



**Iraqi PM to visit Iran next week**

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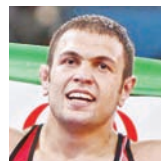
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# Iran breaks Israel's monopoly on tumor treating device

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©File photo

## Iran invites Azerbaijan, Armenia to exercise restraint

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has voiced Tehran's readiness to help soothe the tensions between two of its northern neighbors, namely Azerbaijan and Armenia, which have been caught in a deadly clash.

In phone conversations with Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan late on Tuesday,

Zarif advised both sides to exercise restraint and initiate talks aimed at resolving rifts peacefully.

Zarif proposed that Iran is ready to help bring an end to tensions between the two former Soviet republics.

The clashes broke out on the volatile Armenia-Azerbaijan border on Sunday and have continued over the past days. ➔3

## India sees Iran a vital trade partner, looks for expansion of ties: envoy

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** — Economic and political relations between Iran and India date back to centuries ago and the two countries have kept their ties throughout many turbulences and ups and downs.

India is the only foreign country that is currently participating in a major development project in Iran despite the U.S. sanctions.

The Chabahar Port development project, in southeastern Iran, is the anchor for the expansion of economic relations between the two nations.

The Tehran Times invited Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra to an interview on Tuesday in which we talked about the two countries' current economic relations and also the landscape for the future. ➔4

## Azerbaijani scholar Fariz Akhmedov novelizing poet Shahriar's life story

**TEHRAN** — Azerbaijani scholar Fariz Akhmedov has said that he is novelizing the life story of Iranian poet Mohammad-Hossein Behjat Tabrizi, who wrote under the pseudonym Shahriar.

Akhmedov, who is also the director of the Scientific Library of Nakhchivan State University, made the remarks in his recent meeting with Abolfazl Rabiei, Iran's cultural attaché in Nakhchivan, the Islamic

Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) announced in a press release published on Wednesday. Akhmedov said that he plans to unveil the novel during the 115th birthday celebration of the poet in 2022.

Shahriar was born on January 2, 1907, and passed away on September 18, 1988. Iranians commemorate Shahriar every year on his death anniversary, which is also Iran's National Day of Poetry and Literature. ➔12

## Washington realizing unipolar world has ended: Russian academic

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — Washington has recognizes that the unipolar world has come to an end, although it does not yet know how to adjust to a multipolar world, says Glenn Diesen, an associate professor from the University of South-Eastern Norway.

After U.S. withdrawal from international treaties such as the nuclear deal, some experts pointed out that the U.S. decline as a global power has expedited.

"The more U.S. power decline, the more it will be prepared to use its administrative role in the international economic system to punish adversaries," Glenn Diesen tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Do you believe that the 2015 nuclear deal was successful, or was it born dead?

A: The agreement reached a broad consensus in the international community, and Iran upheld its obligations. It would, therefore, be incorrect to say that it was born dead. The U.S. has only recently begun pursuing the policies of withdrawing from and renegotiating international agreements. This is, to some extent, a unique feature of the Trump administration, although it can also be interpreted as the U.S. attempting to reposition itself due to its relative decline.

The sanctions against Iran always had two functions, to prevent nuclear proliferation and to weaken a regional power that opposes the U.S. The nuclear agreement was successful to the extent it prevented or at least delayed Iran's nuclear potential. However, the removal of sanctions made Iran more powerful and difficult to contain in the region.

■ Do you think that Washington's exit from the nuclear deal and other international agreements is merely a decision by the Trump administration or that the U.S. as a whole is moving towards such an approach?

A: The Trump administration has been withdrawing from many international agreements. The belief seems to be that key agreements have to be renegotiated to strengthen the U.S. position in the international system. The relative strength of the U.S. in the international system is reducing, and it is reasonable to argue that the status quo is not tenable. ➔7

## Open-air museum being set up featuring millennia-old relics in northeast Iran

**TEHRAN** — A new round of restoration work is due to commence on Tepe Rivi, which has so far yielded magnificent remains of the Bronze Age up to the Sassanid period.

A team of Iranian and German experts and academia are scheduled to jointly conduct the follow-up project that also aims to arrange the rich archaeological site to become an outdoor museum.

"These activities will be carried out in the form of protection and restoration of mudbrick structures and a columned hall in the historical Rivi site," CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Habib Yazdanpanah as saying on Tuesday.

"This year, 4 billion rials (around \$95,000) has been allocated to create tourism infrastructure and provide the spaces needed for tourists in the historic Ravi area, which will be tuned to an open-air archaeology museum," the official added.

"The proximity of this historical site to the

city of Ashkhaneh and the road that connects Gorgan to Mashhad has provided a good opportunity to create a tourism museum site and the growth of the tourism industry in the Samalqan plain," he explained.

Teams of Iranian and German archaeologists are slated to continue research on Tepe Rivi, an ancient site in northeast Iran, which has so far revealed magnificent remains of the Bronze Age up to the Sassanid period. The teams have completed seven archaeological seasons across the site and based on a new agreement their cooperation will be continued for the next five years, according to CHTN.

Archaeological research works in Rivi started in 2012. Since then archaeologists accessed remains of settlements from the Bronze and Iron Age, the Achaemenid, the Parthian, the Sassanid dynasties, and the early Islamic period. ➔8

## Philadelphia protesters sue city over tear gas, use of force

On Tuesday, three civil rights lawsuits filed in Philadelphia accused the city of using military-level force that injured protesters and bystanders alike during peaceful protests against racial inequality and police brutality.

One lawsuit accuses Philadelphia police of lobbying tear gas and firing rubber bullets at protesters indiscriminately as they marched peacefully on a city highway. Another accuses the police of using tanks, tear gas, pepper spray, and rubber bullets in an African American business and residential district, at times injuring people in or near their own homes, AP reported.

"They were just opening fire on anybody they saw, for hours and hours, regardless of any conduct or justification," said Bret Grote, legal director of the Abolitionist Law Center, who called the police response to demonstrations that rocked the city in May and June reckless.

"They were shooting children. They were shooting old people. They were shooting residents on their own street. They were gassing the firefighters," he said.

The lawsuits, involving more than 140 plaintiffs, were filed the same day the city announced the resignation of Philadelphia Managing Director Brian Abernathy. The suits were filed by the law center, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and civil rights lawyers in the city.

Both the city and the police department declined to comment directly on the lawsuits. However, in a statement, Mayor Jim Kenney said the city is conducting an independent review of both situations and will hold police accountable.

"I am highly concerned about what transpired on both I-676 and 52nd Street, and I fully regret the use of tear gas and some other use of force in those incidents," Kenney said. ➔10

## Iran to start producing COVID-19 drug remdesivir next week

**TEHRAN** — Iran will start producing the antiviral agent remdesivir for the treatment of coronavirus patients next week, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Wednesday.

So far, no effective and reliable medicine has been identified for the treatment of coronavirus in the world, but remdesivir is prescribed for patients with this virus in Europe and the United States, he stated.

He went on to note that although the medicine is available sufficiently in the country, its domestic production will start next week.

The broad-spectrum antiviral agent remde-

sivir is a nucleotide analog prodrug. On May 1, The U.S. FDA issued EUA of remdesivir to allow emergency use of the agent for severe COVID-19 (confirmed or suspected) in hospitalized adults and children. A phase 1b trial of an inhaled nebulized version was initiated in late June to determine if remdesivir can be used on an outpatient basis and at earlier stages of disease.

Remdesivir was studied in clinical trials for Ebola virus infections but showed limited benefit. Remdesivir has been shown to inhibit replication of other human coronaviruses associated

with high morbidity in tissue cultures, including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2003 and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 264,561 on Wednesday, of whom 13,410 have died and 227,561 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,388 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 199 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

Currently, 3,411 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition, she added.

## City Theater promoting masks as Tehran sees big rise in COVID-19 cases

**TEHRAN** — The City Theater Complex joined the national campaign "I Wear a Face Mask" on Wednesday by unveiling a graphic design as Tehran sees a big rise in the COVID-19 cases.

The design fixed on a billboard located in the courtyard of the complex features the central building wearing a face mask.

The design has been created by Bahman Vakhshour based on a photo by Samira Nazari.

The design also carries the motto "My face mask protects you and your face mask protects me". The campaign "I Wear a Face Mask" has been launched by the Health Ministry due to a sharp rise that has occurred in the number of coronavirus infections and deaths in Tehran and several other Iranian cities over the past few weeks.



© Tehran Times/ Bahman Vakhshour

## Tehran says concerned over E3's co-op with U.S. to kill JCPOA

**TEHRAN** — Tehran has voiced great concerns over any cooperation by the European trio with the U.S. to undermine the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The European parties to the JCPOA are France, Germany and Britain, known as E3.

"Any companionship of some remaining participants of the JCPOA with U.S. conspiracies against the agreement, particularly to destruct and undermine of the very text of the UNSCR 2231, inter alia, lifting of arms restrictions in the fifth year of adoption of the JCPOA in October 2020, is a matter of grave concern," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on the fifth anniversary of the nuclear deal.

The following is the text of the statement:

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an important achievement of multilateral diplomacy, which has been strongly supported by the international community, is in serious danger on its fifth anniversary. Unless the international community shall ensure the balanced implementation of all parties in good faith, it could be another victim of the U.S. unilateral and unlawful approach. The U.S. and its allies should bear the responsibility for the consequences of such policies.

The international, legal, technical, strategic and political capital of this agreement has been deeply eroded on its fifth anniversary, due to the destructive and illegal actions of the United States. The remaining Participants of the JCPOA are aware of this and by consensus are of the view that the root cause for the current situation is the continuing violations of UNSCR 2231 and the JCPOA. ➔3



## The collapse of the Iran nuclear deal 5 years on would be a failure of EU values

By Gholamhossein Dehghani, Iran's ambassador to Brussels

July 14 marks the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or the Iran Nuclear Deal. It takes place against a gloomy and bleak backdrop. Years from now, when historians recount what happened in this era, they will presumably note the incipient end of the JCPOA as the beginning of the decline of multilateralism and a serious blow to an integrated European foreign policy.

Through the JCPOA, the EU achieved what would have been deemed unthinkable for a union whose credibility as a foreign policy actor was - and is - doubted by many, even within the European camp. In this sense, the JCPOA created remarkable momentum for multilateralism in general, and, from a European standpoint, a crucial turning point in non-proliferation diplomacy specifically with the EU leading the way. On July 14, 2015, the EU well deserved a clap on the shoulder for navigating a tortuous path through negotiations. The conclusion of the JCPOA, however, was the beginning of another equally daunting job: its successful implementation, with the Europeans fulfilling the roles of coordinators and participants.



Safeguarding the JCPOA for Europe is tantamount to upholding its core foreign policy values as enshrined in its founding treaties, and as reflected in EU security and non-proliferation strategies. On the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the JCPOA, and probably its last, it is time to revisit how Europe (or rather the EU) played their roles in the nuclear agreement and how it will unfold if they tread the current path.

