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"All of us must be united against enemy"



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Defying U.S., China and Iran near trade and military partnership: NY Times

Iran and China have quietly drafted a sweeping economic and security partnership that would clear the way for billions of dollars of Chinese investments in energy and other sectors, undercutting the Trump administration's efforts to isolate the Iranian government because of its nuclear and military programs.

The partnership, detailed in an 18-page proposed agreement obtained by The New York Times, would vastly expand Chinese presence in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways and dozens of other projects. In exchange, China would receive a regular supply of Iranian oil over the next 25 years.

The document also describes deepening military cooperation, potentially giving China a foothold in a region that has been a strategic preoccupation of the United States for decades. It calls for joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence sharing — all to fight "the lopsided battle with terrorism, drug and human trafficking and cross-border crimes."

The partnership — first proposed by China's leader, Xi Jinping, during a visit to Iran in 2016 — was approved by President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet in June, Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said last week.

Iranian officials have publicly stated that there is a pending agreement with China, and one Iranian official, as well as several people who have discussed it with the Iranian government, confirmed that it is the document obtained by The Times, which is labeled "final version" and dated June, 2020.

In Beijing, officials have not disclosed the terms of the agreement, and it is not clear whether Mr. Xi's government has signed off or, if it has, when it might announce it.

If put into effect as detailed, the partnership would create new and potentially dangerous flash points in the deteriorating relationship between China and the United States.

It represents a major blow to the Trump administration's aggressive policy toward Iran since abandoning the nuclear deal reached in 2015 by President Obama and the leaders of six other nations after two years of grueling negotiations. **→3**

Trump not caring about human rights in Persian Gulf Arab states: human rights activist

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — A former director of the Middle East and North Africa division of Human Rights Watch says the Trump administration does not care about the human rights records of Persian Gulf Arab countries, noting Donald Trump "cares only about selling weapons and making a profit."

Some states in the Persian Gulf region such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain are continuing repression against other Arab nations, especially Yemen, while global institutions like the UN stand idly by without any active reaction.

"Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and UAE are closely tied to the United States and major clients of the United States regarding arm sale and purchases," Sarah Leah Whitson tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ How do you evaluate the reforms which Muhammad bin Salman talked

about in Saudi Arabia?

A: Regarding the reforms in Saudi Arabia, particularly about the women's rights, I think these reforms are but long overdue, and it is very embarrassing that it took so long for the Saudi government to do such basic things for a woman such as driving permission, allowing women to travel without a permission of a man, but obviously a lot remains to be done: To bring Saudi Arabia into harmony with where the globe is with respect to equal rights to women.

However, unfortunately, these reforms in Saudi Arabia have come with a clear message to the Saudi people that it is only MBS (Muhammad Bin Salman) who decides what reforms should be made and when to make and how to make, and he has chosen to punish Saudi citizens who have dared to call for very same reforms, even ones that he himself has promoted. In fact, it is a reform with autocracy. **→7**

Black Lives Matter protest in front of the U.S. embassy in London

By staff & agencies

Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters hold a demo against racism and police brutality in front of the U.S. embassy in London on Saturday, July 11.

Meanwhile, thousands of protesters have marched through Brighton in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Demonstrators held placards and shouted "black lives matter every day" and "UK is not innocent".

It follows an outcry over a video showing a man shouting "I can't breathe" while being restrained on the ground by three Sussex Police officers.

In another BLM protest, attended by hundreds in Hull, the police custody death of a man was remembered.

Brighton protesters were serenaded by a string quartet as they passed the city's war memorial. The Sussex force said the man was arrested

and became aggressive towards officers before being placed on the ground.

The incident has been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

Last month, more than 10,000 protesters marched through the East Sussex city in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement worldwide.

It followed the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who died after a white police officer knelt on his neck for almost nine minutes in the U.S. city of Minneapolis on 25 May.

His death sparked a wave of Black Lives Matter protests, including in the UK.

■ **Seattle**

Hundreds of activists, who had been demonstrating against police brutality since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May, then flocked to the neighbourhood and set up a peaceful occupied protest. **→10**

Coronavirus more infectious now by 3-9 times: Iranian expert

TEHRAN — Global researches show that a specific change in the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus genome has caused it to be more infectious by 3-9 times compared to the onset of the pandemic, deputy health minister Reza Malekzadeh has said.

A research published in the journal Cell indicates the variant in question, D614G, makes a small but effective change in the virus's 'Spike' protein, which the virus uses to enter human cells.

Bette Korber, a theoretical biologist at Los Alamos National Laboratory and lead author of the study, noted, "The D614G variant first came to our attention in early April, as we had observed a strikingly repetitive pattern. All over the world, even when local epidemics had many cases of the original form circulating, soon after the D614G variant was introduced into a region it became the prevalent form."

The SARS-CoV-2 virus has a low mutation rate overall (much lower than the viruses that cause

influenza and HIV-AIDS). The D614G variant appears as part of a set of four linked mutations that appear to have arisen once and then moved together around the world as a consistent set of variations.

Will Fischer of Los Alamos, an author on the study, said "both that this increase in infectivity was detected by careful observation of sequence data alone, and that our experimental colleagues could confirm it with live virus in such a short time." **→9**



© Mehr/ Behnam Yousefi

Carpet-weaving, most common home job in Jiria

A couple weaves a carpet with specific pattern on an old loom installed at their home in the small village of Jiria, Farahan county, central Markazi province, on July 9, 2020.

The knowledge of carpet-weaving has been passed down from generation to generation, so that it is now the most common job in the village.

Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and high quality. Official figures show handmade carpets have a significant share in Iran's non-oil exports.

Travel industry set to reflect true image of Iran's safety, capability

TEHRAN — Iran has been taking major efforts to guarantee the safety of foreign travelers and reflect a true image of the country and its capacities in the tourism sector, deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri said on Saturday.

"Given that the biggest challenge in foreign arrivals is the lack of a true [international] image of Iran and building trust that the country is practicing health protocols to overcome the coronavirus crisis," CHTN quoted Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Seyyed Zia Hashemi who has recently been named the Islamic Republic's new cultural attaché to Sweden by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, the report said.

"The joint goal of the [tourism] ministry and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization is to reduce the Iranophobia and to reflect a real image of the country and its potentials as a [capable] host for [organizing] safe journeys," Teymouri noted.

Regarding Sweden, Teymouri said, "This important Scandinavian country with about ten million population, welcomes some seven million inbound passengers per annum and it has plentiful tourism capacities to cooperate, especially in the field of sharing expertise as well as holding joint cultural weeks that led to more mutual understanding." **→8**

Washington failed to prove Gen. Soleimani was threat to American interests: UN investigator

Agnes Callamard says U.S. violated principle of sovereignty through assassination

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Agnes Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, has said that the United States violated the principle of sovereignty by assassinating Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in early January.

In an interview with Al Mayadeen, she said that Washington failed to prove that the assassination was carried out to protect U.S. interests, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Callamard said on Thursday that the U.S. targeted killing of Soleimani was unlawful and risked eroding international laws that govern the conduct of hostilities, The New York Times reported. "Absent an actual imminent threat to life, the course of action taken by the U.S. was unlawful," Callamard wrote in a report that she presented on Thursday to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

She said that the U.S. attack on Soleimani was the first targeted drone killing of a senior foreign government official on the territory of a third country.

"It is hard to imagine that a similar strike against a Western military leader would not be considered as an act of war," she wrote. As a result of the killing, the international community faced "the very real prospect that states may opt to 'strategically' eliminate high ranking military officials outside the context of a 'known' war, and seek to justify the killing on the grounds of the target's classification as a 'terrorist' who posed a potential future threat," Callamard said in her report.

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

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

Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the UN office in Geneva, has condemned the U.S. assassination of Soleimani as an act of state terrorism that has endangered world peace and security.

Addressing a regular session of the UN Human Rights Council on Thursday, Baghaei Hamaneh described the assassination as an "illegal measure" and a "big crime".

He said the U.S. and the country that hosted the American drones used in the killing of General Soleimani must be held accountable for the atrocity, Tasnim reported.

The U.S. action was a violation of international law, the UN Charter and international human rights law (IHRL), the Iranian envoy said, adding that the assassination was an immoral and dangerous action.

Washington must not be allowed to justify such illegal measure under any pretext, Baghaei Hamaneh stated.

Benjamin Friedman, from George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, said the killing could be construed as an act of war.

"This attack is different from all the drone strikes because it targeted a senior figure in Iran's government," he told Al Jazeera. "It seemed like an act of war and an assassination."

Deputy minister: U.S. losing strategic advantages of Iran due to hostility

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said the U.S. has deprived itself of Iran's strategic advantages due to its hostile positions towards his country.



"It is true that a part of the U.S. hostility towards Iran is due to the Middle-East issues, the Zionist regime of Israel's security and Iran's defense for the Palestinian people's rights, but the major part of this hostility more than any anything else derives from Iran's geopolitical and strategic importance," Baharvand wrote in a memo in the Persian-language Iran newspaper on Sunday.

"The U.S. has lost Iran's strategic advantages. They have chosen the wrong path and embarked on enmity towards Iran instead of concessions to Iran, in a bid to prevent the presence of their rivals in the region and compensate for their failures," he added.

The Iranian officials have many times stressed that they cannot trust Washington and its allies due to their enmities.

Last September, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei underlined the necessity for the country's interaction with different world states, except Israel and the U.S., and said Washington and the European states which have shown clear animosity towards the Iranian nation should not be trusted.

"The way for interaction and negotiation with any country, except the U.S. and the Zionist regime, is not closed but the countries which have hoisted a flag of hostility against the Islamic Republic, headed by the U.S. and some European countries, should not be trusted at all because they clearly show animosity towards the Iranian nation," Ayatollah Khamenei said, addressing members of the Assembly of Experts in Tehran.

"The Europeans step onto the scene seeming as a mediator and negotiate. They make contacts, speak for a long time, and make promises, but all in vain," he said, and added, "They are neither able enough nor dominant enough nor have sufficient possibilities, yet their thoughts are the very same thoughts of the Americans."

Ayatollah Khamenei blasted the European states for disloyalty to the nuclear deal and their practical commitment to the U.S. sanctions, and said they are unlikely to act any differently in future as well; "therefore, we should be fully disappointed at the Europeans".

He stressed that there is no ban or problem with meeting or signing contracts with the European states, but no hope should be pinned on them and no trust should be laid in them.

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the social, political and economic situation of the U.S. and Europe, and said, "The U.S. which is our main enemy is today the most hated government in the world and the Europeans are themselves admitting their weaknesses and decline of their power."

Ayatollah Khamenei: All problems can be solved

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that all economic problems can be solved while suggesting that it is inadvisable that MPs insult executive officials.

"If self-reliance thinking and national confidence, especially among the youth, be on the rise and the country's strong capabilities are tapped, and illusory hopes on outside borders... are weakened, I am quite confident that economic problems are solvable," the Leader told the new parliament (Majlis) through a videoconference.

Ayatollah Khamenei went on to say that "the Majlis should prioritize issues, avoid being drawn into marginal issues and also work honestly for the people."

Efforts should "have tangible effect on the process of solving problems," the Leader suggested.

He also said that factional disputes will make the people upset, noting, "All of us must be united against enemy."

The Leader also called the sitting parliament, the 11th of its kind since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, "symbol of the people's hope and expectation".

He said people participated in the February parliamentary elections despite economic problems and the enemies' propaganda, which shows the people's hope for solving the problems is alive.

"Know the value of this important position," the Leader advised.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said that presence of "motivated, faithful, capable, educated and competent youths" in the parliament

"People are against conflicts between the three branches of government."



has made it very "good" and "promising". Elsewhere, he likened economic problems in the country to an "illness".

"Undoubtedly, the country will beat this illness through its strength and defense power, as it is admitted by the enemies that they failed to reach their anti-Iran objectives through harshest sanctions and comprehensive pressure," the Leader stated.

The Leader noted that "inflation, devaluation of the national currency, illogical price rise, problems of production enterprises and problems caused by sanctions" are among the issues that have made the people's living, especially the poor and middle classes, difficult.

The Leader also pointed to the country's capabilities, citing establishment of thousands of knowledge-based companies, implementation of hundreds of infrastructure projects, continuous inauguration of new projects as well as astonishing progress in the military industry and also advances in

space technology as examples of the country's high potential.

The Leader also called housing a key issue and said facilitating marriage of the youth and increasing birth rate in order to prevent the ageing of the population are among other important issues which should be addressed.

Ayatollah Khamenei attached great importance to relying on domestic capacities to solve the problems.

The main issues to solve are "production, employment, inflation, management of financial system and non-reliance on oil revenue," the Leader insisted.

■ Leader advises interaction among branches of government

Ayatollah Khamenei also advised interaction among the three branches of government.

The judiciary and executive bodies must implement the parliament's approvals, he said, adding that the parliament must consider realities and capacities in its approvals.

Srebrenica genocide demonstrated Europe's ineptitude, UN failure: Zarif

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995 laid bare Europe's ineptitude that continues until today and a failure on the part of the United Nations.

"25 yrs ago today, #SrebrenicaGenocide began as Europe failed to uphold its basic duties. Quarter of a century later Europe is plagued by same ineptitude," Zarif tweeted.

Zarif made the remarks as Bosnia and Herzegovina commemorated the carnage on Saturday.

The massacre have stood out as the worst carnage of civilians in Europe since World War II.

During the Bosnian war, Bosnian Serb forces pushed



non-Serbs out of territories they sought for their Serb statelet. Fleeing Muslims took shelter in several eastern towns, including Srebrenica, that were designated as United Nations "safe zones", according to Reuters.

Zarif said, "The failure of the @UN to take any action at the time—to forever haunt the world body—should remain a lesson for the present."

On July 11, 1995, the Serb forces commanded by General Ratko Mladic overran Srebrenica, which was protected by lightly armed Dutch peacekeepers. They sent women and children away and captured and executed the men and boys they found. The bodies were dumped into mass graves and later exhumed by UN investigators and used as evidence in war crimes trials of Bosnian Serb leaders.

Ghalibaf says parliament's main goal is solving people's problems

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on Sunday that solving the people's economic problems is the main goal of the new parliament.

In a meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei through videoconference, Ghalibaf said "reforming budget", "renovating tax system", "supporting vulnerable classes of society", "removing obstacles to production" and "developing foreign business" are the main priorities of the parliament.

He also attached great importance to cooperation among the three branches of

government.

Ghalibaf said in June that solving economic problems and budget restructuring are parliament's priorities.

"We assure our dear people that economy and the people's livelihood are priorities in the 11th Majlis," he said at an open session of the parliament.

In a message to the new parliament in May, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei emphasized that attention must be paid to economy.

"In the area of economy, we have not got a favorable grade in achieving justice in the 'decade of progress and justice'....

This unwanted reality must make all prioritize livelihood of the poor classes of the society," the Leader said in his message to the parliament.

The Leader noted that economy and culture are the top priorities of the country. "Currently, economy and culture are on the top list of the country's priorities."

To solve economic problems, the Leader suggested, it is necessary to revise policies to boost employment, production, increase value of national currency and tame the inflation. He added that the general policies of the resistance economy must also be given priority.



Ukraine plane downed due to radar operator's error: Iran Civil Aviation Organization

(Press TV) — The Civil Aviation Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CAO.IRI) says the mismanagement of an air defense unit's radar system by its operator was the key "human error" that led to the accidental downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane in early January.

In a statement issued late Saturday, the organization said a failure in the mobile air defense system occurred due to a human error in following the procedure for aligning the radar, causing a "107-degree error" in the system.

It added that this error "initiated a chain of hazard," which subsequently led to further errors in the minutes before the plane was shot down including wrong identification of the passenger plane that was mistaken for a military target.

The statement noted that due to radar misalignment, the air defense unit's operator misidentified the passenger plane as a target, which was approaching Tehran from southwest.

With 167 passengers and nine crewmembers on board, Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 crashed outside Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on January 8, moments after takeoff.

Iranian authorities acknowledged that the plane had been downed due to human error at a time when Iran's air defenses were on high alert due to increased hostile American aerial activity in the aftermath of Iran's missile strike on an Iraqi military base, which



houses U.S.-led coalition forces in the Arab country.

