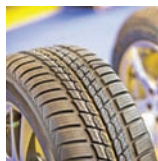




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# UN deems Gen. Soleimani assassination a 'violation of UN Charter'

See page 3



UN human rights investigator Agnes Callamard

## Capital market, a chance for mining sector to bloom

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** – Being among the world's top mineral-rich countries, Iran has set a new target for further development of its mining sector as the country's economy is moving away from oil toward becoming oil-independent.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries in the world in which 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world's largest deposits of copper, zinc, and iron; so there are numerous large, medium and small-

sized mines across the country that are being operated by the government or the private sector.

Recently, however, due to the obstacles created by the U.S sanctions, many of the small and medium-sized mines which are mainly owned by the private sector have been facing serious problems regarding the overhaul of their machinery and equipment and even exports of their products, so that several small mines have been forced to reduce their production or even completely shut down. **→4**

## COVID-19 rings alarm bells in Iran as daily deaths surge to 200

**TEHRAN** – The number of daily COVID-19 mortalities in the country hit a new record high of 200 on Tuesday and the total number of deaths reached 11,931, as officials warn of an alarming situation in the days ahead.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki expressed his deep concern about the surge in new cases and deaths and said

"Unfortunately, many people did not pay attention to the instructions so that a new wave of illness affected us.

However, through the first wave, we were able to reach a great achievement by decreasing the mortalities to about 30, and we had planned to decline the deaths to less than 10." **→9**

## Centuries-old Yazd Jameh Mosque back to former glory

**TEHRAN** – The 12th-century Jameh Mosque of Yazd (Masjid-e Jameh) has undergone a new round of restoration, a local tourism official has said.

The tiling of the dome of the mosque, which has been more exposed to the erosive factors such as wind, rain, and sun, needs some rehabilitation works, ISNA quoted Majid Olumi as saying on Tuesday.

The restoration project aims at reviving, preserving, protecting, and strengthening the historical structure, he added.

The terms "Jameh Mosque" or "Masjed-e Jameh" or "Friday Mosque" is used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran does it designate this purpose. **→8**



## ARTICLE

Salman Parviz  
Journalist

## India-China standoff enters 9th week

As the dispute over the shared border between India and China, two nuclear-armed nations, enters its ninth week, the region remains tense. The high-altitude, rugged Ladakh region is now the epicenter of the border standoff. It is far removed from the lives and imagination of most Indians and Chinese residents; the region has now become the talk of their daily conversations and worries.

According to Reuters, China has begun pulling back troops from along its contested border with India, Indian government sources have said. The Chinese military was seen dismantling tents and structures on Monday at a location in the Galway Valley near the site of the latest clash, said India government sources, who declined to be identified as they are not authorized to speak to the media.

In response to whether China has moved equipment back to the Galway 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.

Indian and Chinese troops are now locked in a tense standoff at multiple locations along their disputed 3,488-km boundary on the Tibetan plateau. Various rounds of talks have failed to produce results.

New Delhi has banned Chinese apps after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in the high-altitude brawl in Galway Valley on June 15. The clash saw soldiers in brutal hand-to-hand fighting with clubs and sticks about 4,270 meters above sea level amid sub-zero temperatures. China has yet to confirm whether it suffered casualties.

India's decision to ban dozens of Chinese apps is a big setback for China's top tech firms trying to replicate their remarkable domestic success globally, as they are now stymied in what many consider the world's last great untapped digital market. **→7**

## "Glory of the Shia" on Musa al-Sadr published in Tehran

**TEHRAN** – "Glory of the Shia", a book containing interviews with a number of close followers of the Lebanese-Iranian philosopher and Shia religious leader Musa al-Sadr has been published in Tehran.

Iranian scholars Mohsen Kamalian and Ali-Akbar Ranjbar Kermani have compiled the interviews for the book published by the Raazani publishing house.

Among the personalities are Husayn Al-Musawi, a Lebanese who founded the now-dissolved Islamic Amal in 1982, and Naim Qassem, a Shia Lebanese cleric and politician, who was the second-in-command of Hezbollah.

Zakaria Hamza, Abulfazl Al-Musawi and Yusuf Husayn are also among the interviewees.

The key role Al-Sadr played in awakening the Shias in the region is the main topic

discussed with the personalities in the book.

The revival of the Islamic movement and Lebanese resistance has also been scrutinized.

The book also studies Al-Sadr's stances on various issues in West Asia, the Lebanese civil war and the crisis in southern Lebanon.

Al-Sadr's relations with the 1979 Islamic Revolution have been reviewed.

Musa al-Sadr, also known as Imam Musa Sadr, disappeared with two aides in August 1978 on his way to attend ceremonies commemorating Libya's Muammar Gaddafi's ascent to power.

When he was not seen in Tripoli, it was said he had left for Italy. While his fate is not known, it was widely suspected that he was kidnapped at the behest of Gaddafi, who may have viewed him as a religious rival.

## Georgia governor calls up National Guard, declares state of emergency due to violence

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp declared a state of emergency following an uptick in shootings over the July Fourth weekend that injured 31 people and killed five after weeks of violent crime and property destruction in Atlanta.

The move authorizes the activation of 1,000 National Guard troops to "protect state property and patrol our streets".

"Peaceful protests were hijacked by criminals with a dangerous, destructive agenda. Now, innocent Georgians are being targeted, shot, and left for dead," Kemp, a Republican, said in a statement. "This lawlessness must be stopped and order restored in our capital city. I have declared a State of Emergency and called up the Georgia Guard because the safety of our citizens comes first, Fox News reported.

"This measure will allow troops to protect state property and dispatch state law

enforcement officers to patrol our streets. Enough with the tough talk," he added. "We must protect the lives and livelihoods of all Georgians."

The Guardsmen will be assigned to protect state buildings, including the Capitol, the governor's mansion, and the headquarters for the Department of Public Safety. Their presence will free police officers to increase patrols on roadways and in communities, especially in Atlanta, Kemp said.

Among those killed over the holiday weekend was an 8-year-old girl. Secorrea Turner was riding in a car Saturday night in Atlanta when at least two people opened fire on the vehicle. The shooting happened near the Wendy's fast-food restaurant where Rayshard Brooks was killed by a police officer last month, prompting weeks of protests and clashes between demonstrators and police. **→10**

## Hamas, Hezbollah declare united front against Israeli land grab bid

The Palestinian and Lebanese resistance movements, Hamas and Hezbollah, have censured Israel's plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank as an act of "aggression against the Palestinian people," calling for a united front against the U.S.-backed land grab bid.

In a letter to Secretary General of Hezbollah Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on Monday, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of Hamas, highlighted the "grave dangers" posed by Israel to the Palestinian cause, according to

a statement by the Lebanese resistance group.

"The Palestinian people are capable of confronting this plan," the statement said, calling on Arab and Muslim nations and "free people of the world to quickly move to stop the occupation's continuous aggression against the Palestinian people."

According to Lebanon's al-Manar news website, the letter was handed by Hamas' representative in Lebanon Ahmad Abdul Hadi and an accompanying delegation to Head of Hezbollah's Palestinian File Hassan Hoballah.

The two sides reiterated their unified stance against the Israeli plot.

Hoballah reiterated Hezbollah's support for the Palestinian struggles against Israel's occupation, stressing that all the conspiracies against the Palestinian cause would be thwarted.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had set July 1 as the date for starting the annexation plan's implementation, but the move faced delays amid internal rifts and as Tel Aviv awaited a green light from Washington. **→10**



© ISNA / Hadi Zand

## Through research sheds new light on 21 ancient sites across central Iranian plateau

An aerial photo shows the ruins of a millennia-old human settlement, which along with 20 others, has recently been identified during what is called the 'most extensive' systematic field research so far conducted in the central Iranian plateau, July 6, 2020.

The study suggests the earliest settlement in the region dates from the New Stone Age (or the Neolithic era, approximately characterized by the adoption of agriculture) and the latest one dates back to the Safavid epoch (1501-1736)

## U.S. has admitted military and political failures in Syria: Russian academic

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — An associate professor in the Department of Comparative Politics at RUDN University believes that the United States has admitted its military and political failure in Syria.

"The United States recognizes its military and political failure in Syria," Vladimir Ivanov tells the Tehran Times.

Ivanov says Washington's main goal of overthrowing the Assad government has not been realized.

However, the scholar says, Russia, unlike many other foreign powers, "has managed to maintain good (or at least normal) relations with all participants in major regional conflicts."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Turkey accuses Russia of increasing its military intervention in Libya. This accusation was made while Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar visited the Libyan capital, Tripoli. What is your comment?

A: Recently, the Libyan national army has destroyed Turkish military equipment stationed at a strategically important airbase al-Vatya.

The day before, it became known about Ankara's intention to participate in the Libyan conflict openly. Turkey sides with the Government of National Accord and comes into conflict with France over Libya.

Turkey is outraged by the attack on the al-Vatya airbase in Libya, which the Ankara-backed Government of National Accord led by Faiz Saraj recaptured from the Libyan national army of Marshal Khalifa Haftar. **→7**



## Nuclear deal won't survive if U.S. insists on arms embargo: ambassador

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — The 2015 nuclear agreement will have no chance to survive if the United States insists on extending the arms embargo on Iran, Tehran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali has said.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2231 clarifies that arms sanctions against Iran are lifted in October, but the U.S. announced they would not comply with this resolution, Jalali said, according to Tass.

They have recently initiated a meeting of the UN Security Council with the goal of creating the prerequisites for the extension of arms embargo on Iran, he added.



The ambassador also expressed gratitude to Russia for opposing the IAEA resolution crafted by the UK, France, and Germany which demands Iran to provide access to two sites with the alleged storage of undeclared nuclear material.

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

U.S. President Donald Trump administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if its attempts to

extend the arms embargo fail.

Russia warned last week that the extension of arms embargo will jeopardize efforts to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

"The United States' push was not only unjustified but also counterproductive in terms of the prospects of preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on July 2.

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

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

## Lieberman urges Netanyahu to 'shut up' official claiming Natanz 'bomb attack'

**(Press TV)** — Israel's former minister of military affairs, who has now turned into an opposition figure, says Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should gag an unnamed official leaking to the press Tel Aviv's alleged role in a recent incident at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.



In an interview with the Israeli Army Radio on Monday, Avigdor Lieberman reacted to remarks by an unnamed "Middle Eastern intelligence officer," who claimed in an interview with The New York Times that Israel had planted a powerful bomb at the Natanz complex in central Iran last week.

Without calling out Mossad chief Yossi Cohen by name, Lieberman blamed the leakage on the intelligence official who is seeking to succeed Netanyahu as the head of the right-wing Likud party.

"An intelligence official says that Israel is responsible for an explosion in Iran on Thursday. The country's entire security echelon knows who it is," Lieberman said.

"I would expect the prime minister to keep that senior intelligence official's mouth shut, particularly as he has started his Likud primary election campaign... It just cannot be that that official not only explains what we did, but also what we didn't do," he added.

On Thursday, Iran said an incident affected a shed under construction at the Natanz complex, but it caused no casualties and failed to stop enrichment work at the facility.

Iran has not officially declared whether it was an accident or an act of sabotage, but the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said the main cause has been determined and will be announced at an appropriate time.

Some Israeli officials were asked about the possibility of the regime's involvement in the attack on the facility, but they have neither confirmed nor denied involvement.

The regime often practices a policy of deliberate ambiguity when it is involved in acts of sabotage in sovereign lands.

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

"Not every event that happens in Iran is necessarily related to us," Israeli minister of military affairs Benny Gantz said, without denying involvement in the Natanz incident.

Commenting on the extent of the damage days later, Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said, "There were advanced equipment and precision measurement devices at this site that were either destroyed or damaged."

He said the incident had caused "significant financial damage," adding it could "slow down the development and expansion of advanced centrifuges."

The Iranian official added that a new and more advanced shed would be built at the Natanz nuclear facility to replace the one damaged in the incident.

Israel has in the past worked to disrupt Iran's peaceful nuclear program through the assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists.

It has also conducted cyberattacks on Iranian nuclear sites. In 2010, Stuxnet, a cyber weapon widely believed to be made by the U.S. and Israel, hit the Natanz plant, in the first publicly known example of a virus being used to attack industrial machinery.

Tehran later developed an indigenous firewall securing its sensitive industrial facilities against Stuxnet.

# Iranian govt. says has not signed any agreement to lease land or port to China

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that Iran has not signed an agreement to lease land or port to China, noting there is nothing secretive in the 25-year cooperation plan with China.

"There is nothing secretive in this respect. It was discussed in latest visit by Foreign Minister [Mohammad Javad Zarif] to China and was also discussed in a meeting between Leader of the Islamic Revolution [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei] with President of China [Xi Jinping]. When any agreement is reached, it will be announced," Rabiei said during a press conference.

He also said, "Division into West and East has no status in our foreign policy. The Islamic Republic does not limit itself and is ready to cooperate with all countries. Our only limitations are the Zionist regime and those who impose sanctions."

Zarif said on Sunday that there is no "hidden issue" in the long-term comprehensive partnership agreement between Iran and China.

"The agreement was discussed in the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Leader of the Islamic Revolution. We announced the issue to the people. In last year's visit, I took this agreement to China and it was announced. When China responded to our draft, we announced it and when China accepted negotiation with us, the issue was



announced," Zarif told an open session of the parliament.

The foreign minister said the details will be announced when the agreement is "finalized".

He added, "There is transparency in our behavior, however, the truth is that power in the world is shifting (to the East) and we should know the realities of the international situation and take action in the post-West world."

Zarif said the revival of the Silk Road is included in the agreement.

Rabiei said on June 23 that Iran and China have drafted a 25-year plan for comprehensive cooperation which proves failure of the plots to isolate the Islamic Republic.

"This plan proves failure of the United States' policies to isolate Iran, sever Iran's relations with the international community and also to harm Iran's will to expand relations with other countries," Rabiei said during a press conference.

He said that the 25-year plan is based on a win-win approach which "heralds long

term cooperation".

"Recognizing cultural commonalities, encouraging multilateralism, supporting equal rights of the nations and insisting on domestic development are parts of this plan," the government spokesman explained.

In a meeting on June 21, the cabinet of ministers approved the final draft of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan between Iran and China.

Rouhani said the strategic partnership between the two countries is based on a win-win approach.

"This cooperation is a ground for Iran and China's participation in basic projects and development of infrastructure, including the large 'Belt and Road' initiative, and an opportunity to attract investment in various economic fields, including industry, tourism, information technology and communication," the presidential website quoted Rouhani as saying.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on June 29 that the comprehensive cooperation plan has not been finalized yet.

However, Mousavi said, the content of the "agreement will be published once it is finalized."

Mousavi dismissed claims of any new negotiation about the cooperation plan.

He said, "This document is in line with the interests of the two countries and it is honorable."

## Next U.S. administration must compensate for harms inflicted on Iran: Zarif

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that the next U.S. administration must compensate for the harms Washington has inflicted on Iran.

"It is not important for us who will win the upcoming election in the U.S., but it is important for us to see Washington rectify its approach towards Tehran," Press TV quoted Zarif as saying in a virtual address to the annual Mediterranean Dialogues 2020 conference hosted by Italy.

The chief diplomat noted that anyone who will take office in the White House must take steps to compensate harms and losses inflicted on Iran.

Zarif also pointed to the U.S. economic terrorism, saying those who claim that Iran is not subject to medical sanctions should know that it is not possible for the country to buy medicine because banks refuse to do transactions with Iran.

The foreign minister also attached great importance to diplomacy, saying it is the most effective tool to resolve

international issues.

The foreign minister said the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, was a great diplomatic achievement which was reached following serious and long-term negotiations.

