm U.S. officials

Trump was 'near-sadistic' in phone calls with female world leaders

In hundreds of highly classified phone calls with foreign heads of state, President Donald Trump was so consistently unprepared for discussion of serious issues, so often outplayed in his conversations with powerful leaders like Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Erdogan, and so abusive to leaders of America's principal allies, that the calls helped convince some senior U.S. officials -- including his former secretaries of state and defense, two national security advisers and his longest-serving chief of staff -- that the President himself posed a danger to the national security of the United States, according to White House and intelligence officials intimately familiar with the contents of the conversations.

The calls caused former top Trump deputies -- including national security advisers H.R. McMaster and John Bolton, Defense Secretary James Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and White House chief of staff John Kelly, as well as intelligence officials -- to conclude that the President was often «delusional,» as two sources put it, in his dealings with foreign leaders. The sources said there was little evidence that the President became more skillful or competent in his telephone conversations with most heads of state over time. Rather, he continued to believe that he could either charm, jawbone or bully almost any foreign leader into capitulating to his will, and often pursued goals more attuned to his own agenda than what many of his senior



advisers considered the national interest.

These officials' concerns about the calls, and particularly Trump's deference to Putin, take on new resonance with reports the President may have learned in March that Russia had offered the Taliban bounties to kill U.S. troops in Afghanistan -- and yet took no action. CNN's sources said there were calls between Putin and Trump about Trump's desire to end the American military presence in Afghanistan but they mentioned no discussion of the supposed Taliban bounties.

By far the greatest number of Trump's

telephone discussions with an individual head of state were with Erdogan, who sometimes phoned the White House at least twice a week and was put through directly to the President on standing orders from Trump, according to the sources. Meanwhile, the President regularly bullied and demeaned the leaders of America's principal allies, especially two women: telling Prime Minister Theresa May of the United Kingdom she was weak and lacked courage; and telling German Chancellor Angela Merkel that she was «stupid.» Trump incessantly boasted to his fellow

heads of state, including Saudi Arabia's autocratic royal heir Mohammed bin Salman and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, about his own wealth, genius, «great» accomplishments as President, and the «idiocy» of his Oval Office predecessors, according to the sources.

According to CNN, in his conversations with both Putin and Erdogan, Trump took special delight in trashing former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama and suggested that dealing directly with him -- Trump -- would be far more fruitful than during previous administrations. «They didn't know BS,» he said of Bush and Obama -- one of several derisive tropes the sources said he favored when discussing his predecessors with the Turkish and Russian leaders.

The full, detailed picture drawn by CNN's sources of Trump's phone calls with foreign leaders is consistent with the basic tenor and some substantive elements of a limited number of calls described by former national security adviser John Bolton in his book, «The Room Where It Happened.» But the calls described to CNN cover a far longer period than Bolton's tenure, are much more comprehensive -- and seemingly more damning -- in their sweep.

Like Bolton, CNN's sources said that the President seemed to continually conflate his own personal interests -- especially for purposes of re-election and revenge against perceived critics and political enemies -- with the national interest.

## DR Congo violence displaces over one million in six months: UN



More than one million people have been forced to flee their homes in the violence-ravaged eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since the start of the year, the UN said Tuesday.

The UNHCR, the United Nations' refugee agency, voiced alarm at an increasing number of attacks by armed groups on displaced civilians, saying it was "appalled" by the surging violence< AFP reported.

"In the last eight weeks, UNHCR and its partners have recorded multiple attacks by armed groups on displacement sites and

villages," it said in a statement.

It said the attacks were mainly in Djugu Territory in Ituri province; in Fizi and Mwenga Territories in South Kivu province; and Masisi and Rutshuru Territories in North Kivu province.

"Violence has displaced more than one million people in the last six months in these areas," the refugee agency said.

The UNHCR urged the authorities in the DRC to strengthen the police and military presence in the east "to improve the security situation and hold the perpetrators accountable".

## Taliban reaffirm commitment to U.S. deal in Pompeo call

The Taliban reaffirmed their commitment to a February deal to draw down the war in Afghanistan during a call with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the group's spokesman has said.