The missile strike came after terrorist American forces assassinated Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), along with his companions, outside Baghdad International Airport on direct order from U.S. President Donald Trump.

Elsewhere in the CAO's document, which is not the final report on the accident investigation, the body said the first of the two missiles launched at the aircraft was fired by an air defense unit operator who had acted "without receiving any response from the Coordination Center" on which he depended.

According to the report, the second missile was fired 30 seconds later after the air defense unit's operator "observed that the detected target was continuing on its flight trajectory."

The military prosecutor for Tehran Province, Gholamabbas Torkisaid, said late last month that the downing of the Ukrainian passenger plane was the result of human error on the part of the air defense unit's operator, ruling out the possibility of a cyberattack or any other type of sabotage.

He added that a mobile air defense unit was responsible for the shooting down, because its operator had failed to determine the direction of north correctly and, as such, identified the aircraft as a target, which was approaching Tehran from southwest.

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

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on June 22 that the country would send to France "within the next few days" the black box of the Ukrainian passenger plane.

Zarif said the Islamic Republic had already informed Ukraine that Tehran was ready to settle all legal issues pertaining to the tragic incident, establish a procedure for compensating the families of victims and reimbursing the Ukrainian airline for the incident.

Enemies oppose Iran-China partnership: Vaezi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The enemies oppose deepening of economic and commercial ties between Iran and China, says Iranian presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi.

"The issues that are raised in social media are not true," Vaezi said on Saturday night on national television, Mehr reported.

"The reason behind the enemy's anger is that they have failed to reach their goals with regard to Iran," he said, adding that the enemies "were after [fomenting] unrest and isolating the people and Iran and driving a wedge between the people and the establishment."

He said the Iran-China roadmap does not entail the Chinese control on Iranian islands or the presence of their military forces by any means.

The 25-year agreement with China defines a roadmap to mutual cooperation without any discussion about Iran's southern islands or deployment of military forces, the veteran politician said.

The media speculations about the deal are just "illusions and rumors" spread by certain parties who try to disrupt Iran's relations with China, he stated.

Vaezi said the frameworks of the agreement have been defined, but it has not been finalized yet.



Any binding agreement must be ratified by the parliament, so that nothing would be hidden from the country's legal bodies, the president's chief of staff underlined, assuring

the people that the agreement with China would comply with the constitution.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on June 23 that Iran and China have drafted

a 25-year plan for comprehensive partnership 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 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.

Guardian Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said on Saturday that the council supports the Iran-China partnership plan.

"All international agreements and deals must be reviewed in the Majlis and the Guardian Council, and the same is true of Iran and China's 25-year plan," Kadkhodaei said during a press conference, according to ISNA.

"In my opinion, the totality of Iran and China's 25-year plan was good and we should support it," he said. "The enemy's stance shows that the Islamic Republic has taken the right path."

Envoy felicitates Iraq over Mosul victory anniversary

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad, Iraj Masjedi, has congratulated the Iraqi people and government on the anniversary of the liberation of Mosul from Daesh (ISIS).

In a message to Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, Masjedi congratulated the victory to Iraqi prime minister, government political and religious leaders, army, Popular Mobilization Forces, security forces, police, Peshmerga and nomads who played major role in the victory, according to IRNA.

Masjedi pointed to senior Iraqi religious leader Ayatollah Ali Sistani's historic Fatwa which played a significant part in Iraqis' fight against Daesh terrorists.

This great victory showed that the Iraqi government and people can overcome all obstacles by unity and empathy, he added.

The diplomat also commemorated Iran's top anti-terrorist commander, martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, and martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandes, who played significant role in defeating ISIS in Iraq.

Ambassador Masjedi denounced the U.S. government's terrorist act to assassinate the two anti-terrorist commanders.



Mosul fell in June 2014, when Daesh in an attack took control of the city. Iraqi forces launched the operation to retake Mosul on October 16, 2016.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi officially announced Mosul liberation on July 9, 2017.

Shortly after Daesh unleashed its terror campaign in Iraq in 2014, Ayatollah Sistani issued a fatwa calling on

all Iraqi citizens to defend their country.

Iran provided advisory help to the Iraqi security forces in their three years of war against Daesh militants in Iraq who were mainly composed of terrorists from different countries as well as former Baathist officers loyal to Saddam Hussein.

The Mosul victory marked the formal end of a fierce campaign that lasted nearly nine months and left much of Iraq's second-largest city in ruins.

Top Iranian military officials, including Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri, congratulated Iraqi military and political officials on their victory.

In a message to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in November 2017, General Soleimani declared the promised defeat of Daesh.

Soleimani, who has been at frontline positions in battles against Daesh in Iraq and Syria, thanked Ayatollah Khamenei's wise leadership, the sacrifices of Iraqi and Syrian people and governments as well as the defenders of the shrine for their courageous fight against the terrorist group.

Western action against Syria 'unacceptable': ambassador

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to the Netherlands Alireza Kazemi Abadi says the new action made by Western states against Syria in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is imbalanced and unacceptable.

The 94th session of the executive council of the OPCW wrapped up on Thursday

with 29 votes in favor, 9 abstentions and 3 negative votes on a draft decision on "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic" at The Hague-based headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Kazemi Abadi said such measure has been in line with politicizing the OPCW

and creating disputes among members, IRNA reported.

The Iranian diplomat termed as "illegitimate" the establishment of a fact-finding team, and criticized the group for its biased and unrealistic report against Syria, which accused the country of using chemical weapons in Ltamenah, northern Syria.

Kazemi Abadi said the new action has ignored many factors like Syria's efforts to maintain cooperation with the OPCW.

The decision which was moved by France and other western countries was adopted while India, Pakistan, South Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, UAE, Algeria, Bangladesh and Kenya abstained to vote, and Russia, China and Iran opposed it.

Ex-Israel spymaster admits: Iran can't be stopped in nuclear bid



TEHRAN (Press TV) — A former Mossad chief, who ran the agency under three Israeli prime ministers, admits that Iran's nuclear program cannot be stopped, expressing confidently that the Islamic Republic is determined to advance its atomic work.

Shabtai Shavit, Mossad chief from 1989 through 1996, made the remarks to The Times of Israel in a June 2 interview that the daily published on Wednesday.

In the interview, the 80-year-old was asked about a book he has written under the title Head of Mossad -- published in Hebrew in 2018 -- where he has admitted Iran cannot be stopped in its nuclear bid.

"So the worst-case scenario is that the Iranians won't give up on their decision, their determination....," Shavit said of the Islamic Republic's resolve to retain and advance its nuclear activities.

He, however, alleged that the Iranian nuclear energy program had a military aspect to it, something that Israel and its biggest ally, the United States, have never ceased to claim.

This is while, as per a fatwa (religious decree) by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

banning nuclear arms, Iran has never sought and will never seek such non-conventional weapons.

The U.S. and Israel's bid targeting Iran comes while the former is the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons, and the latter is widely known to be the only possessor of nuclear arms in the Middle East with hundreds of atomic warheads. Tel Aviv also refuses to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a monument to global peace and security that the Islamic Republic is a signatory to.

The former spy chief's remarks concerning Iran's nuclear program and its considering access to peaceful nuclear energy to be an "absolute right" were most recently underlined by Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

Speaking on Sunday, Kamalvandi pledged that a new and more advanced shed would be built at the country's Natanz nuclear facility to replace one that was damaged during an earlier incident.

"Necessary arrangements have been made to rebuild the damaged shed at Shahid Ahmadi Roshan (Natanz) nuclear facility and a bigger shed with more

advanced equipment is to replace it," he said. The official reminded that the shed involved in the incident had initially been tapped to host more centrifuge machines in line with an order issued by the Leader for the AEOI to make preparations for the enrichment of uranium up to a level of 190,000 SWU (Separative Work Unit) without delay.

The incident hit the shed, which was under construction at the complex at the time, on July 2. It, however, caused no casualties and failed to either slow down or stop the enrichment work at the nuclear site.

Tehran has not officially declared whether it was an accident or an act of sabotage, but the country's Supreme National Security Council has said the main cause has been determined and would be announced at an appropriate time.

Various reports across Israeli or Israeli-allied media outlets have, meanwhile, been trying to establish credit for the Israeli regime for carrying out an alleged attack on the Natanz site.

This is while some Israeli officials, who have been asked about the possibility of the regime's involvement in the blast, have neither confirmed nor denied its involvement, with the Israeli minister for military affairs, Benny Gantz, saying, "Not every event that happens in Iran is necessarily related to us."

Gantz predecessor Avigdor Lieberman was also soon to rage against an alleged "senior intelligence official"'s reportedly claiming a role by Tel Aviv by saying the purported figure "not only explains what we did, but also what we didn't do." He also urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "to keep that senior intelligence official's mouth shut."

The Tel Aviv regime has, nevertheless, carried out many atrocities in the past to try to come in the way of Tehran's peaceful nuclear work.

The regime has been behind 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 Natanz, 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.

Army Aviation to attain new missiles soon

Army Aviation offers aerial emergency services to 18 Iranian provinces, General Ghorbani says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Army Aviation Chief Yousof Ghorbani has hailed the achievements of his forces, saying the Army Aviation will attain missiles with ranges of 20 and 100 kilometers.

"God willing, we will attain 20- and 100-kilometers missiles very soon," General Ghorbani said during a ceremony on Sunday, Mehr reported.

The Iranian Army Aviation has gained salient achievements in defense and security sections, including precision guided and 8.5km missiles, he stated.



He said his forces are currently a powerful arm of the Islamic Republic, adding, "The Army Aviation has gained great achievements since the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution in defending the country with all its power."

In recent years, Iran's military power has been turned into a contentious issue by the U.S. and its allies. The Islamic Republic maintains that its military might poses no threat to other countries, and that its defense doctrine is merely based on deterrence.

General Ghorbani put the number of parts and equipment manufactured by the Army Aviation at 435.

He pointed out that the Army Aviation offers aerial emergency services to 18 Iranian provinces.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the general hailed to the bravery of martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and commemorated his name and memory in the fight against terrorism.

"Blessed is martyr Lieutenant General Hajj Qassem Soleimani, who was martyred by the most hated people," he said in reference to the assassination of Soleimani at direct order of U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this year.

On January 3, 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.

In retaliation for the assassination of General Soleimani, who headed the IRGC Quds Force, an Iranian ballistic-missile strike on January 8 targeted a U.S. base in Iraq housing U.S. forces, leaving some 110 U.S. troops suffering from traumatic brain injuries.

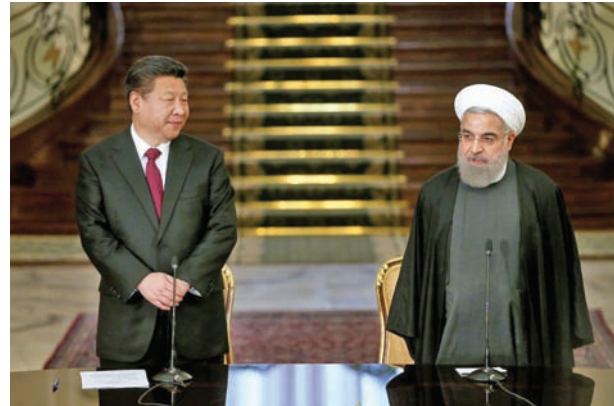
Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has blasted the assassination as an obvious example of state terrorism pursued in gross violation of the fundamental principles of international law.

"The United States' brutal and cowardly assassination of Major General Qassem Soleimani, the champion of fighting terrorists in the region, and his companions, while on an official visit to neighboring Iraq, is an obvious example of state terrorism pursued in gross violation of the fundamental principles of international law, entailing criminal responsibility of its perpetrators," Takht-Ravanchi said on Friday.

Defying U.S., China and Iran near trade and military partnership: NY Times

The investment and security pact throwing Iran an economic lifeline.

1→ Renewed American sanctions, including the threat to cut off access to the international banking system for any company that does business in Iran, have succeeded in suffocating the Iranian economy by scaring away badly needed foreign trade and investment.



The partnership was first proposed by President Xi Jinping of China during a visit to Iran where he met his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani in 2016. Credit...

Iran has been one of the world's largest oil producers, but its exports, Tehran's largest source of revenue, have plunged since the Trump administration began imposing sanctions in 2018; China gets about 75 percent of its oil from abroad and is the world's largest importer, at more than 10 million barrels a day last year.

At a time when the United States is reeling from recession and the coronavirus, and increasingly isolated internationally, Beijing senses American weakness. The draft agreement with Iran shows that unlike most countries, China feels it is in a position to defy the United States, powerful enough to withstand American penalties, as it has in the trade war waged by President Trump.

"Two ancient Asian cultures, two partners in the sectors of trade, economy, politics, culture and security with a similar outlook and many mutual bilateral and multilateral interests will consider one another strategic partners," the document says in its opening sentence.

Industrial projects worth over \$3b inaugurated in 7 provinces in 5 weeks

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During five weeks since launching the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's new program called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports", 25 industrial projects worth 128.46 trillion rials (about \$3.058 billion) have been inaugurated in seven provinces across Iran.



As reported by IRNA, the mentioned projects have created jobs for 3,170 persons.

Based on the program named "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports", the ministry plans to inaugurate 200 industrial, mining, and trade projects across the country by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (begins on March 21, 2021).

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

The mentioned program has been defined by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry in line with the government's new strategies for developing the country's infrastructure in order to realize the "Surge in Production" motto.

The same program (called "A-B-Iran") was also defined by the Energy Ministry last year, under which numerous energy projects were inaugurated in various provinces across the country.

Industry Ministry approves over \$800m of foreign investment in 3 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has approved 58 foreign investment cases valued at \$832.6 million in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), the portal of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported.

According to the latest data released by the Industry Ministry, of the total number of foreign investments approved in the mentioned period, 26 cases or 45 percent were attracted into the industry, mining and trade sectors.

Based on the data, 68 percent of the ministry's foreign investment was attracted by the industry sector, followed by mining and trade with 20 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

The largest volume of foreign investment in the mentioned period was attracted by the groups of manufacturing chemical products, Internet businesses, and coke manufacturing, as well as oil products.

Accordingly, the first four countries in terms of the value of investment were Germany, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Austria, and China, and the largest number of investments were made by Afghanistan with eight cases, followed by China, UAE, and Germany.

Also, Sistan-Baluchestan, Tehran, and Alborz provinces were the top three provinces in terms of the volume of approved foreign investment.

Back in June, the Industry Ministry published the foreign investment data for the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20), based on which the figure increased by 5.4 percent compared to the same period last year.

As reported, the total foreign investment approved by the ministry in the mentioned two months amounted to \$417.3 million, registering a \$21.4-million rise compared to the \$395.9-million for the last year's same period.

As previously reported by the Industry Ministry, Iran expects a 10-fold increase of foreign investment in industry and mining sectors by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2021).

Iran, India discuss expansion of trade ties in new areas

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum and Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra met to discuss expansion of trade ties in new areas, TPO portal reported on Sunday.

In this meeting, ways of developing relations in areas such as rail and road transportation, as well as expansion of regional cooperation with countries like Afghanistan and Uzbekistan were explored.

The continuation of preferential trade talks, holding the fourth meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, strengthening relations between the two countries' chambers of commerce and diversification of export and import baskets were also among the issues discussed by the officials.

The two sides also emphasized the regulation of barter trade between the two countries.

Zadboum for his part, called for facilitation of the activities of Iranian businesses in India, while Dharmendra stressed India's commitment to strengthening and developing relations with Iran.

The ambassador pointed that the current year marks the 70th anniversary of the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Iran and India had held a new round of negotiations on signing a preferential trade agreement (PTA) between the two sides in mid-February.

Initiated in 2016, the negotiation on this agreement is said to be in the final stages, and the two sides hope that the list of the commodity items entitled to preferential tariffs will be finalized in the next round of the talks.

Back in June, the Vice-chairman of Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce Parham Rezaei had said that trade between Iran and India, which was affected by the coronavirus pandemic, were gradually getting back to normal.