■ **'U.S. weapon sale is a factor of instability in the world'**

Zarif also faulted the U.S. weapon sale as a main factor that has intensified instability in the world.

The weapons the U.S. sells only to Saudi Arabia each year is three times the total Iranian defense budget, the minister stated.

Zarif who Iran's chief negotiator in nuclear talks with the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) said Tehran signed the JCPOA with open eyes it triggered the deal's dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) at the right time.

Zarif added that five years have passed since the



conclusion of the JCPOA and Iran has not yet reaped the economic benefits of the deal due to the acts of sabotage by certain sides and Europeans' lack of commitment to their obligations.

## Hamas praises Ayatollah Khamenei's message

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Ismail Rezvan, a leader of the Hamas resistance movement, has praised Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's message to Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh.

Rezvan told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday that Iran has always been a supporter of resistance in Palestine.

He noted that Ayatollah Khamenei has always supported the Palestinian cause.

"Iran's position on the issue of Palestine shows the country's support for the resistance movement which shows that we are not alone in confronting a Zionist institute and a project of the United States," the Hamas official said.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated in his letter 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 movement'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 siver 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.

## Russia criticizes U.S. State Department tweet about arms restrictions on Iran



**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, on Tuesday criticized a tweet by the U.S. State Department about arms restrictions on Iran.

The U.S. State Department tweeted on Monday, "The UN has maintained arms restrictions on Iran for 13 years. The resolution the U.S. has circulated would extend restrictions on Iran indefinitely.

The restrictions should not be removed until Iran demonstrates a credible change in its behavior."

In response, Ulyanov tweeted, "Would it entail a more responsible and less destabilising US policy of arms supplies to the Middle East amounting to astronomical figures?"

The U.S. has presented a draft resolution to the UN Security Council seeking indefinite arms embargo against Iran in violation of Resolution 2231. The move was shunned by

even Washington's European allies in the last week session of the UN council.

According to Resolution 2231, which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and great powers, arms sanctions on Iran ends in October.

Washington is taking such illegal moves despite the fact that Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the multilateral nuclear agreement and slapped the heaviest sanctions in history against Iran.

## China terms JCPOA as pillar of peace in West Asia

**POLITICAL d e s k** TEHRAN — Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian has said the Iran nuclear agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is an important pillar for the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and peace and stability in West Asia.

In a press conference on Monday, Lijian said the JCPOA is an important outcome of multilateral diplomacy endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution.

He described the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and its maximum pressure on Iran as "the root cause for the tension in the current Iranian nuclear situation", saying the accord is an important part of the international order based on international law.

He said China hopes that all parties concerned can adopt an overall and long-term perspective, make efforts to meet each other halfway, resolve differences on the implementation of the JCPOA through dialogue and consultation within the framework of the JCPOA Joint Commission, restore the balance of rights and obligations under the JCPOA, and do their best

to safeguard and implement the JCPOA.

"China will maintain close communication with relevant parties, facilitate peace, promote talks and continue working for the political and diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue, he added.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. have been high since U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal in May 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on all major industries in Iran, including oil and petrochemicals exports.

The Trump administration's sanctions were imposed under the banner of a "maximum pressure" policy against Iran.

Tehran says the U.S. "maximum pressure" has produced "maximum resistance" from Iran.

The U.S. government has also made empty calls for talks, but Iran has made it clear that negotiation is always possible within existing framework of the nuclear deal and only if the U.S. returns to the deal and honors its commitments.

Asked about a 25-year accord between Iran and China, spokesman Lijian said Beijing and Tehran enjoy traditional friendship and the two sides have been in communication on



the development of bilateral relations.

"We stand ready to work with Iran to steadily advance practical cooperation," he added.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that the 25-year partnership agreement is in line with reviving the Silk Road now called "One Belt-One Road".



# Rouhani advisor calls Iran-China agreement ‘a sign of strength’

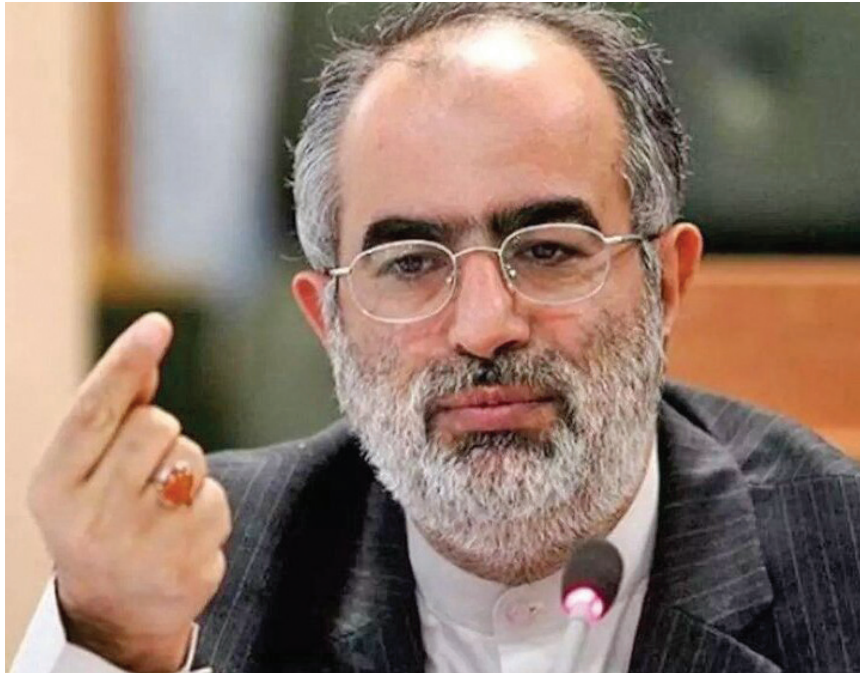
**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — An adviser to President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday defended the draft agreement for long-term strategic partnership between Iran and China, suggesting reaching a long-term agreement with another country “is not a sign of weakness” rather “a sign of strength”.

“Having a plan for 25-year cooperation with another country is not a sign of weakness. The weakness is that our long-term cooperation agreements be limited to one country. Having 25-year cooperation agreements with tens of other important countries is a sign of strength and ensures our stability” Hesameddin Ashena tweeted on Tuesday morning.

The cabinet of Hassan Rouhani approved the draft of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan between Iran and China on June 21 and tasked Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif with negotiating with China over the plan in order to finalize it.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on June 23 that Iran and China have drafted the 25-year plan for comprehensive partnership and it is based on a win-win approach which “heralds long term cooperation”.

“Recognizing cultural commonalities,



encouraging multilateralism, supporting equal rights of the nations and insisting on domestic development are parts of this

plan,” Rabiei added.

In a cabinet meeting on June 21, Rouhani elaborated on the strategic partnership

between Iran and China saying that the agreement is a positive step towards increasing the importance of global energy and sustainable development of oil and gas resources, as well as renewable energy and joint investment in free zones.

“This cooperation is a ground for Iran and China’s participation in basic projects and development of infrastructure, including the large ‘Belt and Road’ initiative, and an opportunity to attract investment in various economic fields, including industry, tourism, information technology and communication,” the presidential website quoted Rouhani as saying.

Zarif has said the details of the 25-year agreement will be announced to the public once the agreement is finalized.

Addressing an open session of the Parliament on Sunday, Zarif said: “The agreement was discussed in the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Leader of the Islamic Revolution [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei]. We announced the issue to the people. In last year’s visit, I took this agreement to China and it was announced. When China responded to our draft, we announced it and when China accepted negotiation with us, the issue was announced”.

## Ambassador calls on UN chief to pursue case of abducted Iranian diplomats

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, on Monday called on United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres to help find four Iranian diplomats who were kidnapped in Lebanon in 1982.

On July 4, 1982, Ahmad Motavasselian, Mohsen Mousavi and Taqi Rastgar-Moqaddam, three diplomats of the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon, along with Kazem Akhavan, IRNA’s photojournalist were held captive by the Lebanese Phalange forces on their way to work on the route of Tripoli-Beirut.

In a letter on the 38th anniversary of the abduction, Takht-Ravanchi wrote a letter to Guterres saying based on reports the diplomats were handed over to the Zionist regime forces immediately after they were kidnapped near Beirut in an area which was occupied by Israel.

Further evidence shows that they have been held in Israeli prisons and are still alive, Takht-Ravanchi said, according to IRNA.

He highlighted the significance of the humanitarian issue, and referred to Iran’s suggestion to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with regard to forming a fact-finding committee to probe into the issue.



The Iranian envoy also urged the UN chief to support the committee’s activities.

Referring to the fact that kidnapping Iranian diplomats is a blatant violation of international law, Takht-Ravanchi underscored the UN’s responsibility to address the issue.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the ambassador pointed to the Lebanese government’s cooperation, reminding that Lebanon had officially called on the UN secretary general to shed light on the fate of the kidnapped diplomats.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday issued a statement saying evidence suggests that the diplomats kidnapped in Lebanon were handed over to the forces of the Zionist regime of Israel and then taken to the occupied territories and that they are now being held in the prisons of this regime.

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

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

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

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

## Iran raps assassination of Iraqi expert Hisham al-Hashemi

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Iran’s Embassy in Baghdad condemns the assassination of leading Iraqi researcher Hisham al-Hashimi.

In a statement on Monday evening, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Embassy in Iraq condemned as a “criminal action” the assassination of al-Hashimi, who was fatally shot outside his house in Baghdad on Monday.

“We condemn the criminal action of assassination of expert of Iraq’s security is-

suess, Hisham al-Hashimi, and other elites of that country,” the Iranian Embassy said, Al Mayadeen reported.

The leading Iraqi expert on Daesh (ISIL or ISIS) and other armed groups was shot dead in Baghdad on Monday after receiving threats from militias, security and interior officials said.

Al-Hashemi, 47, was shot near his home in the Zeyouneh area of Baghdad and pro-

nounced dead at a hospital.

The researcher was among the world’s leading experts on Daesh, providing details of its inner workings to the international media and advising the Iraqi government on its response.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi blamed Hashimi’s killing on armed groups “outside of the law,” vowing in a statement to “hunt” and prosecute them.



## Daily Beast exposes fake personas masquerading as anti-Iran online writers



**TEHRAN (Press TV)** — An American publication has revealed the identity of a network of dozens of fake writers and analysts spreading propaganda against Iran.

In a report on Monday, The Daily Beast identified the network of at least 19 fake personas that had spent the past year placing more than 90 opinion pieces in 46 different outlets like the Washington Examiner, Newsmax, RealClear Markets, American Thinker, and The National Interest.

The personas in the network used a mixture of stolen or AI-generated avatars and fake biographies to make them seem more plausible.

One of these fake identities is Rafael Badani, who has introduced himself as a “geopolitical risk consultant and interactive simulation designer” and an “international relations senior analyst” for the Department of Labor.

He stole his profile photos from the blog of an unwitting San Diego startup founder. His LinkedIn profile, which described him as a graduate of George Washington and Georgetown, is equally fictitious, according to the report.

As a Newsmax “Insider” columnist, Badani produced articles that heaped praise on the United Arab Emirates and advocated a tougher approach to Qatar, Turkey, and Iran.

Following the report, the Washington Examiner removed its article written by “Badani,” leaving only an editor’s note, “This op-ed has been removed after an investigation into its provenance and authorship.”

Also on Monday, Twitter suspended Badani’s account along with 15 others after The Daily Beast shared the results of its investigation into the network for violating the company’s “policies on platform manipulation and spam.”

“Using technology, human manipulation, and partnerships with researchers and other independent organizations studying these issues, we work to identify platform manipulation on our service and take action,” a Twitter spokesperson told The Daily Beast in a statement.

“As is standard, if we have reasonable evidence to attribute any activity to a state-backed information operation, we’ll disclose them—following thorough investigation—to our public archive,” it added.

The network has also “placed articles critical of Qatar and supportive of tougher sanctions on Iran in conservative North American outlets like Human Events and The Post Millennial, founded by conservative writer Andy Ngo, as well as Israeli and Middle Eastern newspapers like The Jerusalem Post and al-Arabiya, and Asian newspapers like the South China Morning Post.”

“The personas identified by The Daily Beast were generally contributors to two linked sites, The Arab Eye and Persia Now; had Twitter accounts created in March or April 2020; presented themselves as political consultants and freelance journalists mostly based in European capitals; lied about their academic or professional credentials in phony LinkedIn accounts; used fake or stolen avatars manipulated to defeat reverse image searches; and linked to or amplified each others’ work,” said the report.

Lin Nguyen is another fake identity who introduced herself as an “analyst in South Asian regional security,” and, along with another fake identity, Cindy Sheen, wrote

mostly on East Asian issues.

However, said the report, the network soon grew and expanded its focus towards the Middle East.

In February, two websites, The Arab Eye and Persia Now, were registered on the same day and began to acquire a host of contributors.

The Arab Eye describes itself, ironically enough, as a bulwark against “Fake News” and biased narrative” with a mission that “now more than ever it is crucial to hear opinions from the other side of the aisle on matters pertaining to the Middle East,” report added.

Persia Now lists a non-existent London mailing address and an unanswered phone number on its contact form. The apparent editors of the outlets, Sharif O’Neill and Taimur Hall, have virtually no online footprints or records in journalism.

In a similar report last year, American news outlet The Intercept revealed the fake identity of an anti-Iran columnist named Heshmat Alavi, who was an imaginary character spawned by the notorious terror group the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO).

The Intercept made the explosive discovery after reaching out to Hassan Heyrani, a high-ranking defector from the U.S.-backed terrorist cult.

In a blog post published after The Intercept article, the Alavi account admitted for the first time that there was no real Heshmat Alavi, claiming instead to be using a pseudonym.

Following The Intercept’s revelation last year, publications like Forbes, the Daily Caller, and The Diplomat that had published articles by Alavi either removed or updated them to reflect his nonexistence as a person.

U.S. left wing news media called the name “fake,” arguing that American media never check names out.

In an April report, The Intercept said that social media companies were under increasing criticism for getting misinformation out to the public, as in Alavi’s case.

## Intelligence minister, air force commanders attend parliamentary committee on Natanz incident

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi attended and military commanders from the Army air defense unit attended a session of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Tuesday afternoon over the incident in the Natanz nuclear facility.

“In continuation of its meeting for investigating the Natanz incident, in today’s afternoon a session was held with the presence of Hojjatolislam Seyyed Mahmoud Alavi and his deputies, senior commanders of the Army air defense unit and senior officials of the Law Enforcement Forces,” committee spokesman Abolfazl Amoui said.

He said so far considerable conclusions have been made about the explosion at Natanz but more investigations are still going on.

The MP said the public will be notified about the incident when the studies are complete.

## UN investigator deems Soleimani assassination a ‘violation of UN Charter’

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — A UN human rights investigator said on Monday that the U.S. assassination of Iran’s top general Qassem Soleimani represented a “violation of the UN Charter”.

The United States has failed to provide sufficient evidence of an ongoing or imminent attack against its interests to justify the strike on Soleimani’s convoy as it left Baghdad airport, said Agnes Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

Callamard wrote in a report that the attack violated the UN Charter, calling for accountability for targeted killings by armed drones and for greater regulation of the weapons.

“The world is at a critical time, and possible tipping point, when it comes to the use of drones. ... The Security Council is missing in action; the international community, willingly or not, stands largely silent,” she told Reuters.

Callamard is due on Thursday to present her findings to the Human Rights Council, giving member states a chance to debate what action to pursue. The United States is not a member of the forum, having quit two years ago.

On January 3, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered strikes that killed General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), as well as eight other people.

“Major General Soleimani was in charge of Iran military strategy, and actions, in Syria and Iraq. But absent an actual imminent threat to life, the course of action taken by the U.S. was unlawful,” Callamard wrote in the report.

