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More Iran-Pakistan border points reopened

TEHRAN — The spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced on Monday that Iran's three more border points with Pakistan were reopened today, IRNA reported. "Exports and imports through the three trade borders (in the Iranian southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province) with Pakistan are fully resumed," Rouholah Latifi said. "As of today, the three markets of Rim-

dan, Koohak and Pishin in Sistan-Baluchestan Province on the Pakistani border have been completely reopened, and trade with the country has returned to normal," the official said. Pakistan's decision to reopen new border crossings with Iran comes at a time when both sides have already reopened the Taftan (Mirjavah) border crossing seven days a week to expand border trade between the two countries. →4

Over 18,000 female rescuers providing services

TEHRAN — There are currently 18,247 female members of the Red Crescent Society providing relief and rescue operations to women affected by incidents in the country, head of the Red Crescent Society's Rescue and Relief Organization has announced. "Women must receive special assistance from specialized groups of female rescuers in accidents due to their special physical characteristics," IRNA quoted Mehdi Valipour as saying on Monday.

Female rescuers are offering services during accidents and disasters in four categories, including social-psychological support, family reunification, operation support, accommodation, and emergency nutrition, he explained, adding, volunteers also excel in search and rescue operations such as urban and long-distance search and rescue operations, mountain search and rescue, medical emergencies and assessment.

Iran distributes free books to promote reading in remote areas

TEHRAN — Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has sent free packages of books to isolated villages across the country to promote reading. The packages include over 60,000 books, which have been donated by people and a number of cultural organizations, the ministry's Office for Cultural Studies and Planning an-

nounced on Monday. Over 150,000 books have been collected in the initiative titled "It's Possible by Books" and 60,000 titles were selected to be sent to the villages. The books will be distributed in villages that have active and constant participation in the cultural festivals being organized annually across the country. →12

Iranian football drawn into controversy

TEHRAN — Two matches of Iran Professional League were cancelled after Esteghlal and Foolad announced that several players tested positive for COVID-19, however Iran League Football Organization has announced that their tests should be verified. It means there is no trust between federation and clubs.

Lack of trust between them is terribly upsetting. Several clubs had already announced that they would withdraw from the league if the competition resumes, however the football federation didn't take the threat into consideration and started the matches.

Acting head of Iran Football League Organization Soheil Mahdi had said if five players of a team are tested positive, the team's matches will be canceled, and now the clubs say they have a right not to participate in a match because more than 10 players of their team have been diagnosed with the coronavirus.

The football federation is in trouble since it could be a dangerous game for two parties. In the other countries, the clubs have cooperated with their federations to resume their leagues but here the clubs' stubbornness can be a problem, along with the fact that maybe they're right.

It seems there is no specific organization in Iran football to manage what is problematic. We need to have deterrence in place for the clubs to obey the measures.

Iran football federation is leading by an acting president and FIFA has not yet allowed the federation to hold the general assembly since the FFIRI's statutes does not comply with FIFA rules.

In a letter to the FFIRI, FIFA refers to eight issues that still need to be addressed, including the reduction of the role of the Iranian Sports Minister in internal FFIRI affairs.

The football has to know its president as soon as possible, or else must accept the consequences of the situation.

Chaos ensues. Iran football needs to reform as soon as possible. Without trust, there is no progress and it's worth noting that Iran football needs unity ahead of the 2022 World Cup qualification.

Iran to start reconstruction of damaged building at Natanz nuclear site

TEHRAN — Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has said an explosion at a key nuclear facility in Natanz has caused significant damage to the nuclear complex.

According to the spokesman, there were measuring equipment and precision instruments in the complex and many of them were destroyed by the accident.

He said the reconstruction of the damaged building at the Shahid Ahmadi Roshan Natanz Complex will get underway soon.

"After the accident happened, our priority was to ensure that there are no casualties, to find the cause of the incident and the way to reconstruct the complex and compensate for the losses," IRNA on Monday quoted Kamalvandi as saying.

"In the first step we found out that there was no casualty but the financial losses were significant," he said.

As the Supreme National Security Council announced, the security bodies are now aware of the cause of accident, but, due to security considerations they do not tend to comment on it, Kamalvandi explained.

Elaborating on the features of the accident, he said the nuclear site's construction process started seven years ago and it was about to be completed after two years, but, due to issues related to the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the construction process did not continue.

More samples of advanced centrifuges were supposed to be produced in the same building, Kamalvandi added.

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. →3

Black armed protesters march in Georgia, U.S.

A group of predominantly Black armed protesters marched through a Georgia memorial park on the Fourth of July calling for the removal of a carving of Confederate officials.

The group, named the Not F---ing Around Coalition (NFAC), marched through Stone Mountain Park on Saturday, with many protesters holding rifles, including military-style weapons, and some wearing ammunition belts, Reuters reported.

The protesters called for the removal of the nine-story-high monument depicting Confederacy President Jefferson Davis and two Confederate generals, Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. The location of the monument also served as the site of the Ku Klux Klan's rebirth in 1915.

Videos posted online showed scores of

protesters dressed in black and wearing face scarves during the protest. One clip showed a leader challenging white supremacists while shouting into a loudspeaker.

"I don't see no white militia," he said. "We're here. Where ... you at? We're in your house. Let's go."

John Bankhead, the spokesman for the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, said the about 100 to 200 protesters were peaceful, The Associated Press reported.

"It's a public park, a state park. We have these protests on both sides of the issue from time to time. We respect people's First Amendment right," Bankhead told NBC affiliate station WXIA-TV.

"We understand the sensitivities of the issue here at the park ... so we respect that and allow them to come in as long as it's peaceful, which it has been," he added. →10

Israel launches new spy satellite

Israel has launched a new spy satellite that it said would provide high-quality surveillance for its military intelligence.

In a statement on Monday, Israel's Ministry of Defense and Israel Aerospace Industries said "Ofek 16" was shot into space at 4am local time [01:00 GMT].

The "electro-optical reconnaissance satellite with advanced capabilities ... will undergo a series of tests," it added.

The first images are expected in about a week.

According to al Jazeera, there were no further details on the satellite's mission, but Israeli public radio said it would be used to monitor the nuclear activities of regional rival Iran.

Minister of Defense and Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz said intelligence capabilities are "essential" to Israel's security.

"We will continue to strengthen and maintain Israel's capabilities on every front, in every place." State-owned Israel Aerospace Industries was the main contractor for the project and the sat-

ellite's payload was developed by defense firm Elbit Systems.

"Our network of satellites lets us watch the entire West Asia — and even a bit more than that," said Shlomi Sudari, the head of IAI's space program.

The Ofek-16 is an "optoelectronic reconnaissance satellite with advanced capabilities," the ministry said. It is the latest satellite in the Ofek series to be launched into space, following the Ofek-11, which entered orbit in 2016. →10

'World's longest suspension bridge' being built in Iran

TEHRAN — The world's longest suspension bridge with a length of 500 meters is being constructed in the northwestern province of Ardebil and will come on stream in June 2021.

The bridge is being constructed in Aznav tourist area in Khalkhal city, which is famous for its mountains, springs, and gardens. ILNA quoted provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi as saying on Monday.

Pointing to the province's Meshginshahr suspension bridge and Hir curved glass suspension bridge as popular tourist attractions, he noted that Ardebil can be named the province of suspension bridges.

Meshginshahr suspension bridge is 345 meters long, 3 meters wide and 80 meters high. It was inaugurated in 2015 and is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia.

Inaugurated in January, Hir curved glass suspension bridge is the first of its kind in the world. Measuring 220 meters in length, the bridge's all-glass parts and metal cables have been constructed by domestic engineers using high-quality materials.

The official also said that three ski resorts in Owjor of the Sareyn county, Shabil in Meshgin Shahr, and Alvaresi in Sareyn county will be launched by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (starts March 20, 2021).

Earlier in April tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.

In December 2019, Fallahi announced that seventeen tourism projects, worth 1,500 billion rials (some \$35 million) would be inaugurated in the province in the near future. →8



Vank Cathedral hosting 400-year-old Armenian culture exhibition

TEHRAN — The centuries-old Vank Cathedral (locally called Kelisa-ye Vank) in Isfahan is hosting an exhibition of artworks and handicrafts made by Armenians of New Jolfa district with the aim of introducing their 400-year-old culture and art.

The exhibit is displaying traditional costumes, hand-made pieces of jewelry and music instruments made by Armenian artists from the Safavid era (1501-1736) to the present, CHTN quoted the manager of the cultural complex of the cathedral Aris Davitian. →8

Iranian Air Force unveils indigenous simulator system for Russian-made Ilyushin Il-76

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Iranian Air Force on Monday brought into service a homegrown simulator system for the Russian-made Ilyushin Il-76 strategic airlifter, Tasnim reported. The strategic airlifter was unveiled in a ceremony in Tehran attended by Air Force Commander Aziz Nasirzadeh.

The Air Force chief said experts from Air Force have made such advances in the technology of full flight simulators that they can develop simulators for both military and civilian aircraft.

Nasirzadeh also unveiled plans to produce a homegrown simulator system for P3F planes.

Ilyushin Il-76, Soviet military transport aircraft, first flown in 1971 and first produced in 1975. It was designed by the Ilyushin design bureau under G.V. Novozhilov.



The Il-76 was a heavy transport plane, capable of handling a payload of more than 88,000 pounds (40,000 kilograms), according to britannica.com.

It was equipped with two cranes that traveled on overhead tracks, and its rear ramp doubled as a hoist. Unlike most military transports, the Il-76 was armed, with two guns in a rear turret.

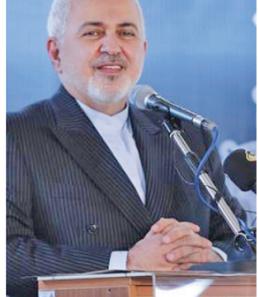
Its four turbofan engines produced 26,455 pounds of thrust each. Its maximum speed in level flight was 528 miles per hour (850 km per hour), and its ceiling was 50,850 feet (15,500 m). From 30 to 90 passengers could be accommodated.

Iran's progress, capabilities causes of concern for U.S., Israel: Zarif

(Press TV) — Iran's foreign minister says the pressures exerted by the United States and Israel on the Islamic Republic prove that both regimes are concerned about the new grounds Tehran has broken in recent years and its continued progress.

Speaking in a meeting of senior officials of Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday, Mohammad Javad Zarif said, "Perhaps, no other country has been under such mounting pressure from certain [world] powers, especially the United States, and the Zionist regime."

He added that the Iranian Foreign Ministry has been constantly dealing with countries and groups outside Iran, which use all their power to mount pressure on the Iranian people.



Zarif noted that pressures put on Iran by Washington and Tel Aviv stem from the fact that both regimes "are concerned about Iran's growth and capabilities, which has prompted them to take action to confront it."

Zarif's remarks came just a day after the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, Brigadier General Alireza Tangsiri, announced that the country has developed underground cities along the country's entire southern shores, including the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, which can accommodate both naval vessels and missiles.

"We [in the Iranian Armed Forces] have underground cities, which house both vessels and missiles," the commander said, adding, "Our entire shoreline [in southern Iran] is equipped with [various types of] arms."

"Another thing I am going to say [to enemies] with certainty is that we are present everywhere in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman and ... in places you cannot even imagine. We are your nightmare," Tangsiri added.

■ 'U.S. must not be allowed to reintroduce Iran as security threat'

Addressing the same meeting, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi said the United States should not be allowed to once again portray Iran as a "security threat."

"Every move that would introduce Iran as a security threat on the international scene would be playing in the U.S. court," Araqchi said.

He added that U.S. President Donald Trump is facing a difficult situation after the recent developments in the country and "therefore, we should not give a pretext to the U.S. to use Iran as a bargaining chip in the [upcoming] U.S. [presidential] election campaign."

He said Washington has increased its so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran to its highest level over the past six months after it failed to achieve its objectives.

The senior Iranian diplomat warned that the U.S. is currently pursuing its "main objective" that is "to once again send [the case of] Iran to the [United Nations] Security Council and has mobilized all its power to this effect," adding that such a "dangerous game" may cause strategic damage for Iran if the Iranian side played into the U.S. hands.

Pointing to the outcomes of the international nuclear agreement -- known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- signed between Iran and major world powers in 2015, Araqchi said, "Foiling a security agreement that was made between the U.S. and Israelis after many years was one of the JCPOA's achievements. We intended to prevent the reformation of this consensus over the past months."

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has said that the U.S. policy to exert "maximum pressure" on Iran has already failed and all economic indexes show that the country has weathered the worst phase of that policy.

Rouhani made the remarks in a press conference with domestic and international media in Tehran in February, saying, "All [economic] indexes show that we have weathered [the worst phase of] the U.S. maximum pressure [policy]. Americans have reached the conclusion that the path they have chosen [for dealing with Iran] has been based on a wrong strategy."

Vaezi says Iran welcomes close ties with Venezuela

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Monday that Iran respects the Venezuela government and people and welcomes expansion of ties and cooperation with the Latin American country.

"Iran's political determination is supporting the legal Venezuelan government and helping the people of this country solve their problems," he said during a meeting with Venezuelan president special envoy Jorge Marquez.

Vaezi also noted that the United States seeks to exert pressure and hatch plots against the freedom-seeking people, especially Iran and Venezuela.

"We have to prevent any harm to the people's well-being by the enemies' sanctions through solidarity and expansion of cooperation and relations," the presidential chief of staff said.

The Venezuelan envoy delivered a written message of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to President Hassan Rouhani.

Marquez said that Iran and Venezuela have very good relations, calling for expansion of ties. He also praised Iran's supports for Venezuela.

Elsewhere, he said that the U.S. hegemony is common enemy of Iran and Venezuela which should be countered through unity.



Venezuelan president special envoy Jorge Marquez (left) held talks with Iranian presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi in Tehran on Monday.

Rouhani has said that Iran and Venezuela should deepen "strategic" and "friendly" ties. He made the remarks in a message to President Maduro on the occasion of the anniversary of Venezuela's independence.

"Stressing the necessity of deepening friendly and strategic relations between the two countries, I am sure that we will witness the Venezuelan people's victory in overcoming the current problems in near future," Rouhani predicted.

Iranian tankers' arrival in Venezuela was a celebration day

Marquez also said that arrival of Iranian fuel tankers in Venezuela was a celebration day for the people.

People of Venezuela considers the Iranian nation a "great hero", he added.

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.

Reportedly, another four Iranian tankers are sailing towards Venezuela.

Both Iran and Venezuela have been sanctioned by the U.S.

In remarks on June 11, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps said Iran "imposed its will" after sending fuel tankers to Venezuela and denounced the United States as a fading world power.

Major General Hossein Salami said despite harshest American sanctions, Iran was still able to supply Caracas with crucial petrol products.

The Islamic Republic is "breaking the back of the enemies", Salami said, according to Aljazeera.

"By God's grace, today we are witnessing the early and rapid decline of our arch enemies, particularly the U.S. All of the symbols with which the U.S. was presenting itself and was displaying an untrue image to the world are falling, and the U.S. is tearing apart the image it had created about itself," said the top general.

"Unable to contain the coronavirus, the U.S. is today in the worst economic conditions," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei: Iran will spare no effort in backing Palestinians

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In response to a letter by Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has reiterated that Iran will "spare no effort" in backing the oppressed Palestinians against the Zionist regime of Israel.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, like the past, as a religious and human duty and also based on the principles of the Islamic Revolution, will spare no effort for supporting the oppressed Palestinian people and restoration of their rights and fending off the evil of the fake and usurper Zionist regime," Ayatollah Khamenei stated in the response letter.

The Palestinian official had recently sent letters to more than 120 Arab and Muslim officials, calling on them to join hands in defense of the Palestinian cause, and devise mechanisms to stop Israel's plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank, calling Tel Aviv's decision "criminal and racist."

The Leader said, "I have carefully studied your message about the current conditions of dear Palestine. I appreciate all Jihadi forces for the Resistance movement that has set the

ground for weakening the U.S. and Zionist regime," Ayatollah Khomeini wrote.

The resistance's struggle, the Leader noted, has "caused weakness and frustration for them (the U.S. and Israel), and has, on the other hand, awarded esteem and pride to the Muslim nation."

After suffering "irreparable" defeats in the battleground, the "pitiable enemy" tried furthering its expansionist approach and attempts at violating Palestinians' rights through laying a siege on the Gaza Strip and subjecting the coastal sliver to economic pressure, Ayatollah Khamenei's letter read. The Leader was referring to the blockade that the Tel Aviv regime began to impose on Gaza after Hamas came to rule the enclave.

"With the logic of wisdom, reasoning, and experience, the brave Palestinian nation has overcome the Zionists' threats," the Leader remarked.

The Leader noted that awareness, unity, and solidarity among the Palestinian people and groups will have an effective role in thwarting the plans of the enemy by the Zionists.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to start annexing all settlement blocs and the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank. The move, however, appears to have come to a halt in light of widespread international rejection of the plan.