314 idle industrial units revived since late March

1 → Tehran with 44 units, Isfahan with 40 units, and West Azarbaijan with 28 units were the provinces in which most of the revived units are located, the deputy minister added.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The country's technology units and sci-



entific and research centers have come to believe that they can help the industry and that the industry can use their potentials and capacities," he added.

The latest data released by the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry shows that 72,250 industrial and mining units are

operating across the country in which nearly 2.43 million people are working.

According to the data, with 15,822 active units, the field of non-metallic minerals accounts for the biggest share of the mentioned units, while food and beverage products and rubber and plastic products

with 8,682 and 7,524 units are in the second and third places.

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

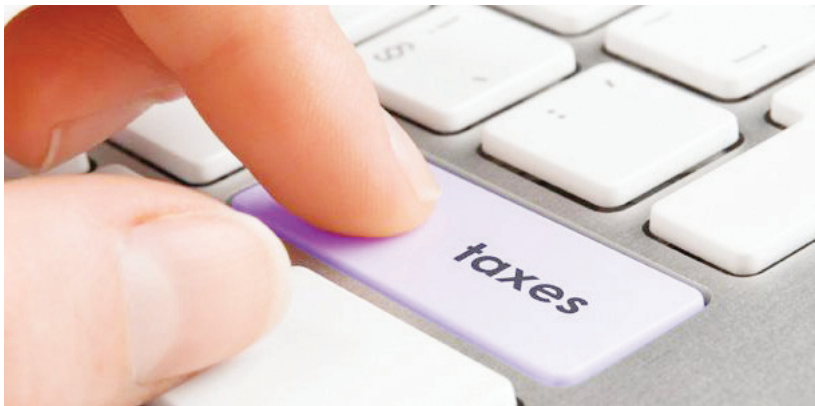
Tehran, Isfahan, and Khorasan Razavi provinces had 9785, 8585, 5294 active units, respectively, by the end of the last Iranian calendar year (March 19) accounting for the highest number of units among the Iranian provinces.

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

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

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

INTA announces average tax rate of 28% for this year



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's National Tax Administration (INTA) announced that the average tax rate in Iran is 28 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), IRNA reported.

Omid-Ali Parsa also said that the figure will be less in the deprived provinces such as Lorestan and Ilam which will have an average tax rate of 15 percent.

He put the figure at 32 percent for Tehran Province.

The official has also announced that the country's monthly tax income has reached over 120 trillion rials (about \$2.857 billion).

He said the mentioned amount includes both direct and indirect taxes.

Parsa reiterated that all governmental bodies should cooperate in achieving the targeted tax revenues.

Saying that the Iranian government collects eight percent of the people's income for the public expenditures, while the figure is 30 percent in the world, the official stressed, "Now that the oil revenue is reduced, the government has no income rather than collected taxes; so the people should cooperate in this due."

Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand said on June 7 that the government considers tax as the main source of income for managing the country's economy in the absence of oil revenues.

"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," Dejpasand said in a statement on the occasion of national tax day.

Taxes are the safest, healthiest, and 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 Dejpasand as the benefits of tax incomes.

Iran's tax revenue has increased 31 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the head of National Tax Administration has announced.

Putting the country's tax income at 1.43 quadrillion rials (about \$34.04 billion) in the previous year, the official said, "We could collect 250 trillion rials (about \$5.9 billion) as value-added tax (VAT)", IRIB reported.

Parsa also said that the country has gained projected tax income by 102 percent in the past year, and put the average tax income growth at 21 percent during the previous five years.

The head of the National Tax Administration further mentioned preventing tax evasion as one of the prioritized programs of INTA.

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.

Value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange rises 54% in a week



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) climbed 54 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IME Public Relations Department reported.

As reported, 832,078 tons of commodities worth over \$1,404 billion were traded at this exchange during the past week, while the amount of traded commodities experienced a growth of 30 percent as well.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 405,221 tons of various products worth close to \$859 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 299,993 tons of steel, 6,160 tons of copper, 5,150 tons of aluminum, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 93,750 tons of zinc dust were traded by the customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 424,856 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$560 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 125,000 tons of VB feed stock, 121,556 tons of bitumen, 78,658 tons of polymer products, 43,360 tons of chemical products, 1,615 tons of insulation, 38,000 tons of lube cut oil, 50 tons of argon, 2,168 tons of base oil, 2,000 tons of slaps waxes as well as 13,175 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 2,000 tons of commodities were traded on the IME's side market.

It is worth noting that 1,300 kg of saffron was trade on the agricultural trading floor of the IME.

As previously reported, over 3.088 million tons of commodities valued at \$4.75 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange in June.

Last month, the oil and petrochemical

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

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

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

On this trading floor 1,036,628 tons of steel, 18,475 tons of copper, 600 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 90 tons of precious metals concentrates, 71,970 tons of zinc, 200 tons of lead ingot, 28,405 tons of aluminum, as well as 17 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

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

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

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

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

Majlis approves double-urgency plan of vacancy tax law

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian parliament (Majlis) on Sunday approves the double-urgency plan of the vacancy tax law, IRNA reported.

The mentioned plan is mainly aimed at lowering the housing rental rate in the country.

Expressing his agreement over the approval of the mentioned plan, Hossein Hossein-Zadeh Bahraini, a member of the Majlis Economic Committee, said, "Our problem in the housing sector is not the demand higher than the supply, while the number of residential units is more than required."

This plan is vital, as many families are struggling for renting the homes, while there are many empty units, the MP further reiterated.

The vacancy tax law, as part of Direct Tax Reform Law, was put on the agenda in the Iranian calendar year ending March 2016 and was enforceable from the year ending March 2017, but there was little data on the number of vacant units then, according to Mahmoud Alizadeh, a senior official with Iran



National Tax Administration (INTA).

Alizadeh said, "As per Clause 54 of Direct Tax Law if a home remains vacant for more than a year, it will be subject to Vacancy Tax. Homes with a floor area of 150-odd square

meters will be subject to tax at the rate of 20 percent of the property's rent value," Eghtesad Online published on June 20.

Elaborating on the vacancy tax, INTA Head Omid-Ali Parsa said last month, "Empty homes will not be taxed in the first year but they will be taxed at the rate of 50 percent of the property's assessed rent in the second year and in the third year, they will be levied tax at the rate of 100 percent of the assessed rent".

According to Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh, the head of the Housing Economy Department at the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, a total of 6.6 million households or 30.7 percent of the country's 18.1 million urban households in the country live in rented homes.

Noting that the objective of the empty home tax is to return empty properties or second homes [under-used properties] as rental homes, the official said latest figures by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) show more than 2.1 million homes in urban areas are empty while there are about two million second home-owners.

Farzad-B gas field development deal to be signed soon: NIOC head

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said on Saturday that the operator for Farzad-B gas field has been determined and the deal for the development of the field is going to be signed in the near future, Mehr News Agency reported.

Masoud Karbasian made the announcement on the sidelines of the signing ceremony of Yaran oil field's development deal with a domestic company.

Karbasian said despite the numerous problems and the limitations created by the U.S. sanctions, the contractors for the development of almost all of the country's joint fields have been determined.

Farzad-B, with estimated reserves of 12.8 trillion cubic feet of gas, was opened in 2008 by a consortium of three Indian companies: ONGC, Oil India Limited and Indian Oil Corporation.

The Indians were supposed to develop the



field after its exploration, but they stopped their activities after the West intensified sanctions on the Islamic Republic in 2012.

With the lifting of the sanctions, India once again called for the development of Farzad-B by ONGC Videsh which is the overseas investment arm of the country's biggest energy exploration firm.

In May 2019, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said Iranian oil ministry had prepared a plan for financing the project and the framework of the contract was going through final editions.

NIOC asked Indians to submit a technical plan and then a financial proposal for the development of the field, however, after submission Iran did not agree with the other side's financial proposals.

Later in August 2019, Karbasian had announced that Iran was not going to wait for India on developing Farzad-B gas field, and soon the project would know its operator.

Iran defies U.S. sanctions by sending oil products across globe



E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Director General of Ports and Maritime Affairs Department of southern Hormozgan province Allah-Morad Afifi-Pour said 279 vessels loaded with oil products have been shipped from the southern ports of the country to various destinations across the globe since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Mentioning the U.S. sanctions on the country's shipping industry as well as the exports of oil products, Afifi-Pour noted that with the measures taken by the government not only the exports of such products did not decline but a 2.79-percent rise has also been registered, Tasnim news agency reported.

He said that since the beginning of this year up to July 5th, 331 vessels loaded or unloaded their cargoes comprised of oil products in Shahid Rajaei Port's Persian Gulf oil terminal.

"Of these shipments, 52 four-million-ton

cargoes including crude oil, condensate and MTBE were unloaded and 279 vessels were loaded with 4.1-million-ton cargoes comprised of oil products and hydrocarbons to deliver it to destinations all around the world," the official explained.

According to the official, development projects in the country's southern ports including Shahid Rajaei port's Persian Gulf oil terminal are currently underway to increase the capacity of these ports.

Measures like attracting investors in the Persian Gulf oil terminal and also the construction of three new oil pier posts are among the important development projects pursued by the Ports and Maritime Organization this year, Afifi-Pour said.

These projects will increase the export capacity of oil products from Shahid Rajaei port by more than 30 percent in the near future, he stressed.

North Yaran developed at lower cost than contract Capex

TEHRAN (Shana) — The chairman of the board of directors of Tadbir Energy Development Group said that the contract for the development of North Yaran Field was signed with a capital expenditure of \$700 million, but it was put into operation with \$580 million investment.

Addressing a ceremony to sign a contract by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Persia Oil and Gas Industry Development Company in Tehran on Saturday, Gholam-Hossein Nozari said Azadegan field, as a future pole of oil production and the main support of the economy, can be one of the drivers of the country's economy, and Yaran field is a part of the same field (Azadegan).

He pointed out that by digging descriptive wells, the connection between North and South Yaran fields will be determined, adding: "Implementation of phase one of Yaran (North) field development project was a huge achievement for reasons such as identifying and equipping appropriate manpower, project management, use of domestic manufacturing, which accounted for about 80

percent of the equipment installed in Yaran, major use of indigenous forces and the like."

The chairman of the Tadbir Energy Development Group noted that the North Yaran field development contract was one of the few buyback contracts that was implemented at a lower cost than the contract capex.

According to Nozari, in the negotiations with Russia's Rosneft Company, an estimated \$700 million was proposed for the second phase of the Yaran project, but in the negotiations with the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company and the savings considered, the cost of the contract was considered less than that figure.

He said his company had so far drilled over 57 wells, expressing hope that construction of downhole pumps would be maximized domestically in order to enhance oil recovery.

Over 800 wells need such pumps in West Karoun Region, he said, adding construction of such pumps required complicate engineering.



OPEC readies next move in bid to avoid oil-market taper tantrum

Saudi Oil Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman likes the idea of OPEC+ acting as the central bank of oil. And he expresses admiration for Alan Greenspan, former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

As reported by Bloomberg, the challenge now confronting the oil producers' club is one that's all too familiar to the Fed: how to avoid a "taper tantrum," the market panic that ensued when the institution proposed tightening monetary policy in 2013.

Having successfully doubled crude prices over the past few months through unprecedented output cuts, the OPEC+ alliance led by the Saudis and Russia is poised to begin unwinding these stimulus measures. As fuel demand recovers with the lifting of coronavirus lockdowns, the producers are about to open the taps a little.

But as Greenspan's successors discovered seven years ago, taking away the punch bowl carries its own risks.

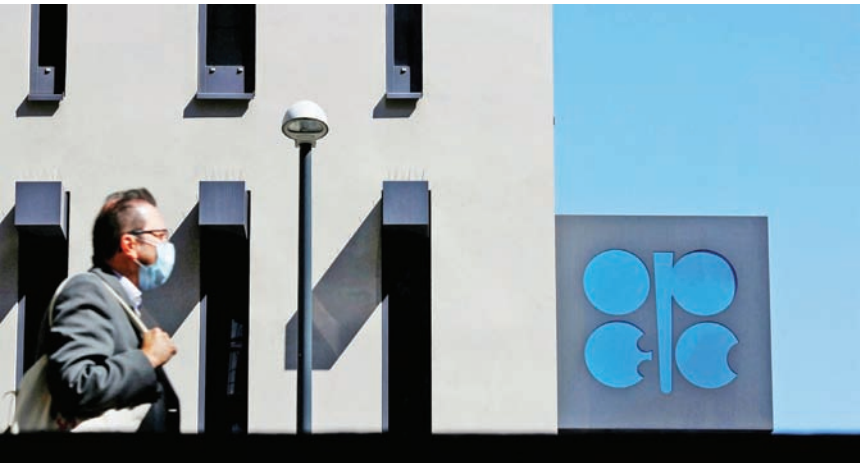
A second wave of the pandemic threatens another slump in oil consumption, while the billion-barrel mountain of inventories that piled up during the first outbreak still looms. If OPEC+ increases supply just as the market falters then prices could crash once again.

"When they look at prices over the quarter, when they look at green shoots of demand pick-up, I think they feel good," said Helima Croft, head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets LLC. "I do think they are cognizant though of some of the potential clouds on the horizon."

It's a balancing act that Prince Abdulaziz and his counterparts must weigh on July 15, when they hold an online meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee, the panel that reviews OPEC+'s progress.

■ Easing the cuts

The JMMC will consider whether the



23-nation alliance should keep 9.6 million barrels of daily output off the market for another month, or restore some supplies as originally planned, tapering the cutback to 7.7 million barrels.

As the demand recovery gains traction, members are leaning toward the latter option, according to several national delegates who asked not to be identified. Shipping schedules for August are already being set, so the course is more or less locked in, one said.

In Russia, the most influential non-OPEC member of the alliance, major oil companies are preparing to increase production next month in the absence of other guidance from the Energy Ministry, according to two people from the industry who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on July 2 that no position on an extension had been taken yet, but stressed that it's better if OPEC+ sticks to its previous decisions.

OPEC+ can go ahead with the designated

increase without inundating the market, said Bob McNally, founder of consultant Rapidan Energy Group and a former White House official. Global demand will rebound by 18% this quarter to 95.7 million barrels a day as economic activity resumes, he predicts. That will whittle away inventories at a brisk clip of 5.6 million barrels a day.

"Our balances show hefty deficits in the third and fourth quarters, even with a tapering," McNally said. "I think the market will handle it pretty well."

■ Fragile market

Yet the strategy is not without risks.

While oil prices have recovered to \$43 a barrel in London, from a two-decade low of \$15.98 in late April, sentiment in the market remains fragile.

The acceleration of the pandemic in the U.S., where infections hit a record last week, and its re-emergence in Asia is "casting a shadow over the outlook," the International Energy Agency warned in a report on Friday. The Paris-based

agency advises major economies on energy policy.

There's also still a price discount on prompt crude futures -- known as a contango -- in the U.S. and Europe, suggesting the wider market hasn't yet tightened. Crude inventories in the U.S. and China are near record levels, government and satellite data show.

"The kind of recovery that people would have expected maybe by now has not materialized," said Mohammad Darwazah, an analyst at Medley Global Advisors. "There's no doubt the consensus is we will get a tightening of the market, we're just not quite there yet."

As a result, Riyadh is expected to insist that if output is restored, countries abide by their mandated limits -- and that exporters who haven't yet made their share of the cutbacks atone for it.

■ Falling in line

Iraq, Nigeria, Kazakhstan and Angola are among laggards who have promised "compensation cuts" over the next few months to make up for cheating in May, which equate to about 420,000 barrels a day each month. That should offset some of the group's scheduled 2 million-barrel surge, and the JMMC could impose further reparations for overproduction in June.

How far the likes of Baghdad and Lagos, which have a poor track record of adhering to OPEC+ agreements, go in their atonement is debatable, but Prince Abdulaziz has scored a victory in pressing them to deliver a surprisingly strong performance last month. He is unlikely to relax his vigilance when the producers gather on Wednesday.

"While relieved and satisfied so far, ministers realize they are not out of the woods yet," Rapidan's McNally said. "Compliance is the No. 1 priority."

