



IRGC to unveil new missile system in September 2



COVID-19 lowers chance of Iran's success at World Cup qualification 11



"Love Resurrection" director Mosafer-Astaneh appointed president of Fajr theater festival 12



Congratulations on birthday of Imam Reza (AS)



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U.S. cannot cause any harm to the will of Syria's friends

Rouhani, Putin, Erdogan voice commitment to Syria's sovereignty

[See page 2](#)

Zarif slams Washington for undermining global peace, security

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has condemned Washington's "malign" unilateralism, saying the United States has undermined global peace and security. Zarif made the remarks in an address to a virtual UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday surrounding Washington's push to have the Council extend an arms embargo against Iran that will expire in October under a historic nuclear accord endorsed by the council's Resolution 2231.

The following is the transcript of Zarif's speech:
I wish to begin my statement with words Prime Minister Mosaddegh used in this Council 69 years ago.
"The Security Council was established so that large and small nations alike might sit around the same table and cooperate for the maintenance of peace in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. [→2](#)

Over \$833m of facilities to be paid to transport sector in coming months

TEHRAN — Iranian government will pay 35 trillion rials (about \$833.3 million) of facilities with an interest rate of 12 percent to the transport sector in the coming months, deputy transport and urban development minister announced. Shahram Adamnejad said that the transport industry has been recently in need of support in all sectors, so it was decided to allocate some facilities to this

industry, IRNA reported.
"In air sector, we have had flight limitation since the last days of the previous [Iranian calendar] year (ended on March 19), railway transport was reduced, there was almost no marine transportation, and there have been many limitations in road transport because of the coronavirus pandemic, therefore; the mentioned facilities were allocated to the transport sector", the deputy minister noted. [→4](#)

Iran setting rules to resume foreign tourist arrivals amid pandemic

TEHRAN — The ministries of tourism and health in close collaboration with several other government bodies are defining a series of rules for admitting foreign travelers to the country amid a standstill in the global tourism industry caused mainly by the coronavirus. To support the recovery of the tourism sector, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts on Wednesday

hosted a conference to scrutinize a comprehensive health protocol enabling strong policies to ensure the highest possible safety of travelers and host communities in the era of COVID-19 global pandemic. Chaired by Vali Teymouri, the deputy tourism minister, the conference brought together deputy ministers from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Intelligence, [→8](#)



ARTICLE

ZHANG Yuan
Expert

Fighting COVID-19: Cooperation and the new world order

In 2020, all countries are facing multiple pressures to curb turbulent epidemic pressures, gain economic recovery, ease financial crises, inspire people, and rebuild public confidence. The COVID-19 crisis rapidly promotes the process of international institution reform and accelerates the formation of a new world order. Although the global spread of COVID-19 has not completely stopped, the urgent desire to facilitate the resumption of work and reopen the economy is the same all around the world.

Since informed the WHO and other countries the unknown Pneumonia as soon as was identified and released the genome sequence of the novel coronavirus, China has effectively curbed the New Coronavirus Pneumonia epidemic through difficult, brave but confident epidemic prevention and control campaign. China is open, transparent, and responsible for releasing information and sharing China's experience in virus control and the treatment of infected cases for promoting international cooperation. The epidemic is currently entering the gratifying stage of epidemic prevention and control, and full-scale resumption of work, resumption of business activities, and resumption of normal daily life have orderly returned in China.

Both China and West Asian countries are active participants in the fight against the epidemic, and they are promoters and practitioners of international anti-pandemic cooperation. The COVID-19 epidemic is forcing world reforms and accelerating the formation of new world order. In what form should the future world order benefit the people and benefit the governance of all countries, it is currently a major international political issue that people are generally concerned about. Between the initiative and the passive, the views that contributed to the new world order are constantly colliding, and the political efforts to build the world order are constantly being restructured repeatedly. [→7](#)

Turkey to hold trial for Khashoggi murder suspects in absentia

Turkey will try the 20 suspects in the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi — including two former aides to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — in absentia on Friday, his fiancée told AFP.

Khashoggi, 59, a Riyadh critic commentator who wrote for The Washington Post, was killed after he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2, 2018, to obtain paperwork for his wedding to Turkish fiancée Hatice Cengiz.

Turkish prosecutors accuse Saudi Arabia's deputy intelligence chief Ahmed al-Assiri and the royal court's media czar Saud al-Qahtani of leading the operation and giving orders to a Saudi hit team.

Eighteen other suspects — including intelligence operative Maher Mutreb who frequently traveled with the crown prince on foreign tours — were also charged with

"deliberately and monstrously killing, causing torment."

They face life in jail if convicted. The trial in absentia will open at Istanbul's main court Caglayan on Friday at 10:00 am local time (0700 GMT), Khashoggi's fiancée Cengiz told AFP late Tuesday.

"I will also be there," she said. Agnes Callamard, the U.N. special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, is also expected to attend the trial.

There was no immediate official confirmation of the trial in absentia.

Turkish prosecutors had already issued arrest warrants for the Saudi suspects, who are not in Turkey.

Khashoggi's sons announced in May that they "forgive" the killers of their father.

However, his fiancée said, "no one" had the right to pardon his murderers. [→10](#)

At least 10 arrested in Seattle protest zone after mayor's order to vacate area

Law enforcement officers in the city of Seattle began entering the protest zone on Wednesday morning to enforce an order from the mayor's office that the area be vacated, the Seattle Police Department said via Twitter.

"Police on scene continue to issue dispersal orders. Officers have made approximately 10 arrests at this time. Anyone seeking to exit the area can still do so to the south, toward Pike Street," police said via Twitter before later adding: "Three additional arrests at 12/Pike."

The police also announced that an armed group was approaching law enforcement officers. They also warned that anyone who remains in the area is subject to arrest.

Due to ongoing violence and public safety issues in the East Precinct/Cal Anderson Park area. Mayor Jenny Durkan has issued

an executive order to vacate the area. Seattle police will be in the area this morning enforcing the Mayor's order.

Commenting on the current situation, the Seattle police chief stated that the Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP) has become "lawless and brutal," citing four shootings and other violent acts in the area.

The self-proclaimed autonomous zone was established at the start of June by demonstrators protesting against the police brutality in the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis police custody on 25 May.

On 8 June, Seattle police withdrew from the Capitol Hill district, while leaving the Department's East Precinct building behind, as an act of "trust and de-escalation" after days of clashes with demonstrators. [→10](#)

U.S. used SWIFT as a weapon against Iran

SWIFT became a weapon of the U.S., allowing the nation to force other countries and regions out of the global financial market by limiting or blocking them from the clearing regimes. Iran, Venezuela and Zimbabwe are among the countries that were impacted. With the dollar as a major global reserve currency, the U.S. financial watchdogs can monitor the non-cash circulation of every cent

As bilateral tensions continue to ele-

vate, the U.S. has been taking up various measures to contain China. Russian media recently reported that the U.S. may even roll out extreme financial blockades to hamstring China and Russia, which could mean excluding the two countries from the U.S. dollar denominated international payment network or SWIFT, a drastic move that will bring huge destruction to the international financial system.

From restricting exports of U.S. techno-

logical products to China, slapping punitive tariffs on Chinese imports, forcing U.S. firms to leave China market, to cracking down on the world's top telecom equipment maker Huawei, the U.S. has been tightening its economic and trade restrictions on China using all means at its disposal.

And, it is possible that U.S. could resort to its last remaining weapon, by restricting or even blocking China from the dollar clearing and settlement system. [→10](#)



© File photo

In memory of Iran Air Flight 655 victims

On July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes of the United States Navy fired missiles at an Iran Air Airbus A300B2 which was flying over the Strait of Hormuz from the port city of Bandar Abbas to Dubai, carrying 274 passengers and 16 crew members.

Following the attack, the plane disintegrated and crashed into the Persian Gulf waters, killing all 290 on board, among them 66 children.

Annually, a special ceremony is held by throwing flowers into the Persian Gulf waters in memory of those killed in the unforgivable and heinous act.

Iran, Italy to hold online seminar on mutual trade

TEHRAN — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) is going to hold an online seminar on July 22 in collaboration with the Italian embassy in Tehran, as well as the European House — Ambrosetti Corporation for discussing mutual trade amid the coronavirus pandemic.

As reported by the TCCIMA portal, senior officials from both sides are going to be attending the online event which is going to be mainly focused on non-oil sectors, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and the EU support for trade between the two sides.

The two-hour seminar, which will be followed by online trade talks (B2B), is going to highlight the current and future prospects for bilateral trade between Iran and Italy, the importance of small businesses for economic development, the U.S. sanctions and changes in business cooperation patterns.

Although the U.S. renewed sanctions against Iranian economy are preventing Iran's European trade partners to do business with the Islamic Republic, Italian traders and businessmen seem strongly determined to preserve their trade ties with Iran.

They did not leave the Iranian market even in the previous round of the sanctions.

During a number of meetings between Iranian and Italian officials and businesspeople after the imposition of the new round of sanctions, the Italian side has repeatedly expressed its eagerness and determination to preserve and even expand economic and trade cooperation with Iran.

UNSC did not back U.S. bid to extend Iran arms embargo: envoy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said the UN Security Council members did not endorse the U.S. government's proposed resolution to extend an arms embargo on Iran.

In a post on his Twitter account after a Tuesday meeting of the UN Security Council, Takht-Ravanchi wrote, "Today, UNSC members reiterated, again, their support for JCPOA and UNSCR 2231."

"Their speeches proved that they do NOT support the US' move to extend arms embargo on Iran as it violates 2231," the envoy wrote.

"US should withdraw its ill-fated draft immediately; before it is rebuffed yet again," he added.

Washington has stepped up calls for the extension of a UN arms embargo on Iran, which will otherwise expire in October under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran's interest lies in implementing JCPOA regardless of U.S. provocations, says ex-IAEA official

By Hamid Bayati

TEHRAN — The former head of Verification and Security Policy at the IAEA has said that it is in Iran's strategic interest to continue implementing the JCPOA and the NPT regardless of U.S. provocations.

"In my view, it is in Iran's strategic interest to continue implementation of the JCPOA and the NPT regardless of U.S. provocations and to avoid taking irreversible steps that would be problematic for Iran and the region," Tariq Rauf told the Tehran Times on Tuesday.

Rauf explained that the U.S. has been exercising a policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran and Washington's efforts to extend the arms embargo in October is part of this policy to bring continuous pressure on Iran.

"Both China and Russia are opposed to extending the arms embargo that they consider as being a temporary measure as envisaged in July 2015 and to expire in October this year," he said. "Given the various U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran including on oil sales, the oil price collapse, the impact of COVID-19 on Iran's economy; Iran does not have the financial capacity to purchase new weapons from Russia or China," he opined.

Hence, he continued, the extension of the arms embargo is a political measure and its effect on Iran's arms acquisitions from abroad in real terms is negligible.

Rauf added that at present there is not sufficient support in the Security Council to extend the arms embargo, and the veto can be exercised by China and Russia. "The E3 are in a difficult position vis a vis the U.S. and Iran and they have very little leverage."

IRGC to unveil new missile system in September: general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Brigadier General Bahman Kargar has announced plans to unveil a new missile system by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in the coming months.

Kargar said the missile system will be unveiled during the Sacred Defense Week, which commemorates the anniversary of Iraq's imposed war against Iran, IRNA reported.

"Due to the spread of the coronavirus, some of the programs of this ceremony will be held through video conferencing," he explained.

September 21 marks the beginning of Sacred Defense Week in Iran. Each year, the ceremony is marked by military parades. This year, Iran commemorates the 40th anniversary of the war.

U.S. call for arms embargo of Iran finds no takers: NY Times

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on Tuesday for an arms embargo on Iran to be extended indefinitely, but his appeal fell flat at the United Nations Security Council, where Russia and China rejected it outright and close allies of the United States were ambivalent, the New York Times reported on Tuesday.

The embargo, which is set to expire on Oct. 18, stems from the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear program. President Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2018.

The American bid is all but certain to fail in the Security Council; it might not even collect enough support to be put to a vote, diplomats said. The Trump administration has threatened that if the embargo is not extended, the United States will try to invoke a "snapback" provision of the 2015 deal to reimpose former UN sanctions on Iran — a move other nations said would be unwise and legally invalid.

Representatives of Britain, France and Germany voiced unease at both the expiration of the embargo and the American approach, particularly the snapback, which they flatly opposed.

The European powers said they hoped to find some way to limit Iranian access to arms through a compromise negotiated in the framework of the 2015 agreement, not an action imposed by the Security Council.

The arms embargo applies to Iran importing or exporting most kinds of weapons, including aircraft and tanks. Some limits on missile and nuclear technology will remain in place for a few more years.

The resistance Pompeo's call — coming not only from only rivals like China and Russia, but also from key allies — illustrates the growing isolation and declining influence of the United States, analysts said.

Pompeo claimed Iran is already violating the arms embargo. "Iran is already violating the arms embargo, even before its expiration date," Pompeo said in the Security Council meeting, which was held by video link.

Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, dismissed claims of Iranian aggression, calling them "self-serving allegations and forged documents". Zarif added that it was the United States that "has directly undermined global peace and security."

Zarif began and ended his remarks by quoting Mohammad Mossadegh, the Iranian prime minister overthrown in a CIA-orchestrated coup in 1953 — a nod to a long history of American intervention.

Zarif slams Washington for undermining global peace, security

‘Timetable for removal of arms restrictions on Iran inseparable part of JCPOA embodied in Resolution 2231’

1 → The Council cannot perform its great task ... unless big powers respect the principles which it was created to embody."

Two years later, he was overthrown in a CIA coup.

If this Council falters again, it will be a generational setback for the cause of multilateralism and the rule of law.

We have all in past years seen how malign U.S. unilateralism has intently assaulted international cooperation and international institutions. Through its parallel endeavor to supplant international law with U.S. domestic laws, this has directly undermined global peace and security.

Regrettably, complacency has enabled and encouraged this recklessness.

Indeed, complacency is a root cause for why we are gathered here today.

Iran and other members of the international community have, since the 8th of May 2018, been witnessing the U.S. Government—a co-sponsor of Security Council Resolution 2231—persistently flouting the Resolution, while also trying to force other States to join it in violating the very text it put forward itself. More dangerously, and for the first time in UN history, a permanent member of the Security Council is punishing law-abiding States and private citizens for not violating a Council resolution, which emphasized, and I quote, "promoting and facilitating the development of normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran."

And yet, not a single Council session has been convened to reprove the U.S. Government, or to at least investigate its repeated violations. Instead, some European members of the Council are contemplating further undermining the Resolution and the Council while further reneging on their own JCPOA commitments.

To cover this up, the U.S. has—with some of its enablers—pressured the Secretariat to adopt a perverse reading of Resolution 2231—rejected by 3 JCPOA Participants, which is the polar opposite of the clear affirmation by the Security Council "that conclusion of the JCPOA marks a fundamental shift in its consideration of this issue..."

The U.S.—along with its accomplices in war crimes in Yemen—have gone further in their now-infamous campaign of intimidation against international institutions. Most recently, they coerced the Secretariat to rely on self-serving allegations and forged documents to produce an utterly unprofessional report outside the scope of its mandate under UNSCR 2231. Not surprisingly, the Secretariat simultaneously absolved the Saudi coalition of its well-documented child-killing in Yemen.

“For the first time in UN history, a permanent member of the Security Council is punishing law-abiding states and private citizens for not violating a Council resolution,” Zarif tells Security Council meeting.



By supplanting international law with domestic law, U.S. has undermined international peace, Zarif warns

ments to produce an utterly unprofessional report outside the scope of its mandate under UNSCR 2231. Not surprisingly, the Secretariat simultaneously absolved the Saudi coalition of its well-documented child-killing in Yemen.

