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Boycott Israel

320 officials from Latin America: Sanction Israel if it annexes West Bank

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ARTICLE

James L. Gelvin
UCLA Professor

West Bank annexation: The triumph of domestic politics over international law and common sense

If Israel annexes the settlement blocs and/or the Jordan Valley, it will mark the triumph of domestic politics—both Israeli and American—over international law and even common sense. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu believes annexation will enable him to put together a clear majority in the Knesset that would allow him to derail legal proceedings against him (he is facing corruption charges that could lead to jail time, if he isn't protected by the Knesset). Donald Trump believes that agreeing to annexation, combined with moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and the legality of the settlements, cutting off assistance to the Palestinians and expelling their diplomats from the United States, and the like, will gain him evangelical Christian support in the November elections. While his support in the evangelical community was overwhelming in the past, it, like his support among most other layers of the population, is tenuous in the wake of his mishandling the pandemic, social justice issues/Black Lives Matter, and the economy.

The three pro-settler Zionists who came up with the Trump plan and have been promoting it—Jared Kushner (Trump's son-in-law), Jason Greenblatt (Trump's special envoy to Israel-Palestine), and David Freedman (U.S. ambassador to Israel), have been talking about a "paradigm shift" to replace the stalled negotiations based on the Oslo Accord. Taking a page from the "Israel Victory Project"—the brainchild of the Middle East Forum, an extreme right wing think tank founded by the Islamophobic Daniel Pipes—they believe that continued negotiations are pointless and that Israel should just annex the settlements and declare victory over the Palestinians. ➔7

Overnight stays hit 5 million record high in month

TEHRAN – Iranian travelers registered a record high of more than 5 million overnight stays at accommodation centers across the country during the month of Khordad (May 21–June 20), CHTN reported.

The figure shows that the tourism industry of Iran is rebounding despite suffering from a major setback in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, marking a monthly record high for overnight stays over the past few months, said Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Thursday.

Iran limited travel between its major cities to halt the spread of the coronavirus in March, which led to a drastic reduction in the number of travelers. The government also closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites across the country in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak.

The minister also noted that the tourists as well as accommodation centers need to meet strict health protocols and expressed his hope that travelers prevent the tourist attractions to go back into lockdown by following health protocols.

Earlier last week, deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri announced that a total of 5,703,679 people made overnight stays during the month of Khordad at authorized accommodation centers such as hotels, traditional lodging houses, ecotourism units, pilgrim's guest houses, apartment hotels, guest houses, and tourist centers.

He also noted that during Khordad, over 11,000 surveillance visits were made to tourist facilities including accommodation centers, restaurants, catering businesses, travel agencies, restaurants across 31 provinces of the country, which shows the ministry's simultaneous attention to travel and travel safety. ➔8

The world's largest Confederate monument faces renewed calls for removal

Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial, a nine-story-high bas-relief sculpture carved into a sprawling rock face northeast of Atlanta, is perhaps the South's most audacious monument to its pro-slavery legacy still intact.

Despite long-standing demands for the removal of what many consider a shrine to racism, the giant depiction of three Confederate heroes on horseback still towers ominously over the Georgia countryside, protected by state law.

The monument - which reopens on Independence Day weekend after the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to close for weeks - has faced renewed calls for removal since the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a Black man who died during an arrest by a white police officer who pinned his neck to the ground with a knee.

The brutality of Floyd's death, captured on cellphone video, triggered a national outcry against racial injustice, and revived a long-sim-

mering battle between those demanding the removal of racist symbols from the public sphere, and those who believe monuments honor the tradition and history of the South.

"Here we are in Atlanta, the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement and still we have the largest Confederate monument in the world," said Gerald Griggs, a vice president of the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP civil rights group, which staged a march last week calling for the carving to be scraped from the mountainside. "It's time for our state to get on the right side of history."

The sheer scale of the monument makes its removal a daunting task to contemplate. Longer than a 100-yard American football field, it features the likenesses of Jefferson Davis, the president of the 11-state Confederacy, and two of its legendary military leaders, Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, notched in a relief 400 feet above ground. ➔10

Iraqi officials irate as Saudi daily publishes cartoon against Ayatollah Sistani

Iraqi officials have condemned the publication of an offensive cartoon of prominent Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in a Saudi-owned newspaper, saying the depiction stems from the failure of Riyadh's Takfiri plots.

Hadi al-Ameri, secretary general of the Badr Organization, which leads the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance at the Iraqi parliament, said in a statement on Friday that the Riyadh regime had once again insulted the religious authority and crossed red

lines by the blasphemous cartoon at the Saudi-owned London-based daily Asharq al-Awsat newspaper.

The image underestimates the feelings of millions of Shia, Sunni and Christian Iraqis who are aware of Ayatollah Sistani's role in preserving the country's national sovereignty against the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group, al-Sumaria TV network quoted Ameri as saying.

He noted that the cartoon shows the Saudi

regime's intention to continue its suspicious schemes and hostilities against all those seeking to maintain Iraq's unity.

Takfirim, the trademark of many terror outfits, is largely influenced by Wahhabism that is the radical ideology dominating Saudi Arabia and freely preached by its clerics.

Meanwhile, Iraqi lawmaker and Fatah spokesman Ahmed al-Asadi said the Saudi daily's move shows that targeting religious authorities still dominates the kingdom's mentality. ➔10



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Passed down from generation to generation: Turkmen jewelry designs

An Iranian craftswoman makes a final inspection on traditional handmade necklaces in her home, which is also house to a small family workshop for crafting personal ornaments, in Turkmen Sahra, a region in the northeast of Iran near the Caspian Sea, June 30, 2020.

Turkmen jewelry designs mainly feature floral patterns, animals, and abstract images, relying on geometric patterns amongst them circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles.

Security official says Gen. Soleimani assassination was U.S. gift to Takfiri terrorists

TEHRAN — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Saturday that assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was the United States' gift to Takfiri terrorists and their supporters.

Speaking at a meeting of the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council, Shamkhani said that Soleimani's important role in fighting terrorism was the reason behind the U.S. hatred towards him.

The top security official noted that the world should praise Soleimani's endeavor in fighting terrorism.

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

Soleimani was recognized internationally as a legendary commander in the war against terrorist groups, especially Daesh (ISIS).

Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alqasi-Mehr announced on June 29 that 36 individuals, including Donald Trump, have been identified in connection with the assassination and Interpol has been notified to arrest them.

"36 individuals who cooperated, collaborated, and participated in the assassination of Hajj Qassem, including political and military authorities of the U.S. and other countries, have been identified," he stated.

The prosecutor general explained that Trump is at the top of the list, and he'll be facing prosecution even after his term as president.

Russia says dispute resolution mechanism lacks clear procedure

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov said on Saturday that Dispute Resolution Mechanism lacks clear and agreed procedure.

"#Iran requested the Joint Commission of #JCPOA to address Tehran's concerns regarding implementation of the deal by France, Germany and UK through Dispute Resolution Mechanism. This is the third time when JCPOA participants try to launch DRM which lacks clear and agreed procedure," he tweeted.



Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a letter to EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell on Friday denouncing the noncompliance by Germany, the UK, and France regarding the 2015 nuclear deal, after the three European states drafted an anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors which was approved by June 19.

The EU foreign policy chief, responding to the letter, said on Friday, "I have received today a letter from the Foreign Minister of Iran referring Iran's concerns regarding implementation issues

by France, Germany and the United Kingdom under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to the Joint Commission for resolution through the Dispute Resolution Mechanism, as set out in paragraph 36 of the agreement."

"As I have said previously, the Dispute Resolution Mechanism requires intensive efforts in good faith by all," he said, adding, "As Coordinator of the Joint Commission, I expect all JCPOA participants to approach this process in this spirit within the framework of the JCPOA."

He further said, "The Joint Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the agreement under the terms of the JCPOA, has met since 2016 to discuss the implementation of the JCPOA and address pertinent issues brought to the attention of the Coordinator by any participant."

The EU foreign policy chief concluded, "As we approach the fifth anniversary of the JCPOA, I should like to take this opportunity to recall the importance of the agreement. The JCPOA is a historic achievement for global nuclear non-proliferation contributing to regional and global security. I remain determined to continue working with the participants of the JCPOA and the international community to preserve it."

Envoy: Iranians' basic human rights constantly violated by over 40 years of U.S. sanctions

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Ambassador to Paris Bahram Qassemi said that Iran has tolerated illegal sanctions for more than 40 years, and urged the global bodies to take action against the gross violation of human rights by the U.S.

Iran has endured the illegitimate moves and unilateral sanctions targeting the right for life and health of ordinary citizens, Qassemi wrote on his Twitter account on Friday.

Isn't it time for the international community, including the UN Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs, to take a timely and appropriate approach, in compliance with their natural duties, towards a government that commits grave human rights abuses and supports child-killing?, he said.

In a relevant Twitter account on July 1, Qassemi blasted Israel's annexation plan, warning that the regime's expansionist policies endanger regional and global security.

"The West Bank annexation plan is continuation of the occupational and expansionist policies and aggressions of a regime which does not value the UN charter, human rights, international rules and the international community in implementation of its illegitimate, inhumane, racist and never-ending desires," Qassemi was quoted by the Iranian embassy in France's official twitter page as saying on Wednesday.

He warned that dire consequences are waiting for regional and global security and stability if the regime's expansionism and unilateralism as well as the clear violation of the basic international and human rights are not confronted on time.

The Israeli regime plans to annex 30 percent of the West Bank to the occupied territories in early July, under the U.S.-Israeli "Deal of the Century" plan, with the support of President Donald Trump's administration. It has angered Palestinians and international communities such as the European Union.

In response to the annexation plan, the Palestinian Authority cut ties with the Israeli regime and the United States.

No service in government offices for people without face mask: Rouhani

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — President Hassan Rouhani said government offices across Iran will not offer any service to people refusing to wear face masks as of July 5 as part of strict regulations to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

In comments at a Saturday meeting of the Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters, Rouhani said wearing face masks in all public places will be obligatory as of tomorrow.

People without masks will not receive services at any organization and institution, he noted, adding that government employees will also be barred from entering offices if they refuse to wear masks or observe the health regulations.

The president also emphasized that hiding the coronavirus infection is a violation of rights of others, saying anybody aware of contracting COVID-19 is duty bound to inform others on humanitarian and religious grounds.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani praised the Health Ministry and all Iranian medical staff for their great job in making efforts to tackle the pandemic.

The death toll from the novel coronavirus and the number of new cases of infection in Iran have risen sharply in recent weeks after the reopening of businesses and public places.

The death toll from COVID-19 in Iran has exceeded 11,200 and the total number of coronavirus cases has reached 235,429.

An official from Iranian Judiciary said in March that according to the country's regulations, making any threat to public health is a crime and those aware of being infected with coronavirus and hiding it will be jailed for at least one year.

Iran files lawsuit against U.S. over sanctions effects

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Laya Joneidi, the presidential aide for legal affairs, announced on Saturday that Iran has filed a lawsuit in the International Court of Justice against the United States over effects of sanctions on fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

During a visit to the Pasteur Institute, she described the sanctions as "inhuman" and against human rights.

Donald Trump's administration has refused to remove sanctions on Iran even when the country is in the battle against the deadly coronavirus.

Democratic U.S. presidential nominee Joe Biden said on April 2 that Trump's administration must ease economic sanctions on Iran as a humanitarian gesture during the global coronavirus pandemic.

He said the U.S. has a moral obligation to be among the first to offer aid to people in need regardless of where they live when confronting a virus that knows no borders or political affiliations, according to Aljazeera.

Renowned American scholar Noam Chomsky said in May it is "sheer sadism" that that



the United States maintains sanctions on Iran during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The sanctions are illegitimate in the first place, and maintaining them during the pandemic is sheer sadism," Chomsky told IRNA in an interview.

On March 31, a UN human rights expert called for lifting international sanctions against countries ranging from Iran to North Korea and Venezuela in coronavirus crisis, according to Reuters.

"The continued imposition of crippling

economic sanctions on Syria, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, and, to a lesser degree, Zimbabwe, to name the most prominent instances, severely undermines the ordinary citizens' fundamental right to sufficient and adequate food," Hilal Elver, UN special rapporteur on the right to food, said in a statement.

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

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

Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, also said on March 24 that "in a context of a global pandemic, impeding medical efforts in one country heightens the risk for all of us."

"At this crucial time, both for global public health reasons, and to support the rights and lives of millions of people in these countries, sectoral sanctions should be eased or suspended," she said in a statement.

University professor says extension of arms embargo on Iran is unlikely

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Michael Hollingsworth, a professor at the University of South Alabama, has said that an extension of arms embargo on Iran by the United States is very unlikely.

In an interview with ILNA published on Saturday, Hollingsworth said that China and Russia will veto the U.S. move.

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

The professor noted that Washington has left the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, and cannot return the sanctions.

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

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

On Tuesday, the U.S. was rebuked at the UN Security Council meeting, including by the five European countries on the council. A week earlier the U.S. had introduced a draft resolution at the council that would extend the arms embargo on Iran before it expires in October.

The Tuesday meeting became the scene of battle by countries against the United States. It drew strong opposition from the United Nations, Russia and China.

Russia's Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia slammed the U.S. 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.

China 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 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.

"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.

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

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned on Thursday that an extension of arms embargo on Iran will jeopardize efforts to preserve the nuclear deal.

"The United States' push was not only unjustified but also

counterproductive in terms of the prospects of preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," Russia's Sputnik news agency quoted Zakharova as saying.

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

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

Those members of the JCPOA, who have maintained a genuine full commitment to the nuclear deal, will continue to fight for its preservation and sustainable implementation, she said.

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

In a letter to the United Nations' Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council circulated on June 8, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and called for "universal condemnation" of the U.S. attempts.

The Russian foreign minister said the United States withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six major powers and now has no legal right to try to use the UN resolution endorsing the deal to indefinitely continue the arms embargo.

China has also announced opposition to extension of the arms embargo.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Tuesday that China opposes the U.S. efforts to put pressure on the UN Security Council to extend arms embargo on Iran, based on the nuclear deal.

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

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

Zarif advisor calls UNSC meeting manifestation of multilateralism

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Najafi Khoshroodi, an advisor to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, has said that the recent UN Security Council meeting was a manifestation of multilateralism.

"A result of the meeting was highlighting the importance of the United Nations' status and multilateral mechanisms against the United States' unilateral demands," Khoshroodi told IRNA in an interview published on Saturday.

He said, "Participants in the meeting attached importance to full implementation of the 2231 resolution. So, the United States failed to make other countries and the Security Council accompany its unilateralism."

In an address to a virtual UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday, Zarif condemned Washington's "malign" unilateralism, saying the U.S. has undermined global peace and security.

"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," Zarif said.

The meeting was arranged under U.S. pressure to discuss an extension of arms embargo against Iran in violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal.

■ 'Europe should be more independent'

The U.S. was rebuffed at the council meeting. Even five European countries sitting on the council objected the U.S. proposal.