Iran to launch online power plants monitoring center soon

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Ministry will launch the country's first online power plants monitoring center soon, an official with Thermal Power Plants Holding (TPPH) said on Sunday.

Launching this center will identify the necessary equipment as well as the time for repairs and this way it will result in significant save of time and costs, Ali Isa-Pour told IRNA.

According to Isa-Pour, after obtaining information on the status of power plants the center will analyze the received data in order to assess the power plants condition.

As reported, designing and implementation of the system which is aimed for assessing, maintenance, and repairing of the country's power plants, has been carried out completely by Iranian experts and is the most effective online system for monitoring power plants status and troubleshooting.



Offering online reports on the state of the power plants, building a network of specialists, providing all types of power plant services as well as reducing operating, maintenance and repair costs through continuous monitoring of the units and predicting failures and providing solutions for the problems are among the features of this system.

Also, the system is going to provide information-related services to knowledge-based companies and business intelligence services within the Ministry of Energy.

Other functions of the system include providing reports to the management teams and providing economic and managerial analysis for decision making, as well as providing additional services needed to operate the power plants.

According to Iran's Energy Ministry, currently, a total of 478 thermal power plants are operating throughout Iran.

The nominal capacity of electricity generation at Iranian power plants currently stands at nearly 85,000 megawatts [84.795 gigawatts (GW)].

Libya's output recovery will be slow, says NOC, as it lifts force majeure

Libya's National Oil Corporation lifted force majeure on crude exports from all its key terminals, paving the way for a gradual restart of its crude production, Reuters cited the state-owned company as stating.

NOC, however, cautioned that the output recovery would take a long time "due to the significant damage to reservoirs and infrastructure" caused by the port blockade which had been in place since mid-January.

NOC had been in talks with regional countries and the Government of National Accord under the supervision of the UN and the U.S. to restart oil output, and sources said a "temporary arrangement" had been agreed.

"For NOC, the work has just started. Our infrastructure has suffered lasting damage, and our focus now must be on maintenance and securing a budget for the work to be done," NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanalla said. "We also must take steps to ensure Libya's oil production is never again held to ransom."

The North African oil producer has been racked by conflict between the UN-backed GNA and the self-styled Libyan National Army of Khalifa Haftar that has almost completely halted oil output.

On January 18, eastern tribes -- supported by the LNA -- halted crude exports from five of Libya's key oil terminals, which dramatically reduced its crude production.

This led NOC to declare force majeure on crude loadings out of Marsa el-Hariga, Brega, Es Sider, Ras Lanuf, Zueitina and Zawiyah. Force majeure from all these ports have now been lifted.

Libyan crude production had been slashed to around 70,000-100,000 bpd in the past few months, from over 1.10 million bpd before the blockade.

Sanalla has previously warned of permanent damage to the country's oil sector from both a budgetary and technical perspective, which will have severe repercussions on its future output capacity.

The oil blockade has cost the country more than \$6.5 billion in revenues from lost production, and NOC is also under serious budgetary constraints, which will affect the maintenance of its oil infrastructure.

"NOC faces huge extra costs to repair infrastructure damage. The costs of repairing the pipeline network and surface equipment and of well workovers will run to the billions of dinars," Sanalla said.

Sanalla said the closure of several of Libya's oil fields had affected the oil reservoir quality, which had suddenly undergone mechanical, structural and chemical changes.

NOC also said is currently loading a tanker from the Es Sider terminal, which will make it the first export out of this key 350,000 bpd in almost six months.

The Aframax Kriti Bastion was at the Es Sider terminal as of the morning on July 10, according to data from Platts cFlow, trade flow software.

This is NOC's second attempt to load a tanker from Es Sider after the Delta Ocean was turned back when its entry to the port was blocked by the Petroleum Facilities Guards.

The process of unlocking Libyan crude oil remains challenging, especially with the presence or mercenaries and armed groups at its key oil terminals.

Libya holds Africa's largest proven reserves of oil and its main light sweet Sharara and Es Sider export crudes yield a large proportion of middle distillates and gasoline, making it popular with refineries in the Mediterranean region and Northwest Europe.

Second Announcement


**Brief Notice of International
Tender No.9803197**
Industrial hoses- include 42 items

Esfahan Steel Co. intends to purchase through international tender purchasing 42 Items hoses Prospective bidders specialized and experienced in the said area may visit Esfahan Steel Co.'s Website at www.esfahansteel.ir to get the tender documents no later than 06/July/2020 and deliver their bids to the following address no later than official closing time (i.e.14.00 pm) on 20/July/2020

For further information, prospective bidders may contact us via the following email address: mousavi-sh@esfahansteel.ir

Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.

Second Announcement


**Brief Notice of International
Tender No.9900849**

Esfahan Steel Co. intends to purchase 2 Items Refractory Mortar for Steel Ladle's Slide Gate (Type CS60). Prospective bidders specialized and experienced in the said area may visit Esfahan Steel Co.'s Website at www.esfahansteel.ir to get the Tender documents no later than 21.07.2020, and deliver their bids to the following address no later than official closing time (i.e.01:00 p.m.) on 02.09.2020.

Confidential Secretariat of ESCo.'s Security Department, at the main entrance gate next to Melli Bank, Esfahan Steel Company, 45th km of Zobahan- Shahrekord highway, Esfahan, Iran, telephone No. 0098-31-5257-2197.

Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.

TEHRAN TIMES

 Iran's Leading
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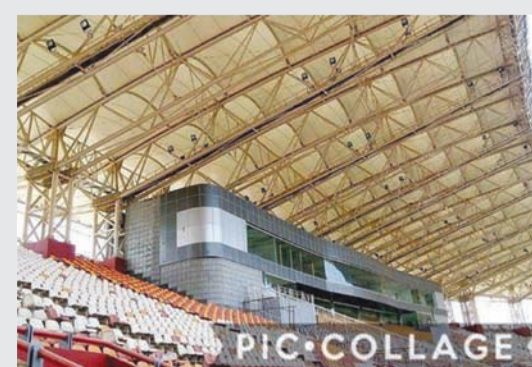
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Trump not caring about human rights in Persian Gulf Arab states: human rights activist

Sarah Leah Whitson says reforms in Saudi Arabia have come “in a package of repression”

1 → reform that comes with a clap in the face of the Saudi people that say only I decide what changes to make in this country. So, it is profoundly undemocratic, profoundly autocratic.

■ Has he actually made real reform, or just exploit it to strengthen his position in the autocratic political system?

A: I don't think it's true what you just said. They are important reforms and welcomed reforms. I am very glad that these reforms happened. However, these reforms have come in a package of repression. They have come with a very clear message that the Saudi civil society, the men and women in Saudi Arabia, have no role in deciding what reform is taking place. So, they are an absolute part of his exercise of monolithic power.

■ We are talking about Bin Salman's reforms, while a lot of Saudi human rights activists are in jail. What is your comment?

A: Yes, we have a lot of activists in jail in Saudi Arabia; unfortunately, it's a disease of the Middle East (West Asia). It's a disease of our region to have activists demanding reform in jail. It is very sad to know that Saudi Arabia is not alone in jailing human rights activists. We have writers, intellectuals, academics in jail that is sad and disease for the region.

■ How do you assess Saudi policies in Yemen? The United Nations chief removed the Saudi-led coalition from his latest “list of shame” despite continued grave violations against children in Yemen.

A: I think the UN secretary-general is really digging himself in this institution. When the UN secretary-general allows people, allows nations to buy the list of shame, the UN secretary-general does great harm not only to the list of shame, which is incredibly important for exposing countries that are causing the most harm to children but to the institution itself.



“The United States in the (UN) Security Council has operated as Israel’s agent.”

I would rather say that they didn't have any list of shame. When you have a list of shame that you can buy yourself, offer, and that is exactly what Saudi Arabia did. Still, under Ban Ki-moon, they threatened to cancel their funding to all of the UN agencies unless it was removed from the list of human violations, and obviously, that is the same financial threat that Saudi Arabia has made to force secretary-general to remove it from list of shame.

■ Do you think that the United Nations

and Western countries are neutral toward issues in West Asia, especially the Palestine conflict?

A: No. Obviously not. The United Nations is controlled by the Security Council and what make the matters worse is that the United States in the Security Council has operated as Israel's agent and Israel defender by blocking implementations of any Security Council resolution that has been proposed. It has been vetoing multiple times to protect Israel from accountability

“He (Trump) cares only about selling weapons (to Persian Gulf Arab states) and making a profit.”

with respect to its abuse of Palestinians. It is, of course, not alone again. Russia repeatedly uses its veto, and there has never been a measure for accountability for the persecution of genocides of Muslims in China because China will use its veto. It is tragic that most intuitions around the globe are supposed to make an effort for peace, and a few superpowers just control Security Council.

■ Why are Western countries silent toward Bahraini protests and violations of human rights there? Why do they continue to export arms to the country?

A: Western countries are not silent. The people in the West, the independent news establishments, the independent human rights organizations are very focused on Bahrain and the government's repression in the country. A list of death penalty verdict announced a few days ago against the number of young Bahraini men in deeply flawed trials marked by serious allegations of torture and forced confession.

However, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and UAE are closely tied to the United States and major clients of the United States regarding arm sale and purchases. In particular, Trump's administration does not care about the human rights records of these countries, and he cares only about selling weapons and making a profit.

■ After U.S. exit from international agreements and bodies such as the WHO and UNESCO, can we expect the collapse of international treaties?

A: They are not going toward collapse with this administration. I don't think the rest of the globe will quit WHO or UNESCO or Human Rights Council for that matter. I can only hope that there will be a new U.S. administration that would soon restore American participation and use important global mechanisms.

Any move against Gaza will have significant repercussions on Israel: Palestinian expert

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Analysts believe that Israel's plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank could lead to an outbreak of confrontation in the Gaza Strip, especially as the Palestinians have strongly opposed the plan.

Regarding the nature of the possible confrontation, some expect Gaza to witness a limited military escalation, based on the firing of rockets from the coastal strip and Israeli response.

“Any escalating action against Gaza will trigger reactions that will leave significant negative repercussions on Israel,” Amer Khalil, the Palestinian expert on Israeli affairs, tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview with Amer Khalil: ■ How do you see the reaction of Arab states to Israel's annexation plan?

A: The Arab countries, in general, have rejected Israel's annexation plan for the occupied West Bank. However, the positions differ from one country to another; still the Jordanian position was more decisive, perhaps because of Jordan's neighborhood with the occupied Palestine and its association with the Israel–Jordan peace treaty or what is referred to as Wadi Araba Treaty.

Jordan is afraid of the Jordanian street reaction, especially since Palestinian refugees form sixty percent of the population of Jordan.

But the reaction of other Arab countries was limited to denouncing and rejecting this plan.

There were indications from some Persian Gulf Arab countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, that this step would affect the normalization process between Israel and the Emirates if the annexation plan went into effect.

Arab countries believe that Israel will take their position into account in the end, and it is concerned about deteriorating relations with the Arab world or any retreat in the normalization process. Perhaps this is one of the reasons

that led to the postponement of the annexation plan.

■ How do you evaluate the Palestinian responses to Israel's decision to annex the West Bank?

A: Estimates of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate indicate that the annexation plan for an area that includes thirty percent of the occupied West Bank will trigger different reactions, and in this regard, it has put forward several scenarios for Palestinian reactions, ranging from going out to the streets and demonstrating against the annexation plan to individual or collective operations in the form of stabbing attacks or run over attacks or martyrdom operations which ultimately lead to a new uprising. The Israeli Intelligence Division expected that the Palestinian reaction would end in a third intifada. As for Mossad's estimates, there will be reactions either at the low level.

Hence, there is an Israeli fear that the annexation plan, its announcement and the beginning of its implementation will lead to instability in the occupied West Bank and the occurrence of a third intifada, which is possible, especially since the position of the Palestinian Authority is like a refusal, decisive and supportive of any move against the annexation plan; but I do not think that the Authority permits any armed action against Israel as it tries to maintain its relations with the Zionist entity in relation to maintaining the situation and borders.

■ Is it possible to normalize relations with a regime that wants to extend and annex more lands? How do you see the future of Israeli expansion plans?

A: Regarding normalization, I believe that the Arab countries, especially the Persian Gulf states, have gone a long way in establishing relations with the Zionist entity.

These relations include cooperation with Israel in visit exchanges, signing of drug purchase agreements and collaboration with Israeli companies on confronting the Coronavirus, as well as public and unannounced meetings between these countries and Israel. Besides, there is a kind of political consensus against Iran, considering it as a threat, and all



of this opened the way for normalization.

■ Do you expect a new military clash between the Zionist entity and the jihadist factions?

A: The confrontation between the Palestinian resistance factions and Israel is possible at any moment based on the developments that can occur, because Israel is not predictable any way.

At any moment, it may launch an attack against the Palestinian resistance or the Palestinian targets, which would lead to the deterioration of the situation, but a balance of deterrence that exists between the resistance and the Zionist entity.

Any escalating action against Gaza will trigger reactions that will leave significant negative repercussions on Israel and can completely change the situation in light of the difficult conditions inside Israeli society.

Israel struggles with the Corona outbreak, the broad closure situation, the economic crisis, the possible economic repercussions of the deployment of soldiers, and the call-up of reserves. Therefore the issue is not easy that Israel launches a new attack.

Syrian govt. Forces block U.S. convoys in Hasakah, forcing them to turn back

Syrian government forces have blocked three U.S. military convoys as they tried to pass through the country's northeastern province of Hasakah, amid lingering public resentment over the deployment of occupying American troops in the regions.

According to a report published by Syria's official news agency SANA, the U.S. forces' convoys had to turn around and head back in the directions they came from after Syrian army troops intercepted them in the villages of al-Sibat, Tal Shamiran, and Mansaf Tahtani.

No injuries were reported, and there was no immediate comment from the U.S. military.

The development took place only a day after a U.S. convoy of three armored vehicles returned to its base when Syrian soldiers intercepted it in Mansaf Tahtani village, which lay in the Tal Tamer district of the same Syrian province and did not allow it to move ahead. There have been no reports of injuries in that encounter.

Since late October 2019, the United States has been redeploying troops to the oil fields controlled by Kurdish forces in eastern Syria, in a reversal of President Donald Trump's earlier order to withdraw all troops from the Arab country.

The Pentagon claims the move aims to



“protect” the fields and facilities from Daesh's possible attacks. That claim came, although Trump had earlier suggested that Washington sought economic interests in controlling the oil fields.

The presence of U.S. forces in eastern Syria has particularly irked the civilians, and local residents have, on several occasions, stopped American military convoys entering the region.

Syria, which has not authorized the U.S. military's presence in its territory, says Washington is “plundering” the country's oil.

Turkey dispatches a new military convoy to Idlib.

Separately, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Turkey had sent a new military convoy to Syria's embattled northwestern province of Idlib.

The Britain-based war monitor, citing activists requesting anonymity, said a Turkish convoy of some 40 military vehicles had entered Syrian territory through the Kafr Lusin border crossing and headed toward Turkish positions.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar announced on March 13 that the Russian and Turkish militaries had agreed on the details

of a new ceasefire in the Idlib de-escalation zone following four days of talks in Ankara.

New U.S. sanctions against Syria under Caesar Act condemned

Moreover, the General Secretariat of the Arab Parties Conference has strongly denounced new U.S. sanctions against Syria under legislation called the Caesar Act, which entered into forces on June 17, as an outrageous violation of international law and the UN Charter.

“Such criminal acts will fail to undermine the steadfastness of Syria, Iran, and Lebanon,” it said in a statement, pointing to the Damascus government's generous support for the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement during the Israeli military's 33-day war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

The statement highlighted that terrorist plots had been hatched against Syria over the past decade, because the government attaches high priority to national stances, calling on all Syrians to exercise resistance in the face of such conspiracies.

The General Secretariat of the Arab Parties Conference is based in Amman's Jordanian capital city and represents 130 Arab parties from different Arab countries.

(Source: Press TV)

Made in Europe: Saudi soldiers, weapons deals and unethical jobs

By Malia Bouattia

An investigation recently published by Amnesty International has shed light on training programs issued by a Belgian company to Saudi soldiers on French soil.