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," Middle East Monitor reported on July 3.

"We support the Palestinian people's demands to end the arm trades and the military and security cooperation with Israel; to lift the free trade agreements with that State; to ban the trade with the illegal Israeli settlements; and to hold accountable the individuals and cooperative actors, complicit with such regime of occupation and apartheid."

China says U.S. withdrawal from nuclear deal is source of tension

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian has said that the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, is the main source of tension around Iran's nuclear program.

"The United States withdrawal from the JCPOA and maximum pressure against Iran are main sources of tension around Iran's nuclear program. China is hopeful that all sides remain within the framework of the JCPOA Joint Commission and solve differences through dialogue," ISNA quoted Lijian as saying on Monday in a tweet message.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has written a letter to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, denouncing the E3's non-compliance with the JCPOA after the three European states drafted an anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors.

The resolution was approved on June 19.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday, "Following the irresponsible and illegal measure by the three European states (Germany, the UK, and France) to initiate a draft resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors and also the continuation of non-compliance with the international



commitments under the JCPOA and the resolutions passed by the (JCPOA) Joint Commission, the minister of foreign affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran yesterday sent a letter to Mr. Borrell, the European Union foreign policy chief and the JCPOA coordinator, 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."

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.

Iranian parliament speaker calls for closer ties with Qatar

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on Monday called for expansion of political, economic and cultural ties with Qatar.

"It is expected that the two countries pay more attention to economic cooperation," he said during a meeting with Qatari Ambassador to Iran Mohammed bin Hamad Al Hajri.

Ghalibaf also sought expansion of cooperation in the area of tourism industry. The Qatari diplomat said his country attaches great importance to relations with Tehran in various spheres.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif discussed expansion of ties with Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on June 29.

The two top diplomats also discussed the latest international developments.

President Hassan Rouhani said in January that Iran has stood and will stand beside Qatar in future.

"At a juncture of time, certain regional countries imposed restrictions on Qatar, but Iran stood beside Qatar and will stand based on its duties as a neighbor," Rouhani said during a joint press conference with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad

Al Thani who was on a tour of Iran.

Rouhani said that the two countries have very good relationship in various areas of economy, science and culture.

"A joint commission will be formed in future months and we hope that the two countries would reach agreements on economic cooperation, investment, technology and other areas," the president stated.

He also said that Iran and Qatar will expand political ties.

For his part, the Qatari emir said that Doha will never forget Tehran's help in difficult days.

"We praise the Islamic Republic of Iran's stance in recent years, especially when Qatar was under blockade," the emir said.

Sheikh Tamim also called for expansion of relations.

In June of 2017, Saudi Arabia along with Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) abruptly cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar and closed land, sea and air routes to the country. The severing of relations also included withdrawing ambassadors and imposing trade and travel bans on Doha.

The Islamic Republic opened its airspace to about 100 more Qatari flights a day during the blockade.

Compensation for victims of Ukrainian plane to be discussed after technical investigation: Kiev

By staff and agency

Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Yevhen Yenin has said that the volume of compensation for victims of the Ukrainian plane crash will be discussed when the technical investigation is completed.

"At this stage, technical investigation has not yet been completed. If it confirms the fact of unlawful interference, it will be possible to proceed to the second phase of the negotiation process and more specifically discuss the volume of compensation. It's still too early to talk about something," told Ukraine 24 TV channel in an interview published on Monday.

He also said, "Black boxes have not been sent to France yet. As of today, we have another promise from the Iranian side to do this on July 20. A couple of days ago we received from the French authorities their consent to accept two of our experts who will participate in the process as members of the technical investigation group."

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



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

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on June 28 that France will start decoding black boxes of the Ukrainian plane.

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

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

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

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

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

Head of the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces said on June 30 that extensive investigations have been carried out over the Ukrainian plane crash incident and the dossier will be sent to court after investigations are completed.

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

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

Launching dispute resolution mechanism not a good idea, says Russian envoy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, believes it's not a good idea for the E3 countries and Iran to launch the dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) under the Iran nuclear agreement.

In a tweet on Monday, Ulyanov wrote: "#E3 and #Iran try to launch from different perspectives Dispute Resolution Mechanism. Not a good idea."

"Instead of fruitless and potentially damaging disputes of this kind all #JCPOA participants need to think together how to preserve the nuclear deal which is in a very bad shape," he suggested.

In another tweet, the ambassador wrote that triggering "the Dispute Resolution Mechanism has become a regular practice. It is not dramatic and definitely is not something extraordinary."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that Iran has triggered the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism on at least six occasions.

"Don't believe the hype: Iran triggered #JCPOA DRM on at least 6 occasions (in ref to U.S. AND E3 violations)," Zarif said via his Twitter account.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi announced on Friday that Zarif has sent a letter Borrell to denounce the E3's non-compliance with the deal, officially called the JCPOA, after the three European states drafted an anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors.



"Following the irresponsible and illegal measure by the three European states (Germany, the UK, and France) to initiate a draft resolution at the International Atomic

Energy Agency Board of Governors and also the continuation of non-compliance with the international commitments under the JCPOA and the resolutions passed by the (JCPOA) Joint Commission, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran yesterday sent a letter to Mr. Borrell, the European Union foreign policy chief and the JCPOA coordinator, 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," Mousavi said.

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 also 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.



Iran to start reconstruction of damaged building at Natanz nuclear site

➔ "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 incident has aroused suspicion about Israel or the United States' possible involvement.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi said on Sunday that "Iran cannot be allowed to have nuclear capabilities." To that end, he claimed, "We take actions that are better left unsaid."

In the past, Israel and the United States have used cy-

berattacks to undermine Iran's nuclear program, but that has been ruled out as a cause in this case.

Some analysts are of the opinion that Israel is seeking to misuse the incident and attribute it to itself.

Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday those who have not done their duties properly regarding the incidents in the Natanz nuclear facility and Sina Clinic will be held accountable.

"The definite policy of the judicial body is to investigate and question directors who have not done their duties," Raisi asserted.

33 people were killed or injured in an explosion caused by a gas leak at Sina Clinic in northern Tehran on July 1.

Will Iran leave NPT if UN arms embargo is extended?

(Excerpt from Anadolu Agency) — The U.S. administration has upped the ante to seek the extension of a UN embargo on conventional arms sale to Iran, much to the chagrin of Tehran.

Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged the UN Security Council to extend the arms embargo against Iran, which ends in October.

Washington circulated a draft resolution seeking "indefinite extension" of the arms ban, with Pompeo hinting that the U.S. will invoke a provision in the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as JCPOA, to re-impose all UN sanctions against Tehran if the UN Security Council fails to extend the embargo.

The U.S. administration unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran in May 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran.

In an op-ed written for The Wall Street Journal last month, Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran and policy adviser to Pompeo, said the U.S. will invoke the unilateral snapback clause of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which blessed the 2015 nuclear deal, to reinstate all UN sanctions on Iran if the embargo is lifted in October.

Hook said that the U.S. plans to return to the nuclear deal in order to trigger the UN sanctions to prevent Iran from buying or selling arms.

Tehran, however, maintains that the U.S. failed to meet its obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2231 by pulling out of the deal, which renders it "incapable" of triggering snapback.

Experts believe that the U.S. efforts to guarantee an extension of the 13-year arms ban on Iran will not be so easy.

Having withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal, they say the U.S. first needs to return to the agreement to trigger the snapback clause against Iran. And to snapback sanctions, that would require nine votes by the UN Security Council members and no vetoes from its permanent members.

Russia and China, the two UN Security Council permanent members, are likely to reject any new resolution by the U.S. that seeks to extend the arms ban or trigger snapback, observers believe. The two Iranian allies have long been calling for the end to UN arms ban on Iran.

■ NTP withdrawal

Experts say the snapback trigger may



work even if the U.S. is no longer a party to the deal, because the language of UN Resolution 2231 gives the right to trigger snapback to the "original parties".

This, however, could again be awkward as the U.S. needs to convince the country holding the chair of the UN Security Council, which is swapped every month. If the U.S. overcomes the hurdle, the veto-holding Russia is likely to challenge the move and the ruling of the UN Security Council chair still needs 9 votes out of 15 UNSC members.

Reza Nasri, a foreign policy analyst and international lawyer, said UN positions on issues pertaining to international peace and security are reflected in the UN Security Council resolutions.

In this case, Nasri says, by adopting Resolution 2231 the world body took the position that Iran's arms program "no longer constitutes a threat to international peace and security" and decided to lift the restrictions.

"Ironically, the United States also agreed with this position and actually drafted and endorsed the resolution under its previous administration," he told Anadolu Agency.

"Now, the Trump administration has unilaterally decided to stand against global consensus, breach the JCPOA agreement, violate Resolution 2231 and even force other countries to violate it."

If the world body goes ahead and extends the embargo on Iran, Nasri says Iran would "probably rethink its nuclear doctrine", its relationship with international organizations like the IAEA and even withdraw from the Non Proliferation

Treaty (NPT).

The trigger was a resolution by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) calling on Iran to "fully cooperate with the IAEA in implementing its NPT Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol".

Responding to the IAEA resolution, 240 Iranian lawmakers called on the government to end voluntary implementation of Additional Protocol and turn all IAEA's on-line inspection into off-line mode.

Baqer Ghalibaf, the speaker of Iran's new parliament, which is dominated by hardliners and conservatives, said IAEA will "not be allowed to violate legal frameworks at all", terming it "active, smart resistance".

Speculation is rife that if the UN extends arms embargo on Iran, the country will immediately leave the NPT and end its remaining commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Hamid Reza Gholamzadeh, head of Tehran-based peace-advocacy organization Peace Spirit and American studies researcher, says Iran has "little to lose" if the UN embargo is not lifted in October.

"It will be an absolute death of the (Iran nuclear) deal and Iran simply will be left with no reason to remain in the NPT," he told Anadolu Agency.

■ Ramifications

Mani Mehrabi, a foreign affairs analyst at United World International, says the rules of play in the U.S. foreign policy are "not decisive", and "lobbies" have the final say.

"The U.S. government will use the UN Security Council, the economic lobbies

Tehran sympathizes with Japan over deadly flood

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Tehran has expressed regret over the recent flood and landslide in Japan, which left dozens of people dead or missing and caused great damage.

In a statement on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi offered condolences to the Japanese nation and government and the bereaved families.



Rescue workers in Japan have begun a desperate search for survivors after dozens were left dead or missing following widespread flash flooding triggered by record rainfall on the southern island of Kyushu.

According to CNN, local authorities confirmed at least 18 people had died and 14 were missing in the prefectures of Kumamoto and Kagoshima, with images from the hardest-hit areas showing houses completely destroyed by the strength of the flood waters.

Japan's Meteorological Agency issued a warning on Saturday for unprecedented rainfall, calling for residents in Kyushu to take "maximum caution." At least 270,000 people were told to evacuate in four prefectures across the island.

Kuma Village in Kumamoto saw a record-breaking 83.5 millimeters of rainfall in one hour on Saturday morning, according to the meteorological agency, while Kanoya city in Kagoshima had 109.5 mm in an hour on Monday, its highest ever.

A heavy rain warning remains in place for parts of Kumamoto and Kagoshima on Monday, with more flooding expected.

Japan's Self Defense Forces and security authorities are continuing search and rescue operations in Kumamoto and Kagoshima prefectures. Efforts have been complicated by conditions on the ground, however, with flooding and landslides cutting off contact to hundreds of communities in the highly-mountainous region.

IRGC, police coordinate plans on border security in Sistan-Baluchestan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Commanders of Iran's border police and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force have discussed plans to boost interaction in ensuring security along the country's southeastern border.

During a meeting in Sistan-Baluchestan province, IRGC Ground Force commander Mohammad Pakpour and Border Police commander Ahmad Ali Goodarzi underlined the need for close coordination between their forces to ensure sustainable security in the border areas, Tasnim reported.



General Goodarzi emphasized his forces' operations against drug traffickers, armed outlaws and terrorist groups in the province, saying any source of insecurity in the southeastern borders would be dealt with firmly.

General Pakpour said security prevails across the southeastern border regions, adding that closer cooperation between the IRGC and the border police would assure the local residents of security and frighten hostile and terrorist groups in those areas.

The Iranian police and security forces have been quite successful in ensuring security in the large province of Sistan-Baluchestan despite its long borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan, harsh weather and vast desert areas.

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

Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades. The country has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics mainly destined for European and Arab countries.

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

In remarks last month, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, said Iran has a balanced approach in fighting narcotics, which prioritizes preventive measures.

"Iran has a balanced, intelligent approach in the field of narcotics; the country has put preventive measures and plans to raise awareness about the negative impacts of drug abuse high on its agenda in a bid to reduce the demand for narcotics in the society," Gharibabadi said.

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

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

Quarterly exports from IKAC up 126% yr/yr

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Director-general of Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) customs office said exports from the airport increased by 126 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), year on year, IRNA reported.

According to Gholamreza Safari Taheri, some 1,284 tons of goods worth \$231.318 million were exported from the IKAC customs in the mentioned three months, registering a 126 percent rise in terms of value compared to the same period of the previous year.

The major exported goods from this customs office included saffron, gold, carpets and medicine, Taheri said.



He noted that the customs' incomes during the said period reached 5.826 trillion rials (about \$138.7 million), 24 percent more than the figure for the same period last year.

"Of course, 6,396 tons of goods, including medicine and raw materials were also imported; drugs, industrial equipment and parts and medical equipment worth \$824.768 million were imported from China, Germany and India and cleared through IKAC Customs," he added.

Emphasizing that Imam Khomeini Airport is the country's largest passenger crossing, he said: "65,057 passengers traveled from this air border in the mentioned time span, of which 46,495 entered the country while 18,562 passengers left."

Safari Taheri mentioned the customs office of IKAC as a positive potential for creating productive employment in the country, saying: "In the first three months of this year, 30,000 tons of goods worth \$3,996 million were also cleared from the customs of IKAC Free Zone to be transited through the country."

"It is hoped that IKAC customs will play an important role in the economic growth of the country," he stressed.

Earlier this month, Transport and Urban Development Ministry and the Secretariat of Iranian Free Zones High Council inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the establishment of Imam Khomeini Airport Free Zone Organization.

The memorandum was aimed at promoting IKAC's economic status and creating maximum coordination between the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development and the Secretariat of Iranian Free Zones High Council.

India to save 20% logistic cost in supplies to CIS countries via Chabahar

ECONOMY TEHRAN — By developing strategic Chabahar Port in Iran, Indian will reduce logistics cost by 20 percent in container transport to CIS countries, bypassing China or Europe, Indian Minister of State for Shipping Mansukh Lal Mandaviya stated.

He said so far, CIS countries could be reached only via China or Europe, the Economic Times reported.

"In a strategic development, loading and unloading of cargo have started at Chabahar Port. Container transport logistic cost to CIS countries will be reduced by 20 percent through Chabahar. So far, cargo to CIS countries from India could be sent only via China or Europe," Shipping Minister Mandaviya told.

CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan.



Indian Minister of State for Shipping Mansukh Lal Mandaviya

"If we want to send containers to CIS countries we can only send via Europe or China. There was no other connectivity with CIS countries. Now, we have developed Chabahar port and there is direct connectivity to these countries via Afghanistan," the minister said.

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

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

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

Later on, in February 2019, the Afghanistan-Iran-India trade corridor for the trade between the two countries through Chabahar Port was officially inaugurated.

Suez Canal to be replaced by Chabahar corridor
Managing Director of Chabahar Free Zone Organization Abdulrahim Kurdi said that Suez Canal will be replaced by the Chabahar corridor in the future, Mehr news agency reported.

He made the remarks on Sunday, noting that Iran is considered a terminal in the middle of the world due to its strategic geography.

He went on to say that Iran, especially from the port of Chabahar is capable of connecting east to west and north to south on a global scale.

Referring to the plans put forward by members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with a focus on the Russian port of Astrakhan, Kurdi maintained, "The project to replace the Suez Canal from Mumbai to Hamburg and St. Petersburg, which includes the Astrakhan, Anzali, Chabahar, and Nhava Sheva (India) will make a significant time difference for transiting goods, reducing it from 38 to 14 to 16 days.

More Iran-Pakistan border points reopened

1 → According to Latifi although trade borders have been reopened, but the passenger sector is still facing some limitations.

Mentioning the borders with Turkmenistan, Latifi said: "rail transportation via Sarakhs and Incheh Boroun crossings are resumed on the border with Turkmenistan, and Iranian goods are exported daily with a capacity of about 90 wagons."

Noting that maritime borders are also active, he said the import of basic goods and

the export of fruits and nuts from the Caspian Sea ports are ongoing with the neighboring countries.

"Rail, sea and road borders with Azerbaijan are also all open," he added.

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, in a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan on May 10, had said that the opening of the border markets of the two countries would lead to the development of Tehran-Is-



lamabad trade relations.

During a meeting with Pakistan's new ambassador to Iran, Rahim Hayat Qureshi on

June 24, the president called for reopening of Iran-Pakistan borders and urged implementation of bilateral agreements.