This status quo is neither acceptable nor sustainable.

The international community in general—and the UN Security Council in particular—are facing an important decision: Do we maintain respect for the rule of law, or do we return to the law of the jungle by surrendering to the whims of an outlaw bully?

In spite of our strong and legitimate objections to the historic mistreatment of Iran by the Security Council—particularly throughout 8 years of aggression by Saddam Hussein, as well as in the course of the unnecessary nuclear crisis—Iran showed its good faith by engaging in negotiations to reach a diplomatic solution as called for by all Security Council Resolutions on the nuclear issue. After thirteen years of complex negotiations, in 2015 Iran and the five permanent members of this Council plus Germany signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which is annexed to—and inseparable from—Resolution 2231. Iran clearly stated its positions immediately after the adoption of the Resolution and again more recently. Yet, it fulfilled all its commitments in good faith, verified by numerous IAEA reports.

In spite of this great achievement of multilateral diplomacy, the president of the United States in May 2018 announced his country's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA, and the unlawful re-imposition of all U.S. sanctions, in material breach of Resolution 2231. Prior to that, the U.S. had persistently committed multiple cases of "significant non-performance" of its JCPOA obligations. It is important to note that even the previous U.S. Administration made every effort to minimize the positive impact of its sanction lifting obligations under the JCPOA and Resolution 2231.

This has all been documented in my numerous letters to the JCPOA Joint Commission

Coordinator and the UN Secretary-General, all of which, unfortunately, have been ignored by the European JCPOA Participants.

Following the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, the UN Secretary-General, the remaining JCPOA participants and many other members of the international community called on Iran to address its concerns through the mechanisms established in the JCPOA and to allow the remaining JCPOA participants to redress the unlawful withdrawal.

The European JCPOA Participants requested Iran to wait for only a few weeks to allow them to compensate for the losses Iran incurred as a result of re-imposed U.S. sanctions.

While expressly reserving Iran's immediate right under Paragraph 26, I initiated the Dispute Resolution Mechanism under Paragraph 36 of the JCPOA on 10 May 2018. However, acting in good faith, we refrained from applying the 'remedy' in order to enable the remaining JCPOA participants to make good on their promises. For a full year, we continued the full implementation of the JCPOA. I trust you are all aware of the 15 consecutive IAEA reports which verified Iran's full compliance with its JCPOA commitments.

■ Zarif: E3 has shown over-compliance with U.S. 'maximum pressure'

Unfortunately, the E3 response to our "strategic patience" was not a long-overdue assertion of European "strategic autonomy". Rather it was over-compliance with the U.S. "maximum pressure" targeting all Iranians.

On 6 November 2018, I made a final call on the Coordinator and the remaining JCPOA Participants under paragraph 36 of the JCPOA. "The United States has now re-imposed with full effect all sanctions specified in the JCPOA and its Annex II, and as elaborated above, no remedial measure has been implemented by the remaining JCPOA Participants. Most have effectively joined the restrictive measures against Iran... Either EU/E3+2—who have repeatedly underlined the security

and strategic ramifications of JCPOA—should ensure Iran's legitimate benefits by fulfilling their commitments made in their statements of 6 July and 24 September 2018 in real and practical terms without further delay, or Iran will have no option but to restore a semblance of balance—as 'the remedy that the participants contemplated if the dispute mechanism did not resolve the issue'... In view of the above, I formally call for the convening of another ministerial meeting of the Joint Commission."

No meeting was convened and none of the European JCPOA Participants even bothered to write a rebuttal for another 6 months. Having repeatedly exhausted the Dispute Resolution Mechanism to absolutely no avail, my Government was left with no recourse but to exercise its rights under Paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA to apply remedial action and cease performing its commitments in part on 8 May 2019.

In spite of all this, our remedial measures have until now had no impact on the IAEA's monitoring and verification of our peaceful nuclear program, thereby making any proliferation risks irrelevant. Indeed, Iran's peaceful nuclear program remains subject to the "most robust" inspection regime in history. From 2016 through 2019, over 92 percent of the Agency's total comparable global inspections were carried out in Iran.

Even the recent controversial report by the Director-General of the IAEA on 5 June 2020 states that "The Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities and locations outside facilities where nuclear material is customarily used (LOFs) declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement".

Having said that, the Agency must resist external pressures to manipulate its agenda. The litany of forged documents at its doorstep have a stated objective of forever killing the JCPOA, thereby ending the Agency's robust monitoring of current activities in Iran. Resuscitating 17-year-old allegations with no proliferation risk—which were investigated and permanently closed by the IAEA Board of Governors in 2015—will certainly not serve the Agency.

Matters which are extraneous to the JCPOA by mutual agreement—such as Iran's defensive capabilities and regional policies—are being maliciously raised by the U.S. Administration and parroted by a handful of its allies and clients.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

“Do we maintain respect for the rule of law, or do we return to the law of the jungle by surrendering to the whims of an outlaw bully?” Zarif asks the international community.

U.S. cannot cause any harm to the will of Syria's friends, Iranian president says

Rouhani, Putin, Erdogan voice commitment to Syria's sovereignty

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey on Wednesday held a tripartite virtual summit voicing strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

Rouhani called for an immediate pullout of U.S. forces from Syria. The Iranian president also said the pressure by the United States "cannot cause any crack in the will of the countries who are friends of Syria."

Iran, Russia and Turkey are member of the Astana process which have been holding several rounds of talks at different levels to bring peace and security to Syria.

At the end, Presidents Hassan Rouhani, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a joint statement saying they reviewed the developments following their last meeting in Ankara on September 16, 2019 and reiterated their determination to enhance the trilateral coordination in light of their agreements.

The following is an excerpt of the joint statement:

The Presidents:

Rejected all attempts to create new realities on the ground under the pretext of combating terrorism, including illegitimate self-rule initiatives, and expressed their determination to stand against separatist agendas aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria as well as threatening the national security of neighboring countries.

Expressed their opposition to the illegal seizure and transfer of oil revenues that should belong to the Syrian Arab Republic.

Reaffirmed the determination to continue cooperation in order to ultimately eliminate DAESH/ISIL, Al-Nusra Front and all other



individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or DAESH/ISIL, and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UN Security Council, while ensuring the protection of the civilians and civilian infrastructure in accordance with the international humanitarian law.

Reviewed in detail the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area and underscored the necessity to maintain calm on the ground by fully implementing all agreements on Idlib.

Expressed grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Syria and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rejected all unilateral sanctions which are in contravention of international law, international humanitarian law and the UN Charter, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Emphasized, in this regard, the critical need to ensure rapid, safe

and unhindered humanitarian access throughout Syria in order to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, and, called upon the international community, particularly the UN and its humanitarian agencies, to increase their assistance to all Syrians without discrimination, politicization and preconditions.

Reaffirmed their conviction that there could be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and that it could only be resolved through the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254. Emphasized in this regard the important role of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, created as a result of the decisive contribution of the Astana guarantors and the implementation of the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi. Welcomed the

agreement to hold the third meeting of the Constitutional Committee in August 2020 and reaffirmed the readiness to support its work through continuous interaction with its members and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen, as facilitator, in order to ensure its sustainable and effective work.

Highlighted the need to facilitate safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their original places of residence in Syria, ensuring their right to return and right to be supported.

Reaffirmed the necessity to respect universally recognized international legal decisions, including those provisions of the relevant UN resolutions rejecting the occupation of Syrian Golan, first and foremost UN Security Council Resolution 497 and thus condemned the decision of the US Administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, which constitutes a grave violation of international law and threatens regional peace and security. They consider Israeli military attacks in Syria as destabilizing and violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of this country and intensifying the tension in the region.

In addition to the Syrian issue, they confirmed their intention to strengthen trilateral coordination in different fields in order to promote joint economic cooperation.

Agreed to assign their representatives with the task of holding the next International Meeting on Syria in the Astana format as soon as possible.

Agreed to hold the next Tripartite Summit in the Islamic Republic of Iran upon the invitation of President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Hassan Rouhani, as soon as possible.

World rebukes U.S. over Iran: Foreign Policy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — With d e s k Trump's re-election prospects up in the air, a heated UN meeting on Iran shows world power's fading fear of confronting the U.S., according to Foreign Policy article published on Tuesday.

The following is an excerpt of the article: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Tuesday sought to reassert America's waning influence on the world stage, challenging the UN Security Council to extend a UN arms embargo that is due to expire in October. Instead, America's top diplomat received a scolding from friends and foes alike in the 15-nation council, which roundly criticized Washington for withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal two years ago without a clear plan to limit Tehran's nuclear activities.

On a day when the European Union pointedly excluded the United States from a "safe list" of countries permitted to travel to the 27-member bloc, the council's chilly reception of Pompeo added to a portrait of an increasingly isolated United States and underscored how little deference other countries pay the Trump administration as it faces a grim reelection contest.

The pointedly critical tone of the debate saw Germany accusing Washington of violating international law by withdrawing from the nuclear pact, while Berlin aligned itself with China's claim that the United States has no right to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran. Russia's UN ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, compared U.S. sanctions on Iran to the killing of George Floyd, saying they were akin to "putting a knee to one's neck."

The dispute centered on the fate of the nearly moribund 2015 Iran nuclear deal. European parties to the deal, like Iran, want to keep it alive; the Trump administration wants to kill it before the election, lest any future Democratic administration bring it back to life.

The latest battleground is one provision of that deal, the planned expiry in October of a UN arms embargo on Iran—one of the sweeteners of the nuclear deal. U.S. allies, including the Security Council's five European states, share Washington's concern about Iran's arms trade, though Europe's own arms embargo is set to continue until 2023 regardless. But they worry that extending the UN arms embargo, in clear violation of the pact signed in 2015, would drive Tehran to kick out nuclear inspectors and set the stage for an even quicker development of its nuclear program.

"The [Iran nuclear pact], which is the result of compromise, can of course be seen as an instrument that can be improved," France's UN ambassador, Nicolas de Rivière, told the council.

At the opening of Tuesday's virtual



At the opening of Tuesday's virtual session, Rosemary DiCarlo, a former U.S. State Department official who serves as UN undersecretary-general for political affairs, praised the nuclear pact as a "significant achievement of multilateral diplomacy and dialogue" and expressed "regret" over the U.S. decision to withdraw, noting that Iran was in compliance with the pact before Trump's abrupt decision to pull the plug.

session, Rosemary DiCarlo, a former U.S. State Department official who serves as UN undersecretary-general for political affairs, praised the nuclear pact as a "significant achievement of multilateral diplomacy and dialogue" and expressed "regret" over the U.S. decision to withdraw, noting that Iran was in compliance with the pact before Trump's abrupt decision to pull the plug.

But she also expressed regret that since July 2019 Iran has violated key provisions of the nuclear pact, surpassing limits on the size of its stockpiles of heavy water and low-enriched uranium and engaging in prohibited nuclear research and development activities.

DiCarlo also flagged Iran's role in missile and drone attacks against Saudi Arabia, as well as arms shipments to proxies in Yemen that appear to run afoul of the provisions of the key UN Security Council resolution that endorsed the nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad

Javad Zarif dismissed claims that Iranian-made weapons were being transferred to Yemen and elsewhere in violation of UN sanctions.

"The international community in general and the UN Security Council in particular are facing an important decision," Zarif told the council. "Do we maintain respect of the rule of law, or do we return to the law of the jungle by surrendering to the whims of an outlaw bully?"

The Trump administration this month circulated a draft resolution to extend the arms embargo on Iran, but veto-wielding China and Russia signaled they would not support the U.S. plan. European powers also reacted coolly to the resolution and are expected to introduce their own stopgap proposal to extend parts of the arms embargo for up to six months. It is unclear if the United States would support their plan.

The Trump administration has charged Tehran with playing a destabilizing role in the Middle East through its support

of proxy groups in the region. Pompeo said that if the United Nations did not extend the arms embargo, it would pave the way for Iran to procure advanced military hardware from Russia and China that would undercut regional stability and potentially threaten capitals in Europe and even South Asia—reiterating misleading claims he made last week about the operational range of high-end Russian and Chinese fighters.

"If you fail to act, Iran will be free to purchase Russian-made fighter jets that can strike up to a 3,000-kilometer radius, putting cities like Riyadh, New Delhi, Rome, and Warsaw in Iranian crosshairs," Pompeo told the council during Tuesday's virtual meeting.

"Don't just take it from the United States; listen to countries in the region. From Israel to the [Persian] Gulf, countries in the Middle East—who are most exposed to Iran's predations—are speaking with one voice: Extend the arms embargo," he said.

JCPOA still best way to ensure peace: UN official

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The United Nations regrets d e s k that the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is in doubt, but notwithstanding current challenges that landmark deal is still the best way to ensure that Iran's nuclear program proceeds along a peaceful path, the UN's top political official said on Tuesday.

Rosemary DiCarlo, undersecretary general for political and peacebuilding affairs, told the Security Council that the 2015 agreement – which the Council endorsed through Resolution 2231 – remains crucial to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and to regional and international security, according to the UN website.

"It is therefore regrettable that the future of this agreement is in doubt", she said, pointing to U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018, the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions and Washington's decision



not to extend waivers for oil trading with Iran.

She also regretted that Iran, in response to the U.S. withdrawal, has – under International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) monitoring – surpassed limits stipulated in the Plan of Action on uranium enrichment, its stockpiles of heavy water and low-enriched uranium, and nuclear research and development activities.

She appealed to Iran to resume full implementation of the JCPOA, and to address concerns raised by other countries regarding its actions inconsistent with restrictions set out in Annex B of Resolution 2231.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump officially announced the unilateral and illegal withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and re-imposed all sanctions lifted in connection with the deal and ordered new ones.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Tehran began to gradually reduce its commitments under the pact to both retaliate for Washington's departure and Europeans' failure to honor their commitments.

Rouhani: No toleration for 'political blow' to nuclear deal

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President d e s k Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the United States has so far done economic blows to the 2015 nuclear deal but if Washington does a "political blow" to the multilateral agreement Iran will not "tolerate" it and will give a decisive response.

"So far, the U.S. blow to the JCPOA has been economic but if it seeks to do a political blow, Iran will not tolerate it and will act decisively," Rouhani told a cabinet meeting.

The threats by Rouhani came as the Trump administration is working hard to extend arms embargo against Iran in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 which endorsed the nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action).

Under the resolution, arms embargo against Iran ends in October.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Tuesday sought to reassert America's waning

influence on the world stage, challenging the UN Security Council to extend arms embargo that is due to expire in October.

Instead, America's top diplomat received a scolding from friends and foes alike in the 15-nation council, which roundly criticized Washington for withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal two years ago without a clear plan to limit Tehran's nuclear activities, according to Foreign Policy.

Rouhani said the UN turned again into a "scene of political defeat" for the United States in its illegal moves against Iran.

The president said the U.S. announces that it has succeeded to put economic pressure on Iran "but politically, legally, morally it has faced repeated failures."

"Last night (Tuesday afternoon based on Iran's local time) 14 members of the Security Council praised the JCPOA and supported it. These 14 members backed the JCPOA and Resolution 2231," Rouhani remarked.

The president also said the U.S. draft resolution against Iran for extending arms embargo also faced a backlash by the Security Council and the world public opinion.

At the opening of Tuesday's virtual session, Rosemary DiCarlo, a former U.S. State Department official who serves as UN undersecretary-general for political affairs, praised the nuclear pact as a "significant achievement of multilateral diplomacy and dialogue" and expressed "regret" over the U.S. decision to withdraw, noting that Iran was in compliance with the pact before Trump's abrupt decision to pull the plug.