Transatlantic ties have historically been an integral element of European politics. In the early 2000s, the discord created as a result of the formation of the coalition of "the willing" and the dislocation of the Europeans and the United States over the Iraq War had created unprecedented disunity between the two coasts of the Atlantic. Against this backdrop, the Europeans managed to insert themselves into the driver's seat of the negotiations that began in 2003 to find a negotiated and multilateral solution for the so-called Iranian nuclear crisis.

A European politician once wrote that through the nuclear negotiations, "the EU sought to promote joint security interests as a way to assert itself as a major player in foreign policy and to strengthen the France-Germany-UK triad, which had been weakened by the differences over the 2003 Iraq war." In this context, transatlantic coordination was essential for European nuclear diplomacy with Iran.

Moreover, as "old timers" on the international scene, the EU's Big 3 had much ground to regain in terms of credibility. Furthermore, the negotiations remarkably promoted the EU, which was trying to secure its envisioned role as a protagonist of a rules-based international order with the UN at its core in line with European values and within the confines of EU principles. They deserve to take credit for their diplomacy, but what are they capable of doing without the United States? What is the EU minus the transatlantic factor?

In the post-withdrawal period, the Joint Commission meeting of July 6, 2018, was an important event in the sense of it being a turning point in exhausting all measures in good faith aimed at resolving the issue at the highest levels of diplomacy. The Chair's statement following the event is quite illustrative. It is a fact that the EU/E3 went to certain lengths after the U.S. withdrawal in their effort to safeguard the economic benefits of the JCPOA, namely the update of the Blocking Statute, the extension of the European Investment Bank's lending mandate on Iran, and more recently, the creation of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX).

The shortcomings of these measures, however, point to a fatal flaw in the EU: that it has not fully weaned themselves from the early support that was provided by the United States in the context of the Cold War, and that a culture of complacency has crept within the very fabric of polity in Europe, which gnaws directly at any inkling of independence and, in turn, renders ambitions of sovereignty and geopolitical independence void of actual meaning.

In this sense, how Europe behaves towards the JCPOA, particularly now under the current circumstances, determines the fate of its quest for foreign policy integration in the years to come and will irrevocably define the sort of player it aspires to be on the international scene.

The conclusion of the JCPOA was indeed a unique achievement for multilateralism and provided tremendous momentum for diplomacy and peaceful settlement of disputes. Therefore, how the EU reacts to the bullying of the U.S., which intends to annihilate the JCPOA and ultimately show that Europe is nobody without the U.S., is a benchmark that demonstrates the extent of EU foreign policy independence and its future role in maintaining multilateralism and international security.

In the end, let us not forget that the U.S. is responsible for the current state of affairs in the non-implementation of the JCPOA. Building up illegal pressures against Iran, which exercised patience for one long year in the hopes of working within the JCPOA framework to find a solution, won't do anybody any good. Taking extra measures beyond the JCPOA won't help save the nuclear agreement either; the imperatives for saving the nuclear agreement have been clearly enunciated by Iran.

All there is left to do is listen to the voice of reason, keep the multilateral momentum going and standing up to the bully.

(Source: Euronews)

# Iran is not isolated and will not stop development, Rouhani says

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that despite the United States' efforts, Iran is not isolated and the pace of development in the country will continue without any delay.

"Despite the United States' efforts, Iran is not and will not be isolated and its moves to develop will not stop," Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

The U.S. has slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in violation of international law. Among other sanctions, it has introduced a total ban on Iran's oil export.

"The United States should know that it will never reach its objectives despite insisting on taking moves against the Iranian people's interests," Rouhani remarked.

He noted that Iran will never give in to bullying.

The Trump administration has claimed the purpose behind the sanctions is to bring Iran to the negotiating table to rewrite the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA. However, many analysts and officials are of the opinion that the sanctions pressure are aimed to regime change in Iran.

Rouhani also pointed to the arms sanctions on Iran which will end in October in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, saying it will mark respect to multilateralism, international law and international agreements.

The United States has stepped up calls for an indefinite extension of UN arms embargo on Iran. It has even



submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council for the purpose.

The U.S. administration has made such action despite the fact that Donald Trump officially quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and is no longer party to the agreement.

Rouhani said, "Tehran has been monitoring moves in this area precisely."

The remaining parties to the JCPOA have expressed opposition to the U.S. efforts to extend arms sanctions on Iran.

Analysts believe that Russia and China will most likely veto the U.S. plan to extend arms embargo.

## Borrell says there is no alternative to nuclear deal

It took more than 12 years for the international community and Iran to bridge their differences and conclude a nuclear deal, EU foreign policy chief says

By staff and agency

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has said that it is urgent to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, because there is no effective alternative to the agreement.

"Today, the JCPOA is under great pressure on multiple fronts. I am convinced that action to preserve it is not just necessary but urgent, for at least two reasons. First, it took more than 12 years for the international community and Iran to bridge their differences and conclude a deal. If the JCPOA is lost, no other comprehensive or effective alternative will be waiting around the corner," he wrote in an article published by Project Syndicate on Tuesday.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

The deal would have not been possible without diplomatic persistence. It required the full buy-in not just of the United States, but also of Russia, China, and of course Iran. The final agreement was solid. At more than 100 pages, and with several annexes, it set out all of the details for a clear quid pro quo: Iran would abide by strict limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions.

The JCPOA is enshrined in international law through UNSC Resolution 2231 (which needs to be fully implemented). It stands as



a prime example of what European diplomacy and effective multilateralism can achieve within the rules-based international order. But the process leading up to it was lengthy and difficult, all but ruling out another chance at a deal.

Second, the JCPOA is not merely a symbolic success. It delivered on its promises, and proved effective. Owing to the unprecedented level of access that it provided for the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA was able to confirm in 15 consecutive monitoring reports between January 2016 and June 2019 that Iran had met all its obligations under the deal.

As such, Europe and other partners lift-

ed sanctions, as specified in the agreement. Iran's international isolation was coming to an end, setting the stage for a restoration of normal economic and trade relations with the rest of the world. In May 2018, however, the U.S. decided to withdraw from the JCPOA and reinstate sanctions in pursuit of a new strategy of "maximum pressure."

Although the restoration of U.S. sanctions clearly had negative effects on Iran's economy and people, Iran continued to adhere to the deal for another 14 months. But now, Iran is once again accumulating worrying levels of enriched uranium and acquiring new nuclear know-how. The JCPOA is being further eroded, and fears from the past are resurfacing.

In January, France, Germany, and the UK formally expressed their concerns about Iran's renewed enrichment activities, and urged it to return to full compliance. Iran, similarly, has voiced its own concerns, arguing that it has not received the expected economic benefits from the lifting of sanctions.

As the current coordinator of the JCPOA, I will continue to work with all remaining parties to the deal, as well as with the entire international community. We will do everything possible to preserve what we achieved five years ago, and to ensure that the deal remains effective.

## Iraqi PM to visit Iran next week

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi plans to visit Iran next week.

According to Al Mayadeen, the prime minister will also visit Saudi Arabia, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Iraqi officials told The New Arab's Arabic-language service in June that Kadhimi was planning his first foreign tour with visits to the United States, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Kadhimi formally took office on May 7.

Prime Minister Kadhimi probably wants to mediate between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S., what his successor Adel Abdul Mahdi tried to do.

Iran has been open for dialogue with Saudi Arabia but Tehran has been a fierce critic of the Saudi-led war on Yemen.

However, Iran has rejected the notion of talks with the Trump administration, insisting that the U.S. must first make up for its illegal sanctions measures against Iran.

Moreover, some analysts and politicians are of the opinion

that the U.S. killed off any chance for dialogue by assassinating Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in early January.

In a phone conversation in May, President Hassan Rouhani told the Iraqi prime minister that Iran will stand beside the Iraqi government and people.

"As we proved that we stand beside the Iraqi people in fighting Daesh, we will stand beside the Iraqi government to help establish stability and make progress," Rouhani stated in phone call.

He said Iran attaches great importance to Iraq's independence, political stability, national sovereignty, and integrity.

"We always have to be careful about plots which target interests of the Iraqi people and the region," he noted.

Rouhani also highlighted the importance of regional peace and stability.

Elsewhere, he called for expanding economic cooperation and implementing agreements between the two countries.

For his part, Kadhimi said that it is essential for two countries to expand economic relations.

The prime minister described Iran as a "friendly" and "brotherly" country.

"We will never forget Iran's help to Iraq in fighting Daesh and we seek expansion of relations in various areas," he said.

Iraj Masjedi, the Iranian ambassador to Iraq, met with Kadhimi in May.

"In the meeting with Mr. Kadhimi, bilateral cooperation, continuation of actions regarding the 1975 Algiers Agreement, banking cooperation, Khorramshahr-Basra railway, and visa for the two countries' citizens were discussed," Masjedi said in a tweet.

He added that the Iraqi prime minister praised Iran's efforts in the fight against Daesh - also called ISIS or ISIL.

"Kadhimi considered Iran and Iraq as two friendly and brotherly countries," the ambassador noted in his tweet.

## Cooperation with China will empower Iran: Carleton University professor

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** - Dane Rowlands, a professor of Carleton University, has said that Iran will be empowered through partnership with China.

In an interview with ILNA published on Wednesday, Rowlands said that economic pressure on Iran has made the country distance from the United States and Europe and instead decide to strengthen cooperate with China which will end in empowerment of Iran in the region.

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

"This plan proves failure of the United

States' policies to isolate Iran, sever Iran's relations with the international community and also to harm Iran's will to expand relations with other countries," Rabiei said during a press conference. He said that the 25-year plan is based on a win-win approach which "heralds long term cooperation".

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

In a meeting on June 21, the Iranian cabinet of ministers approved the final draft of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation with China.

President Hassan Rouhani said the strategic

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

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

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

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

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

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on July 5 that there is no "hidden issue" in the long-term comprehensive agreement between Iran and China.

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

## Sherman: Iran has now more operational centrifuges, more nuclear fuel

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Wendy Sherman, the former U.S. nuclear negotiator with Iran, has censured Donald Trump for quitting the 2015 nuclear deal, saying Trump's decision has led Iran to have now more operational centrifuges and more nuclear fuel.

Sherman, undersecretary of state for political affairs during the Obama administration, wrote the revocation of the deal also led to "more suffering for Iranian people".



The nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, was signed between Iran, the European Union, the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China in Vienna on July 14, 2015.

"Five years ago today we agreed to the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal. Then @realDonaldTrump withdrew. Today, more centrifuges, more enriched material,... more malign behavior in ME, more suffering for Iranian people," Sherman tweeted.