Khoshroodi said European countries should show independence in the face of U.S. pressure.

"They [the Europeans] should think about their regional and economic interests and be aware that linking their foreign policies to the United States will harm their security," he noted.

■ 'Extension of arms embargo will violate intl. law'

Khoshroodi also said that an extension of arms embargo will be a violation international law that will have adverse global effects.

The United States has stepped up calls

for an extension of UN arms embargo on Iran since April. The arms embargo on Iran is set to expire in October.

The U.S. administration has made such action despite the fact that Donald Trump officially quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and slapped the harshest sanctions in history, including a total oil embargo, against Iran.

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

In his address to the Security Council, Zarif said, "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?"

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

'Iran-Venezuela trade poses no threat'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Michael Hollingsworth, a professor at the University of South Alabama, has said that trade between Iran and Venezuela poses no threat to the world.

In an interview with ILNA published on Saturday, Hollingsworth said that the United States is well aware that any action against the Iranian tankers will have consequences.

Reportedly, the U.S. seeks to seize four Iranian tankers sailing towards Venezuela.

The lawsuit, filed late on Wednesday in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, was followed on Thursday by a warrant issued by U.S. District Judge James Boasberg for the seizure of the more than 1.1 million barrels of gasoline in the four vessels, Reuters reported.

Legal sources said the gasoline could likely only be seized

by U.S. authorities if the tankers enter U.S. territorial waters.

In the civil-forfeiture complaint, U.S. federal prosecutors aim to stop delivery of Iranian gasoline aboard the Liberia-flagged Bella, Bering, Pandi and Luna, according to the lawsuit, first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

Boasberg issued the warrant for the seizure of the gasoline in the tankers based on probable cause that the fuel is forfeitable, the Justice Department said.

The lawsuit also aims to stop the flow of revenues from oil sales to Iran.

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

The tankers carried 1,520,000 barrels of gasoline and



diesel fuel to Venezuela. There was also a team of Iranian engineers and specialists from the oil industry on board heading for the country.

Main cause of Natanz nuclear facility incident to be announced at ‘appropriate time’: spokesman

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Tehran has announced that the main cause of a recent incident at the Natanz nuclear facility has been determined and will be announced at an “appropriate time”.

Keyvan Khosravi, spokesman of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Friday that different hypotheses regarding the incident were investigated, which led to the determination of its main cause.

“Due to some security considerations, the cause and manner of this incident will be announced at a proper time,” Press TV quoted him as saying.

He said the damage to one of the sheds under construction at the Natanz complex was limited and investigators did not find any nuclear material at the building.

The Iranian security official rejected rumors about radioactive contamination following the incident.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), on Thursday reported the incident, saying it had caused no stoppage or slowdown of enrichment because the affected shed was actually under construction and not part of the enrichment process yet.

His remarks came hours after an informed Iranian security official told Press TV that there was no evidence to show that the incident has been an act of intentional sabotage.

Kamalvandi said, “The incident took place at about 02:00 local time this morning and



“Due to some security considerations, the cause and manner of this incident will be announced at a proper time,” says spokesman of the Supreme National Security Council.

caused no loss of life,” adding, “We have many open-space sheds at the Shahid Ahmadi Roshan enrichment complex. Our enrichment activities are mostly done underground.”

“Our open-space sheds do different things.

This was one of those sheds, which was under construction. We have material damage, but no loss of life,” he added.

A security official, who was speaking to Press TV on condition of anonymity earlier

in the day, also affirmed that the incident is under thorough examination by expert teams from the AEOI.

He likewise ruled out the notion of contamination, saying the affected site did not contain any radioactive material, adding that none of the AEOI’s personnel were present there at the time of the incident.

Natanz is a uranium enrichment center located in the city of the same name in Isfahan Province, some 250 kilometers (155 miles) south of the capital, Tehran.

It is among the sites now being monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under a 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers.

The IAEA, meanwhile, announced that it was aware of the incident but did not foresee any change to the UN nuclear watchdog’s regular verification of Iran’s commitments to the body’s Safeguards Agreement as a result of the development.

It said the location where the incident occurred does not contain nuclear materials.

The Safeguards Agreement between Iran and the IAEA ensures non-diversion of nuclear material declared by the Islamic Republic.

Meanwhile, Iran’s Civil Defense Organization chief Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali threatened on Thursday that Iran will respond if incident in Natanz was a cyberattack.

A Kuwaiti newspaper reported on Friday that Jerusalem was behind the incident.

Zarif writes to Borrell, denounces E3

1→ and once again referred the cases of the European countries’ non-compliance according to Article 36 of the JCPOA to the Joint Commission for settlement,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday.

Zarif has emphasized in the letter that “any interference in the ongoing safeguards cooperation between Iran and the IAEA would run counter to the JCPOA and could have negative effects on the principles of the existing Safeguards cooperation,” Mousavi added.

The spokesman further reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared for the maintenance and full implementation of the JCPOA by all parties to the agreement, stressing the need for Iran to fully enjoy the economic results of the sanctions’ removal regime as defined by the JCPOA.

Iran will take the necessary and proportional measures in response to any excessive demands and irresponsible behaviors, and firmly calls on the three European states to prepare the ground to save and fully implement the JCPOA by honoring their commitments instead of following the United States’ policy of maximum pressure, the spokesperson concluded.



Borrell said on Friday that he has responded to Zarif’s letter.

“I have received today a letter from the Foreign Minister of Iran referring Iran’s concerns regarding implementation issues by France, Germany and the United Kingdom

under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to the Joint Commission for resolution through the Dispute Resolution Mechanism, as set out in paragraph 36 of the agreement,” the top European diplomat said.

“As I have said previously, the Dispute Resolution Mechanism requires intensive efforts in good faith by all,” he said, adding, “As Coordinator of the Joint Commission, I expect all JCPOA participants to approach this process in this spirit within the framework of the JCPOA.”

He further said, “The Joint Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the agreement under the terms of the JCPOA, has met since 2016 to discuss the implementation of the JCPOA and address pertinent issues brought to the attention of the Coordinator by any participant.”

The EU foreign policy chief concluded, “As we approach the fifth anniversary of the JCPOA, I should like to take this opportunity to recall the importance of the agreement. The JCPOA is a historic achievement for global nuclear non-proliferation contributing to regional and global security. I remain determined to continue working with the participants of the JCPOA and the international community to preserve it.”

Iran is becoming immune to U.S. pressure

(Excerpt from Foreign Policy) — U.S. President Donald Trump said on June 5 that Iran should not wait until after the presidential election “to make the Big deal,” but can get a “better deal” with him now. Trump’s remarks came after a recent prisoner swap, which saw detained U.S. Navy veteran Michael White released from Iran in exchange for Iranian American doctor Majid Taheri. However, while Trump may want to negotiate with Iran and reinforce his self-avowed reputation as a deal-maker before the U.S. election, his “maximum pressure” policy has all but eliminated the chance for U.S.-Iranian diplomacy in the months to come.

Iran has proven resilient in the face of U.S. pressure. While many ordinary Iranians are suffering, the economy is not in total free fall, as many in Washington hoped for. Instead, the country has shown signs of economic recovery, with domestic production and employment increasing. According to Iran’s Central Bank chief Abdolnaser Hemmati, Iran’s non-oil gross domestic product grew by 1.1 percent last year. Prominent Iranian economist Saeed Laylaz also contends that Iran’s economy can weather the coronavirus pandemic and may experience growth this year despite the virus.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, one of the highest decision-making bodies in Iran, said in response to Trump’s offer for a deal, “The exchange of prisoners is not the result of negotiations & no talks will happen in the future.” Shamkhani’s remarks reflect a consistent line in Tehran: Negotiations with the United States are off the table. Even moderate President Hassan Rouhani’s foreign minister, Javad Zarif, and spokesperson Ali Rabiee now maintain that prisoner swaps can occur without negotiations.

The situation was different just a few months ago. The only other time the United States and Iran exchanged prisoners under the Trump administration was in December 2019, when Iran released Princeton doctorate student Xiyue Wang for Iranian scientist Masoud Soleimani. Unlike the recent White-Taheri exchange, the December swap also saw high-level meetings be-



Iran has proven resilient in the face of U.S. pressure. While many ordinary Iranians are suffering, the economy is not in total free fall, as many in Washington hoped for. Instead, the country has shown signs of economic recovery, with domestic production and employment increasing.

tween U.S. and Iranian officials, a rare instance of bilateral U.S.-Iranian talks under the Trump administration. The United States has called for such a meeting again, but Iranian officials now accuse it of sabotaging diplomatic efforts.

Rouhani’s rhetoric around the time of the December swap also suggested he was more open to a new round of negotiations with the United States. Rouhani explicitly declared in the lead-up to the swap that Tehran had not ruled out talks and that

negotiations could be “revolutionary.”

Then, in late December, Rouhani traveled to Japan in a trip that Japanese media said was greenlighted by Washington. There was speculation that the trip could have led to a “small deal” between the United States and Iran, with Iranian media reporting that Japan could get a U.S. waiver for importing Iranian oil and release billions of dollars in frozen Iranian oil revenues. Such a deal could have built confidence and met Rouhani’s

“International relations and the real estate market are not similar. Bullying and bluster do not win deals; mutual respect and ‘win-win’ compromise do.”

precondition of sanctions removal for negotiating with Trump.

However, any hope that the positive diplomatic momentum built in late 2019 would lead to diplomatic progress between the United States and Iran was crushed in early January, with the U.S. assassination of Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani. Many millions thronged Iran’s cities calling for revenge after the killing. Rouhani defiantly exclaimed in February: “They thought that with maximum pressure they can take us to the table of negotiation in a position of weakness ... this will never happen.”

The political climate in Iran has since decisively turned hostile to any talk of negotiating with the United States, reestablishing a taboo that existed for years before the nuclear negotiations during the presidency of Barack Obama.

“Negotiations and compromise with America, the focal point of global arrogance, are useless and harmful,” said Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran’s new parliamentary speaker, in his first speech to the body. “Our strategy toward the terroristic America is to complete our vengeance for the blood of the martyr Soleimani.”

Trump is mistaken if he believes “maximum pressure” is getting him closer to a deal with Iran. The policy is not leading to Iran’s capitulation or collapse, but entrenching U.S.-Iran hostilities and keeping the United States perennially at the cusp of war in the Middle East. Trump, who ran in 2016 on getting the United States out of costly Middle Eastern wars, nearly went to war last June and again in January over his decision to escalate with Iran.

An alternative approach is possible but requires Trump to ditch maximum pressure and rebuild the trust necessary for successful negotiations. International relations and the real estate market are not similar. Bullying and bluster do not win deals; mutual respect and “win-win” compromise do. Trump has styled himself as a deal-maker, but ahead of the November election he has zero foreign-policy victories to his name. If he wants any semblance of a positive foreign-policy legacy, he needs to get off the path to war and on a path to negotiations with Iran.

Tehran issues statement on anniversary of abduction of diplomats

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has issued a statement on the 38th anniversary of the abduction of four Iranian diplomats in Lebanon by mercenaries of the Zionist regime.

“Thirty-eight years have passed since the kidnapping of four Iranian diplomats, Seyyed Mohsen Mousavi, Ahmad Motevasse- lian, Kazem Akhavan and Taghi Rastegar, by mercenaries of the Zionist Regime of Israel at the al-Barbareh checkpoint in northern Lebanon back in 1982,” the Foreign Ministry said.



“As it has been announced over all these years, evidence suggests that the diplomats kidnapped in Lebanon were handed over to the forces of the occupying Zionist regime of Israel and then taken to the occupied territories, and that they are now being held in the prisons of this illegitimate regime,” it said.

The ministry pointed out that Lebanon was occupied by the Zionist regime at the time with the full support of the United States, adding that Iran holds the Zionist regime and its supporters politically and legally responsible for their kidnapping which was a terrorist act.

The statement also criticized the international community for failing to take any serious action with regard to the crime.

It went on to say that the Zionist regime keeps committing crimes and its acts are in breach of international regulations and continues to shirk responsibility for the issue.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the Lebanese government’s cooperation and actions to establish the fate of the four above-mentioned diplomats, including the sending of a letter to the then UN secretary general in 2008 in which the abduction of the Iranian diplomats has been highlighted.”

“In the meantime, Iran once again wants Lebanese officials and the UN secretary general and the International Red Cross and other international institutions to seriously discharge their inherent, legal and human responsibility in pursuing this case, and make every effort to shed light on the status of the abducted diplomats and, accordingly, [Iran] stresses the necessity of the establishment of a fact-finding committee by the International Committee of the Red Cross,” it added.

The Foreign Ministry also sympathized with the kidnapped diplomats’ families, who have suffered a lot over all these years and have always been waiting for them to return home, and hoped that all those held captive or prisoner by the Zionist regime, especially the four dear diplomats, will be released soon.

Mousavi says likely to be named envoy to ‘an important neighboring country’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman **d e s k** Abbas Mousavi has confirmed that he is very likely to be named as Iran’s ambassador to an important neighboring country.

“I’m very likely to become the ambassador of an important neighboring country, inshallah,” Mousavi said on Friday during a TV interview.

“I’m still here,” he said when asked to specify the time of his departure. “So, don’t drive me out.”

He did not provide further details.

Iran urges IAEA to observe principle of impartiality, professionalism

“You would better keep both social and political distancing,” Araqchi says in iconic tweet to Hook-Grossi meeting

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi called on the UN nuclear watchdog to observe the principle of impartiality and professionalism in the IAEA.

Having failed to convince the UN Security Council (UNSC) to extend an arms embargo on Iran, the U.S. sent Brian Hook, the U.S. Special Representative for Iran, to meet with IAEA’s Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in the Austrian capital Vienna on Wednesday to “discuss the IAEA’s verification work in Iran and express full support for the Agency’s professionalism and objectivity.”

Grossi later posted a picture of his meeting with Hook on Twitter with both wearing no mask amid the COVID-19 crisis, saying the two had discussed Iran’s compliance with the IAEA’s safeguard regime.

In an ironic tweet, Araqchi reacted to the meeting and told Grossi, “You would better keep both social and political distancing.” He also called on the UN nuclear watchdog to observe the principle of impartiality and professionalism in the IAEA.

The US recently served the UNSC with a draft resolution on the extension of the arms embargo, however, its appeal fell flat at the United Nations Security Council, where Russia and China rejected it outright and close allies of the U.S. were ambivalent.

Addressing a virtual UNSC meeting on Tuesday, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the United States was an “outlaw bully” that the world body should not surrender to, warning that giving in to Washington’s pressure threatens to restore the “law of the jungle.”

Weight of quarterly exports from Kordestan Province up 67%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The weight of exports from Iran's western Kordestan Province rose 67 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

Director General of Kordestan Province's Customs Department Bakhtiyar Rahmani-pour announced that some 220,000 tons of goods valued at over \$58 million were exported from the province during the first quarter, showing 67 percent growth compared to the first quarter of the previous year, Fars news agency reported.