But she also expressed regret that since July 2019 Iran has violated key provisions of the nuclear pact, surpassing limits on the size of its stockpiles of heavy water and low-enriched uranium and engaging in prohibited nuclear research and development activities.

Rouhani said if the remaining parties to the nuclear deal honor their commitments

to the JCPOA, Iran will immediately reverse its decision in removing caps on its nuclear activities.

"Any hour that 4+1 group become ready to honor all their commitments, the Islamic Republic of Iran also will return to its JCPOA commitments," the president asserted.

4+1 refers to France, Britain, China and Russia as permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

The U.S. officially exited the nuclear deal in May 2018 and started imposing the harshest sanctions in line with its declared "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

Iran waited for a year that the European side compensate for the sanctions. Seeing no action on the part of Europe, in May 2019 Iran stated that its "strategic patience" is over started to gradually remove limits on its nuclear program.

Rouhani said, Iran has always been committed to its political, moral and legal commitments."

Envoy terms Saudi Arabia as 'central bank of terrorism'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to d e s k Belgium Gholamhossein Dehghani has called Saudi Arabia as the "central bank of terrorism" and the main sponsor of extremism in the region and beyond, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

"The Saudi diplomat whose government is the central bank of terrorism and the main sponsor of extremism in the region and beyond has made the comments to escape the accusations Saudi Arabia faces for its crimes in Syria, so it has started accusing Iran," Dehghani said during a conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region".



The remarks came after Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir and U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook 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 on Monday, 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," al-Jubeir added.

Dehghani said everyone is aware of the fact that over the last decade, Iran has been at the forefront of fighting the Daesh and Takfiri terrorism in Syria and the region.

Iran hails any kind of measures taken to alleviate Syrians' sufferings, he said, adding that Iran supports the UN chief's request for establishing truce, especially ending the conflict in Syria.

Referring to Iran's efforts to help Syrians over the last decade, the ambassador said Iran has always tried – especially in the coronavirus era – to address Syrian people's humanitarian needs and reduce their plight.

He reiterated that the international community is accountable in this regard.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Dehghani slammed the U.S. illegal and unilateral sanctions against Syria and its decision to extend them, saying that these sanctions have caused more difficulties for them in fighting Covid-19 with the ordinary people suffering the most.

These sanctions will result in creating more sufferings for Syrian people, Dehghani added.

Russia likens U.S. pressure on Iran to 'putting a knee to one's neck'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russia's Ambassador to the d e s k UN Vassily Nebenzia on Tuesday slammed the U.S. at the UN Security Council for pursuing a "maximum suffocation" foreign policy against Iran, saying Washington's goal was to "achieve regime change or create a situation where Iran literally wouldn't be able to breathe".

"This is like putting a knee to one's neck," said Nebenzia, in a veiled reference to the death of black man George Floyd in Minneapolis after a white police officer knelt on his neck. The incident has since sparked protests across the U.S. and in other countries.



Nebenzia's statement came a week after the U.S. introduced a draft resolution at the UN Security Council that would extend the arms embargo on Iran before it expires in October.

At the virtual Security Council meeting on Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pressured member states to support the extension.

Meanwhile, China has also voiced opposition to the anti-Iran move, urging Washington "to stop its illegal unilateral sanctions" on Iran.

In a statement to the UN Security Council, Zhang Jun, China's permanent UN representative, said the root cause of the current crisis is the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and the reimposition of unilateral sanctions against Iran, Xinhua reported.

"This has again undermined the joint efforts to preserve the JCPOA [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action]," Zhang said, referring to U.S. efforts to extend the arms embargo.

He stressed that the agreement was endorsed by the UN Security Council and "is legally binding".

"We urge the U.S. to stop its illegal unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction, and return to the right track of observing the JCPOA and Resolution 2231 [of the UNSC]," he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has long argued against lifting the arms embargo on Iran, which is set to end in mid-October under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal.

Over \$833m of facilities to be paid to transport sector in coming months

1 → Banking procedure is currently underway and after that, paying the mentioned loans will be started, Adamnejad announced.

The Iranian government is allocating support packages to different economic sectors for compensating the damages caused by the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

One of the packages has been allocated to the country's exhibition industry.



Managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) said last month that after several rounds of discussion and follow-ups by the acting industry, mining, and trade minister the exhibition industry and its subsidiaries were considered among the job categories severely affected by the pandemic.

Bahman Hosseinzadeh said that businessmen and companies active in this area can receive support facilities in the near future.

SEO to hold 12th virtual intl. forum on Islamic capital market in Sep.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) is to hold the 12th Virtual International Forum on Islamic Capital Market (ICM) on September 14-15, the SEO's Public Relations Department announced.

The SEO has organized this event for 11 years in a row with the support of Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI).

Given the outbreak of coronavirus and for the safety measures of all respected participants, the SEO has decided to hold this forum online for the first time.

The theme of this edition of the forum is "A Panacea for Emerging Issues".

The main topics of this ICM are:

- * Fintech and Islamic Capital Market
- * ESG & SRI in Islamic Capital Market
- * Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- * Innovation and Regulatory Issues
- * Efficient Sovereign Sukuk Issuance Models

The ICM has already gained its momentum over a decade of its history, therefore, a number of internationally well-known associations and universities have sponsored this event, as follows:

- International Research Center for Islamic Economics and Finance (IRCIEF) of Malaysia
- Istanbul Zaim University (IZM) of Turkey
- Association of Islamic Finance Professionals (AIFP) of Kazakhstan
- Islamic Finance News (IFN), as "media partner"
- Imam Sadiq University of Iran
- Iranian Association of Islamic Finance

TEDPIX gains 66,036 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — After hitting the record high of 1.5 million points on Tuesday, TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 66,036 points to 1.612 million points during the Wednesday trades, IRNA reported.

As reported, 9.18 billion securities worth 137.39 trillion rials (about \$3.27 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index climbed 54,638 points and the second market's index went up 107,348 points.

TEDPIX has risen 190,000 points during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on June 26).

The index stood at 1.419 million points, showing a 15-percent weekly increase.

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

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

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

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

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 have 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.

Afghanistan transits 76-TEU cargo to India through Chabahar

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Afghanistan **d e s k** has sent 39 containers with a total capacity of 76 twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) to India through Iran's southeastern Chabahar port, IRIB reported, quoting Behrouz Aghaei, the director general of Sistan-Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Department.

According to Aghaei, 30 refrigerated containers and nine conventional ones (a total of 76 TEUs) were shipped from Chabahar port on Tuesday heading for the Indian ports of Mandra and Nhava Sheva.

In 2016, Iran, India, and Afghanistan decided to jointly establish a trade route for land-locked Central Asian countries.

India sent its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan through Iran's Chabahar Port back in 2017.

Later on, Afghanistan officially started exporting goods to India through Chabahar port in a ceremony held in early February 2019.

The event was attended by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, along with Iranian Am-



bassador to Kabul Mohammadreza Bahrani and Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan Vinay Kumar.

In November 2019, Afghanistan Ambassador to Tehran Abdul Ghafoor Liwal said his country was planning to increase

commodity transit through Iranian Chabahar Port.

"Chabahar is an economic and a transit bridge for Afghanistan and we are going to expand our economic relations through increasing exports and imports through Chabahar," he said.

Earlier this week, Head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce Hossein Salimi announced that Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has approved Afghanistan's Ghaznar Bank to open a branch in southeastern Chabahar Port for facilitating trade activities in the port.

As Iran's only oceanic port, Chabahar consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti, each of which has five berths.

Iran has awarded the development project of this port to India, and the South Asian country committed \$500 million to build two new berths in this port.

India has doubled the allocated funding for the development of the port in its national budget bill for 2020.

Quarterly exports from East Azarbaijan Province hits \$710m



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value **d e s k** of exports from East Azarbaijan Province in the northwest of Iran reached \$710 million in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), according to an official with the province's customs department.

Leili Orangi said that the province has exported commodities to 79 countries during the three-month period, Fars news agency reported.

Turkey, Iraq, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan Republic, China, Afghanistan, Italy, Bulgaria, and Pakistan were the main export destinations of the province during the three-month period, the official said.

Mentioning the imports to the province during the first quarter, Orangi said Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Germany, China, Georgia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Austria and Spain were the top ten exporters to East Azarbaijan.

As announced by the head of Islamic

Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), despite the U.S. sanctions Iran managed to export commodities to 128 countries in the past Iranian calendar year.

According to Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, Asian countries account for over 70 percent of Iran's foreign trade and Europe is the Islamic Republic's second-biggest trade partner.

Iran exported non-oil commodities to 40 European countries, 21 Asian countries, 28 African countries, and 12 American countries, while importing from 41 European countries, 31 Asian countries, 12 American countries, and 11 countries in Africa.

The IRICA has put the country's total foreign trade in the past year at \$85.107 billion, noting that of the mentioned total figure the share of Iran's exports was \$41.37 billion while the imports stood at \$43.737 billion.

The total weight of the country's foreign trade was reported to be 169.302 million tons.

Imam Khomeini Airport Free Zone Organization to be established



Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami (R) and Secretary of Free Zones High Council Morteza Bank exchange documents of MOU on establishment of Imam Khomeini Airport Free Zone Organization on Tuesday.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's **d e s k** Ministry of Transport and Urban Development and the Secretariat of Iranian Free Zones High Council inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the establishment of Imam Khomeini Airport Free Zone Organization.

The MOU was signed by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami and Secretary of Free Zones High Council Morteza Bank on Tuesday, the website of Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) published.

This memorandum is aimed at realizing and implementing the policies and priorities of the government in order to achieve economic prosperity in the Imam Khomeini Airport City and create maximum coordination between the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development and the Secretariat of Iranian Free Zones High Council.

Becoming the hub of freight transport and the second hub of passenger transport in

the region are among the goals of the MOU.

Development of the existing free trade zones and establishment of new free zones is currently one of the major economic approaches of Iran and in a bid to attract more investments to these zones Iranian government offers various incentives to the investors.

Tax exemption is one of those incentives which has been offered for more than a decade to the investors in the free zones.

Such incentives have encouraged investment making in these zones.

One of the newly-established zones is Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC).

Last December, the managing director of IKAC announced that over 50 Iranian companies have put in requests to invest in the free zone.

Located next to the capital, this free trade zone can become a powerful driving force for the country's economic development, according to Mehdi Karbalaei, the managing director of IKAC.

Iran's Q1 liquidity up 7.3%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's liquidity reached **d e s k** 26.514 quadrillion rials (about \$631.28 billion) in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), to register a 7.3-percent growth from the figure for the end of the past year, IRNA reported.

According to the data released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Department of Economic Research and Policy, the country's monetary base stood at 3.834 quadrillion rials (about \$91.28 billion) at the end of the first quarter of the current calendar year (June 20), 8.8 percent more than the figure for the end of the previous year.

The country's liquidity also grew by 0.2 percent compared to the figure for the same period last year



(5.3 percent).

Based on the CBI report, the liquidity growth was expected considering the outbreak of the coronavirus and the injection of liquidity by the government for supporting households and businesses.

As reported, considering the CBI's monetary policy frameworks and in line with the bank's inflationary targets, the liquidity growth is expected to return to its normal trend in the coming months.

In early February, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand had put the country's liquidity growth at 28 percent in the first 10 months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019-January 20, 2020).

Container shipping line launched between Iran, Kuwait

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — A refrigerated **d e s k** container shipping line between Iran and Kuwait started its activity with forwarding the first shipment of agricultural food products via Genaveh Port in Iran's southwestern Bushehr Province, Mehr news agency reported.

Head of Genaveh Ports and Maritime Department Davood Bahadori said, "The first consignment of this shipping line, with the weight of 160 tons including various types of food products, fresh fruits and vegetables, was loaded by Landing Craft Arabakhtar and exported to the destination country within the framework of eight refrigerated containers."

This ship has the capacity of transporting eight refrigerated containers, with a total capacity of 497 tons, which is active in the field of export of agricultural and livestock products, he highlighted.



Considering the policies adopted in the field of activity of all affiliated ports and use of

facilities and infrastructures created in them, necessary planning was made for launching

a containerized line between Genaveh Port and Kuwait, Bahadori added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the export of goods via this port and added, "export of goods via this port can lead to the lower costs for exporters due to the short distance of 140 miles to Kuwait."

Bahadori referred to the important strategic and geographical location of this coastal city and added, "proper access roads to the city, current location of the port, proper and appropriate equipment, support of governor and city officials and also customs cooperation are of the salient advantages of the city that has encouraged traders and merchants to do trade and business activity in this port."

Once coronavirus restrictions are removed in Kuwait, Genaveh will be turned into one of the export ports in Bushehr Province and country, he stressed.

Oil Ministry slashes petchem feedstock price by 10%

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Iranian Oil Ministry has reduced the base price of ethane, which is a major feedstock for petrochemical complexes, by 10 percent, IRNA reported.

The decision comes as the global oil prices have fallen significantly due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and consequently the value of other products like petrochemicals has also declined in global markets.

Ethane price was previously set based on the prices of its comprising elements including polyethylene and naphtha, according to which the base price was \$220 and the ceiling was \$400 per ton in Iran.

Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, however, ordered the reduction of prices by 10 percent to help the petrochemical complexes get through the current hard times by increasing their interest margins.

Back in September 2019, Managing Director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi said



the feedstock for petrochemical complexes is going to reach equal to 1.7 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil by 2025.

The official said that last year (ended on March 19), the petrochemical industry received 35 million tons of feedstock equivalent to 800,000 barrels of crude oil per day from the oil industry.

According to Mohammadi, by realization of the second leap in the country's petrochemical industry, 62 million tons per year of feedstock (equal to 1.4 million bpd of crude oil) would be supplied to the sector by 2021.

"This figure will reach 1.7 million bpd by 2025 when the third leap in the industry is realized," he said.

Petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the petrochemical export is the second largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Annual overhaul of thermal power plants completed

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – The annual overhaul program of Iran's thermal power plants has been completed and the power plants are ready to supply electricity during the summer peak consumption period, said Esmail Namazi, the director general of Research and Construction Office of Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH).

According to Namazi, the TPPH's annual overhaul program starts every year in early September and will continue until late May in the next year, IRNA reported.

"All units must be ready for operation by the beginning of Khordad [third Iranian calendar month that begins on May 21] to supply the national electricity grid during the peak consumption period, so the overhaul program for about 93,000 megawatts (MW) of power plants has been completed," the official said.

Given that the total nominal capacity of the country's thermal power plants is about 83,000 MW, the figure for overhaul program indicates that some power plant units have been repaired more than once



during the said period.

Mentioning the problems that the outbreak of coronavirus created in the way of the program, the official said: "In

the last days of the previous year [ended on March 19], the outbreak of coronavirus created some problems for the overhaul of thermal power plants, especially for units

whose repair schedule was delayed."

The overhaul program required repair teams to be dispatched to different regions across the country, but at that time due to the transport restrictions we faced difficulties for obtaining license to move personnel to other provinces, Namazi explained.

Summer months constitute Iran's peak demand periods, so most of the power plant overhaul programs are scheduled to take place during autumn, winter and spring seasons.

Over two-thirds of Iran's thermal power plants are owned and operated by the country's private sector and private owners are currently generating nearly 67 percent of Iran's thermal power.

Currently, a total of 478 thermal power plants are operating throughout Iran which includes both gas power plants and combined cycle plants.

Iran's total power generation capacity currently stands at about 85,000 MW, more than 90 percent of which is supplied by thermal power plants.

Saudi oil cuts take seven supertankers a day off the market



Saudi Arabia seems to have made good on its promise to cut oil production by a record amount in June, Bloomberg reported.