# Iran says U.S. sanctions on Guardian Council run counter to democracy

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign desk Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has denounced U.S. sanctions on Iran's Guardian Council, saying sanctions on the election watchdog body are against democracy.

"Sanctions on the members of the Guardian Council are in fact sanctions on the protectors of democracy and human rights," Mousavi said on Wednesday, Mehr reported.

He made the remarks on the anniversary of the establishment of the Guardian Council.

"The constitution of each country is a fundamental document in the government and the charter of the rights and duties of government officials and institutions on the one hand and the people on the other," he said.

Pointing to the significant role of the council in the country, he added, "Guardianship and protection of the rights of the people as the main owners of the country is submitted in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Guardian Council; an institution whose task is to strike a balance between public interests, including public order and social freedoms. This serious task is accomplished through monitoring the laws and interpreting the constitution."

"On the other hand, the Guardian Council, as the guardian of the Constitution, is also responsible for upholding fundamental rights



and freedoms."

Stressing that the Guardian Council is one of the important achievements of the Islamic Revolution, Mousavi said, "In addition to being responsible for guarding the sanctity of Islamic law and the principles of the constitution, this council also has the

heavy task of defending the essence of religious democracy."

He added that "the totalitarian government of the U.S., knowing which institutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran are responsible for safeguarding the values and ideals of the Islamic Revolution, put sanctions on

five members of the Guardian Council in February 2020."

"In fact, the sanctioning of this council and its members shows the depth of hatred and hostility of the U.S. regime against the government and people of Iran."

"It also conveys the message that such sanctioned bodies are the main contributing factors behind Iran's firm stance against the U.S. maximum pressure and decades of cruel sanctions," he stated.

The spokesman went on to say that the sanctions "directly targets the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Such a move, Mousavi said, comes in line with the poisonous propaganda of the United States, the Zionist regime and their allies to weaken undermine Iran's integrity.

Earlier in February, the United States imposed sanctions on five Iranian officials, including Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, the secretary of the Guardian Council, which is responsible for supervising the electoral process in the country.

The sanctions were announced a day before a key parliamentary vote which is seen as a referendum on Iran's diplomacy to counter imperialistic U.S. policies.

U.S. special representative for Iran, Brian Hook accused the sanctioned officials of preventing free and fair elections by disqualifying a number of candidates.

## Iran invites Azerbaijan, Armenia to exercise restraint

**1→** At least 16 people, including four Armenian troops, 11 Azeri servicemen and one Azeri civilian, have been killed in the worst outbreak of hostilities between the two neighbors in recent years.

Officials in both countries have blamed each other for initiating the fighting.

For years, the two neighbors have been locked in a conflict over Azerbaijan's breakaway, mainly ethnic Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Though a ceasefire was agreed in 1994, Baku and Yerevan continue to accuse each other of shooting attacks around Nagorno-Karabakh.

The latest flare-up, however, occurred far from Na-



gorno-Karabakh and directly between the two states.

In a tweet on Tuesday, the Iranian president's chief of staff called for calm and voiced Tehran's readiness to play as a mediator.

Mahmoud Vaezi wrote that the skirmishes "threaten both countries' interests as well as regional stability and calm and is cause for worry."

He said the sole way out of the crisis is a political settlement of the disputes while taking into account the interests and territorial integrity of both states.

"With a past record of mediation b/w the two countries and given its neighborly relations, I.R. Iran will spare no effort to help," he added.

## Tehran says gravely concerned over E3's co-op with U.S. to kill JCPOA

**1→** and ultimately the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from an agreement reached after years of hard multilateral negotiations. The U.S. Significant Non-performance to its obligations under UNSCR 2231, and the lack of will on the part of remaining Participants to restore the lost balance to the JCPOA, have complicated the current situation around JCPOA and effectively impede the Islamic Republic of Iran to adhere to its undertakings. As a result of this malign policy of the U.S., Iran Cannot benefit from the effects of JCPOA sanctions lifting.

Unfortunately, the situation has developed in such a way that we must once again remind the remaining Participants of the JCPOA, as well as the Member States of the United Nations, of the rights and obligations contained in this agreement, which was endorsed by Security Council Resolution 2231; from the emphasis of Resolution 2231 on "promoting and facilitating the development of normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran" and "its full implementation on the timetable established in the JCPOA" and UNSCR 2231, to the importance of the JCPOA sanctions lifting as one of the main pillars of the agreement.

The JCPOA was a negotiated diplomatic solution to the peaceful settlement of an artificial crisis over the Islamic Republic of Iran's peaceful nuclear program, which is comprehensive and final in nature. Iran entered the negotiations seriously and with a view to the future, and implemented the

outcome of the negotiations in good faith. Transparency and confidence-building voluntary measures, beyond the obligations under the Safeguards Agreement, was part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's efforts to reassure the international community of the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program, in return for the lifting of harsh sanctions imposed under the pretext of the nuclear program. Unfortunately, not only the Islamic Republic of Iran did not enjoy the economic benefits of the JCPOA sanction lifting, but once again the opponents of the JCPOA actively try to re-open the closed file in order to fully destroy the achievements of the JCPOA.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has so far had a constructive and extensive cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the statistics on the number and volume of inspections and verifications carried out in the Islamic Republic of Iran attest this fact. Any attempt to misuse the IAEA to put pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran is inconsistent with the provisions of the JCPOA, and in addition to tarnishing the IAEA's credibility as the only credible international



technical body to monitor States' nuclear activities; it can have negative impacts on existing safeguards cooperation. Furthermore, any companionship of some remaining participants of the JCPOA with U.S. conspiracies against the agreement, particularly to destruct and undermine of the very text of the UNSCR 2231, inter alia, lifting of arms restrictions in the fifth year of adoption of the JCPOA in October 2020, is matter of grave concern, and as has been repeatedly emphasized, the renegotiation of the provisions of JCPOA and amending of the sanctions lifting regime will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and the response of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be firm and decisive. The comprehensiveness and finality of this agreement,

**Unfortunately, not only the Islamic Republic of Iran did not enjoy the economic benefits of the JCPOA sanction lifting, but once again the opponents of the JCPOA actively try to re-open the closed file in order to fully destroy the achievements of the JCPOA.**

## Advisor: Soleimani was in possession of video, audio files of U.S.-ISIL talks

**TEHRAN (Fars)**— Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, has said that former Commander of the IRGC Quds Force Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani had possessed footages and audio files which prove collaboration between the U.S. military commanders and ISIL terrorists in Iraq.

"He (General Soleimani) told me that he was in possession of footages which show that 5 American logistical planes landed at Mosul airport which was under the ISIL occupation at the time and the U.S. generals got off the plane and entered Mosul airport. They negotiated with the ISIL leaders for 5 hours," Amir Abdollahian quoted martyred General Soleimani as saying.

"General Soleimani said that he had the audio file of the talks and that he would release it whenever he deemed proper," he added.

Amir Abdollahian also warned of the U.S. attempts to prolong its military presence in Iraq within the framework of the NATO missions, and said Iran gave an initial warning to the Americans by missile strikes on Ein Al-Assad base in Iraq after assassination of General Soleimani.

"They should know that ultimate expulsion of the Americans from Iraq is their destiny waiting for them," he underlined. Lieutenant General Soleimani was assassinated in a

U.S. drone strike on Baghdad International Airport in Iraq on January 3.

The airstrike also martyred Deputy Commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. The two were martyred in an American airstrike that targeted their vehicle on the road to the airport.

Five Iranian and five Iraqi military men were martyred by the missiles fired by the U.S. drone at Baghdad International Airport.

On January 8, the IRGC Aerospace Force started heavy ballistic missile attacks on U.S. Ein Al-Assad airbase in South-western Iraq near the border with Syria and a U.S. operated airbase in Erbil in retaliation for the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani.

Ein Al-Assad is an airbase with a 4km runway at 188m altitude from sea levels, which is the main and the largest U.S. airbase in Iraq. Early reports said the radar systems and missile defense shields in Ein Al-Assad failed to operate and intercept the Iranian missiles. Unofficial reports said the U.S. army's central radar systems at Ein Al-Assad had been jammed by electronic warfare.

The second IRGC reprisal attack targeted a U.S. military base near Erbil airport in Iraqi Kurdistan Region in the second leg of "Martyr Soleimani" reprisal operation.

Iraq said the attacks had not taken any toll from its army men stationed at these two bases. The U.S. army had blocked entrance into Ein Al-Assad to everyone, including the Iraqi army.

It was the first direct attack on the U.S. army ever since world war two.

The IRGC officials said none of the missiles had been intercepted.

Meantime, Iran announced in late June that it had issued arrest warrants for 36 officials of the U.S. and other countries who have been involved in the assassination of the martyred General Soleimani.

"36 individuals who have been involved or ordered the assassination of Hajj Qassem, including the political and military officials of the U.S. and other governments, have been identified and arrest warrants have been issued for them by the judiciary officials and red alerts have also been issued for them via the Interpol," Prosecutor-General of Tehran Ali Alqasi Mehr said.

He said that the prosecuted individuals are accused of murder and terrorist action, adding that U.S. President Donald Trump stands at the top of the list and will be prosecuted as soon as he stands down presidency after his term ends.

## Deepening China-Iran ties challenge U.S. hegemony

By Stephen Lendman

**TEHRAN (Press TV)** — In contrast to endless U.S. war on humanity, China, Russia, Iran, and other nonbelligerent nations on its target list for regime change pursue cooperative relations with other countries — hostility toward none.

For some time, China and Iran have been working on a reported 25-year strategic partnership.

When finalized, it'll build on a 2016 bilateral agreement between both countries.

Contrary to some reports, there's nothing secret about talks between officials of both nations. They've been known about for some time.

When finalized ahead, it'll reportedly be called the Sino-Iranian Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Days earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi issued the following statement to dispel misinformation and fake news about what's going on, saying:

"According to a 2016 agreement between the presidents of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China, stipulated in Article VI of the communiqué during the honorable Chinese president's visit to Tehran, the two countries have explicitly expressed their political determination to promote and deepen the relations strategically and decided to devise a comprehensive 25-year roadmap between the two countries to become the basis for the coherent and all-out expansion of the political and economic relations between Iran and China in the years to come," adding:

"The preliminary draft of the document has been prepared with the participation of specialized institutions from the two countries and is currently undergoing the negotiation stage."

"Naturally, after finalization of the negotiations, the document will be submitted to the representatives of people in the Parliament for legal procedures."

Referring to U.S. hostility toward both countries, Mousavi added that "the strategic relations between Iran and China that entails mutual key interests for the people of the two countries have enemies (that) will make every effort for the failure of these negotiations and lack of success of the document."

"Fulfillment of Iran's national interests has been the only guiding principle for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in devising the strategic document, and the negotiations have been held with utmost carefulness and meticulousness, and the people of Iran will soon observe its results, God willing."