He noted that over 57,000 trucks exited Kordestan's border crossings in the three-month period.

The trades between the Iranian province and Iraq were halted for over three months due to the coronavirus outbreak.

In a relevant development in early June, Bashmagh border market – the only transit route between Kordestan province and Iraq – resumed working after a nearly 100-day hiatus.

Iranian and Iraqi delegations had earlier convened in the western Iranian city of Marivan and decided to reopen the border market while observing health protocols.

The trucks have to pass through sanitizing tunnels at both sides of the border. While Iran is providing free services, the Iraqi Kurdistan region is charging the trucks upon entering the region, Iranian Kordestan Province Deputy Governor-General Khaled Jafari said.

TEDPIX rises 8,464 points on Saturday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** —TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), went up 8,464 points to 1.621 million on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The index had gained 13.5 percent to stand at 1.612 million points in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported, Bank Mellat, Tejarat Bank, Isfahan Oil Refinery, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Iran Khodro Investment Development Company, and Mobarakeh Steel Company were the major contributors to the index's weekly growth.

TEDPIX hit the record high of 1.5 million points on Tuesday.



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

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

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

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 June 22, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the amount of liquidity absorbed by Iran's capital market has reached 500 trillion rials (about \$12 billion) during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTA instructs implementation of capital market incentive package

1 → because of some rumors or misconceptions some of them are worried that if they enter the stock market their tax records of previous years would be scrutinized.

To address the concerns of the mentioned companies, the government has prohibited INTA from investigating the records prior to the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) for the newly accepted.

Although the Iranian stock market is a

newly developed market and people have only recently gotten acquainted with its activities, this market has been booming in recent years.

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

Commodities worth \$4.75b traded at IME in June



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 3.088 million tons of commodities valued at \$4.75 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in June, IME Public Relations Department reported.

Last month, the oil and petrochemical trading floor of the IME played host to trading of 1,928,480 tons of commodities worth more than \$2.228 billion.

On this trading floor, more than 454,287 tons of bitumen, 363,163 tons of polymer products and 129,840 tons of chemical products, 734,000 tons of VB feed stock, 118,000 tons of lube cut oil, 108,493 tons of sulfur, 4,920 tons of insulation, 7,600 tons of slaps waxes, 150 tons of argon as well as 8,027 tons of oil were traded by customers.

The metal and mineral trading floor witnessed trading over 1,156,368 tons of commodities worth more than \$2.5 billion.

On this trading floor 1,036,628 tons of steel, 18,475 tons of copper, 600 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 90 tons of precious metals concentrates, 71,970 tons

of zinc, 200 tons of lead ingot, 28,405 tons of aluminum, as well as 17 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

Furthermore, in agricultural trading floor of the IME more than eight tons of saffron was traded by the customers.

The side market of the IME experienced trading of 3,176 tons of tomato paste, 60 tons of used locomotive engine oil as well as 606 tons of metal scrape.

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

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

Fish consumption per capita stands at 13kg in Iran



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei put the country's fish consumption per capita at 13 kilograms, IRNA reported.

Iran's fishery output reached 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei has previously announced.

The official said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The official noted that the output, which was more than the projected amount, was achieved through the help of research sectors as well as the ground laid by the private sector.

Referring to the high quality of Iran's fishery products, the head of IFO said that these products were sold easily in the export markets.

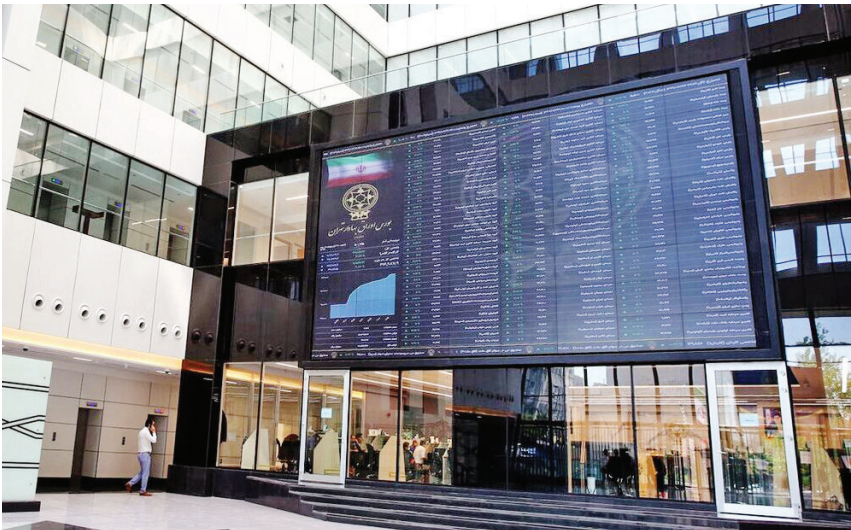
In mid-January, the official had also said that new export destinations have welcomed Iran's high-quality fishery prod-

ucts in the past Iranian calendar year. New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have opened up for Iranian fishery products in the current year, Khoun-Mirzaei said.

"Based on the negotiations and agreements signed between Iran and China by the minister of agriculture, the Chinese fishery market has been opened to Iranian products. The Eurasian nations and South Korean markets have also welcomed Iranian fishery products and have the potential for exports," the official explained.

According to the deputy head of Fishery Organization Hossein Ali Abdolhay, some 12 aquatic species are already bred in Iran and the figure is planned to reach 17 by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021).

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Iran's Agricultural Parks Company (APC) Ali Ashraf Mansouri has recently announced that some 1,500 hectares of fishery parks are planned to be inaugurated in the country in the current year.



512,000 points at the end of last year.

The recent developments of this market have encouraged the government to focus more on this sector as a potential source of

capital for offsetting oil revenue shortages.

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

Khaf-Herat railway to come on stream by Mar. 2021



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said that Khaf-Herat railway will become operational before the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

The minister announced that a part of Khaf-Herat railway will be constructed by Iran while the remaining part will be built by neighboring Afghanistan, Mehr news agency reported.

Construction operation of the part related to Iran is on the verge of completion, Eslami emphasized.

He put the length of the railway from border to Khaf city at 66km and stated, "The significance of this giant project is that the railway in Afghanistan will be revived, so that Afghanistan will be connected to Iran's national railway network as well as other parts of the world."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Eslami pointed to the transit and added, "Iran has a variety of routes such as North-South Corridor and also East-West Corridor in a way that transiting Afghan territory and investing in Afghanistan is essential for Iranian traders and also this country."

Afghanistan government has commitments to transfer country's mining and mineral capacity to other countries, so that a treaty inked between India, Afghanistan and Iran will have an effective role in this regard, he added.

Khaf-Herat railway, as long as 35km, will connect Iraqi rail network to Central Asia.

Khaf-Herat is part of Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project, started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

In a meeting with Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar in Tehran on June 22, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that the third section of Khaf-Herat railway project which connects the rail networks of Iran and Afghanistan will come on stream in the third quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22-December 20).

Underlining the significance of the two countries economic relations, the official said that completing this section is aimed at accelerating the development of economic relations between the two countries.

'Real estate stock exchange to promote transparency in market'



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Deputy Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) says establishment of the country's real estate stock exchange is going to promote transparency in this market.

According to Hossein Selahvarzi, establishing this stock exchange is going to be an opportunity for making the transactions in the housing market more competitive and transparent, and will gain people's trust for participation in mass construction projects, ICCIMA portal reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the officials from Iran's Mercantile Exchange (IME), which is in charge of the establishment of the real estate exchange, Selahvarzi said: "we are studying various aspects of the project."

The official noted that the Real Estate Exchange Company is going to be established with an initial capital of 50 trillion rials (about \$1.2 billion), of which 50 percent will be offered to

people in the form of underwriting, while 25 percent will be shared among government agencies and another 25 percent is given to private sector companies.

"Companies wishing to participate must submit their initial application; these companies will be allocated up to 2.5 percent of the total capital which would be 1.25 trillion rials (equal to nearly \$29 million)."

Underlining the great capacities of this exchange, Selahvarzi said the capital market has the ability to define practical tools for financing the real estate market and large construction projects, and it will make people more confident in participating in the implementation of such projects.

Last week, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand announced the establishment of the country's real estate stock exchange.

The minister had stated that the Economy Ministry was finalizing the issue with the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO).

TPPH to decommission old power plants

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) has started a program for decommissioning worn-out thermal power plants, IRIB reported on Saturday, quoting the company's head.

"Currently, the decommissioning of two power plants is on the agenda, and we hope that the decommissioning operations for Rey and Tarasht power plants will begin this year," Mohsen Tarzatab said.

According to the official, the program is aimed at increasing the average efficiency of the country's power plants.

"The efficiency of old power plants is less than 20 percent," Tarzatab said.

Underlining the company's plans for increasing the efficiency of the country's power plants, he said: "The Ministry of Energy has paid special attention to the optimization of power plants' fuel consumption in the last decade and since the beginning of [the Iranian calendar year] 1392 (March 2013), the program



for converting gas units into combined cycle units was kicked off and the relevant contracts were signed with private sector investors."

According to the official, TPPH has signed deals with the private sector for converting 4,000 megawatts (MW) of gas units into combined cycle plants.

"Currently, more than 3,500 megawatts of these units have either been put into operation or will be inaugurated this year," he said.

The TPPH head mentioned the 20-percent reduction in fuel consumption of power plants by improving the efficiency of thermal power plants, saying: "By converting gas power plants into combined cycle plants the efficiency of these units will increase from about 33 percent up to 50 percent."

Back in May 2019, MAPNA Group's Managing Director Abbas Aliabadi said that six percent of the country's thermal power plants were turned into combined cycle plants in order to reduce greenhouse gases and save energy.

"The conversion of a thermal power plant to a combined cycle one takes about one to two years, however, it is possible for us to convert all the country's thermal power plants into combined cycle plants over a five-year period," Aliabadi said.

Industrial sector's power consumption exceeds 5GW

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Electricity consumption by Iran's industrial sector broke the current Iranian calendar month's (started on May 21) previous record to reach 5,153 megawatts (5.0153 GW) on Friday, IRNA reported.

The mentioned sector's electricity consumption had reached 5,013 megawatts (5.013 GW) last week, which was an unprecedented record in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 19).

The increase in industrial electricity consumption occurred while the consumption trend in other sectors was downward.

Last Saturday, the country's total electricity consumption reached 54,275 MW, which showed that the country's power consumption was still following the steep upward trend earlier this year, the Energy Ministry's data showed.

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

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

Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri



said the country's electricity consumption is expected to reach 60,000 megawatts (60 gigawatts) during the summer peak period.

The deputy minister underlined the Energy Ministry's annual overhaul program

as one of the main strategies of the ministry to realize a "zero blackout" goal during this period and said every year nearly 5,000 MW capacity is added to the total overhaul program.

"Since last summer, 1433 megawatts of nominal capacity and 900 megawatts of practical capacity have been added to the country's power generation capacity," he said referring to the country's nominal electricity generation capacity.

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

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

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

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

37b cubic meters of water stored behind Iranian dams: IWRM

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Nearly 37 billion cubic meters of water is stored behind the dams across Iran, indicating that 71 percent of the capacity of the country's dams is full, a report by Iran Water Resources Management (IWRM) said.

Based on the report published by the IWRM Office of Water Resources Basic Studies, currently the total volume of water stored behind the country's dams stands at 36.89 billion cubic meters, five percent less than the figure for the previous year, Tasnim reported.

As reported, since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2019) up to July 3, 2020, the total volume of water inflow to the reservoirs of the country's dams stood at 51.41 billion cubic meters while the water outflow was reported to be 42.95 billion cubic meters.

In the previous Iranian calendar year's

same period, the water inflow to the country's dams stood at 83.63 billion cubic meters while the outflow was 64.82 billion cubic meters.

Based on the IWRM data, compared to the figures for the previous water year the volume of water entering the country's dams has decreased by 39 percent and the outflow has also declined by 34 percent.

Back in March, IWRM Managing Director Mohammad Rasouliha said more than 30 billion cubic meters of water was stored behind the country's dams.

Following the coronavirus outbreak in Iran, water consumption increased dramatically in March so that the energy ministry urged people to manage their consumption in peak consumption hours.

Earlier in February, Iran's deputy energy minister had said that over 50 percent of the capacity of the country's dams were filled and the rest was kept for flood management.



Last year, the volume of water behind Iran's dams went so down that the country

faced serious problems regarding power generation by hydro-electric power plants.

High quality oil and gas assets should drive an M&A recovery

By Tsvetana Paraskova

The oil price collapse has taken its toll on mergers and acquisitions (M&A) across the U.S. oil and gas industry as companies preserve cash in these highly uncertain times.

The appetite for deal-making in the second quarter, when WTI Crude prices plunged to a negative \$37 a barrel one day in April, was so low that Q2 ranked as the third-lowest quarterly value of upstream deals since 2009, oil & gas data analytics company Enverus said this week.

Compared to the first quarter, the value of oil and gas deals jumped by more than 200 percent in Q2 — to \$2.6 billion from just \$770 million in Q1, Enverus' U.S. upstream M&A report showed.

However, the second-quarter deals included Pure Acquisition Corporation's \$845-million merger with HighPeak Energy in the Permian's Midland basin—a deal that was announced at the end of 2019 and was later recalibrated after the oil price crash. This was the biggest deal in terms of value in Q2.

The other major deals in the top five were for gas assets, predominantly in the Appalachia region, where buyers scooped low-cost assets amid stronger future pricing of natural gas compared to the lows in spot prices seen so far this year.

"While the spot market for natural gas is still suffering from low prices, the future curve 12 or 24 months out is significantly higher. That is permitting buyers to hedge future production at levels that support deal economics," Andrew Dittmar, senior M&A analyst at Enverus, said.

The largest gas deal in Q2 was Shell's sale of its Appalachia shale gas assets for \$541 million to National Fuel Gas Company (NFG).

Deals in the oil industry, however, continue to be scarce and



challenged by volatile prices and uncertain demand recovery.

"Broadly, the market for new deals remains highly challenged, particularly in oil plays," Dittmar added.

In Q1, the deal market collapsed, Enverus said in its M&A report for the first quarter, with all deals taking place before the crash in oil prices in early March, and the largest deals including a bankruptcy sale.

Looking beyond Q2, Enverus sees more gas asset sales, provided that futures prices stay high, with sales potentially extending from Appalachia to other areas of low-cost supply such as the Haynesville.

"However, the market for assets in major oil shale plays, which were the key driver of M&A values for quite a few years, is likely to remain challenged barring a rally in crude prices. Public companies of all sizes are facing significant financial headwinds, making it difficult to convince skeptical investors on the value

of M&A," Enverus said.

There could be some great value opportunities for deals in this environment, as consolidation is a necessity, Deloitte said in a recent report on the U.S. shale patch.