The discussion came as U.S. President Donald Trump faces mounting pressure to explain why he did nothing after being reportedly told that Russian spies had offered and paid cash to Taliban-linked militants for killing American soldiers.

The Taliban have denied that their fighters received any Russian bounties, and the group's Qatar-based chief negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar reiterated their pledge not to strike against the U.S.

Baradar told Pompeo that "according to the agreement, we do not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against the U.S. and other countries", Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said Monday in a statement on Twitter.

The New York Times, citing anonymous officials, had reported last week that Trump had been told about the alleged Russian bounties but he did nothing in response.

Trump denied being informed of the assessment while the White House said the claim had been kept from him



because the intelligence underpinning it was unverified.

But another report from the Times Monday said the President had received a report about the alleged Russian bounties as early as February.

That month, the United States had pledged to withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan by mid-2021 in return for security guarantees in a bid to pave the way for negotiations between warring sides.

Under the landmark agreement, which excluded the

## China passes Hong Kong security law



China passed a sweeping national security law for Hong Kong Tuesday.

The legislation was unanimously approved by China's rubber-stamp parliament, little more than six weeks after it was first unveiled, Daily Star reported.

"It marks the end of Hong Kong that the world knew before," prominent democracy campaigner Joshua Wong tweeted as his political party Demosisto announced it was disbanding.

"With sweeping powers and ill-defined law, the city will turn into a #secretpolicestate."

The United States, Britain, the European Union and the United Nations rights watchdog have all voiced fears the law could be used to stifle criticism of Beijing, which wields similar laws on the authoritarian mainland to crush dissent.

The law bypassed Hong Kong's fractious legislature and the wording was kept secret from the city's 7.5 million inhabitants.

There was no formal announcement from Beijing on the passage of the law. Instead the news filtered out via pro-Beijing politicians and local media outlets in Hong Kong.

Afghan government, Washington and the militants said they would refrain from attacking each other.

The Taliban spokesman said Baradar and Pompeo discussed concerns about the deal, including intra-Afghan talks and the release of 5,000 imprisoned insurgents.

"We are committed to starting intra-Afghan talks," Baradar told Pompeo, blaming the hold-up on the delayed release of prisoners, according to Shaheen.

The Afghan government in Kabul has said it has freed nearly 4,000 Taliban prisoners so far in a bid to kickstart the negotiations.

Pompeo acknowledged the Taliban had refrained from attacking urban centers and military bases under the deal, but called on them to do more to reduce overall violence, according to Shaheen.

Violence had dropped across much of the country after the Taliban offered a brief ceasefire to mark the Islamic Eid al-Fitr festival last month, but officials say the insurgents have stepped up attacks in recent weeks.

Most attacks by the Taliban have targeted Afghan security forces, although there are regular police reports that civilians have been killed in roadside bomb blasts.

## Lebanon warns Israel over 'dangerous' gas exploration bid

Lebanon President Michel Aoun has warned Israel against its "extremely dangerous" bid to explore oil and gas on Lebanon's maritime border, parts of which are claimed by the regime, saying the Arab country will not allow any violation of its territorial waters.

Aoun's warning came a day after Israel approved a license for oil and gas exploration in "Block 72," located close to the Block 9 gas fields, where Beirut is set to begin explorations for natural gas and oil soon.

"Block 72" sits along the disputed 860-kilometer line of waters that separate the Lebanese from Israeli-held territories.

"This will complicate the situation further

as Lebanon will not allow any violations of its internationally-recognized territorial waters, especially in the Exclusive Economic Zone where Block 9 -- which will be explored by Lebanon within a month -- is located," Aoun said Monday.

The Lebanese president further called for the country's Supreme Defense Council to meet on Tuesday to discuss the development at the southern border.

Lebanese lawmaker Kassem Hachem described the Israeli decision as "piracy" and a "declaration of war" on Lebanon, calling for action at "all levels" to "put an end to these aggressive intentions on our homeland."

Israel relies heavily on gas and has long

been developing a number of offshore gas deposits in the Mediterranean Sea.