The January 3 drone strike was the first known incident in which a nation invoked self-defense as a justification for an attack against a state actor in the territory of a third country, Callamard added.

In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC attacked the U.S. airbase of Ain al-Assad in Anbar province in western Iraq as part of its promised “tough revenge” for the U.S. attack.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said Trump was misled to believe his country would get away with the assassination of General Soleimani.

Trump believed that the assassination would augment U.S. security but it worked the other way around, Zarif said in an interview with NBC News’ Richard Engel in Munich back in February.

Meanwhile, Iran has issued an arrest warrant for U.S. President Donald Trump and 35 others over Soleimani’s killing and has asked Interpol for help, Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr said on June 29.

## Tehran warns Israel against crossing red lines

Tehran warns norm-breaking narrative by Israel, even for publicity purposes, is considered violation of redlines

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Tehran has warned Israel that pushing for a norm-breaking narrative with regard to any attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities equals crossing red lines, even if it’s done merely for propaganda purposes.

“The Israeli regime should be aware that creation of norm-breaking narrative on any attack against our nuclear facilities, even if it’s only propaganda, is considered as stepping in the path of violating redlines of global peace and security,” government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday, Mehr reported.

He was pointing to a recent incident in the Natanz nuclear facility, which 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 cyberattacks to undermine Iran’s nuclear program, but that has been ruled out as a cause in this case.

Rabiei said nothing can stop Iran’s nuclear program. “This incident has not had any effect on the process of uranium enrichment, and the Natanz facilities are active as before; Iran’s nuclear activities are peaceful and despite hostilities of enemies, it cannot be stopped,” he stated.

“After the incident, some media outlets tried to create a powerful image for the Israeli regime and attributed the incident to it while officials of the usurper regime have refused to accept responsibility,” the government spokesman added.

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

Meanwhile, 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.



## Tax, main source of income in absence of oil: fin. min.

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand said on Tuesday that the government considers tax as the main source of income for managing the country's economy in the absence of oil revenues, the ministry's news portal Shada reported.

"Currently, the most important method of financing for the country's economic management is taxing, and this has placed a huge burden on the tax administration," Dejjpasand said in a statement on the occasion of national tax day.



Taxes are the safest, healthiest and the most sustainable source of income for the government, and with proper planning these revenues can have a positive impact on the country's sustainable development, the official said.

Strengthening the economy against external shocks and threats, eliminating social inequalities, equitable distribution of wealth in society and increasing welfare, prosperity and security were also mentioned by Dejjpasand as the benefits of tax incomes.

As the oil sale accounts for just seven percent of the country's income in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), the revenues gained from elimination of hidden energy subsidies as well as increased tax incomes will replace oil revenues, according to Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad Bagher Nobakht.

"This does not mean a rise in tax income; but by setting new tax bases and eliminating unnecessary exemptions at a time of economic warfare, more tax revenues will be provided," the official had said in late November 2019.

## Prices of 89 basic commodity items rise during pandemic

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**— The director general of Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's Economic Affairs and Commercial Policies Office said the prices of 89 basic commodity items increased during the coronavirus outbreak. ISNA reported.

According to Mohammad-Reza Kalami, of the mentioned figure, the prices of 36 items increased by less than five percent and the rise for the other 53 items was reported to be over five percent.



Like many other countries around the world, the outbreak of coronavirus had a negative impact on almost all of Iran's economic sectors as well.

However, the government has been taking serious measures for reducing such impacts and consequently the economy is gaining momentum as many borders are getting open again and economic activity is getting back to normal.

In late June, The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on June 20, which marks the end of the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad, stood at 27.8 percent.

The inflation rate fell two percent in the mentioned time span from the twelve-month period ended on the last day of the second month.

## Trade between Iran, U.S. falls by half in 5 months on year

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of trade between Iran and the U.S. has dropped 51 percent during the first five months of 2020, compared to the same period of time in the past year, Eghtesad Online news website reported.

As reported, Iran-U.S. trade stood at \$20 million during the five-month period of this year.

Iran's imports from the United States stood at \$17.1 million during the same period.



The Iran-U.S. trade amounted to \$74.5 million in 2019 and registered a 84.97-percent decline compared to the year before.

In 2018, trade between the two countries increased by 155 percent from 2017. However, after the re-imposition of the U.S. economic and energy sanctions on Iran at the end of 2018, the bilateral trade has fallen drastically.

While the U.S. has re-imposed sanctions on the Iranian economy, the Islamic Republic has been adopting a number of strategies to nullify the sanctions, among them strengthening domestic production to reach more and more self-reliance, and boosting non-oil exports, especially to the neighboring countries, are two major ones.

The previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020) was named the year of "Pickup in Production" and the current year is the year of "Surge in Production", highlighting the significance of production status in the country.

Meanwhile, the country has made doubling non-oil exports to its neighbors atop agenda.

# Capital market, a chance for mining sector to bloom

**1→** Among the major issues that the mining sector is currently facing, financial problems and resource limitations are the most severe ones.

In this regard, the government has urged the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry to take necessary measures for supporting such mines to get back on their feet and start operating again.

The main solution that has been offered for the mining sector is for mines to enter the capital market and offer their shares to raise fund for developing projects and resuming their operations.

To learn more about this, the Tehran Times interviewed Bahram Shakouri, the chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s Mines and Mining Industry's Committee.

What follows is the gist of the discussion.

### ■ The reviving program

Asked about the situation of small and medium-sized mines in the country and the new proposal for listing such mines on the stock market, Shakouri said: "Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute a big part of every nation's productive sector and obviously they play a very significant role in Iran's economic growth and development as well."

In the mining sector, 98.3 percent of the country's mines are operated by SMEs, none of which are currently listed on the stock market, he added.

Since many of such SMEs have been forced to shut down in the current economic situation, the government felt the need for a comprehensive program to revive



such mines, so the Industry Ministry was put in charge of the implementation of the project for reviving idle mines.

Later on, the program kicked off and a working group comprised of representatives from Iran Mine House, ICCIMA Mines and Mining Industry Committee, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) and Iran Minerals Production and Supply Company

(IMPSC) was established.

"In this program, idle mines are identified in coordination with the related bodies in various provinces and some sort of diagnostic procedure is carried out for them in order to identify the reasons for their situation."

### ■ The main issue and the solution

According to Shakouri, the reasons are mainly categorized into five groups including financial problems, technical problems, infrastructure issues, problems related to licenses and permit issuance, and finally

the lack of enough reservoir.

One of the major issues that over 50 percent of the mentioned mines were facing was financial issues, therefore the capital market could be a great opportunity for such SMEs to attract investment for financing their projects, the official said.

Now, nearly two months after President Hassan Rouhani's announcement regarding the need for small mines to enter the stock market, the working group has also been tasked to explore the capital market's capacities for the mining sector and to start the process for small mines joining this market.

"We can direct the great resources that are flowing into the capital market toward the mining sector in order to develop this area and push it further toward productivity," Shakouri said.

According to the official, a big part of the public capital which has been attracted into the stock market is practically idle and is not used for promoting productivity, so by redirecting it toward more productive sectors like the mining industry it could play a significant role in the country's economic growth.

In this regard, the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) and the government should offer special programs and support packages for SMEs in the mining sector to make them able to enter the capital market, he stressed.

"This plan is a very good one which can lead to more productivity, more job creation, and of course more revenues for the country if it is implemented correctly."

## 'Transparency necessary for stock market's companies receiving tax incentives'

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Head of the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) Omid-Ali Parsa said that the tax incentives, which are due to be offered to the companies newly accepted to the stock market, are for those firms which have transparent performance and financial statements.

In late June, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei agreed to the said program which was offered by the government to encourage companies to join the capital market. Later President Hassan Rouhani urged the Economy Ministry to take the necessary measures following the leader's decision.

And, on Saturday, Omid-Ali Parsa instructed the INTA's subsidiary offices to implement the program for offering special tax exemptions and incentives to the companies that are accepted to the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

As reported, although many private companies are eager to enter the capital market; because of some rumors or misconceptions, some of them are worried that if they enter the stock market their tax records of previous years would be scrutinized.

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

Although, as INTA head urged on Tuesday, transparency is a prerequisite for allocating tax exemptions to those companies.

Parsa said, "If the performance and financial statements of the companies lack



*Head of Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) Omid-Ali Parsa* required transparency, they will not be exempted from investigation of their tax records prior to the previous Iranian year."

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

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

The recent developments of this market have encouraged the government to focus more on this sector as a potential source of capital for offsetting oil revenue shortages.

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

## Iraqi prime minister orders resumption of trade with Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has ordered trade exchanges with Iran to be resumed in Mandali and Shalamchah border markets, Head of Iraq's Border Ports Authority Omar Al-Waeli announced.

Al-Waeli added that accordingly, 250 shipments from Iran will enter Iraq daily for two days a week through Shalamchah border in Basra and Mandali in Diyala province, IRNA reported.

Preventive measures against coronavirus should be taken in health departments of the two provinces to ensure safety of workers and incoming goods, he said.

The official reiterated that only goods exchanges are permissible and passengers will never be allowed to enter the border crossings.

In mid-June, the Iraqi government agreed to reopen Zarbatiyeh (Mehran) border crossing to import goods from Iran for two days a week, and trade is currently underway at that border crossing.

Iraq's Border Ports Authority closed border crossings with Iran and its neighbors in mid-March to prevent the outbreak of the coronavirus.

During a meeting between Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi and Manhal Aziz Al-Khabbaz, Iraq's new minister of industry and minerals, in Baghdad on June 24, the two sides discussed expansion of trade and industrial cooperation.

Masjedi congratulated the Iraqi official on his appointment as industry and minerals minister, expressing hope that industrial ties and cooperation between the two countries would expand under his leadership.

Further in the meeting, both officials urged expansion of ties in various areas including the auto industry, launching joint industrial



*Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi* parks, and other industrial and mining areas.

The officials also discussed holding the two countries' joint economic committee meeting and Iran's investment in manufacturing tractors, buses, and minibusses in Iraq.

The economic and political relations between Iran and Iraq have increased significantly in the past few years and the two neighbors are seeking ways to facilitate financial transactions and boost their trade ties.

The two countries have it on the agenda to increase the value of their bilateral trade to \$20 billion by 2021.

Last week, the two sides decided on the ways of implementing an agreement for using Iran's export revenues in Iraq for importing basic goods from the country.

According to the Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati, under the framework of the mentioned agreement, Iran will use its gas and electricity export revenues which amount at several billion dollars a year in addition to CBI resources in Iraq, for importing its required goods from the country.

## Tire production increases 24% in a quarter yr/yr

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of tire in Iran has risen 24 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, 67,734 tons of tires have been produced in the country during the first quarter.

Of the mentioned figure, 36,512 tons were the passenger car tires, which shows a 30-percent rise compared to the first quarter of the past year.

Some 5,476 tons of van tires were manufactured, indicating a ten-percent growth from the figure of the previous year's first quarter.

Also, 12,825 bus tires were manufactured, showing eight percent rise.

Manufacturing of the tires of agricultural machinery experienced a growth of 49 percent to stand at 5,754 tons.

Meanwhile, 1,513 tons of road building machinery tires were manufactured, with a 21-percent growth compared to the first quarter of the past year.

In terms of number, a 27-percent growth was also experienced in tire output during the first quarter of the year, as 10.525 million tires of different types were produced in the three-month period.

Having the annual production capacity of 426,000 tons of tire, Iran accounts for 41 percent of tire output in the West Asian region, according to the deputy director of



non-metal industries office of Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

Mohsen Safdari has said that 11 tire production units are active in the country creating jobs for 14,500 people.

He said 426,000 tons is the nominal capacity, while the real output is less than this figure as some units are working with 60-70 percent of their capacity.

"Iranian tire industry is dependent on foreign raw

materials by 40 percent, so we are self-reliant by 60 percent in this field", the official announced.

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of "Pickup in Production" for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of "Surge in Production" for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic's determination to achieve this goal.

To this end, the Iranian ministries besides the private sector have been outlining their programs for the surge in production.

Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has announced some seven main axes of the surge in production that are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

Developing technology and promoting knowledge-based industries, development of domestic production in line with the Leader's stresses on surge in production, managing imports and development of non-oil exports, improving the business environment, development of financing and investment and finally development of logistics were reported to be the seven major axes of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's works in the current year, which is named "Surge in Production" by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.



# Renewable power generation capacity exceeds 800MW

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Iran's nominal renewable power generation capacity has reached 825 megawatts (MW) at the end of the Q1 of the current Iranian calendar year (June 20), IRNA reported, citing data released by Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA).

The figure is expected to double as other projects with a total capacity of 821 MW are underway across the country, the data suggested.

According to the mentioned statistics, Iran has produced over 4.88 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity from renewable sources since the bid to shift focus from fossil fuels to greener energies started in mid-2009.

The renewable power plants have managed to save the country 1.386 billion cubic meters of fossil fuels, 1.08 billion liters of water and prevented the wasting of 455 million kilowatt-hours of electricity in the national grid.



Moreover, harnessing clean energy in the past 10 years has helped the country curb the emission of greenhouse gases by nearly

3.32 million tons.

With more than 300 sunny days throughout the year, Iran has huge potential to expand

solar energy infrastructure and attract foreign investments.

The country meets more than 80 percent of its electricity demand from thermal power plants that run on fossil fuels. Of the total 82,000 MW production capacity, only about seven percent is supplied from renewable sources.

Currently, over 100 large-scale farms ranging from 2MW to 12MW and over 2,000 small-scale and rooftop renewable power plants are operating across Iran, the number of which has noticeably been growing as Iranian households and small industries have embraced the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

## Electricity projects inaugurated in 3 provinces

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Ministry inaugurated 43 electricity projects in three provinces on Tuesday, during the 10th week of the ministry's A-B-Iran scheme under which every week major energy projects are going to be inaugurated in various provinces across the country, IRIB reported.

The mentioned projects include 40 power supply projects in southwestern Khuzestan Province, the replacement of 4,700 kilometers of low-pressure transmission lines with self-supporting cables in North Khorasan province in the northeast of the country, and the upgrade of a power plant in northern Mazandaran province.

As reported, about 4.64 trillion rials (nearly \$110.5 million) has been invested in the mentioned projects.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mohammad-Hassan Motevalizadeh, the head of Iran's Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company,



known as Tavanir.

A-B-Iran scheme [the acronyms A and B

stand for water, electricity in Persian] was initiated in the previous Iranian calendar

year (ended on March 19), during which the minister made 31 trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

Earlier this year, Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said in the second phase of the program the ministry is going to inaugurate 250 major energy projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to Ardakanian, in the water sector, the mentioned projects include nine major dams, implementation of modern irrigation systems in 54,000 hectares of land, 20 water, and wastewater treatment plants and supplying drinkable water through a pipeline to more than 1400 rural areas across the country.

Since the beginning of the second phase of the scheme in the current Iranian calendar year, every week several energy projects have gone operational across the country.

## Petchem role in stock market

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — In the petroleum industry, petrochemical companies have gained fame for their early and fast yield. Some experts say the rate of return of investment in petrochemical projects is six years.

Under circumstances of sanctions and Covid-19 outbreak, where many petroleum industry companies had to restrict or even halt their production, petrochemical companies continued their normal production and supply of products. That proves the petrochemical sector remains a reliable industry.

The experience of previous years in the mercantile exchange shows that petrochemical companies have often distributed attractive dividends among shareholders. That is why some petrochemical companies are attractive to investors looking for annual profits. Such features have also pushed people to direct their investment to the stock market.

Stock market indices have been on upward and downward trend; however, petrochemical stocks have always shown to be spared any decline. That explains why petrochemical shares are largely attractive.