"The key question is what to buy and, more importantly, what not to buy. Any large acquisition or merger should be considered only if one plus one is greater than two on both operational and financial fronts," according to Deloitte.

While some companies may be considering acquisitions, others are struggling to survive at these low oil prices, and U.S. oil production has curtailed around 2 million bpd of output since the oil price crash.

The rig count has collapsed in recent months, although the decline has started to slow in the past two weeks, according to Baker Hughes data. The number of oil rigs dropped by 3 rigs for the week to July 2, bringing the total to 185—compared to 788 active rigs this time last year. According to EIA estimates, U.S. oil production held for the second week at 11 million bpd for the week ending June 26. But oil production is still 2.1 million bpd less than the all-time high from the start of this year.

The shale patch slashed expenditures for 2020 and suspended production guidance after the price crash.

"Oil prices have risen significantly since the May lows, and we expect that most E&P companies will issue more definitive production guidance, along with recalibrated drilling and completion activity, in their first half 2020 earnings reports in a few weeks," RBN Energy said in a note last week.

Although some producers are starting to bring back part of the production they had curtailed, it will likely be a few years — or never — until U.S. crude oil output returns to its pre-crisis levels of 13 million bpd.

China's era of mega-dams is ending as solar and wind power rise

It's the beginning of the end for the era of mega-dam building in China.

China Three Gorges Corp. on Monday turned on the first set of generators at the massive Wudongde hydropower plant, deep in the mountains of Yunnan province. About 170 kilometers (106 miles) downstream on the Jinsha River sits Baihetan, the last of its kind, scheduled to go into operation next year.

According to Bloomberg, at full run, the two sites will produce more electricity than every power plant in The Philippines combined. They're the final two mega-dams in a Chinese construction boom that goes back more than half a century, one that became increasingly mired in controversy over the trade-off between the benefits of the renewable energy and flood prevention and the social and environmental costs.



Now, China's hydro industry is down-shifting toward smaller projects and pumped storage. Engineers have run out of the easiest locations to power massive sets of turbines and the falling cost of rival energy sources such as solar mean it isn't worth moving on to more challenging locations.

"It's so cheap developing renewables and coal-fired power, why bother injecting huge sums of money to develop hydro 2,000 kilometers deep in the Tibetan plateau," said Frank Yu, an analyst with Wood Mackenzie Ltd. "The future of hydro is going to be pumped storage and is also going to be smaller and smaller."

China's dam-building era began in the 1950s, soon after the Communist Party gained power, but it reached a crescendo in the past two decades. After Baihetan gears up to full capacity in late 2022, China will have completed five of the world's 10-biggest hydropower plants in just 10 years. China's dams generated more electricity in 2017 than the total supply of every other country in the world besides the U.S. and India.

Hydro power

Harnessing China's rivers, which flow from the snowy peaks in the west to the fertile deltas in the east, has always been a prime concern of its leaders. More than 4,000 years ago, the emperor known as Yu the Great gained eternal fame by employing dikes, dams and canals to control flooding that plagued the ancient civilization.

The Communist Party used a disastrous flood in 1931 to argue that the Kuomintang government was a failure, and when Mao Zedong took over in 1949 dam-building was a priority. But construction and engineering were often subpar, resulting in more disasters like the Bangqiao and Shimantan dam collapses in 1975 that killed as many as 240,000 people.

As China emerged onto the global scene in the late 1990s, so too did its dam-building industry. "Since the turn of the century, the country has more than quadrupled its installed capacity and accounted for over half of global hydropower growth," said Samuel Law, an analyst for the International Hydropower Association.

The modern mega-dam building period began in earnest with the long-touted project to block the Yangtze River at the base of the Three Gorges, a series of narrow passageways between mountains that hem in China's longest river.

The project was unusually controversial in China. Proponents touted the benefits of clean energy, improved navigation and the chance to tame one of the nation's most flood-prone rivers. Opponents focused on the million-plus people who would be forced to resettle from the narrow strips of fertile orange groves along the river's edge to harsher environments on higher ground, along with the loss of cultural and archaeological sites.

Work began in 1994 and when the final generator was switched on in 2012 it became the largest hydropower plant in the world, generating 22.5 gigawatts. Two more massive projects, the 6.4-gigawatt Xiangjiaba and the 13.9-gigawatt Xiluodu, were completed in 2014 on the Jinsha River, which feeds into the Yangtze. Along with Wudongde and Baihetan, the 1,200-kilometer stretch of water will have five of the 10 largest hydropower plants on earth.

Mega dams

Pickings are about to get slimmer. Big hydropower plants require large flows of water cascading down a steep change in altitude and China has tapped most of the best prospects that are easy to reach.

After Wudongde and Baihetan, there are no dams bigger than 10 gigawatts are under construction or in planning or permitting stages, according to Pavan Vyakaranam, senior power analyst at GlobalData.

"Although the country has a strong pipeline of mega hydropower projects, it has mostly exhausted its major potential sites and there is reduced scope for new announcements," he said.

Slower growth

A similar story happened in the U.S., where massive government dam projects helped pull the country out of the Great Depression in the late 1930s, including the Hoover Dam, the world's largest at the time. By the end of World War II, hydroelectricity supplied more than a third of the nation's needs.

Construction peaked in the 1960s, then slowly ground to a halt as utilities turned to nuclear power and opposition grew from farmers, environmentalists and Native Americans. Last year, hydroelectricity provided 6.6 percent of U.S. power supplies, according to the Energy Information Administration.

China hasn't completely run out of space for hydro. There are plenty of sites for smaller 1-to-3 gigawatt plants that would be signature projects in most other countries. So-called pumped-hydro projects can help store intermittent renewable energy for when it's most needed. And it does still have potential sites for mega-dams, they just aren't easy to get to.

The most prominent would be the Motuo dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet, which at one point was being eyed as a potential 38-gigawatt plant, nearly double the size of Three Gorges. The Chinese government is still researching the site's feasibility, according to a person familiar with the studies, who asked not to be identified because the information isn't public.

But such a development is seen as unlikely by many analysts. Getting materials and workers to such a remote area would be enormously costly, as would stringing the power lines needed to get the electricity to market. And that doesn't factor in the geopolitical issues around damming a conduit that feeds some of India's major rivers, including the Brahmaputra.

As China's dam builders pack up their tools at home, they are expanding overseas. China's major development banks have financed nearly \$44 billion worth of hydropower projects globally since 2000, according to researchers at Boston University's Global Development Policy Center.

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Washington is pushing its European vassals to assume a more aggressive posture against Iran: Italian analyst

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

TEHRAN — Federico Pieraccini, an Italian independent geopolitical analyst at the Strategic Culture Foundation, tells the Tehran Times that the resolution adopted by the IAEA and drafted by the UK, France, and Germany is “a new excuse” to put much pressure on Iran, while “Iran has actually been too cooperative with the IAEA.”

Pieraccini, a frequent contributor to Global Research, says “international bodies like the IAEA are supposed to be impartial but are in actual fact part of the U.S. world order constructed after WW2.”

The text of the interview with Pieraccini is as follows:

■ The International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors adopts a resolution drafted by the UK, France, and Germany, calling on Iran to grant the IAEA access to two locations amid allegations of undeclared nuclear activities. In response, Iran has warned against attempts to engage Iran in what could become an endless process with the Agency. Iran has asked member states to avoid creating what it called “an unnecessary crisis.” What is your take on it?

A: I believe that Iran has actually been too cooperative with the IAEA. No other country has granted access to its facilities in the same way Tehran has consistently done over the last ten years. The resolution adopted by the IAEA and drafted by the UK, France, and Germany seems to be a new excuse to push the envelope with the IAEA vis-a-vis Iran even further, setting the stage for Tehran to deny access to the two facilities and thereby give France, Germany and the UK the justification to accuse Iran of not cooperating with the IAEA.

I would not give too much consideration to this draft and its consequences: the U.S. - the main ally of the UK, France, and Germany - has sabotaged and withdrawn from the JCPOA deal, destroying a decade's worth of negotiations. This latest draft is a way for London, Paris, and Berlin to show goodwill to the Trump administration and is nothing that should worry the Iranian government too much. History shows that Iran has, in the past, comply with all aspects of the IAEA inspections.

■ The resolution, submitted by these three countries comes at a time the United States is working to extend an arms embargo against Iran. How do you see the role of the U.S. in this scenario?

A: The U.S. role is always destabilizing, double-faced, and based on the logic of U.S. imperialism, the dominance



of the U.S. dollar, and global hegemony. With the Trump administration relations between Iran and the U.S. have sunk to an all-time low. It is not surprising that Washington is pushing its European vassals to assume a more aggressive posture against Iran.

■ European countries have never seriously stood up to the U.S. They have already failed to take steps to ensure that Tehran benefit from the deal following Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the accord in May 2018. What is your view that “Iran has no reason to trust Europe”?

A: The recent resolution may be the beginning of a quick deterioration in trust between Tehran and European capitals. Relations are already very tense due to European countries' failure to apply the principles agreed to in the JCPOA on economic sanctions and trade out of fear of U.S. counter-sanctions.

■ The three European sponsors of the resolution and JCPOA signatories say they are still committed to preserving the deal. Tehran says by sponsoring the resolution, they have put the future of the JCPOA in jeopardy and have worked to undermine the current level of Iran's cooperation with the Agency. In your view, what will be the consequences of the resolution?

A: The consequences of these actions are entirely in the hands of the three European countries. Iran is not going to grant access to those facilities, so we will have to see how much Berlin, Paris, and London are willing to use this as

an excuse to further sabotage any sort of agreement with Tehran to appease the U.S. administration. It looks as if the intended purpose of this resolution is to create a justification for European countries to pull back from the JCPOA by citing Iran's lack of compliance with the IAEA.

■ China submitted a statement to the IAEA, saying, “The root causes of this situation lie in the unilateral and bullying practices of the U.S.” How can you assess China's (and Russia) approach?

A: China and Russia continue to face the same problem over and over again. International bodies like the IAEA are supposed to be impartial, still they are, in actual fact, part of the U.S. world order constructed after WW2. The transition from a unipolar world order to a multipolar world order will mean creating a trusted and shared environment of multilateral institutions that can truly work without bias and pre-planned agendas favoring one country over another. Until we fully transition into a new world order, international relations between superpowers will continue to be strained, and Russia and China will have to do their best in the meantime to keep the U.S. in check militarily and economically.

■ Experts argue that even if Iran allowed inspections of the sites named by the Israeli sources, it would be setting a wrong precedent that would be against the interests of all countries. What do you think?

A: I agree. As I stated previously, these inspections are only a pretext and a dangerous one with regard to sovereignty. Iran and any other country that cares about its territorial jurisdiction being violated under false pretexts should protest vehemently.

■ What is the main purpose of the United States and Europe in taking such actions?

A: The main purpose is to oppose Iran and its people by any means. The U.S. and Europe are intent on blocking a transition from the current US-centric world order into a full-fledged multipolar world order. China and Russia, as well as their major allies like Iran, are poised to be the main actors in this global transition. The interconnectivity is developing on all levels between Europe, Asia, and Africa, including Iran, as one of the most important players.

Instead of contributing to the formulation of the new rules that will govern international relations in a spirit of cooperation with peer countries, Washington and certain European capitals prefer to pursue unilateral goals, not fully comprehending that this attitude is only accelerating the demise of the unipolar world order and its fifty years of failures.

American ambassador brings the political conflicts back to the surface in Lebanon

By Mohammad Mazhari

In recent days, Arab media outlets have been discussing the implications of a verdict issued by a Lebanese judge to ban media from talking to the U.S. ambassador to Beirut after she took direct aim at Hezbollah in a provocative move.

After the American ambassador's remarks, Judge Mohammed Mazeh, who is based in Tyre, passed an order on June 28 to stop media outlets from speaking to Ambassador Dorothy Shea or reporting her comments for a year or face a \$200,000 fine. The verdict will become obligatory if approved by the country's Information Ministry.

However, Mohammad Mazeh was put under question by the Judicial Inspection Board for the ban before he submits his resignation on June 29, according to state media.

On June 29, Lebanese Foreign Minister Nassif Youssef Hitti had summoned the American ambassador over her remarks against Hezbollah.

“The Lebanese foreign minister summoned the American ambassador to protest against her meddling in Lebanese domestic affairs and to confirm that the Foreign Ministry rejects the statements of Ambassador Shea, about the Lebanese parties and groups which have wide Lebanese support in the government and the parliament,” Lebanese National Media Agency said.

In an interview on Saudi-owned Al Hadath TV last week, Shea had said: “Hezbollah is destabilising the country and jeopardizing



Lebanon's economic recovery.”

In fact, the American ambassador's statements triggered widespread political reactions in Lebanon. In this regard, Lebanese parliamentarian Hassan Fadlallah strongly condemned the “insulting words” of the ambassador on June 28, describing it as a brazen affront to the country, and a challenge to international norms.

He stressed that “her statements are a blatant attack on Lebanon's sovereignty and its national dignity,” calling on the authorities “to take immediate action to compel this ambassador to respect international law,” Lebanese media reported.

It seems that the American ambassador

tries to echo American supremacists' deceptions, which may be part of a strategy to exploit internal conflicts in Lebanon.

She deals with the Lebanese nation and its government as if the country is under colonial rule.

In this regard, Lebanese journalist Abir Bassam told Tehran Times that the United States is openly meddling in Lebanese internal affairs.

“It is not the ambassadors' job in general to discuss the country's internal affairs,” she added.

Shea's superior manner in accusing a Lebanese political party of neglecting its social base is considered insulting and ob-

vious interference in the domestic affairs by most Lebanese people as well as provocative to those who always aligned with the Resistance.

In this regard, Haitham Abu Said, West Asia commissioner for human rights, pointed out to certain regulations and standards prohibiting ambassadors from interference in domestic affairs of the host country.

“Any kind of interference in the host country's internal affairs, inciting any group against another group, calling for participation in demonstrations, gatherings, and meetings for a coup against the host authority or creating any riot is unacceptable, according to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961,” Abu Said told Tehran Times.

Lebanon is witnessing the worst economic crisis in its modern history, as national currency lira has lost 80 percent of its value since October when nationwide anti-corruption protests began to shake the country.

Corruption is one of the most important factors in this crisis and it cannot pay its debts. To make matters worse, the U.S. has imposed sanctions targeting Hezbollah to infect the entire Lebanese banking sector, all of which will inevitably have a devastating impact on the Lebanese political scene.

However, the Lebanese government tries to manage and contain the economic crisis; still, some political leaders in Lebanon are sabotaging efforts to reform the economy by supporting American policies in the region.

Formal annexation won't change anything on the ground: former Obama adviser

Robert Malley, former Middle East adviser to Barack Obama, remains doubtful about the scope of the annexation project presented on July 1 by Benjamin Netanyahu, saying that “the Occupied Palestinian territories have been de facto annexed for decades”.