These soldiers were brought over to Commerce in eastern France and taught to use arms that were reportedly being used against the Yemeni people in Saudi Arabia's continued war in that country. The devastating consequences of the conflict - famine, mass epidemics, and economic collapse alongside growing military death tolls - are well documented.

This does not appear to be a cause for concern to French authorities.

Journalist Audrey Lebel, writes in Amnesty's publication, La Chronique, of the involvement of local French officials, alongside the private Belgian company John Cockerill, in developing this highly profitable project. The involvement of Gérard Longuet, former French Defense minister and currently a Senator for the Meuse region where this program runs, is an especially disturbing revelation.

Longuet has also served on the John Cockerill board of directors since 2013. He was key in introducing the company's CEO Bernard Serin to General Rack-Madoux, the French army chief of staff, as well as facilitating the relationship between the two entities.

Serin and Longuet worked together to award the company state support and bring the training program to the Meuse region. Given the Saudi-led war in Yemen, this is a deal that has facilitated and contributed to the unthinkable level of destruction in the country, and the countless civilian deaths during the years that followed.

Indeed, the ongoing assault on Yemen, which has devastated the country since 2015, has led to the displacement of over 3.3 million people. Unimaginable suffering, including the spread of cholera and recurring famine, have all been brought on by the Saudi-led coalition's blockade. Described as the “worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world” by the United Nations, this is hardly a political crisis that can be overlooked, ignored, or even downplayed.

Yet, it was in 2018 - three years after the start of the war, when the extent of the catastrophe was well known - that Saudi military personnel was welcomed at the training ground. Throughout the long years of countless fatalities from military offensives, including airstrikes and raids, none of the complicit parties have reviewed the continuation of the program, let alone end it in the name of basic humanity.

When questioned, Longuet even stated that “I don't have the power to stop wars. When France sends Rafales [fighter aircraft] to India, it is not for the 14th July military parade; it is to transform people into charcoal”.

Revolting as it is, this statement appears to represent a much more general and institutional approach to the issue. In 2019, the investigation that led to the publication of the Yemen Papers, by Disclose magazine, uncovered that French President Emmanuel Macron and his army minister, Florence Parly, had both received secret files which proved the use of French arms in Yemen.

Nor was this the only element of Cockerill's implication in the war. Amnesty International also found that the Belgian company declared that it had achieved the ‘deal of the century’ when it signed an almost \$5 billion contract in 2014, which committed it to deliver just under 1,000 “Canadian-made armored vehicles” to the Saudi regime. And what a deal it was.

Furthermore, the entire affair was justified, Amnesty found, as an employment opportunity for the local area in France. Brown and black people abroad can be dehumanized and killed mercilessly by the tools of war produced by western companies and governments, and the imbalance is justified by the job offers created in Europe.

Similar arguments are made in the UK also to justify the continued development of weapons, their sale, and - critically - use across the world. Yet workers themselves have long put alternative proposals forward.

For example, Ray, a Unite rep in aerospace, tells me that “we need to transition from arms industry work to socially and environmentally useful and sustainable work.” He argues that this is especially doable “when yards or factories are threatened with closure. That is a winnable argument, I think. All it takes is one well-organized site or yard and the community to fight, occupy, etc. with demands for a just transition to shift this.”

Unite the union committed at its 2018 policy conference to support “campaigning at every level, including the establishment of a cross-sectoral defense and diversification combine, to secure a serious government approach to defense and diversification.” It also noted that “it is only [its] members who have devoted significant time and energy to develop and promote these initiatives,” while both Labour and Tory governments have stood in their way.

The truth, of course, is that capital cares little about “job creation” - a sad euphemism in this case for the silent compulsion of the market that forces workers, especially in times of crisis, to choose between abject poverty or participating in the spread of murder and destruction - and cares only for their profits.

Indeed, the irony of all of this, is that there isn't even much proof that the working classes and the unemployed in France benefit from this program, which the Amnesty investigation even highlighted to be the case. It found that in 2015, the projection was that it would generate “25 direct jobs... and 75 indirect jobs”. Five years later, only 20 of those appear to have materialized.

Workers in the West are ignored, left to make individual choices between their morals and their immediate economic needs, while thousands around the world pay with their lives and their livelihoods for the continued drive for profit of armament companies.

The French government - but also its UK counterpart, which has also recently announced its continued commitment to selling weapons to the Saudi regime despite recognizing their “possible” use in war crimes - care little for their working population, as their repeated austerity measures demonstrate all too well.

They are driven only by their desire to maintain - or increase - their influence and control over the Global South's resources and workforces to continue lining the pockets of the richest at home.

Democracy, freedom of the press, or women's liberation vanish like hot air, the second dollars, euros, and - in this case - riyals are on the table.

The solution then can only come from serious, committed internationalist responses, led by social movements and workers in the West and mass resistance in the Global South. Our struggle to invest in renewable energies and create jobs at home does not run against the interests and lives of those in Yemen, Palestine, or Iraq.

On the contrary, the struggle to end weapon exports is the struggle to end the armament industry and to turn it into productive, socially useful, and ecologically necessary ones. It is a struggle, as always, against our government and our employers. Our enemy, after all, is at home.

(Source: The New Arab)

Iran’s proposal welcomed at COMCEC tourism meeting

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iran’s proposal concerning the revival of domestic travels in the era of coronavirus has been welcomed at a recent webinar of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), which is affiliated with the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation.



Iran’s plans regarding domestic tourism and related safety measures have received special attention from the chairman and members of the COMCEC who emphasized that procedure could be considered as a “successful model”, ISNA reported on Saturday. Representatives of the member states exchanged views and discussed proposals on impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and hospitality spheres during the webinar in which participants were asked to provide solutions to save the tourism during both the coronavirus and the post-coronavirus eras, the report said. The Iranian delegation presented two proposals, which are to focus on the prosperity of domestic tourism with a great concentration on family tours and to prepare video clips of the positive status of hygiene in accommodation and hospitality centers and its wide distribution in order to build trust among people for domestic travel.

The COMCEC described the proposal of domestic family tours as a completely new and crucial idea in the growth of domestic tourism, and its chairman regarded that as one of the main results of the webinar.

As one of the four Standing Committees of the OIC, COMCEC was established by the Third Islamic Summit Conference in 1981.

4-star hotels to promote tourism in Ilam province

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Two four-star hotels are being built in Ilam to give a boost to the hospitality sector in the lesser-known western province, CHTN reported. In collaboration with the private sector, the hotels are being constructed with a total budget of 380 billion rials (about \$9 million), provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh announced on Sunday.



One of the hotels will be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021) and the other one will come on stream in the near future, the official added.

He also noted that the under-construction hotels will create 60 job opportunities.

Some 1.63 million travelers visited historical sites and heritage museums across Ilam province during the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year.

Over 8,000 foreign nationals and 150,000 domestic holiday-makers were accommodated in hotels, hostels and guest houses across the province during the nine-month period, according to data released by provincial tourism department.

Bamou National Park, a paradise for wildlife watching

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Situated the northwest edge of Shiraz and split into eastern and western parts by Shiraz-Isfahan Highway, Bamou National Park is one of Iran’s best places for fauna watching.

Along with the population explosion and expansion of Shiraz, this park began to shrink in size and was converted into a zoological park and then a national park in 1970, IRIB reported. Located on a high peak reaching 2,700 meters, Bamou National Park is spread over 40,000 hectares and includes three mountain ranges extending parallel from the east to the west. On these mountains are narrow plains where deer, ibex, rams, and wild goats abound.

Flamingo, wild duck, pelican, vulture, and tortoise also find it a suitable habitat. Studies have shown that there are 32 species of mammals, 91 species of birds, 19 species of reptiles, and 3 species of amphibians in this region.

Among the bird species, 18 are protected while 6 are in danger of extinction. Spring begins before April in Bamou Park. One can see wide expanses of different flowers such as primrose, tulip, and anemone.

So far, more than 300 species of plants have been classified in Bamou Park, most of which have herbaceous and medicinal values.

In addition to the afore-mentioned animals, the park hosts carnivores like leopard, wolf, hyena, lynx, jackal and fox. There are also birds of prey such as the golden eagle and the buzzard, as well as a variety of other birds like partridge, in the region.

Since this park is close to scientific institutes, it has become a suitable center for zoological and botanical researches. A lot of people come to the area on weekends to enjoy the serene beauty of the place with their families and friends.

Travel industry set to reflect true image of Iran’s safety, capability

→ 1 Last November, the official noted “I, as an expert, who has been working in the field of tourism for the past twenty years, believe that the main challenge of our travel industry is that Iran is internationally unknown. Moreover, over the past years, our enemies have orchestrated an anti-Iranian sentiment or Iranophobia project.”

While the U.S. State Department has long issued strong advisories against traveling to Iran and despite tensions between the two countries. However, almost all foreign nationals or tour operators previously been in the country believe that Iran has proven to be a safe and remarkably hospitable place for travelers, including Americans.

Early in May, Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, in close cooperation with the Health Ministry, announced new guidelines and instructions to ramp up the safety of travels across the country in connection with the coronavirus pandemic.

Over the past couple of months, many countries, including the Islamic Republic, imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, incoming and outgoing flights have been suspended, and road travels restricted to a great extent. Some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country



In this file photo, health workers spray disinfectant outside the Imam Reza shrine (AS) in Mashhad, northeast Iran on February 27, 2020. (Credit: WANA News Agency via Reuters)

that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019. Latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

IranAir to resume Istanbul flights after five-month halt over virus pandemic

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iran’s flag carrier Homa, known internationally as IranAir, is scheduled to resume Tehran-Istanbul flights following some five months of suspension over the outbreak of the coronavirus.

The round flights are scheduled twice a week on Fridays and Mondays from Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport to (and from) the Istanbul Airport by closely observing healthcare protocols, IRIB reported on Sunday.

The first flight is slated to take off on



Monday at 09:25 a.m. local time from the IKIA based on permission issued by Iran Civil Aviation Organization, the report said.

Over the past couple of months, many countries, including the Islamic Republic, imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, many incoming and outgoing flights have been suspended, and road travels restricted to a great extent.

For the time being, IranAir operates services to London, Manchester, Paris, and Amsterdam amongst other destinations.

Centuries-old windmills in eastern Iran restored

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Some centuries-old windmills, locally known as Asbads, were rehabilitated in the oasis city of Tabas-e Masina, eastern province of South Khorasan, a local official has said.

The restoration project included repairing the roof, strengthening the roof using cob material and repairing walls and interior parts of the mudbrick windmills, Amir Esmail Shahsavari said, IRNA reported on Sunday.

With 54 Asbads, Tabas-e Masina has the most number of Asbads in the province, the official added.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has almost completed preparations for a chain of such vertical-axis windmills for possibly becoming a UNESCO World Heritage. Asbads can be found in the provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, and Khorasan Razavi.

Made of natural clay, straw, and wood, an Asbad is typically comprised of eight chambers, with each chamber

housing six blades. As the area’s strong, steady wind enters the chambers it turns the blades, which then turn grindstones. The structures reach up to about 65 feet in height.

The Asbad used to be a smart technique to grind grains. It also bears testimony to the human being’s adaption with nature by transforming environmental obstacles into opportunities. “Asbad is a smart technique to grind grains, a technique which goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran, in an attempt to adapt themselves with nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities, managed to invent it,” according to UNESCO website.

“The earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Seistan [Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE,” the Encyclopedia Britannica says.

Avid visitors and researchers can examine the subtle yet simple mechanism in person as several windmills have been restored and brought back to life to testify how ancient



Iranians harnessed the wind to make a living. The Islamic Republic designated the Asbad as a national heritage site in 2002.

Museums, tourist spots in Bushehr still closed due to COVID-19

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Museums across the southwestern Bushehr province will remain closed for one more week over the coronavirus outbreak, provincial tourism chief has said.

Parks, recreation centers and beach resorts will also remain closed for at least one week as some cities of the province are on the red risk zone based on the number of COVID-19 infections and fatalities, CHTN quoted Mohammad-Hossein Arastuzadeh as saying on Saturday.

The country closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites across the country in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak back in February, but as the coronavirus lockdown was eased, they were reopened in early May.

Back in April, Arastuzadeh announced that the tourism sector of Bushehr province is ready to jumpstart after the coronavirus crisis ends.

He also stressed that the province needs innovative



plans and programs to attract more tourists and travelers to its tourist attractions and historical sites.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant

monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid eras, Bushehr Province is one of Iran’s most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Over 135,000 historical relics retrieved in 39 months

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iranian authorities have recovered 135,879 original and fake historical objects from smugglers or illegal diggers over the past 39 months, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has said.

A total of 7,541 culprits were detained in this regard and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, Amir Rahmatollahi said, ILNA reported.

Several exquisite and priceless relics that represent various eras of the country’s rich history, have been unearthed in various excavations in the country’s historical sites, and are mostly being kept in different museums.

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

It also hosts some of the world’s oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques,



bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa and Chogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

Discover amazing properties of Iranian endemic medicinal plants

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Bioactive compounds of medicinal

herbs have possible health benefits with anti-oxidative, anticarcinogenic, antihypertensive, antimutagenic and antimicrobial activities. Iranian traditional medicine is rich of various herbs which have been used to treat various diseases and disorders since ancient times.

An article, entitled “Antioxidant, antibacterial and therapeutic properties of some endemic medicinal plants of Iran: a review” and conducted by Sara Haghju, Hadi Almasi, provides a brief overview of the medicinal benefits of some important endemic herbs of Iran.

Recently researchers and food manufacturers have become increasingly interested in plant extracts as natural sources of antioxidants. The antioxidant and antimicrobial properties of various extracts from medicinal plants have been of great interest because of their potential use as natural additives for the prevention of oxidation, controlling pathogens and/or toxin-producing microorganisms in foods.

Medicinal plants have been used as traditional medicines all over the world for thousands of years. A report by Gen8 showed that out of the 104 compounds that are used globally as drugs over 37 years, 60 of them originated from Chinese traditional medicinal plants.

This review introduces 8 endemic medicinal plants of Iran that have antioxidant, antimicrobial and therapeutic activities.

■ Anethum graveolens “Shevid”

Anethum graveolens L. (Dill), a member of the Apiaceae family, is an herbal plant characterized with a single stem and a terminal or primary umbellate flower. Dill has been used in various foods such as cans, soups, sauces and also flavoring salads. It is traditionally used in Iran as a treatment for some gastrointestinal ailments such as flatulence, indigestion, stomachache and colic and has also antispasmodic effect on the smooth muscles of the gastrointestinal tract.

Different experiments showed dill excellent antioxidant activity and the effects of dill extracts on the female reproductive system.

■ Coriandrum sativum “Geshniz”

Coriandrum sativum L. (Coriander) is a culinary and medicinal plant from the Umbelliferae family which is used as flavoring agent in food products, perfumes and cosmetics. It is generally cultivated for its seeds. The seeds contain an essential oil and the linalool (monoterpenoid compound), as the main components. Coriander traditionally used in Iran to treat some ailments including dyspeptic complaints, loss of appetite, convulsion, insomnia and anxiety.

Study showed that Ethyl acetate extracts of both seeds and leaves had highest amounts of phenolic compounds and strongest radical-scavenging activity. In addition, leaves extracts were more effective antioxidants than the seeds one. The results of the study indicated that the compounds with medium polarity were the most potential antioxidants.

■ Cuminum cyminum “Zireye sabz”

Cuminum cyminum is an annual herbaceous plant, belongs to the Apiaceae family. Each fruit of this plant contains a green seed with aromatic characteristics. It is used in Iranian folk medicine since more than 200 years ago.41 The fruits have been extensively used as an Iranian traditional medicine for treatment of toothache, diarrhea and epilepsy.

Dhandapani et al., evaluated the effect of C. cyminum seed powder supplementation



on the plasma and tissue lipids in alloxan diabetic rats. Results showed that oral administration of cumin extract to diabetic rats significantly reduced the blood glucose levels and increased levels of plasma cholesterol, phospholipids, free fatty acids and triglycerides.