"(N)o other text would be valid before the finalization of negotiations. Therefore, the media are urged to refrain from republishing the texts that are prepared and disseminated with various purposes and objectives."

Mousavi expects that details of the strategic partnership will be finalized and made public in the near future.

Separately, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said "(w)ith confidence and conviction, we are negotiating a 25-year strategic accord with China," stressing there's nothing secretive about it.

The leadership of both countries supports it. Bilateral ties have been close for years.

Days earlier, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi slammed what he called "destructive... propaganda...initiated and directed from outside Iran against the expansion of (its) relations with neighbors...especially (with) China and Russia."

Clearly, U.S. hardliners from both right wings of its war party oppose constructive relations that benefit nations they want transformed into subservient vassal states.

The Sino/Iran accord will advance the economic and strategic interests of both countries at the expense of U.S. imperial aims to weaken and undermine their development.

According to Oil Price.com last week, citing unnamed "senior sources closely connected to Iran's Petroleum Ministry," the economic accord will have a military component, adding:

"China will invest U.S. \$280 billion in developing Iran's oil, gas, and petrochemicals sectors" during the first five years of the 25-year agreement, "provided both countries agree" on terms.

"There will be another U.S. \$120 billion of investment" by China, \$400 billion in total.

In return, "Chinese companies will be given the first option to bid on any new — or stalled or uncompleted — oil, gas, and petrochemicals projects in Iran."

"China will also be able to buy any and all oil, gas, and petchems products at a minimum guaranteed discount of 12 per cent to the six-month rolling mean average price of comparable benchmark products, plus another 6 to 8 per cent of that metric for risk-adjusted compensation."

China will be involved in "build(ing) out of Iran's core infrastructure" as part of its "One Belt, One Road" initiative.

It's a longterm project for greater regional integration, numerous countries involved in over \$1 trillion in investment.

China, Russia, Iran, and other regional countries seek increased industrialization through mutual cooperation.

America pursues dominance, stressing militarism over cooperative relations with other nations, a prescription for confrontation over peace and stability.

Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiee said Iran is "ready (to negotiate) similar accords with (other) countries based on mutual trust."

According to Oil Price.com, China seeks another discount, "32%" in total. Its assessment is pure speculation as bilateral discussions continue.

Terms of what's agreed on won't be known until officials of both countries release them publicly.

On Thursday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Gholamreza Ansari said the following:

"Some of the criticisms recently raised about a 25-year strategic cooperation deal between Tehran and Beijing are ridiculous," adding: "They are terrified that Iran would be linked to China's global potentialities."

"Since Iran's relations with China are serious, and that forms the basis of economic and strategic cooperation between the two states in the 25-year document, it is quite normal for western countries to be worried about such relations."

"The policy of the U.S. and Britain—Anglo-Saxons in general—is to focus on pressuring Iran in a bid to keep it away from China and Russia."

The policy failed. So did over 40 years of U.S. efforts colonize and exploit Iran, its vast hydrocarbon resources, and 84 million people. China and Iran are economic and strategic partners.

According to Chinese President Xi Jinping, "relations between (both countries) resulted in important achievements in the political, economic and cultural sectors," adding:

Beijing "is ready to start a new chapter in bilateral relations by upgrading the current level of interaction and cooperation."



## Bushehr Province exports products worth over \$1b in a quarter

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of commodities exported from Iran's southwestern Bushehr Province stood at over \$1.18 billion during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), director-general of the province's Customs Department announced.

Behrouz Qarebeygi put the weight of the exported products at more than 5.7 million tons, Mehr news agency reported.

The official said that the petrochemical products had the lion's share of the province's exports during the three-month period, amounting to 4.2 million tons worth over \$1.14 billion.

He noted that butane, propane, polyethylene, methanol, urea, styrene, cement, clinker, base oil, polystyrene and alkyl benzene were the major petrochemical products exported from the province.

Gas condensate comes next with 7,000 tons worth \$3.7 million, while other commodities shipped from Bushehr ports amounted to 1.3 million tons worth \$44 million, Qarebeygi added.

The official said imports via Bushehr customs stood at 196,000 tons worth \$218.14 million during the three months to June 20 to register a 17-percent decline in terms of value compared with the similar period of last year.

Last year, about 39 countries were the export destinations of this province, Qarebeygi has previously announced.

During the mentioned period, over 3.7 million tons of goods valued at over \$823 million dollars have been exported from the province, he noted.

The official further referred to the petrochemical products, vegetables, minerals, and gas condensate as main goods exported from Bushehr to different world countries.

## TPO holds Iran-Austria commodity-country desk meeting

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) hosted a meeting of the Iran-Austria commodity-country desk in which the roadmap for economic cooperation between the two countries was discussed, the TPO portal reported on Tuesday.

According to Behrouz Olfat, TPO's director of Europe and America Department, the meeting was aimed to assess the performance of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee and to review the comments and suggestions of the two countries' working groups and other relevant bodies regarding the required changes and reforms in the relations between the two countries.

At this meeting, while presenting the performance of the economic working groups, the representatives of the relevant bodies offered their plans and proposals regarding the arrangement and composition of the mentioned working groups.

The official noted that based on the negotiations and proposals offered in the meeting, it was decided to present a roadmap to the Austrian side based on the formation of six working groups in line with the current international trade environment.

As reported, the event was attended by representatives of the private sector, including the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the Chamber of Cooperatives (COC), as well as government departments, including the Vice President for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, and Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO).

## Medicinal plants to be offered at IME

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) announced on Wednesday that the medicinal plants will be offered at this exchange, IRNA reported.

Offering the medicinal plants at the IME, the farmers, producers, and consumers can easily find each other to make deals based on transparent and competitive pricing while omitting the dealers.

Meanwhile, those interested in producing these plants can receive necessary training and consultations through this exchange, something occurred in terms of saffron since a couple of years ago and led to boosting the exports of this product.

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).

## Foreign investment in Iran to be facilitated

By Hanieh khakpour

**TEHRAN** — After the Supreme Council for Economic Coordination, the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry, the Interior Ministry, and other influential organizations in Iran decided to facilitate the conditions of foreign investment in the country, Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri announced the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protecting Act (FIPPA) last year.

Although there are easier conditions and best incentives than in the past, the experts and economic activists believe that these are not adequate and it needs reconsideration. They state these conditions are not compatible with other countries in our region. Therefore, last month, in a meeting with the Vice President, this issue was investigated and Jahangiri ordered to remove existing obstacles as soon as possible. One of those responsible for this issue is Foreign Minister. Now, Gholam-Reza Ansari, the deputy Iranian foreign minister for economic affairs, says in an exclusive conversation to Tehran Times that this ministry has provided its own suggestions to be presented to Vice President.

"Although, tangible changes have occurred in the level of interest for foreign investment in Iran after the announcement of the new legislation by the vice president, we are trying to improve it", Ansari said.

He did not comment about the amount of new investment but described the results of new regulations, "very good" and added, "We should facilitate our regulations according to the regional conditions and the neighboring countries".

The official underlined the reason for this change, "Increase attractiveness for foreign investors".

Granting protection and facilities to foreign investors the same as domestic investors, making investment in all fields where private sector activity is allowed, protection against expropriation and nationalization are included in the FIPPA.

Inflowing capital into the country depends on various reasons; one of them is the business environment. Since a foreign investor who wants to bring his/her own capital into the country, wants to ensure about returning on profits and capital principle, we have to guarantee the security of this space", Ansari elaborated.

The deputy Iranian foreign minister for economic affairs announced that both Iranians abroad and foreign investors will be audiences of these new changes.

# Tehran hosting intl. paper, related machinery exhibition

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's 3rd International Specialized Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products and Related Machinery kicked off at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Tuesday, Public Relations Department of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) reported.

The inaugural ceremony of the exhibit was participated by IIEC Managing Director Bahman Hosseinzadeh, and Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki.

As reported, over 60 domestic companies are showcasing their products and latest achievements during the four-day event.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony, Niaraki emphasized that all economic and trade activities are underway through complete compliance with the health protocols due to the coronavirus pandemic, and said, "Specialized exhibitions are some places for showcasing domestic capabilities and capacities."

"Attending the specialized exhibitions means showcasing these capabilities, which can lead to meeting the domestic needs and also expansion of exports", the official reiterated.

Due to the health protocols, the 3rd International Specialized Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products and Related Machinery is just open for those invited.

Emphasizing that the health protocols will be completely observed in the exhibition,



Hosseinzadeh has previously said that the experts and specialists can visit the exhibit from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and some measures have been also taken to provide online public visit.

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

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

He further put the country's need for newsprint paper at 65,000 tons, packag-

ing paper at about one million tons, tissue paper at 160,000 tons, and cardboard at one million tons.

### Exhibitions to be held on schedule

All exhibitions, especially the big ones such as ELECOMP, Agrofood, oil & gas, Iran Health, and construction exhibits, will be held on schedule and complying with all health protocols, IIEC managing director stated on Wednesday.

Hosseinzadeh said given that the Tehran Permanente International Fairgrounds is equipped with the sanitizing and coronavirus-combating equipment, and the four health protocols are completely observed

in the exhibition area, all exhibitions are planned to be held on schedule.

"As the specialized exhibitions play a significant role in boosting the country's non-oil exports, we are determined to hold all exhibitions specially the big ones, through complying with the health protocols", the official noted.

Saying that based on the official estimations, the world will suffer from the coronavirus pandemic, Hosseinzadeh said, "The economy cannot be shut down; so the exhibitions cannot be closed; but they can be held through observing health protocols."

Last month, Hosseinzadeh had also said that all of the country's exhibitions would be held physically and based on the schedule.

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

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

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

## India sees Iran a vital trade partner, looks for expansion of ties: envoy

**1 →** What comes below is a summary of the interview:  
■ Mr. Ambassador please give us a summary of Iran and India's current economic relations and how you see the future of these ties?

Well, Iran is a very import trade partner for us, and this year, especially, is more significant since it marks the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the two countries' political relations which was started after the signing of a treaty between the two sides.

Iran and India's relationship is not something new, it is very robust and goes back to centuries. We have a very strong foundation to build upon and that is how the two sides' leaders are stressing the need for expanding relationships in all areas.

We are also neighbors, we are maritime neighbors, and now with Chabahar port as the anchor of the two countries' trade relations, we have become maritime partners as well.

Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani have met four times this year and that is the indication of how important the relations are for both sides.

As you see, our economic relations continue despite all the limitations and challenges.

India was the first country that put in place a banking mechanism to be able to trade with Iran in national currencies.

This rupee-rial channel is being facilitated by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It has helped the traders in both countries for the exchange of commodities.

UCO Bank is also the Indian partner in this mechanism and we have a set of six banks on the Iranian side that are designated by the CBI and trade is going on through these banks.

Currently, India mostly exports agricultural items like tea, rice, and some spare car parts to Iran and in return, Iran also exports to India.