275 idle production units revived in Tehran Province in 15 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — A deputy in Tehran Governorate said that 275 idle production units have been revived in Tehran Province during 15 months since the start of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019).

Heshmatollah Asgari told IRNA on Monday that the number of idle units in the province was 800 in the beginning of the previous year, and 275 units coming back to the production cycle, there are still 525 units to be revived.

As previously reported, Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has revived 211 idle production units during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

The Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry plans to bring 1500 idle units, mostly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), back into operation by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2021).

Based on the ministry's plans for the current year, reviving 1,020 unproductive small mines is also on the ministry's agenda.

ISIPO managed to revive 1,185 idle production units across the country during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to Ali-Asghar Mosaheb, ISIPO deputy head for small industries affairs.

According to the official, the mentioned units returning to operation created direct jobs for 21,618 persons.

One of the approaches through which ISIPO is planning to help inactive units get back in the production cycle is to see their knowledge and technology needs, Mosaheb said.

"The country's technology units and scientific and research centers have come to believe that they can help the industry and that the industry can use their potentials and capacities," he added.

The latest data released by the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry shows that 72,250 industrial and mining units are operating across the country in which nearly 2.43 million people are working.

According to the data, with 15,822



active units, the field of non-metallic minerals accounts for the biggest share of the mentioned units, while food and beverage products and rubber and plastic products with 8,682 and 7,524 units are in the second and third places.

In terms of job creation, the group of non-metallic minerals has also the highest employment rate, with 382,837 people working in this sector. The group of food and beverage products and the group of manufacturing chemical products are also in the second and third place with the employment of 362,223 and 200,358 people.

Tehran, Isfahan, and Khorasan Razavi provinces had 9785, 8585, 5294 active units, respectively, by the end of the last Iranian calendar year (March 19) accounting for the highest number of units among the Iranian provinces.

The employment of the said provinces in the industrial and mineral units was 402,915, 262,498, and 193,290 people respectively.

Also, Kish Free Zone with two active units, Chabahar Free Zone with 73 units and Maku Free Zone with 84 units had the least number of active units among the provinces, with 70, 1416 and 2330 people working in them, respectively.

In the past few years, many of the production units across Iran have been wrestling with financial issues as well as the problem of supplying their raw materials, so that many have been forced to shut down or decrease their activities.

Tehran to host intl. paper exhibit next week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's 3rd International Specialized Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products and Related Machinery will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on July 14-17, Public Relations Department of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) reported.

IIEC Managing Director Bahman Hosseinzadeh announced that over 60 Iranian companies will showcase their products and latest achievements in the exhibit.

Emphasizing that the health protocols will be completely observed in the exhibition, Hosseinzadeh said that the experts and specialists can visit the exhibit from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and some measures have been also taken to provide online public visit.

He said this exhibition is being held under the condition that Iran needs 350,000 tons of writing and printing paper, most of which is imported.

There are currently three writing and printing paper production plants in Iran, whose production is not high due to several problems, Hosseinzadeh lamented.

He further put the country's need for newsprint paper at 65,000 tons, packaging paper at about one million tons, tissue paper at 160,000 tons, and cardboard at one million tons.

On June 21, Hosseinzadeh had said that all of the country's exhibitions would be held physically and based on the schedule as of July 2.

Mentioning the successful launch of the "Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements" exhibition in early June, he said since Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds has been equipped with disinfection devices and equipment, all exhibitions would be held on schedule and in compliance with the health protocols.

According to Hosseinzadeh, specialized exhibitions can be held in accordance with four health protocols including protocols for exhibition centers, pavilion construction, participants, and visitors.

The official noted that the mentioned exhibitions are not going to be open for public visits and only expert groups and specialists can visit in compliance with health protocols.

After the successful experience of "Surge in Production and Corona Containment



Achievements" exhibition, the demand for holding specialized exhibitions has increased, the official said adding, these exhibitions will be held under health protocols and will be open only for specialists.

Underlining the important role of the exhibition industry in promoting domestic production and exports, Hosseinzadeh said: "Exhibition industry has a significant role in the development of exports and introducing new markets, so it is not possible to shut down this important sector, but all exhibitions should be held in accordance with health regulations."

The "Surge in Production and Corona Containment Achievements" exhibition was held during June 13-16 to showcase the country's medical and healthcare achievements in the battle against the coronavirus outbreak.

The event was the first physical exhibition since the outbreak of the coronavirus back in March.

Next, Iran's 12th Doors & Windows Technology International Exhibition was held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on July 2-5.

As announced by Farhad Aminian, the head of the exhibition's organizing headquarters, the industrialists and traders highly welcomed the event.

In a relevant remark, the vice-chairman of Iran's Association of Doors and Windows Manufacturers said that holding specialized exhibitions under the current condition will improve the business environment and reinvigorate business activities.

Vahid Jalalipour also mentioned holding such exhibitions as one of the major approaches for boosting production.

'Over \$595m of bonds issued by industry, mining sectors since Mar. 20'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Director General of the Investment and Financing Office of Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry said 25 trillion rials (about \$595.2 million) of bonds have been issued through industry and mining sectors since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Speaking in a seminar on new methods of financing on Monday, Nematollah Shahbazi said the ministry has four main strategies to follow in the current year.

"Realizing surge in production, completion of semi-finished projects, development of export and controlling import, as well as market management and regulation are four major areas of focus for the ministry in the current year," he explained.

To realize the mentioned four goals, the ministry has defined seven axes in the form of 40 projects and programs, Nematollah said, adding that provision of financial resources and attracting investment for projects constitute one of these axes.



According to the official, in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) the industry and mining sectors required 4.25 quadrillion rials (about \$101.19 billion) of

resources, of which 3.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$76.2 billion) was supplied by the banking system in the form of facilities.

He further noted that the mentioned sectors are expected to need 5.75 quadrillion rials (about \$136.9 billion) of resources in the current Iranian calendar year, of which 4.15 quadrillion rials (about \$98.8 billion) is expected to be supplied in the form of fixed or working capital.

"Even in this case, we are facing a 28 percent deficit and it is necessary to use new financing methods to compensate for this deficit," Shahbazi stressed.

Joining the capital market is one of the good financing methods for companies, which in addition to funding their projects, will also strengthen the financial basis of the companies, he said.

He also emphasized that the share of industry and mining sectors in the total banking facilities should be increased, adding: "Of course, the downward trend of allocations to these sectors was stopped last year and the share of these sectors from the total bank facilities has reached 32 percent."

Less than 20% progress posted for 69% of underway industrial, mining projects



ECONOMY TEHRAN — Latest data published by the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry show that 69 percent of the semi-finished industrial, mining or trade projects across the country reported less than 20 percent of physical progress by the end of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 19).

As reported by ISNA, according to the ministry data there are currently 65,162 projects underway in various provinces which are expected to create 1,937,350 job opportunities when completed.

Yazd, Isfahan and Semnan had the biggest number of projects underway among the other provinces, the data suggested.

Last year, the Industry Ministry paid 335.77 trillion rials (nearly \$7.99 billion) to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress.

The ministry has it on the agenda to complete and inaugurate numerous projects in the current Iranian calendar year in order to realize the year's slogan which is "surge in production".

In this regard, the ministry has implemented a new program called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports", based on which it plans to inaugurate 200 industrial, mining, and trade projects across the country by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (begins on March 20, 2021).

As reported, a total of 1.69 quadrillion rials (about \$40.23 billion) has been invested in the mentioned projects that are going to create job opportunities for 41,000 people.

Based on the ministry data, since the beginning of the current year up to June 16, 196 industrial, mining and trade projects worth 230 trillion rials (about \$5.48b) went operational throughout the country.

Energy Ministry calls on govt. bodies to reduce power consumption

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Spokesman of Iran's electricity sector said that government organizations and agencies account for nearly 4,000 megawatts (MW) of the country's electricity consumption and they need to reduce this figure by at least 10 percent.

Referring to the Energy Ministry's focus on optimizing the electricity consumption of offices and executive bodies in recent years, Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi pointed to the air conditioning systems as one of the most important consumption factors of the mentioned bodies in the summer, Mehr News Agency reported.

According to the official, of the country's total 57,000 MW of electricity consumption in the summer period, about 22,000 MW is consumed by air conditioning and air cooling systems.

He called on the consumers in the mentioned sectors to manage their consumption by setting the temperature in a way that prevents energy waste.

The official underlined the importance of reducing the electricity consumption of the



government bodies by 10 percent for the stable supply of power during the summer peak period and noted that such offices could use smart electricity meters to manage their consumption properly.

"If the electricity consumption of an office or executive body increases compared to the same period of the previous year, it will receive a warning in the first place and if the consumption is not modified, that office will be denounced

in newspapers and social media."

According to Rajabi Mashhadi, this method has been implemented in several different cities so far and has brought good results in terms of reducing the power consumption of offices.

"We will welcome public reports in this regard," he said.

With the beginning of the hot season, electricity consumption in Iran has been rising significantly in recent weeks.

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 MW (60 gigawatts) during the summer peak period.

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.

Petchem revenue tops \$14.5b in a year

TEHRAN (Shana) — The CEO of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi has said that the petrochemical sector earned Iran \$14.5 billion in revenue last calendar year to March 2020.

Mohammadi said last calendar year was marked with success for petrochemicals production as production forecasts came true.

He said the petrochemical output reached 31 million tons last calendar year, 23 million tons of which was exported and the rest was supplied on domestic markets.

Mohammadi noted that petrochemicals prices dropped 30% on average last calendar year year-on-year, adding that petrochemicals exports earned Iran \$9.5 billion while domestic market purchased \$5 billion of petrochemicals.

The official said that Iran's petrochemicals production saw 6% growth during the first 50 days of the current calendar year year-on-year. That is while the Covid-19 outbreak had slashed demand. Demand for petrochemicals was down 40% due to lower demand for crude oil in the world. Mohammadi; however, said the conditions are improving.

Iran's petrochemical industry is moving towards stability and remains a key segment in Iran's economy. It is noteworthy that the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), a major petrochemical holding with a big share in petrochemicals production and exports, was slapped with US sanctions last year. Mohammadi said the major impact of US sanctions targeting PGPIC was the imposition of additional costs on exports, particularly in the transport sector.

No production hitch

Despite all restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 outbreak on the global economy, Iran's petrochemical industry plans to operate 16 projects with a total investment of \$12 billion in the current calendar year. Once operational, these projects would bring Iran's petrochemical production from 31 million tons to 37 million tons. However, the main question which remains is whether or not these projects would be affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.

Mohammadi said four projects were likely to be delayed due to Covid-19 outbreak, but 12 projects will definitely come on-stream to add 20 million tons to Iran's petrochemicals output.

Iran's petrochemicals production capacity currently stands at 66 million tons, which would at worst, reach 86 million tons by next March.

Focus on investment packages

In addition to completing petrochemical projects, several methanol projects would come online by March 2022. Many worry about the economic viability of methanol projects.

"To resolve this issue, investment packages for using surplus methanol to produce propylene and supply national needs are focused on this product," said Mohammadi.

He called for more steps to be taken in the petrochemical industry for a smarter development of the petrochemical industry. These projects are on the agenda for petrochemical development in the methanol, propylene, ethylene and benzene sections.

These projects would cut foreign imports, create prosperity and attractive jobs in the downstream sector of the petrochemical industry and improve the value chain and supply products of higher value.

Propylene shortages

Iran would make up four percent of world propylene production by 2025, while this figure will be 18 percent for the entire world, 21 percent in China, 17 percent in the U.S. and 16 percent in Saudi Arabia.

Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh has already offered solutions for compensating for propylene shortages. "By setting up two propylene lines — one extending from northern Iran to southern Alborz and one extending from Assaluyeh to central Fars — an extended propylene chain could be created," he said.

Mohammadi has put at 175,000 tons, the amount of propylene Iran currently needs. In other words, with the production of 985,000 tons of propylene by Iranian refineries and petrochemical plants, 175,000 tons more is needed. Iran's propylene production is planned to reach 1.95 million tons by 2024, while the country would be faced with 700,000 tons of propylene shortages.

2 propylene lines in Iran

Two propylene production lines are envisaged for the production of 3-3.5 million tons of propylene in the country. The first pipeline extends from Assaluyeh to Marvdasht, which would be operated by NPC. Propylene would be produced from surplus methanol in Assaluyeh to be injected into a 430km pipeline. It would then be transported to a storage hub in Marvdasht to be used in the development of a propylene chain in Fars and Isfahan provinces, as well as some cities in other provinces.

The second pipeline would extend from Neka to Damghan. The propylene produced from natural gas would be stored in Damghan to be used for the development of downstream industries in North Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan and Semnan provinces.

NPC would be also operating the GTPP project in Esfahan Gharb in order to expand the propylene chain. These projects will be GTPP or MTP, which would help end Iran's propylene imports.

Mohammadi expressed hope that this project would be started under the 12th administration. He said this project would push petrochemical industry development towards smart development and help produce higher-value products based on domestic needs.

Propylene chain and petchems

In Iran, propylene is merely converted to PP and EH2. By



2025, Iran would be producing four derivatives from propylene.

By implementing leading industries, 12 products would be manufactured from propylene. In the meantime, all MTP and GTPP projects would be implemented using technical knowhow provided by Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC).

Mohammadi said the MTP project in Assaluyeh would have a 470,000-tonne capacity, while the GTPP project would have a 120,000-tonne capacity. PRTC owns the licenses of both projects, thereby dispensing with the need for foreign technology.

Diverse products with high value-added

Iran has experienced a big jump in its petrochemical production over the past seven years. There are other projects under way to help enhance petrochemicals supply. However, the key point is whether there is demand for these products.

Mohammadi said: "We need to remain vigilant about what is happening across the world. We must know where we are or where they are."

"By making efforts towards development of technical know-how, we need to push the petrochemical industry towards more diversity in products of high value-added with a view to completing the supply chain in order to make the petrochemical industry more attractive," he said.

Mohammadi said: "We need to follow the world in order to have a proper assessment of development. Blind development and implementing projects with long yields should be excluded as they would lose their attractiveness in the world after several years. Therefore, we need to move towards an intelligent development of the petrochemical industry in order to survive in the global market."

99.99% safety in pipeline transmission

TEHRAN (Shana) — The Iranian Oil Pipelines and Telecommunication Company (IOPTC) transmits millions of liters a day of a variety of petroleum refined products via over 14,000 kilometers of underground pipeline and many pumping stations to feed refineries producing gasoline, gasoil and kerosene among other products before delivery to the storage facilities of National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIODPC).

Qasem Arab Yar-Mohammadi, CEO of IOPTC, said: "As its name suggests, the company has two tasks: handling pipeline and telecommunication affairs. They complement each other and they are important alike."

He said that the primary task assigned to IOPTC was to transmit crude oil, and supply feedstock to oil refineries.

"The crude oil received from National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) or National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is sent to refineries as feedstock via transmission installations (pipelines and pumping stations). In the next step, refined products, including gasoline, gasoil, fuel oil and kerosene, are carried to NIODPC storage facilities for distribution," he said.

Yar-Mohammadi said telecommunications was key to the transmission of petroleum fluids. Therefore, he added, the microwave, wireless and fiber optic network of IOPTC is independent.

"The safety coefficient of this section at IOPTC is 99.99%, which means minimum disruption in the telecommunications system of the company," he said.



Yar-Mohammadi said that due to the sensitivity of job assigned to IOPTC for the transmission of crude oil and petroleum products, this company has not been privatized.

IOPTC covers 12 zones, monitoring 14,000 kilometers of pipeline and a large number of pumping stations located on various routes.

He said: "Each area is managed independently. Except for macro policy-making like specific projects requiring the approval of the Board of Directors, other affairs are decided upon independently."

He added that all these areas were following a single objective, which is sustainable transmission of fluids via pipeline.

128b liters of oil fluid

Yar-Mohammadi said IOPTC handled the transmission of 128.59 billion liters of crude oil and petroleum products last calendar year.

"Over that period, more than 68.615 billion liters of crude oil (or 431,579,000 barrels) was carried to oil refineries while more than 49.422 billion liters of petroleum products was delivered to NIODPC storage facilities for distribution and more than 10.552 bil-

lion liters was carried to southern ports for exports," he said.

Transmission sustainability

Yar-Mohammadi said that preventive maintenance was key to the transmission process. He added: "Sustainability in the transmission of crude oil and petroleum products depends on overhaul, preventive maintenance, removing defects and technical monitoring."

"Without considering the aforesaid points, no sustainability in pipeline transmission could be envisaged. Ordinary and smart pig running are monitoring tools and methods which are instrumental in the sustainable and safe transmission of fluids via pipeline," he said.

The official noted that intelligent pig running would detect corrosion inside the pipeline. He said a European company conducted pig running in IOPTC pipelines in 2004, adding it was similar to cardiac angiography.

He said that pigging would provide very precise information about the interior of pipelines, adding that it would help detect any obstacle to the sustainable transmission of fluids inside pipes.