In an interview with The New Arabi newspaper about Netanyahu's step to announce Israeli annexation of West Bank territory, Robert Malley said that “Benjamin Netanyahu's new government partners, former chiefs of staff Benny Gantz and Gabi Ashkenazi, think the annexations should be carried out in full agreement with the regional states, which is obviously impossible, and that they should be accompanied by some kind of Israeli peace initiative, however modest.”

“The most virulent opposition to Netanyahu does not come from that camp, but from the extreme right, for whom an annexation of whatever magnitude accompanied by even formal acceptance of a future Palestinian state, is worse than the status quo, under which Israel has de facto sovereignty over all the Palestinian territories,” he added.

While others believe that the annexation should involve all the territories included in the “Trump plan”, Malley argued that “we shouldn't exaggerate the significance of these objections. From the beginning I have believed that Netanyahu will go ahead with annexation to help him go down in Israeli history, and because it serves his current political purposes.”

Referring to the fact that White House is divided between solid supporters of Netanyahu, and others, who want to hold back annexation in order to maintain good relations



with the Persian Gulf Arab monarchies, former adviser to Barack Obama said, “There's always been a debate at the core of the Trump administration between those, like Kushner, who perhaps naively believe that the Trump plan could relaunch a “peace process,” and those, like the U.S. ambassador in Israel David Friedman, for whom this plan in reality serves to advance ideological ambitions which are part of the DNA of the political trend in power in Israel, and to change the givens of the Israeli-Palestinian equation.”

He emphasized the importance of avoiding alienating the White House's Arab allies, for the first group, while for the second - and Friedman - it's important to make the Palestinians understand that this land will never belong to them, so they should shed any illusions.

He concluded that “it's Trump who will decide,” arguing that he's liable to be more open to Friedman's line, which would enhance his support with his electoral base, especially

the evangelicals.

Answering the question “Could the annexations become an issue in the U.S. presidential election?” Robert Malley pointed out to two of the foreign policy issues that Trump intends to play on in his campaign concern the Middle East: support for Israeli annexation and the Iranian nuclear affair.

He further said, “If annexation happens, Trump will accuse the Democrats of abandoning their ally. And he will portray Biden as a false friend of Israel, and as being soft on Iran. That won't win him a single extra Jewish vote, and will only have a very marginal impact on the election.”

“Trump certainly won't withdraw his plan, which has broad support in Israel, especially among the two big parties in power,” he stressed.

Referring to Trump's promise that he'll only support annexation if the two big parties in power - Likud and Blue and White - agree on its scope and its modes of implementation, Malley went on to say that “Trump certainly won't withdraw his plan, which has broad support in Israel, especially among the two big parties in power.”

Regarding the conditions of Palestinians if there is no annexation, Malley noted “the prevailing situation, before the annexation announcement, is not as though we were a step away from a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

Emphasizing that “for decades, the Palestinian territories have been annexed de facto, without it being de jure,” he said, “With or without formal annexation, and whatever its scale, that will change nothing fundamental on the ground nor in the lives of the Palestinians.”

A tsunami of evictions is looming in U.S.

The distress among renters likely to surge this summer when federal unemployment benefits run dry

By Salman Parviz

As businesses reopen across the U.S., so are eviction courts with millions walking the fine thin line between homelessness and having a shelter over their head. Today, it is estimated that anywhere from 20 million to 28 million American renters are perilously close to eviction.

Homelessness was a pre-existing crisis. Before the Covid-19 struck, four evictions were filed every minute in 2016 when the unemployment rate was 4.7 percent, according to Eviction Lab at Princeton University.

Today the unemployment is close to three times that level as the U.S is wrestling with an economic collapse not seen in a generation.



A woman wearing a mask walks past a wall bearing graffiti asking for rent forgiveness in Los Angeles on May 1, 2020. (Photo: Valerie Macon / AFP via Getty Images)

Many major cities in the U.S. will face a wave of evictions as government relief payments and legal protections run out for millions of out-of-work Americans who have a little financial cushion and few choices when looking for new housing.

Though many states enacted a patchwork of temporary eviction moratoriums and the federal government issued a partial ban on evictions, these moratoriums are quickly expiring.

Hardest hit are tenants whose housing costs ate up more of their paychecks. Many workers laid off in March due to coronavirus outbreak are finding eviction notice on their door.

Though about 90 percent of renters made full or partial rent payments by late May, the trend is unlikely to continue. More than 38 million people have filed jobless claims since March, including a high proportion of people living in households making less than \$40,000 a year.

In a survey released in May by the American Census Bureau, nearly a quarter of respondents said they missed their last rent or mortgage payment. Making one wonder if another homeownership crisis is ahead with foreclosures once the pandemic slows down and the economic repercussions of lockdowns begin.

Without government intervention, it will be hard to avoid a wave of eviction in America. A \$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill backed by House Democrats includes a proposal to dedicate \$100 billion for rental assistance. Republicans have criticized the package as too costly, and it is unlikely to pass in its current form, reports The New York Times.

Some argue that the federal government has already done enough, in the form of the stimulus checks and a \$600 weekly boost to unemployment payments. The \$600 weekly payments from the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program were put in place as part of the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act Congress passed in late March. These benefits are set to expire end of July.

Many landlords say they were working with their tenants, waiving late fees advocating government cover missed rent. Still, landlords have bills to pay too.

Indeed, the poor people all over the world were hit hardest by job losses amid lockdowns. Which brings to the question of whether megacities and pandemic epicenters like New York City can avoid a post-coronavirus exodus?

Just like Covid-19 infections, the Black and Latin families in America are bound to experience a disproportionate impact in this housing crisis, unless solutions are put in place. Housing Solutions for the minority group should be picked up while there is momentum left in the “Black Lives Matter” movement. Evicting people in the middle of a global health crisis puts them at greater risk of contracting and spreading Covid-19.

The truth is the American nation and government is failing them. And not for the first time.

West Bank annexation: The triumph of domestic politics over international law and common sense

1 → The Trump plan represents this policy, although it is presented deceptively as an alternative means of getting to a two-state solution. The Trump plan calls for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians that would ultimately lead to a Palestinian state. However, the terms of the negotiations are so onerous that they are unacceptable to Palestinians. Among those terms: the Trump plan would provide the starting point for negotiations and is non-negotiable; the Palestinian state would be broken up by settlement blocs, the wall, and bypass roads; the Palestinian state would not have sovereign control over its boundaries and air space and would be completely surrounded by Israeli territory; the Palestinians have to recognize Israel as a “Jewish state” and renounce the right of return, etc.

Believe it or not, the two main opponents of annexation in Israel are the military establishment, on the one hand, and extremists in the Israeli settler movement, on the other. The military establishment believes annexation will possibly lead to Jordan's (and maybe Egypt's) renunciation of its peace treaty with Israel, the end of security coordination between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, the collapse of the Palestinian Authority and chaos in the West Bank, a third intifada, a reversal of Israel's blossoming relationship with the (P)GCC and Saudi Arabia, and international condemnation and sanctions by the European Union. Extremists in the settler movement don't want just the settlement blocs--they want all of the West Bank for Israel. This position is not only supported by some affiliated with the settler movement, but it is also the official position of Netanyahu's Likud Party. Opponents in the United States include much of the Democratic Party, along with younger Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Professor James L. Gelvin is an American scholar of West Asian history and a faculty member in the department of history at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Overnight stays hit 5 million record high in month

➔ Months ago, many countries, including the Islamic Republic, started imposing travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus, restricting air, road, and rail travel to a great extent.



Some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism 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.

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).

Tehran to host major carpet exhibit in Sept. despite coronavirus concerns

HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN – Tehran will host an international carpet exhibition in September as the event had been postponed for some three months over coronavirus concerns.



“The 29th International Exhibition of Iranian Handmade Carpets will be held in the month of Shahrivar (Aug. 22 – Sept. 21) due to a special emphasis made by the acting industry, mining, and trade minister Hossein Modarres Khiaabani, the handwoven carpet producers union, and carpet weavers,” Bahman Hosseinzadeh, the managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) said on Friday, IIEC reported.

The decision, however, was made in a time when the country is still struggling with the spreading coronavirus pandemic and the government is making it mandatory within days to wear masks in public places and covered spaces. Over the past couple of months, the fears of virus have emptied thousands of exhibition halls across the globe.

Last August, some 850 manufacturing companies and export businesses took part at the 28th Iran Handmade Carpet Exhibition at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds. The event is considered as the world’s largest handmade carpet exhibition with regard to production standards both in terms of quantity and quality.

Organized by the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, the expo is customarily visited by trade and commercial delegations from various countries in order to make businesses. Various-sized carpets, rugs, and tableau rugs, whether newly-woven or rare ones, are brought together from every corner of Iran at the exhibit.

Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and good quality.

Roofing covers of ‘winged human’, palaces replaced at Pasargadae

HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN – The four-year-old roofing covers of the magnificent “winged human” bas-relief and several other ruined palaces at the UNESCO-registered Pasargadae in southern Iran have recently been replaced.



“The old shielding structures, which were practically lost their protecting function, were replaced with new polycarbonate ones,” IRNA quoted Afshin Ebrahimi, the director of the World Heritage site, as saying on Saturday.

Back in 2017, the Achaemenid-era ensemble was partly roofed by shielding structures in close collaboration with Italian experts using stainless steel and anti-rust material based on a memorandum of understanding that the Iranian cultural heritage body had signed with the Rome-based International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property.

Situated in about 50km north of Persepolis, itself another World Heritage site, Pasargadae was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great who reigned mighty Persian Empire from 559 to 530 BC.

Cyrus declared the world’s first charter of human rights, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder. The empire he established stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley to its greatest extent, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers.

‘Effective advertising could get tourism out of coronavirus crisis’

TOURISM d e s k TEHRAN – Iran’s deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri said on Wednesday that producing effective advertising content on social media could get the tourism sector out of the coronavirus crisis.

The tourism ministry aims at creating a positive image of Iran, while the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization plans to reduce Iranophobia in the international arena, which could be done with the cooperation of both parties, the official added, CHTN reported.

He also noted that the tourism ministry has produced several videos and photos promoting Iranian historical sites, natural sights and handicrafts, which could be translated in different languages to be used for the online foreign visitors.

The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the world to a standstill, and tourism has been the worst affected of all major economic sectors.

Some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism 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.

Latest available data show eight million tourists visited the country during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Iran is home to one of the world’s oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC.



A view of the UNESCO-registered Persepolis in Fars province, southern Iran

Coronavirus causes \$357m damage to Kish Island’s tourism

TOURISM d e s k TEHRAN – Kish Island’s tourism industry has taken 15 trillion rials (over \$357 million) hit from the coronavirus outbreak over the previous months.

Due to the climatic conditions of the island and the time of the outbreak of the virus, which coincided with the island’s tourist season, Kish Island’s tourism industry took a severe hit from coronavirus pandemic. ISNA quoted Masihollah Safa, the head of the Association of Kish Hoteliers.

Although the government has promised to support the private sector, it hasn’t helped or supported investors and hoteliers’ community yet, while the private sector is one of the main promoters of the tourism industry of the island, he added.

Earlier last week, the president of the Iranian Hoteliers Association Jamshid Hamzezhadeh announced that the outbreak of the new coronavirus has inflicted a loss of



60,000 billion rials (about \$1.4 billion) on Iranian hospitality industry during the past four months. The Iranian government has announced

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

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

“Last [Iranian calendar] year was a bumpy ride for Iran’s tourism as it suffered from flooding in the spring, protests [over petrol prices] in November, and the fatal Ukraine International Airlines plane crash in January,” Rafiei-Shad explained.

On April 20, Iran lifted intercity travel bans days after President Hassan Rouhani unveiled a “Smart Social Distancing Initiative” as a new phase of measures to prevent the virus spread.

Historical objects unearthed in Burnt City added to National Heritage list

HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN – Twelve moveable properties, which had been previously unearthed in various excavations in the Burnt City, a UNESCO-registered site in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, have been inscribed on the National Heritage list, CHTN reported on Saturday.

A statue in the shape of a nail and human head, a polychrome water urn, a soapstone bead, and a marble cup are among the items inscribed on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The inscriptions were announced on Saturday in a letter to the governor-general of the province, the report added.

The historical relics can be visited at Zabol Anthropology Museum.

Called “Shahr-e Sukhteh” in Persian, the Burnt City is associated with four rounds of civilization, all burnt



Tanour: A traditional bread baking system in Iran

By Seyed hossein Hosseiniseddiq

Bread is known as the blessing of the table and is the predominant food of most Iranians. The aroma of fresh bread will multiply the human appetite. In Islam, the value of this divine blessing is so great that even its crumbs are respectable. From time immemorial, adults have taught their children that if you see a piece of bread on the way, be sure to pick it up, and if it is clean, eat it, or put it aside so that it will not be trampled.

Meanwhile, the quality of the Tanour (a kind of oven) used to bake bread is also very influential. Clay Tanour that are made by hand; undoubtedly, the spirit of nature will be transferred to bread. Previously, in urban and especially rural houses, next to the living room, there was a special room for Tanour and baking bread, and usually once a week bread and cookies were baked in this Tanour.

Of course, it should be noted that the location of the Tanour in all regions of Iran was different depending on the geographical situation under the influence of heat, cold and rainfall. The Tanour room has a special architecture with a hole in the roof to let the smoke of the burning wood out, and also the bottom of the Tanour has a small hole that regulates the entry and exit of air.

It is interesting to know that after baking the bread, they used the fire left over from baking lunch or dinner, which is called Komajdan in Shahrودي dialect. Thus, some rice, some mutton or beef, a few medium-sized potatoes, beets and some spinach as well as spices are poured into the copper pot and finally the copper pot is placed in the hot

ashes of the fire left over from the bakery. They even pour ashes on the lid, and after a few hours, they take the cooked food out from under the ashes. In general, it can be said that Komajdan is a copper pot with a lid in which the pastry dough is put with oil and its lid is fixed then it is put under the fire to cook and also the stews can be cooked in it.

But with the expansion of industrial breads produced by the machine. People were deprived of these traditional and healthy breads.

■ **What is Iranian traditional Tanour? And how is it made?**

The English word comes from Hindi or Urdu tandoor, which came from Persian Tanour and also Avestan language Tanoura which all mean clay oven.

A Tanour also known as is a cylindrical clay used in baking bread and cooking. The heat for a Tanour was traditionally generated by a wood fire or dried Dermaneh (a plant entitled Silver Mound) or dried feces of cows which was common among Turkmen people in north of Iran, Gorgan plain. And perhaps are used charcoal in other area.

To make a traditional Tanour, the soil must be well sifted and dried so that future moisture does not cause the Tanour to crack; after the soil is completely dry, water is added to it and mixed. After the mud is made, goat hair is added to it by hand and mud cylinders are made of it; goat’s hair makes the clay more durable, and prevents it from cracking. The clay cylinders are then cut into equal halves and, after combining with each other, form a complete circle. The circles are stacked one by one, and after



the height of the Tanour reaches the appropriate size, the inside and outside of it are smoothed with a putty knife; when the work is done, the Tanour should be well dried so that it can be used for many years to bake traditional bread.