Economists believe that state assets listing would give rise to such economic benefits as profitability, removing budget deficit, encouraging people to invest in the stock market, deepening the capital market and preventing any market bubble.

The capital market is largely prosperous these days. With the listing of state assets on this market, people are encouraged to invest in the stock market and their capital would not move towards gold and foreign currency. Moreover, people would get further familiar with the capital market and their knowledge of finance would grow.

### Successful players

Petrochemical stocks are warmly welcomed in the stock market. The Pars, Nouri and Shahid Tongdugyan petrochemical companies were the first petrochemical companies to list on the stock market successfully. Now, more petrochemical companies are subscribing to the stock market with at least six of them being subsidiaries of the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC).

Arya Sasol Petrochemical Company was expected to list on the stock market in March, but the Covid-19 outbreak created some restrictions. However, the important issue is that even news of petrochemical stocks listed on the stock market would shake the market. Among 40 top companies named by the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), there are some petrochemical companies. The reason for this selection is the significant improvement in their financial performance.

Shazand Petrochemical Company, Pars Petrochemical Company, Kermanshah Petrochemical Industries Company, Pardis Petrochemical Company, Kharg Petrochemical Company, Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company, Zagros Petrochemical Company, Maroun Petrochemical Company and Ghadir Petrochemical Company are among the 40 com-



panies with big impact on the stock market last calendar year.

Those who follow stock market developments should know that petrochemical stocks have become influential in everyday trading. However, the effectiveness of petrochemical companies in the stock market and initial public offering that have breathed fresh life into the stock market are owing to decisions made by the Downstream Petrochemical Industries Development Department.

Owing to cooperation and interaction between this department and the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade as well as the Iran Mercantile Exchange, a transparent and lucrative market is seen.

Jafar Rabiei, CEO of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company, has said that the Arvand, Bu Ali Sina and Bandar Imam petrochemical companies would soon list on the stock market.

Noting that the capital market was warmly welcomed, Rabiei said: "The stock market is not a place for people to become rich overnight. Anyone entering the stock market hastily will undoubtedly suffer losses."

He added: "The stock exchange has a higher yield compared with other markets. Certainly those who are eyeing long-term investment of more than one year would make more gains in the stock exchange than in the gold, foreign currency and other parallel markets."

Regarding alleged bubbles in the stock market index, he said: "A small segment of money stock has so far entered the capital market and there is still hot money that has yet to enter this market. I don't believe that the government has deliberately intervened to make the stock market index green in a bid to sell its own stocks. Rather, I believe that the capital market convinced the government to sell its own stocks on the market. Put simply, the market attracted the government, which was a positive development. The government was finally convinced to offer its shares on the market. I believe that we have very good stocks in the market that have yet to reach their natural

prices because they are still being traded below the net asset value (NAV)."

"Investment and holding companies enjoy good potential for growth. They will make very good profits and distribute high dividends so that people would be able to purchase stocks at lower prices," he said.

Rabiei said PGPIC was holding about 40% of Iran's petrochemical market. PGPIC is also accounting for 40% of Iran's petrochemical exports.

PGPIC and subsidiaries hold about 12% of the capital market. Their share exceeds 42% in the chemical industries.

He said that PGPIC is a major player in the capital market and it has already offered many of its subsidiaries on the stock market. He added that the remaining companies would list on the stock market in the current and next calendar year.

"We plan to bring three more companies into the stock market: the Arvand Petrochemical Company, which is known as the PVC giant in the country, Bu Ali Sina Petrochemical Company, which is similar to the Nouri Petrochemical Company, and the big aromatic plant in Mahshahr," he said. "After that, we would be able to introduce the Bandar Imam Petrochemical Company, the largest petrochemical company in the country, on the stock market."

Rabiei said: "I don't think that anyone has suffered losses after purchasing shares of Pars Petrochemical Company, Nouri Petrochemical Company and Shahid Tongdugyan Petrochemical Company. However, nobody should purchase or sell stocks emotionally."

"If those who purchased these stocks wait at least one year I am sure that they will make big profits out of PGPIC's newly-offered stocks. Nobody has to worry about the index slipping into the negative territory for several consecutive days. That's natural for the stock market and I assure you that good days are awaiting the stock market," he said.

### Petchem stocks

The bulk of petrochemical companies' stocks may be in the hands of a bigger petrochemical firm. In other words, these stocks are negotiable by these companies. However, as long as the market conditions are bullish it would be lucrative for other shareholders, too. Therefore, this issue must be taken into consideration in the purchase of stocks. Many companies would be faced with restrictions in production, distribution and sales in coming months. Petrochemical companies would continue their work and global developments also show that this bullish trend would continue. Therefore, these companies would be able to remain highly lucrative options in the capital market. Most items petrochemical needs are polymer products that exist in the country and most petrochemical companies do not need to communicate with foreign entities. That would be instrumental in blunting the impact of sanctions on the Iranian economy and facilitating circumvention of sanctions.

## Iran's daily gas refining capacity exceeds 1bcm

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Iran's daily gas refining capacity has reached more than one billion cubic meters (bcm), an official with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) told Shana.



Masoud Zardavian, the NIGC director of coordination and production supervision, also announced the country's gas refineries' readiness to produce enough natural gas in a timely and adequate manner, and said: "There is always a balance between gas production and consumption in the country, because development of the gas supply network is not possible without increasing natural gas production capacity."

Earlier last month, the NIGC spokesman said the country's daily production of natural gas increased by 24 million cubic meters (mcm) and stood at 674 mcm.

"The average daily gas production in the country stood at 650 mcm last year in this month", Mohammad Asgari told Shana.

According to the official, the country's average daily gas consumption is currently 540 mcm.

## Oil recovery to increase at Azar oilfield

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — The Central Processing Facility (CPF) of Azar joint oil field is now complete, marking a major step towards enhanced oil recovery at the field.



Inauguration of the facility realizes the final production target of 65,000 barrels of crude oil per day in this field.

The Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), as the employer of the project, has announced that the countdown has begun for production of 65,000 b/d of crude oil under a buyback deal.

Oil Industry Pension Fund Investment Company (OPIC) (as investor of the project) has signed a deal with the Oil Industries Engineering and Construction Company (OIEC) for developing the geo-physically complicated field.

Production of 15,000 b/d from the field began in 2016 and nearly doubled in about two months.

## Canada's LNG industry on shaky ground as high-profile investors back off: report

Legendary investor Warren Buffett's decision to walk away from a proposed export terminal for liquefied natural gas in Quebec is being held up in a new report as a sign that the LNG sector in Canada and elsewhere is on shaky ground, Global News reported.

The Global Energy Monitor report released Monday says Buffett's move in March underscores the growing political and economic uncertainty that LNG projects are facing even as governments around the world tout liquefied natural gas as a clean alternative to coal power.

Canada has emerged as a major proponent of expanding liquefied natural gas as a way to fight climate change abroad and create jobs and revenue at home, with numerous multibillion-dollar projects to facilitate LNG exports to Asia and elsewhere in the works.

Yet Global Energy Monitor suggested Buffett's decision to withdraw investment firm Berkshire Hathaway's planned \$4-billion investment in an LNG export terminal in Saguenay, Que., is a sign of things to come.

Neither Buffett nor Berkshire Hathaway explained their reasons for the move, but the company behind the terminal project blamed "the current Canadian context" — an apparent reference to nationwide rail blockades and protests against the Coastal GasLink pipeline in B.C. at the time.

"While many projects face opposition from local communities, the case of the Energie Saguenay LNG Terminal in Quebec shows the potential for a local protest to galvanize a national movement," said the Global Energy Monitor report.

Global Energy Monitor is an international non-governmental organization that catalogues fossil-fuel infrastructure around the world and advocates for more investments in renewable energy.

Monday's report goes on to suggest that political opposition is only one of many new challenges to the LNG sector, with another being a dramatic drop in the price of gas due to an oversupply at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has sent demand plummeting.

The result: plans to build pipelines, terminals and other infrastructure in Canada and around the world have been put on hold — or dropped entirely.

The report lists 13 LNG projects in Canada alone that have been cancelled or suspended in recent years. That includes a \$10-billion LNG export facility in Nova Scotia, which is now in limbo as the company behind the project tries to decide whether to move ahead or not.

One of those apparently not affected is LNG Canada's Coastal GasLink pipeline, which was the target of this year's protests and blockades over a route that crosses traditional Wet'suwet'en territory in British Columbia. The company said last month that it plans to have 2,500 people working on the 670-kilometre pipeline from Dawson Creek to Kitimat by September.

## Sydney switches to 100% renewable energy

The City of Sydney in Australia is powering all its operations with 100 percent renewable electricity generated from wind and solar farms in the New South Wales (NSW) region, cities-today.com reported.

This incorporates all city-owned properties, including approximately 115 buildings such as libraries, community halls and office buildings, 75 parks, five pools and 23,000 street lights, as well as the Sydney Town Hall.

The switch has been made through a ten-year power purchase agreement with Australian retailer Flow Power. Valued at over A\$60 million (US\$37 million), it is understood to be the biggest agreement of its kind by a council in Australia.

The move is forecast to save the City up to \$AU500,000 a year over the next decade and to reduce carbon emissions by around 20,000 tonnes a year. The new agreement

is also expected to generate jobs, support communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and create new opportunities in the drought-affected NSW area.

"We are in the middle of a climate emergency. If we are to reduce emissions and grow the green power sector, all levels of government must urgently transition to renewable energy," said Sydney's Lord Mayor, Clover Moore. "Cities are responsible for 70 percent

of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, so it is critical that we take effective and evidence-based climate actions."

The City of Sydney became carbon-neutral in 2007 and was the first government in Australia to be certified carbon-neutral in 2011. Moore said the new deal will help Sydney reach its 2030 target of reducing emissions by 70 percent by 2024, six years early.



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# India-China standoff enters 9th week

## Beijing' pulling back troops' after deadly border clash: India

**1 →** On Friday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a surprise visit to Ladakh and, in a veiled dig at China, said the "age of expansionism" is over.

India claims 38,000 square kilometers of land currently under Chinese control while Beijing stakes claim to a 90,000 square kilometers area within Indian territory, reports Aljazeera.

On the surface, the dispute turns on whether the land belongs to China or Bhutan. It is only about 34 square miles, but it is pivotal in the growing competition between China and India over Asia's future.

The dispute dates to contradictory phrases in an 1890 border agreement between two now-defunct empires, British India and China's Qing dynasty, that put the border in different places. One gives Bhutan control of the area – the position India supports – and the other China.

Bhutan that joined the UN in 1971 does not have diplomatic ties with China.

According to independent Indian security analysts, India's cancellation of its spring military training exercises in Ladakh due to coronavirus gave People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops the ideal opportunity to seize several positions long claimed and patrolled by India.

The clash last month between Chinese and Indian troops in the Himalayas left casualties for the first time in 45 years. Soldiers from both sides have camped out in Galway Valley in the Ladakh region, accusing each other over trespassing over the disputed border, a trigger of a brief but bloody war in 1962, after which China strengthened its control over the region.

Lying between the Kunlun mountain range in the north and the Himalayas to the south, Ladakh was originally inhabited by people of Indo-Aryan and Tibetan descent.

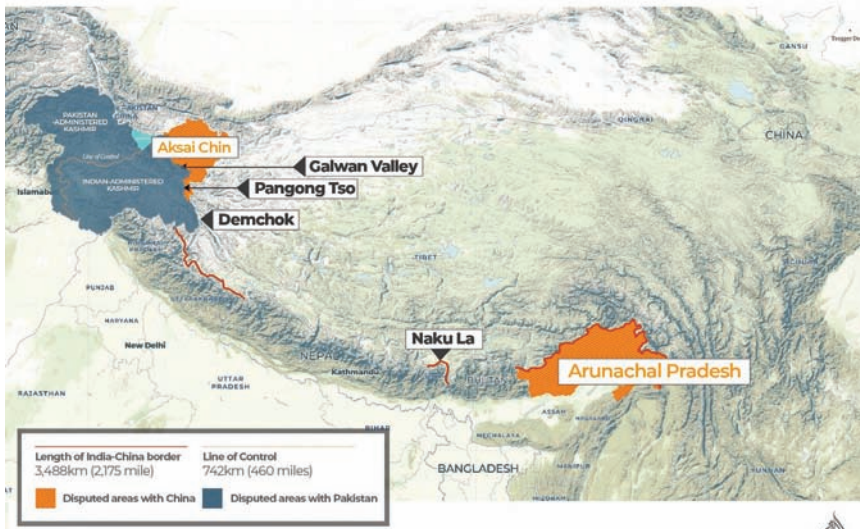
"Located at the crossroads of important trade routes since ancient times, Ladakh has always enjoyed great geostrategic importance," says Indian Major General Dr. G.G. Dwivedi, an expert in Sino-Indian relations.

In talks with Indian Express, General Dwivedi said China's forays into the region began after the 1949 Communist Revolution, when Chairman Mao Zedong, himself a veteran of guerilla warfare, began consolidating China's periphery as part of his expansionist designs.

The PLA occupied Tibet in 1951 and then began to eye Ladakh. The Tibetan revolt of 1959 and the Dalai Lama's flight to India saw China further strengthened its military presence in Ladakh. India reacted by set-

### CHINA-INDIA Border dispute

India and China share 3,488km-long land border, most of which remain disputed.



ting up Army posts in the region to prevent Chinese expansion.

"This resulted in the initial clash between the Indian and Chinese forces in the Kongka Pass area in 1959. Later, Galway Valley became the scene of action when the Indian Army established a post to cut off the Chinese post in the Samjunjing area, marking the beginning of the 1962 war," says Dwivedi.

In the latest face-off, Indian troops first spied the Chinese on the banks of Pangong Tso lake, which is one-third in India and two-thirds in China. The lake is of great significance to the Chinese, who have built infrastructure along both its sides to ensure the speedy build-up of troops.

In a sign that today's escalation has been brewing for a while, in April, a top Indian official accompanied the Dalai Lama to the border of Tibet, shrugging off China's public insistence that the journey is halted. In May, India boycotted the inauguration of Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature "One Belt, One Road" project, saying the plan ignored "core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity."

In another sign of deteriorating Indo-China bilateral relations, New Delhi recently imposed blunt restrictions on Chinese investment in the country and has been drawing ever closer to countries that Beijing considers hostile.

Pundits claim that New Delhi's deepen-

ing alliance with Washington has alarmed Beijing and intensified border tensions. U.S. President Donald Trump's invitation to India to participate in the upcoming G7 meeting drew scathing comments in Chinese media.

Indeed, pundits believe the reason for Trump's two-day visit to India on February 24 was to counter China. Washington is wary of the emergence of China on the world stage.

China is also the main supporter of Pakistan. Gwadar Port is a deep seaport on the Arabian Sea at Gwadar in Baluchistan province of Pakistan. It is located just 600 kilometers from the Strait of Hormuz. The port was made possible only after China lobbied for it because of its growing interest in landlocked Afghanistan and the region.

India is investing in Chabahar Port. During an interview with the Tehran Times in 2017, former Indian Ambassador Saurabh Kumar to Tehran pointed that Chabahar Port is an important part of North-South Corridor, the multi-modal sea, rail road route to move freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Gwadar port lies 172.2 kilometers (107 miles/92.98 nautical miles) to the west of Chabahar Port. To counter China's influence in the region, the development of the Chabahar Port got a waiver from the Trump administration's "Maximum Pressure" sanctions on Iran.

### Global reactions

While Indo-China standoff continues, global support for India has grown. Most Western leaders have criticized China over a tough new security law in Hong Kong and the South China Sea and are now uneasy with the border standoff.