Yar-Mohammadi said that despite strict pig running, pipeline transmission had been done without any halt.

He added that talks were underway for signing agreements for a 2,100-km and a 2,800-km pipeline pigging.

Yar-Mohammadi said one of the aforesaid projects would be assigned to an Iranian knowledge-based company this year. "Signing an agreement with this knowledge-based company would be a show of support for Iranian

companies, as well as domestic development of this costly technology which has been monopolized by foreign companies," he added.

Yar-Mohammadi added that nearly 5,000 kilometers of pipeline would be pigged in the current calendar year.

Reliance on domestic manufacturing

Yar-Mohammadi said extensive efforts were underway in Iran for the development of smart pig running technology, adding that it would not be far-reaching.

"Once, we did not have anything specific to IPTC. We largely depended on foreign companies and we had to purchase foreign tools and equipment," he added.

The official said the conditions had changed a lot and turbines were being manufactured domestically.

Yar-Mohammadi said that in most sectors of the petroleum industry, including pipeline and telecommunications, dependence had ended.

"2MW electro-engine, pumps, electric boards and pipes are manufactured in the country. Sanctions are harmful and have had consequences, but they brought us blessings, too," he said.

"The sanctions pressure pushed us to explore more domestic potential for manufacturing. Today, domestic manufacturing is an instruction while effective and constructive steps have been taken for domestic manufacturing," he said.

Yar-Mohammadi said 80% of IOPTC needs was supplied domestically.

Lost in oil's rally: \$2 trillion-a-year refining industry crisis

By Barbara J Powell and Jack Wittels

Crude oil is the world's most important commodity, but it's worthless without a refinery turning it into the products that people actually use: gasoline, diesel, jet-fuel and petrochemicals for plastics. And the world's refining industry today is in pain like never before.

"Refining margins are absolutely catastrophic," Bloomberg quoted Patrick Pouyane, the head of Europe's top oil refining group Total SA, as saying to investors last month, echoing a widely held view among executives, traders and analysts.

Catastrophic margins

What happens to the oil refining industry at this juncture will have ripple effects across the rest of the energy industry. The multi-billion-dollar plants employ thousands of people and a wave of closures and bankruptcies looms.

"We believe we are entering into an 'age of consolidation' for the refining industry," said Nikhil Bhandari, refining analyst at Goldman Sachs Inc. The top names of the industry, which collectively processed well over \$2 trillion worth of oil last year, are giants such as Exxon Mobil Corp. and Royal Dutch Shell Plc. There are also Asian behemoths like Sinopec of China and Indian Oil Corp., as well as large independents like Marathon Petroleum Corp. and Valero Energy Corp. with their ubiquitous fuel stations.

The problem for the refiners is that what's killing them is the medicine that's saving the wider petroleum industry.

When U.S. President Donald Trump engineered record oil production cuts between Saudi Arabia, Russia and the rest of the OPEC+ alliance in April, he may have saved the U.S. shale industry in Texas, Oklahoma and North Dakota, but he squeezed refiners.

A refinery's economics are ultimately simple: it thrives on the price difference between crude oil and fuels like gasoline, earning a profit that's known in the industry as a cracking margin.

The cuts that Trump brokered lifted crude prices, with benchmark Brent crude soaring from \$16 to \$42 a barrel in the space of a few months. But with demand still in the doldrums, gasoline and other refined products prices haven't recovered as strongly, hurting the refiners.

The industry's most rudimentary measure of refining profit, known as a 3-2-1 crack spread (it assumes three barrels of crude makes two of gasoline and one of diesel-like fuels), has slumped to its lowest level for the time of the year since 2010. Summer is normally a good period for refiners because demand rises with consumers hitting the road for their vacations. This time, however, some plants are actually losing money when they process a barrel of crude.

Worst fear

Just a few weeks ago, the outlook appeared to be improving for the world's biggest oil consumers. Demand in China was almost back to pre-virus levels and U.S. consumption was gradually rebounding. Now, a second wave of infections has prompted Beijing to lock down hundreds of thousands of residents. Covid-19 cases are also on the rise in Latin America and elsewhere.

With demand in the U.S. now showing signs of heading south again as coronavirus cases flare up in top gasoline-consuming regions including Texas, Florida and California, the margins are at risk of deteriorating in America, which accounts for nearly two in each ten barrels of oil refined worldwide.

"The worst fear for refiners is a resurgence of the virus and another series of lockdowns around the world that would again significantly impact demand," said Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates in Houston.

Another problem is that — where it has been recovering — the demand pickup has been uneven from one refined product to the next, creating significant headaches for executives who need to select the best crudes to purchase, and the right fuels to churn out. Gasoline and diesel consumption has surged back, in some cases to 90% of their normal level, but jet-fuel remains nearly as depressed as at the nadir of the coronavirus lockdowns, running at just 10% to 20% of normal in some European countries.

Refiners had resolved the problem by blending much of their jet-fuel output into, effectively, diesel. But that, in turn, is creating a new challenge: too much of so-called middle distillates like diesel and heating oil.

"Right now gasoline demand is barely keeping some plants alive," said Stephen Wolfe, head of crude oil at consultant Energy Aspects Ltd. "And with jet production shifting over to diesel and gasoline production, that puts even more strain on product supply," he added.

In the U.S. refining belt, processing rates are being continually tweaked in response to potential fluctuations in demand. In April, during the height of U.S. lockdowns, Valero Energy Corp.'s McKee, Texas, refinery cut rates to about 70%. It then raised processing to near 79% in anticipation of the Memorial Day holiday, before finding a new low of 62% by mid-June, according to people familiar with the situation.

Disastrous diesel

Ultimately, if refiners don't make money, they buy less crude, potentially capping the oil-price recovery of the past few months for Brent and other benchmarks. Even so, the actions of Saudi Arabia, Russia and the rest of the OPEC+ group suggest that refiners will remain squeezed for longer, with oil prices outpacing the recovery in fuel prices.

The immediate problem is compounded by a longer-term trend: the industry has probably overbuilt over the last decades, and older plants in places like Europe and the U.S. can't compete with new ones popping up in China and elsewhere in the world.

"Refinery margins in the next five years are going to be worse than the average for the last five years, and particularly bad in Europe," said Spencer Welch, vice president of oil markets and downstream consulting at IHS Markit. "We already thought that refining was in for a tough time, even more so now."

Catalyst for change

The weakness means that the industry's collective earnings will plunge to just \$40 billion this year, down from \$130 billion in 2018, according to an estimate from industry consultant Wood Mackenzie Ltd. of 550 refineries around the world.

That could be a catalyst for change. The demand hit from the virus is yet to cause any delays in a number of mega-refining projects, most of which are in China and the West Asia, that will start operations from 2021 to 2024, according to the analysts at Goldman Sachs. This will cause global utilization rates to be 3% lower over this period than in 2019. Plants are more likely to close in developed countries because the bulk of demand — and new refining capacity — is in developing nations, they said.

Many of the refineries that are being built in the West Asia and China will also get government backing, a fact that only makes life more challenging for the plants in Europe and the U.S.

The industry is already moving to resolve the overcapacity: oil trader Gunvor Group Ltd. has said it may mothball its refinery in Antwerp, and U.S. refining group HollyFrontier Corp. in June announced it was changing its Cheyenne plant from processing crude oil to a renewable diesel facility.

For now though, there's a more mundane reality to deal with: the market. OPEC and its allies can constrain the supply of crude — squeezing refiners — but they can't make end users consume fuel.



Second Announcement
Call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One Stages retender



N.I.O.C
1399.1671

National Iranian Drilling Company

Subject of Tender:

Tender No.	Description
FP/12-99/050	P/F GATE VALVE
FP/12-99/051	P/F RENHE
FP/12-99/052	P/F CORE FULL BORE STEM TEST TOOLS
FP/12-99/053	P/F MACOY CLINCHER-GRIFACE & INSERT COATING

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial)
National Iranian Drilling Company	8,081,754	Tender No. : FP/12-99/050 Indent No.:08-22-9745218	11,350,000,000
	8,082,309	Tender No. : FP/12-99/051 Indent No.:08-22-9845059	7,801,699,092
	8,082,700	Tender No. : FP/12-99/052 Indent No.:08-22-9845080	18,541,650,000
	8,083,516	Tender No. : FP/12-99/053 Indent No.:08-22-9845174	14,018,300,000

Method Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.

Qualitative evaluation of tenders

Tender Document Distribution by Company The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof **19 JUL 2020**

Distribution Place	Submitting Method
Hall No. : 113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148660	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 400114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 52010000400114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.

Documents Receiving Method

Closing date	Address
35Days after the last time of Purchasing 24 AUGUST 2020	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

Purchasing & Submitting

Value of guarantee	Regarding Indent No
568,000,000Rial / 3.866 Euro	Regarding Indent No9745218-22-08
391,000,000 Rial / 2.666 Euro	Regarding Indent No9845059-23-08
928,000,000 Rial / 6.445 Euro	Regarding Indent No9845080-22-08
701,000,000 Rial / 4.869 Euro	Regarding Indent No9845174-22-08

Type of guarantee ✓Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
✓Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 400114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 52010000400114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Duration of credit & quotation Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr
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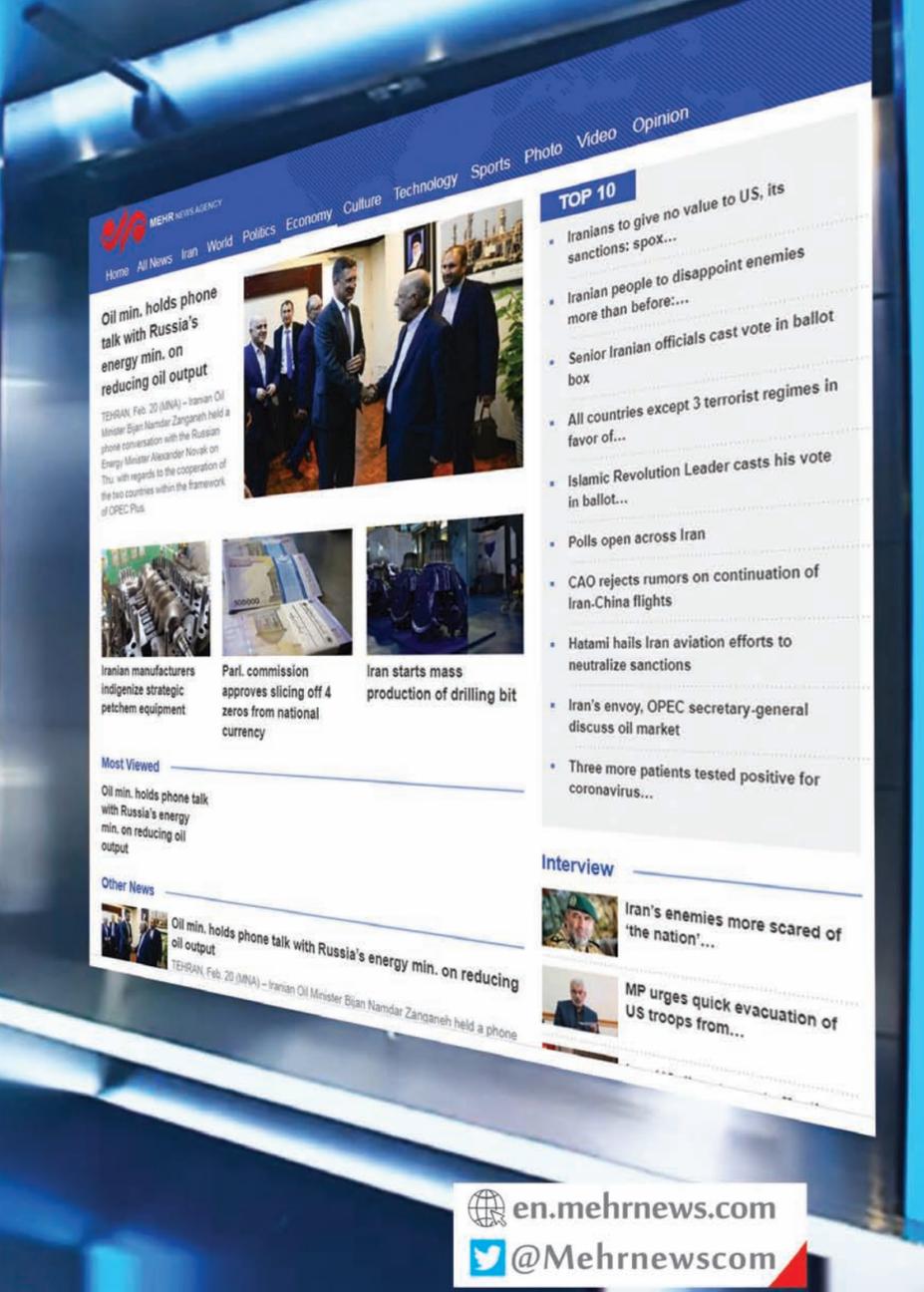
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Provocative U.S. military drills near Chinese waters

By Stephen Lendman

Imagine how the U.S. and the world community would react if Chinese, Russian, or Iranian warships conducted military exercises in the Gulf of Mexico or off America's east or west coasts.

Bipartisan hardliners in Washington and establishment media might consider this action a *casus belli*.

Clearly, it would provoke a sharp U.S. reaction, including possible interdiction of foreign ships by Pentagon ones, risking a possible clash that could lead to something much more serious.

Numerous times before, Pentagon warships conducted provocative drills in the South China Sea and other parts of the world where they don't belong — their presence posing a threat to regional countries.

In response to legitimate Chinese military exercises in its own waters, the Pentagon falsely accused Beijing of "the latest in a long line (of actions) to assert unlawful maritime claims and disadvantage its Southeast Asian neighbors in the South China Sea (sic)," adding:

The U.S. will continue to monitor Chinese military activity — in a part of the world where U.S. forces close to its borders are a hostile presence.

Beijing strongly opposes provocative U.S. military drills near its territory, an earlier PLA statement saying:

"Reality has proved once again that the US is the biggest facilitator of the militarization of the South China Sea, and is a troublemaker for the region's peace and stability," adding: "The PLA will remain on high alert, and adamantly safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests, as well as the peace and prosperity of the region."

In response last May to U.S. Naval Institute encouragement of privately owned ships to seize Chinese merchant vessels, the PLA slammed the call as promoting "act(s) of piracy," adding:

"These actions are criminal activities explicitly prohibited under international laws, and will absolutely receive joint opposition and a severe backlash from the international



community."

A previous article explained that for the first time since the pre-1990 Cold War ended, three U.S. aircraft carriers with other Pentagon warships are patrolling Asia/Pacific waters.

Two U.S. aircraft carriers, the Reagan and Nimitz, are holding large-scale military drills in the South China Sea close to its waters, along with four other Pentagon warships.

Their stated purpose is to challenge what they called Beijing's unlawful territorial claims (sic).

Two mainland USA Barksdale air force base, nuclear-capable, B52 warplanes that refueled in Guam are involved in the exercises, a statement by U.S. 96th Bomb Squadron commander Lt. Col. Christopher Duff, saying:

"Bomber Task Force demonstrates U.S. capability to rapidly deploy to a forward operating base and execute long-range strike missions," adding:

"This sortie demonstrates our ability to reach out from a home station, fly anywhere in the world, and execute those missions, rapidly, regenerating from a forward operating base and continuing operations."

Over the weekend, a U.S. Navy statement said Pentagon military exercises in the South China Sea aim to protect against "possible attacks by the enemy" — at a time when no U.S. foreign threats exist, so they're invented to justify what's unjustifiable.

What's going on is a provocative Pentagon show of force far distant from U.S. territory in a part of the world where its forces don't belong.

According to an unnamed Chinese military expert "(t)he U.S. is saying one thing and doing another. It is applying different standards on China's actions than it does on its own."

China's Foreign Ministry earlier called US Asia/Pacific military exercises Pentagon "flexing of muscles...thousands of miles away" from its homeland.

PLA Naval Military Studies Research Institute senior research fellow Zhang Junshe called U.S. military exercises near Chinese waters a hostile action in the name of "freedom of navigation."

Pentagon South China Sea military exercises come at a time of greatly deteriorated Sino/U.S. relations.

Reportedly since South China Sea arbitration in 2016, the Pentagon refrained from multiple aircraft carrier exercises in its waters — the last one in 2014 until now.

According to retired PLA naval officer Wang Yunfei, "China's resolve to safeguard its territorial integrity, sovereignty and maritime interests will not waver (despite) the latest threat posed by the U.S."

"The Chinese military is prepared and will deal with them (the U.S. provocation) with ease."

China's Global Times explained that the PLA "has a wide selection of anti-aircraft carrier weapons like DF-21D and DF-26 'aircraft carrier killer' missiles," adding:

"The South China Sea is fully within the grasp of the PLA. Any U.S. aircraft carrier movement in the region is at the pleasure of the PLA."

The Pentagon's global empire of bases and provocative actions against sovereign independent nations China, Russia, Iran, and others risk increased U.S. war on humanity than already.