However, we are encouraging the expansion of trade to other areas, since Iran's economy is diversified and it is no longer only oil-driven and there are many potent areas for cooperation like services, manufacturing, and light engineering.

In terms of the volume of trade, unfortunately, the trade has fallen significantly this year due to the pandemic and it is estimated that since the beginning of the current year so far the trade turnover between the two sides stands at nearly \$4 billion.

That is the vision, that is what Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani have identified as the core strategies for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides, and we will do our bests to realize this vision.

■ You mentioned the expansion of ties in new areas, what have you done in this regard?

As for the expansion of trade to new areas we have been in talks with both Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and also Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) from the Iranian side and as for the Indian side, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) as well as the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM).

Now we are working to get these sides to hold talks and discuss new areas for cooperation.

The Iranian chambers have given me a list of items they want to trade with India and the Indian side as well have done so, and what we are doing is to consider barter trade as well, that is exchange of goods between the two sides.

■ How much the pandemic has affected the two sides' trade and what you have done to mitigate the situation?

We have to look for ways to continue engagement when the world is being disrupted by this corona pandemic, and we also have to see how the landscape of the world is changing to be able to make plans for the future.

Of course, the coronavirus has affected countries all over the world at various levels, but, the business of governments must go on, so I and my colleagues have been interacting with various ministries even during the pandemic to see what we can do to boost the trade relations.

As for economies we have to answer questions like how do supply-demand chains work, how manufacturing will be affected, how to manage your dependency on us and our dependency on you for exchange of goods, how should we work around these challenges, and so on?

So, what we are doing is to reach out to Iranian economic bodies in every area like the chambers of commerce, CBI, etc. to find ways for the further expansion of the trade ties between the two countries.

In some areas we are planning to hold some online meetings

between the two sides, we are also looking at other programs.

■ How is the Chabahar development project proceeding? We are grateful that Iran has trusted India with the first phase of developing Shahid Beheshti port in Chabahar.

Currently, Indian partners are using Iranian facilities in the port but we have placed orders for the necessary equipment from China, Italy, Finland, and Germany and hope that the first delivery will be in October.

We see Iran as a pivot for our economic interactions with Central Asia, with Eastern Europe through Azerbaijan and with CIS countries. For this we have two transport corridors, one is Chabahar as the gateway to Central Asia and the other is Bandar Abbas.

We have also partnered with Afghanistan to transit goods through this port.

Iran, India, and Afghanistan have signed a trilateral agreement based on which India uses Chabahar port as a launch pad to supply goods, and equipment to the country and vice versa.

The vision has been given by the leaders of the two countries and we are trying to implement that vision.

To put it in a nutshell, the development of the port is going on smoothly and in the one year that India has started activities in the port the volume of shipments and transit through the port has increased significantly.

■ How are talks on the preferential trade agreement between the two sides progressing?

Several rounds of talks have been held regarding the preferential trade agreement between the two sides and based on the outcomes of the previous round of talks in February the two sides exchanged the lists of commodity items and the next meeting will be held at the end of the current month to discuss the results.

■ what about the talks on Farzad-B gas field, is there a chance that India would continue this project?

Regarding the Farzad-B development project unfortunately there has been no progress in the talks but we are hopeful about the future.

When the political turbulences are calmed and our energy cooperation is resumed we definitely look for cooperation in many energy-related projects, and Farzad-B is one of them.

## ‘Govt. can take advantage of capital market for financing development projects’

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said that the government can take advantage of capital market for financing the development projects, IRNA reported.

Making the remarks in a meeting with the members of the parliament's Economic Committee on Tuesday, Hassan Qalibaf-Asl underlined that the present status of the capital market is an opportunity for the national economy.

Last month, the transport and urban development minister announced that his ministry's planning to offer 12 freeway and railway projects to be financed through the country's capital market.

Mohammad Eslami made the announcement in a meeting with the members of the country's road building companies association.

As announced in May by the deputy transport minister for resource planning and management, Transport and Urban Development Ministry planned to offer 14 infrastructure projects to be financed through the country's capital market.

"Studies have been concluded for 14 infrastructure projects for entering the capital market, and investment companies are assessing various methods and models of offering these projects in the stock market," Amir-Mahmoud Ghaffari stated.

According to Ghaffari, seven railway pro-



Securities and Exchange Organization Head Hassan Qalibaf-Asl

jects and seven freeway projects would be offered in the capital market, and the transport ministry was considering which of those projects should be the priority.

"This is the Transport and Urban Development Ministry's first experience in this area and we are designing a model for its implementation", the official explained.

He further noted that the ministry is holding several meetings with the Securities and Exchange Organization to plan the model and approach for those projects to enter the market, adding that investment companies were developing a proposal for the stock market.

Referring to the schedule for the offerings, the deputy minister said, "We are trying to offer the projects in the capital market in the first half of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20-September 21)."

"At the first stage, two projects will be listed," he added.

## Customs co-op discussed between Iran, Russia

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — During a video-conference between Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali and Russian officials at Federal Customs Service including Vladimir Vladimirovich Ivin, the deputy head of the customs, on Tuesday, the two sides investigated ways of boosting bilateral customs cooperation.

Addressing the conference, Jalali said that Iran is ready to create customs "Green Corridor" with Russia in the pandemic occasion when many international activities have been brought to lock down, IRNA reported.

To have multilateral cooperation with Eurasian Economic Union (EUEA) in the framework of Russian President Vladimir Putin's initiative to create the customs "Green Corridor" in coronavirus and post-coronavirus periods is among the main agenda of development of economic relations, the ambassador said.

During the talks, the two sides exchanged views about fostering customs cooperation and solving some problems for the Iranian lorry drivers.

The two sides stressed the need to have constant contact.

Russia suggested considering President Putin's initiative to create "green corridors" for delivery of essential goods that would be unimpeded by sanctions and trade wars, news agency "TASS" quoted Russia's Organization for Security and Cooperation in



Europe (OSCE) envoy Alexander Lukashевич as saying in late April.

Putin talked of the initiative at the emergency summit of G20 group last March.

According to the official data, trade turnover between Russia and Iran amounted to \$1.74 billion in 2018 and \$1.589 billion in the period between January-September 2019.

Also in late December 2019, Moscow's commercial representative in Tehran, Rustam Zhiganshin had announced that more than 50 percent of Iran and Russia's total bilateral trade was being conducted through national currencies.

"If in 2018 payments in national currencies comprised 40 percent [of the two countries' trade], in 2019 this quota has already exceeded 50 percent," Zhiganshin told sputnik.

Russia's exports to Iran include machinery, steel, wagons, wood, vegetable oil, corn, barley, red meat, and other goods, while its imports from the Islamic Republic are mostly dairy products, vegetables, and fruits.



# Oil Ministry to submit long-term energy-outlook plan to Majlis

ENERGY

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Tuesday that his ministry is going to present four cooperation documents to the parliament's Energy Committee to be used as the roadmap for the development of the country's energy industry, IRIB reported.

Zanganeh made the remarks in a press conference on the sidelines of a meeting between the Oil Ministry officials and the Parliament (Majlis) Energy Committee.

According to the official, one of the mentioned documents is a plan for managing fuel consumption and transportation for the horizon of the Iranian calendar year 1420 (starts in March 2041), which is an interdepartmental document in which the optimization of cars, the reform of the structure of intra-city transportation and the type of cars that are built are the main focus.

"Other documents are regarding the gas supply and demand, as well as the production of oil and petrochemicals up to the 1420



horizon," Zanganeh said.

One of the most important areas that the Energy Committee is seriously emphasizing is the optimization of energy consumption in liquid and gas fuels, and in this regard, it was decided that four documents will be submitted by the ministry to the committee and the committee will determine the final edition of the documents, the official said.

According to the minister, in the meeting, a foundation was laid for effective cooperation in the energy sector, and it was decided to expand the cooperation between the Ministry of Oil and the Energy Committee in parts in the form of signing cooperation documents and in parts in the form of political support from the parliament's side.

All of this is paving the way for the future; all of these documents may not be approved in the current year, however currently the government's experience is aligning with that of parliamentarian, and the country's future path in the field of energy is being laid.

## Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 54% in June: OPEC

ENERGY

**TEHRAN** — Iranian heavy oil price increased \$12.71 in June to register a 54-percent rise compared to the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report published on Tuesday.

Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$36.26 per barrel in the mentioned month, compared to May's \$23.55 per barrel.

According to the report, the country's average heavy crude price was \$37.68 since beginning of 2020 up to the report's publishing day.

The report put average Iranian crude output for the second quarter of 2020 at 1.958 million barrels per day indicating a near 103,000-bpd fall compared to the figure for the first quarter of 2020.

In addition to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the global oil industry which resulted in the drastic fall in oil prices, Iranian oil industry has also been under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by re-imposing sanctions.

The new round of sanctions targeting Iran's oil sector were put in action in early November 2018 and many of Iran's oil buyers have given in under the U.S. pressures.

In late 2019, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said that Iran will use any possible way to export its oil, stressing that exporting crude was the country's legitimate right.

"We will use every possible way to export our oil and we will not succumb to America's pressure because exporting oil is Iran's legitimate right," Zanganeh said.



## OPEC+ may temper output rise with extra oil cuts from cheats

OPEC+ is seeking extra production cuts from members that have missed their targets again in June, potentially tempering the impact of the supply resumption planned by the wider coalition next month, Bloomberg reported.

A technical committee that met online on Tuesday outlined plans for countries including Iraq, Nigeria and Kazakhstan to make an additional 842,000 barrels a day of compensatory cuts in August and September, according to delegates.

The proposal will be discussed on Wednesday by a ministerial monitoring committee led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, the delegates said, asking not to be named because the information isn't public. They're expected to announce that the group's overall curbs of 9.6 million barrels a day -- about 10 percent of global supplies -- will be relaxed in August as global fuel demand recovers.

To prevent the supply increase destabilizing a still-fragile market, Riyadh and Moscow are keen for the cartel's laggards to make up for earlier cheating. On paper, full delivery of the compensation cuts could shrink the scheduled 2 million-barrel-a-day supply increase by almost half.

Iraq's state oil-marketing company has told at least four Asian refiners it will supply less crude to them next month as it seeks to comply with its OPEC+ commitment, according to people with knowledge of the



matter. SOMO, as the company is known, told some buyers it would try to meet their full needs after August, the people said.

It's still unclear how much of the reparations will be delivered by those countries that still haven't fully met their original pledges.

"With Iraq, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and Angola all under-complying in May and June, these guys now need to over-comply to make up for the lost cuts," Amrita Sen,

chief oil analyst at consultant Energy Aspects Ltd., said in a Bloomberg television interview on Tuesday.

Last month, stragglers across the alliance agreed to make good on their lapses in May, which amounted to 1.26 million barrels a day.