On Friday, Japan backed India in its border standoff to support New Delhi's position opposing unilateral changes to the LAC. Japanese ambassador to India Satoshi Suzuki tweeted about his country's support following a conversation with Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla, hoping for a "peaceful resolution through dialogues." The move was akin to support of Japan's support to India during the 2017 Doklam standoff with China.

French Defense Minister Florence Parly conveyed "steadfast and friendly support" to her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh in a letter on June 29, in which she expressed "deep solidarity" over the death of 20 Indian soldiers in the violent face-off with Chinese troops along the LAC on June 15.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Wednesday said: "Tensions over territorial claims are rising across the Indo-Pacific region, as we have seen recently on the disputed border between India and China, and the South China Sea, and the East China Sea," while he hiked Australia's defense budget to \$270 billion for a 10-year period. The remarks came against the backdrop of Australia, banning China's Huawei for its 5G sector infrastructure.

Although members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been silent on the India-China standoff, the ten states' leaders recently rejected China's claim to almost the whole of the South China Sea.

In early June, the Indian Foreign Ministry said a day after military commanders from both sides met near Chashul, a border village at the disputed frontier near Pangong Tso, a lake where troops from the two countries clashed last month.

"Both sides agreed to peacefully resolve the situation in the border areas according to various bilateral agreements and keep in view the agreements between the leaders that peace and tranquility in the India-China border regions are essential for the overall development of bilateral relations," the statement said.

Modi and Xi last met in India in October, promising to increase economic and security cooperation. Both leaders must have a follow-up of this meeting in order to de-escalate the border tensions.

## U.S. has admitted military and political failures in Syria: Russian academic

**1 →** Ankara tried to establish a military base located 140 kilometers south of Tripoli but deployed Turkish air defense systems (US-made Hawk anti-aircraft missile systems) were damaged in the air attack and couldn't even protect themselves.

Although Turkey has not yet openly accused any side of the air raid on al-Watiya, «transparent hints» are being made, that two «external» forces supporting the LNA are behind the strikes: Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, in Arab world several analysts describe the situation as «the UAE has taught a lesson to the Turks».



Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar was in Tripoli July 3 and 4, where he held talks with the military and political leadership of the Government of National Accord. Ankara is going to openly participate and intervene in the conflict in Libya after Faiz Sarraj concluded a defense agreement with the Turkish side. In accordance with the new Treaty, Turkey gets the right to place its military base on the territory of Libya.

■ What is your evaluation of the Astana peace process in regard to the Syria crisis? Was it successful cooperation between Russia, Turkey, and Iran?

A: For now, it's obvious that Moscow's actions in the region were more effective than those of its Western rivals, due to high-quality expert analysis and awareness of the real situation in the Middle East (West Asia).

While the U.S. leadership often relied on biased assessments of pro-Western dissidents and political immigrants, the Kremlin always had the analytics of professional research scientists, and data from a broad intelligence network on the ground was inherited from the Soviet Union.

According to some experts, Russia (unlike many other foreign powers) has managed to maintain good (or at least normal) relations with all participants in major regional conflicts. Russia did not undertake numerous political and security commitments in the region and, unlike the United States, is not limited in flexibility by any rigid alliances. Thus, Moscow is in a better position than Washington to serve as a mediator in negotiations between influential actors in the region.

■ How do you assess the presence of U.S. troops in Syria while Washington, besides some Arab capitals, blames Russia and Iran for supporting Assad's government?

A: Having lost the confrontation in Syria, the U.S. intends to move to the second phase of aggression – to subversive work, including information. By entering the information



war platform, the United States recognizes its military and political failure in Syria. The main goal of overthrowing B. Assad has not been achieved. The U.S. is announcing the deployment of psychological and subversive operations, which they are quite adept at. At the same time, American troops seizure Syrian oil fields. Another thing is that today the United States, as it seems, simply cannot influence the processes in a particular region of the world by military force. We can witness the acute desire of the U.S. government not even to change the regime in Damascus. The main aim for them now is to squeeze Russia out of its strategic position in Syria.

■ American sources claim Russia did pay extremists to attack U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. What is your analysis?

A: This «information» of American media is a typical fake and has already been officially denied by the American President. Russia has never cooperated with the Taliban and only those who either have a poor understanding of the situation in Afghanistan or deliberately distort the facts speak of any collusion between Moscow and the Taliban. The Afghan radical Taliban movement is conducting its own investigation based on media reports about alleged Russian collusion with the movement and calls these accusations baseless, invented by intelligence, and aimed at damaging the peace process in the country. Press Secretary of the Russian Federation Dmitry Peskov expressed regret that once the largest and respected world media promoted those fakes. The Russian Embassy in the United States demanded that the country's authorities respond adequately to threats that come to diplomats because of news about Russia and Afghanistan. The white house, the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence said that there is no confirmation of the reports at the moment and that D. Trump was not informed about them.

## Reasons why Iran backs Venezuela

By Mohammad Mazhari

As two oil-producing countries under U.S. sanctions, Iran and Venezuela have been working in recent years to strengthen geopolitical ties to relieve U.S. pressure and find a solution to improve their economies.

A significant expansion in Iran-Venezuela relations would allow the presidents of both countries - Hassan Rouhani in Tehran and Nicolas Maduro in Caracas - to challenge the United States' imperialist policies.

This relationship will calm down sentiments of anti-American groups inside Iran and Venezuela and shows their strong ties and alliance as two members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Over the past weeks, Tehran has come to the aid of Caracas in various ways, sending fuel, refinery parts, and more recently humanitarian aid. Fuel delivery is a lifeline for the Maduro government. Venezuela has been suffering from a shortage of gasoline, basic foodstuffs and medicine amid the economic crisis.

American sanctions and pressure on the left-wing government in Venezuela have led to a sharp decline in public services and a spread of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Through supporting Maduro, Iran tries to turn Venezuela into a foothold to challenge U.S. hegemony and revive anti-imperialist policies in the world.

Besides, Iran is working hard to increase its influence in Latin America, which has long been considered U.S. "backyard" and increase its access to various resources in the continent.

"Iran flew out some \$500 million in gold bullion as



payment for services rendered," according to a Bloomberg report. However, officials in Iran dismissed the report.

The gradual increase in U.S. sanctions against Caracas, even pushed back Maduro's loyal ally Russia. Pressure from Washington caused Rosneft, the Russian state-controlled oil firm, to cease operations in Venezuela in March and sell all of its assets in the country.

That's why the Maduro government needs Iran's collaboration to strengthen its hand against U.S. sanctions, as the country is grappling with harsh U.S. restrictions on its oil exports and international financial transactions.

Iran is experiencing worse economic sanctions. This happened after the U.S. under the Trump presidency unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA and returned the previous sanctions and imposed new ones.

Although Russia and China have continued to support Venezuela by sending humanitarian aid to the country to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, analysts say Caracas no longer can request multibillion-dollar loans from its international allies as the country has pre-sold its oil for the coming year, which caused the price of this product to fall to its lowest level in history.

But, Tehran-Caracas relations made a fuss, when Western media focused on Iran's flights to Venezuela in recent weeks; the flights which were reportedly carrying Iranian oil industry equipment and technology for unused Venezuelan refineries.

In mid-May, the news of five Iranian tankers carrying 1.5 million barrels of fuel to Venezuela dominated the headlines. The measure raised concerns if the U.S. Navy would stop the cargo.

It caused both Iranian and Venezuelan leaders to warn the U.S. about any wrong step which may threaten global peace and security.

Iranian oil tankers were eventually escorted into Venezuelan territorial waters by planes and ships from the Venezuelan armed forces to temporarily solve the country's shortage of fuel.

This collaboration was described as a political victory over U.S. sanctions and bullying in the world.

With officials promising to ship more fuel and food from Tehran to Caracas, it seems that Iran is going to be the greatest help to the Venezuelan economy; It would be enough to turn up the heat on the United States and its allies, especially if Latin America's political pendulum swings back to the radical left.

## U.S. plotting soft coup against Hashd al-Sha'abi forces in Iraq: Lawmaker

An Iraqi legislator warns that the United States is fomenting a soft coup against Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), better known by the Arabic word Hashd al-Sha'abi, stating Washington is trying to constrain the role of the anti-terror forces.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the Arabic-language al-Maalomah news agency on Tuesday, Muhammad al-Badawi, a lawmaker from the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance, said the U.S. had hatched plots to limit the role of Hashd al-Sha'abi forces and stir up internal strife in Iraq.

The Iraqi lawmaker added, "There are signs of a coup in Iraq. Pieces of information were obtained prior to last year's [anti-government] demonstrations about the U.S. sponsorship, bids against security authorities as well as attempts to bring former officials wanted for corruption back to power."

On June 26, a high-ranking official from the Hashd al-Sha'abi slammed a recent unprecedented raid by Iraqi forces on a PMU base in southern Baghdad, stating the U.S. had dictated the operation, and that there are foreign attempts to undermine the PMU.

On March 27, the New York Times newspaper reported that the Pentagon had ordered a secret directive, which called on U.S. military commanders to prepare a campaign against Kata'ib Hezbollah, which is part of Hashd al-Sha'abi.

But the United States' top commander in Iraq had warned that such a campaign could be bloody and counterproductive.

Lieutenant General Robert P. White wrote in a blunt memo that a new military campaign would require thousands of more American troops to be sent to Iraq.

Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters have played a major role in the liberation of areas held

by Daesh terrorists ever since the Takfiri group launched an offensive in the country, overrunning vast swathes in lightning attacks.

In November 2016, the Iraqi parliament voted to integrate the PMU, which was formed shortly after the emergence of Daesh in Iraq in 2014, into the military.

However, the popular group is a thorn in the side of the United States, which is widely believed to be managing an array of militant groups, including Daesh, to advance its Israel-centric agenda in the region.

Iraqi lawmakers unanimously approved a bill on January 5, demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops following the U.S. assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq's PMU, and



their companions.

There have been growing calls for the Baghdad government to pave the way for the implementation of the parliamentary order.

(Source: Press TV)



## Over 60 smuggled historical objects seized in Kerman

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Sixty four historical objects have been confiscated in the southeastern Kerman province during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20), a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Tuesday, IRNA reported.



The recovered objects include bowls, cups, human and equestrian statues as well as animal statues, which date back to different historical eras, Seyyed Hadi Jafari said. Nine illegal diggers and smugglers were detained in this regard and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, he added. The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

## Two sites in Sistan-Baluchestan added to national heritage list

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Two natural sites in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, CHTN reported. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism announced the inscriptions of Goordim Cliff and Shoorein Spring, both in Kahir village, Konarak county, on Tuesday in a letter to governor general of the province, the report added.



Sistan-Baluchestan was previously shunned by potential foreign and domestic travelers though it is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert, parts of latter is situated in Kerman province. For mainstream Iranians, the name of Sistan-Baluchestan was conjuring up stories of drought, desiccated wetlands, and dust storms. On the international scale, foreigners may consider it a reminiscent of the big red blot on the Iran safety map. In ancient times, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, the Baluchistan region provided a land route to the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations. The armies of Alexander the Great marched through Baluchistan in 326 BC on their way to the Hindu Kush and on their return march in 325 experienced great hardships in the region's barren wastes.

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

(Part: 1/2)  
**(Louvre museum)** — This perforated stone was commissioned by Puzur-Inshushinak, a prince of the dynasty of Awan in Iran, to commemorate the erection of a monument. It is decorated in relief with a scene showing a god offering a nail before a lion, protected by a lama divinity. The object, which displays a strong Mesopotamian influence, also has two inscriptions, one in Elamite, the other in Akkadian. **A commemorative stone for the foundation of a building** This stone seems to be part of an object made in three sections. It has a central perforation, some fifteen centimeters in diameter, intended to receive a nail made of copper and cedarwood. This hole would have been made with a wooden or metal tool, with grains of quartz used as an abrasive. This was a votive stone dedicated as part of the foundation ritual for a building. A second fragmentary relief shows the hindquarters of a lion and carries an inscription in Akkadian. The broken surfaces seem both to belong to the left side of the same object, although the exact correspondence has not been established. This stone was commissioned by Puzur-Inshushak, a king of the Awan dynasty, after the decline of the Akkadian Empire, c. 2100 BC.



# Centuries-old Yazd Jameh Mosque back to former glory

**→ 1** The mosque, which was first built under Ala'oddoleh Garshasb of the Buyid dynasty, is still in use today and is a fine example of Persian architecture. The entrance to the mosque is crowned by a pair of minarets, one of the tallest in Iran, dating back to the Safavid era and measuring 52 meters in height and six meters in diameter. The entrance is decorated from top to bottom in tile work, which is formed of different colored pieces that are sandwiched together to create the design. Within is a long arcaded courtyard where, behind a deep-set south-east iwan, is the sanctuary chamber. Its tiled Mihrab is one of the finest of its kind in existence. The architectural masterpiece was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 1924. With its winding lanes, the forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a 'don't miss' destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains. Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.



The 12th-century Jameh Mosque of Yazd is still in use today and is a fine example of Persian architecture.

## Iran, ITC developing national tourism export strategies

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iran's deputy tourism chief has said that the social, wildlife, historical, cultural, and medical realms of tourism have been selected for the ongoing cooperation between Iran and the International Trade Centre (ITC) in the way of developing the national tourism export strategies for the Islamic republic. "Last year, we and the International Trade Centre started a joint corporation with the aim of developing the tourism industry of the country... and in this regard, realms of social, historical, cultural, health, and wildlife tourism have been selected for development of national exports [of the country]," Vali Teymouri said on Tuesday, CHTN reported. Strategies to boost competitiveness [as an export sector], build value-addition and develop new markets and ways to maximize local economic are amongst goals the joint plan is to achieve with the close collaboration with the private investors and local communities, the official noted. Experts say that an effective National Tourism Export Strategy (NTES) enables policy-makers, tourism and investment sup-



port institutions, and enterprises to make choices on key decision-points and to priorities. This, in turn, ensures that countries can optimize conditions for long-term tourism sustainability, and enhanced economic and

social benefits. "Tourism is trade. It involves the buying and selling of services and goods, with compensation paid by a buyer (the visitor) to a seller. Tourism is a source of foreign exchange

earnings. It boosts country's domestic output. It is subject to the rigors of the international marketplace. Most countries want to increase exports as a means of generating employment, increasing government revenue, and raising standards of living. Many countries have export strategies, addressing a range of products and services, to boost competitiveness, build value-addition, and develop new markets. Most have tourism policy frameworks in place, supported by tourism master plans that aim to strengthen infrastructure, regulation, and institutions." Since the UNWTO General Assembly in Colombia in September 2015, ITC and UNWTO have entered a formal strategic partnership to build upon the two organizations' resources and competencies and to share perspectives in the process of rethinking a joint approach to Aid for Trade (AfT) in tourism. Established in 1964, the International Trade Centre is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. It is a development agency that is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

## Hotel projects worth over \$28m underway in northwest Iran

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Two four-star hotels are being built in the northwestern province of Ardabil with a total budget of 1.2 trillion rials (Over \$28 million). The hotels, which are being constructed in the capital city of Ardabil, will be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), said Ardabil Governor Masud Emami Yeganeh, CHTN reported on Tuesday. The under-construction hotels will create over 100 job opportunities, the official added. 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, provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi announced that seventeen tourism projects, worth 1,500



billion rials (some \$35 million) would be inaugurated in the province in the near future. 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 Ardabil as their prime destination. Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil 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 Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

## Rice planting commences at paddy fields in Alamut



**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Farmers plant rice seedlings on paddy fields across Alamut, a semi-mountainous region in Qazvin province, west-central Iran, July 5, 2020. Better known for being home to a well-fortified ruined castle and its lush cherry gardens, Alamut is however a place to rice paddy fields, covering some 40,000 ha of lands. The fragrance of Iranian rice is distinct worldwide. The Iranian method of rice cooking is very different from those of other countries across the globe. It may seem to be a bit long and detailed, but the key tradition in the Iranian culinary is patience as many Iranians believe that making good food is an art. Rice cooking in Iran also has a few tricks that you won't find in other rice-loving nations. There are washing, boiling, draining, and finally steaming methods to cook your rice perfectly. For example, Iranians generally cover their rice with a damkoni (a fitted fabric pot-lid cover) when steaming it to prevent the vapor from escaping. Persian rice is best served immediately right out of the pot when it is still hot and buttery. Some 2.9 million tons of rice were harvested in the country during the past Iranian calendar year of 1398 (ended on March 19), according to the Agriculture Ministry. Alamut annually attracts hundreds of thousands of holidaymakers to the castle that once sheltering the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124), a leader of Ismaili sect, known as 'Assassins'. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The Valleys of the Assassins".