Observed Saudi crude exports for this month fell to 5.7 million barrels a day through June 29, the lowest since Bloomberg began tracking the flows at the start

of 2017. That compares with 6.2 million a day in May. It's a reduction equivalent to more than seven full supertankers over the course of the month.

As the coronavirus ravages the global economy and saps energy demand, the Saudis are leading a push among major oil producers to cut supplies. State company Saudi Aramco agreed to cap output at 8.5 million barrels a day from May-July as part of an OPEC+ agreement to boost prices. The kingdom then went a step further, pledging to pump 1 million barrels daily less than that in June.

While changes in exports and overall production aren't perfectly correlated, those curbs are showing up in the kingdom's shipments to the world's biggest economies. Flows to China, usually the largest purchaser, are down by about 45 percent on a monthly basis in June to 1.1 million barrels a day.

A recent flood of Saudi oil to the U.S. has dropped sharply. Flows in June have shriveled to 224,000 barrels a day, compared with almost 1.3 million in April, a three-year high. Only three supertankers and a smaller vessel were observed carrying Saudi crude to the U.S. in June, though more may emerge as some cargoes update their final destinations.

Tankers hauling a combined 17 million barrels of

oil from the kingdom this month haven't yet indicated their ultimate port of call. It takes a ship roughly six weeks to sail from Saudi Arabia to the U.S. and about three weeks to China. Any vessel leaving for America now would arrive in the first half of August.

Wild swings

The volume of oil from Saudi Arabia has swung wildly in the past few months, in part due to the lingering effects of the kingdom's price war with Russia earlier in the year. Aramco slashed its official selling prices for oil in April and May, before raising them for this month, after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners agreed to limit output.

One example of the whipsaw in Saudi flows is India, the closest major market. Riyadh's crude exports to India soared to more than a million barrels a day in April, when prices were at historic lows. Cargoes then fell by almost 50 percent in May. Shipments are set to increase this month, though not by as much as expected in an analysis of Saudi oil flows in mid-June.

Exports to South Korea are also poised to climb to 1.1 million barrels a day, the highest in at least 3-1/2 years. Shipments to Japan are set to decline to about 610,000 barrels a day, the third consecutive monthly drop.

Japan's May crude imports fall to 53-year low as COVID-19 cuts oil demand

Japan's crude imports dropped 25 percent year on year to 2.28 million bpd in May, the lowest for the month in 53 years as refiners had slashed their crude throughput in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, which sank domestic oil products demand.

The May crude imports, which were the lowest for the month since 1967, also dropped 17.3 percent from April as refiners had reduced their crude throughput by 25.6 percent year on year and 19.9 percent month on month to 2.07 million bpd, Platts reported, citing preliminary data released June 30 by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Japanese refiners reduced crude imports year on year from almost all of its key suppliers in West Asia, Russia, Americas, including zero imports from the US in May. "With tanks having been filled up, we are getting left with an option to cut refinery runs as it is increasingly getting difficult to purchase crude," Takashi Tsukioka, then president of the Petroleum Association of Japan said April 17.

"While [Japanese] refiners are lifting their term contractual volumes by May, there is a chance that the refiners might not be able to lift the term contractual volumes after June," Tsukioka said.

The Japanese crude imports from its top



five crude suppliers -- Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Russia -- all fell year on year in May, when the imports from the suppliers accounted for 94.1 percent of the total supply in the month.

Japan's Saudi crude imports slid 5.5 percent year on year to 931,733 bpd in May, while its crude imports from the UAE fell 28.9 percent from a year ago to 729,935

bpd. Crude imports from Kuwait slipped 3.2 percent on the year to 241,270 bpd in May, crude from Qatar plummeted 39.3 percent year on year to 153,143 bpd, and Russian crude imports dropped 34.7 percent from a year ago to 91,837 bpd.

Decades low

Japan's oil products demand, which had been increasingly hit by the coronavirus

pandemic in recent months, fell further in May when the country's leisure activities were severely curtailed during the Golden Week national holidays over late April-early May. Japan was under state of emergency restrictions until May 25.

Among oil products demand, jet fuel and gasoline were hardest hit in May as the public refrained from traveling for leisure and business during the state of emergency restrictions.

Jet fuel sales plunged 75.4 percent year on year to 20,434 bpd in May, when gasoline sales dropped 22.4 percent from a year ago to 628,693 bpd, according to METI data.

The May jet fuel sales were the lowest for the month since 1971, and gasoline sales were the lowest in May since 1985, according to METI data.

Japan remained a net importer of gasoline for the second consecutive month in May, boosting imports from neighboring countries because of refinery run cuts in response to plummeting domestic demand due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Japan imported an average of 53,093 bpd of gasoline in May, more than double the 24,856 bpd a year earlier, and remained a net importer for the second consecutive month after exports stood at 30,139 bpd, according to METI data.

Overhauling Abouzar oil field saves IOOC €500,000

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Engineers and technicians in Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) have managed to save the company €500,000 by successful overhauling of Abouzar oil field's A-11-19 well, Shana reported.



According to ICCO, the overhaul operations included cleaning the sands inside the well by drilling the reservoir to dump the sand liming through an open hole.

Abouzar is located 76 kilometers southwest of the Kharg Island. Its output, now at roughly 200,000 barrels per day, is transferred via a pipeline to the island for export after being processed.

So far, 107 oil wells have been drilled in Abouzar field, of which 90 are in operation and the rest are idle due to age and technical problems.

Currently, more than 100 people are working on the platforms of the field and the country's largest oil production in the Persian Gulf is from this field.

The field's reservoir is estimated to contain about four billion barrels of in place crude oil, 20 percent of which can be extracted.

Big Oil's nightmare is coming true

By Nick Cunningham

Royal Dutch Shell said that it could cut the value of its oil and gas assets by as much as \$22 billion, as it takes a dim view of the state of the oil market. The move adds more evidence to the notion that a huge slice of oil reserves will wind up as stranded assets. Shell cut its Brent oil prices forecast from \$60 per barrel to \$35 for this year, and lowered its 2021 and 2022 forecasts to \$40 and \$50 per barrel, respectively, down from \$60 previously. The lower outlook reflects the expected damage to the oil market due to the coronavirus and the negative impacts on the global economy, Shell said.

As a result, the value of Shell's assets will be cut by between \$15 and \$22 billion. Broken down by segment, Shell's integrated gas unit will take an \$8 to \$9 billion hit, mostly related to Australian LNG assets, including its gargantuan Prelude project, a floating LNG vessel, which came in over budget and is now underutilized in a weak LNG market. Shell's upstream unit will be impaired by \$4 to \$6 billion, a cut related to Brazil and U.S. shale. Finally, its refining portfolio will be reduced by \$3 to \$7 billion.

Shell's gearing, a ratio of equity to debt, will rise by 3 percent due to the impairment.



The massive write down is the company's largest in more than a decade, and it comes a week after BP also announced a major \$17.5 billion impairment. Shell's write down is a "wake up call" for the industry, according to Credit Suisse.

In April, Shell cut its dividend by two-thirds, upending a long-standing position by the majors to protect shareholder payouts at all costs. It was the first cut to its dividend in about 75 years.

The devaluation of large segments of the oil majors' business operations is not only a reflection of a temporary downturn in the oil market. The majors are essentially acknowledging that a substantial portion of their oil and gas reserves are going to be left in the ground. Calls to avoid "stranded assets" have floated around for years, sometimes by environmental groups, but increasingly from investor groups and shareholders. Now, the majors themselves are recognizing the reality of stranded assets.

"It's about fundamental change hitting the entire oil and gas sector," Luke Parker, vice president, corporate analysis at consulting firm Wood Mackenzie, told the Wall Street Journal. "Within this write down, Shell is giving us a message about stranded assets, just like BP did a few weeks ago."

Shell's CEO Ben van Beurden recently said that the company would announce a major restructuring of the company by the end of the year intended to reorient its operations to prepare for the coming energy transition.

BP has already professed a commitment to transitioning to a low-carbon company. The British oil major just announced that it was selling off its entire petrochemical unit, although that move likely has more to do with an effort to raise cash. Indeed, there are questions about how deep the plans for a transformation go, as Drilled News has reported.

While BP and Shell struggle with how to deal with these stranded assets, Exxon Mobil is so far ignoring the issue and has yet to write down any shale assets.

Some accounting experts say Exxon's stubborn refusal to cut the value of its assets amounts to fraud, according to the Wall Street Journal. A former accountant at the company told the WSJ that Exxon's refusal to impair part of XTO Energy is part of an "arrogant, aberrant, long-standing...posture."

The \$31 billion purchase of XTO more than a decade ago is widely considered a colossal failure. Exxon bought the shale gas driller at the top of the market. The accountant said that the value of XTO should probably be cut by at least \$17 billion, and that Exxon should probably take another \$20 billion write down on its other assets. He has sent repeated complaints to the Justice Department over Exxon's accounting practices. Exxon has denied the allegations.

More broadly, the oil industry could see much larger write-downs as the energy transition appears to be accelerating. Deloitte said that the industry could write-down another \$300 billion in assets, after impairing \$450 billion over the past 15 years.

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Global real estate market plunges amid COVID-19 pandemic

Higher unemployment rates decrease sales

By Salman Parviz

Owning a home remains the single most important investment in most people's lives. The novel coronavirus pandemic will impact all players in the real estate chain from tenant, landlord, lender, service provider, broker, insurer, investor, etc. A moratorium in the construction industry has been placed in many parts of the world with new protocols requiring tool sanitization, hand-washing stations, staggered work schedules and mandatory face covering.

This article will cover the real estate markets that Iranian diaspora tend to invest abroad, including Turkey, UAE, Canada, USA, etc.

As unemployment has surged globally due to the pandemic, it has reduced consumer appetite for investment in real estate. As a result the market, which saw a global surge over the past two decades, has receded for the first time after a long period.

■ Canada:

In a BNN Bloomberg April 22 report that COVID-19 stings Toronto housing as sales sink 69 percent in early April. Owning a home remains the largest single investment for most Canadians.

Toronto is Canada's heart of business and economic activity and it is the country's largest housing market which went into a deep freeze as COVID-19 decimated homebuyer demand.

New listings slumped 63.7 percent in April from the same time last year. Prices were relatively steady in April as average house priced slipped 1.5 percent to CAD\$819,665. Meanwhile, prices fell most sharply in the detached property market, falling an average 4.6 percent to \$990,543.

In May, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) warned home prices could decline as much as 18 percent if the Canadian economy doesn't recover this year from the impact of economic downturn due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysts believe that the housing market is unlikely to recover while unemployment in Canada is hovering at 13 percent currently. CMHC says housing prices won't have full recovery (pre-pandemic levels) until end of 2022.

The national housing agency announced recently it would be tightening the rules for insured mortgages – those with less than a 20 percent down payment – in an effort to protect new buyers and taxpayers.

Meanwhile, Ontario provincial government has declared that it will halt commercial evictions until pandemic crisis is over.

CMHC said average housing prices could fall anywhere from nine to 18 percent in its forecast, and as much as 25 percent in oil-producing regions in Canada, including three provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 2015 Albert produced 79.2 percent of Canada's oil, Saskatchewan 13.5 percent, and province of Newfoundland and Labrador 4.4 percent.

■ U.S.A.:

U.S. jobless claims in 9-week total to 38.6 million amid layoffs fueled by coronavirus pandemic, amid 14.7 percent jobless rate that is the highest since the Great Depression.

Home sales have plunged to 9-year low, mortgage delinquencies set to soar as unemployment is on the rise. Home sales plunged 17.8 percent in April. With the lock-down occurring from mid-March, and given the shakiness from the stock market in February that hurt pending contracts, so now we are seeing an almost 20 percent decline in existing homes sales, reports bitcoin.com.

As COVID-19 will reshape U.S. entire real estate industry, how people reengineer their careers and lifestyles to adapt to the new normal, many will reconsider how, when and where they define home, writes Forbes.

One pattern could be that the Americans will live in one



As new housing supply creates further downward pressure on prices in Dubai, sellers are not as desperate to offload as they were in 2009.

home for longer impacting real estate markets by increasing the demand for features that facilitate multi-generational living.

Financing might change. In 2018, the average homebuyer spent 13.3 years in one home.

Other trends that have emerged include:

--Homebuyers may depend on their real estate agent more;

--Buyers might block towards the suburbs, with areas like New York City were among the hardest hit by COVID-19, before the pandemic, many people preferred high-rise condos. Due to shared plumbing and ventilation systems of high-rise buildings may transmit viruses at faster and higher rates.

--A second house to get away from major cities to safer and less populated areas.

■ UK:

Commercial rent is going unpaid and prospect of more job losses means fewer people are thinking about buying homes.

In April, UK house prices fell for third month in a row as COVID-19 plunged real estate market by 0.5 percent. The average price of a home in UK dropped by 0.2 percent over the month and stands at 237,808 pounds, reports The Guardian.

As the UK went into lockdown in March, buyers and sellers were told to delay their moves and suspend new viewings and many deals were put on hold until the market was unlocked on 12 May.

■ Turkey:

As Iranian nationals continue buying houses in Turkey despite the pandemic as Turkey ranks 14th among the world's most advantageous real estate markets for foreigners. Foreign residential sales in Turkey significantly increased following the reciprocity law launched in 2013, after which foreign sales surpassed \$6 billion, breathing new life into the sector. The sales of residential properties to foreigners reached 45,483 units last year.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute data, the number of houses sold to foreigners jumped 11 percent and reached 11,068 in the January-March period, despite a short-term stagnation in the housing market due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Selman Ozgun, chairman of Antalya-based Helmann Yapi, was quoted that a foreigner can buy real estate for about 400,000 euros (\$440,000) in countries such as Portugal and

Spain, while this figure is around 120,000 euros in Istanbul.

Following Iranians and Iraqis and Russians were the third nation purchasing homes in Turkey, followed by Afghans, Palestinians and Yemenis, report Daily Sabah.

In order to encourage investment in real estate Turkey reduced the limits for foreigners to acquire Turkish citizenship. Foreigners owning a minimum \$250,000, instead of the previous limit of \$1 million, can now acquire Turkish citizenship.

■ Persian Gulf Arab region:

By the end of 2019, the UAE's real estate market outlook was looking very positive, and then COVID-19 arrived. The immediate focus was five-year event Expo2020 which was postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic and many companies, not just in the property market, are looking at their own business models and seeking to course correct.

Banks have lower interest rates and developers have repackaged their property offers to include longer-term payment plans.

More than 3.5 million foreign workers may lose their jobs due to the pandemic and oil crisis, reports Asia Times, as expat flight to follow migrant exodus from the Persian Gulf Arab states.

In Dubai, the Middle East's business hub, 70 percent of companies could go bankrupt within six months, reports Asia Times, as unemployment across the region hovering around 13 percent. Local citizens, overwhelmingly employed by the public sector, will be largely spared.

Saudi Arabia's construction giant BinLadin Group has cut thousands of jobs. Flag carriers Emirates and Qatar Airways will reportedly let go up to 40,000 employees.

Foreign employees, from construction workers to skilled professionals, lack safety net provided to domestic employees. Population loss due to unemployment could exceed 3.5 million people, Scot Livermore, the Chief Economist at Oxford Economics Middle East, estimated in May.

In Dubai, where less than one inhabitant in 10 is an Emirati citizen, the population could shrink by a minimum ten percent, a former director of Dubai's Department of Finance tweeted.

The International Monetary Fund forecasts non-oil activity in the region to contract by 4.3 percent this year, reversing the 2.3 percent growth in had previously projected.

Americans striving to return Lebanon to chaotic situation: West Asia commissioner for human rights

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – The commissioner for West Asia at the International Human Rights Commission is of the opinion that the U.S. is using all means to push Lebanon toward chaos.