Reportedly, Israel had been avoiding granting licenses for the exploration of Block 72, fearing it could lead to a new conflict with Lebanon.

According to Press TV, in February 2018, Lebanon said it had signed gas exploration and production contracts for two energy blocks, including Block 9, with a consortium of France's Total, Italian Eni and Russia's Novatek oil and gas companies.

The two sides nearly came to blows over Beirut's offshore oil and gas exploration projects.

Back in December 2017, Beirut had granted licenses to a consortium of three

international companies to carry out exploratory drilling in Lebanon's Block 4 and Block 9 and determine whether they contain oil and gas reserves.

Israeli authorities, who claim sovereignty over Block 9, reacted angrily to the announcement.

In January, Israel signed a deal with Greece and Cyprus to build a pipeline channeling natural gas from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe, despite objections from Turkey.

Israel and Lebanon have further been engaged in a rift over Israel's occupation of Shebaa Farms, a small strip of land at the intersection of the Lebanese-Syrian border and the Golan Heights.



# Kazemi wins FIBA Dunk of the Decade bracket

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Arsalan d e s k Kazemi of Iran has claimed the FIBA Dunk of the Decade crown after his high-flying entry from the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament 2016 emerged victorious in the interactive fan voting.

The interactive bracket featured 32 entries from across all FIBA regions and a wide range of global and continental national team competitions, with a total of 699,188 votes cast over the period of 20 days, FIBA reported.

Having received 80,658 votes for 55.8 percent in the Final matchup, Kazemi's dunk over Ioannis Bourousis bested another highly popular candidate, Angola star Carlos Morais, who had the backing of 63,887 supporters for 44.2 percent.

On his path to overall victory, Kazemi eliminated Norvel Pelle of Lebanon, Rui Hachimura of Japan and Gabe Norwood of the Philippines in the Asian Conference before knocking out Rafael Mineiro of Brazil in the Semi-Final.

A runner-up in the overall standings, Carlos Morais' windmill dunk from FIBA AfroBasket 2013 claimed the top honors in Africa, while Rafael Mineiro and Kristaps Porzingis won the regional conferences in Americas and Europe, respectively.

Fans participating in the voting had a chance to win an official Molten game ball from the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019, with the winner of the sweepstakes to be confirmed shortly.



## Jesus Candelas appointed Iran futsal technical director



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Span- d e s k iard Jesus Candelas has been named as technical director of Iran national futsal team.

In the technical committee meeting held in Iran Football Federation headquarters on Tuesday, the Spaniard was appointed to take the role.

The 62-year-old coach had already worked as head coach in Iran futsal team but he parted company with the team due to financial issues.

Under tutelage of Candelas, Iran finished runners-up in the 2014 AFC Futsal

Championship after losing to Japan.

Ex-Iran captain Mohammadreza Heydarian has been also appointed as Iran assistant coach.

Iran, as the most decorated Asian team, prepare for the 2020 AFC Futsal Championship in Turkmenistan.

The 2020 AFC Futsal Championship will be the 16th edition of the AFC Futsal Championship, the biennial international futsal championship organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for the men's national teams of Asia.

## Esteghlal slip up in IPL title race



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal d e s k football team missed two crucial points as they were held to a 1-1 draw against Saipa in Iran Professional League (IPL) Monday night.

Masoud Rigi put the Blues into the lead in the 15th minute but just before the interval Farshid Bagheri scored an own goal.

Esteghlal moved down to fifth place with 37 points, 13 points adrift of leaders Persepolis with eight games remaining.

In Isfahan, Sepahan defeated Gol Gohar 2-0 thanks to goals from Mohammadreza Hosseini and Mohammad Karimi.

Sepahan moved to second place with 40 points.

Foolad also jumped to third place after beating Machine Sazi 2-1 in Ahvaz. Babak Moradi gave the visiting team a lead just four minutes into the match but Farshad Ahmadzadeh levelled the score in the 16th minute.

Brazilian striker Luciano Pereira Mendes scored the winner in the 65th minute.