But the technical committee found that, while several had stepped up their efforts in June, they still missed the mark. Overproduction within the OPEC cartel amounted to a further 380,000 barrels a

day last month, its data showed.

With a second wave of coronavirus infections hitting the U.S., signs of a renewed economic slowdown and oil-storage tanks still brimming, it's no surprise that the cartel might want to act gradually.

"The transition to higher production coincides with a move back to movement restrictions in populous U.S. states and other countries around the world," said Louise Dickson, an analyst at consulting firm Rystad Energy A/S. "Where will the extra oil go now if people are ordered back to their homes to reduce the spread?"

A monthly report published by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries on Tuesday gives an insight into why, despite the ongoing economic slump, the cartel believes the easing is justified. Demand for OPEC's crude is forecast to climb from here, and even surpass pre-virus levels in 2021.

During the second quarter, when lockdowns aimed at containing the pandemic were at their height, demand for OPEC crude was barely half the level seen the previous year, at just 15.87 million barrels a day. But the group expects it will be back at prior levels above 30 million in the fourth quarter.

"They are seeing the demand recovery that we all are," said Sen of Energy Aspects. "It is the right time to start increasing production -- gradually, of course."

## Oil and gas drilling set for a multi-decade low in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has stymied oil and gas activity, a phenomena which has now affected the drilling market both in terms of wells drilled and in terms of related demand for drilling equipment. A Rystad Energy analysis shows the number of drilled wells globally is expected to reach around 55,350 this year, the lowest since at least the beginning of the century.

The decline is a staggering 23 percent fall from 2019's number of 71,946 wells. Our forecast, which extends to 2025, does not find it likely that last year's number will be met or exceeded within the considered time frame. Drilled wells are expected to partly recover to just above 61,000 in 2021, as governments ease travel restrictions, boosting oil demand and prices. Then numbers will rise further to just above 65,000 in 2022 and remain just below 69,000 until the end of 2025.

According to oilprice.com, North America is likely to be most affected, with the country's rig count already down to historic lows just a few months into the downturn. Although modest recovery is possible in 2H20, drilling activity will remain more than 50 percent below the levels seen at the same time last year.

From the 55,350 wells to be drilled in 2020, 2,238 are offshore and 53,112 onshore. Before Covid-19 struck, Rystad Energy had expected total wells to rise year-over-year to 74,575, of which 2,896 would be offshore wells and 71,679 onshore wells.

"Both new wells and drilling lengths will be pared down as E&P's scale down investments, affecting the entire supply chain associated with these services. This includes drilling tools, which will decline by 35 percent in 2020 compared to 2019," says Reza Hassan Kazmi, energy services analyst at Rystad Energy.



When looking at drilling tools, we include blowout preventers (BOPs), downhole drilling tools, drill bits, drill pipe, jars, drill collars and other drilling tools except downhole pumps used for artificial lift, under the generic service segment.

Drilling length, another key driver for drilling tools, especially for drill pipes, drill collars, heavy-weight drill pipes and drill bits, is also estimated to drop by 25 percent this year before improving in 2021. At a more granular level, such as the regional or country level, the percentage decrease in wells will not always result in a proportional reduction in total drilling lengths, as drilling depths per well could greatly vary between different regions and countries.

From the demand standpoint, we expect that onshore and offshore purchases for drilling tools will drop from \$16 billion in 2019 to \$10 billion in 2020. Besides North America, Africa and Russia will be the biggest contributors to this loss,

where purchases will drop by 36 percent and 27 percent respectively this year.

Russian operators are likely to delay the drilling of new wells on mature assets to ensure compliance with agreed production cuts, while Sonatrach will cut back most of its spending on projects such as Hassi Messaoud and Tin Fouye-Tabankort. In the medium term however, as major E&Ps resume developing their lineup of offshore projects in Africa, we expect the demand for drilling tools (especially for drilling risers) to increase.

Overall, onshore markets are expected to recover as early as 2021 and grow at a rate of 7 percent annually towards 2025, while offshore markets will see some highs and lows and will maintain an overall flatish level towards 2025.

Despite the overall stagnant growth, Brazil, Australia and China will continue to offer exciting opportunities in the short term with 20 percent to 40 percent growth prospects for offshore drilling in these countries while the United Kingdom, Guyana and Mexico look promising in the medium to long term. The United States remains the hotspot for spending on drilling tools onshore, while Norway is expected to top the list for offshore drilling tools spending.

In the onshore market in the US, more than 80 percent of spending on drilling tools will be spent on shale drilling. The Permian and the Appalachian basins will drive 60 percent of total shale spend on drilling tools followed by some conventional activity in other basins. Off the coast of Norway, Troll, Balder/Ringhorne and Johan Sverdrup will drive the demand for drilling tools.

For more analysis, insights and reports, clients and non-clients can apply for access to Rystad Energy's Free Solutions and get a taste of our data and analytics universe.

## Tehran to host 1st int'l conference on polyethylene value chain

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — The first international conference on polyethylene value chain with focus on introducing new technologies, grades and business markets will be held on 3 and 4 October 2020.

According to the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), this will be the first of a series of international conferences supervised by NPC on value chain of petrochemical products.

The first value chain conference entitled "Polyethylene" will be held in 6 sections: domestic, regional and international markets, introduction of polyethylene chain technologies and complementary industries, competitive advantages of Iran and assessment of the industry's leaders, and investment opportunities and challenges.

Since polyethylene is the largest member of the important family of polyolefins and the most commonly used plastics in the world and its supply and its demand is in the three grades of high density, low density and light linear grades, the need to develop the value chain of this valuable product is the basis for this conference.

Currently, the total polymer production capacity in the country is about 8.2 million tons per year, of which 4.8 million tons (60%) is allocated to polyethylene production. Among polyethylene types, high density polyethylene with 45% has the highest share in production and demand.

Iran's share in polyethylene production in the West Asia is 20% and in global markets is 4%.



## Iraq pledges 100 percent compliance with OPEC+ quota in August: oil minister

Iraq has pledged to reach 100 percent compliance with its OPEC+ quota in August and make up for overproduction in May and June, as OPEC's second largest producer continues to improve its adherence to historic OPEC+ cuts, the country's oil minister said on July 13.

Iraq affirmed its commitment to the OPEC+ cuts in a call with Saudi energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, the two ministers said in a joint statement.

Iraqi oil minister Ihsan Ismaeel "confirmed Iraq's firm commitment to the OPEC+ agreement, and added that Iraq would improve further to reach 100 percent by the beginning of next month, and pledged to compensate during the months of July, August and September, for the overproduction in May and June," said the statement.

The Saudi energy minister praised Iraq's compliance in June, which reached nearly 90 percent according to secondary sources, and voiced his confidence that OPEC's second-largest oil producer would continue to improve its compliance level, the statement added.

Iraq, often a laggard in terms of compliance, produced 3.698 million bpd in June, including flows from the semi-autonomous Kurdish region, a 9 percent decline from 4.068 million bpd in May, state oil marketer SOMO said on July 11.

Total exports, including those from the Kurdish region, declined 11.4 percent to 3.218 million bpd, from 3.633 million bpd in May. Still, Iraq overproduced in June, when its quota was 3.592 million bpd.

"The two ministers stressed that efforts by OPEC+ countries towards meeting production cuts, as stated in the agreement, will enhance oil market stability and help accelerate the rebalancing of global oil markets," the joint statement said.

Iraq, which has attracted the ire of OPEC + counterparts for its historic non-compliance, made a big reduction in its output in June to 3.70 million bpd, a nearly five-year low, according to the latest S&P Global Platts OPEC+ production survey.

Exports from Baghdad in June fell to an average 2.816 million bpd, in line with projections made by Ismaeel. In May, exports averaged 3.212 million bpd.

Iraq was supposed to trim its production by 1.061 million bpd in June to 3.592 million bpd, in line with the OPEC + cuts.

OPEC and its allies, including Russia, rolled over their collective production cuts through July to help bolster the market as it emerges from the depths of COVID-19.

Under the deal, Angola, Iraq, Kazakhstan and Nigeria committed to compensate for their lack of compliance in May and June with extra cuts for quotas in July, August and September.

## Shell makes bet on digital LNG trading with GLX investment

Royal Dutch Shell Plc, the world's biggest liquefied natural gas merchant, is making a bet on the trade's digital future by taking a minority investment in the online platform developer GLX Digital, Bloomberg reported.

GLX is among a handful of companies using web-based trading to modernize the world of physical commodities and help deepen liquidity. Since creating its online LNG auction hub, the Perth, Australia-based company has shifted toward helping customers create their own digital trading systems.

Shell is the highest profile investor in GLX, which also include Australia's Woodside Petroleum Ltd. and Malaysia's Petrolam Nasional Bhd. It dominates global LNG trade, handling about 22% of the world's volume, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. Neither Shell nor GLX would disclose the value of the investment or size of the stake.

"This digital platform is a natural step in the continued evolution of the global LNG market and as a leading LNG player, we are keen to be part of this," Steve Hill, an executive vice president for Shell, said in a statement. "The sophistication of the GLX software in combination with the high caliber and quality of the management team gives GLX a strong base for the future."

Founded in 2015, closely held GLX has about 23 employees and is trying to grow to 40 in the next year, Chief Executive Officer Damien Criddle said by phone. It has about 75 companies signed up, and revenue from subscriptions is up approximately 600% year-on-year and is "in the seven figures," he said, without providing further details. The company isn't profitable yet as it focuses on growing and eventually expanding into other commodity sectors.

Criddle said the company's shift away from controlling its own online LNG marketplace and toward helping companies build their own has resonated with traders, who prize the privacy of their deals.



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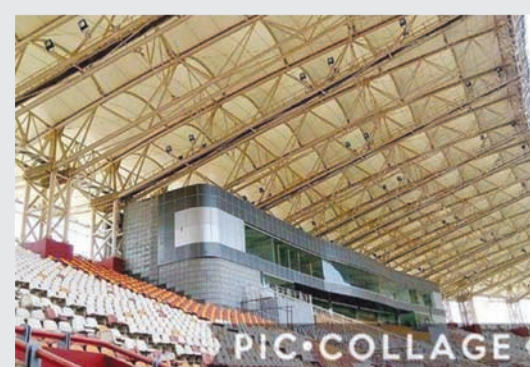


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# Washington realizing unipolar world has ended: Russian academic

➔ However, this goes beyond the Trump administration. One month after the Soviet Union collapsed, President Bush announced in the State of the Union speech that the U.S. should re-start missile defense, and other documents revealed that it sought to cement the unipolar moment by undermining Russia's nuclear deterrence.

More recently, the U.S. also announced its unilateral withdrawal from the START Treaty with Russia and attempted to blame Moscow. Washington recognizes that the unipolar moment has come to an end, although it does not yet know how to adjust to a multipolar world.

■ Don't you think that Europe could have prevented U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement?