"Americans are striving with all means to return the chaotic conditions in Lebanon again," Haissam Bou-Said tells the Tehran Times when asked about U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea who last week accused "Hezbollah of destabilizing the country and jeopardizing Lebanon's economic recovery."

Shea's statement was considered by many Lebanese as offensive, pitting rival groups against each other.

Analysts likened Shea's words to pouring oil on the fire of sectarian strife in the country.

Bou-Said is among those who say the ambassadors must avoid interfering in the host country's internal affairs.

"Interfering in the host country's internal affairs, inciting any group to another group, calling for participation in demonstrations, gatherings, and meetings for a coup against the host authority or creating any riot is unacceptable," Bou-Said points out.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Many Lebanese accuse U.S. ambassador of obviously interfering in Lebanese internal affairs and violating international conventions. What is your comment on it?

A: These are not just accusations, but a reality that has occurred since she arrived in Lebanon and assuming her duties as U.S. ambassador to Lebanon. What Ambassador Dorothy Shea has done in the media through her statements is baseless, false, and offensive to the Lebanese people; few of the Lebanese people agree with what she said, for political and sectarian reasons. It is true that we, as an international human rights committee,

cannot agree on the necessity of acquiring a weapon of any size, however by the principle of deterring the Israeli regime that occupied Palestine and still violates every day the rights of Muslims and Christians together, it becomes necessary to find ways to defend.

■ What are the reasons for making such provocative statements in such a situation? Should we expect new developments?

A: The reasons to make such statements at this time and intentions of the American administration is obvious; They are striving with all means to return the chaotic conditions again, especially if we take many factors into account, including worldwide protests against racism in the United States. After the American police killed George Floyd, and their efforts to reinvigorating the extremist "takfiri" groups in West Asia and North Africa, as well as the Caesar Law passed in 2016 which was activated a few weeks ago.

Yes, in response to the second part of your question, we have to be somewhat cautious because the rapid developments in the Arab streets, especially in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, and probably soon in Tehran according to the information we receive, indicate malicious intent on the pretext of human rights. Still, the center for planning these developments is in another place designed to apply the "American and Israeli" agenda in the region.

■ How do you evaluate Lebanese officials' reaction to the controversial statements of the American ambassador?

A: We issued a statement supporting the Lebanese prime minister's reform plan presented to the Lebanese Parliament. This plan is faltering as a result of conflicts between political groups in Parliament, and this reflects on the government's performance in terms of making decisive decisions. However, in the case of Ambassador Dorothy Shea,



the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Nassif Hitti summoned the American ambassador on Monday afternoon to inform her of the government's dissatisfaction with her statements and interventions in Lebanese internal affairs under Article 41 of the Vienna Convention of 1961. But it seems that Ambassador Shea, who is not from President Trump's school, in her military experience, has yet to understand how dangerous it is to break the law.

In the second part of your question, we have asked for the international article's application that explicitly indicates the warning or expulsion of any diplomat doesn't respect international conventions.

■ What do international conventions say about missions of ambassadors?

A: Ambassadors in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 have many advantages that cannot be mentioned here, and the most important advantages are diplomatic immunity, which allows them not to appear in the judiciary and not be held accountable in any government department in the host

country, but there are also regulations and standards for ambassadors prohibit engaging in any business or any work that might result in financial benefits for them.

Moreover, any kind of interfering in the host country's internal affairs, inciting any group to another group, calling for participation in demonstrations, gatherings, and meetings for a coup against the host authority or creating any riot is unacceptable.

■ What is the basic reason for the current economic crisis in Lebanon?

A: The economic crisis in Lebanon today is the result of the accumulations of wrong policies and financial engineering carried out by previous governments since 1992, when former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri came to power, bringing the economic sector under the control of his government. Lebanese central bank governor Riad Salameh occupied his position with absolute powers during Prime Minister Hariri's term. Therefore the current economic crisis in the country is the result of those policies that did not succeed for many different reasons, including the failure of the peace negotiations in 1993, which was counted on by Hariri's government, as well as financial waste in Lebanese administrations as a result of conflicts between political groups. There are also productive and non-productive projects that have also been the basis for being shared between political parties, each benefited according to the size of its parliamentary bloc and its representation in the government.

Today, Diab's government tries to manage and contain the consequences of those policies; some political leaders in Lebanon are still active and sabotaging the efforts to support the Lebanese government, which decided to turn towards the East to find financial aid and rise again.

Fighting COVID-19: Cooperation and the new world order

(The Post-hegemonic Order in the Post-epidemic Era Should be an International Order without Absolute Hegemony)

To protect the health of the people, improve public health security, and make the future a better world, the future, and the new world order should first attach importance to and encourage all forms of international cooperation, taking the opportunity of contemporary health cooperation. Secondly, the ideal future world order should be multi-polar and abandon political stereotypes. Thirdly, it is more meaningful for the new world to stabilize and rehabilitate the economy and ensure people's livelihood than exacerbate political-ideological disputes. Finally, it is also extremely important that the new world order is dedicated to satisfying the common wellbeing of prosperity and stability, rather than competing for or preempting any world supremacy.

Firstly, the new world order requires comprehensive international cooperation. The ongoing battle against the COVID-19 epidemic shows a truth: the virus has no borders, and public health security threats that may affect people's daily life also have no borders. Mankind is a closely connected community of shared future. To overcome the epidemic, sincere and professional international cooperation is necessary.

During this epidemic period, China took the initiative to build a platform for multilateral cooperation and communication. Taking June as an example, "Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19" and "High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation" are two of the most notable via video conferences that mainly focus on developing countries.

Likely when China was hit hardest by COVID-19, friendly countries expressed their sympathy and assistance to China. When countries facing the epidemic pressure, China has actively given the human, material, financial and technical support, and assistance to the countries by Chinese experience in fighting the epidemic.

The new international order's composition is inseparable from big responsible powers and healthy international institutions working together to provide global public goods jointly.

Secondly, the new world order should be an unbiased multi-polarization system. The ideal future world order should be multi-polarized and should abandon political stereotypes. Promoting the international community's joint cooperation to fight against COVID-19 calls for support to the international mechanism represented by WHO to play a role in the global anti-epidemic cooperation and maintain the status and role of the United Nations.

A fair international order is also related to whether backward countries that do not have sufficient healthcare infrastructure and vaccine research capability can also have fair access to treatment and prevention of COVID-19.

Effective protection, enforced quarantine and isolation, monitor examination and testing, clinical treatment, epidemiological tracking, information sharing, vaccine research, and many fields are inseparable from the cooperation of developed and developing countries.

When irresponsible and irrational populist politicians are busy playing the blame game, successful communication and mutual help among professional medical experts and professional technical teams from various countries are still modeling the impression that multilateral cooperation is still feasible and effective.

West Asia's epidemic news is not hesitant to report on China's achievements in resuming work and resuming business, nor are they afraid to criticize the US government for its ineffective treatment. It is an expression of unbiasedness and upholding international justice.

The direction of future international order should abandon the Cold War mentality and respect the true national capabilities and governance levels of all countries. The comparative advantage between countries is reflected in their governance capabilities, not so-called the pros and cons of the political system.

Thirdly, the new world order should focus on economic development. Jointly boosting the economy, securing the wellbeing of humanity, improving people's livelihood, and ensuring world prosperity is more meaningful than political-ideological disputes. In the post-epidemic era, revitalizing the economy is a priority for developing countries and a major test for developed countries' governments.

The rising global economic recession crisis and turbulent financial markets make the international community's top priority restoring the world's economy by ensuring and maintaining the openness, stability, security of the global industrial and supply chain.

Propagating political stereotypes, advocating populism, building trade barriers, and advocating "de-globalization" are not helpful for economic development. The consequences of stigmatization of fighting the pandemic and politicization of the virus will impact on low-income countries' fight against the epidemic.

So, continuing to promote BRI construction will help all countries in the world work together to restore the economy. BRI is China's manifestation of a responsible member and a manifestation of the humanitarian spirit of working together in the international community.

Finally, countries living in the new international order should not compete for supremacy. It is noble to satisfy people's wellbeing to prosperity and stability for every government, rather than taking advantage of the strategic opportunities created by the epidemic to pursue any world hegemony.

COVID-19 poses a grave threat to all countries and their government. Governments' response measures do not inherently have policy advantages from any transcendental ideology or political position. China advocates cooperation, not a competition, not conflict. Neither the United States nor Western countries that historically have economic advantages over China should let go of their arrogance and prejudice towards China.

In the presence of a common health security crisis, pragmatic cooperation will be used to lay a solid foundation for mutual trust and solid mutual trust to create a more stable and prosperous community of shared future.

The pandemic accelerated the changing of the new world order. Unreasonable unilateralism will only erode the already crumbling soft power appeal. The post-hegemonic order in the post-epidemic era should be an international order without absolute hegemony. This new international order is not international anarchy, but a multi-polar, jointly consultative international order full of confidence in cooperation.

Dr. Yuan ZHANG is Professor and Director of the Religion in the Middle East Research Program of the Middle East Studies Institute (MESI) of Shanghai International Studies University (SISU).

Ancient horse remains discovered in central Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — An ancient burial containing the remains of a horse -- estimated to be four years old -- has been discovered by archaeologists in Tepe Ashraf, the sole archaeological hill in Isfahan, central Iran.

The horse skeleton was found near a place where a giant jar-tomb was unearthed last month, which researchers believe could shed a new light on ancient human life in Isfahan.

"The burial of this horse with its head turned towards the animal's body, shows an official burial which was practiced during the early years of the Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE). In this type of burial, the animal's body was buried next to its owner, who had died," IRNA quoted senior archaeologist Alireza Jafari-Zand as saying on Tuesday.

Jafari-Zand, who heads the archaeological excavation at the hill, explained: "Evidence came to light from some Parthian cemeteries, being excavated in northern Iran, shows that the deceased's horse was buried next to him, and this fully shows that we have the same burial [tradition] in Isfahan, the discovery of this type of burial in Ashraf hill is of high importance for the history of Isfahan because no such phenomenon has been reported in central Iran so far."



"Tepe Ashraf is the second place after the Tepe Sialk (in Isfahan province) that has yielded the discovery of such jar tombs that offers valuable clues to uncover the obscure history of pre-Islamic Isfahan," Jafari-Zand said.

Excavations at Tepe Ashraf initially began in 2010 when Jafari-Zand announced his team found evidence at the site suggesting that the Sassanid site had also been used during the Buyid dynasty (945–1055). "We stumbled upon a reconstructed part in the ruins of the castle, which suggests that the structure had been used during the Buyid dynasty."

"Isfahan is a city, which has never died over the history... and the old Isfahan is beneath the modern city. Thus, normally, archaeological excavation is impossible in the city," according to Jafari-Zand who believes that the mount keeps a part of the history of Isfahan and Iran in its heart. The mound has seriously been damaged on the northern side by the construction of a street. Besides, unscientific excavations carried out by several archaeology interns in 1987 disturbed the historical strata in a part of the site.

Soaked in a rich history, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran during the 16th and 17th centuries, and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. Isfahan is filled with architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people. It has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half of the world", suggesting that seeing it is equivalent to seeing half of the world.

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

(Part: 2/2)

(Louvre museum) — The first vases decorated with animal friezes in high relief were made in the Jemet 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.

■ **Technical and pictorial elements found in works from Marlik**

This vase can also be compared to objects made in northern Iran in the same period. It may have been imported, or based on a model peculiar to this region. The decoration of the vase, in particular, is of similar workmanship to that of gold and silver vessels from the Marlik region, notably a gold pot decorated with winged bulls with heads and necks in high relief (Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum).

Moreover, the presence of horses introduces a new element in relation to bulls, which stemmed from a more ancient tradition. Horses were highly prized in this region on the shores of the Caspian Sea, near Mount Elburz. The individual grave of a horse has even been found. This vase is thus an illustration of the important place horses began to hold in the second half of the 2nd millennium.

Iran setting rules to resume foreign tourist arrivals amid pandemic

→ 1 and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development along with representatives from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, CHTN reported.

Addressing the conference, Teymouri elaborated on a growing need for taking action to define all-inclusive health protocols, saying "Given the fact that some countries, especially neighboring countries, are gradually re-opening borders, the Islamic Republic of Iran needs to take action to define comprehensive health protocols, which should be revealed to world communities through international institutions."

"Accordingly, by the means of establishing the necessary mechanisms, determining all capacities and limitations by related agencies, we will form a framework of the health protocol that ensures healthy visit of foreign travelers during the era of the coronavirus."

"For the time being, the global focus is on coexistence with the novel coronavirus, support for the tourism industry, and finally the reopening of borders through specific regulations," he noted.

Teymouri called on various organizations and tourism agencies for cross-sectoral collaboration to build trust and to reflect Iran's efforts to the world to demonstrate how and under what criteria "we are accepting tourists.... how we treat them and ultimately bid farewell them upon their return."

Specific mandates for testing, tracing, receiving of a traveler test/vaccine certificate, identifying infected travelers and removing them from the travel ecosystem, wearing a mask when interacting with people in all modes of transports, maintaining physical distancing to the best of one's ability, were amongst topics discussed in the meeting.

Back in May, the tourism ministry declared new guidelines and instructions in a framework named "Smart travel protocol" to ramp up the safety of domestic travels being implemented in hotels, guest houses, eco-lodge unites, tourist destinations, transport facilities, recreational centers, and restaurants.

"The smart travel protocol states what



A conference, chaired by Vali Teymouri, the deputy tourism minister, brings together deputy ministers from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Intelligence, and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development along with representatives from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, discussing health protocols needed to resume foreign tourist arrivals amid pandemic, on July 1, 2020.

considerations a hotel, agency, or tour guide should follow. It's as if accommodation units need to focus more on renting one-bedroom than two-bedroom. Or if the hotel has been closed until now, with what considerations will it start working and under what conditions will it accept passengers. These cases are detailed in the present protocol we should revise its articles using the opinion of the relevant organizations," Teymouri explained.

"I believe that tourism industry of the country will get back on the right track far sooner than generally expected thanks to the measures taken to deal with the spread of coronavirus in tourist destinations, hotels, stopovers, and all the centers which are affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts," Teymouri said in an

exclusive interview with the Tehran Times in May.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization has recently praised efforts made by Iran's tourism ministry to manage the travel industry during the coronavirus pandemic. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said in a letter to tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan that the country's measures have truly earned plaudits to mitigate the impact on tourism.

"A series of measures that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran has taken, under the guidelines and recommendations of UNWTO, has truly earned plaudits as an effective practice to mitigate the impact on tourism."

Experts expect Iran to achieve a tour-

ism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Qajar-era subterranean garrison identified in northeast Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — An underground garrison, estimated to date from the Qajar era (1789–1925), has been discovered near Bojnurd, the capital of North Khorasan province, northeast Iran.

Talking to IRNA, Bojnurd tourism chief Ahmadreza Rahimzadeh on Wednesday said that the newly-discovered garrison, which covers some 4,000 square meters in area, is situated on mounds overlooking the villages of Najafabad, Qezelqan and Ghalejiq.

"Studies are still underway in the area to identify all and parts of the garrison that is estimated to date from the late Qajar era or the early Pahlavi epoch," the official said.

"Built to counter attacks by Turkmen or Russians invaders, the military garrison has long underground corridors, parts of which were used as resting places, bakeries, soldiers' baths, as well as keeping horses and cattle."

Bojnurd, known in the Middle Ages as Buzanjird, is about 701 km from Tehran.



Historical city of Meybod and its cultural heritage

(Destination Iran) — Meybod is one of the historical cities of Yazd province, dating back to the Sassanid era. This city has managed to gain a particular place among the world's spectacular heritage sites because it has accommodated some of the most spectacular monuments of Iran.