■ **Fresh baked Sangak bread**

It can be said that it is the only triangular tanour in the world and the oldest triangular bread in the world. Sangak. It is a type of bread that is baked on a bed of gravel in a flat oven. Sangak is cooked only in Iran, so it can be called the national bread of Iran. The history and origin of bakery and Sangak bread in Iran are as follows:

Shah Abbas the Great, the most powerful king of the Safavid Empire, for the well-being of the poor and their troops, who often needed temporary and immediate bread and stew

during their travels and had to reach every city, there were bakers who could make as much bread for the soldiers as they could, and it was the food they put in the stew. He came up with a solution and asked Sheikh Bahaei to solve this problem. Sheikh Bahaei one of the scholars and scientists of the tenth century AH (1495 CE – 1591 CE), should be considered the inventor of Sangak bread and its Tanour shape. In fact, he invented the Sangak Tanour with thought and contemplation. This invention, which has been carefully designed and implemented, is so complete and accurate that after a few hundred years, it is still used in its original form.

There is another view that the baking of Sangak bread was common before the arrival of Islam in Iran and during the Sassanid kings. Several years ago, in the basement of a very old castle near the city of Varamin, the remains of a Sangak bakery were discovered, the oven of which remained intact, and the veins inside it were also present.

Sangak is one of the traditional types of bread that can be sprinkled with seeds such as sesame seeds, black seeds (Nigella seeds) or a mixture of both to flavor it. In the past, poppy seeds were used to do this, but they are now banned. Sangak is also used as a wedding table bread, which is cooked in a large way and decorated with honey and sesame seeds. Probably, Sangak bread, as it is today, evolved from a nomadic method of throwing large numbers of stones and pebbles on a fire and spreading the dough thinly on it to bake it.

(Dr. Hosseiniseddiq is a faculty member at the Islamic Azad University)

Health network playing a key role in fighting coronavirus

➡ He went on to say that “some national and provincial conferences were held to make all the officials and the health network aware of the pandemic and its consequences, adding, in the third step, some 1,900 health houses and posts were assigned to COVID-19 patients.

We have provided the necessary equipment for the virus diagnosis and treatment to the health houses and health posts, and after a while, the COVID-19 self-assessment system was set up and introduced to the people; which was for informational purposes, not a medical diagnosis.

However, some 14.5 million people registered in the system, 4.5 million of whom showed COVID-19 symptoms.

During 10 days, 78 million people were contacted through phone conversation and had been checked.” As a result of the first phase of the screening program, 31,000 people were hospitalized, he further stated.

Through the second phase, 30 million people were diagnosed, with a priority of people at a higher risk of COVID-19, including, older people (that is people over 60 years old); and those with underlying medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer).

The screening was also conducted on 1.2 million nomads in the country, 442 of whom were infected and referred to the hospitals, while there have so far been no mortalities among the nomads, he noted, adding, all received self-protective equipment and disinfectants free of charge.

Highlighting that refugees also have undergone screening tests, he said that 3.7 million refugees were registered in the Salamat system, 2.7 million of whom were diagnosed, and those infected with the virus received free medicine.

■ **How PHC system established in Iran?**

In 1971, a research project was carried out in the northwestern city of Urmia that came up with an idea of setting up a comprehensive healthcare network in both rural and urban areas of the country, similar projects were piloted in the provinces of West Azarbaijan, Shiraz, Tehran, Fars and Lorestan from 1973 to 2020, However, Iran's health care network was launched in 1981-1983.

He went on to note that over six years (1984 to 1990), the PHC system was fully developed throughout the country.

The country's PHC system is formed of several sections working in harmony to offer primary care to different groups of people in rural and urban areas; in rural areas, Health Houses are established in villages with over 300



residents, which are under the supervision of a rural comprehensive health center.

Each health center takes control of five Health Houses.

Two healthcare providers (called Behvarz) are providing primary care in each health house; including, preventive care, health promotion, screening, and basic medical services for the predefined conditions, to an approximate population of 1,100 people.

While complicated cases or those with more severe symptoms are sent to the comprehensive health center, and emergency patients are referred to the provincial hospitals.

Currently, 31,400 Health Houses and 7,400 health centers are providing services to over 20 million villagers nationwide, with 630 healthcare providers, he highlighted, adding, therefore, 97 percent of the country's rural population is covered by the PHC system.

A similar system is providing primary care in urban and suburban areas called Health Posts with community-based health care workers (called “Moragheb-e-Salamat”), each of whom is tasked with offering services to about 2,500 people.

There is also an urban comprehensive health center that supervises three Health Posts, he noted, adding, some 5,500 health posts and 2,723 health centers are active across the country, with 24,000 healthcare practitioners.

Pointing out that 93 percent of the urban residents are covered by the health networks in the country, he said that 3,987 physicians and 12,032 health care providers (dentists, nurses, midwives, and health professionals in the fields of environmental health, nutrition, mental health, etc.) provide services to

54 million people,” he also explained.

He went on to say that patients who need more specialized services are referred to the provincial hospitals and medical clinics; each health networks in 31 provinces of the country, operates under the supervision of the province's medical universities.

■ **Family Physician program expansion a must**

In 2005, Family Physician (FP) program was started, which targeted almost 25,000,000 citizens residing in rural areas, and piloted in two provinces of Fars and Mazandaran.

Based on the program, a physician and a midwife offer services in rural areas, every 3,300 villagers have a physician and there is a midwife per 5,200 people in villages.

The plan helped reduce treatment costs and public spending on healthcare services, as the physician is aware of the person's health background, so that it prevents many unnecessary diagnostic processes, like scans.

A longstanding challenge, however, remains to be a barrier to the expansion of the FP program into urban settings, where the PHC is undeveloped and fragile as well as the powerful private sector is resistant.

It is of great importance to expanding the plan across the country, and the government must support to implement the FP program in all the provinces, which leads to a considerable reduction in treatment costs, he emphasized.

■ **PHC system, a key element to COVID-19 vaccination**

Pointing to the COVID-19 vaccine production, he said that currently, 20 projects are running for vaccine production in the country,

which will soon start human trials, as animal testing has been made successfully.

Whenever a vaccine is ready to mass-produce, the health network will be the key to its nationwide distribution and injection, he noted, emphasizing that by the time the vaccine is introduced to the national or international market, we will plan to vaccinate the whole population without a doubt.

He further warned of a hard winter due to the influenza strike, which may make the current situation more complicated, stating that last year we have purchased 1.4 million dosage of flu vaccine for the public and private sector, however, this year, we offered nearly 7 million dosages to vaccinate people against influenza.

■ **Iranian health network model implemented in the U.S.**

As WHO have several times praised Iran's PHC system, many countries expressed eagerness to use Iran's experience in their countries and strengthen their healthcare system.

So far numerous conferences and meetings held to exchange ideas for different countries in the region, as Iran has the most unique PHC system, he noted, stating that Mississippi state in the United States has run the same system after using Iran's experiences.

■ **The most unique electronic health record (EHR) system**

In 2016, we have also established a national electronic health record (EHR) system in which every citizen is registered with the national ID number, he highlighted, adding, which provides us with comprehensive health data on different fields.

Moreover, we have assigned a person to follow up on people's complaints in each province and determine the people's satisfaction with the received services, he added.

■ **Challenges facing PHC network**

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the challenges and barriers to the health network expansion and empowerment, noting that we are currently grappling with a lack of workforce, as more healthcare providers are needed to cover the whole villages.

As long as our budget is dropping year by year, we need more sustainable funds, he said, calling on officials to think of a solution for budget allocation and speed up the health network development.

Another barrier to the expansion of health networks is the lack of vehicles for providing primary health care services to remote areas, impassable villages, in addition to the provision of motorcycles for Behvarz that should cover their surrounding villages that have no health houses.

Long-term wearing of masks to contain COVID-19 may be harmful: expert

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — An Iranian specialist in infectious diseases and a member of the National Committee for Influenza has said wearing face masks for a long time to prevent from the coronavirus spread may harm people's health as it can lower the blood oxygen level.

“Wearing masks in crowded and public places is critical and dramatically decreases a person's chances of being infected by the COVID-19 virus, but it is not recommended in private or not-crowded places for a long time,” Dr. Masoud Mardani told IRNA on Saturday.

He also recommended ordinary people not to wear medical masks because the virus can easily enter into the mask through its filter and if the user is contaminated with the virus, he or she can spread the virus to others and to the environment.

He went on to say that some 18 million people, or 20 percent of the country's population, have been infected with the coronavirus so far.



The World Health Organization has reported that the use of masks is part of a comprehensive package of the prevention and control measures that can limit the spread of certain respiratory viral diseases, including COVID-19.

Masks can be used either for protection of healthy persons (worn to protect oneself when in contact with an infected individual) or for source control (worn by

an infected individual to prevent onward transmission).

However, the use of a mask alone is insufficient to provide an adequate level of protection or source control, and other personal and community level measures should also be adopted to suppress transmission of respiratory viruses.

Whether or not masks are used, compliance with hand hygiene, physical distancing and other infection prevention and control (IPC) measures are critical to prevent human-to-human transmission of COVID-19.

Over the past 24 hours, 2,449 new cases of COVID-19 were identified in the country, of which 1,148 were hospitalized, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Saturday, adding that the total number of patients in the country reached 237,878.

Unfortunately, 148 patients lost their lives over the past 24 hours.

The total number of COVID-19 deaths in the country reached 11,408, she said.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Iran spends \$477m on refugee education annually

Iran spends about 20 trillion rials (nearly \$477 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) every year on the education of foreign national students residing in the country, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education has said.

Over 558,000 foreign national children are receiving education in Iran completely free of charge, 474,000 of whom are Afghan children, ISNA quoted Gholamreza Karimi as saying on Wednesday.

Karimi said that there are currently about 137,000 undocumented Afghan students in the country, adding that their parents do not have valid residency documents, “but we have provided the conditions for enrolling them in schools.”

ایران سالی ۲ هزار میلیارد تومان برای دانش آموزان اتباع خارجی هزینه می کند

ایران هر سال حدود ۲ هزار میلیارد تومان برای ۵۵۸ هزار دانش آموز اتباع خارجی در مدارس سراسر کشور هزینه می کند.

به گزارش روز چهارشنبه ایسنا، غلامرضا کریمی رئیس مرکز امور بین الملل و مدارس خارج از کشور وزارت آموزش و پرورش گفت از این تعداد ۴۷۴ هزار نفر آنها اتباع افغانستانی هستند.

کریمی با بیان اینکه در حال حاضر ۱۳۷ هزار دانش آموز غیرمجاز در کشور داریم گفت پدر و مادر این افراد مدارک اقامتی معتبر ندارند اما ما شرایط ثبت نام آنها را مدارس فراهم کردیم.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“mal-, male-”

■ **Meaning:** bad, evil

■ **For example:** nearly 67% of the country's population suffers from **malnutrition**.

PHRASAL VERB

Rely on

■ **Meaning:** to count on, depend on; trust

■ **For example:** Don't worry. You can rely on me. I can keep a secret.

IDIOM

Do a good turn

■ **Explanation:** If you do someone a good turn, you act in a helpful way

■ **For example:** Mike is a great guy - always ready to do a good turn.

Heatwaves have become longer and more frequent since the 1950s

Heatwaves are happening more frequently and lasting longer around the world, according to the first comprehensive global study on prolonged periods of excessive heat.

The research analysed the extreme temperature events at a regional level since the 1950s and found that nowhere on the planet experienced a significant decrease in heatwaves, the Independent reported.

This study found that changes in heatwaves are not only increasing but accelerating due to the human-driven climate crisis.

“Not only have we seen more and longer heatwaves worldwide over the past 70 years, but this trend has markedly accelerated,” said lead author Dr Sarah Perkins Kirkpatrick from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Extremes.

Heatwaves have a myriad of negative impacts, including on human health and agriculture, and can lead to more frequent and intense wildfires.

Extreme temperature events were the worst in regions which experience disproportionately more negative impacts of the climate crisis. The research, published in the journal Nature Communications, also came up with a new metric — cumulative heat — to reveal how much heat is packed into individual heatwaves and seasons. That number is also rising.

Crucially the study found that the most intense heatwave seasons, as defined by cumulative intensity, have happened since 2000.

Dr Perkins Kirkpatrick said: “Cumulative heat shows a similar acceleration, increasing globally on average by 1C-4.5C each decade but in some places, like the Middle East, and parts of Africa and South America, the trend is up to 10C a decade.”

During Australia's most intense heatwave season, an additional 80C (176F) of cumulative heat was experienced. In Siberia and the Mediterranean, their most extreme seasons had an additional 200C (392F).

Alaska experienced its worst season where 150C (302F) extra heat was contributed.

According to the study, the only metric of heatwaves that has not accelerated is heatwave intensity, which measures the average temperature across heatwaves.

Scientists say that this is because, around the world, there are more heatwave days and they are lasting longer. When the average temperature is measured across longer heatwaves, any shifts in intensity are barely detectable.

A detectable increase in average heatwave intensity was found only in southern Australia and some regions of Africa and South America.

At a regional level, researchers discovered that natural variability can have a large impacts on heatwaves. This variability can overwhelm heatwave trends, so regional trends shorter than a few decades are generally not reliable.

Instead, researchers looked at how the trends had changed over multi-decade intervals between 1950-2017.

The changes were dramatic. In the Mediterranean, there was a significant increase in heatwaves when measured over multi-decade spans.

From 1950-2017, the Mediterranean saw an increase in heatwaves by two days a decade. When researchers narrowed it down to 1980 to 2017, the trend accelerated to 6.4 days a decade.

Heatwave trends were varied in different regions. There are rapid changes in heatwaves in the Amazon, north-east Brazil, west Asia and the Mediterranean.

South Australia and North Asia are still seeing changes to heatwave trends but at a slower pace.

Overall, the research found that vulnerable nations, where infrastructure is less robust, will be the hardest hit by extreme heat.

The results indicate that strategies must be devised to deal with chronic heat exposure, which will have impacts on human health and energy supply, and that further research is needed on what impacts the decomposition of cumulative heat will have.

“Climate scientists have long forecast that a clear sign of global warming would be seen with a change in heatwaves,” said Dr Perkins Kirkpatrick, adding that “these events, are unequivocal indicators that global warming is now with us and accelerating”.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Morocco quake rescue

(February 25, 2004)

Rescue efforts are continuing in north-eastern Morocco, where there was an earthquake early on Tuesday morning. Buildings were destroyed outside the port city of al-Hoceima and in the nearby mountain area. Around five hundred and sixty people may have died in the earthquake. This report from Pascale Harter: **Day has broken** on a **desolate** scene in the Rif mountain region of Morocco. In al-Hoceima, people spent the night **huddled together** under **makeshift** plastic tents. They have either been made homeless by the earthquake or are simply too scared to stay inside, as **aftershocks** rattle through the city, a terrifying reminder of Tuesday's **devastation**.