Instead of being the world's leading proponent of peace, stability, and the rule of law, the U.S. prioritizes dominance over other nations by whatever it takes to achieve its aims.

Source: Press TV

The will of people is like a fire smoldering under ashes: ex-Bahraini parliamentarian

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Pro-democracy protests in Bahrain have entered their ninth year. The rights of protesters are gravely violated, especially as authorities are continuing to enforce repressive policies in conjunction with an imposed censorship supported by Persian Gulf monarchies.

Ironically, authorities have a monopoly on television, radio, and newspapers. There are no independent media that can work freely inside Bahrain.

In light of this fact, the Tehran Times interviewed Ali AlAshiri, a former member of the Bahraini Parliament.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Bahraini courts continue to uphold death sentences against political detainees, despite being tortured. Please explain?

A: Yes. These courts continue to uphold the death sentence against the political convicts, while the constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain states that any confession under torture is unacceptable.

If we look closely at most of the cases in which the death sentence was pronounced, we see no real evidence or material fact but confessions of the convicts who stress that they have been subjected to torture and physical and psychological coercion.

■ Why are Arab regimes silent on repression in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia but accusing countries like Syria of dictatorship?

A: We can see these kinds of double standards in most of these countries. They support movements and protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, and Syria, but they talk about Bahrain as if there is no protest or describe it as a riot provoked by foreign countries. The reasons are clear: They may endanger their interests if talk about the demonstrations because of sectarian reasons; most of the protestors are from the Shiite community in Bahrain.

■ Do you think that repression will continue in Arab countries? And, can we bet on the awakening of Arab nations?

A: Despite decades of continuous repression, the will of the peoples remains like a fire smoldering under the ashes, and they will come back to the streets as soon as they find an opportunity again.

■ Regarding what is happening in Yemen, Bahrain, and Palestine, how do you see the UN performance?

A: The positions of the United Nations are based on politicized reports rather than real evidence.

Regarding Bahrain, Palestine, and Syria, the UN says nothing more than expressing concern and issuing statements, but in other regions, they impose their resolutions on the pretext of human rights violations.

■ What is your comment on the release of Bahraini political activist Nabil Rajab, who is still not allowed to move around or speak out on human rights abuses?

A: The step to release human rights activist Nabil Rajab came late, and the remaining period was replaced in accordance with Law No. 18 of 2017.

It may be in response to many calls from human rights organizations, given his medical care, after a critical situation imposed by the Coronavirus outbreak that necessitated his release from prison.



The American Dream that didn't come true

American Dream has come into question as the U.S. plunged into a state of social and racial turmoil in the wake of the tragic death of George Floyd, a black man who was died after a white policeman in Minneapolis knelt on his neck for more than 8 minutes.

Since 1931, the idea of American Dream has been the source of inspiration for a lot of authors, filmmakers, politicians, and public figures as well as the ordinary people from all walks of life in the U.S who seek to make their dreams come true in a country that once was famous for its upward social mobility possibilities.

The term American Dream first emerged in 1931, when the American historian James Truslow Adams coined it in his bestseller book entitled "The Epic of America."

Adams stated that "the American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement." He further said that the American Dream is not "a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others

for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position".

The definition of the American Dream has witnessed many changes over the past century. It has morphed from the right to create a better life to the strong desire to achieve material goals such as buying a house or starting a business. The American Dream is now defined as the following: If you work hard, your material dreams come true.

However, this year's Fourth of July (Independence) was a stark reminder that, no matter how hard you work, if you are a black or a member of any other ethnic minority group, your American Dream may never come true due to racial injustice and wealth disparities.

Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), who was lucky enough to live his American Dream, underlined this fact by posting a video commemorating the U.S Independence Day on Twitter on Saturday. He said that the American dream must be "as true for a Black child born in Minneapolis as it was for a white bodybuilder born in Austria".

"We have Americans that cannot breathe, except on ventilators. Who cannot breathe because of a knee on their neck, because of

oppression and racism," added the action star, referring to the death of George Floyd in police custody.

As the American Dream became more associated with making progress in achieving economic goals, the U.S. income inequality gap worsened in recent years. "The income inequality gap has never been wider. The country's uneven wealth distribution is illustrated by the fact that the bottom 50% of Americans have just 1% of the nation's wealth, while the top 10% holds 70%," CNN reported on July 3, citing data released by the Pew Research Center.

The wealth and income inequality, as well as the hardness of social mobility, stand in stark contrast to the American dream. This fact was reflected in the World Economic Forum's Global Social Mobility report, which was published on January 19, 2020. The U.S was not among the top 10 countries. It was ranked 27th in this report.

Pundits believe that the latest wave of racial protests in the U.S has exposed the link between wealth disparities and racial issues.

"The Black Lives Matter protests have underlined how wealth disparities have a racial dimension. Studies show that White families'



incomes far outstrip those of Black households, which take home less than 60% of their white counterparts' earnings. Asian-Americans have the worst income disparity of any minority," CNN said, warning that the American Dream "got lost and the country has been sleeping through a growing crisis."

In June 2015, as he announced that he is running for president, Donald Trump said, "Sadly, the American dream is dead. But if I get elected president, I will bring it back bigger and better and stronger than ever before, and we will make America great again".

One year later, Trump took office. Nearly four years into his administration, however, Trump apparently failed to bring back the American Dream, which itself turned out to be just wishful thinking.

U.S. is a violent bully internally and internationally: Scottish politician

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN (MNA) — Referring to the violent history of the U.S. and its endeavors to abolish the culture of racism, Scottish politician Tommy Sheridan said, "The U.S. has always been a bully, a violent bully internationally, and a domestic bully in relation to police forces polluted by racists from top to bottom."

George Floyd, an unarmed American black man, died on May 25, 2020, after a police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes even after he stopped moving and pleading for air.

His death by the U.S. police has caused a ripple of protests throughout the U.S., turning the country into a battlefield between police and demonstrators. Rallies have turned violent in some U.S. cities, where the police have fired tear gas and rubber bullets against the demonstrators.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened the use of force in dealing with protests against the death of George Floyd, referring to participants as "thugs" in a tweet that was later hidden by Twitter for "glorifying violence."

But the former President Barack Obama issued a statement on Floyd's killing via Twitter and pleaded for Americans to open their eyes to the ongoing racial injustice that plagues the country.

Growing unrest against police brutality across the country, Obama said to demonstrators that this moment is politically advantageous for protesters who are calling for widespread police reforms and large-scale institutional change.

Simultaneously with all the protests in the U.S., thousands of people of all colors, creeds, ages, and walks of life took to the streets across the world to show their anger over the racism and police brutality.

To shed more light on the issue and its dimensions, we reached out to Scottish politician Tommy Sheridan.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Where do you think these protests across the U.S. will eventually lead to? Do you see any hope for a change of behavior towards African Americans?

A: George Floyd's senseless and awful murder is not the first example of police racism and bru-



tality in America and won't be the last. However, sometimes events take a life of their own and coincide with specific circumstances. Who would have thought Rosa Parke's defiance in December 1955 would develop into a full-blown boycott and eventual change in discrimination laws? There appears to be a sense across many parts of the U.S. that 'enough is enough'. I certainly hope the fundamental change in the systemic racism which scars American society emerges from this tragedy.

■ Why do you think the United States has failed to abolish the culture that has grown out of hundreds of years of slavery?

A: The United States was built on bloodshed, subjugation, and racism. The genocide of the Native Americans followed by the economic application of slavery and the war, which ensued between 1861-65 over slavery but about economic domination of capital over land, only added to that very violent history. The U.S. had some great visionaries try to build a new society, but at heart, it has always been a bully, a violent bully internationally, and a domestic bully in relation to police forces polluted by racists from top to bottom.

■ What do you believe the world can do to help African-Americans and eliminate the structural racism in the U.S.?

A: Racism is worldwide cancer, which appears more virulent and noticeable in some countries than others. The U.S. is amongst the worst afflicted countries, but many others also have major challenges. International cooperation and solidarity in the fight against racism are essential, but it will

also require focusing on the unity of the dispossessed, black and white, against capitalism and the very many inequalities and injustices that it spawns as an economic system. Keeping the working class divided is a long-term strategy of the rich and powerful in society.

■ European countries have kept silent on recent developments in the U.S. despite the fact they are among the first to express worry for human rights issues in other regions, such as West Asia. What is your take on this?

European countries, separately and particularly via the European Union, have been disgraceful and shameful in their silence in the face of U.S. abuse of human rights and international law across the world. The U.S. deployment of economic sanctions is the modern-day form of international terrorism as it attacks the very fabric of countries and their ability to feed their nations and provide essential medicines. Rather than condemn such political piracy and brutal bullying, the E.U. has acted like a pathetic cheerleader in the face of U.S. incursions in Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Syria and further afield. Much of the E.U., but particularly Britain, is no more than an obedient puppy of U.S. invasions, illegal coups, and brutal economic sanctions policies.

■ How can these developments affect the upcoming Presidential election in the U.S.?

A: I am not a fan of Joe Biden. He is of the same ilk of the Clintons and their sickening hypocrisy within America and across the world. They talk of freedom and democracy while crushing democratically elected governments and social movements across the globe if they dare to demur from the neo-liberal economic philosophy of U.S. capital and privatization for the benefit of the already rich and powerful. Biden represents the past, the polluted swamp of vested privilege and favors for the rich. Sadly, Bernie Sanders will not be the Democratic candidate. That is sad and tragic. The choice in November facing U.S. citizens is one of two devils. Biden is the devil I hope they opt for, but I would have to vote for him with a peg on my nose and blindfold. Trump is the worst of the options, but only slightly. American needs a proper party of socialism to unite and represent the black and white working classes.

Second Announcement

Call for public tender (First/Second publish)

One Stages tender

Subject of Tender INGERSOLL RAND AIR HOIST

N.I.O.C
1399.1728

National Iranian
Drilling Company

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value)Rial(
National Iranian Drilling Company		Tender No.: FP/11-97/042-3 Indent No.: 01-22-9746021	8.616.000.000

• **Qualitative evaluation of tenderers**

Method	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.
• Purchasing & Submitting	

Tender Document Distribution by Company	Distribution Place	Submitting Method
	Hall No.:113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148656 -06134148615	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. • Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	Address
	• 35days after the last time of Purchasing) closing date The envelopes will be opened At am on	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

• **Tender Guarantee**

Value of guarantee	Type of guarantee
Rial / Euro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)

More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr

تهران تایمز نوبت دوم ۹۹/۴/۱۷

Vank Cathedral hosting 400-year-old Armenian culture exhibition

➔ The art of Armenian architecture as well as well-known Armenian crafters and artists will also be introduced in the exhibit. Moreover, on the sidelines of the exhibit, different handicrafts workshops are being held, and young narrators introduce the customs and traditions of the Armenian people of Jolfa.



The centuries-old Vank Cathedral (locally called Kelisa-ye Vank) is widely referred to as an everlasting masterpiece of architecture.

The Vank Cathedral is widely referred to as an everlasting masterpiece of architecture, which harmoniously blends Islamic motifs and elements with those of Armenians. Vank means "monastery" or "convent" in the Armenian language.

Built in the first half of the 17th century, with the encouragement of the Safavid rulers, Kelisa-ye Vank is a historic focal point of the Armenian Church in Iran.

Hundreds of Armenians, who migrated to Isfahan during the Ottoman-Safavid War (1603-18), contributed to the cathedral being completed.

Some say that the varying fortunes and independence of this suburb across the Zayande River and its eclectic mix of European missionaries, mercenaries, and travelers can be traced almost chronologically in the cathedral's combination of building styles and contrasts in its external and internal architectural treatment.

The construction is said to begin in 1606 by the first arrivals being completed with major alterations to design between 1655 and 1664 under the supervision of Archbishop David.

The Armenian quarter of Isfahan dates from the time of Shah Abbas I, who transported a colony of Christians from the town of Jolfa (now on Iran's northern border) en masse, and named the village 'New Jolfa'. Shah Abbas sought their skills as merchants, entrepreneurs, and artists and he ensured that their religious freedom was respected – albeit at a distance from the city's Islamic center.

Khoy, the ancient city of culture, sunflowers

➔ Sprawling adjacent to some towering mountains in western Iran, the lively city of Khoy is a destination for whom interested in old Persian architecture as its ancient mosques, churches, caravanserais, bathhouses, fortresses, and ramparts, each tells a story.

The city, sited near the ancient Silk Road in West Azarbaijan Province, may not be worth a long detour but should you be in the vicinity is well worth a visit.

A variety of flora and fauna, warm water spas, salt mines, and rich history as a Christian center, put it on the itinerary of travelers to this place.



A bust of the famed 13th-century Persian Poet, Shams Tabrizi, with a minaret of the same name in the background.

Khoy was vastly fortified at different times in its history, most recently by the decree of Qajar dynasty rulers in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is also well-known for the mausoleum of Shams Tabrizi, the renowned Iranian poet and mystic.

The region's economy is based on agriculture, particularly the production of fruit, grain, timber, sunflowers as it is nicknamed for the latter; Khoy the city of sunflowers.

In the 2006 census, the city population was estimated for 178,700 while in 2012 the figure pointed at 200,900.

During parts of its bitter history, Khoy was occupied for several times, in 1911 by the Ottoman Empire, in World War I by Russian troops who withdrew in 1917, and finally in the World War II by the Soviets, who remained until 1946.

The places briefly introduced in blew are among the city's most visited sights:

■ **Motaleb Khan Mosque:** A huge and roofless 13th-century structure of plain brickwork, the Motaleb Khan Mosque claims to have the world's largest mihrab. The entrance to this mosque is hidden behind street vendors stalls that are just meters from Imam Khomeini Square.

■ **The Darvazeh Sangi:** It is a black and white stone arch that has two carved lions that make up the last remains of Khoy's former city wall.

■ **St Sarkis Church:** A church with slit windows that suggest that it had a fortified past. Although some upper brick sections were rebuilt in the 1730's St Sarkis Church supposedly dates from the 4th century. Be sure to take note of the carved motifs over the western door.

■ **The Shams Tabrizi Minaret:** Named for a celebrated 13th-century poet, the Shams Tabrizi Minaret is hidden in the back alleys off 22 Bahman Street, which is just a short taxi ride northeast of Gumsal Square. The Shams Tabrizi Minaret is 300 years old and is interestingly encrusted with protruding animal horns.

Hotel occupancy rate plunges to 10% in Khorasan Razavi

➔ **TOURISM TEHRAN** – The occupancy rate of hotels in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, one of Iran's giant travel destinations, has plummeted to 10 percent, ILNA quoted Abolfazl Mokaramifar, the provincial tourism chief, as saying on Monday.

Although based on the number of COVID-19 infections and fatalities, the province is on the red risk zone, the hotels are allowed to resume their work, however, the number of visits to the province has decreased drastically and there are no foreign tourists in the province.

No tourist sites or museums have been closed and no specific decision has yet been made on the possible closure of them, the official added.

He also noted that travel restrictions haven't been imposed yet, but travelers need to follow strict health protocols.

Earlier last week, Esmaeil Khayyami, the health tourism manager of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences announced that the coronavirus pandemic has slashed the number of travelers visiting the city of Mashhad for medical purposes by 95 percent over the past few months.

Having 14 hospitals and three medical centers, which are offering special services to foreign patients, Mashhad has the most medical tourists in the country after Tehran.

Before the coronavirus puts everything on lockdown, Mashhad played host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe to visit the imposing, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

Almost 40 million Iranian pilgrims and travelers visited the city during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 19).

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted around the holy shrine. The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites which are generally crowded.



A view of the holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

A peek into Bronze-Age Tepe Gariran, a gateway to the "Old Routes of Western Iran"

➔ **TOURISM TEHRAN** – In 1931, the renowned British archaeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862 – 1943) surveyed Tepe Gariran in western Iran along with several others across the ancient land. His views were published in November 1969 in a book titled "Old Routes of Western Iran: Narratives of an Archaeological Journey".

Situated within Alashtar county that is one of the prominent valley plains in central Zagros mountain range, the mound, however, after over 80 years in 2017, dragged the attention of new generations of archeologists to resume excavations at the site, which is mostly notable for being home to a Bronze-Age civilization.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, in c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. Of ancient highlights of the region are the Luristan Bronzes that comprise small cast objects decorated with bronze sculptures from the Early Iron Age, found in large numbers in Lorestan and its neighboring Kermanshah province.

According to an essay discussed during an International Conference of the Society of Iranian Archaeology, excavations of Gariran, as a great Bronze Age site, which covers more than five hectares, revealed continuity from middle-late Chalcolithic to Iron Age.

The identification of settlement patterns can provide important information about



regional and cross-regional communications in this area. Due to its exceptional position and the importance of its sites, this plain has been the subject of the growing attention of ancient geographers and geologists.

In the Parthian and Sassanid texts, there has been no reference to the city and plains of Alashtar, but the historians from the early centuries to the contemporary Islamic era have mentioned the name Alashtar in their books, referring to it with such titles as Lashtar.