## If Ajax want Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Brighton should sell

The transfer rumor mill sprang into life over the weekend with Ajax being linked with a summer move for Brighton & Hove Albion winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

Ajax boss Marc Overmars views Jahanbakhsh as the perfect replacement for Chelsea-bound Hakim Ziyech, according to reports from Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf.

A return to the Eredivisie would present a way for Jahanbakhsh to end his Brighton nightmare. Since signing from AZ Alkmaar for a club record £17 million in the summer of 2018, the Iranian international has managed just two goals and one assist in 33 games.

Graham Potter has used Jahanbakhsh just 10 times this season, eight Premier League appearances and two cup matches. Since the Premier League restarted after lockdown, Jahanbakhsh has failed to make Potter's matchday squad despite the increase to nine substitutes. Clearly, the Brighton boss does not rate him.

Which is why if Ajax do make an offer for Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Brighton should sell. There is little point in keeping a player who so obviously does not figure in a manager's plans, especially one who deserves a shot at first team football elsewhere for his exemplary attitude.

The debate over Jahanbakhsh's ability will no doubt rage long after he leaves the Albion. The facts are that he has contributed towards three goals in his 35 game Brighton career, which works out at a cost of £5.66 million per involvement.

He didn't register a single goal or assist under Chris Hughton in the 2018-19 season, which some supporters put down to Hughton's negative tactics.

They believed that a more attack-minded boss such as Potter would draw the sort of form from Jahanbakhsh which saw him score 21 times in the Eredivisie for AZ Alkmaar in 2017-18.

Instead, Potter didn't give Jahanbakhsh a minute of league football until the Premier League campaign reached December.

His first start then came on December 28th and he marked the occasion with the opener against Plucky Little Bournemouth, before scoring that stunning overhead kick against Chelsea to win the Premier League Goal of the Month award for January.

There had been hope that might belatedly light a fire



under Jahanbakhsh's Brighton career, but it hasn't really happened.

Scoring an overhead kick does not suddenly turn you into a future Ballon d'Or winner as a lot of Brighton fans seem to think, as those of us who witnessed Tommy Fraser away at Hereford United in 2009 can testament to.

Jahanbakhsh wouldn't be the first big money signing from the Netherlands to struggle in England and he probably won't be the last.

There is something about the gulf in standard between the Eredivisie and the Premier League that makes it particularly hard for strikers to adapt. Ricky van Wolfswinkel, Vincent Janssen, Memphis Depay and, er, Jurgen Locadia are testament to that.

What cannot be in doubt however is Jahanbakhsh's dedication, attitude and commitment. Which explains why even his harshest critics over the past two years – and we were definitely one of those when it came to his on-pitch contribution – would be hard pushed not to wish him well wherever he goes next.

When Jahanbakhsh finally got the monkey goal off his back against the Cherries, he sunk to his knees and cried. That is how much scoring a Premier League goal meant to him. Even Ebenezer Scrooge would have been touched.

As his Brighton career failed to take off and he sat watching from the stands, it would have been easy for Jahanbakhsh to give up. He could have sat around collecting his hefty wage packet and do nothing to try and turnaround his Brighton career.

Never mind that he spent six games suspended for be-

ing a loose cannon, the same number of goals he managed to score. One goal per suspension. The problem wasn't Brighton, Florin.

Compare that to Jahanbakhsh, who hasn't had a bad word to say about the Albion. He's patiently waited for his chance under Potter and when he got it, scored a goal that left him so overcome with emotion that he burst into tears.

Even now, when he cannot break into Potter's extended 20-man matchday squad, he doesn't complain. Those reports about Ajax's interest are attached with quotes which say that although Jahanbakhsh is frustrated, he still wants to make it work at Brighton. A first class attitude, right there.

It is the professionalism of Alireza Jahanbakhsh during his time at Brighton which means that the club should be willing to listen to offers, whether they be from Ajax or elsewhere.

What might stop the Albion from doing so is the massive loss that they are certain to make. No other Premier League side would be interested in Jahanbakhsh based on his performances at the Amex and few clubs on the continent will offer anywhere near the £17 million that Brighton played.