A: Europe was not able to prevent the U.S. from withdrawing from the agreement. The Europeans are too dependent on the U.S. in

terms of security and economy. The West's collective leadership makes solidarity the top priority, which unfortunately makes the application of international law inconsistent and often contradictory. The Europeans protest although they will eventually fall in line. The U.S. is now even threatening with sanctions against the Europeans if they abide by the Iranian nuclear agreement.

■ Is there any international law to punish the U.S. for violating international treaties?

A: International law is largely a reflection of power, and the countries of the world have neither the ability nor willingness to punish the U.S. The lack of repercussions after the U.S. killed General Soleimani demonstrates that sovereign inequality is built into international law. The best thing to do for Iran, China, Russia, and other adversaries of the U.S., is to decouple from U.S. technologies, industries,



## The lack of repercussions after the U.S. killed General Soleimani demonstrates that sovereign inequality is built into international law.

transportations corridors, and financial instruments such as currency and banks. The more U.S. power decline, the more it will be prepared to use its administrative role in the international economic system to punish adversaries. The natural "punishment" of the U.S. is the subsequent incentives for countries like China and Russia to enhance Eurasia's economic connectivity and reduce reliance on the U.S.

■ Don't you think that U.S. violation of the nuclear deal and Europeans' inaction lead to the collapse of international agreements?

A: International agreements require

a certain degree of trust. The problem of renegotiating nuclear deal is that Tehran has no reason to believe that the U.S. will uphold its obligations. This weakening of global governance was also recently expressed by Beijing. The U.S. is unilaterally withdrawing from the START nuclear treaty with Russia and demands China to be part of a new trilateral agreement. Beijing's response was to dismiss the U.S. proposal as a hoax that should not be trusted. Moscow is also growing weary of the U.S. breaching and withdrawing from international agreements.

## The best thing to do for Iran, China, Russia, and other adversaries of the U.S., is to decouple from U.S. technologies, industries, transportations corridors, and financial instruments such as currency and banks.

## ‘Optimism of the will’: Palestinian freedom is possible now

By Ramzi Baroud

In a recent T.V. discussion, a respected pro-Palestine journalist declared that if any positive change or transformation ever occurs in the tragic Palestinian saga, it would not happen now, but that it would take a whole new generation to bring about such a paradigm shift.

As innocuous as the declaration may have seemed, it troubled me greatly.

I have heard this line over and over again, often reiterated by well-intentioned intellectuals, whose experiences in researching and writing on the so-called 'Palestinian-Israeli conflict' may have driven some of them to pessimism, if not despair.

The 'hopelessness discourse' is, perhaps, understandable if one is to examine the off-putting, tangible reality on the ground: the ever-entrenched Israeli occupation, the planned annexation of occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank, the shameful Arab normalization with Israel, the deafening silence of the international community and the futility of the quiescent Palestinian leadership.

Subscribing to this logic is not only self-defeating but ahistorical as well. Throughout history, every great achievement that brought about freedom and a measure of justice to any nation was realized despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

Indeed, who would have thought that the Algerian people were capable of defeating French colonialism when their liberation tools were so rudimentary as compared with the awesome powers of the French military and its allies?

The same notion applies to many other modern historical experiences, from Vietnam to South Africa and from India to Cuba.

Palestine is not an exception.

However, the 'hopelessness discourse' is not as innocent as it may seem. It is propelled by the persisting failure to appreciate the centrality of the Palestinian people — or any other people, for that matter — in their own history. Additionally, it assumes that the Palestinian people are, frankly, ineffectual.

Interestingly, when many nations were still grappling with the concept of national identity, the Palestinian people had already developed a refined sense of modern collective identity and national consciousness. General mass strikes and civil disobedience challenging British imperialism and Zionist settlements in Palestine began nearly a century ago, culminating in the six-month-long general strike of 1936.

Since then, popular resistance, which is linked to a defined sense of national identity, has been a staple in Palestinian history. It was a prominent feature of the First Intifada, the popular uprising of 1987.

The fact that the Palestinian homeland was lost, despite the heightened consciousness of the Palestinian masses at the time, is hardly indicative of the Palestinian people's ability to affect political outcomes.

Time and again, Palestinians have rebelled, and with each rebellion, they forced all parties, including Israel and the United States, to reconsider and overhaul their strategies altogether.

A case in point was the First Intifada.

When, on December 8, 1987, thousands took to the streets of the Jabaliya Refugee Camp, the Gaza Strip's most crowded and poorest camp, the timing and the location of their uprising were most fitting, rational and necessary. Earlier that day, an Israeli truck had run over a convoy of cars carrying Palestinian laborers, killing four young men. For Jabaliya, as with the rest of Palestine, it was the last straw.

Responding to the chants and pleas of the Jabaliya mourners, Gaza was, within days, the breeding ground for a real revolution that was self-propelled and unwavering. The chants of Palestinians in the Strip were answered in the West Bank, and echoed just as loudly in Palestinian towns, including those located in Israel.

The contagious energy was emblematic of children and young adults wanting to reclaim their ancestors' identities, which had been horribly disfigured and divided among



regions, countries, and refugee camps.

The Intifada — literally meaning the "shake off" — sent a powerful message to Israel that the Palestinian people are alive, and are still capable of upsetting all of Israel's colonial endeavors. The Intifada also confronted the failure of the Palestinian and Arab leadership, as they persisted in their factional and self-seeking politics.

In fact, the Madrid Talks in 1991 between Palestinians and Israelis were meant as an Israeli-American political compromise aimed at ending the Intifada in exchange for acknowledging the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a representative of the Palestinian people.

The Oslo Accords, signed by Yasser Arafat and Israel in 1993, squandered the Intifada gains and, ultimately, replaced the more democratically representative PLO with the corrupt Palestinian Authority.

But even then, the Palestinian people kept coming back, reclaiming, in their own way, their importance and centrality in the struggle. Gaza's Great March of Return is but one of many such people-driven initiatives.

Palestine's biggest challenge in the movement is not the failure of the people to register as a factor in the liberation of their own land, but their quiescent leadership's inability to appreciate the immense potential of harnessing the energies of Palestinians everywhere to stage a focused and strategic, anti-colonial, liberation campaign.

This lack of vision dates back to the late 1970s when the Palestinian leadership labored to engage politically with Washington and other Western capitals, culminating in the pervading sense that, without U.S. political validation, Palestinians would always remain marginal and irrelevant.

The Palestinian leadership's calculations at the time proved disastrous. After decades of catering to Washington's expectations and diktats, the Palestinian leadership, ultimately, returned empty-handed, as the current Donald Trump administration's 'Deal of the Century' has finally proven.

I have recently spoken with two young Palestinian female activists: one is based in besieged Gaza and the other in the city of Seattle. Their forward-thinking discourse is, itself, a testament that the pessimism of some intellectuals does not define the thinking of this young Palestinian generation, and there would be no need to dismiss the collective efforts of this budding generation in anticipation of the rise of a 'better' one.

Malak Shalabi, a Seattle-based law student, does not convey a message of despair, but that of action. "It's really important for every Palestinian and every human rights activist to champion the Palestinian cause regardless of where they are, and it is important, especially now," she told me.

"There are currently waves of social movements here in the United States, around civil rights for Black people and other issues that are (becoming) pressing topics — equality and justice — in the mainstream. As Palestinians, it's important that we (take the Palestinian cause) to the

mainstream as well," she added.

"There is a lot of work happening among Palestinian activists here in the United States, on the ground, at a social, economic, and political level, to make sure that the link between Black Lives Matter and Palestine happens," she added.

In her part, Wafaa Aludaini in Gaza spoke about her organization's — October 16 Group — relentless efforts to engage communities all over the world and play their part in exposing Israeli war crimes in Gaza, ending the protracted siege on the impoverished Strip.

"Palestinians and pro-Palestinian activists outside are important because they make our voices heard outside Palestine, as mainstream media does not report (the truth of) what is taking place here," she told me.

For these efforts to succeed, "we all need to be united," she asserted, referring to the Palestinian people at home and in the diaspora, and the entire pro-Palestinian solidarity movement everywhere, as well.

The words of Malak and Wafaa are validated by the growing solidarity with Palestine in the BLM movement, as well as with numerous other justice movements the world over.

On June 28, the U.K. chapter of the BLM tweeted that it "proudly" stands in solidarity with Palestinians and rejects Israel's plans to annex large areas of the West Bank.

BLM went further, criticizing British politics for being "gagged of the right to critique Zionism and Israel's settler-colonial pursuits".

Repeating the claim that a whole new generation needs to replace the current one for any change to occur in Palestine is an insult — although, at times, unintended — to generations of Palestinians, whose struggle and sacrifices are present in every aspect of Palestinian lives.

Simply because the odds stacked against Palestinian freedom seem too great at the moment, it does not justify the discounting of an entire nation, which has lived through many wars, protracted sieges, and untold hardship. Moreover, the next generation is but a mere evolution of the consciousness of the current one. They cannot be delinked or analyzed separately.

In his "Prison Notebooks," anti-fascist intellectual, Antonio Gramsci, coined the term "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will."

While logical analysis of a situation may lead the intellect to despair, the potential for social and political revolutions and transformations must keep us all motivated to keep the struggle going, no matter the odds.

Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author, and editor of the *Palestine Chronicle*. He has authored a number of books on the Palestinian struggle, including *The Last Earth: A Palestinian Story*. Baroud has a Ph.D. in *Palestine Studies* from the University of Exeter and is a *Non-Resident Scholar* at Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, University of California Santa Barbara.

## Danon has exposed the fact that the UN has abandoned Palestine

By Ramona Wadi

Israel's outgoing Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, is not leaving the arena without his usual, unfounded claim that the international community is subservient to the Palestinian narrative. In a recent item in the Jerusalem Post, Danon cautioned against calling Israel's plan to formalize its land theft "annexation." To substantiate his claim, he quoted former Israeli prime minister and wanted terrorist Menachem Begin: "You can annex foreign territory. You can't annex your own country."



Mixing Biblical narratives with politics, Danon stated that it was British policy to establish "a Jewish national home in Palestine," thus proving the Zionist colonial trajectory, rather than any claims to the land. The European colonial ideology, which set up a settler-colonial entity in Palestine, has no roots in indigenous territory, and erasing Palestinians from their land does not make the European colonizers in Palestine in any way indigenous.

According to Danon, "Those who decry it as 'annexation' are doing nothing more than appeasing the Palestinian narrative and making peace ever more elusive. This puts them, to use their words, on the wrong side of history."

In another article for the Jewish Insider, Danon echoed the America Israel Public Affairs Committee's recommendations to criticize Israel but not issue "threats," with direct reference to a letter by Democratic lawmakers to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, which recommended the conditioning and withholding of U.S. financial aid for Israel if annexation is implemented.