# Iran, Australia share experience on fight against coronavirus, wildfires

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — Karim d e s k Hemmati, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), and Lyndall Sachs, the Australian Ambassador to Iran, discussed ways to expand cooperation through exchanging experience on battling COVID-19 and wildfires.

During a meeting on Monday, Hemmati said that the IRCS is one of the top five societies in the world and one of the strongest ones in West Asia, according to the IRCS.

The IRCS provides both relief services and volunteer activities, and cooperates with over 2 million volunteers who were offering assistance since the onset of the epidemic, he added.

Referring to the measure taken to help the Ministry of Health, he said: "One of the most important actions was public education. We produced educational content on coronavirus, which has so far received more than 71 million views on social media."

Despite the fact that Iranians were affected by the U.S. sanctions and many workshops and sources of income were closed due to the pandemic, they had donated more than 1.3 trillion rials (nearly \$30 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in cash and kind to the IRCS to support those affected, he explained.

This was a unique initiative in the world and made us manage the disease faster than other countries, he added.

He further called on the Australian Red Cross to help the Iranian Red Crescent Society overcome the problems caused by the pandemic.

■ **300,000 food packages for corona-affected families**

The population distributed 300,000 food packages during the outbreak across the country and among the deprived who had no income, Hemmati said, adding, also, 500,000 patients with cancer and rare diseases received personal protective equipment.

People affected by crises and those financially-struggling, as well as people who are not covered by any organization, will be supported by the IRCS, he noted.

■ **155 anti-corona shipments sent to IRCS**

In the past five months, 155 international



cargoes, including masks and other personal protective equipment, have been delivered by governments and international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, he stated.

He expressed appreciation to those who supported the Iranian people during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The Red Crescent Society is a member of the governing body of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and has so far provided humanitarian services along with other countries, he noted.

■ **Cooperation on fighting bushfires**

Appreciating the cooperation and bilateral interaction between the IRCS and the Australian Red Cross in the field of humanitarian action, he said that widespread wildfires in Australia, which have resulted in heavy financial and human losses, require that the two national populations of Iran and Australia cooperate more on climate change and share their experiences in this area.

Although there are many firefighting facilities in Australia, the country has been hit hard by recent bushfires, but there are not enough facilities in Iran to extinguish

forest and rangeland fires, and we ask the Australian Red Cross help us perform better in firefighting operations, as well as countering climate change, which is part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' plans, he explained.

■ **Australian donation to Iran on coronavirus**

Sachs, for her part, said that the Australian Red Cross is very active in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and has maintained this position for a long time, it has a long history of working with Iran.

Australia has been very lucky in the face of COVID-19, with 90,000 infected and 106 mortalities, compared to other countries, which is the result of the proper management of the disease as well as the geographical location of Australia, she stated.

Iran and Australia have a high cultural affinity and are similar in helping and supporting the deprived and needy. Our country has taken appropriate measures, both in terms of protecting the affected from coronavirus and wildfires, she highlighted.

Australia is a rich country, but the sympathy and support that the people of Iran

shared on social media with the Australians during the fires was very valuable to us, and it is very important that people from other countries think of you in difficult circumstances, she noted.

This support is in fact a reflection of the intimacy and warmth of the 50-year-old relationship between the two countries. We have 60,000 Iranians in Australia, which is very effective in the friendly relations between the two countries, she also said.

It is true that geographically there is a long distance between the two countries, but the distance does not mean that we cannot help each other when needed. Australia has a lot of experience in firefighting and drought control, and we are ready to share our experiences with countries with similar conditions, she emphasized.

Emphasizing the need to expand cooperation and exchange of experiences between the two countries, she concluded that "soon the necessary infrastructure will be established to expand cooperation."

COVID-19 is a global epidemic, and of course, there must be global cooperation to get things back to normal, she concluded.

## Anzali Wetland rehabilitation plan to start next year

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — Rehabilitation of Anzali Wetland is a priority and its implementation will start in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2021-March 2022) and will take 10 years to be completed, Masoud Bagerzadeh Karimi, the director of aquatic ecosystems at the Department of Environment (DOE) said.

The most urgent problem that must be solved in Anzali Wetland is the invasive species of common water hyacinth, he stated, ISNA reported.

He went on to explain that common water hyacinth is a dangerous invasive plant that grows rapidly in the wetland and is now our only way to counteract is the physical removal of the plant, adding, this invasive plant speeds up water evaporation 13 times and poisons the environment and creates competition for survival among native species.

With huge sediments accumulated in Anzali Wetland, a plan proposed using domestic bioremediation BioGME technology; but some expressed worries about the technology as being carcinogenic or posing a threat to aquatic species and we decided not to use it, he stated.

So we have a new plan, through which, an eco-friendly approach with two important features will be implemented, including cross-sectoral cooperation that involves all stakeholders in reviving the wetland, he said.

According to Bagerzadeh Karimi, the 10-year revival program will be implemented next year after approval by the National Headquarters of Wetlands. Also, Gilan Univer-



sity will cooperate with the DOE as a consultant to provide scientific support.

Our goal in reviving wetlands is to involve responsible bodies, such as the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Interior, with a strategy to preserve wetlands, which cannot be achieved except within the framework of the national cooperation, he added.

Covering more than 19,000 hectares, Anzali Wetland is located near the northern port city of Bandar Anzali, neighboring the Caspian Sea. The wetland was designated as a Ramsar site on June 23, 1975. It is fed by several rivers and separated from the Caspian Sea by a dune system. The lagoon is home to submerged and floating vegetation and also extensive reed beds. It bears inter-

national importance in terms of breeding, staging, and wintering waterbirds.

While dams have contributed to human development by providing reliable sources of drinking water and irrigation, hydropower, recreation, navigation, and income, they also can cause considerable damages to the rivers, or deplete fisheries, and alter recreational opportunities.

The lagoon has been listed in Ramsar Convention since December 21, 1975.

Anzali Wetland has suffered huge sediment and sludge accumulation due to the entrance of domestic and agricultural sewage of five surrounding cities, which resulted in a decrease in the wetland's depth and capacity along with threatening biodiversity.

One of the most important concerns regarding Anzali Wetland is a constant drop in depth which was 11 meters before while shrinking to 1 meter or even 50 centimeters in recent years.

According to a report published by the University of Tehran in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), the amount of sediment accumulated in Anzali Wetland is usually 1 to 7 millimeters per year.

If the average sedimentation rate is three millimeters, one meter should be reduced from the depth of the wetland every 30 years, while the wetland's depth has decreased by 3 meters in the past 30 years.

Undeniably, human involvement has led to such a situation in Anzali Wetland.

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

## International environment exhibition to be held in Tehran

The 19th International Exhibition on the Environment will be held in Tehran on March 4-7, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

At this year's exhibition, various industrial, business and service units will be presenting their environmental achievements, as well as environmental science centers and universities specializing in the environment.

The exhibition will be held under the theme of "environment, social responsibility of 80 million rangers".

## نمایشگاه بین‌المللی محیط‌زیست در تهران برگزار می‌شود

نوزدهمین نمایشگاه بین‌المللی محیط‌زیست از ۱۴ تا ۱۷ اسفندماه در محل دائمی نمایشگاه‌های بین‌المللی تهران برگزار می‌شود. به گزارش ایرنا، در نمایشگاه امسال واحدهای مختلف صنعتی، تجاری و خدماتی دستاوردهای زیست محیطی خود را ارائه می‌دهند و از سوی دیگر مراکز دانش بنیان و دانشگاه‌هایی که در زمینه محیط زیست به صورت تخصصی فعالیت می‌کنند نیز در این نمایشگاه حضور خواهند داشت.

شعار امسال این نمایشگاه، «محیط زیست، مسوولیت اجتماعی ۸۰ میلیون محیط بان» تعیین شده است.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “hol- or holo-”

■ **Meaning:** complete, whole

■ **For example:** we were interested in updating information on an uncommon migratory seabird with a **Holarctic** distribution

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Play something up

■ **Meaning:** to emphasize something, sometimes making it seem more important than it really is.

■ **For example:** Play up your strongest arguments in the opening paragraph.

### IDIOM

#### Day in the sun

■ **Explanation:** to get long-awaited attention or some form of well-deserved appreciation

■ **For example:** Dave finally got his day in the sun when an article was published about his research.

## COVID-19 rings alarm bells in Iran as daily deaths surge to 200

1 → Namaki reiterated the need to maintain physical and social distance, not to join the gatherings and not to transmit the infection from asymptomatic patients, urging people not to travel.

Over the past 24 hours, 2,637 new cases of COVID-19 were identified in the country, of which 1,455 were hospitalized, she stated, adding, the total number of patients in the country reached 245,688, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Tuesday.

Currently, 3,270 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition. So far, 207,000 patients have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

From July 4 to 7, some 148, 163, 160, and 200 patients died of coronavirus, respectively, which shows a rising trend.

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

People must wear face masks indoors or in gatherings, from July 5 to 21. And if necessary, the plan will be extended until August. Using a face mask prevents coronavirus transmission up to 80 percent, Sadat Lari said.

Alireza Delavari, Tehran University of Medical Sciences vice-chancellor, has said that "People's cooperation in preventing the transmission of coronavirus has decreased, and this will increase the incidence of disease and the number of hospitalizations and will cause problems for the treatment system."

Referring to the increase in the prevalence of the virus, he noted that "Using a mask and observing social distancing are the most important factors in preventing corona, which is unfortunately not observed in large shopping centers, private companies, and even government offices, subways and buses."

## Coronavirus: world treating symptoms, not cause of pandemics, says UN

The world is treating the health and economic symptoms of the coronavirus pandemic but not the environmental cause, according to the authors of a UN report. As a result, a steady stream of diseases can be expected to jump from animals to humans in coming years, they say.

The number of such "zoonotic" epidemics is rising, from Ebola to Sars to West Nile virus and Rift Valley fever, with the root cause being the destruction of nature by humans and the growing demand for meat, the report says.

Even before Covid-19, 2 million people died from zoonotic diseases every year, mostly in poorer countries. The coronavirus outbreak was highly predictable, the experts said. "[Covid-19] may be the worst, but it is not the first," said the UN environment chief, Inger Andersen, the Independent reported.

The biggest economic costs fall on rich nations - \$9tn (£7.2tn) for Covid-19 over two years, according to the IMF's chief economist. This makes a very good case for investment in the countries where diseases emerge, the authors say.

The report said a "one health" approach that unites human, animal and environmental health is vital, including much more surveillance and research on disease threats and the food systems that carry them to people.

"There has been so much response to Covid-19 but much of it has treated it as a medical challenge or an economic shock," said Prof Delia Grace, the lead author of the report by the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) and the International Livestock Research Institute (Ili).

"But its origins are in the environment, food systems and animal health. This is a lot like having somebody sick and treating only the symptoms and not treating the underlying cause, and there are many other zoonotic diseases with pandemic potential."

"An intense surge in human activity is affecting the environment all across the planet, from burgeoning human settlements to [food production], to increasing mining industries," said Doreen Robinson, Unep's chief of wildlife. "This human activity is breaking down the natural buffer that once protected people from a number of pathogens. It's critically important to get at the root causes, otherwise we will consistently just be reacting to things."

"The science is clear that if we keep exploiting wildlife and destroying our ecosystems, then we can expect to see a steady stream of these diseases jumping from animals to humans in the years ahead," said Andersen.

Wildlife and livestock are the source of most viruses infecting humans and the report cites a series of drivers of outbreaks, including rising demand for animal protein, more intensive and unsustainable farming, greater exploitation of wildlife, surging global travel and the climate crisis. It also says many farmers, regions and nations are reluctant to declare outbreaks for fear of damaging trade.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Guantanamo Releases

(March 10, 2004)

Kershid Ahmed from the Muslim Community Centre in Dudley, England, comments on the release of some British men from the American military base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

There are many unanswered questions that the **community** would want to have answers to and I'm sure once they return we will know answers to those questions and these are mainly why were they in Afghanistan, who was responsible for **getting** them there, what, if anything is **going on** underneath the surface here in our community, is there any external influence on our young people and if there is we want to **identify** it and **eliminate** it. And obviously we need to reassure the community **at large** that the Muslim community here does not pose any **threat** to them. We can only do that when we've got answers to these questions.

■ **Words**

**the community:** the group of people who live in an area

**getting:** transporting

**going on:** continuing

**external:** outside

**identify:** find it out

**eliminate:** destroy

**at large:** the wider (community)

**threat:** prospective danger

(Source: BBC)



## Hamas, Hezbollah declare united front against Israeli land grab bid

→ 1 The contentious plan — which would allow Tel Aviv to annex about 30 percent of the West Bank — is in accordance with a Middle East scheme drawn up by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump and unveiled in January on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The scheme — which Trump calls the deal of the century — largely gives in to Israel's demands while creating a Palestinian state with limited control over its own security and borders, enshrining the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital."

According to Press TV, the U.S.-backed annexation scheme has drawn international criticism and triggered waves of protest rallies around the globe.

### Indonesia rejects Israeli plan

On Monday, Indonesia's government and House of Representatives also censured Israel's plan to annex Palestinian territories.

"President Joko Widodo fully supports our firm stance against the Deal of the Century, including the annexation of the West Bank by Israel," Mardani Ali Sera, Deputy Chairman of the Indonesian parliamentary body for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (BKSAF) told Turkey's official Anadolu news agency.

Mardani said opposition to Trump's so-called peace plan had been announced in a joint statement between the House and Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi. He added that the House and the Foreign Ministry would continue to work together to mobilize international support against the plan. Mardani also proposed establishing a special unit under the Indonesian Foreign Ministry to encourage Palestinian independence.

## UK sanctions Saudi Arabia for Khashoggi's 'brutal murder'

By staff & agencies

The United Kingdom imposed economic sanctions on dozens of individuals and organizations from Russia, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, and North Korea under new British powers to punish human-rights offenders. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the sanctions targeted those behind «some of the notorious human rights violations in recent years», and were aimed at stopping the laundering of «blood money».

The UK's first sanctions will target 25 Russian nationals it said were involved in the mistreatment and death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, and 20 Saudi nationals held responsible for the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the foreign ministry said.

«Today this government ... sends a very clear message on behalf of the British people that those with blood on their hands - the thugs and despots, the henchmen and dictators - will not be free to waltz into this country to buy up property on the King's Road, to do their Christmas shopping in Knightsbridge, or frankly to siphon dirty money through British banks or other financial institutions,» said Raab.

«The designations will also include those responsible for the brutal murder of the writer and journalist Jamal Khashoggi.»

After leaving the European Union in January, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson wants to forge a new independent role for Britain in foreign and trade affairs, and this was the first time London could impose asset freezes and visa bans independently.

According to al Jazeera, Among the list of Saudi names are Saud al-Qahtani, a former Saudi royal adviser, and Ahmed al-Asiri, a former deputy intelligence chief. Both had charges against them dropped by a Saudi court after 11 suspects were put on trial last December over the Khashoggi killing. Five were sentenced to death.