Take Ajax for example. Their transfer record is £14.63 million and they have only paid over £10 million for eight players in their history.

They are the richest club in the Eredivisie and yet they won't be offering close to enough money for Brighton not to make a huge loss on Jahanbakhsh.

It isn't Jahanbakhsh's fault that the Albion paid £17 million for him. And it isn't Jahanbakhsh's fault that they did so in the transfer window following a huge outlay on Locadia with plenty of warning signs about signing players from the Netherlands – see Locadia, Danny Holla, Elvis Manu and Roland Bergkamp.

Jahanbakhsh should not be kept at the Amex just because Brighton don't want his departure to highlight more failings in their transfer business.

He has been too much of a professional with a brilliant attitude to deserve that. If Potter doesn't rate Alireza Jahanbakhsh, then Brighton should sell to someone who will give him the shot at first team football that he deserves. And he would go with all our blessings.

(Source: WeAreBrighton.com)

## Veteran ski founder Abbaskhan dies

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian ski founder and coach d e s k Khalil Abbaskhan died on Tuesday. He passed away at the age of 100 in Tehran.



Abbaskhan built chairlift at the ski resort Abali, northeast of Tehran and Darband, north of Tehran.

The officials of Iran Ski Federation had unveiled his bust in Darband in April in recognition of his outstanding services to ski.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Abbaskhan's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

## Iran volleyball mourns the passing of Ahmad Miraninejhad

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Ex-Iran volleyball player Ahmad d e s k Miraninejhad passed away on Tuesday.

He died at the age of 74.

Miraninejhad represented Iran in the world's army competitions in 70's.

Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) expressed sympathy with Miraninejhad's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

## Masoud Shojaei to return to Panionios?

Media reports suggest that Panionios is going to re-sign Iranian midfielder Masoud Shojaei.

Shojaei was a member of Panionios in 2016-17 before joining AEK Athens.

The 36-year-old midfielder, who currently plays for Tractor, has reportedly been linked with a return to Panionios.

Shojaei was absent in the match against Nassaji, where Tractor suffered a 1-0 home defeat in Tabriz.

(Source: SDNA)

## Vahid Amiri sidelined for a month with hamstring injury

**Tasnim** — Persepolis football team midfielder Vahid Amiri has been sidelined for a month due to the hamstring injury.

Amiri was forced to leave the field in the match against Paykan in the 35th minute after suffering a hamstring injury.

He will be sidelined for the next four weeks.

Persepolis lead the table of the Iran Professional League (IPL) with 50 points, 10 points above Sepahan.

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Shojaei was absent in the match against Nassaji, where Tractor suffered a 1-0 home defeat in Tabriz.

(Source: SDNA)

## Former Colombia, Costa Rica boss Pinto to coach UAE

Jorge Luis Pinto, best known for leading Costa Rica to the FIFA World Cup quarter-finals, is set to take over the United Arab Emirates national team.

The 67-year-old Colombian will sign a two-year deal which would lead up to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Finals, local media reported after the United Arab Emirates Football Association said the deal had been given a green light.



Pinto has won league titles with clubs in Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica and Venezuela, but won global recognition by guiding Costa Rica to the FIFA World Cup quarter-finals in 2014.

Pinto was hailed after a run which ended with a penalty shoot-out defeat by the Netherlands, after winning a tough group, beating Uruguay and Italy and drawing with England.

UAE are currently fourth in Group G of the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023. Only the group winners are guaranteed progress to the final round of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

Pinto replaces Serbia's Ivan Jovanovic, who had been on a short-term deal when the coronavirus lockdown saw the UAE release him.

(Source: AFP)



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There are two kinds of people who are greedy and never satisfied: seekers of learning and lovers of the world.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Art series on Imam Reza (AS) introduced

→1 A selection of eight plays on the life story of Imam Reza (AS) and his teachings was another collection that was unveiled. The plays have been written by Nader Borhani-Marand, Ayyub Aqakhani, Hossein Fadaei-Hosseini and several other renowned playwrights.