And other researches has shown antioxidant and antibacterial activities, bioactive compounds and health effects of some herbs of Apiaceae family grown in Iran.

■ Cichorium intybus “Kasni”

Cichorium intybus (Chicory) belongs to the Compositae family is called as “Kasni” in Iran. It is used for treatment of acne, inflammation of throat, enlargement of the spleen, diarrhea and vomiting. Chicory has also used as an herbal medicine due to its tonic effects upon the liver and digestive tract. Fresh chicory consists of 68% inulin, 14% sucrose, 5% cellulose, 6% protein, 4% ash and 3% other compounds, whereas dried chicory contains about 98% inulin and 2% other compounds.

Experiments investigated protective effects of C. intybus in short and long-term diabetes in albino rat models. Feeding with dried powder of Chicory leaves lowered the blood glucose level to near normal level (85-100mg/dl). Other papers compared conventionally and biodynamically-grown chicory for its polyphenol content and antiradical activity. Results indicated that total polyphenol content was higher in plants exposed to water stress.

■ Melissa officinalis “Badranj-booye”

Melissa officinalis L. is an Iranian medicinal plant locally named Badranjbooye, Varangboo and Faranjmoshk and grows in the north, north-west and western parts of the country.55 It is traditionally used as a treatment for headaches, flatulence, indigestion, colic, nausea, nervousness, anaemia, vertigo, syncope, malaise, asthma, bronchitis, amenorrhea, cardiac failure, arrhythmias, insomnia, epilepsy, depression, psychosis, hysteria, ulcers and wounds. The leaves of M. officinalis L. are also utilized in Iranian traditional medicine as digestive, carminative, antispasmodic, sedative, analgesic, tonic and diuretic as well as for functional gastrointestinal disorders.

■ Mentha piperita (Na’na)

Mentha piperita (Peppermint) belongs to the Lamiaceae family and is probably originated in Eastern Asia. This medicinal plant is particularly beneficial in building the immune system and fighting secondary infections. M. piperita is rich in polyphenolic compounds and therefore has strong antioxidant activity. Menthol is the most abundant constituent of the essential oil which has antibacterial effects.

Studies evaluated antimicrobial activity

and chemical composition of M. piperita oil against food spoilage microorganisms.

■ Mentha pulegium “Pooneh”

Mentha pulegium L. commonly known as pennyroyal is a medicinal plant of Labiatae (Lamiaceae) family. The flowering aerial parts of the plant has been conventionally used for its antiseptic properties to treat cold, sinusitis, cholera, food poisoning, bronchitis and tuberculosis and also used as antitumor, carminative, expectorant, diuretic, antitussive and menstuate.64 Kamkar et al., investigated antioxidative activities of the essential oil, methanol and water extracts of Iranian pennyroyal in vegetable oil during storage.

Antioxidant activity of the essential oil and extracts were evaluated and proved.

■ Urtica dioica “Gazaneh”

Urtica dioica L. (nettle) is an herbaceous perennial flowering plant, belongs to the Urticaceae family. Herbal infusion of leaves is used to treat diarrhea, vaginal discharge, internal/external bleeding.67 In addition leaves have been shown to have hypotensive and anti-inflammatory effects, diuretic and immunomodulatory activity and to alleviate rheumatic pain.

Steroids, terpenoids, phenylpropanoids, coumarins, polysaccharides, lectins; and seven flavonol glycosides (kaempferol-3-O-glucoside and -3-O-rutinoside; quercetin-3-O-glucoside and -3-O-rutinoside, isorhamnetin-3-O-glucoside, -3-O-rutinoside and -3-O-neohesperidoside) have been identified as major components of root and flowers of U. dioica respectively.

Antioxidant activity of hydroalcoholic solution extracts of U. dioica and M. neglecta Wallr plants and their mixture were investigated. Hydroalcoholic extracts of both plants had strong antioxidant activity, reducing power, superoxide anion radical scavenging, hydrogen peroxide scavenging, free radical scavenging and metal chelating activities in comparison to natural and synthetic standard antioxidants such as BHA, BHT and ?-tocopherol. The total antioxidant activity of these two plants was nearly the least while that of the mixture extract was higher than estimated.

■ Future trends

When consumed consciously and systematically, many herbal plants are very important for human health because of their phenolic compounds. Most medicines are produced synthetically today and many microorganisms can develop resistance very quickly against them, which is not possible in the case of

phytochemicals.

In recent years, especially in the developed countries, there is a tendency towards increased use of phytochemicals. Medicinal herbs as a source of phytochemicals can help people to stay fit. Healing and nourishing processes may go together. However, endemicity and seasonal or periodical growth of the most of these plants has limited their availability.

Accordingly, cultivation, processing and preservation of herbal plants could be a good idea for increasing the availability of endemic plants for all people around the world. The herbs of these plants can also be provided in the form of capsules and powders, as dietary supplements and thus differ from conventional foods or food ingredients. On the other hand, more research into the medicinal effects and health benefits of all the endemic herbal plants in different organs is needed, both from the epidemiological perspective and in animal and cell models. Medicinal benefits and possible harmful effects of the herbal plants should be completely introduced to the consumers.

■ Iran’s 1,738 endemic medicinal herbs

Tarohom Behzad, deputy director of the Forests, Ranges, and Watershed Management Organization, has said that some 2,300 species of medicinal plants bare cultivated across Iran, of which 1,738 species are endemic species.

Of the 8,425 species of herbs identified in the country, 2,300 have medicinal, aromatic and cosmetic properties, he added.

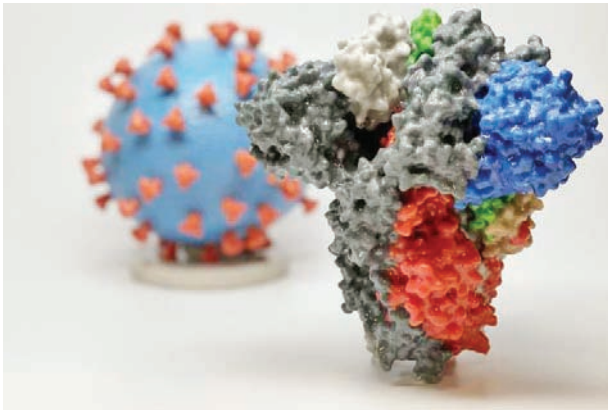
In the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 2019), 1,600 tons of medicinal plants were exported, which was 1,434 tons last year and 870 tons a year before, he said, adding that export of medicinal plants has increased over the past two years.

He also stated that this year 26 products have been exported, with 4 new products compared to the last year’s products.

According to the World Health Organization, the global market for herbal products is \$60 billion annually. About 25 percent of medicines worldwide are made of herbs. Among 252 important medicines of WHO, 11 percent are exclusively produced from medicinal plants.

Coronavirus more infectious now by 3-9 times: Iranian expert

1 → Fortunately, “the clinical data in this paper from Sheffield showed that even though patients with the new G virus carried more copies of the virus than patients infected with D, there wasn’t a corresponding increase in the severity of illness,” said Saphire, who leads the Gates Foundation-supported Coronavirus Immunotherapy Consortium (CoVIC).



Korber noted, “These findings suggest that the newer form of the virus may be even more readily transmitted than the original form – whether or not that conclusion is ultimately confirmed, it highlights the value of what were already good ideas: to wear masks and to maintain social distancing.”

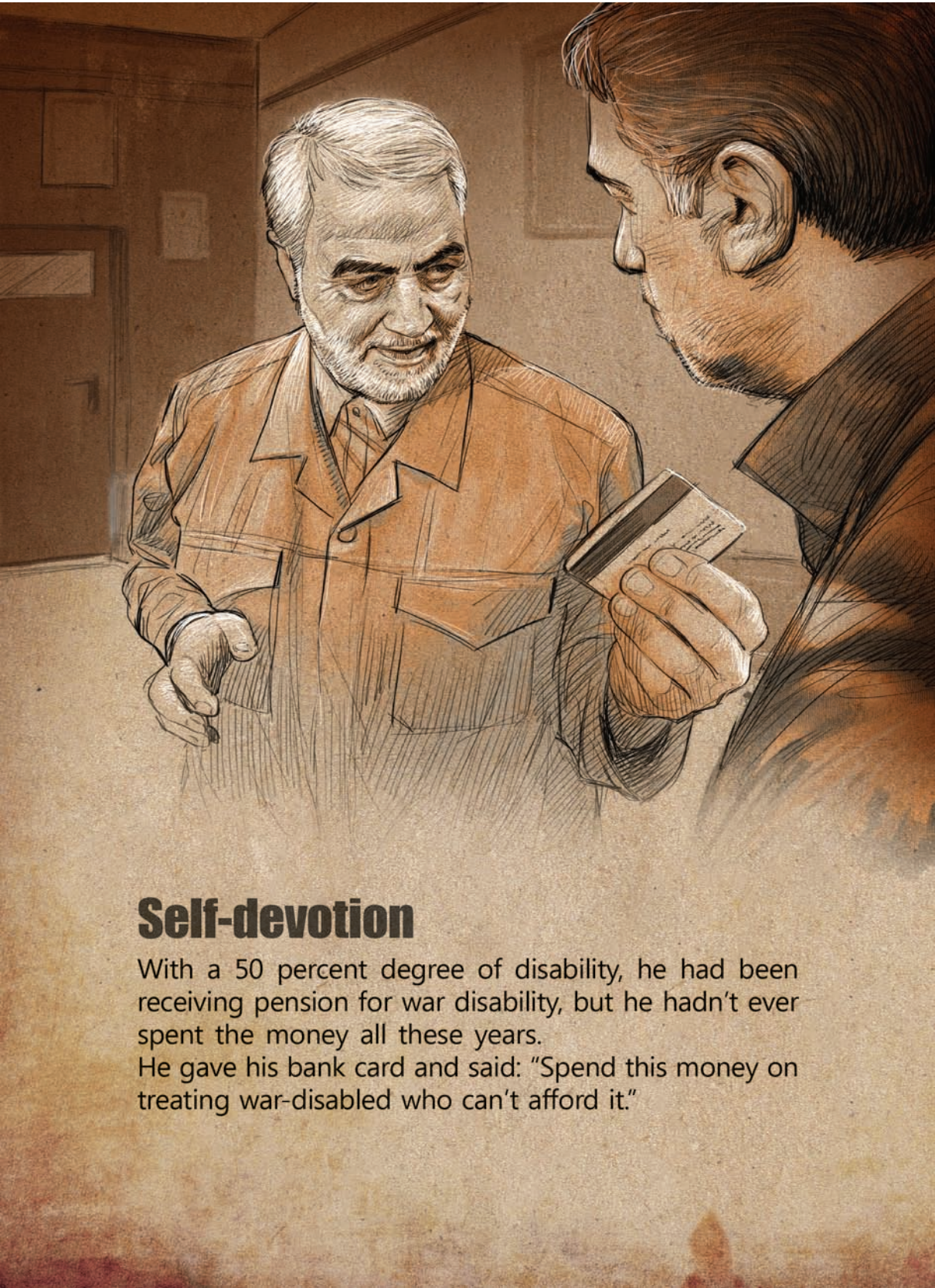
The study, entitled “Tracking changes in SARS-CoV-2 Spike: evidence that D614G increases infectivity of the COVID-19 virus”, suggests that virus with D614G change in Spike out-competes original strain, but may not make patients sicker.

Over the past 24 hours, 2,186 new cases of COVID-19 were identified in Iran, of whom 1,499 were hospitalized, the total number of patients in the country reached 257,303, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Sunday.

The number of daily COVID-19 mortalities in the country reported 194 on Sunday and the total number of deaths reached 12,829.

Currently, 3,359 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition.

So far, 219,993 patients have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.



No casualties as 4-magnitude tremor shakes Tehran province

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — An earthquake measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale shook Firoozkooh county, northeast of Tehran province, on Sunday, leaving no damages or casualties.

The earthquake occurred at 11:49 a.m. local time at a depth of 7 kilometers near the city of Damavand, according to the Iranian Seismological Center.

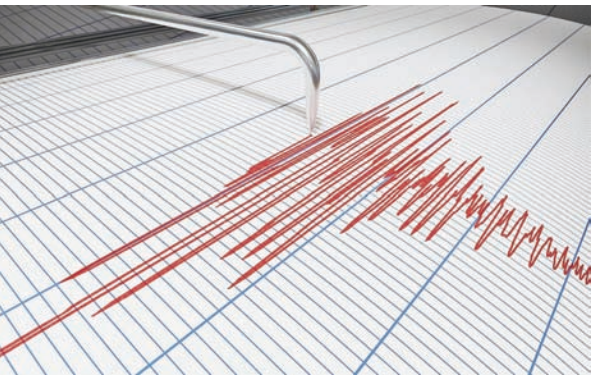
“We have received several reports of earthquakes, some of which do not mention the fault, but a place on the border of Semnan, Mazandaran, and Tehran provinces has been the cause, which is expected to be the Mosha fault,” Mansoor Darajati, head of disaster management organization of Tehran said.

Today from 5:17 a.m. until 11:49 a.m., when the last earthquake was recorded in Firoozkooh, six earthquakes above two on the Richter scale affected this region, the largest of which was the four-magnitude, which was the last one so far, he stated.

The first earthquake occurred with a magnitude of 3.6, he concluded. On May 8, an earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale shook the same area, killing two and injuring 33.

Later on May 27, another earthquake of 4.0 on the Richter scale shook the capital.

The causative fault for the earthquake was Mosha fault, 5km north of the city of Damavand. It has a history of major historical earthquakes in 958 A.D. in Rey-Taleghan with an estimated earthquake magnitude (EEM) of 7.7; 15 June 1665 with EEM 6.5 that caused a landslide and created Taar lake in the vicinity of Damavand, actually a mountain promenade



in Tehran province; 27 March 1830 EEM 7.1 in Shemiranat; 2 October 1930 EEM5.0 in Ah-Mobarakabad; 20 January 1990 EEM5.9 in Firoozkooh; and 9 May 2020 EEM5.1 in Damavand, according to Mehdi Zare, a professor of engineering seismology.

Tehran is one of the most hazardous metropolises in the world in terms of the risk of different natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, subsidence, drought, landslide, fire following an earthquake, etc. On the other hand, Tehran has over 8,300,000-night time population with a mixture of old non-resistant structures as well as modern high-rise buildings that affect the vulnerability of this city.

UN approves Syria aid through one crossing as Russia prevails in vote

→1 According to al Jazeera, in the session, the measure was approved by 12 of 15 members in the council's fifth vote this week on the issue, with Russia, China and the Dominican Republic abstaining.

German UN Ambassador Christoph Heusgen told his Chinese and Russian counterparts to report back to their capitals "how those people who gave the instructions to cut off the aid of 500,000 children ... are ready to look into the mirror tomorrow".

Fifth vote

For weeks, Russia, Syria's most important ally, had been demanding an end to the use of the Bab al-Salaam border crossing, which leads to the Aleppo region in northern Syria.

Council members had also been split on whether to renew authorisation for six months or one year.

"Russia is consistently in favour of humanitarian deliveries to Syria with full respect of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and with coordination of its legal government. This issue should not be politicised," deputy Russian UN envoy Dmitry Polyanskiy said after the vote.

The successful vote came after two failed votes on Russian proposals and two vetoes by Russia and China of resolutions drafted by Germany and Belgium.

Hezbollah deputy head: Israel does not have ability to survive

A high-ranking official with the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement has dismissed U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial proposal for "peace" between the Israeli regime and Palestinians, dubbed "the deal of the century," stating that the initiative obliges the Palestinians to bequeath their own land.

"The so-called deal of the century was a stillborn plan ever since it was released [in late January], because it is unilateral and part of the international injustice campaign against Palestinians. Palestinians' united front together with international consensus will frustrate the proposal," Hezbollah Deputy Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem said as he addressed a virtual forum called "United against the Deal of the Century and Annexation Plan" on Saturday. "Since the Occupation set foot on the land of Palestine, with British sponsorship and supervision, division has been pervasive, and Palestine and the entire region has lived in a state of turmoil, confrontation, aggression and criminality," he said.