From an archeological point of view, in 1936, Sir Aurel Stein entered Alashtar to

study the settlement sites and the cemeteries introducing Lorestan bronze which were located across the Karkheh and Seymareh River: he then started examining Gariran and Betki Hills. (Stein, 1940: 280- 300).

Ernst Herzfeld was also among the researchers who investigated the bronzes in Lorestan and visited the relics and artifacts in Alashtar Plain (Herzfeld, 1941). In his studies from 1963 to 1967, Clare Goff visited some parts of Alashtar as well.

In general, 72 archaeological sites were identified in Alashtar plain which given the

dispersion of the relics in the region (including pottery and surface material), 42 sites belonged to the Parthian period.

Alashtar is a fertile plain with a high potential for agriculture. Most of the Parthian sites in this plain were located inside these fertile agricultural lands which have played a key role in the development of settlements in different eras in this plain, especially during the Parthian period (compared to other eras), though most of these sites have been destroyed today as a result of agricultural activities.

Generally, there is a diversity of flora and fauna in the plain with the surrounding mountains covered with forest trees and wild plants. The fertility of this plain has stimulated the cultivation of crops and vegetation in the area to the extent that today a variety of crops and trees can be seen in the area thanks to the climatic and ecological features.

Walnut, apple, grape, willow, poplar, pear, elm, cherry, cranberry, and sycamore are abundant in the area. Apart from forest trees, some non-edible plants such as paqzan, salsify, artichokes, oregano, mint as well as a variety of medicinal and aromatic plants such as borage, daphnia, thyme, basil flowers, violet, damask rose, rose, anemone, musk willow, tulips, licorice, lily, hibiscus flowers, narcissus, and mountain tea grow in this area.

The basic conclusion that can be drawn here is that there has been no fundamental change in the environment and climate of Lorestan since the Iron Age to date.

'World's longest suspension bridge' being built in Iran

➔ Ha said that the objective to launch tourism projects in the province is to provide tourists from all over the world and domestic tourists as well with the opportunity to use these facilities and select Ardebil as their prime destination.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

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

is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

Persian historians have ascribed a founding date to the province's capital (also named Ardebil) in the Sassanid period, but its known history does not begin until the Islamic period. It was at that time the residence of the Sasanian governor. The Umayyad governor made Ardebil his capital, but the Arab hold on the region did not last. Local rulers fought continuously in the area until the Mongol conquest in 1220, when the town was destroyed. It lost all importance until the Sufi mystic Sheikh Safi al-Din made it the center of his Safavid order in the 13th century.



File photo depicts Meshginshahr suspension bridge, which crosses the Khiav River, near a city of the same name, Ardebil province in northwest Iran.

Magnificent Hasanlu undergoing restoration project

➔ **HERITAGE TEHRAN** – A rehabilitation and restoration project has been commenced on millennia-old Hasanlu, a magnificent archaeological site in northwestern Iran, which is highly hoped to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in the near future.

In late June, a restoration and reorganization project was commenced on sections of the Hasanlu historical complex with a credit of 500 million rials (about \$12,000), IRNA quoted Hassan Shiri, director of the ancient site, as saying on Monday.

Execution of protective coating of thatch on architectural remains; removal of disturbing vegetation; and restoration of passageways are amongst the most important tasks being taken in this ancient complex, the official noted.

"Restoration of damaged architectural remains, museum labels, and strengthening of lighting systems are amongst other missions being performed."

Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage,



A couple takes a look at the Golden Bowl of Hasanlu, which dates from ca. 900 BC, during a visit to the National Museum of Iran, downtown Tehran.

Tourism and Handicrafts is working on the possible inscription of Hasanlu on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Among the most important objects uncovered at Hasanlu were an unusually decorated silver bowl, several iron garment

pins headed by bronze lions, a solid gold bowl, a knife handle with gold cloisonné, and two hollow bronze horse heads that served to hold liquids.

According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, Hasanlu was inhabited from about 2100 to about 825 BC, but the richest period yet excavated dates to the 10th and 9th centuries BC. The period, often called "Mannaean" after the name of the people who lived in the area, is characterized by gray pottery accompanied by black and red varieties, the black ware being of a much finer quality and probably made in imitation of metal vessels.

Experts say parallels to the motifs on the Hasanlu objects have been found in Elam, Assyria, north Syria, and Urartu, indicating that Iran not only received considerable cultural and artistic stimuli from other areas but also, in turn, exerted influence on the Middle East.

The excavations have revealed important knowledge about the prehistory of northwestern Iran, particularly during the late 2nd and early 1st millennia BC.

\$370m spent to counter SDSs in 3 years

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Over the past three years, the government has spent about \$370 million from the National Development Fund on fighting sand and dust storms (SDSs), Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for SDSs mitigation, said.

Since the past few years, southern and western provinces of the country are frequently hit by sand and dust storms, as well as drought and even destructive floods, which is caused by both internal and external hotspots; major external SDSs sources are Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

In fact, Iran has been repeatedly exposed to SDSs due to its presence in the arid and semi-arid part of the world, so that in 2006-2007, the dust storms originating in Iraq and Syria affected Iran, haunting a wide area of the country so that it reached the central areas and southern slopes of Alborz and also included Tehran.

Consumption, changing the pattern of cultivation, and climate change have increased the negative effects of this phenomenon.

One of the key steps we have taken is to identify dust hotspots and specify the intensity of dust generation in those areas, Tahmasebi stated.

After nearly two years, we identified areas with very low to very high dust potential, through which about 57 million hectares annually produce about 5 million tons of dust, and scatter about 8 kilograms of dust per hectare in the air, he noted.

He went on to say that in the next step, parts that could be considered permissible were removed, so important dust sources in 23 provinces estimated at 34.7 million hectares, with an average amount of 4.24 million tons of dust per year, of which 122.7 kilograms of dust per hectare is raised annually.

The 23 provinces affected by SDSs are located in the south, southeast, center, and parts of the west, 9 provinces of which are hit by 80 percent of the SDSs, and the most severe in terms of quantity and quality includes the provinces of Kerman, South Khorasan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Yazd, Semnan, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, and Hormozgan, respectively, he noted.

We conducted another study and found that nearly 5.8 million hectares, amounting to 17 percent of the hotspots, are located in protected areas, he further stated.

About 19 million hectares of surrounding countries affect Iran, which is mainly raised



from Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Turkmenistan, he noted.

Over the past three years, some \$370 million have been spent to mitigate SDS hotspots in the country, he said.

During this period, about 110,000 hectares undergone seedling plantation, more than 750,000 hectares of protection, trapping and grazing operations in pastures with dust-raising potential, soil stabilization in 150,000 hectares, including mulching, construction of live and non-living windbreaks, equipping 100 stations for forecasting and warning, about 360 thousand cubic meters of dredging operations, improving routes for water to reach wetlands and about 100 kilometers of water transmission channels to humidify areas with dust potential in 27 dusty provinces were among the actions have been taken, he explained.

The national working group for the mitigation of SDSs has also taken a series of measures, including 39 meetings of the national and specialized committees and 45 meetings of related working groups, and several provincial working group meetings in 20 provinces, he noted.

One of the problems we have is that coop-

eration between responsible bodies is very difficult, and the organizations do not give us a comprehensive report, he concluded.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, sand and dust storms usually occur when strong winds lift large amounts of sand and dust from bare, dry soils into the atmosphere. Over the last decade, scientists have come to realize the impacts on climate, human health, the environment, and many socio-economic sectors.

How to mitigate the effects of SDSs

According to EcoMENA, sand and dust storms cause significant negative impacts on society, economy, and environment at local, regional and global scales. There are three key factors responsible for the generation of sand and dust storms – strong wind, lack of vegetation, and absence of rainfall. The environmental and health hazards of such storms cannot be reduced permanently, however, its impact can be reduced by taking appropriate measures.

As the dust cloud rises, it reduces horizontal visibility which can impact human life in many ways. The fine suspended particles also contain contaminants, bacteria, pollens, which cause negative health impacts such as allergies and respiratory diseases. Dust also carries airborne pollutants such

as toxins, heavy metals, salt, sulphur, pesticides, etc. which cause significant health impacts when people inhale the contaminated dust. Dust can corrode buildings and other built infrastructure as it contains a high level of salts.

The effects of sand and dust storms can be reduced by using a number of health and safety measures and environmental control strategies. Large-scale sand and dust storms are generally natural phenomena and it may not be always practicable to prevent it happening. However, control measures can be taken to reduce their impacts. Localized small-scale dust emission due to human induced activities can be reduced by using temporary mechanical methods such as concrete barrier, mulching, tree buffer, etc.

Taking appropriate control of dust raising factors such as increasing the vegetation cover where possible can help in the stabilization of the soil, sand dunes, and form windbreaks. Additionally, the use of native plants and trees as the buffer can reduce wind velocity, and sand drifts at the same increase the soil moisture. Designing buildings appropriately and conduct air infiltration testing during building commissioning can also help the adverse effects of sand and dust storm.

Earth's smallest carnivore spotted in southwestern Iran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — A least weasel, one of the world's smallest mammals, has been seen for the first time in a mountain of the southwestern province of Khuzestan, Mostafa Yousefi, head of the provincial department environment said on Monday, IRNA reported.

The least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*), known as little weasel, common weasel, or simply weasel, is the smallest member of the genus *Mustela*, family *Mustelidae* and order *Carnivora*. The body is slender and elongated, the legs and tail are relatively short. The color varies geographically, as does the pelage type and length of tail.

Weasels weigh about 25 grams and grow to just 11 to 26 centimeters long.

Small rodents form the largest part of the least weasel's diet, but it also kills and eats rabbits, other mammals, and occasionally birds, eggs, fish, and frogs.

It is native to Eurasia, North America, and North Africa, and has been introduced to New Zealand, Malta, Crete, Ber-



muda, Madeira Island, the Azores, the Canary Islands, São Tomé, the Falkland Islands, Argentina, and Chile.

The distribution of this species in Iran is from North Khorasan to Azarbaijan, Kordestan, Kermanshah, and Lorestan.

It is classified as least concern by the IUCN, due to its wide distribution and large population throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

The weasel species live in Khuzestan includes beech marten, badgers, honey badger, Eurasian otter, and smooth-coated otter, Yousefi said, IRNA reported on Monday.

Valuable species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and amphibians live in the Shimbar Andika protected area, among which weasel is the smallest carnivore and brown bear, the largest carnivore in Iran, and the Red List species such as leopards, hyenas, wild goats, Greek tortoise, Luristan newt, eastern imperial eagle, and rare species such as black stork and pel's fishing owl, he also said.

He said that preventing hunting, habitat fragmentation, cutting down trees, overgrazing of livestock, and fire are the most important protection measures in the Zagros forests.

Shimbar protected area is located northeast of Masjed-e-Soleiman city.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

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

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

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

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

افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

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

به گزارش ایسنا، مه‌اله رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه‌ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل‌ویکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد.

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

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

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“galacto-, gala-, galact-”

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

PHRASAL VERB

Grasp at something

■ **Meaning:** to try to hold on to something
■ **For example:** His foot slipped and he grasped at the top of the wall.

IDIOM

Bring nothing to the table

■ **Explanation:** to have nothing of interest to offer the other side in a negotiation
■ **For example:** We'll never reach an agreement if we don't all bring something to the table.

\$10bn of precious metals dumped each year in electronic waste, says UN

At least \$10bn (£7.9bn) worth of gold, platinum and other precious metals are dumped every year in the growing mountain of electronic waste that is polluting the planet, according to a new UN report.

A record 54m tonnes of “e-waste” was generated worldwide in 2019, up 21% in five years, the UN’s Global E-waste Monitor report found. The 2019 figure is equivalent to 7.3kg for every man, woman and child on Earth, though use is concentrated in richer nations. The amount of e-waste is rising three times faster than the world’s population, and only 17% of it was recycled in 2019.

Electronic and electrical goods, from phones and computers to refrigerators and kettles, have become indispensable in modern societies and enhance lives. But they often contain toxic chemicals, and soaring production and waste damages human health and the environment, and fuels the climate crisis.

The report blames lack of regulation and the short lifespan of products that are hard or impossible to repair. Experts called the situation a “wholly preventable global scandal”, the Guardian reported.

People in northern Europe produced the most e-waste – 22.4kg per person in 2019. The amount was half as much in eastern Europe. Australians and New Zealanders disposed of 21.3kg per person, while in the US and Canada the figure was 20.9kg. Averages across Asia and Africa were much lower, at 5.6kg and 2.5kg per person respectively.

E-waste contains materials including copper, iron, gold, silver and platinum, which the report gives a conservative value of \$57bn. But most are dumped or burned rather than being collected for recycling. Precious metals in waste are estimated to be worth \$14bn, but only \$4bn-worth is recovered at the moment.

Europe had the highest recycling rate in 2019, at 42%, with Asia second at 12%. But across North and South America, and Oceania, the rate was 9% and in Africa it was 0.9%.

In low- and middle-income countries, some e-waste is recycled but usually by unsafe practices, such as burning circuit boards to recover copper. This releases highly toxic metals such as mercury, lead and cadmium, “causing severe health effects to workers as well as to the children who often live and play near e-waste activities”, the report said.

It estimated that 50 tonnes of mercury from monitors, energy-saving light bulbs and other e-waste is dumped each year. Furthermore, gases released from discarded fridges and air-conditioning units were equivalent to 98m tonnes of atmospheric carbon dioxide in 2019, close to the national emissions of Belgium.

“E-waste is a very big problem because the amount is growing at a very rapid pace each year, and the level of recycling is just not keeping up pace,” said Kees Baldé at the UN University, based in Bonn, and an author of report. “It’s important to put a price on the pollution – at the moment it is simply free to pollute.”

“The biggest problem is that, in many countries, there are no collection systems,” said Mijke Hertoghs, at the UN’s International Telecommunication Union. “The companies that bring the equipment on the market are not being held accountable for the end-of-life disposal.”

But Hertoghs said the value of the metals being dumped presented an opportunity. Baldé agreed: “If [collection and recycling] were better organised, the economies of scale would go up and I think there are opportunities for creating a new economy and new jobs. There would be a huge income for many people.” Recycling would also cut the environmental impact of mining for new metal: “One gram of gold has a massive footprint.”

“Improper e-waste recycling is a major emerging hazard, silently affecting our health and that of future generations,” said Maria Neira at the World Health Organization. She said one in four childhood deaths resulted from pollution, including e-waste.

In 2018, the ITU’s governing body set a target of increasing e-waste recycling from 17% to 30% by 2023. But, as things stand, said Hertoghs: “It’s totally unrealistic to achieve that goal.” Since 2014, the number of countries with national e-waste policies or laws in place has only increased from 61 to 78, out of a total of 193 UN member states.

Libby Peake from the thinktank Green Alliance said: “The ever-growing mountain of e-waste documented in this report represents a wholly preventable global scandal.”

“It doesn’t have to be this way,” she said. “Products could be designed to last, to be repaired and, just as crucially, to be upgraded. Ensuring the system keeps electronic products in circulation would create hundreds of thousands of jobs ... There’s no excuse for leaving this scandal unaddressed.”

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Super Tuesday

(March 03, 2004)

John Kerry, the senator from the New England state of Massachusetts, is to become the Democratic Party challenger in the United States presidential election this year. It follows his victories in nine out of the ten states that held party primary and caucus elections yesterday, on what is known as Super Tuesday. This report from David Bamford:

The night belonged to John Kerry as results one by one **confirmed** that his challenger, John Edwards, had been unable to make a **breakthrough** in any of the ten states. He came closest in the southern state of Georgia, just a few **percentage** points behind, but results in the big states of New York, California and Ohio **assured** Mr Kerry of a **definitive** victory. The only state he didn’t win was **tiny** Vermont, which in a **quirk** of the political system, voted for Howard Dean, who wasn’t even **running** any longer. Now John Kerry’s attention will turn to choosing a Vice Presidential **running mate** - it may even be John Edwards - and preparing to do battle with George Bush.

Words

confirmed: if something confirms what you believe, it shows that it is definitely true

breakthrough: an important development or achievement

percentage: a fraction of an amount expressed as a particular number of hundredths of that amount

assured: if you are assured of something, it is certain that you will get it

definitive: something that is definitive provides a firm conclusion that cannot be questioned

tiny: extremely small

quirk: a strange occurrence that is difficult to explain

running: in an election, if someone runs for political office, they take part as a candidate

running mate: here, the person who will run with John Kerry, seeking the post of vice president

(Source: BBC)

UAE orders government shake-up as coronavirus hits economy

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced a broad government restructuring for more "agile and swift" decision-making amid the coronavirus pandemic, merging government entities and appointing new economy and industry ministers.

The head of Abu Dhabi's national oil company ADNOC, Sultan al-Jaber, was named as industry and advanced technology minister and Abdullah al-Marri was appointed economy minister.

The restructuring was announced by the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, on his official Twitter account.