A book bearing a selection of photos from several festivals on Imam Reza (AS) was also introduced at the ceremony.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini said that the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad represents a great example of Islamic Iranian art.

He also said that the Imam Reza Foundation, which was established by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, has been a major center for art and cultural activities over the past two decades.

The foundation has held over 30 festivals over the past two years, he said, and added, "The festival tries to introduce many young talents and support many valuable artworks."

Director of the foundation Mahmudreza Barazesh for his part said that the foundation aims to introduce the sacred words in the form of artworks to society.

He added that the album bears a portion of the musical culture of the country, which will remain as part of the intangible heritage for the next generations.

## Daniel Graham's "Presocratic Philosophy" published in Persian

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of "Presocratic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Alexander Mourelatos" written by American author Daniel W. Graham has been published in Persian by Amirkabir Publications. The book has been translated into Persian by Behnaz Dehkordi.

This book presents some of the most recent trends and developments in Presocratic scholarship. A wide range of topics are covered, from the metaphysical to the moral to the methodological, as well as a broad range of authors: from recognized figures such as Heraclitus and Parmenides to Sophistic thinkers whose place has traditionally been marginalized, such as Gorgias and the author of the Dissoi Logoi.



Front cover of the Persian version of American author Daniel W. Graham's book "Presocratic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Alexander Mourelatos".

Drawing together contributions from distinguished authorities and internationally acclaimed scholars of ancient philosophy, this book offers new challenges to traditional interpretations in some areas of Presocratic philosophy and finds new support for traditional interpretations in other areas.

Graham has been teaching Socrates for 35 years, first at Grinnell College, then at Rice University, and for most of his career at Brigham Young University, where he has been department chair and is currently the Abraham Owen Smoot Professor of Philosophy.

He has been a visiting fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge University, and a visiting professor at Yale University.

The recipient of two NEH fellowships, he has published eight books (in ten volumes) with leading academic presses, one of which was named one of the best books of 2010 in the Times Literary Supplement, and authored over one hundred scholarly articles in journals of philosophy, classics, history of ideas, and history of science, as well as in scholarly books.

He does research in eight languages, has lectured around the world, and is the president of the International Association for Presocratic Studies.

# Anthology of poems on Commander Qassem Soleimani published

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — An anthology of poems on Commander Qassem Soleimani named "The Phoenix of Quds" has recently been published.

Published by the Khate Moqaddam Publishing House in Tehran, the collection features poems by Alireza Qazveh, Mohammadreza Tahmasbi, Ali Davudi, Mehdi Jandar and dozens of other Iranian poets.