For those in the mountain villages scattered around al-Hoceima, **desperation** is turning to tragedy. Rescue workers have been unable to get to the worst hit areas where they believe whole families have been buried alive as their homes collapsed. Volunteers have worked through the night, but they are poorly trained and plainly under-equipped, often using their bare hands to clear **rubble**. They hope that today digging equipment and expertise will reach this inaccessible mountain region. But with the new day has dawned the knowledge that for the families in the **isolated rural villages** here help almost certainly comes too late. Already talk has turned from what can be done to rescue survivors from the rubble to what can be done for a homeless population already **mourning** their dead.

■ **Words**

Day has broken: When 'day breaks' it is dawn; the start of the day **desolate:** A 'desolate' place is sad; empty; lacking in comfort **huddled together:** If people 'huddle together' they stay close to each other for warmth and comfort **makeshift:** 'Makeshift' things are temporary and usually of poor quality; often because there is nothing better available. **aftershocks:** smaller earthquakes, which occur after a large earthquake **devastation:** serious and widespread destruction or damage **desperation:** loss of hope; if people feel 'desperation' they think that situation is so bad, they will do anything to change it **rubble:** pieces of brick or stone from a destroyed building **isolated rural villages:** villages in the countryside that are a long way from towns and cities **mourning:** If people are 'mourning' they are feeling sad about someone's death

(Source: BBC)

320 officials from Latin America: Sanction Israel if it annexes West Bank

By staff & agencies

More than 320 scholars, former presidents and legislators from Latin America joined forces to condemn Israel's planned annexation of parts of the occupied Palestinian territories.

In a joint statement, the public personalities said: "The increasing severity of the Israeli violations and its impunity compel us to answer to the call made by the vast majority of organizations from the Palestinian civil society," The Middle East Monitor reported.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement announced that the statement, underwritten by former Brazilian presidents Dilma Rousseff and Lula da Silva, former Bolivian president Evo Morales, former Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa and Argentine Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, was part of a South African initiative to unify efforts from all over the world for the punitive measures.

The statement also calls for the re-activation of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid in order to put an end to the Tel Aviv regime's apartheid policies against Palestinian people in the occupied lands.



"The proposed annexation of Palestinian territory by Israel is not only an offense against international law and a threat to peace; it is an attack against women and men who fought against colonialism and apartheid," Brazil's former foreign minister Celso Amorim, a signatory to the statement, said.

■ **Mandela foundation urges action by European leaders**

Separately, the Elders founded by South African anti-apartheid figure Nelson Mandela in 2007 said in letters to the leaders of France, Germany, Britain and the European Union that they should insist to Israel that annexation would have negative political and economic consequences for bilateral and regional relations.

The Elders — led by former Irish President Mary Robinson with Mandela's widow Graca Machel and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as co-chairs — said annexation "is fundamentally contrary to the long-term interests of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples."

They said annexation "will not dampen future Palestinian demands for rights and self-determination, but destroying hopes in a [so-called] two-state compromise will increase the risks of future violence in one of the most combustible areas in the world."

The Elders called on EU leaders to consider suspending the 27-nation's Association Agreement with Israel if annexation goes ahead in any form.

They also recalled the United Kingdom's "historical and abiding responsibility" as the colonial power in pre-1948 Palestine.

Palestinians believe Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to annex one-third of the already illegally occupied West Bank, including parts of the strategic Jordan Valley, is only a formality and a de facto Israeli occupation of their land has been under way for many years.

"Israel's annexation plan has been in process since 1967," Salah Khawaja, coordinator of an anti-occupation campaign called the Popular Committee to Resist the Wall and the Settlements, said.

"Israel has since built settlements and the wall. And so, annexation has been ongoing for a long time," he added.

According to Press TV, July 1 was set by Netanyahu to start annexation of parts of the West Bank, but Tel Aviv failed to launch the scheme on the set date amid differences between Netanyahu and key members of his cabinet, whose consent the White House says is needed for the annexation to go ahead.

Netanyahu's office announced that he will continue to discuss the plan with the U.S. administration.

U.S. President Donald Trump gave Tel Aviv the green light for the land grab in his self-proclaimed "deal of the century," which was unveiled in January with the aim of legitimizing Israel's occupation and re-drawing the West Asia (Middle East) map.

Resistance News

Khudari calls for forming emergency gov't to face annexation plans

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— Jamal al-Khudari, head of the Popular Committee Against the Siege, has called for forming an emergency government representing the Palestinians from all spectra in order to close ranks against the Israeli annexation plans.

"There is need to form an emergency government with the participation of all parties and factions and to coordinate popular activities on the ground in the framework of confronting the occupation's dangerous steps," Khudari stated on Friday.

He stressed the need for "a rapid joint plan that translate the Palestinian reconciliation into a tangible reality as it is considered the first option at the current stage that is capable of achieving unity and forming a force able to engage in a real confrontation against the Judaization settlement project, the annexation project, the deal of the century and the Gaza siege."

Settlers threaten to kill and displace Palestinians in al-Khalil

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— A horde of extremist Jewish settlers on Friday evening infiltrated into Wadi al-Husain area in the east of al-Khalil city and verbally attacked the local residents.

According to local sources, a group of settlers spread through the streets of Wadi al-Husain area and shouted death threats against the residents.

The settlers also threatened to expel the locals from the area and seize their homes.

The Wadi al-Husain residents and their property are exposed to repeated attacks and crimes by Jewish settlers, who live in nearby settlements and outposts.

North Korea says no need to sit down with U.S. for talks

North Korea does not feel the need to have talks with the United States, which would be nothing more than "a political tool" for Washington, a senior North Korean diplomat said on Saturday, ahead of a U.S. envoy's visit to South Korea.

Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said negotiations would not work out between Washington and Pyongyang and there will be no change in North Korea's policy.

"We do not feel any need to sit face to face with the U.S., as it does not consider the DPRK-U.S. dialogue as nothing more than a tool for grappling its political crisis," Choe said in a statement carried by state-run KCNA news agency.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's formal name.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun is due to visit South Korea next week to discuss stalled talks with North Korea.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Wednesday that U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un should meet again before the U.S. elections in November, which would help resume the stalled nuclear negotiations.

Trump's former national security adviser, John Bolton, told reporters in New York on Thursday that the president might seek



another summit with Kim as an "October Surprise" ahead of the election.

Trump and Kim Jong Un met for the first time in 2018 in Singapore.

They met again in Vietnam in 2019, but

the talks fell apart when Trump said Kim had failed to offer enough nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles in exchange for lifting international sanctions.

At their third meeting, in June 2019

at the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas, the two agreed to restart negotiations. Working-level talks between the two sides in Sweden in October were broken off.

The world's largest Confederate monument faces renewed calls for removal

→ **1** The Sons of Confederate Veterans is an organization that staunchly defends Stone Mountain and other Confederate statues and emblems. Dedicated to teaching the "Southern Cause," according to its website, it believes their removal is akin to purging American history.

The Southern or "Lost Cause of the Confederacy" holds that the war was fought over a heroic, but lost, effort to defend states' rights to secede from the Union in the face of Northern aggression, rather than the preservation of slavery.

Martin O'Toole, an official of the Georgia chapter, said the monument is not a totem of racism at all. It's history, plain and simple, he says.

"It's three men on horses," O'Toole said. "What's racist about that?"

Maurice J. Hobson, an associate professor of African American Studies at Georgia State University, counters this, describing the Southern Cause as "a false history" that downplays slavery's role in the Civil War.

He said the Confederate leaders were traitors to the United States who fought to hold onto a Southern economy that depended on slavery.

All three men featured on the monument, Davis, Lee and Jackson, were slave owners.

"The whole of Stone Mountain was erected to show what



some white Georgians revered," he said.

Stone Mountain has long held symbolism for white supremacists. The Ku Klux Klan, a hate group that was formed by Confederate Army veterans and has a history of lynchings and terror against Black people, held its rebirth ceremony atop mountain in 1915 with flaming crosses. Klansmen still hold occasional gatherings in the shadows of the edifice, albeit now met with protesters behind police tape. Many of those cross-burnings took place on or around July 4.

The monolithic monument was proposed more than a

Iraqi officials irate as Saudi daily publishes cartoon against Ayatollah Sistani

→ **1** In a post on his Twitter account, Nasr al-Shammari, spokesman for Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba group, stressed that the anti-Shia stance adopted by Saudi Arabia, the U.S. and Israel is not strange.

The Saudis are those who have unjustly shed the blood of Muslims, he wrote, adding that the insult to the Iraqi cleric proves Riyadh's bitter feeling as its Takfiri conspiracies were defeated by the religious

authority's wise and firm measures.

Ali al-Asadi, chairman of Nujaba's political board, emphasized that the main reason behind the offensive cartoon was Ayatollah Sistani's fatwa (religious decree) that led to the establishment of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi.

According to Press TV, in June 2014 — when Daesh unleashed its campaign of terror and destruction in Iraq — Ayatollah

Sistani issued a religious edict (fatwa) and called on his followers to rush to the national army's help in the fight against the Takfiri outfit.

The fatwa helped bring together Shia fighters, Sunni tribesmen as well as Christian and Izadi volunteers under the umbrella of the PMU to reverse Daesh's gains and ultimately end the terror group's territorial rule in Iraq in late 2017.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ali al-Asadi called for the closure of Asharq al-Awsat's office in Iraq.

Back in May, Saudi-funded TV channel MBC insulted late Hashd al-Sha'abi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. He was assassinated in a U.S. drone attack in January along with top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

Russia says China would be needed in expanded G7 summit

Russia is not in talks with Washington about its potential role at an expanded Group of Seven summit later this year, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Saturday, insisting that China should also be included in the event.

His comments to TASS news agency countered those of John Sullivan, U.S. ambassador to Russia, who told RBC TV on Friday that Washington was "engaged with the Russian Foreign Ministry and with the other G7 governments about whether there is an appropriate role for Russia at the G7."

U.S. President Donald Trump has raised the prospect of Russia's return to the group, which includes the world's most advanced economies, after it was expelled

in the wake of its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

Trump said last month it was "common sense" to invite President Vladimir Putin to rejoin the group.

Russia had been part the group, then known as the G8, since 1997.

Other G7 nations, including Canada and France, have objected to Russia's return, however.

Ryabkov said that the absence of China from an expanded G7 summit would make it impossible to discuss international issues.

"The idea of this so-called extended G7 is flawed because it's not clear how the authors of this initiative plan to address the Chinese factor," he was quoted as saying.

U.S. envoy forges ahead with troubled Taliban peace deal

Washington's envoy to Afghanistan stressed Saturday the economic benefits of the peace deal with the Taliban, forging ahead with an agreement that has run into new political obstacles both in the U.S. and regionally.

Zalmay Khalilzad was wrapping up a week-long trip that included stops in Uzbekistan, Pakistan and the Gulf state of Qatar, where the Taliban negotiators are headquartered.

The U.S. signed a peace deal with the Taliban in February to end 19 years of war in Afghanistan, AP reported

Khalilzad has sought to stress the economic benefits of the peace deal throughout his tour. In a series of tweets early Saturday, the U.S. envoy said he had met with the Qatar Investment Authority and the Taliban's chief negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani, in the tiny Gulf state's capital of Doha.

"We agreed development plans in support of peace can never start too early," Khalilzad tweeted.

However, Washington has recently become embroiled in a controversy over intelligence reports that Russia was



paying money to insurgents with links to the Taliban to kill American and NATO soldiers.

The identity of the insurgents who took the bounty money

is still vague but the payments have been traced to an Afghan drug lord Rahmatullah Azizi, who is living in Moscow, according to Afghan officials who spoke with The Associated Press.

The officials said the money was delivered through Azizi's brother Wahidullah, who was the go-between for those facilitating the attacks on U.S. troops.

The New York Times first reported the U.S. intelligence claiming the payment of bounties as well as Azizi's involvement.

Added to the uncertainty and delays swirling around the U.S.-Taliban peace deal, the Pentagon released a report on Wednesday that questioned the Taliban's commitment to end its ties with Al-Qaida. The peace deal calls for the Taliban to fight against terrorist organizations and ensure Afghanistan would not be used again to attack U.S. interests or its allies. Critics of the deal say the militants can't be trusted.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied contacts with Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, saying the insurgents were committed to the peace deal.

Iran to meet Syria in friendly in September: report

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Media reports suggest that Syrian football association has reached an agreement with Iran for a friendly match.

According to @syria_pro_sport, the match has been scheduled for Sept. 3.

The Eagles of Qasioun will also meet Iran's archrivals Iraq in a friendly match five days later.

Iran and Syria are preparing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

Iran are in Group C, five points behind Iraq.

The 'Persian Leopards' have four must-win match ahead.

Deagan Skocic's 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.

Syria also lead Group A with 15 points, eight points ahead of China.

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.



© Mehr / Mohammad Reza Abbasi

Iran football plunged into crisis once again

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The coronavirus has once again plunged the Iranian football into crisis.

Esteghlal team, who were supposed to go to Jam, Bushehr Province for the game against Pars Jounubi, refused to travel to the southern city because of concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, despite the fact that all the members of the team were at the Tehran's Mehrabad Airport to fly to Jam on Saturday evening.

However, Ahmad Sa'adatmand, Esteghlal general manager, said that they have bought flight tickets for Sunday morning and were waiting to receive the full report of the players' Covid-19 test results.

The club announced on Saturday that several players of the team as well as some club's staff have tested positive for coronavirus.



The Iran Football League Organization in a statement responded that Esteghlal must participate in the match against Pars Jounubi as it is scheduled.

Further, the League Organization issued a threatening statement stressing that the players and clubs' members who pretend to be infected with the coronavirus will face legal action and their activities will be suspended.

"The football medical department will send the related players and staff to the trusted labs and medical centers to perform additional tests intended to diagnose the Covid-19, and in case of proving they have violated the rules, they will be banned from registering new contracts and will be suspended from all football-related affairs," the statement reads.

On Friday, Foolad Khuzestan also announced that six players of the side have tested positive for coronavirus.

Mohammad Tabe appointed acting Iran's NPC secretary general



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Tabe has been named as acting secretary general of Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC).

Tabé, who has already worked as deputy NPC technical director, replaced Hadi Rezaei in the position.

Rezaei stepped down from his role on June 20 but will remain as Chef de

Mission for next year's Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

He also is Iran's sitting volleyball team.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games have been postponed until next year because of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. The event, due to begin on 24 July, will now take place "no later than summer 2021".

Iran's judo league ended due to coronavirus outbreak



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran judo league was officially brought to an end due to coronavirus outbreak.

According to the Iran Judo Federation, Khorasan Razavi have become champions, with Khoshgovar and Ra'd Padafand level on points at the second place and Naft Masjed Soleyman finished in third place.

The winners will be awarded their prizes on July 30 in Tehran, capital of Iran.