"The aim ... is a government that can more quickly make decisions and deal with changes and more adeptly seize opportunities in dealing with this new stage in our history; a swift and agile government," Sheikh Mohammed said.

China 'pulling back troops' after deadly border clash: India

China has begun pulling back troops from along its contested border with India, Indian government sources have said, following the worst clash between the two nuclear-armed neighbors in nearly 50 years, which left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

The Chinese military was seen dismantling tents and structures on Monday at a location in the Galwan Valley near the site of the latest clash, Indian government sources, who declined to be identified as they are not authorized to speak to the media, told Reuters news agency.

Vehicles were seen withdrawing from the area, as well as at Hot Springs and Gogra - two other contested border zones, the sources said.

In response to a question on whether China had moved equipment back to the Galwan Valley, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said both sides were "taking effective measures to disengage and ease the situation on the border".

"We hope India will meet China halfway and take concrete measures to carry out what both sides agreed to, continue to closely communicate through diplomatic and military channels, and work together to cool down the situation at the border," Zhao told a news conference.

Black armed protesters march in Georgia, U.S.

→ 1 According to the Hill, the protests come as calls to remove Confederate monuments were reignited after the death of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody in May.

The park had reopened for the holiday weekend after being shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic. It usually hosts a laser and fireworks show in front of the carving, but this year, the show was canceled because of the virus.

Israel launches new spy satellite

→ 1 According to Sudari, the Ofek-16 is the "brother" of the Ofek-11, containing many of the same capabilities, along with a few "light improvements, in terms of precision." Defense Ministry officials refused to comment on the jump in the name, from Ofek-11 to Ofek-16.

"The Ofek-16 is highly advanced, including breakthrough 'blue and white' technology that serves our defense interests," Sudari said, using a term that refers to the colors of the Israeli flag to signify domestically produced capabilities.

Though the main function of the new spy satellite will likely be monitoring Iran and developments in its nuclear and missile programs, defense officials denied any symbolism in conducting the launch amid growing reports that Israel was responsible for a number of recent explosions in the Islamic Republic, including one at a uranium enrichment facility and another at a missile production plant.

Resistance News

Israeli authorities to demolish 30 Palestinian buildings in Jerusalem

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Israeli authorities on Monday ordered the demolition of 30 Palestinian structures in al-Isawiya village in Occupied Jerusalem.

Activist Mohammed Abu al-Hommous said that Israeli municipality crews on Monday stormed al-Isawiya and distributed demolition notices targeting 30 homes and various facilities.

The Israeli crews also took pictures of the threatened buildings. Some of them are inhabited houses and others are still under construction.

In addition to construction restrictions, the Palestinian residents of al-Isawiya have been lately subjected to stepped-up demolition campaigns targeting mainly homes and commercial facilities.

Israeli warplanes carry out fresh air raids on Gaza

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Israeli warplanes have carried out fresh airstrikes against the Gaza Strip, bombing locations in the east of the besieged enclave.

The Israeli military says the warplanes and helicopters have stricken the positions of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in Gaza Strip late on Sunday night.

An Israeli military spokesperson claimed in a statement that the Hamas targets hit by the warplanes include "underground infrastructure".

The spokesperson also claimed that the attacks were in reaction to three rockets allegedly fired from the besieged enclave at southern parts of the occupied territories. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

There were no immediate reports of casualties caused by the Israeli air raids.

The fresh attacks come as Hamas has called on other Palestinian groups in the occupied West Bank to join hands and start an armed struggle against the Israeli occupation.

Virus pushes U.S. hospitals to the brink, India overtakes Russia with third-largest outbreak

By staff & agencies

Officials at the epicenter of the worsening coronavirus crisis in the United States warned Sunday their hospitals were in danger of being overwhelmed by the upsurge, as India registered a record number of new cases.

In signs of progress, Formula One returned with the season-opening Austrian Grand Prix held behind closed doors, while the Louvre museum in Paris will reopen on Monday after a 16-week shutdown, AFP reported.

The US has struggled to respond to the devastation wrought by the virus, with its national death toll rising to near 130,000 out of 2.8 million confirmed cases, and many states hit by increasing infections after lockdowns were eased.

Hospital beds are full in parts of Texas, while calls for fresh stay-at-home orders are growing. Some mayors say their cities reopened too early, as President Donald Trump tries to downplay the disease that has gripped much of the country.

India faces similar challenges as it clocked a record daily number of cases across a vast nation where medical facilities are uneven and many COVID-19 infections are likely to be undiagnosed.

India has passed Russia as the nation with the world's third-largest coronavirus outbreak, reporting almost 700,000 cases.

Monday's planned reopening for India's Taj Mahal was cancelled, but the Louvre museum in Paris welcomed visitors again after being closed for almost four months.



Indonesia recorded its deadliest day yet, while Spain locked down another area after a spike in COVID-19 cases, putting 70,000 more people under restrictions until at least next weekend.

In the U.S., new infections dropped under 50,000 for the second time in as many days, but the death of Broadway actor Nick Cordero was one of many in a sharp increase in fatalities in California.

COVID-19 exposed deep flaws in Spain's anti-poverty system: UN expert

The coronavirus outbreak has highlighted

serious weaknesses in Spain's social security system and a failure to address the plight of the poorest people, a UN expert said Monday.

«Spain's social protection net was utterly inadequate before COVID-19, but the pandemic has since exposed just how deeply it is failing people.» Philip Alston, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, said in a report on a fact-finding mission he made to Spain this year.

Alston said millions of Spaniards who were unable to work had to struggle through

delays, glitches and other difficulties to access government support during the lockdown.

Alston, whose mandate ended in April, praised the government for adopting a national minimum income scheme in May, calling it an ambitious and impressive achievement, but said it was just the first of many urgently needed measures.

Spain launched its minimum income program - worth between 462 euros (\$514) and 1,015 euros a month depending on family size - in the hope of reaching some 2.3 million people.

Maduro censures 'criminal' U.S. sanctions during military parade

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has denounced the United States for keeping up its "criminal sanctions" against the Latin American nation even during the deadly coronavirus pandemic as he oversees a grand military parade on the country's Independence Day.

Maduro made the comments on Sunday during a ceremony, which celebrated the enactment of the 1811 Venezuelan Declaration of Independence from Spanish rule.

Prior to the speech, the Venezuelan military put on a show of force, with planes flying over Caracas and soldiers marching past the president and senior military officials.

Maduro further said the world thought that the "American imperialism would take a pause" at a time when Venezuela — along with other states — is fighting to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

"On the contrary, they intensified their criminal sanctions, a campaign against food, against medicine, against petrol that Venezuela seeks and buys in the world," he added.

Washington, Maduro said, was trying to "create an unmanageable crisis" and more "suffering for the Venezuelan people."

The U.S. has over the past years imposed harsh economic sanctions on the oil-rich country to pressure Maduro to step down, forcing millions of Venezuelans to abandon their



homeland due to a lack of basic food and necessities.

According to UN statistics, at least 3.3 million people have left the country of 30 million since the end of 2015.

The U.S. — backed by dozens of its regional and Western allies — has stepped up its anti-Maduro push by lending support to right-wing opposition figure Juan Guaido in his bid to topple the elected government in Caracas.

China slams U.S. for sending aircraft carriers to disputed sea

Beijing has slammed the United States for sending its aircraft carriers to the disputed waters of South China Sea, where the Chinese military was holding naval drills, saying the provocative move is aimed at driving a wedge between regional countries.

Addressing a press briefing on Monday, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Washington had "deliberately" sent the USS Ronald Reagan and USS Nimitz aircraft carriers to the South China Sea to "flex its muscles."

The Americans, he added, "have ulterior motives. The U.S. is creating division among nations in the region and militarizing the South China Sea," nine tenths of which is claimed by China.

The two U.S. carriers arrived in the region on Saturday for "military exercises" as China was wrapping up its own naval drills near the disputed Xisha islands, called Parcel islands by China's rivals, who have overlapping sovereignty claims to the resource-rich sea.

Speaking to Reuters on Monday, the commander of the USS Nimitz, Rear Admiral

James Kirk, said the two American aircraft carriers were conducting "exercises" in the contested sea within sight of Chinese naval vessels spotted near the U.S. navy's flotilla.

"They have seen us and we have seen them," Kirk said.

The U.S. military said on Twitter that B52 bombers were also involved in the exercise.

Earlier, Rear Admiral George Wikoff, commander of the strike group led by the USS Ronald Reagan, said the military move was to "show an unambiguous signal to our partners and allies that we are committed to regional security and stability."

Apparently reacting to the deployment, China on Friday slammed "non-regional countries" for traveling a long distance to conduct large-scale military activities in the South China Sea, stressing that such provocative moves in Chinese territorial waters were the source of tensions and instability in the region.

The U.S. — which sides with China's rivals in their territorial claims — says such military operations are meant to protect "freedom of navigation" in the sea, a gateway for trillions



of dollars in maritime trade each year.

China warns Canada over Hong Kong move

Elsewhere in his comments, the Chinese official delivered a warning to Canada after the Ottawa government said it was suspending an extradition treaty with Hong Kong as part of a package of responses to the new security law recently introduced by mainland China in the semi-autonomous region.

Beijing, he said, viewed the decision as interference in its domestic affairs and reserved the right to take additional action in response to Canada, without giving

more details.

Separately, Canada's Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne said on Friday that Ottawa was implementing several measures in regard to the new Hong Kong national security law.

According to the official, in addition to suspending the extradition treaty, sensitive exports to the special administrative region will be treated the same as they were going to China.

Champagne noted that the trade of military items of the same nature will no longer be permitted with Hong Kong.

Canada and a number of Western countries have harshly criticized the new national security law for Hong Kong, which was enacted on Tuesday and which they say harms the city's semi-autonomous status. Beijing rejects the allegation.

The new security legislation criminalizes secession, and subversion against mainland China, and allows Chinese national security institutions to operate in the city for the first time since 1997, when Hong Kong returned from British to Chinese rule.

Inside the America

The Trump administration's dedication to preserving offensive national monuments is an indication of the American aversion to learning the truth about our ugly national history. But if actually picking up a book is too much of a struggle, certainly such things can be gleaned from passive education—from watching and contemplating well-made popular films and other media presentations. Especially in the Age of Covid, when we spend many more hours at home, glued to our televisions or computer screens, there is ample time to be exposed to something other than one's own point of view. You wouldn't even have to go far from the mainstream if you wanted to learn about a different perspective. There are numerous blockbusters that tell the tales of America's history of genocide, racism and slavery, from the 1962 classic To Kill a Mockingbird, to more recent films such as Clash, to the newly released Da 5 Bloods, which all focus on racially based strife.

Case in point: hasn't every American seen the opening scene from Tom Cruise's famous film The Last Samurai, when a drunken, depressed and PTSD-ridden Cruise, haunted by his role in the 7th Cavalry Regiment's massacre of Native Americans under the leadership of General Custer, finds himself perform-

ing sales demonstrations for the Winchester Rifle Company. The film's soundtrack gains authenticity and simultaneously encourages viewers to make the connection to the confirmed brutalities of American history by using the tune Garryowen. The 7th Cavalry Regiment—famous for its participation in some of the largest battles of the Indian Wars, the most infamous being the Battle of Little Bighorn—became known by the nickname Garryowen because that tune was played right before the Cavalry charged in to attack unarmed Native villages, massacring men, women and children alike.

All these details intersect in the current political climate because of the Trump administration's inflammatory and offensive choice of location for the president's Independence Day speech this year. On July 4th, 2020, amidst unrest and protests over police brutality against people of color, sparking a growing racial and class divide between Americans, Donald Trump has further isolated and insulted Indigenous Americans by delivering his deeply divisive Independence Day speech from Mount Rushmore, complete with the playing of that genocidal battle tune—Garryowen. In the midst of protests calling for the demolition of memorials that glorify the

notions of slavery and genocide, the Trump administration decided to hold America's biggest summer holiday celebration at America's largest and most quintessential monument. This site, called Mount Rushmore by the US government, is a gigantic illegal carving on stolen land, which scars the sacred Black Hills area with the faces of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt. In the 1868 Treaty of Laramie, the US government recognized the Black Hills as part of the Great Sioux Reservation and set the land aside for exclusive use by the Sioux Nation. Not only has Donald Trump insulted and degraded Indigenous Peoples by glorifying the monument built on stolen land, signifying the more than 500 broken treaties which paved the way for cultural decimation, disease and near genocide, but he and his administration further demonstrate their callous disregard for history by using the same battle song played against the Native peoples on that very spot one hundred and fifty years ago. With ceremonies and symbolism of this sort, the 45th President of the United States has taken America even further away from resolving any racial crisis, and has demonstrated no intention to resolve the damages created by this system of White Supremacy.

Flight restrictions prevent Ayanda Patosi to return to Iran

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Ayanda Patosi, the South African midfielder of Foolad Khuzestan, has been for more than four months in his country and still could not return to Iran because of the Covid-19 crisis and the flight restrictions.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Patosi has explained his latest situation.

Q Ayanda, how is the situation in South Africa regarding the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic?

A: I'm in Cape Town right now because of the coronavirus crisis. Actually, it's been very hard in South Africa because the country went lockdown and some social activities are not open yet and forced to shut down. Now, we are in Level Three of the plan to control the virus. In Level Three they have opened some shops and some jobs have started working again.

Q Why you couldn't return to Iran?

A: The flight restrictions still remain. It's very difficult to get a flight to other countries including Iran. Me and Foolad club's office have been working very hard to get the flight as soon as possible. I'm in touch every day with my agent and also with Mr. Saeid Azari, the general manager of the Foolad Club, and we are doing our best to get the flight and to return to Iran at the earliest possible time.

Q You have been away from Iran for more than three months now.

A: Yes, it's been very hard for me. I miss the club, I miss the team, I miss the players and playing around with them.

Q Let's talk about what you have done during the lockdown.

A: throughout the lockdown, I've managed to train alone in my own backyard. It's hard but that is something I can do in this situation. I spent time with my family. Most of the time I'm outside the country but I've been



in Cape Town for too long now. I've never been in Cape Town for a long period if I'm not playing football in South Africa!

Q About Foolad game against Esteghlal (which Foolad won 2-1), there were some rumors that Patosi himself didn't want to be in this match to play against his ex-team Esteghlal!!

Q No, It's not true. I wanted to be in that game because Esteghlal are my ex-team and I really liked to play against them, against my former teammates. It could be a nice and interesting game for me. I would really love to be in that game but because of the Covid-19 situation in my country, I couldn't get the flight on time for that match.

Q Anything else you want to say?

A: To all Foolad fans: Thank you very much guys for your support. I've received so many messages on my Instagram. I really can't wait to come back to Ahwaz. I really appreciate your support. I know it's very difficult to stay at home to watch Foolad games but your health comes first guys. Thank you very much and stay safe!

Survey finds 77% of Japanese think Olympics 'cannot be held' next year



TOKYO (Reuters) — A wide-ranging survey conducted by the Japan News Network (JNN) found that 77% of those questioned said that the Tokyo Olympics "cannot be held" next year, it was announced on Monday.

The Tokyo 2020 Games, originally due to start this month, have already been delayed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

As organizers plan the rearranged Games, questions remain over whether it is suitable, or possible,

to host the Olympics in Japan next year.

Organizers have previously said they will look to "simplify" the Games next year to lower costs and reduce risks related to COVID-19.

However, in the JNN poll, conducted over the weekend and that mostly centered on Japanese politics, 77% of respondents said they think the Olympics "cannot be held" in 2021. They did not give a reason.

Just 17% said they thought it "can be held" next year.

Vietnam says may host F1 race in November



HANOI (Reuters) — Vietnam could host the country's first Formula One Grand Prix in late November, the ruling body of its capital city said on Monday, as the country approaches three months without domestic transmission of the coronavirus.

The Vietnam Grand Prix was initially due to take place in Hanoi on April 5 but was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizers said they would monitor the virus situation and pick another time for the race.

"We are assessing all virus-related issues and will discuss them with the organiz-

ers. Hopefully the race can be resumed by end-November," Hanoi's chairman Nguyen Duc Chung said at a meeting attended by local media, of which a recording was obtained by Reuters.

Chung did not elaborate and it was not clear if a November date had been discussed with Formula One.

The 2020 Formula One season started in Austria on Sunday with an initial calendar that so far has eight races in Europe, without spectators, until September, with uncertainty about how many races there will be.

Djokovic's event taught us to be cautious: French Open director

MUMBAI (Reuters) — French Open organizers are taking every precaution to ensure the Grand Slam does not meet the same fate as Novak Djokovic's Adria Tour, which was abandoned after several players tested positive for COVID-19, tournament director Guy Forget has told Reuters.

Djokovic has come under fire after the charity event was played in front of packed crowds in Serbia and Croatia and saw players hugging at the net and posing for pictures together.

Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki have all tested positive for the new coronavirus.

The French Open will allow up to 60% of the usual capacity inside the Roland Garros grounds when the rescheduled claycourt tournament starts on Sept. 27 and Forget said there was no chance of them repeating the mistakes of the Adria Tour.