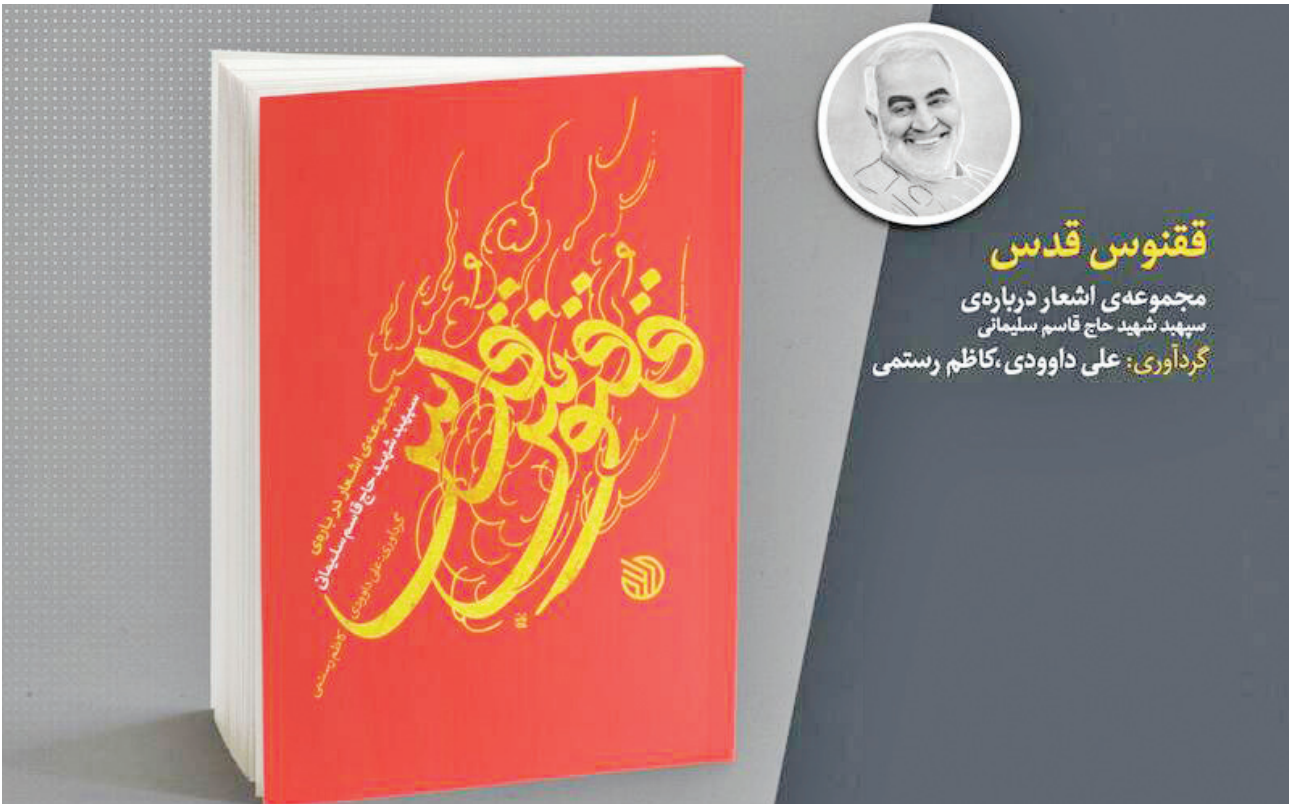
"Just hours after the martyrdom of Hajji Qassem, we came together to do something for him," poet Kazem Rostami, one of the poets whose poems have been published in the book, has said in a statement.

"At that time, everybody wanted to do something to express his/her abhorrence and regret for the terrorist act and the loss of Hajji Qassem," he added.

"All we had were the language of poetry and rhythmic words. We began our work and 'The Phoenix of Quds' was the outcome of the union," he stated.

He said that none of the poets can say that he/she could have been able to describe perfectly the depth of the tragedy, and added, "However, we did our best and selected the best compositions to be published in the book."

Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, was assassinated during a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.



A poster for the anthology of poems on Commander Qassem Soleimani "The Phoenix of Quds".

## Book City to discuss Shams's views on Ghazali brothers



This combination photo shows portraits of the Persian mystic brothers Majd ad-Din Abu al-Fotuh Ahmad Ghazali and Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ghazali.

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — The Book City Institute in Tehran on Wednesday is scheduled to hold a webinar that will discuss the Persian mystic Shams-i Tabrizi's views on the Persian mystic brothers Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ghazali and Majd ad-Din Abu al-Fotuh Ahmad Ghazali.

The webinar will begin at 4 pm on [instagram.com/bookcityculturalcenter/](https://www.instagram.com/bookcityculturalcenter/) and Hassan Bokhari, the director of the Iranian Society of Cultural Works and Luminaries, is among the scholars selected to deliver speeches.

Shams was the mentor of the Persian mystic and poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi, who met him during his journeys to Syria.

He was deeply influenced by Shams during their second visit in Konya. For months, the two men constantly interacted, and, as a result, Rumi neglected his disciples and family, who could not tolerate the close relationship.

One night in 1247, Shams disappeared forever. This experience turned Rumi

into a poet. The Divan of Shams is a true translation of his experiences into poetry.

Shams, whose tomb is located in the northwestern Iranian town of Khoy, commented in his writings about philosophers, poets and mystics who lived a long time ago, among which were the Ghazali brothers Muhammad and Ahmad.

Muhammad (1058-1111) was a Muslim theologian, mystic, law specialist, rationalist and spiritualist of Persian descent.