According to Press TV, the senior Hezbollah official added, "It has been the resistance of the Palestinian people and the sacrifices of their martyrs and fighters that have prevented the demarcation of the borders of the usurping regime, and safeguarded the rights of Palestinian generations."

"It is now a proven fact that Israel does not have the ability to survive, and that its existence depends merely on international injustice and support of the United States and major powers," Sheikh Qassem added.

Sheikh Qassem then called for unison among all Palestinian political factions, saying, "Israel cannot achieve what it wants when the ultimate goal is to resist occupation and liberate Palestine."

The deal of the century envisions Jerusalem al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the Tel Aviv regime to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank and Jordan Valley. The plan also denies Palestinian refugees the right of return to their homeland, among other controversial terms.

Resistance News

Haneyya: Thwarting annexation plan major goal

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Head of Hama's political bureau Ismail Haneyya on Saturday said that an effective strategy is needed to achieve the major goal of the current stage in the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation, which is foiling the West Bank annexation plan.

Speaking at the "United Against the Deal of the Century and Annexation" forum, Haneyya said that the annexation plan has unveiled the U.S.-Israel political and ideological alliance which is aimed at undermining the foundations of the Palestinian cause.

Haneyya said that the annexation plan comes as part of the Zionist project which feeds on displacement, Judaization, and settlement expansion.

The Hamas leader affirmed that the Palestinian resistance groups will not hesitate to engage in any battle to protect their lands and people against anything threatening their existence.

Unity is needed now more than ever both on the popular and official level, he stressed.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had declared that his government would start the annexation of over 30% of the West Bank area in July, but due to disagreements inside the Israeli government and with the US administration, the move has been postponed.

Hamas values Chilean Senate's decision over Israel

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— The Hamas Movement has appreciated the Senate of Chile's recent approval of a resolution calling on president Sebastian Echenique to adopt a law boycotting settlement goods and banning commercial activity with companies that operate in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In a press release on Sunday, Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasem urged all the governments that voiced rejection of Israel's annexation plans to translate their words into action through imposing sanctions on the occupation state and prosecuting its leaders.

Spokesman Qasem asserted that the growing worldwide rejection of Israel's colonial behavior and annexation plans reflected the isolation of the Zio-American position.

On Wednesday, July 1, the Chilean Senate passed in a vote of 29 in favor, no votes against and 6 abstentions a resolution calling upon the Chilean government to review, among other things, all its agreements with Israel.

Pelosi plans legislation to limit Trump

U.S. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is seeking to limit the president's pardon powers after Trump commuted the sentence of longtime adviser Roger Stone on Friday.

"President Trump's decision to commute the sentence of top campaign advisor Roger Stone, who could directly implicate him in criminal misconduct, is an act of staggering corruption," Pelosi said in a statement Saturday.

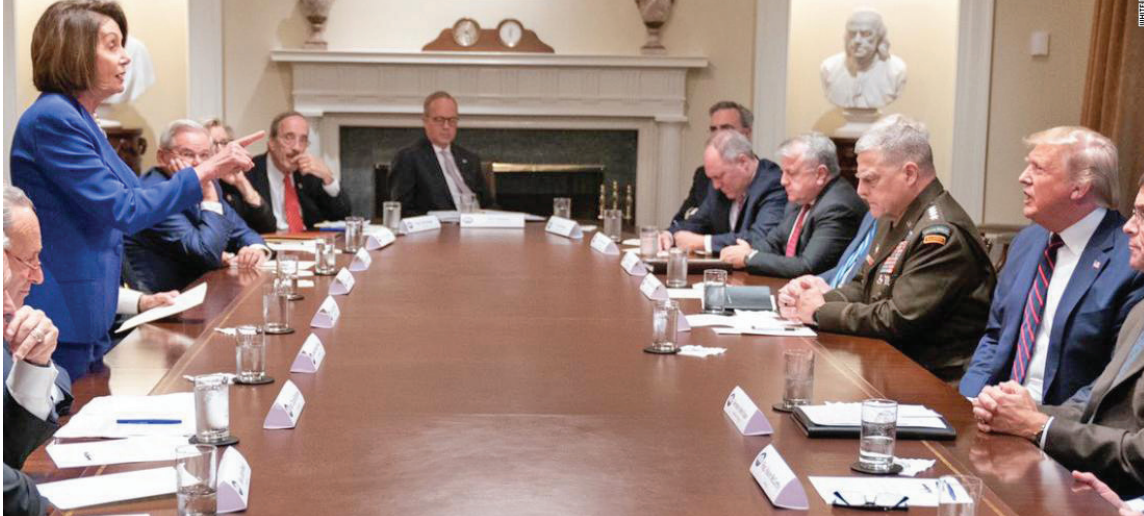
She added, "Congress will take action to prevent this type of brazen wrongdoing. Legislation is needed to ensure that no President can pardon or commute the sentence of an individual who is engaged in a cover-up campaign to shield that President from criminal prosecution."

According to The Hill, Stone, who acted as a campaign adviser for Trump during the 2016 election cycle, was convicted of multiple crimes, including witness tampering and lying to Congress. He openly lobbied Trump for clemency, as his three-year prison sentence was set to begin July 14.

Trump has long maintained that Stone, 67, was the victim of a political witch hunt.

"Roger Stone has already suffered greatly. He was treated very unfairly, as were many others in this case. Roger Stone is now a free man," White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said in a statement.

Stone was the last of a half-dozen Trump associates to be charged in connection with former special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation. While Mueller didn't find sufficient evidence to charge the president's campaign associates with conspiring with Russia to interfere in the 2016 election, he did conclude that the campaign welcomed Russia's election interference efforts.



Legislation limiting the president's ability to grant clemency has no chance of passing while the Republicans control the Senate. It's also not entirely clear if Congress has the constitutional authority to limit the president's pardon power. Under the Constitution, the president is able to execute a pardon except in cases of impeachment.

The yet-to-be-introduced bill will join legislation introduced by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) in 2019 that would mandate greater trans-

parency between the White House and Congress regarding pardons.

The proposed law would force the U.S. attorney general to give leadership of the relevant congressional committees "all materials of an investigation that were obtained by a United States Attorney, another Federal prosecutor, or an investigative authority of the Federal Government, relating to the offense for which the individual is so pardoned."

Libya: Haftar's LNA says blockade on oil will continue

Renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) has said it would maintain a blockade on oil production and exports that the National Oil Corp (NOC) says has cost the country \$6.5bn in lost revenue.

Friday's loading of a first tanker since January with oil from storage had led NOC to lift force majeure on all exports, though it warned that damage to fields meant it would take a long time to fully restore production, al Jazeera reported.

However, LNA spokesman Ahmed Mismari on Saturday said in an online statement the country's oilfields and ports are "closed until the orders of the Libyan people are implemented", laying out conditions to lift the blockade.

Mismari demanded that oil revenue should flow into a new bank account outside Libya to be distributed between regions; that it should not fund what he called "terrorists and mercenaries"; and an audit of central bank accounts to investigate past spending.

As virus rages in U.S., Trump finally wears a mask

U.S. President Donald Trump wore a face mask in public for the first time Saturday, finally yielding to intense pressure to set a public health example as the coronavirus rampages across America.

Trump had on a dark mask with the presidential seal as he walked through the corridors of Walter Reed military hospital outside Washington to meet wounded veterans, AFP reported.

Trump strode past reporters and did not stop to speak to them about what had become a hotly anticipated moment -- would he have a change of heart on a practice recommended by the government's own medical experts?

"I've never been against masks but I do believe they have a time and a place," Trump said as he left the White House.

News reports this week said aides practically begged the president to relent and wear a mask in public -- and let himself be photographed -- as coronavirus cases soared in some states and as Trump trailed Democrat Joe Biden badly in polls ahead of the November election.



Trump has steadfastly defended his administration's handling of the pandemic even though the United States is the hardest-hit country in the world.

Yemen's Houthis agree to give UN access to abandoned tanker



Yemen's Houthi movement has agreed to provide the United Nations access to a stranded oil tanker that risks causing an environmental disaster off the coast of the war-divided country, two UN sources familiar with the matter said.

The UN earlier this week said it was extremely concerned after water entered the engine room of Safer tanker, which carries 1.1 million barrels of crude oil and has been stranded off the Red Sea oil terminal of Ras Issa for over five years, Reuters reported.

The sources said that the Houthi group,

which controls the port, sent a letter approving the deployment of a UN technical team to the tanker.

The United Nations is also discussing with Yemen's warring parties about arranging the sale of the crude and dividing proceeds between Yemen's Saudi-backed government and the Houthi group that ousted it from power in the capital, Sanaa, in late 2014.

The UN Security Council is scheduled to hold a meeting Wednesday to discuss the Safer tanker issue which has been mired in disputes over control of ports and revenues.

U.S. military convoy blown up in Iraq's Diwaniyah



A U.S. military convoy carrying logistic supplies has been attacked in Iraq on the road between Samawah and Diwaniyah, south of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, local media reports say.

At least three vehicles of the convoy were reportedly destroyed or damaged in the attack which occurred at 10 pm (local time) on Saturday.

Some media reports say the convoy has been targeted by a remote-controlled VBIED.

The convoy was reportedly traveling between the cities of Diwaniyah in Al-Qadisiyyah province and Svehiclein

Muthanna province.

The videos and images released of the incident suggest that the vehicles caught fire following the attack.

It is not immediately clear if any casualties were incurred.

The newly formed Iraqi group, Saraya Thawrat al-Eshreen al-Thaniya, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Anti-U.S. sentiments have been running high in Iraq since Washington assassinated top Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani and the second-in-command of the Iraqi popular mobilization units, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, in January.

Black Lives Matter protest in front of the U.S. embassy in London

→1 There, they distributed free food and medical supplies, planted community gardens, and held film screenings and workshops. One small group painted a large, bright statement on a wall within the zone: "Black Lives Matter".

The area was declared the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone -- or Chaz, for short. It was to be a police-free, self-governing utopia. A few days later, in an interview with CNN on 11 June, the city's Democratic mayor Jenny Durkan said the zone could herald a "summer of love".

Protesters gather in Detroit

Boisterous protests over the police shooting of a Detroit man concluded late Friday, hours after the release of

video showing officers returned fire when the suspect shot at close range.

Three Detroit officers shot at Hakim Littleton, 20, killing him on Detroit's west side just after noon on Friday, sparking a call for immediate protests in the wake of nationwide unrest following the death of George Floyd during a police incident in May.

"Justice for Hakim Littleton! Fire and jail the killer cop!" dozens of demonstrators chanted outside Detroit's 12th Precinct headquarters on Seven Mile Road near Woodward on Friday night. More than two hours earlier, police played dash and bodycam video appearing to show Littleton drawing and firing on officers who were arresting an associate.

26 Photos

Protesters gather after Detroit officers shoot, kill man who fired on Earlier, officers from that precinct's Gang Intelligence Unit and Operation CeaseFire detail were near San Juan and McNichols investigating a July 5 shooting at a block party when the exchange of gunfire occurred at about 12:15 p.m., police Chief James Craig said.

Craig said officers were at the scene Friday because they had learned last week's shooting was gang-related. Less than five hours later, an angry crowd of about 300 people gathered at the site, demanding racial justice, police defunding and answers from Craig.

‘Persepolis are not champions yet’ - Yahya Golmohammadi

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team coach Yahya Golmohammadi has warned his team there is still a lot of work left to be done in their bid to win the Iran Professional League title.

Persepolis lead the IPL table with 56 points, 14 points ahead of Sepahan and Shahr Khodro. The Reds need two wins out of their six matches to claim title for the fourth time in a row.

Persepolis have won their past three matches since resumption of the league competition.

“We took another step toward the title by beating Machine Sazi in Tabriz but competition has not yet finished. Persepolis have difficult matches ahead and I’ve told my players we are still not champions,” Golmohammadi said.

“There are 18 points left for us and we will try to do our best. Unfortunately, our fans cannot attend the matches due to coronavirus lockdown but we know that our supporters are very enthusiastic about their teams,” he stated.

“Our players are thirsty to win and they can handle it. We have to keep their mental and physical fitness. The Persepolis players always want to be a winner,” Golmohammadi went on to say.

Persepolis are scheduled to meet Foolad on Thursday and it could be another big step toward winning the title.

“Foolad are a strong team and take advantage of young players. They play at high tempo but we want to win and I hope it will be a beautiful match,” Golmohammadi concluded.



Majid Jalali no longer Gol Gohar coach



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Majid Jalali has parted way with Gol Gohar football team, following poor results in Iran Professional league (IPL) on Sunday.

The Sirjan based club have confirmed that their coach will not guide the team in the remaining matches of the season.

After parting company with their former Croatian coach Vinko Begovic, Gol Gohar's directors opted to appoint Jalali as the team's new head coach in October 2019.

However, a day after the team's defeat against Peykan on Saturday, the club and the head coach agreed to bring an end to their partnership by mutual consent.

With 19 points from 24 games, Gol Gohar are currently on the 15th spot in IPL and are one of the main candidates to be relegated to the league.

Faraz Kamalvand, the former coach of Pars Jonoubi Jam as well as, Firouz Karimi, a veteran Iranian coach, are linked with the vacant bench of Gol Gohar.

Gol Gohar Football Club was established by the Gol Gohar company in Sirjan in 1988 and competed in local leagues. In 2007 Gol Gohar was promoted to the Azadegan League for the first time. In the 2018-2019 season, they won the league and were promoted to the Persian Gulf Pro League.

Esteghlal held by Tractor: IPL



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team were held to a goalless draw by Tractor in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday.

Esteghlal's next year's AFC Champions League hopes were dealt a blow after they accumulated just one point and remained in sixth place with 38 points.

Sepahan in Isfahan dropped points in a home draw against Pars Jonoubi. Mohammadreza Hosseini gave the hosts the lead just 11 minutes into the match and Reza Khaleghi equalized the match in the 85th minute.

Shahr Khodro were also held by Saipa at the dying moments of the match in Mashhad.

Amin Ghaseminejad was on target for Shahr Khodro in the 9th minute but Armin Sohrabian levelled the score just before the final whistle.

Struggling Paykan earned a crucial win against Gol Gohar, beating the team 2-0 thanks to goals from Mahan Rahmani and Nader Mohammadi.

Sanat Naft Abadan and Nassaji drew 1-1 in Abadan.

Reza Jabireh scored for Sanat Naft in the 26th minute and Rahman Jafari scored the equalizer before the break.

Persepolis lead the table with 56 points, 14 points clear of Sepahan and Shahr Khodro.

Tractor sit fourth with 41 points.

LeBron reveals he won't wear social justice message

Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James said Saturday that he won't wear a social justice message on the back of his jersey when the NBA season resumes.

James explained why he passed when he spoke with reporters on a video conference call Saturday.

“I don't need to have something on the back of my jersey for people to understand my mission or know what I'm about and what I'm here to do,” James said.

The Lakers are slated to open the restarted season on July 30 against the Los Angeles Clippers at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex near Orlando, Fla.

The NBA is allowing players to sport a message on the back of their jerseys instead of their last name. James scanned the list of approved phrases but didn't see one that appealed to him.

“It was no disrespect to the list that was handed out to all the players,” James said. “I commend anyone that decides to put something on the back of their jersey. It's just something that didn't really seriously resonate with my mission, with my goal.”



“I would have loved to have a say-so on what would have went on the back of my jersey. I had a couple things in mind, but I wasn't part of that process, which is OK. I'm absolutely OK with that.”

Among the phrases reportedly agreed upon by the NBA and the NBA Players association include: Black Lives Matter; Say Their Names; I Can't Breathe; and Respect Us.

In fact, Lakers center JaVale McGee chose “Respect Us” for the back of his jersey.

“I definitely feel like respect is a key factor in social injustices,” McGee told reporters on Saturday. “I feel like we definitely need to get equality. We definitely need to get the same respect everybody else does.”

Saturday also marked the Lakers' first group practice for the preparation of the upcoming restart. It came four months to the day since the NBA season was halted due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“It gave me an opportunity to be home and make up a lot of time that I've lost over the years because I've been playing in this league and striving to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, to ever play this game,” said James, a 16-time All-Star averaging 25.7 points, 10.6 assists and 7.9 rebounds this season. “So sacrificing my family at times was the most challenging and hardest part of it all.”