"Maybe some people were overconfident there," Forget said by telephone.

"Luckily no one got hurt really bad but even a few cases is too much and we want to avoid that as much as we can.

"We want to reassure everyone that having people getting ill will be terrible for us. Let's be really careful, really cautious."

France began easing restrictions in May but has been reporting over 500 cases daily in recent days. Protective masks will be mandatory for anyone on the move inside Roland Garros and they will be recommended for those sitting courtside.

The French Tennis Federation (FFT) expect some 20,000 spectators a day during the early stages of the two-week



tournament and about 10,000 per day on the final weekend. Forget said a successful event needed to have some kind of a crowd.

"We all see soccer on television, it's wonderful but something is missing without the crowds," the former world No. 4 said.

"We are working closely with the administration, the government, to make sure we can provide some crowd while still following very strict security measures."

MORE FLEXIBLE

The U.S. Open in New York, which is scheduled to start on Aug. 31, will have no spectators and operate under strict health protocols, including limiting the size of each player's entourage.

Forget said French Open organizers were not planning anything as strict and were even hoping to ease restrictions.

"Luckily things are a bit more flexible in Europe and in France, especially," he said. "Hopefully, what we're going to announce will probably be even more flexible than what we did."

The FFT drew heavy criticism in mid-March when it unilaterally moved the French Open to September from its scheduled May start amid the COVID-19 crisis, placing it in the middle of the hardcourt season.

Forget said he understood why some were unhappy about it but thought saving one of the most prestigious and lucrative tournaments in tennis was worth it.

"We're not going to celebrate or congratulate ourselves for the decision we took," the 55-year-old said.

"We thought it's a risk worth taking. Of course we'll make people unhappy."

"But in mid-October, if we're able to come together and we've been able to provide revenue for 600 people, I think we will be very satisfied as a federation and I as a former player."

Forget was reasonably confident the tournament would be a success but would not relax until after the men's final on Oct. 11.

"I don't want to shout 'victory' before the tournament actually happens," Forget said.

"As the tournament director I'll only be happy once the men's winner shakes the hand of the finalist."

"We will all together be able to say, we did it." (Source: Reuters)

Sepahan held by Saipa: IPL

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Sepahan football team failed to narrow the gap at the top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) table to 10 points after being held by Saipa on Sunday.

In the match held in Tehran's Dastgerdi Stadium, two teams played out a goalless draw.

Saipa should be grateful to their goalkeeper Hamed Fallahzadeh since he made two key saves in this match. Sepahan still are second with 41 points, 12 points adrift of IPL leaders Persepolis.

In Sirjan, Shahr Khodro secured a late 1-0 win against Gol Gohar and moved up to third place. Shahr Khodro sit behind Sepahan on goal difference.

Naft Masjed Soleyman also edged past Machine Sazi 1-0 in a home match.

Esteghlal and Pars Jonoubi match as well as a match between Nassaji and Foolad were canceled after Esteghlal and Foola players tested positive for coronavirus.

Azmoun stars as Zenit ease to Russian title

Islamic Republic of Iran striker Sardar Azmoun was crowned a Russian Premier League champion for the second successive season, scoring twice as Zenit Saint Petersburg wrapped up a second consecutive title on Sunday.

The Iran hotshot was the Player of the Match on the day of Zenit's coronation, netting the opening goal in the fifth minute, then adding a second shortly after half time as Sergey Semak's side beat Krasnodar 4-2, extending their lead over second placed Lokomotiv Moscow to an insurmountable 13 points with four matches remaining.

Azmoun's characteristic contribution was the latest chapter in what has been a fine individual campaign, notching his 12th and 13th goals in 25 league appearances, and taking his tally to 17 in 33 matches in all competitions.

With their title success - which was achieved both two months late and four matches early due to the league's three-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic - Zenit were crowned champions for the sixth time since 2007.

Azmoun has been one of the club's standout players since joining in February 2019, scoring 25 league goals on the way to back to back titles.

Those exploits have seen the 25-year-old linked to transfer interest from some of Europe's top clubs, and voted Asia's Greatest Russian Premier League Player in a the-AFC.com fan poll last month.

With Zenit's league success confirmed, the club's attention will now turn to securing the Russian Cup title, with a semi-final against Spartak Moscow set for July 19. (Source: AP)

Esteghlal forward Tabrizi undergoes surgery

Tasnim — Esteghlal football team striker Morteza Tabrizi underwent surgery on his knee on Sunday.

He had a surgery for a torn ACL suffered in a friendly match against Rayka in mid-June.

Tabrizi will miss the rest of the Iran Professional League (IPL) due to the injury.

Esteghlal forward Arsalan Motahari had previously suffered a hamstring injury.

UAE to start preparations on July 22

The United Arab Emirates Football Association (UAE FA) has announced that the national team will start preparations for the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 on July 22.

The Committee for The National Teams and Technical Affairs approved the first stage of the preparation program after coordinating with the technical staff led by new head coach Jorge Luis Pinto.

The first gathering will be July 22-27, while the second preparatory camp on August 1-23 will be abroad with two friendly matches scheduled.

There will be a third gathering for the team on August 31-September 9, which will also include two friendly matches that will be played during FIFA days ahead of their next Asian Qualifiers match against Malaysia on October 8.

UAE, currently fourth in Group G with six points, will then travel to Indonesia for their sixth match of the Qualifiers on October 13.

Their final two matches are scheduled for November 12 and 17 against Thailand and Vietnam respectively. (Source: the-afc)

Al Duhail part ways with Mandžukic

Six-time Qatar Stars League champions Al Duhail announced that they have parted ways with Croatian forward Mario Mandžukic.

"The club's management has reached an agreement with the Croatian professional Mario Mandžukic to end the contract with him by mutual consent after the period he spent with the team," said an official statement from the club.

The 34-year-old forward appeared in only 10 matches since joining Al Duhail from Italian giants Juventus last December, including two 2020 AFC Champions League ties where he scored their opening goal in Group C against Islamic Republic of Iran's Persepolis.

Al Duhail will resume Qatar Stars League action on July 25 against Umm Salal. They held a four-point lead over Al Rayyan prior to the COVID-19 enforced break. (Source: AFP)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A trouble that saddens you is better than a blessing that rouses your selfishness and loses you God's favor; for, the former grinds your body like a rasp, and the latter burns your spirit little by little.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iran distributes free books to promote reading in remote areas

The culture ministry is planning to carry out an extensive stage of "It's Possible by Books" after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Workers load packages of donated books for the plan "It's Possible by Books" in Tehran on July 5, 2020.

To promote reading, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in collaboration with several cultural organizations, including the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, selects an Iranian city as book capital every year.

Iran's 2020 Book Capital is Shiraz, the hometown of Hafez and Sadi that also houses the tombs of the great Persian classical poets.

In addition, ten villages across the country are selected as Book Loving Villages of the Year.

Iran's 2020 Book Loving Villages are Zavarom in North Khorasan Province, Vadeqan in Isfahan Province, Seyyedabad in West Azarbaijan, Bonegazi in Bushehr Province, Alavieh in Fars Province, Kheirabad in Kohkilyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Khorshid in Mazandaran Province, Isin in Hormozgan Province, Seyyeshahab in Hamedan Province and Gerdkuh in Yazd Province.

Paintings on face masks to go on view at Tehran gallery

TEHRAN — Tehran's CAMA - Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery will be playing host to a group exhibition of paintings on face masks to help encourage more people to wear face masks during the coronavirus pandemic.

Shahla Homayuni is the curator of the exhibit named "Wear a Mask" that will display 70 masks by 70 artists.

In a press release published on Monday, CAMA director Mona Khosheqbal said that a number of veteran artists and young talents have been asked to create their paintings on face masks to showcase at the exhibition, which will open on Friday.

Each face mask bears the signature of the artist on its reverse side hidden from the visitors, she added.

Hossein Mahjubi, Ahmad Vakili, Homayun Salimi, Behzad Shishehgaran, Reza Hedayat, Shahla Homayuni, Turan Farhat, Shahram Gilabadi and Reza Bangiz are among the participating artists.

The exhibit will be running until July 21 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

The idea of drawing paintings on face masks was earlier implemented during May by Iranian graphic designer Yazdan Saadi.

He created his new collection on face masks depicting the mythical Iranian hero Rostam fighting coronavirus monsters.

Ferdowsi's masterpiece Shahnameh and its seven adventures were the sources of inspiration for Saadi.

"This was not something unusual in the process of my artistic career. I have always paid great attention to the materials I use in my works. The idea was not strange to me. We didn't have the habit of living with face masks and only doctors and craftsmen used them in their jobs, and this was a new thing added to our lives, something to wear outdoors that was annoying at first," he once told Tehran Times.

Although the new virus has captured and impacted our lifestyle, I decided to conquer the idea of wearing a face mask as I thought this must be a concept of battle and fighting," he had said.

Moreover, the Health Ministry asked people to join the movement "I Wear a Mask" and the artists were invited to join this movement to encourage more people to put on face masks.

The nurses, doctors and medical staff are in the frontline battling the coronavirus, their diligent efforts need to be honored and respected while people are also asked to wear masks to help fight this new virus, the ministry has said.

Niavaran Cultural Center to host Iran-Austria Music Event

TEHRAN — Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center next week will be playing host to a music festival named the "Iran-Austria Music Event".

Musicians from Iran and Austria will be joining together at the center on July 15 to give performances during the event, Alireza Nazemorroaya, the deputy director of the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce, which is the main organizer of the festival, said on Sunday.

He made the remarks during a ceremony the center organized to unveil a poster for the event.

The ceremony was also attended by Niavaran center director Ebadreza Eslami, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini and a number of Austrian organizers of the festival.

"Iran and Austria have had close cultural relations since the Safavid period, and I am really happy that the cultural relationship between the two countries is going on effectively," Eslami said.

For his part, Hosseini said, "The language of art doesn't need to be translated as it forms in artists' solitude."

"Iran is only one percent of the Earth, however, it holds ten percent of its art and cultural heritage, and this gives us a responsibility to share our cultural assets with the world," he added.

"During her visit to Iran, Teresa Indjein, the head of cultural policy at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussed a plan that is expected to lead to organizing some good joint art and cultural programs in both countries," Hosseini noted.

He noted, "The Iran-Austria Music Event will be an auspicious beginning to a long-range collaboration in other fields of art between the two countries."



Organizers attend a ceremony at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center on July 5, 2020 to unveil a poster for the Iran-Austria Music Event.

New movies to hit silver screens amid pandemic



A scene from "There at the Same Time" by director Sirus Alvand.

TEHRAN — Three new movies will hit silver screens across Iran this Wednesday while the death toll from COVID-19 has risen in the country over the past ten days.

The films are "Women Are Angels 2", "There at the Same Time" and "Pishi Mishi".

"Women Are Angels 2" by Arash Moayerian portrays a wealthy wife and a poor husband. The woman is in love with her husband and names her house and her automobile showroom after him, however, she finds out more about her husband's disloyalty when her trip is cancelled.

Sahar Qoreishi, Niusha Zeighami, Mohammadreza Sharifinia and Sirus Hemmati are the main actors of the movie.

"There at the Same Time" by director Sirus Alvand tells the story of Rana and Amir who have begun their life in an old district in the suburban area.

Parviz Parastui, Mahur Alvand, Shahram Haqiqatdoost, Shahrokh Forutanian and Ehsan Kardan star in this movie. "Pishi Mishi" by director Hossein Qanaat is a children's comedy about Farhad's love of Maloos.

The movie stars Reza Shafi-Jam, Bahareh Rahnama, Saeed Hedayati and Mohammad Shiri.

The Screening Council of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance secretary Morteza Shayesteh said that the two previous onscreen movies of Peyman Qasemkhani's comedy "Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army" and Mohammad Kart's directorial debut "Butterfly Swimming" will continue their screening.

Iran's Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters announced last week that it would examine the imposition of new limits on art and cultural activities as fresh cases of COVID-19 have been reported across the country.

Teleplays viable alternatives to stage performances during pandemic: Hadi Marzban

TEHRAN — Director Hadi Marzban has said that teleplays are viable alternatives to stage performances during the coronavirus pandemic.

"In a meeting with Qader Ashena, the director of Iran's Dramatic Arts Center, I told him television has forgotten teleplays but if it decides to show more interest in teleplays, we can negotiate with the managers for several teleplays every week," Marzban said.

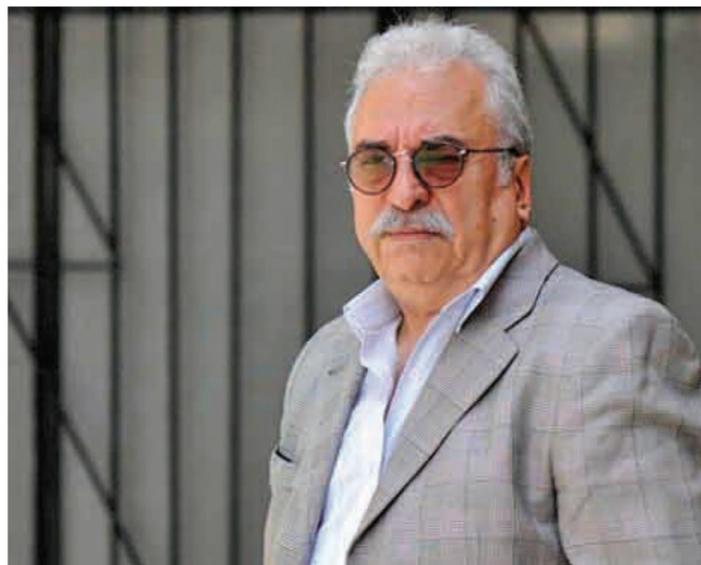
"I know this will not be the theater we like and expect, and the attendance of the theatergoers is very important for us. However, we need to understand the situation; now that the coronavirus is fighting with us we need to fight back this way," he said.

He added that if television cooperates and dedicates a budget in collaboration with the dramatic center, more teleplays will be produced every week so that people will not forget theaters.

Marzban said that he has many unread books to read and unfinished works to do, but he is not in a good mood to carry them out.

"Of course, I have not been idle these days and have begun to write my biography, about my personal and artistic life, and I ask everyone to pray that the coronavirus leaves sooner so that we can return to our normal conditions of the past," he said.

Marzban planned to return to the stage with a political romance named "Dr. N."



Stage director Hadi Marzban in an undated photo.

Likes His Wife More Than Mossadeq" in Vahdat Hall in February, however, the project was halted due to the outbreak of coronavirus in the country.

The play was an adaptation of a novel by Iranian writer Shahram Rahimian. It is about Dr. Esfandiar N., an ardent supporter of Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran's

former prime minister, who made great efforts to nationalize the oil industry in 1951 that were nullified by the CIA coup d'état against the national icon in August 1953.

Moreover, puppeteer Adel Bozdudeh, who planned to restage his puppet show "An Accident in the City of Puppets" nearly fifty years after its premiere in Tehran, said on Monday that he will postpone his project.

"Because I don't want to take a risk and put the health of an adult or a child in danger," he said.

Bozdudeh was due to stage his play for children at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) in May, but the play was postponed to a later time in October.

"Amid the coronavirus pandemic, it is not a good idea to gather families and children in one closed place to watch a play," he said.

"The IIDCYA has resumed its activities but only with solo performances, and one cannot say how long they can be on stage due to the low number of attendees these days," he added.

"These days, I cannot take the risk of performing the play because I think a child or an adult might take this virus back home and get infected," he noted.

"I still believe the health of people especially children is much more important than any theater performance," he added.

"Tristano Dies" at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Italian writer Antonio Tabucchi's novel "Tristano Dies: A Life" has appeared at Iranian bookstores.

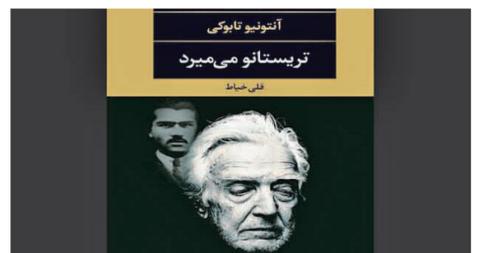
The book has been translated by Qoli Khayyat and published by the Negah publishing company in Tehran.

The story is set during a sultry August at the very end of the twentieth century while Tristano is dying. A hero of the Italian Resistance, Tristano has called a writer to his bedside to listen to his life story, though, really, "you don't tell a life...you live a life, and while you're living it,

it's already lost, has slipped away."

Originally published in 2004, "Tristano Dies" is a vibrant consideration of love, war, devotion, betrayal and the instability of the past, of storytelling and what it means to be a hero.

Tabucchi was an academic who taught Portuguese language and literature at the University of Siena, Italy. Deeply in love with Portugal, he was an expert, critic and translator of the works of Fernando Pessoa from whom he drew the conceptions of saudade, of fiction and of the heteronyms.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Italian writer Antonio Tabucchi's novel "Tristano Dies: A Life".