Khashoggi, a 59-year-old Washington Post columnist, was killed at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018. Turkish officials said his body was dismembered by the killers and his remains have yet to be found.

## Georgia Governor calls up National Guard, declares state of emergency due to violence

→ 1 Authorities said Turner was in the car with her mother and another adult when the driver attempted to drive through illegally placed barricades to get to a parking lot. A group of armed individuals had blocked the entrance.

In an emotional press conference, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms excoriated the shooting suspects.

"You shot and killed a baby," she said. "And there wasn't just one shooter, there were at least two shooters."

Other cities are also grappling with a wave of gun violence over the long weekend. At least six children were killed in a series of shooting incidents in New York City that saw eight people killed and 44 shot.

## Resistance News

## Settlers storm Aqsa, restrictions tightened on Muslim worshipers

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Dozens of Jewish settlers on Tuesday broke into al-Aqsa Mosque while accompanied by large police forces who imposed tight restrictions on Palestinian worshipers entering the site.

Jerusalem's Islamic Awqaf Authority said that 66 Israeli settlers defiled al-Aqsa Mosque in the morning and toured its courtyards while receiving presentations on the alleged "Temple Mount".

Meanwhile, the Israeli police tightened entry restrictions on Palestinian worshipers, scrutinized their IDs and ordered many of them to stay outside the Mosque.

## IUMS says silence on Israel's annexation plan "treason"

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— The International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) has described the silence on Israel's intents to annex vast areas of the occupied West Bank as "new treason."

In a statement published on its website, IUMS warned that the world would lose its respect for the international bodies and its resolutions if Israel succeeded in its new land grab plan.

It also said that Israel's usurping of more Palestinian land would pose a threat to international security and peace, stressing the need for fighting such Israeli plans by the entire international community.

# OIC urges UN Security Council to stop Israel annexation plan

Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan warn Israel on annexation

By staff & agencies

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) writes to the members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), urging the body to come in the way of a plan announced by Israel for annexation of significant portions of the occupied West Bank.

The letter was addressed by the 57-member organization's Secretary-General Yousef al-Othaimeen to the UNSC's members as well as the members of the Middle East Quartet — the European Union, Russia, United Nations, and United States— the Arabic-language Rai al-Youm news website reported on Tuesday.

The letter urged the Council to adopt "the necessary measures" that would prevent the annexation and compel Israel to stop all its illegal activities.

The OIC also urged the UNSC to hold an emergency meeting to "salvage the [remaining] opportunities for peace, and revive attempts at reinstatement of the political process under international supervision." Such meeting, it added, had to enable realization of "the two-state solution, and [creation of] a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem [al-Quds] as its capital."

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the plan to annex 30 percent of the occupied Palestinian territory — namely the areas upon which the regime has built its illegal settlements as well as the Jordan Valley — after US President Donald Trump backed the annexation in January. Trump pledged the support while unveil-



ing details of his West Asia (Middle East) scheme called the "deal of the century."

The highly controversial scheme allegedly seeks to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but is heavily tilted in favor of the occupying regime. As well as backing the annexation, the scheme re-endorses Washington's incendiary recognition in late 2017 of al-Quds as "Israel's capital," although Palestinians want the occupied holy city's eastern part to serve as the capital of their future state.

Palestinians have roundly rejected either the American design or the Israeli plan that

is rooted in it.

Tel Aviv had previously announced July 1 as the date it sought to start implementing the annexation plan. It, however, is yet to get it off the ground amid far-and-wide international condemnation and speculation that the plan was announced in the first place to deflect attention from a massive corruption scandal involving Netanyahu.

### Countries warn Israel of consequences to bilateral ties

Also on Tuesday, Egypt, France, Germany, and Jordan warned Israel against going ahead with the plan, saying that

## UAE says it will test 2 million people for COVID-19 as cases rise

The United Arab Emirates plans to test two million people, or about 20% of the population, for the novel coronavirus over the next two months after the infection rate climbed again following the lifting of restrictions, a government spokesperson said.

According to Reuters, the regional business and tourism hub on June 24 removed a nationwide curfew in place since mid-March. It has gradually reopened commercial businesses and public venues and the emirate, or state, of Dubai is set to reopen to foreign visitors Tuesday.

"While it is worrying to see a slight increase in cases in the past few days, it is a reminder that we all should be responsible and committed to follow health practices," government spokesperson Amna al-Shamsi said late Monday.

"UAE health authorities continue to increase testing capacity for Covid-19, with additional 2 million tests to be performed in the coming two months, across the coun-



try," she said in comments carried on the government Twitter account.

The UAE recorded 528 new cases Monday, taking its tally to 52,068 with 324 deaths. The daily infection rate had dropped from a peak of over 900 in late May to average between 300 to 400, but rose over the weekend to some 700.

Dubai's move to allow foreign visitors has not been implemented on the federal level in the UAE, which does not provide a breakdown of coronavirus cases for each of its seven emirates.

Abu Dhabi, the largest and richest emirate, has restricted movement into the UAE capital, with people residing outside the emirate required to obtain a permit showing a negative COVID-19 test.

Neighboring Saudi Arabia has the highest count among the six Gulf Arab states at more than 213,700 infections with 1,968 deaths as of Monday.

## Taliban violence poses 'serious challenges' to peace: Ghani

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has warned that violence by the Taliban is threatening the country's peace process, as he briefed the international community on Kabul's preparations for peace talks with the armed group.

Afghan authorities and the Taliban are preparing to engage in the so-called intra-Afghan talks aimed at bringing lasting peace to the war-torn country. The negotiations, slated to be held in the Qatari capital Doha, are part of a February deal between the US and the Taliban to end the nearly two-decades-old war.

But violence, which had briefly reduced after a surprise ceasefire offer by the Taliban in May, has again spiked with officials

blaming the armed group for killing hundreds of security personnel and civilians in recent weeks.

The Taliban has been running a bloody armed rebellion since it was toppled from power in a U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

Ghani on Monday hosted the first of three online conferences aimed at briefing the global community on the expected peace talks.

"If the Taliban continue fighting, the Afghan peace process will face serious challenges," he told online attendees from several nations.

"Unfortunately, the current level of violence is higher compared to last year," Ghani said, according to a statement issued by his office.

## Britain now compliant with Saudi Arabia arms order, can issue export licenses: minister

Britain has complied with a court order over its decisions on granting export licenses to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, its trade minister said on Tuesday, meaning it can once again issue new licenses to export arms to the kingdom.

The Court of Appeal last year ruled that Britain broke the law by allowing arms sales to Saudi Arabia that might have been deployed in the war in Yemen.

The court concluded that Britain's government had erred in law in its decision-making processes on arms export licenses to Saudi Arabia, after activists said there was evidence the weapons had been used in violation of human rights statutes.

While the court's decision did not mean Britain had to halt arms exports to Saudi Arabia, it did mean it had to pause the granting of new export licenses to sell arms to the kingdom - Britain's biggest weapons purchaser.

Trade minister Liz Truss said the government had "now re-taken the decisions that were the subject of judicial review on the correct legal basis, as required".

"It follows that the undertaking (given) to the Court — that we would not grant any new licences for the export of arms or military equipment to Saudi Arabia for possible use in Yemen — falls away," she said in a written statement.

## France-Turkey tensions mount after NATO naval incident

For France, it was the final straw. For Turkey, it was a misunderstanding. For NATO, it could be a turning point.

The incident unfolded quickly in the eastern Mediterranean on June 10, when a French frigate under NATO command tried to inspect a Tanzanian-flagged cargo ship suspected of smuggling arms to Libya in violation of a UN embargo.

The French armed forces ministry, speaking on behalf of the government, said the frigate was harassed by three Turkish navy vessels escorting the cargo ship. A Turkish ship flashed its radar lights and its crew put on bulletproof vests and stood behind their light weapons, it said.

Turkey disputes this. It denies trafficking arms to Libya and says the cargo ship, the Cirkin, was carrying human-

itarian aid. It has accused the French navy of aggression.

Turkey's ambassador to France, Ismail Hakk Musa, said on July 1 the three Turkish warships were helping NATO enforce the UN arms embargo.

NATO ordered an investigation, but its contents are classified and NATO has not commented on its outcome. Two European diplomats told Reuters that France sent a letter to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg in early July saying the report did not "correctly establish the facts."

The US Pentagon declined to comment on the incident.

For France, the incident highlights what many NATO allies see as President Tayyip Erdogan's tendency to act against the Western alliance's interests and values.

After a series of disagreements, from Turkey's pur-

chase of weapons from Russia to gas drilling operations near Cyprus, France concluded that suspicions of Turkish arms smuggling to Libya were too serious to ignore, four NATO diplomats and officials told Reuters.

France has suspended its participation in NATO's Mediterranean mission, Sea Guardian, instead offering its assets to a European Union mission that is upholding the UN arms embargo but does not involve Turkish ships, diplomats said.

"What do you do when you have a NATO surveillance mission ... and one of those in the alliance is the one doing the trafficking, while saying it is implementing the (UN)embargo?" said an official from France's armed forces ministry, requesting anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

## U.S. wants to end Resistance by starving Lebanon: Naim Qassem

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Hezbollah's deputy secretary-general, Sheikh Naim Qassem, said, "the U.S. besides its allies is directing the starving plan against Lebanon in order to impose policies which are not in Beirut interests."

"The U.S. is using Israel to impose pressure on Resistance and achieve its goals in the re-

gion, while Hezbollah's existence is annoying and dangerous to them," he noted in a press interview with Lebanese Al-Ahd website.

"Lebanese positions related to solidarity with Syria, Iraq and the region annoy the U.S., because the U.S. wants to push Syria to fall into a trap and change its policies," he underlined.

He further said, "We know that Lebanon is under great economic pressure, but we made a decision to make every effort to build the state and work with the Lebanese government and governmental institutions to save the economy wherever possible."

"We try to make proposals to that help improve conditions, including what we recently

proposed and what the Secretary-General of Hezbollah said about the necessity of turning towards the East instead of West, to diversify the options," he said.

He emphasized that Lebanon should come out of Western dominance by strengthening ties with the eastern countries like China, Russia, and Iran.

## Brazil President tests positive for coronavirus

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro tested positive for the coronavirus Tuesday, shortly after the presidential palace said he had been displaying symptoms associated with the disease.

Bolsonaro announced his diagnosis to journalists, saying he had begun feeling ill on Sunday, multiple outlets reported.

The president reportedly also confirmed that he is taking

hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug touted by President Donald Trump as a possible preventive treatment for the disease, as well as azithromycin. Neither drug has been proven to be an effective prophylactic for Covid-19.



# FIFA orders Persepolis to pay Calderon \$ 580,000

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — FIFA has ordered Iranian football club Persepolis to pay \$ 580,000 to former coach Gabriel Calderon.

Persepolis parted ways with the Argentine in January after six months but have failed to pay his full wages so far.

Now, FIFA announced that the Iranian football club must pay the sum of \$ 580,000 to the ex-Betis coach.

Persepolis must also pay \$90,000 and \$75,000 to Calderon's assistants Joaquin Gil Arrondo and Inigo Valencia Amadoz, respectively.

Persepolis acknowledged the decision announced by FIFA regarding the unpaid salaries on Monday.

FIFA has previously ordered Persepolis to pay more than one million euros to former coach Branko Ivankovic.

The Reds also have to pay 200,000 euros to Ivankovic's assistants Igor Panadic (goal-keeping coach), Zlatko Ivankovic (assistant) and Marco (fitness coach).

The Iranian giants have 10 days to lodge their appeal against the decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Earlier, FIFA had opposed the payment of money to international creditors of Persepolis, but due to the decision of FIFA's Disciplinary Committee, the international governing body of football has agreed to deposit money into accounts of the club.

Persepolis have about \$ 650,000 blocked funds at FIFA, which they are unable to receive due to the International sanctions.



## Iran confirms friendly match against Uzbekistan



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN**— Head of Iran football national teams committee, Mehdi Kharati, announced the holding of a friendly match between the national teams of Iran and Uzbekistan on upcoming FIFA dates.

As reported by the official website of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), Kharati confirms the new friendly match for the Persian Leopards.

"Since the friendly matches in FIFA dates will be from August 31 to September 8, the FFIRI has followed up its plan for the preparation of the national team so that we could provide some friendly matches for our team during the period of FIFA dates," Kharati said.

According to Kharati, the match between Iran and Uzbekistan is scheduled for September 7 in Tashkent.

Previously, it was reported by media that Iran has reached an agreement with the Syrian football federation for another friendly match.

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

The 'Persian Leopards' have four must-win matches ahead in Group C.

Deagan Skocic's team are scheduled to host Hong Kong on October 8 in Tehran and meet Cambodia five days later in Phnom Penh.

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

## Persepolis coach Golmohammadi threatens to resign



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN**—Persepolis head coach, Yahya Golmohammadi, threatened to resign from his role if the problems of the club are not resolved.

While Persepolis are top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) table with 53 points, 12 points more than Sepahan and Tractor (both with 41), the club have been facing managerial problems in recent months, which has angered the team's head coach.

Yahya Golmohammadi has said that he will resign if the Ministry of Sports does not take any steps toward resolving the problems of Persepolis and does not make a decision about the club's board members. The disagreements between the three

members of the club's board of directors, namely Mehdi Rasoul Panah, Ali Raghbati, and Mehrdad Hashemi, have caused the problems over the financial and managerial issues in Persepolis.

The club also have other problems regarding the unpaid salaries of former coaches including Branko Ivankovic and Gabriele Calderon. On Monday, FIFA ordered the Iranian giants to pay \$ 580,000 to former coach Gabriel Calderon.

Golmohammadi, who became head coach of Persepolis in January 2020, scored a new record on July 4th that could be achieved by a Persepolis coach in IPL, which is six wins out of seven matches since his start of a managerial career in the club.

## Young Gaza amputees play soccer again after coronavirus curbs eased

**GAZA (Reuters)** — Young Palestinian soccer players, all amputees and many on crutches, were back on the field in Gaza on Tuesday for the first time since coronavirus restrictions were eased in the territory.

Their coach said some of the 26 athletes lost limbs to Israeli gunfire in Gaza, where Hamas, the ruling Islamist militant group, and Israel have fought three wars since 2008.

"We are now back on the field. We are training and keen to play in the league," said Mai Al-Yazji, 14, referring to an amputee teams' tournament for boys and girls under the age of 16.

Its borders tightly controlled by Israel and Egypt, Gaza has reported 72 coronavirus infections and one death from the respiratory disease. The Mediterranean coastal enclave has around two million inhabitants, many of them impoverished.

Gaza health authorities recently allowed sports clubs, gyms, mosques, restaurants and event halls to resume operations.



About 80 adult amputees compete in their own soccer league. Many of them were injured in the conflict with Israel, according to the Palestine Amputee Football Association in Gaza.

The association sponsors the league in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the ICRC also provides uniforms and crutches.

"We are very happy we are restarting the amputee football activity, training and competitions," said Ignacio Casares, the ICRC office director in Gaza.

"Make no mistake, they are athletes, they have special abilities and they are somehow special as well as persons," he told Reuters.

Fouad Abu Chalyoun, chairman of the Palestine Amputee Football Association, said the partnership with the ICRC helped in the amputees' rehabilitation and re-engagement with the community.

## Securing Afif's future, finding foreign players Xavi's immediate targets

Renewing Akram Afif's contract and securing replacements for Gabi and Marco Fabian are top of Xavi's list after signing a one-year extension as Al Sadd head coach.

The Spanish legend put pen to paper on Sunday, committing his future to the reigning Qatar Stars League champions till the end of the 2020-21 season.