The Lakers (49-14) hold a 5 1/2-game lead over the Clippers for the top seed in the Western Conference.

(Source: Reuters)

Barcelona suffer injury blow with Griezmann set for spell on sidelines

Barcelona forward Antoine Griezmann is set to miss his side's final two La Liga games after picking up a thigh injury during Saturday's 1-0 win over Real Valladolid.

Griezmann, 29, was brought off at half time after suffering the knock and the club released a statement on Sunday to confirm the forward will be out of action.

Barca did not confirm how long Griezmann will be unavailable but he is expected to miss the matches against Alaves and Osasuna.

The France international has endured a tough debut campaign since his €120 million transfer from Atletico Madrid.

Griezmann has scored 15 goals in all competitions but was left out of the starting lineup for a number of weeks under manager Quique Setien.

Griezmann's brother and father criticised Setien on social media after the Barca boss refused to apologise for bringing Griezmann on in stoppage time against Atletico.

Sources have told ESPN that the club have reassured Griezmann that he is part of their future plans after meeting with his camp this week.

A source with knowledge of the meeting said it went “perfectly,” with both the club and the player's camp expressing a desire for the relationship to continue.

Barca are one point behind league leaders Real Madrid who have a game in hand on their fierce rivals.

(Source: ESPN)



Iran's Beiranvand a candidate for ACL2018 Team

Asian Football Confederation is going to determine the top 11 players of the 2018 AFC Champions League and Iran and Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand is among the candidates.



The-afc begins with five candidates for the all-important number one shirt. The fans should review the nominees and then choose their favorite goalkeeper to helm the rearguard for this all-star XI in a poll.

Beiranvand went into the latter stages of the competition on the back of famously denying Ronaldo from the spot at the 2018 FIFA World Cup and the Persepolis custodian would thwart yet another global superstar with one of the standout moments of the 2018 AFC Champions League.

With the second leg of the semi-final against Al Sadd in its dying moments and on a knife edge, Beiranvand's flying world-class save somehow kept out Xavi's goalbound header as the Tehran giants advanced to the final for the first time. A moment of pure class in what was an outstanding campaign.

He will have to compete with Kwoun Sun-tae, Shin Hwa-yong, Zhang Lu and Song Beom-keun to be named the best goalkeeper in the ACL2018 Team.

(Source: the-afc)

Mehrdad Karimian parts ways with Shahin Bushehr

Tasnim — Mehrdad Karimian parted company with Shahin Bushehr by mutual consent just 10 days after he was named the team's interim coach.

Karimian had replaced Croatian coach Miso Krsticevic on July 1.

In his first match as interim coach, Shahin lost to 10-man Persepolis 1-0 in Tehran and the team suffered a heavy 5-1 loss against Zob Ahan on Friday.

Shahin Bushehr are rooted to the bottom of the Iran Professional league (IPL) table on 17 points.

The Bushehr-based club have announced that they will introduce the new coach within one day.

ParaVolley signs MoU with FIVB: Hadi Rezaei

IRNA — ParaVolley Asia Oceania Secretary General Hadi Rezaei said that World Para Volley has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with FIVB (International Volleyball Federation) facilitating collaboration between the two organizations with the overall objective to promote volleyball around the world.

The cooperation of two organizations on specific projects will enable both the FIVB and World ParaVolley to boast that volleyball in all of its forms is a sport for all.

World ParaVolley is the independent organization responsible for planning and delivering the sport of ParaVolley for athletes with physical impairments.

“ParaVolley and FIVB have many capacities to collaborate because they have many same goals. I have to say International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) have already started collaboration on various projects and activities in the world,” Rezaei said in an interview with Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) website.

“Mr. Davarzani is a member of Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) board of directors and we have asked him to facilitate collaboration between AVC and Asia Oceania,” the Iran sitting volleyball coach added.

“There are so many common goals between sitting volleyball and volleyball and, technically, there is no much difference between coaching in ParaVolley and volleyball and the trainers can come together,” he added.

“Volleyball has a great family including indoor volleyball, beach volleyball, snow volleyball, sitting volleyball and beach ParaVolley. We are looking to see beach ParaVolley in Paralympic 2028. This is our long-term goal,” Rezaei concluded.

Ex-Australia captain Jedinak calls it a day

Former Australia captain and Crystal Palace stalwart Mile Jedinak announced his retirement on Sunday, saying it was “time for a new chapter”.

The 35-year-old spent five seasons at the London club, joining from Turkey's Genclerbirligi in 2011, skipping Palace to promotion back to the Premier League via the playoffs in 2013.

He moved to Aston Villa in 2016 but was released at the end of the 2018-19 season with speculation that he may rejoin a team in Australia's A-League, where he started his career.

But the defensive midfielder took to Instagram to confirm he was hanging up his boots aged 35.

“I was a young boy from Western Sydney with a dream to play professional football,” he said. “My journey to reach that goal was full of so many experiences, challenges and memories that will always be cherished.”

“I want to thank all the clubs I represented for allowing me the opportunity to do so. It's now time for a new chapter.”

Palace paid tribute on Twitter, calling Jedinak “a leader of men and a club legend”.

He played 79 times for his country, featuring at three World Cups before bowing out of international football in late 2018.

One of his biggest triumphs was captaining the Socceroos to win the 2015 Asian Cup on home soil.

(Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The people of the world are like travelers in a caravan, who are carried on in their sleep.

Imam Ali (AS)

Tehran Intl. Book Fair 2020 canceled over escalation in COVID-19 cases

→1 Turkey was slated to be the guest of honor of the Tehran International Book Fair this year.

Earlier the organizers had suspended China's presence after the first cases of the disease were detected in the country.



People visit the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla on April 28, 2019. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

Numerous cultural and art events, including the Fajr International Film Festival, have been canceled since February when the first cases of the COVID-19 infection were reported in Qom.

Official says drive-in cinema continues despite reopening of theaters

A R T TEHRAN — The director of the drive-in movie theater project in the provinces of Tehran and Alborz, Manuchehr Safarkhani, has said that despite the reopening of movie theaters, the project continues as COVID-19 still rules the country.

From the very beginning of the shutdown of all art and cultural centers after the outbreak of coronavirus, those active in art and culture of the country began to find a solution to keep the art and cultural activities alive even in the shadow of the new virus.

The main goal was to preserve the art and cultural activities, inject happiness and keep the spirits of people high in order to face the difficult days of dealing with the new virus.



People enjoy a movie at a drive-in cinema in the parking lot of Tehran's Milad Tower on May 2, 2020. (IRNA/Davud Qahrdar)

Although the Owj Arts and Media Organization was one of the first in the public sector, launching the project with Ebrahim Hatamikia's latest movie "Exodus" in the parking lot of Milad Tower in Tehran, producer and filmmaker Safarkhani was the first in the private sector, launching the project in the provinces of Tehran and Alborz.

"Although Peyman Qasemkhani's comedy 'Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army' and Mohammad Kart's directorial debut 'Butterfly Swimming' began screening after the movie theaters reopened after being closed for about 4 months, we decided to continue the drive-in movie theater," he said.

"We believe it can be considered a different type of participation and a different experience and a new definition of movie theaters," he added.

"We are planning to concentrate on developing the project. The Enghelab Sports Complex in Karaj, as well as the Takhti Sports Complex and Khavaran Cultural Center in Tehran, are active as places that can host filmgoers in the drive-in cinema project, and we are planning to add more locations," he concluded.

Sculpture of legendary actor Ali Nasirian unveiled at Film Museum of Iran

A R T TEHRAN — A d e s k sculpture of the legendary stage and screen actor Ali Nasirian was unveiled at the Film Museum of Iran on Saturday evening.

The sculpture represents Nasirian as Abolfat'h, a bookbinder in director Ali Hatami's popular TV series "Hezardastan".

Nasirian and actors Reza Kianian and Fatemeh Motamed-Arya attended the unveiling ceremony of the sculpture designed and made by Hossein Ardestani.

After the unveiling ceremony, Nasirian said that he got a good feeling on seeing the sculpture and expressed thanks to the museum.

"I remember Ali Hatami told me that he wants 'Hezardastan' to be an album of me and my other colleagues Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Ezzatollah Entezami, Davud Rashidi and Jamshid Mashayekhi. And his remarks encouraged me more to accept the role of Abolfat'h," he said.

"Abolfat'h was a bookbinder who was suffering from tuberculosis and had to live separately from his wife. I did not know how to speak Persian with an Azarbaijani accent and Nasser Tahmasb lent his voice to the role which added more to the character," he said.

"Hatami had permitted the actors to feel comfortable in their roles in his films. He did not interfere much. Acting is a creative career and an actor must visualize the role and then begin to act, while the voice and tone of the actor are also important," he said.

Motamed-Arya called Nasirian the representative of an unrepeatable generation because of his typical style of acting and his own dear self.

"He gave identity and character to acting.



Actor Ali Nasirian poses with his sculpture at the Film Museum of Iran on July 11, 2020.

This means he made a great thing out of nothing, and that is precious in our cultural history like our Persepolis," she said.

"The reason behind the popularity of his generation is because of their methods, thoughts and attitudes towards this career, which left us a great structure and is precious for us. We cannot see a role played by Nasirian

and say we don't like it," she added.

Kianian also said, "When Motamed-Arya says Nasirian is from a golden generation that means this generation was the first educated generation of Iranian cinema and theater. They were the first who studied at the Academy of Fine Arts."

Nasirian received an award for best

supporting actor at the 37th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran for his role in "A Hairy Tale" in February.

The Iranian Theater Forum also honored him for his lifetime achievements in May 2019. In July 2019, the 7th Shahr International Film Festival also honored the actor with a lifetime achievement award.

Ivan Ward's "Phobia" comes to Iranian bookstores



Cover of the Persian translation of Ivan Ward's book "Phobia".

CULTURE TEHRAN — British d e s k author Ivan Ward's book "Phobia" (Ideas in Psychoanalysis) has been published in Persian by the Sib-e Sorkh Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Morteza Monsef.

People all experience phobias of a mild or severe kind, crystallizing their fears or aversive behavior around a particular object or situation. Certain typical phobias may be regarded as a normal part of childhood - fear of the dark, of wild animals, of intruders.

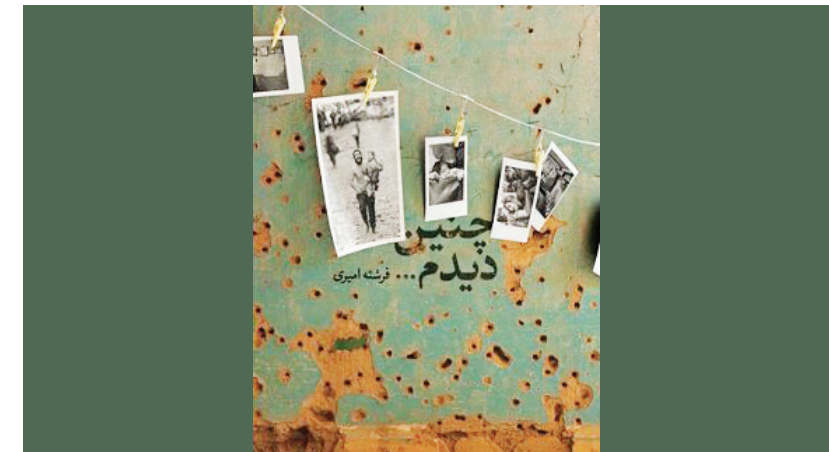
Ivan Ward guides the readers through the array of explanations about phobias. The behaviorists see it as a conditioned response to a frightening experience; the genetic explanation sees phobia as the

evolutionary legacy of real environmental threats - snakes, spiders, lightning and so on. But the experience of severe phobia also contains something intensely irrational - why such overwhelming anxiety at the sight of a bird's feather, or the thought of crossing a bridge?

It is around this perplexing core that a psychoanalytic explanation comes into its own. Using common experiences, horror stories, the films of Alfred Hitchcock and the cultural history of racism, this book illuminates the nightmare world of phobic phenomena in the individual and in society.

Ward is the director of education at the Freud Museum, London, the series editor of "Ideas in Psychoanalysis" and author of "Introducing Psychoanalysis".

Persian novel "I Saw that..." on filmmaker's journey to war-torn Syria released



Front cover of Iranian writer Fereshteh Amiri's latest novel "I Saw that..."

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k writer Fereshteh Amiri has recently published her latest novel "I Saw that..." about an Iranian documentarian who risks his life in war-torn Syria to search for his friend.

"I suffered a lot in writing this book; sufferings that sometimes stopped me from continuing," Amiri has said.

"It was not an easy job to write about war and this war in particular whose fires are blazing deep down," she added.

The story is narrated by Sussan, whose husband Hamid, a documentarian, decides to leave Iran to trace his close friend, Mostafa, who

is missing in action in war-torn Syria.

Sussan, who was raised in an orphanage, is opposed to Hamid's decision. However, he begins his journey which leads to his captivity.

This is also a spiritual journey for Hamid, Sussan and their daughter, Yasaman, during which everybody gains a new outlook toward life.

"If there was not the kind people like Mostafa, who became eternal in their own ways, I could not have continued writing this book," said Amiri, who is also the author of the acclaimed novels, "The Years of Separation" and "The Story of Benin".

"I Saw that..." has been published by Neyestan Publications in Tehran.

New president says Fajr Intl. Theater Festival 2021 likely to go online

A R T TEHRAN — The new president of the Fajr International Theater Festival has said that the 2021 edition of the event will likely be held online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is one of the issues we need to take into consideration, and of course, we have no alternative but to make the best use of technology. Either the festival will be held online or in its usual form," Hossein Mosafer-Astaneh said.

"We also need to make the best use of the potentials in the virtual world, while the necessary and appropriate infrastructures should be provided," he said.

He said that there are no plans yet to postpone the festival, which is annually held during January, and added, "The festival is a strong motivation for many troupes in Tehran and other cities and that we should not be rendered by coronavirus."



Hossein Mosafer-Astaneh in an undated photo. (Tasnim/Hossein Movahhednejad)

Mosafer-Astaneh whose play "Return" was on stage at Tehran's Sarv Theater Hall recently, also said that the play has been halted due to a significant rise in the number of the COVID19 infections in the country over the past week.

"The heavy death toll made me and the director of the hall to be more concerned about the health of the actors and the audience. We stopped the play and we will resume performances only after the current situation gets better," he added.

"At the present time, the new virus is with us and we should continue our life and cannot shut down theaters completely, however, we need to adapt ourselves to the current situations" he concluded.

Many international festivals and movie theaters around the world have been shut down amid the pandemic.

IIDCYA, ICRO team up to keep Iranian expats in Greece in touch with native culture

A R T TEHRAN — The d e s k Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) has teamed up to keep the Iranians living in Greece in contact with their native culture.

Ways of collaboration between the two organizations were discussed in a meeting on Saturday between the Iranian cultural attaché in Greece, Mehdi Nik-khah Qomi, who is an ICRO envoy, and Hamed Rahnama, director of IIDCYA Public Relations and International Affairs Department.

"The IIDCYA is ready to send a large collection of its translated books to Iranian children living in Greece and also to organize meetings with Iranian writers and poets for the children," Rahnama said.

He also suggested that the institute organize Iranian film festivals for the children and non-Persian speakers living in the country.

For his part, Nik-khah Qomi said that social networks have great potential to keep the children updated on their native country's events and issues.

"There are historical and civilizational

affinities between Iran and Greece, therefore it is appropriate to raise the children's knowledge of the affinities," he added.

"We need to create appropriate materials to nourish the children's thoughts through the social networks," he noted.

He added that the materials should help mitigate the repercussions of the geographical distance from their native culture.

Photo: IIDCYA Public Relations and International Affairs Department director Hamed Rahnama (L) presents a painting by an IIDCYA member to the Iranian



cultural attaché in Greece, Mehdi Nik-khah Qomi during a meeting on July 11, 2020. (IIDCYA/Hamid Tavakkoli)