The weather conditions of the desert city of Meybod is of a dry city. It is located in the northwest of Yazd city. The eastern part reaches some flat plains, and the western part overlooks the mountains and heights nearby.

Agricultural lands constitute some areas around Meybod, in which various agricultural and horticultural products are cultivated.

As there are many qanats and underground water resources, Meybod has a great value in Yazd province. The qanats are valuable resources for irrigating agricultural land.

■ **A brief history**

The most important historical and archaeological finds of the historical city of Meybod show that the first traces of the appearance of the region originates around it. In fact, the earliest settlements of the people have started at Firuzabad, Bideh, Mehrjerd, and Barjin near the old rivers of the region.

The local people were well acquainted with the traditional extraction of water from underground qanats and used these water resources for their livelihood and prosperity. If we want to express a certain period for the emergence of Meybod, it dates back to the time of the Sassanid era. Of course, the existence of several special bricks remained from Medes' era in Narin Qal'eh clearly expresses the powerful reign of some local rulers in Meybod.



An aerial view of Meybod, a historical oasis city in central Iranian plateau

■ **Tourist attractions**

With its valuable buildings and handicrafts, Meybod is one of the tourist attractions of the world. The handicrafts and special events of this city are not only famous throughout Iran, but also throughout the world. Today, most of people are familiar with the monuments of Meybod. Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is trying to introduce the valuable handicrafts of the city to the world more than ever.

The historical city of Meybod has monuments dating back to several thousand years ago. One of the oldest attractions of Meybod is Narin Qal'eh.

This ancient castle is made of very sturdy sun-dried bricks and belongs to the pre-Islamic period. This monument is now in the middle of the city and on relatively high mounds. If you stand

over Narin Qal'eh, you can easily see the whole city around you.

Another famous attraction of Meybod is the Kabutar Khaneh tower, which literally means pigeon tower. This beautiful building, an example of Iranian vernacular architecture, has long been the place to produce agricultural fertilizers. The architecture of Kabutar Khaneh Tower is unique and impressive. There are many holes in the interior of the tower accommodating thousands of pigeons. Each one is a nest for one pigeon.

Some of the other attractions of the historical city of Meybod are: The historical "Mehrjerd Castle" dating back to the Zand and Afsharid dynasties; The Friday Mosque of Firuzabad with its valuable inscriptions; The Friday Mosque of Meybod with its beautiful architecture; and Safavid-era caravansary.

■ **Intangible cultural heritage of Meybod**

Two important ceremonies take place in Meybod, considering a part of the intangible cultural heritage of this city:

The ceremonies of Shah Hassan and Shah Hossein in Meybod, held with special religious practices in the first ten days of the month of Muharram. These ceremonies are ancient and original;

Another ritual ceremony held in this city is "Nakhl Gardani", which is a procession while carrying a wooden structure called Nakhl. The ceremony takes place in a very magnificent manner on the tenth day of the Muharram month (The Day of Ashura) to commemorate the resistance and martyrdom of Imam Hussein in all areas of Yazd, including the historical city of Meybod.

Nakhl Gardani ritual is deeply rooted in the beliefs of the local people of Yazd province. This endeared ritual is one of the most valuable national intangible heritage you can find in several parts of Iran.

■ **Handicrafts**

The reputation of the city of Meybod is not only due to the existence of its ancient monuments. Handicrafts, ceremonies and celebrations held in this city are also among the intangible cultural heritage of Iranians for various occasions.

The handicrafts consist of woodturning, pottery, zilu weaving and Karbafi. The latter is a traditional handicraft of this region and includes sewing scarves, towels, bundles, Appliqués and tablecloths.

The textile related industries of Meybod are expanding. If highly skillful people do this art, it will undoubtedly turn out to be at least an important handicraft in Iran.

Weird but true: rare tree capable of producing oil

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Euphorbia tirucalli, a rare tree growing well in dry regions of Sistan-Baluchestan province in southeastern Iran is capable of producing 10 to 50 barrels of oil per hectare.

Euphorbia tirucalli (commonly known as aveloz, Indian tree spurge, naked lady, pencil tree, pencil cactus, milk bush) is a hydrocarbon plant, which produces a poisonous latex that can cause blindness.

The tree is a shrub or small tree with pencil-thick, green, smooth, succulent branches that reach heights of growth of up to 7 meters. It is used as alternative medicine in many cultures. Attempts have been made to use it to treat cancer, excrescence, tumors, warts, asthma, cough, earache, neuralgia, rheumatism, and toothaches in countries.

It has no thorns and is used by farmers as a natural fertilizer and pesticide. This tree can flower in nature, but it rarely happens in apartment conditions.

It has a wide distribution in northeastern, central, and southern Africa. It may also be native in other parts of the continent as well as some surrounding islands and the Arabian Peninsula and has been introduced to many other tropical regions, such as Brazil, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Ghana. And is often used to feed cattle or as hedging.

■ **Pencil tree needs more research and attention**

Mansour Raeisi, head of Nikshahr's forests, range, and watershed management organization told IRNA on Wednesday that U.S. chemist Melvin Calvin has proposed the exploitation of E. tirucalli for producing oil due to its latex can also be used as fuel.



This usage is particularly appealing because of the ability of E. tirucalli to grow on land that is not suitable for most other crops. Calvin estimated that 10 to 50 barrels of oil per acre was achievable.

He said that in some countries, this tree is used for the production of glue and rubber, adding that the only use of this evergreen species in Nikshahr city is the use of fencing of farms and orchards.

Pointing out that white sap is very sticky and has medicinal uses, and pests cannot

destroy it due to the toxicity, he said that the growth of this rare tree can prevent cutting of many forest trees in Nikshahr.

This tree only needs irrigation in its early days of planting and then it can grow by rainwater or soil moisture, he said, adding, the planting is done spontaneously by farmers for fencing around the gardens.

Raeisi pointed out that we will soon start the growth of it due to the high value of the species and its therapeutic uses.

The tree is scattered in Nikshahr city,

especially in the central part of Mahban and Dehestan villages, and there are about 10 hectares of it, both hand-planted and self-cultivated, and in the past was used as fertilizer and pesticides, which have unfortunately been replaced by chemicals, he explained.

"So far, no research has been done on the pencil tree, and we hope that this will be achieved with the help of investors from the private and public sectors," he concluded.

33 killed, injured in explosion at clinic in Tehran



SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Thirty three people were killed and injured in an explosion caused by a gas leak at a clinic in northern Tehran on Tuesday night.

A fire erupted at Sina Athar Medical Center, killing 19 including 15 women and 4 men so far. Moreover, 14 have been injured and transferred to a hospital, ISNA reported.

Tehran fire department spokesman Jalal Maleki said that the blaze broke out at 20:56 local time and was extinguished around two hours later.

Seven people were treated at the scene, according to the emergency services organization's public relations.



Justice Ministry to promote citizenship rights of Iranian expats

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Justice and the Counseling Services for Iranians Abroad (CSIA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to promote citizenship rights of Iranians living overseas, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

The MOU was signed by Delavar Bozorgnia, director general of human rights and citizenship rights at the Ministry of Justice, and Seyed Majid Hallajzadeh, director of the CSIA.

To promote and protect the rights of the citizens a variety of efforts by various segments of society, including non-governmental organizations and civil society activists is required. In order to expand scientific, educational, research and cooperation using the capacities



of the parties, especially in the field of providing civil rights services to Iranians abroad, this memorandum was signed.

As per the MOU, cooperation, partnership and assistance will enhance to promote and enhance the benefit of Iranian expats from citizenship rights.

Utilizing scientific, experimental, research, international relations and other capacities through holding lectures, conferences, seminars, roundtables, workshops, symposiums and short-term training courses, especially civil rights training courses, and drafting and approving legal plans and bills or amending laws and regulations related to civil rights issues in the society are among other objectives of the MOU.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Wildfire extinguished in northern forests

Wildfire, erupted in northern forests of Gilan province over the past 2 days, has been fully extinguished, commander of the protection unit of natural resources and watershed management organization of Gilan has stated.

According to the latest statistics, approximately 130 hectares of forests in Gilan province have been burnt in recent days, IRNA quoted Mohammad Qorbani as saying on Sunday.

He went on to say that 99 percent of fires in 13 cities of Gilan province have caused no serious damage to the trees.

In spite of the complete containment of fire, the protection unit is on full alert, he further noted.

Appreciating all the forces who made efforts to control the wildfire, he concluded that fire broke out in various cities, including Rezvanshahr, Talesh, Roudbar, Siahkal and some others.

آتش سوزی جنگل های گیلان مهار شد

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان گفت: آتش سوزی جنگل های استان گیلان پس از ۷۲ ساعت تلاش، کاملاً مهار شد. سرهنگ محمد قربانی لرد عصر روز شنبه در گفت و گوی اختصاصی با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: بر اساس آخرین آمارها به صورت تقریبی حدود «۱۳۰ هکتار» از اراضی جنگلی استان گیلان در چند روز اخیر دچار آتش سوزی شدند.

وی افزود: ۹۹ درصد از آتش سوزی جنگل های ۱۳ شهرستان استان گیلان سطحی بوده و خسارت جدی به درختان وارد نشده است.

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان خاطر نشان کرد: به رغم مهار کامل آتش در جنگل های استان، نیروهای یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری در آماده باش کامل هستند.

وی ضمن قدردانی از تمامی نیروها در مهار آتش در جنگل های استان گیلان اضافه کرد: آتش سوزی در سطح شهرستان های مختلف استان از جمله رضوانشهر، تالش، رودبار، سیاکل و غیره روی داده.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“phon-, phono-”

■ **Meaning:** sound, voice

■ **For example:** Small-group activities focus on *phonological* awareness and language skills.

PHRASAL VERB

Put in something

■ **Meaning:** to do something in a particular way, especially a performance in a play, film, race

■ **For example:** He put in a brilliant performance in the British Grand Prix.

IDIOM

Doom and gloom

■ **Explanation:** A general atmosphere of pessimism, and a feeling that the situation is not going to improve

■ **For example:** Fortunately, it's not doom and gloom for all businesses, in spite of the economic situation.

150 years of industrialization has undone 6,000 years of global cooling, study shows

In little more than 150 years, humans have reversed a 6,000-year pattern of global cooling, a major study into historic temperatures has found.

A team of researchers reconstructed the global average temperature over the Holocene Epoch - the 12,000 years of Earth's history since the last Ice Age.

The findings show that global cooling began around 6,500 years ago, when the long-term average global temperature topped out at around 0.7C warmer than the mid-19th century - just as the Industrial Revolution, which had begun in Britain, began to take hold across Europe and America.

The period before industrialisation represented the lowest global temperatures since the last Ice Age, culminating in a so-called "little ice age" in recent centuries, the study found.

Since then, increasing greenhouse gas emissions from industrialised economies have contributed to global average temperatures 1C above the mid-19th century.

Northern Arizona University's School of Earth and Sustainability's Regents' professor Darrell Kaufman, lead author of the study, said: "Before global warming, there was global cooling."

"Previous work has shown convincingly that the world naturally and slowly cooled for at least 1,000 years prior to the middle of the 19th century, when the global average temperature reversed course along with the build-up of greenhouse gases.

"This study, based on a major new compilation of previously published paleoclimate data, combined with new statistical analyses, shows more confidently than ever that the millennial-scale global cooling began approximately 6,500 years ago."

Earlier this year, an international group of 93 paleoclimate scientists from 23 countries - led by Professor Kaufman and his team - published the most comprehensive paleoclimate data ever compiled on the past 12,000 years, compressing 1,319 data records, based on samples taken from 679 sites globally.

At each site, researchers analysed ecological, geochemical and biophysical evidence from both marine and terrestrial archives, such as lake deposits, marine sediments, peat and glacier ice, to work out past temperature changes. Countless scientists, working around the world over many decades, conducted the basic research that contributed to the global database.

Assistant research professor Michael Erb, who analysed the temperature reconstructions, said: "The rate of cooling that followed the peak warmth was subtle, only around 0.1C per 1,000 years. This cooling seems to be driven by slow cycles in the Earth's orbit, which reduced the amount of summer sunlight in the northern hemisphere, culminating in the 'Little Ice Age' of recent centuries."

The average global temperature has increased by just over 1C (2F) since 1880, suggesting the global average temperature of the last decade (2010-2019) was warmer than anytime during the post-glacial period.

The study's co-author, associate professor Nicholas McKay, noted that some individual decades are not resolved in the 12,000-year-long temperature reconstruction, making it difficult to compare it with any recent decade.

He said: "On the other hand, this past decade was likely cooler than what the average temperatures will be for the rest of this century and beyond, which are very likely to continue to exceed 1C above pre-industrial temperatures."

Professor Kaufman added: "It's possible that the last time the sustained average global temperature was 1°C above the 19th century was prior to the last Ice Age, back around 125,000 years ago when sea level was around 20 feet higher than today."

Professor Cody Rountson said the study helps scientists quantify the processes causing the climate crisis.

He said: "Investigating the patterns of natural temperature changes over space and time helps us understand and quantify the processes that cause climate to change, which is important as we prepare for the full range of future climate changes due to both human and natural causes.

"Our future climate will largely depend on the influence of human factors, especially the build-up of greenhouse gases. However, future climate will also be influenced by natural factors, and it will be complicated by the natural variability within the climate system. Future projections of climate change will be improved by better accounting for both anthropogenic and natural factors."

WORDS IN THE NEWS

London congestion charge

(February 18, 2004)

London's congestion charge scheme is a year old. Opinion is mixed over the success or failure of the scheme which charges drivers five pounds - or around nine dollars - to enter the centre of Britain's capital city. This report from Sally Hardcastle.

The **congestion charge** which is imposed from early in the morning until mid-evening certainly reduced the number of vehicles going into central London. However, because more cars than expected stayed outside the charge zone it has raised less money than was **predicted for city coffers**. One hundred and twenty million dollars was collected from **charge payers** rather than the two hundred and thirty million hoped for.

The money is **supposed to be spent** on improving public transport. There is some conflict over whether the scheme has damaged business. **According to one recent survey** 72 per cent of London businesses say it's working. However, another survey by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors claims that 90 per cent of retailers are critics.

Some business people have benefited. Sales of motor scooters are up, for example, and taxi drivers report that they can do more jobs in the day because they spend less time stuck in traffic. However, **big retail stores** are likely to be at the forefront of a campaign against a plan by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, to expand the **congestion charge area**.

■ **Words**

congestion charge: the fee you have to pay to drive a car in central London

predicted: if you predict an event you say it will happen

city coffers: in the past money and precious materials were kept in large wooden chests known as coffers

charge payers: car drivers who have to pay the congestion charge

supposed to be spent: if something is supposed to be done, it should be done because of an instruction or rule

according to one recent survey: a detailed investigation done not long ago claims that this is true

critics: opposed to the congestion charge

big retail stores: large shops selling a wide range of goods and services

to be at the forefront: something at the forefront of an activity is important to its development

congestion charge area: the part of London where you have to pay

(Source: BBC)

Turkey to hold trial for Khashoggi murder suspects in absentia

→ 1 The trial in absentia will open at Istanbul's main court Caglayan on Friday at 10:00 am local time (0700 GMT), Khashoggi's fiancée Cengiz told AFP late Tuesday.

"I will also be there," she said. Agnes Callamard, the U.N. special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, is also expected to attend the trial. There was no immediate official confirmation of the trial in absentia. Turkish prosecutors had already issued arrest warrants for the Saudi suspects, who are not in Turkey.

Khashoggi's sons announced in May that they "forgive" the killers of their father.

However, his fiancée said, "no one" had the right to pardon his murderers.