Iran has been battling the spread of the coronavirus, with the total number of cases hitting 237,878 on Saturday and a further 148 deaths bringing the country's toll to 11,408, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on state television.

8-month wait almost over for resumption of Chinese soccer

An eight-month wait for the new Chinese Super League to start is nearly over, a delay nearly as long as it takes to play a regular season. And July 25 can't come soon enough for the players and coaches.

With the central city of Wuhan the original epicenter of the coronavirus that brought sport around the world to a halt, the 2020 Chinese soccer league, due to kick off on Feb. 22, was the first to be suspended. While neighbors such as South Korea restarted in May and Vietnam in June, Chinese teams have had to wait.

There was talk of May and June starts in China, too, but with stars such as Marouane Fellaini, who joined Shandong Luneng from English giant Manchester United in 2019, becoming infected and new cases of the virus springing up in the country, there were growing concerns that the season would be canceled.

"We played our last game at the start of November and the most challenging aspect of this was that the league kept getting delayed," Afshin Ghotbi, coach of top-tier team Shijiazhuang Everbright, told The Associated Press. "That was difficult for the players who have been through quarantine and isolation from their families."

Shijiazhuang spent two months in an Abu Dhabi training camp before being allowed back to China in March to undergo 14 days in quarantine.

The Chinese Football Association announced the start date on Wednesday.

"China's battle to prevent and control the epidemic has achieved major strategic results and the national epidemic



prevention and control situation continues to improve," it said in a statement.

Ghotbi said it was a "big thing" to finally have a date.

"It gives us something to aim for," he said. "When I told the players, I could see their concentration and energy move up a level. They now know it is time to step up."

When the league finally kicks off it will do so in the twin hub cities of Suzhou and Dalian in order to minimize travel and risks of infection. Details have yet to be confirmed but it is expected that the league's 16 teams will be divided into two groups of eight with the winners playing off against each other.

It's most likely that group stage matches will be held

without spectators. A decision will be made whether to allow fans to the latter stages of the season.

While Shijiazhuang does not have the deep pockets of big-spending teams such as Guangzhou Evergrande and Shanghai SIPG, Ghotbi, a former head coach of Iran, hopes that his background working with national teams will help with the shortened format.

"I have worked at World Cups and Asian Cups and this may be a similar tournament style situation with many games in a short space of time. We also have an advantage in that we have all our foreign players with us and have the entire team together."

China's tightening of entry requirements for foreigners from March and the reduced number of international flights have meant that teams have had a tough time bringing players and coaches back from overseas. Beijing Guoan is still waiting for Brazilian stars Renato Augusto and Fernando to arrive from South America.

Some clubs resorted to drastic measures. In June Dalian Yifang paid a reported 3.57 million yuan (\$530,000) to hire a charter flight to bring head coach Rafael Benitez back from Spain.

The former Liverpool and Real Madrid coach has been busy trying to get his players, who have not had competitive action since November, up to speed by July 25.

"Players in the English Premier League were concerned about the lack of training time before the games started" Benitez said. "This is the situation we face too."

(Source: AP)

Esteghlal in shock after 8 members test positive for COVID-19

MNA — Officials of Esteghlal FC announced that the results of COVID-19 tests of eight members of the team have been positive.

The news come as the team are slated to face Pars Jonoubi Jam on Sunday in Bushehr province. After realizing the test results, team's head coach Farhad Majidi decided to shut down today's training of the team in Tehran.

The club have not specified the names of players who have tests positive, but some media claim that the team's captain, Voria Ghafouri, is among the infected.

Other reports indicate that Esteghlal's medical team is preparing to carry out new tests from those who have tested positive.

Meanwhile, the club's general manager Ahmad Sa'adatmand has announced an emergency condition, calling on all his deputies and club's officials to come its headquarters to decide on continuation of the season.

Estaghlal had taken on Foolad and Saipa in the past two weeks after the IPL was resumed. Foolad also announced on Friday that six of its players have contracted the virus.

In early June of 2020, in the second phase of the government's plan to control the outbreak of Covid-19, the guidelines about social distancing and the health requirements of the football matches were also announced.

According to the guidelines, if there are more than five people in a team with positive tests for coronavirus, the activity of the relevant team will be suspended until the patients fully recover and obtain a health certificate.

Mona Ashofteh joins Saipa from Turkish team Elbistan

Tasnim — Iran women's volleyball team outside hitter Mona Ashofteh joined Saipa volleyball club on Saturday.



The 19-year-old player is the youngest Iranian woman player who has played abroad.

Ashofteh was a member of Kahramanmaraş Elbistan of Turkey last season.

Saipa coach Maryam Hashemi also extended her contract for one year more.

The Iran's women's league draw ceremony will be held on Sept. 30.

Ex-Iran coach Wilmots linked with Bordeaux

Marc Wilmots has been reportedly linked with a move to French club Bordeaux.

According to webgirondins.com, the Belgian coach has played for Bordeaux in 2001 and now the French club has set its sight on hiring him as a coach.

Bordeaux is looking for a French-speaking coach to replace Paulo Sousa.

Wilmots has been free since his resignation from the position of Iran coach in December 2019.

The 51-year-old coach had been linked with a move to Turkish giant Fenerbahce in April.

(Source: webgirondins.com)

2020 Jones Cup Cancelled due to Coronavirus

The Chinese Taipei Basketball Association (CTBA) announced the cancellation of this year's William Jones Cup international basketball tournament after previously postponing the games to August due to the coronavirus pandemic.

CTBA has said the decision was made after considering the inconvenience foreign players would face once they arrived in Taiwan. The basketball governing body said it had consulted the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) and both agreed that prioritizing health was most important.

Since the Jones Cup is considered an invitational competition, CTBA said it would have to pay all the extra expenses, which it could not afford.

This would mark the third cancellation of the invitational tournament since it was established 43 years ago, in 1977. The previous cancellations were due to a 1989 fire that destroyed the Chungwa Sports Stadium and by the 2003 SARS outbreak.

The tournament was named after British basketball promoter Renato William Jones, who was one of the founders of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA).

Iran is one of the most decorated teams in the tournament after USA and the Philippines.

Beiranvand could remain in Persepolis until end of season: Antwerp

PLDC — Alireza Beiranvand can remain in Persepolis until the end of the season, Belgian club Antwerp said.

Beiranvand officially is Antwerp goalkeeper from July 1 but he cannot join the team due to coronavirus restriction.

Now, the Belgian club has announced Beiranvand can stay in Iran if Persepolis pays his salary.

According to the deal, Persepolis must pay him 50,000 euros per month.

Persepolis has yet to express its satisfaction with Antwerp's offer

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Mix with people properly, so that they weep for you when you die, and show you affection and fight your enemy when you are alive.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iranian troupe blends “SpongeBob”, “Rhinoceros” for Tehran performance

A R T TEHRAN — Bachehaye Shahkar, a Tehran-based troupe for children’s performances, plans to perform a play based on the American animated comedy TV series “SpongeBob SquarePants” and Eugène Ionesco’s “Rhinoceros”.

The play “The Rhinoceros SpongeBob” will be staged by director and writer Sami Salehi-Sabet at the Tehran Independent Theater from July 12 to 17.

The play tells the story of a group of youth and young adults that team up to perform a play in the city. Their play is a combination of “SpongeBob SquarePants” and Eugène Ionesco’s “Rhinoceros”: in the underwater life, all friends and relatives of SpongeBob choose to turn into rhinoceroses for unclear reasons. SpongeBob can do nothing to change their minds, while they begin mocking him. They also taunt SpongeBob about why he doesn’t want to change into a rhinoceros.

In Ionesco’s “Rhinoceros”, the inhabitants of a small, provincial French town turn into rhinoceroses. Ultimately, the only human who does not succumb to this mass metamorphosis is the central character, Béranger, a flustered everyman figure who is initially criticized in the play for his drinking, tardiness and slovenly lifestyle, and then, later, for his increasing paranoia and obsession with the rhinoceroses.

The play is often read as a response and criticism to the sudden upsurge of Fascism and Nazism during the events preceding World War II, and explores the themes of conformity, culture, fascism, responsibility, logic, mass movements, mob mentality, philosophy and morality.

Alireza Khodabakhsh, Mana Mokri, Sarina Bonyani and Mehrdad Amani are some members of the cast.

Portuguese festival picks movies from Iran

CULTURE TEHRAN — The Iranian animated movies “Each Other” and “Malakout” will be competing in the 17th In the Palace Film Festival, which will take place in the Portuguese city of Varna from September 15 to 22.

The two will be competing in the Best Animation Film Category.



A scene from “Malakout” by Iranian director Farnush Abedi.

“Each Other” by Sarah Tabibzadeh portrays a young man who works in a bedroll selling shop and he accidentally loses one of the layers.

Farnush Abedi’s short animated movie “Malakout” is a horror film about a pianist, who has lost one of his hands and can’t play the piano anymore. Doctors decide to transplant a dead criminal’s hand to his body. The pianist with his new hand starts killing people.

The In the Palace festival is an established international event dedicated to short films, new media and digital arts up to 27 minutes in length.

The main purpose of the festival is to present and promote the contemporary short film art form.

DEFC doc chronicles life of Iran Kaveh founder Asghar Qandchi

A R T TEHRAN — The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) has produced a documentary recounting the life story of Asghar Qandchi, the founder of Iran Kaveh, Iran’s first trailer and truck manufacturing company.

Mostafa Razzaq-Karimi is the director of the documentary named “Unfinished Path”.

“I wanted to portray the industrial history of the country, and the personal life of Qandchi was of high significance,” Razzaq-Karimi said in a press release published on Saturday.

“Qandchi was a blacksmith working in his garage downtown. He had an interesting life, he could not go to school to study but he was a successful entrepreneur. He worked very hard and had many problems in his life, however, we decided not only to portray his dramatic life but also to review Iran’s contemporary history through the industry,” he said.

The DEFC produced the documentary in collaboration with Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture.

He added that the DEFC has turned into a good venue for young filmmakers to make documentaries about industry and entrepreneurship.

“Industry can be a good topic for a documentary and can attract larger audiences,” he said.

Qandchi was able to establish ties with Mack Trucks of the United States and started manufacturing trucks officially under their license.

His company soon grew to 1200 workers and reached a capacity of roughly 2000 trucks



A scene from the documentary “Unfinished Path” by director Mostafa Razzaq-Karimi.

per year. The company was renamed Saipa Diesel Company years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

After the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, although he had lost his authority in his own company, he tried to establish another

company called Kaveh Car in order to provide after-sales service and maintenance to existing Mack trucks in Iran.

Book City to scrutinize philosophy of life in views of Western thinkers



A poster for the session “Life, a Journey to Create Meanings”.

CULTURE TEHRAN — The philosophy of life in the views of a number of Western philosophers will be reviewed in an online session that will be organized by the Book City Institute in Tehran.

The session entitled “Life, a Journey to Create Meanings” will be held on July 7 at 3 pm on instagram.com/bookcityculturalcenter/ and Hossein Mahmudi will deliver a speech.

“Is there any meaning for life?” the Book City wrote in a statement for the session. “If so, is the meaning

the same for everybody? And if not, is it possible to create a meaning for life? Is the meaning accessible to others? Is it enough to create meaning for life once and forever? Will one meaning be able to cover all aspects of our lives?”

“These questions have occupied the minds of many people and the session intends to find answers based on the views of some philosophers from Plato to Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche and Ludwig Wittgenstein,” it added.

Photos depicting love story from Persian literature on view in Daoulas Abbey Gardens



A photo by Babak Kazemi on display in the Daoulas Abbey Gardens, France.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian photographer Babak Kazemi is displaying a selection of his photos created based on a love story from classical Persian literature in the Daoulas Abbey Gardens in France.

As part of the Daoulas Photographic Walks, “Love, Stories from the East and West” is a joint exhibit by Kazemi and British photographer Laura Pannack.

Kazemi’s collection centers on the story of Shirin and Farhad written by the Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi (1141-1209). In the story, Farhad carved an entire mountain

for the sake of his beloved Shirin.

The exhibit, which opened on June 4, will be running until November 2020. Kazemi has been represented by the Silk Road Gallery in Tehran.

Kazemi, 36, lives and works in Tehran. His works are on view in the collections of various museums in Tehran.

A former monastery built in the 12th century by Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, Daoulas Abbey overlooks the little French town of Daoulas, once a strategic port between the Léon region of Brittany and Cornwall.

Courtyard of Vahdat Hall to host play based on novel “Too Loud a Solitude”

A R T TEHRAN — Director Peyman Qadimi plans to stage a play based on Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal’s novella “Too Loud a Solitude” in the courtyard of Tehran’s Vahdat Hall during late July.

Saber Abar, a star of Asghar Farhadi’s Oscar-winning movie “A Separation”, will perform the play renamed “Heh”.

Qadimi dramatized the story based on a Persian translation of “Too Loud a Solitude” by Parviz Davai.

To avoid the disturbance of those nearby from noise pollution, the voices of the performances can be received through headphones of cellphones. In addition, the organizers have made an obligation to respect health protocols.

Due to political censorship, Hrabal himself published “Too Loud a Solitude” in 1976. However, it was published officially in 1989.

The novella tells the story of an old man named Hanta who works as a paper crusher in Prague, using his job to



Saber Abar will be the sole actor of the play “Heh”.

save and amass astounding numbers of rare and banned books. He is an obsessive collector of knowledge. The book was translated into English by Michael Henry Heim.

Peppa Pig collection appears in Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — Six volumes of the Peppa Pig book series co-written by Mark Baker and Neville Astley have been published in Persian by Ofoq Publications in Tehran.

The collection has been translated by Mahsa Khosravi.

There’s a first time for everything, even when you’re Peppa Pig!

From enjoying holidays and sleepovers to exploring new locations, these books are a great way to prepare the little one for those new moments.

“Peppa Goes on Holiday”, “Peppa’s First Glasses”, “Dentist Trip”, “Peppa Pig: The Family Computer”, “Peppa Visits the Aquarium” and “Peppa Plays Football” are the six stories selected from this collection to be published in Persian.

Peppa and her family go on their first holiday abroad in “Peppa Goes on Holiday”. They pack their suitcases and fly all the way to Italy, where they eat pizza and go sightseeing! But there’s so much to see and do that Peppa keeps leaving poor Teddy behind!

“Peppa’s First Glasses” says that Pedro

Pony can’t see very well without his glasses. And Peppa Pig is sure she can’t see very well either. So Mummy Pig takes her to see Mr. Pony, the optician, and Peppa has an eye test.

In “Dentist Trip”, Peppa and George are going to the dentist. It’s George’s first visit, so he’s a little nervous—but Peppa shows him that a trip to the dentist can be lots of fun!

Mummy Pig is working at home on the family computer but Peppa and George want to play “Happy Mrs. Chicken” in the book “Peppa Pig: The Family Computer”.



This combination photo shows front covers of the collection of Peppa Pig book series published by Ofoq Publications in Tehran.