The FIFA World Cup winner and Barcelona legend said he would work closely with the Al Sadd management on a number of key issues.

"The most important of which is the renewal of Akram Afif's contract," said Xavi in a statement on the Al Sadd website.

Afif is a key member of the Al Sadd squad

and securing the 2019 AFC Player of the Year's future is vital ahead of the resumption of the QSL and 2020 AFC Champions League.

"We must also sign foreign players to replace Gabi and Marco Fabian," added Xavi, with Al Sadd recently announcing the departures of both.

With the QSL resuming on July 24, Xavi was glad to welcome back on Saturday the Al Sadd players who were attending a national team training camp.

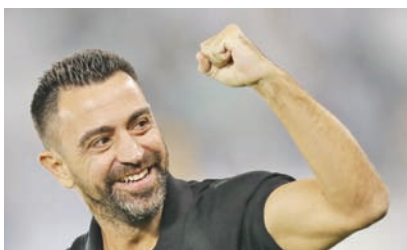
"I am happy that the squad is complete after the return of the remaining first team players, in preparation for this upcoming period and the resumption of the league championship."

Al Sadd were third in the QSL standings on 32 points when the season was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March. With five matches remaining, Al Duhail lead on 42 points while Al Rayyan (38) are second.

Xavi, however, believes there is still all to play for and is determined to see Al Sadd hitting the ground running when competitive action resumes.

"My complete focus in this current period is to fully equip the players for the upcoming domestic and Asian competitions."

He will get a chance to gauge the level of the players in friendlies against Umm Salal on Friday and Muaither six days later. Al Sadd were also on course for a berth in



the 2020 AFC Champions League knockout stage, with Xavi's men having four points on the board in Group D after two matches before the season was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Source: the-afc)

## Sardar Azmoun on Milan's radar

Ralf Rangnick has a number of different targets in mind as he looks to begin his revolution at AC Milan with a bang, a report claims.

Sky Italia confirmed on Monday that Rangnick has already signed a deal with Milan, and despite the denials of the club Calciomercato.com are in agreement that the German will arrive.

The outlet reports that he will become head coach and technical director at Milan with ample decision-making power on the market.

Red Bull Salzburg midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai is the main target as the Hungarian talent is a protégé of Rangnick. The consolidated relationships with his agent and the Austrian club means Milan are ahead of PSG and Arsenal in the race.

The negotiation is hotting up nicely and the Rossoneri know they must pay the €25million release clause – payable over 3 years – to secure a major target for Rangnick.

In addition, Rangnick is already clear on the other signings that must arrive: at least one strong central defender, two midfielders and two forwards.

Nikola Milenkovic of Fiorentina and Robin Koch of SC Freiburg are the two hot names for the defense, while Luka Jovic from Real Madrid and Sardar Azmoun from Zenit are priorities for the attack.

The name of Florentino Luis could be revisited too, but the negotiations before were led by current directors Massara and Maldini, whose future is to be deciphered.

(Source: One Football)

## Mostafa Karkhaneh tests positive for coronavirus

**Volleyball.ir** — Saipa volleyball head coach Mostafa Karkhaneh has tested positive for COVID-19.

The Iranian club have confirmed that their coach has been tested positive.

The long-serving coach will have to undergo a 14-day home quarantine.

The volleyball federation wishes him a speedy recovery.

The number of people tested positive for COVID-19 infection in Iran has risen to 243,051 and 11,731 have lost their lives.

## Shahrdari Bam crowned Iran's Kowsar Women League title

**IRNA** — Shahrdari Bam were crowned Iran's Kowsar Women Football League champion on Monday.

The Iran football federation decided to end the competition following the coronavirus outbreak and introduced Shahrdari Bam as champions.

The number of people tested positive for COVID-19 infection in Iran has risen to 243,051 and 11,731 have lost their lives.

Shahrdari Bam, who lead the Iran Women's League table, were named the champions for the third time in a row.

Shahrdari Bam are the most decorated football team in the Kowsar Women Football League with seven titles out of 12.

## Ex-Iran wrestling president tests positive for COVID-19

**Tasnim** — Former president of Iran Wrestling Federation Mohammad Reza Taleghani has reportedly tested positive for COVID-19.

He will have to undergo a 14-day home quarantine.

Also, Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Hossein Nouri has contracted the coronavirus and has been hospitalized in Tehran.

The number of people tested positive for COVID-19 infection in Iran has risen to 243,051 and 11,731 have lost their lives.

## Al Ain boost squad with Brazilian Jorgens

UAE Pro League side Al Ain have announced the signing of young Brazilian defender Erik Jorgens de Menezes.

The 19-year-old left-back joins former AFC Champions League winners Al Ain from Porto Alegre outfit Internacional on a three-year contract.

Jorgens is expected to arrive in UAE on Monday and will be a good addition to Pedro Emanuel's side in their bid to salvage their 2020 AFC Champions League hopes, with the 13-time UAE Pro League winners currently fourth in Group D.

(Source: the-afc)

## BWF cancels China Masters, Dutch Open due to coronavirus

Badminton's BWF Tour Super 100 events in China and Netherlands have been cancelled due to the coronavirus crisis, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) said on Tuesday.

The China Masters, originally scheduled for February and March, was initially postponed until May and then moved again to August, while the Dutch Open had been due to take place in October in Almere, Netherlands.

Both Super 100 tournaments have now been removed from the BWF's revamped calendar.

However, badminton's World Tour is due to restart with the Taipei Open during the first week of September, followed by the Korea Open a week later.

The season-ending World Tour Finals in Guangzhou, China has been pushed back a week and will now conclude on Dec. 20.

(Source: Reuters)



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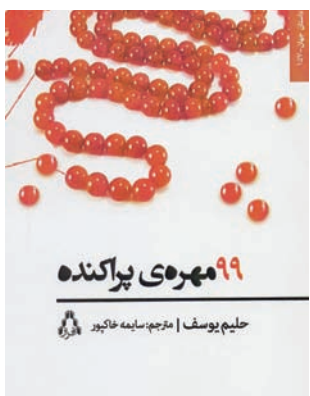
The most deserving person is he who can punish the guilty, but shows indulgence and forgiveness.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Syrian Kurdish writer Helim Yusiv's "99 Scattered Beads" published in Persian

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of Syrian Kurdish author Helim Yusiv's novel "99 Scattered Beads" ("99 Moriken Belavbuyi") has been published by Afraz Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Saymeh Khakpur.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Syrian Kurdish writer Helim Yusiv novel "99 Scattered Beads".

Their problems have always been a matter of great concern to Azad.

But thanks to his work, the pain of immigration, and the traumas of a divided country and the story of the secrets of an old love are mentioned in this book.

With realistic scenes and situations "99 Scattered Beads" is both a panoramic novel with details.

"No doubt the translation of literary works help introduce other languages while it will also be a step forward introducing the culture and literature of other nations. I also wanted people to get to know more about the Kurdish society and their culture," Khakpur has said.

"This novel narrates the events happening in West Asia for the Syrian Kurdish nation that is involved in an unwanted war and the problems Kurds are facing. The book tells of the pain and tragedies, which are sometimes filled with love, and it discloses the inner character of the people living in this region," she added.

Since 2000, Yusiv has lived in Germany. He produces his works in the languages of Kurdish and Arabic. He has released his novels, short stories and plays predominantly in Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, United Arab Emirates, England, Germany and Turkey. Only a few of his works have been released in Syria.

"Republic of Fools", "Executions of a Nose", "Shoes and Head" and "Worldstation" are among his books.

## Spanish festival picks "The World's Last House"

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — "The World's Last House", a short movie by Iranian director Amir Gholami, will be competing in the Riurau Film Festival (RRFF) running in Marina Alta, Spain from August 28 to September 11.

The short will be competing in the General Fiction category with several other short films from different countries, including Poland, France, Denmark and Spain.



A scene from "The World's Last House" by director Amir Gholami from Iran.

The film is a bitter comedy about a person living in an isolated village in Sanandaj, Kordestan Province. He wants to solve the problems of the people in the village, however, another person decides to kill him.

# Poor communication during pandemic brings depression to artists, gallery owners: art expert

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The director of Shokuh Gallery, a major art gallery in Tehran, has said that the lack of communication between people and art aficionados impacting the art community following the outbreak of coronavirus has caused the artists to lose motivation and feel depressed.

"Our type of work is closely connected with people and if this communication does not exist, the artists and the gallery owners will feel depressed," Behnush Forutan told the Persian service of Honaronline on Tuesday.

"Artists can work in isolation for a while, however, they need to display their artworks and hear the responses and see the feedback, or else they will lose motivation," she noted.

She added that the galleries and the art centers need to continue their activities because if the art does not exist in society, people will lose their high spirits.

"Holding exhibitions during the coronavirus pandemic is very hard. We need to observe all the health protocols. We ask the visitors to disinfect their shoes before they enter the gallery, and next we provide them with face masks and disinfectant solutions, while we also try to observe social distancing," she said.

She added, "The artists who are wellknown can sell their artworks most any way, and do not need to hold exhibits, but new talents and young artists need to be introduced, and this has been very hard these days. Holding solo exhibits helps introduce these young talents where they can find opportunities to sell artworks. However, the artist themselves also show no interest



Paintings by a group of artists are view in an exhibition at Shokuh Gallery on December 7, 2019. (Honaronline/Amir-Hossein Khalili)

because there is no guarantee there will be visitors at the gallery."

"During this deep recession facing the country, only a few can be found to purchase artworks, and even some of the private

collectors decided to sell their collections to make a living. As a result, young artists cannot count on selling their artworks these days," she lamented.

The gallery is currently playing host

to a group exhibition by the Sakoo Art School in Tehran.

The exhibit will continue until July 14 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.

## Book on Abbas Kiarostami removed from stores over his son's lawsuit



Front cover of "I'm at Home", a collection of filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's private letters to his former wife.

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — A Tehran court has ordered all copies of a book containing a collection of renowned Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's private letters to his former wife to be removed from bookstores over his son Ahmad's lawsuit against the publisher.

Speaking to the Persian service of ILNA, Ahmad's attorney, Maryam Kianersi, said, "The book 'I'm at Home' has been published without permission from Ms. Parvin Amirqoli [Kiarostami's former wife] and Ahmad Kiarostami."

"Therefore, Ms. Amirqoli and Mr. Kiarostami filed a lawsuit against the publisher, and the court ordered all the thousands of copies of the book to be

confiscated," she added.

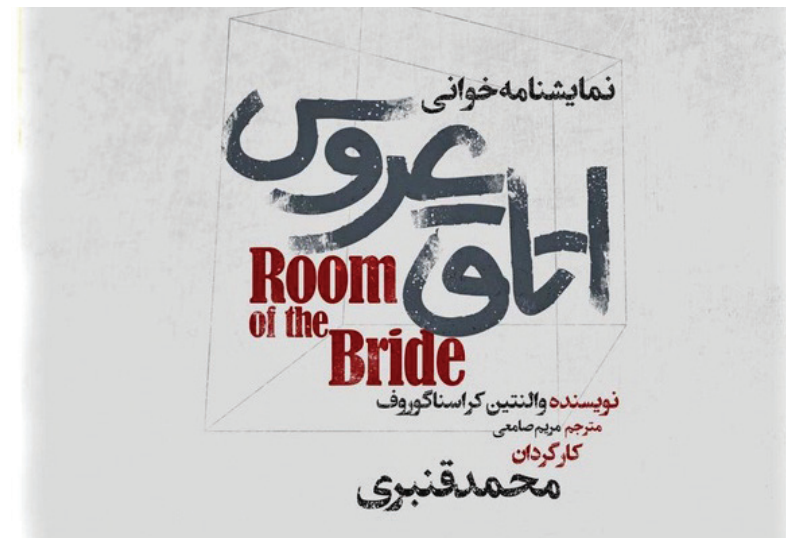
Nazar, the publisher of the book, had only obtained permission from Bahman Kiarostami, another son of Kiarostami, to release the book.

"Nazar Publications will remain silent concerning Mr. Ahmad Kiarostami's untrue remarks; a good approach that the late Kiarostami followed over all of his life," Nazar managing-director Mahmudreza Bahmanpur has said in a statement.

Kiarostami married Amirqoli in 1969 and the marriage ended in 1982 with two sons.

A winner of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 for his "Taste of Cherry", Kiarostami died of cancer on July 5, 2016 at the age of 76.

## Mehregan Theater to host reading performance of "The Bride's Room"



A poster for a reading performance of Russian writer Valentin Krasnogorov's comic play "The Bride's Room" in Tehran.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — A reading of Russian writer Valentin Krasnogorov's comic play "The Bride's Room" will be performed at Tehran's Mehregan Theater on July 11.

Mohammad Qanbari is the director of the play, which will star Elaheh Shahparast, Elaheh Zahmati, Leila Mirzai, Vesal Amini and several other actors.

Women aged between 15 and 70 are the characters of the unusual play "The Bride's Room". The bride, her mother, sister and girlfriends, as well as other women — relatives of the bridegroom — are gathering in the bride's room of a palace for marriage registration, as is customary in

Russia. But nobody knows where the bridegroom is. Pending his arrival, the events of this play develop.

There have been hundreds of performances of the play in Russian theaters.

Krasnogorov is one of the best known modern Russian dramatists. His first play, "An Ideal Man", was written in 1976. His plays, "The Dog", "Small Tragedies", "The Delights of Adultery", "Somebody Must Leave", "Now or Never", "Love Medicine", "Several Hours From the Life of a Man and a Woman", "That Weak Gentle Sex", "A Cruel Lesson" and several others have been performed in more than 400 theaters of various countries.

## Five Iranian shorts to compete in Mister Vorky festival



A scene from the short film "The Father of Trees" by Teimur Qaderi.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — A lineup of five Iranian short films will be competing in the Mister Vorky International Festival of One-Minute and Short Films, which will take place in the Serbian town of Ruma from August 12 to 23.

The lineup includes "Return" by Mostafa Gholami, "The Father of Trees" by Teimur Qaderi, "Less" by Mohammad Zamani, "Heaven" by Reza Moayyedi and "The Condemned"

by Nima Daneshmand.

The Mister Vorky festival promotes the best one-minute and short films from all continents.

The goal of the Mister Vorky festival is to present short films that are innovative, different, experimental and daring.

The organizer of the festival is the Independent Film Center Vorky Team, which in this way pays tribute to the great Serbian-American film artist Slavko Vorkapich-Vorky.

## "Oxford History of Modern Europe" appears in Persian bookstores

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — "The Oxford History of Modern Europe" has recently been published in Persian.

Ebrahim Amel-Mehrabi is the translator of the book released by Elmi-Farhangi Publications in Tehran.

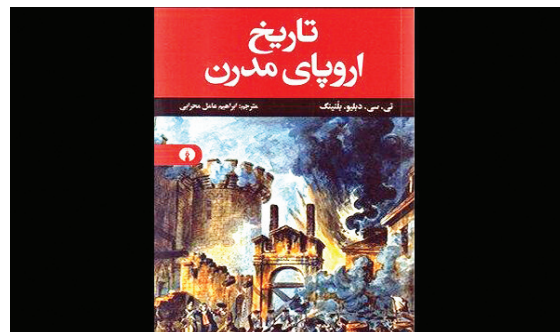
Written by eleven contributors of international standing, this book offers a readable and authoritative account of Europe's turbulent history from the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century to

the present day.

Originally published in 2000, the book was edited by T. C. W. Blanning.

Each chapter portrays both change and continuity, revolutions and stability, and covers the political, economic, social, cultural, and military life of Europe.

This book provides a better understanding of modern Europe, how it came to be what it is, and where it may be going in the future.



Front cover of the Persian translation of "The Oxford History of Modern Europe".