"His ambush and heinous murder do not have a statute of limitations and no one has the right to pardon his killers. I and others will not stop until we get #JusticeForJamal," Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz tweeted.

"The killers came from Saudi with premeditation to lure, ambush & kill him... We will not pardon the killers nor those who ordered the killing," she added.

Khashoggi — who was close to the Saudi royals but became a critic — was killed and dismembered at the kingdom's consulate, in a case that tarnished the reputation of Crown Prince Mohammed. His remains have never been found.

Prior to his killing, Khashoggi had written critically of the crown prince in multiple columns for the Washington Post and had been living in exile for about a year, fearing he would be detained if he returned to Saudi Arabia as part of a wider crack-down on writers, activists and critics.

After offering shifting accounts of what transpired under intense international and Turkish pressure, the kingdom eventually settled on the explanation that Khashoggi had been killed by Saudi agents in an operation masterminded by two of the crown prince's top aides, who have since been removed from their posts.

The kingdom denies the crown prince had any knowledge of the operation. His critics, however, point to U.S. intelligence reports that say an operation like this could not have happened without his knowledge.

U.S. used SWIFT as a weapon against Iran

Using SWIFT settlements to threaten China will backfire

→ 1 The dollar clearing and settlement system or the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), is a global payment system in which U.S. dollars are traded, transferred, settled, and stored around the world. The system's quote currency is U.S. dollar, and is therefore controlled by the U.S. government.

SWIFT was nominally a non-profit organization before the September 11 terror attacks in 2001. Its operation mechanism was then altered by the George W. Bush administration, which forcibly broke the global payment network's operating rights. Its safety, reliability, speed, standardization and automation were greatly damaged so that the network could become a U.S. foreign policy tool, a feature which has since dominated the system's operation.



SWIFT became a weapon of the U.S., allowing the nation to force other countries and regions out of the global financial market by limiting or blocking them from the clearing regimes. Iran, Venezuela and Zimbabwe are among the countries that were impacted. With the dollar as a major global reserve currency, the U.S. financial watchdogs can monitor the non-cash circulation of every cent.

In order to form a substitute platform, the EU established the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), but the attempt resulted in almost nothing. China launched the Cross-border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) in 2015, an independent clearing system with the yuan, China's currency, as the quote currency.

For any trade activity using the U.S. dollar, SWIFT serves as an inevitable path. However, a complete economic "decoupling" from China is impossible for the U.S., as is isolating China from the global economic system, no matter what kind of restructuring is promoted by the U.S.

Moreover, any such move would backfire if the U.S. intends to limit or block China's usage of SWIFT services, though the move could also cause some problems for China. Although America's superpower status will not be immediately at risk, the U.S. dollar hegemony will collapse given that China is the second-largest economy, with huge dollar reserves and bonds.

The animosity held by the U.S. cannot be overlooked. Amid the current COVID-19 pandemic, China's viable route for a stable growth is to continue promoting the development of the yuan, including the promotion of the digital yuan and the yuan-denominated transactions, and expanding the usage of the yuan in trade and investment.

(Source: Global Times)

Resistance News

Israeli forces demolish two Palestinian structures in Jerusalem

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN— Israeli forces on Wednesday demolished two buildings in different towns of Jerusalem.

Local sources said that Israeli forces demolished two residential buildings. One is owned by the Za'atra family in Jabal al-Mukabber, while the other is owned by the Abu Teir family in al-Isawiya.

In May, 59 Palestinian structures were demolished in Jerusalem, 15 of which were demolished by their Palestinian owners who were forced to do so to avoid paying steep fines to the Israeli-controlled Jerusalem municipality.

UK PM Johnson tells Israel: Do not annex parts of the West Bank

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Israel it should not go ahead with a plan to annex parts of the West Bank, cautioning that London would not recognise any changes to the 1967 lines.

In an opinion piece in Yedioth Ahronoth, Johnson writes that 'As a life-long friend, admirer and supporter of Israel, I am fearful that these proposals will fail in their objective of securing Israel's borders'

"Annexation would represent a violation of international law," Johnson said in an opinion piece for Yedioth Ahronoth, Israel's top-selling daily. "It would also be a gift to those who want to perpetuate the old stories about Israel."

"I profoundly hope that annexation does not go ahead," he said. "If it does, the UK will not recognize any changes to the 1967 lines, except those agreed between both parties." Johnson is doubling down on comments he made in mid-June also arguing any annexation would be a breach of international law. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netan-



yahu has said he intends to extend Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements and the

Jordan Valley, as envisaged by a blueprint announced by U.S. President Donald Trump

Venezuela to hold parliamentary elections in December



Venezuela will hold elections in December to renew the National Assembly, the only institution where the opposition has a majority, the country's electoral authority has announced.

Candidates will contest an expanded number of seats in the new legislature, which will increase from 167 to 277, Indira Alfonzo, who was named chief of the National Electoral Council (CNE) by the Supreme Court earlier this month said, al Jazeera reported.

"We unanimously debated and built the special rules that will govern this December's parliamentary elections," Alfonso said, announcing the increase in seats.

President Nicolas Maduro welcomed the electoral authority's announcement, adding that his Socialist Party is already "working" with allied organisations to nominate candidates.

"We will prepare for the birth of a new National Assembly," he said, speaking on the official television station VTV.

Italy seizes 14 tons of Daesh-made amphetamines from Syria



Italian police said Wednesday they have seized a world record 14-tonne haul of amphetamines made by the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group in Syria.

The drug, in the form of 84 million Captagon tablets, was worth about one billion euros, police said in a statement, describing the operation as "the biggest seizure of amphetamines in the world".

"We know that the ISIL finances its terrorist activities mainly by traffick-

ing drugs made in Syria which in the past few years has become the world's largest producer of amphetamines," the statement added.

The shipment was hidden in three containers found in the port of Salerno, just south of Naples, AFP reported.

Captagon, a brand name, was originally for medical use but illegal versions have been widely used by Daesh fighters in combat -- the police said.

Hundreds of George W. Bush administration officials to back Biden

Hundreds of officials who worked for former Republican President George W. Bush are set to endorse Democratic White House hopeful Joe Biden, people involved in the effort said, the latest Republican-led group coming out to oppose the re-election of Donald Trump.

The officials, who include Cabinet secretaries and other senior people in the Bush administration, have formed a political action committee - 43 Alumni for Biden - to support the former vice president in his Nov. 3 race, three organizers of the group told Reuters. Bush was the country's 43rd president, Reuters reported.

The Super PAC will launch Wednesday with a website and Facebook page, they said. It plans to release "testimonial videos" praising Biden from high-profile Republicans and will hold get-out-the-vote efforts in the most competitive states.

The group is the latest of a number of Republican organizations opposing Trump's re-election, yet another sign that he has alienated some in his own party, most recently with his response to the coronavirus pandemic and nationwide protests over racial injustice and police brutality against Black Americans.



"We know what is normal and what is abnormal, and what we are seeing is highly abnormal. The president is a danger," said Jennifer Millikin, one of the 43 Alumni organizers, who worked on Bush's 2004 re-election campaign and later in

the General Services Administration.

The other two members who spoke to Reuters are Karen Kirksey and Kristopher Purcell. Purcell worked as a communication official in the Bush White House. Kirksey was on the Bush 2000 campaign, and later in the Agriculture and Labor Departments.

Millikin said the group was not yet ready to name all its members or its donors. It has to provide a list of initial donors to the Federal Election Commission by October.

Bush's office has been informed about the group, but the former president is not involved and has not indicated if he approves of its aims, she said.

Freddy Ford, a spokesman for Bush, said Bush had retired "and won't be wading into this election."

Bush, who is still admired by many moderate Republicans, won praise for saying the May 25 death in Minneapolis of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, in police custody reflected a "shocking failure", and urged that protesters be heard.

Earlier, he released a video calling for Americans to unite in the face of the pandemic.

Turkey claims EU turns blind eye to refugee neglect

Turkey accuses the European Union of turning a blind eye to human rights abuses perpetrated against refugees by Greece. The claim was made during a conference organized to raise money for those impacted by the Syrian conflict.

Representatives from 80 countries and organizations took part in the online 'Supporting the future of Syria' conference. During the event Turkey accused Greece of human rights abuses against refugees, including sinking their boats and holding them in appalling conditions in camps.

Campaigners say Western nations should be doing more to help Syrian refugees.

More than half-a-million people have

died since the Syrian conflict began almost a decade ago. 13 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes. 9 out of 10 Syrians are living in poverty.

The West finally accepts that efforts to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad have failed. However, the EU and U.S. continue to try and apply pressure on the Syrian Government Turkey accuses the European Union of turning a blind eye to human rights abuses perpetrated against refugees by Greece. The claim was made during a conference organized to raise money for those impacted by the Syrian conflict.

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Syrian Government, Press TV reported.

The Brussels conference had hoped to raise 10 billion U.S. dollars to help Syrians. In the end 7.7 billion was pledged.

Critics of U.S. and EU foreign policy claim the West should be doing a lot more to help Syrians given its devastating role in destabilizing the country and bringing misery to so many millions.

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At least 10 people arrested in Seattle protest zone after mayor's order to vacate area

→ 1 5 Austin Police investigated over use of force at protests

Five Austin police officers are on paid administrative duty amid an investigation into the use of what authorities call "less lethal" force during May protests against police brutality and racial injustice, according to the police department.

The investigation follows public outcry after two people participating in protests in Austin sparked by the death of George Floyd were seriously injured by officers' bean bag rounds — ammunition that law enforcement deems "less lethal" than bullets.

Officers Nicholas Gebhart, Kyu An, John Siegel, Derrick

Lehman and Kyle Felton were placed under investigation as of Friday, and their duties have been limited.

A spokeswoman for Austin police said in an email Tuesday that the department could not confirm whether the officers were involved in the cases of 20-year-old Justin Howell or 16-year-old Brad Levi Ayala, who were both hospitalized after being unintentionally shot in the head with bean bag rounds during protests the last weekend of May.

The statement cited ongoing investigations in its reasoning for limiting the release of information.

The Austin Police Association did not immediately respond

to The Associated Press for comment Tuesday.

Paid administrative duty limits the type of work officers can do while they are under investigation. Austin police policy says officers can be placed on paid administrative duty pending investigations into any force that resulted in serious bodily injury requiring hospitalization and the use of impact weapons.

The Austin Police Special Investigations Unit and the Internal Affairs Division are working to identify other officers involved in protest-related incidents, according to the statement.

COVID-19 lowers chance of Iran's success at FIFA World Cup qualification

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team could suffer a major blow if FIFA decides to hold the 2022 World Cup qualification behind closed doors.

Iran sit third in Group C, five points behind Iraq. The "Persian Leopards" could take advantage of their home matches against Bahrain and Iraq but the games will most likely be held behind closed doors due to coronavirus outbreak.

The Iranian fans have been always supportive of their national team in the home matches and the decision will surely lower the chance of Dragan Skocic's team to book a place in the next stage.

The last four games of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will be held in October and November. The second wave of the COVID-19 infection will hit rise in the fall, around October and November, when temperatures cool.

FIFA and AFC will most likely decide to hold the competition behind closed doors or neutral venue and both decisions will go against Iran football.

Iran must win four upcoming matches if they want to have a chance to experience the FIFA World Cup for the third time in a row.

The "Persian Leopards" are scheduled to host Hong Kong on October 8 in Tehran and meet Cambodia five days later in Phnom Penh.

Iran's last two matches against Bahrain and Iraq - which are very crucial - will be against Bahrain and Iraq on November 12 and 17 in Tehran.

The eight group winners and four



best runners-up will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA

World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the second round of the joint qualifiers will compete

in a separate competition for the remaining 12 slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Shahin Bushehr coach Miso Krsticevic not to return to Iran



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Shahin Bushehr head coach Miso Krsticevic has refused to return to Iran over safety fears due to the spread of the coronavirus in Iran.

Miso left Iran four months ago when the Iranian Professional League (IPL) halted because of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country.

The Croatian coach of the Bushehr based football team has reiterated that he will not return to Iran until the number of Coronavirus cases in the country decreases.

Now in Croatia, Miso has said that the reason for not coming to Iran was that he felt he was in danger due to illness.

"Yesterday, I told Shahin Club directors that I would not return to Iran until Coronavirus's related statistics in Iran dropped," he said as reported by the Tasnim

news agency on Tuesday.

"I don't want to endanger my health, safety, and life because of football and I won't do it for money. I express my sadness to the staff and the fans of Shahin because of this difficult situation, but we all live once and we have to take care of our lives," Miso Krsticevic added.

Shahin drew 2-2 against Naft Masjed Soleyman at the IPL last week. They stand at the 15th place at the table.

Shahin club on Wednesday announced that Mehrdad Karimian has been appointed as head coach until the end of the season.

Iran reported another 2457 coronavirus cases Tuesday, bringing the country's total number of residents sickened to 227,662.

Unfortunately, during the past 24 hours, 142 patients lost their lives. All told, 10,817 people have died in the country from the disease.

Tough task for Iran to host 2027 Asian Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran will have a tough task to host the 2027 Asian Cup since the other bidders for Asia's premier football tournament are Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and India.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has revealed the names of five countries who expressed interest to host the tournament.

"The AFC will now work with each Bidding Member Association on the delivery of the necessary bidding documentation in accordance with the bidding process and will announce the host for the 19th edition of the AFC Asian Cup in 2021," said the AFC in a statement late on Tuesday.

AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa thanked the five member associations for showcasing their support to the Asian Cup.

"On behalf of the Asian football family, I would like to thank all our Member

Associations for stepping forward to express their desire and for sharing our ambitions to host a world-class stage for our players, teams, officials and fans and I wish all of them the very best in the bidding process," he said.

Of the five countries expressing an interest, two nations have already hosted the tournament twice since its inception in 1956.

Reigning champions Qatar staged the competition in 1988 and 2011, as well as Iran, who are the only nation in Asian football history to have won the coveted crown twice on home soil in 1968 and 1976.

Three-time champions Saudi Arabia and India, who were recently awarded the hosting rights for the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup, as well as Uzbekistan, this year's host for the AFC U-19 Championship, are all vying to stage event for the first time.

Karim Bagheri finds so difficult to leave Persepolis

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis coach Karim Bagheri, who is supposed to cooperate with Iran national football team, says that it's very difficult for him to leave his club.

Bagheri, who has been part of the Persepolis club's staff for the last five years, currently works as the assistant coach of Yahya Golmohammadi.

The 47-year-old coach was named as Iranian assistant of Dragan Skocic in Iran national football team in early March and will have a part-time job in national team since he is still Persepolis's assistant coach.

When asked whether it is the last season of his presence on the Persepolis bench, Bagheri responded: "This is what the football federation wants. Given that I have a contract with Persepolis for another year, the federation and the club must reach an agreement on the issue."

According to the Football Federation of the Islamic Re-



public of Iran (FFIRI)'s announcement, Karim Bagheri will assist Skocic in the 2022 World Cup qualification.

Former Iran national team midfielder believes that the

federation has put him in a difficult situation.

"Mr. Nabi, the secretary general of the FFIRI, clarified his stance in this regard, and it was decided to announce our views for a final agreement.

"It is very difficult for me to leave Persepolis. I've been in this club for several years and I have always shown and expressed my love for Persepolis. The fans have always been kind to me and I consider myself a member of Persepolis family. It is really difficult for me to choose between the national team and Persepolis right now. I hope whatever happens, happens for good."

Iran national team are scheduled to host Hong Kong on October 8 in Tehran and meet Cambodia five days later in Phnom Penh.

Iran's last two matches against Bahrain and Iraq - which are very crucial - will be against Bahrain and Iraq on November 12 and 17 in Tehran.