One of his greatest works is "Ihya Ulum al-Din" ("The Revival of the Religious Sciences"), which is about Sufism and Islam.

Ahmad is best known in the history of Sufism for his ideas on love, expressed primarily in the celebrated work entitled "Sawaneh".

Shams described Muhammad's scientific methodology as "unparalleled" and his writings "as perfect as the sun's light." He also called Ahmad the king of the luminaries of his time.

## Plays by Persian writer Gholamhossein Saedi published in Turkish



Cover of the Turkish translation of Iranian writer Gholamhossein Saedi plays "Dictation and Angle" by Aidin Sardarinia.

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — Renowned Iranian writer Gholamhossein Saedi's plays "Dictation" and "Angle" have been published in Turkish in Istanbul.

The plays have been released by Totem Publications in one book titled "Dikte ve Kose" ("Dictation and Angle"). The Iranian Turkish literature scholar Aidin Sardarinia is the translator of the plays. The project is part of Sardarinia's MA thesis.

The two plays bear political themes. "Dictation" is full of political sentences dictated to a student, while the student resists writing the sentences and his resistance is portrayed in the play.

"Angle" is full of characters with a variety of different thoughts and opinions who are delivering their lectures at an intersection. The garbage scattered in the street and the people gathered in the area and the dialogues between them bear interesting social topics.

The publisher has previously published

Saedi's short story collection "Mourners of Bayal" translated by Hashem Khosroshahi.

The book is about the dark adventure of a single village. The stories are considered the first examples of magical realism in Iranian literature and storytelling.

Saedi (1936-1985) was a psychiatrist, editor and a dramatist who wrote under the pseudonym, "Gowhar Morad".

Saedi was born into a middle-class family and was raised in the city of Tabriz where he began his literary career as he pursued his education, culminating in a medical degree from Tabriz University in 1961.

He composed some poems, only a few of which were published. He also collaborated in the translation of some works.

"The World's Best Dad", "An Eye for an Eye", "The Flower Hamlet" and "Housewarming" are some of Saedi's works.

A collection of plays by Saedi entitled "Bright House" has already been translated into Arabic.

## Animated movie "Pink House" criticizes social media addiction

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — "Pink House", an animated movie produced at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), criticizes social media overuse.

Directed by Nazila Rajaieh, the 2D animation is about a girl who loses herself under the shadow of social media addiction.

"Today, I see how much the use of the Internet has become epidemic," Rajaieh said in a press release

published by the DEFC on Tuesday.

"I've met people who have become mentally ill due to problematic social media use, and consequently, they've felt a need to receive treatment in psychiatric hospitals. As a result, the idea of making the animation came into my mind," she added.

Rajaieh has spent a year making the short movie she has co-written with her sister, Farnaz.



Art aficionados visit the 10th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art at the Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran in 2011.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The 11th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art will resume after a nine-year hiatus at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center in October.

The organizers, including Visual Arts Office director Hadi Mozaffari and the director of the event, Hirbod Hemmat-Azad, attended a press conference on Monday to brief the media about the biennial.

Mozaffari said that the country needs more hope and excitement during the pandemic and home quarantine, and added, "That is why

we support artworks created by the artists. Anyway, we know that we will be having a hard year ahead, but it will be accompanied by a schedule full of events."

Manijeh Armin, a member of the policymaking council of the biennial, said, "The central theme of the biennial is self-analysis. For artists, the term 'self' possesses multidimensional concepts, and invites them to return to their inner self."

"What is important in this biennial is that each artist makes use of the contemporary experience to create an artwork from the

inner self," she said.

Another member of the council, Farzad Faraji, pointed to the last edition of the biennial held in 2011 and said, "We know that we will be confronting new outlooks this year after a nine-year hiatus, and we have tried to prepare the necessary grounds for all different outlooks, and we know that self-analysis will help artists show their real selves and real talents."

All the ceramists are asked to attend the event, which will open on October 30 at the center and will be running for one month.



A scene from the DEFC animated short "Pink House" by Nazila Rajaieh.