Spread of the coronavirus would prompt the NBA to stop the 2019-20 season, commissioner Adam Silver said Tuesday.

Speaking on the TIME 100 Talks, Silver said the league is "reasonably confident" about its plan to restart the season in Orlando on the Disney World campus in July. But if the virus spreads among players and personnel in Florida, Silver said the league will have no choice but

to pull the plug.

"Never full steam ahead no matter what," Silver said. "One thing we are learning about this virus as much as (it's) unpredictable, and we and our players together with their union look at the data on a daily basis. If there were something to change that was outside of the scope of what we are playing for, certainly we would revisit our plans. We are testing daily. We haven't put a precise num-

ber on it but if we were to see a large number of cases and see spread in our community, that would of course be a cause to stop as well."

Dr. Anthony Fauci said Tuesday in testimony in Washington, D.C., that he has become more concerned with the surge in COVID-19 cases in Florida, Texas, California and Arizona.

The NBA is working closely with medical experts and plans to modify

guidance and recommendations based on all available information, Silver said.

"We are going to see as we go," Silver said. "Certainly if cases are isolated, that's one thing. A lot of the determination will be our understanding of how our community become infected. That will be part of our judgment in terms of whether we should continue. But certainly if we had a lot of cases, we are going to stop. You cannot run from this virus."

Alireza Mansourian nominated for Iran U19 hotseat

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Alireza Mansourian is a candidate to lead Iran's U19 football team.

The Iranian media reports suggest that he has reached an agreement with Iran football federation to take charge of the team.



Mansourian most recently coached Iranian football club Zob Ahan.

Mansourian, 48, was head coach of Iran U23 football team from 2011 to 2014. He was replaced by Portuguese coach Nelo Vingada.

U19 coach Sirous Pourmousavi stepped down from his role in early June and Mansourian will replace him.

Iran prepare to participate at the 2020 AFC U-19 Championship in Uzbekistan scheduled for October.

The top four teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2021 FIFA U-20 World Cup in Indonesia.

Taremi scores winner against Sporting Braga

IRNA — Iranian forward Mehdi Taremi scored a late goal against Sporting Braga to seal three points for Rio Ave.

Rio Ave defeated Braga 4-3 in a thrilling Primeira Liga outing on Tuesday at Stadio Dos Arcos to move up to fifth place in the table. Both teams went into the game needing a win which would boost their Europa League ambitions.

Mehdi Taremi scored twice in the match.

He first was on target in the 34th minute. Taremi also found the back of the net in the injury time from the penalty spot.

AHC Dunarea Calarasi complete signing of Amin Yousefnejad

Tasnim — Iran international handball player Amin Yousefnejad joined AHC Dunarea Calarasi.

The 24-year-old player has signed a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee with the Romanian handball team.

Yousefnejad has most recently played at Italian club Siena.

Iranian players Shahoo Nosrati, Saeid Heydari Rad, Alireza Mousavi, Allahkaram Esteki and Mohsen Babasafari have already joined the Romanian teams.

Pourrahnama maintains 3rd position in world para taekwondo

MNA — Iranian para-taekwondo athlete Mahdi Pourrahnama has maintained his third position in the latest world para taekwondo ranking list.

The world taekwondo federation has released its latest ranking list and Mahdi Pourrahnama stood on the third position of -75kg weight category with 181/84 points, said the Head of Gilan taekwondo committee Mohsen Setorgi.

Iranian para-taekwondo athletes Mahmoud Jafarzadeh and Alireza Bakht also ranked 14th and 47th in the world, he added.

Pourrahnama has received the 2020 Olympic quota and he was standing at the top of the ranking list in most of 2019.

Olympic champion Yazdani joins Bazar-e Bozorg

Tasnim — Hassan Yazdani, a 2016 Olympic Games gold medal winner, joined Bazar-e Bozorg wrestling club on Tuesday.

Yazdani prepares to win his second gold medal in Olympic Games.

The 86kg freestyler has fully recovered after undergoing surgery on his knee last year.

Bazar-e Bozorg of Iran freestyle wrestling team won the title of the World Wrestling Clubs Cup last year.

Arsenal sign rising teen star Saka to long term contract

Arsenal have tied Bukayo Saka down to a long-term contract, the club announced on Wednesday. Sources have told ESPN it is a four-year deal.

Saka, 18, has made 33 appearances this season, playing mainly down the left flank and has contributed three goals as well as 11 assists.

"Bukayo is a talented and intelligent young player," head coach Mikel Arteta told the club's website. "He has impressed me with his work ethic and attitude to learn and adapt, and it has paid off in his performances."

"I am excited to continue working with him to develop him further, and for him to help us achieve our goals."

Arsenal's technical director Edu said Saka's extension is a sign the club's academy is proving a success in the development of young players.

"This is something everyone involved wanted to happen and we are delighted that Bukayo has signed a new long-term contract," Edu added.

(Source: ESPN)

NBA to stop season if virus spreads

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who constantly jests, exposes a part of
his intelligence to destruction.

Imam Ali (AS)

Storyteller Susan Maqsdulu to release podcasts of classical Persian tales

A R T **TEHRAN** — Storyteller Susan Maqsdulu, who is mostly known for her children's performances, plans to release a series of podcasts presenting stories from classical Persian literature for the home quarantine during the coronavirus pandemic.



Storyteller Susan Maqsdulu gives a performance for children in an undated photo.

"In a series of podcasts named 'Susan Tales', I will be recounting a number of Persian folktales every week. I have begun with 'One Thousand and One Nights', and will next go on to other stories such as 'Adventures of Sinbad', 'Patient Stone' and 'Daughter of Narenj-o-Toranj'," she said.

"I chose podcasts because it is in some way related to theater considering its storytelling aspect. However, I do not believe the virtual world can replace face-to-face interaction in the dramatic arts," she said.

"I first began to prepare the stories for adults since not all the classical Persian tales are suitable for children. I also was aware that young mothers admit that they do not know folktales, and that is why I felt the need to recount the stories for adults so that they can later retell the stories to their children based on their own tastes and interests," she added.

"Those who were children in the 1980s tell me that they like my voice and have good memories of the stories I used to tell them while they were kids, and that they wanted to hear the stories they had once heard with my voice again," she said.

She added that she has plans to release a series of podcasts for children as well, because she does not want the stories to be limited to a specific age group.

She hoped that she would be able to prepare an educational package to give appropriate advice to parents by means of making use of the knowledge of a psychologist on the side.

Maqsdulu, who is also a writer and a stage actress, is the storyteller of audio stories "Lady Moth" and "The Moon and Panther".

CEOs of ECO Cultural Institute, Farabi Cinema Foundation meet in Tehran

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Sarvar Bakhti, the new president of the ECO Cultural Institute, and the director of Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation, Alireza Tabesh, met in Tehran on Monday.



Farabi Cinema Foundation director Alireza Tabesh (L) and ECO Cultural Institute president Sarvar Bakhti meet in Tehran on June 29, 2020.

They discussed the expansion of cooperation in joint film projects among ECO member states.

Bakhti hoped that the cooperation would continue leading to new and additional collaborations.

Tabesh also said that cultural activities would not be halted because of the coronavirus pandemic as long as the Internet exists and cultural activities such as webinars, workshops and even festivals can be organized with the help of the Internet.

The two sides agreed to prepare an agreement, based on which joint film projects, virtual workshops and Eco film festivals would be initiated.

“Love Resurrection” director Mosafer-Astaneh appointed president of Fajr theater festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Director Hossein Mosafer-Astaneh, who is most famous for his play “Love Resurrection” about the life of the Persian poet Molana Jalal al-Din Rumi, has been selected as the new president of the Fajr International Theater Festival.

The appointment was announced on Wednesday by Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini.

Mosafer-Astaneh served as the director of the General Office for Dramatic Arts from August 2010 to September 2011. He also was picked to preside over the Fajr theater festival for several years.

Mosafer-Astaneh replaced stage director Nader Borhani Marand who has held the position since June 2018.

“The Fajr theater festival is one of the biggest theatrical events in the country and enjoys a special position, and surely the protection and elevation of this artistic event is necessary for the organizers,” Hosseini said.

“The special conditions these days due to the coronavirus pandemic in the country requires proper measures to be taken, and it is anticipated that the new president and his team could fully cover the event the best way possible,” he added.

The 39th edition of the Fajr International Theater Festival is scheduled to be held in Tehran during January 2021.



Hossein Mosafer Astaneh in an undated photo. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

Iraqi Kurdish novel “House of Cats” translated into Persian



Iraqi Kurdish translator Mariwan Halabjawi in an undated photo.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Kurdish translator Mariwan Halabjawi has recently finished rendering his fellow Kurdish writer Hiwa Kader's novel “House of Cats” into the Persian language.

“In this novel, as a prominent writer, Hiwa Kader has considered people's loneliness in the West and East and their identity crisis,” Halabjawi told the Persian service of ISNA on Wednesday.

“The writer has splendidly presented the cultural differences and the loneliness of those people that are living in exile and their attachment to pets and cats in particular,” he added.

He said that the novel has some sub-stories, one of which is about Mr. Sharifi and Mrs. Ziba, a rich Iranian couple that have a happy life in Stockholm.

Ziba returns to Iran for some reasons,

leaving her spouse alone in the Swedish capital. In her absence, Sharifi buys a cat from the House of Cats, naming it after Ziba, due to his love for his wife.

Halabjawi said that the novel is being translated into the English, Danish, Norwegian and Arabic languages and added his Persian translation of the book will be published by Saleh, a major Tehran-based publishing house, in the near future.

Kader, who has published five collections of poetry, lived in Sweden for two decades. He currently lives in his hometown Sulaymaniyah, a city in the eastern portion of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq.

He also translated Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich's book “War's Unwomanly Face” and Spanish novelist Carlos Ruiz Zafón's “The Shadow of the Wind” into Kurdish.

Isfahan museum to showcase Fallen Astronaut

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Isfahan Museum of Contemporary Art is scheduled to put on view a copy of Fallen Astronaut, a miniature aluminum sculpture that was taken on the Apollo 15 mission to the Moon in 1971, in an exhibition opening today.

The 8.9-cm sculpture created by Belgian sculptor Paul van Hoeydonck was left there along with a plaque honoring the 14 American and Soviet space travelers who had died up to that time in the course of human spaceflight.

The museum announced on Wednesday that it received the 17th edition of the statuette as a present on February 22, 2019. The announcement did not refer to the name of the donor.

The exhibition of the figurine will run until August 7.

Prior to his Apollo 15 lunar mission, astronaut David Scott met Van Hoeydonck at a dinner party. There it was agreed that Van Hoeydonck would create a small statuette for Scott to place on the Moon, though their recollections

of the details differ.

Scott's purpose was to commemorate those astronauts and cosmonauts who had lost their lives in the furtherance of space exploration, and he designed and separately made a plaque listing 14 American and Soviet names.

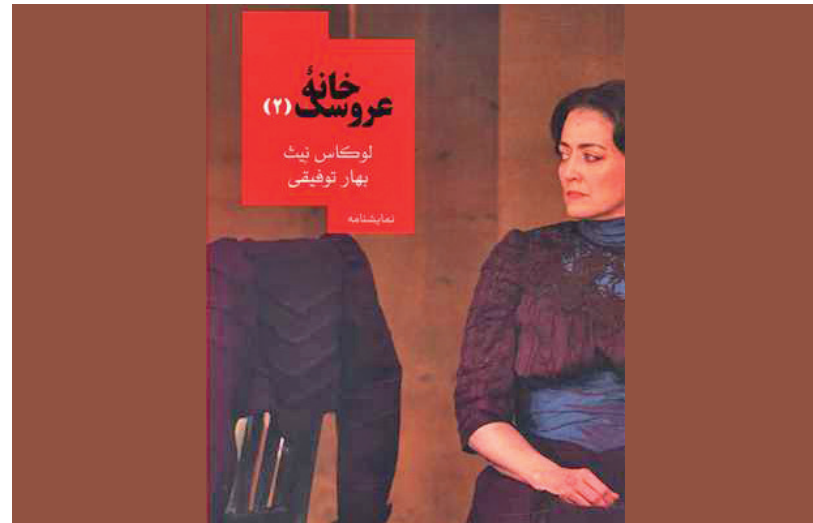
Van Hoeydonck was given a set of design specifications: the sculpture was to be lightweight but sturdy, capable of withstanding the temperature extremes of the Moon; it could not be identifiably male or female, nor of any identifiable ethnic group.

According to Scott, it was agreed Van Hoeydonck's name would not be made public, to avoid the commercial exploitation of the U.S. government's space program.

Scott got permission from top NASA management prior to the mission to take the statue aboard his spacecraft, but did not disclose it publicly until a post-mission press conference.

Scott secretly placed the Fallen Astronaut statue on the Moon during the Apollo 15 mission, near the completion

Lucas Hnath's “A Doll's House” published in Persian



Front cover of the Persian version of American writer Lucas Hnath's play “A Doll's House, Part 2”.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of American writer Lucas Hnath's “A Doll's House, Part 2” has been published by Roozbahan Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Bahar Tofiqi.

“A Doll's House, Part 2” received eight Tony Award nominations, including best play in 2017.

It has been fifteen years since Nora Helmer slammed the door on her stifling domestic life, when a knock comes at that same door. It is Nora, and she has returned with an urgent request. What will her sudden return mean to those she left behind?

Lucas Hnath's funny, probing, and bold play is both a continuation of Ibsen's complex exploration of traditional gender roles, as well as a sharp contemporary take

on the struggles inherent in all human relationships across time.

Hnath won the 2016 Obie Award for excellence in playwriting for his plays “Red Speedo” and “The Christians”.

His other plays include “Hillary and Clinton”, “A Public Reading of an Unproduced Screenplay about the Death of Walt Disney”, “Isaac's Eye”, and “Death Tax”.

His works have been produced nationally and internationally with premieres at the Humana Festival of New American Plays, Victory Gardens Theater and South Coast Repertory. He has been a resident playwright at New Dramatists since 2011.

Hnath has received the Kesselring Prize, Guggenheim Fellowship, Whiting Award, two Steinberg-ATCA New Play Award Citations, Outer Critics Circle Award for Best New Play, an Obie Award and the Windham-Campbell Literary Prize.



“Fallen Astronaut” statue and a name plaque on the surface of the Moon.

of his work on August 1, 1971, along with a plaque bearing the names of eight American astronauts and six Soviet cosmonauts who had died in service.

Art Bureau to honor stage adaptations of classical Persian literature

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) has launched a festival that will honor stage adaptations of classical Persian literature.

“The festival has been established to stress the need to return to the values of our classical literature as an effective way to correct the literary defect of the country's modern theater,” said stage writer and director Ayyub Aqakhani, who is also the director of the Study Office of the Dramatic Arts Center at the Art Bureau.

“We believe that the lack of profound Persian plays, of which our cultural figures have warned, will only be improved by a prudent, methodological and intelligent return to the classical Persian literature, particularly those that are unusually dramatic,” he added.

“Referring back to the classical Persian literary works will help us reinforce the social infrastructures of theater in the country, which is facing a number of cultural emergencies,” he noted.

The event has been named “The Chahar-Rah Stage Adaptations of Classical Persian Literature”. Chahar-rah means crossroads

in the Persian language.

“We selected this name because we believe that history, literature, culture and theater will meet each other at the festival on its long road into the future world,” Aqakhani said.

He staged “Solar Eclipse” about a love story between an Afghan migrant and an Iranian gypsy woman at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex in 2016.

Earlier in 2015, he directed “The Heavy Pieces of Lead” about the life story of the Iranian war hero Mostafa Chamran at the Chaharsu Hall of the complex.



Stage writer and director Ayyub Aqakhani in an undated photo.