The ongoing efforts to justify Israeli violations of international law clearly indicate the seriousness of annexation. Danon claims that history and international law are on Israel's side. They aren't; unfortunately, though, the international community is. The UN is to blame for the way that Palestinian history and narratives have been relegated to annual commemorations, thus communicating that as far as the international body is concerned, Palestinians are just a trophy item on its agenda. With such silent diplomacy and one with which the Palestinian Authority is in complete concordance, it is an easy task for Israeli representatives to manipulate history and international law based upon collective inaction when it comes to Palestinian rights.

History has documented Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestine; it is a fact, as is its normalization by the international community. Danon has had enough experience at the UN to know that any purported support for Palestinians' political rights is meaningless and that Israel can get away with anything, including war crimes because the international community allows it to determine by itself what constitutes a violation of international law. Israel, though, believes that it is incapable of violating international law because the colonial state's own legislation justifies crimes that international laws and conventions prohibit.

Moreover, Israel's depiction of democracy within the international arena ensures that the UN will never consider the realities of its colonial violence, let alone recognize that Palestinians are within their rights to resist occupation as part of an anti-colonial struggle. Undoubtedly, Danon would prefer to debate whether land theft should be called annexation or reclamation, the latter being another example of Zionist sophistry. This would eliminate any scrutiny of the fact that Israel is formalizing annexation without so much as a collective warning from the international community, despite the UN's posturing and pontificating about international law. Danon and his fallacious claims have exposed the fact that the organization has effectively abandoned Palestine and the Palestinians.

*Ramona Wadi is an independent researcher, freelance journalist, book reviewer, and blogger. Her writing covers a range of themes in relation to Palestine, Chile, and Latin America. Her article appeared in MEMO.*

## Trump walks back plan to deport foreign students taking online classes

Donald Trump's administration has rescinded its previous plan to deport international students if their university courses go online this fall, following a legal challenge from top universities.

U.S. District Judge Allison D. Burroughs announced the decision during a hearing on Tuesday after Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology won a legal battle over the issue.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement would revert to its earlier guidance and allow overseas students to remain in the U.S. even if their courses were wholly virtual, the judge noted.

The move to restrict the F-1 visas attracted widespread criticism from colleges and universities across the U.S., which are already grappling with how to safely return students to campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The order [by Trump] came down without notice — it's cruelty surpassed only by its recklessness. It appears that it was designed purposefully to place pressure on colleges and universities to open their on-campus classrooms for in-person instruction this fall, without regard to concerns for the health and safety of students, instructors, and others," according to Harvard University President Larry Bacow.

In the past weeks, Trump has repeatedly threatened to cut off funding to schools that do not open in the fall and criticized a federal health agency's guidelines for reopening schools as "very tough & expensive."

The Republican president, who is seeking re-election in November, also has accused the Democrats of wanting to keep schools shut for political reasons, despite a surge in coronavirus cases across the country.

Trump's campaign views reopening classrooms and enabling parents to get back to work as a key to economic recovery and a boost to his re-election chances in the 2020 presidential vote. (Source: Press TV)



## Historical mansion being restored into manuscript museum

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The second season of restoration work has been started on Birjandi Historical House in a bid to turn the centuries-old mansion to a top manuscript museum in Borujerd, Lorestan province, western Iran.



“With the completion of the project or equipping a manuscript museum in Borujerd city, this museum will be considered as one of the first manuscript museums in the country and it is estimated to be highly welcomed by visitors,” provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Wednesday, CHTN reported.

One of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran, Lorestan mainly acts as a gateway to the neighboring Khuzestan province which hosts UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System. Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

## Bina house undergoes rehabilitation project

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Bina mansion in the city of Khusf, the eastern province of South Khorasan, has undergone some rehabilitation works, a local cultural official has said.

The mansion, which dates back to the Qajar era (1789–1925), was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 2005.



The restoration project includes renovating the kitchen, yard, and bathrooms, repairing the flooring of the room and kitchen and repairing the plasterworks and landscaping, CHTN quoted Parisa Jamshidi as saying on Wednesday.

The house has a central courtyard. It also has a porch with a crescent arch, as well as badgir (wind catcher).

South Khorasan province is home to many historical and natural attractions such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Polond Desert.

It is also known for its famous rugs as well as its saffron and barberry which are produced in almost all parts of the province.

## Beyond Iran’s tourist attractions: the people and places to visit in Iran

**By Pashmina Binwani**

(Part 1/8)

On a trip to Iran a couple of years ago, I experienced first hand the beautiful hospitality of Iran beyond its tourist attractions. Iranians are particularly thrilled to meet all races, and even Americans, as I discovered traveling the country for 3 weeks. Politics bruises the very ideals of the Iranian people, and in no way do they echo the sentiments of what has been happening in the media.

As I traveled through the country with groups of different races and religions, I asked my host “Would he host an American?” and his eyes lit up and he instantly responded, “Yes, I would host them just like I would host anyone.”



Looking out on Iran’s labyrinth of highways

The places to visit in Iran were often overshadowed by the friendly conversations with people. Every walk in the park, a visit to the mosque, or a train ride to the other end of the city were often met with tea requests and more gifts than we could fit in our backpacks.

Looking back at my pictures, there were standout moments that made my visit to Iran special, more than just visiting Iran’s tourist attractions. For all the genuine pride the people of Iran demonstrated, there were stories of Iranians who hoped for a better future.

From a retired old man in the Armenian quarters of Tehran who longed for stability, to an engineering student who is learning German and trying to better every instance of his life and to young Iranians who have tasted a better life elsewhere in Asia, it was clear that each one of them were hopeful and helpless at the same time.

Here’s a photo-journey depicting the people that matter and the Persian landscapes that carry dreams and stories of the people that I met, and how a country as warm as Iran should be given a visit.

# Open-air museum being set up featuring millennia-old relics in northeast Iran

**→ 1** The previous rounds of research had been hired various experts in archeology, geography, geophysics, geomorphology, and ecology who took part from the [Ludwig Maximilian] University of Munich; the [Free] University of Berlin; the University of Tehran; and Shahid Beheshti University, the report said.

Based on the studies, various architectural and archaeological evidence from the Parthian and the Sassanid era were discovered in the Rivi site, which is situated in Maneh-Salmalqan county of North Khorasan province.

The evidence, according to Mohammad-Javad Jafari who headed of the fifth season of archaeological excavation at Rivi site, indicates the sequence of settlement in the area in the aftermath of the Achaemenid era, according to the Archaeology News Network.

Back in October, a number of historical clay stamps, estimated to date from Achaemenid and Parthian eras, were discovered in the ancient site.

“The seals were found alongside clay urns in a large hall and the seals are imprinted in a variety of geometric patterns [depicting] plants, animals, and human figures. Studying the findings can yield valuable information on the economy, culture, and arts of the ancient societies,” Jafari said.

“These stamps represent the widespread and complicated economic relations that people of the time had with other communities in such a way that made them bring together and store goods.”

Evidence suggests that residents of this area sealed the urns that were loaded with particular goods then tied them with ropes, the archaeologist said.

The Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC) was the largest and most durable empire of its time, stretching from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and to India.

The Parthian Empire (247 BC – 224 CE), also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power in ancient Iran. The Parthians largely adopted



Archaeological research works in Rivi started in 2012. Since then archaeologists accessed remains of settlements from the Bronze and Iron Age, the Achaemenid, the Parthian, the Sassanid dynasties, and the early Islamic period.

the art, architecture, religious beliefs, and royal insignia of their culturally heterogeneous empire, which encompassed Persian, Hellenistic, and regional cultures. At its height,

the Parthian Empire stretched from the northern reaches of the Euphrates, in what is now central-eastern Turkey, to eastern Iran.

## Covid-19 closes museums in Tehran once again

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – All museums in Tehran have gone on lockdown again for one more week following the increase in the number of people infected with the coronavirus, IRNA reported.

According to the Coronavirus Control Operations Headquarters, museums’ staff must be present at work during this period, but the museums are closed to the public to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, said Mohammadreza Kargar, the director of museums and historical properties at the tourism ministry on Wednesday.

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.

Due to a sharp rise in the number of coronavirus infec-



tions and deaths, all art and cultural centers, universities, schools, seminaries, English schools, libraries, movie theat-

## Islamic-era relics found in historical mansion in Isfahan

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Some pieces of pottery and porcelain dating back to the Islamic era have recently been found during the restoration of Bekhradi Mansion in the central Isfahan province, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has said.

The relics were unearthed from the east wall of the mansion by the restorers and cultural heritage experts, CHTN quoted Abdolreza Arab as saying on Wednesday.

Safavid-era (1501–1736) mansion, was built as a caravanserai and then turned into a house. The almost 400-year-old house is the oldest house that belonged to the Bekhradi family, one of the wealthy families of Isfahan at the time.

Located inside a big garden, the mansion has been restored several times and currently is used as a traditional accommodation center.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran’s top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars,



museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It’s a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan

which is translated into “half the world”; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its ‘life-giving river’, the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan’s Islamic buildings, and the city’s majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning “Image of the World”), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

## New properties in Khuzestan added to National Heritage List



**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Nine historical and natural sites in the southwestern Khuzestan province have been inscribed on the National Heritage List, IRNA reported.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Tuesday in a letter to governor general of the province, the report added.

Remnants of the historical city of Manjaniq, Majid Khan Castle, Imamzadeh Hamzeh Holy Shrine, Iran Club, and Tchogha Pahn Hill in different cities of the province are among the properties added to the National Heritage List.

Khuzestan is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites of Susa, Tchogha

Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could spend weeks exploring. The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

Lying at the head of the Persian Gulf and bordering Iraq on the west, Khuzestan was settled about 6000 BC by a people with affinities to the Sumerians, who came from the Zagros Mountains region. Urban centers appeared there nearly contemporaneously with the first cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium. Khuzestan, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, came to constitute the heart of the Elamite kingdom, with Susa as its capital.

## Fam tour in Lorestan province canceled as virus picks up again



**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A pre-planned familiarization tour in Lorestan, one of culturally and naturally rich provinces in western Iran, has been canceled as the spread of the coronavirus picks up again in parts of the country, organizers said on Tuesday.

“Due to the spread of the coronavirus and the fact that Lorestan has become one of the provinces on alert to counter coronavirus, the familiarization tour with the province’s tourist attractions has been canceled until further notice,” CHTN quoted provincial deputy tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi as saying on Tuesday.

In July, Qasemi announced the provincial department is scheduled to hold a familiarization tour for the heads of as-

sociations of travel and tourism agencies from all over the country, some artists, and correspondents in a bid to promote traveling to the province.

Over 1.5 million visits were paid to tourist attractions and museums in Lorestan during the past Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended March 20). Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. The region was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.



# Iran breaks Israel's monopoly on tumor treating device

**SOCIETY**  
d e s k

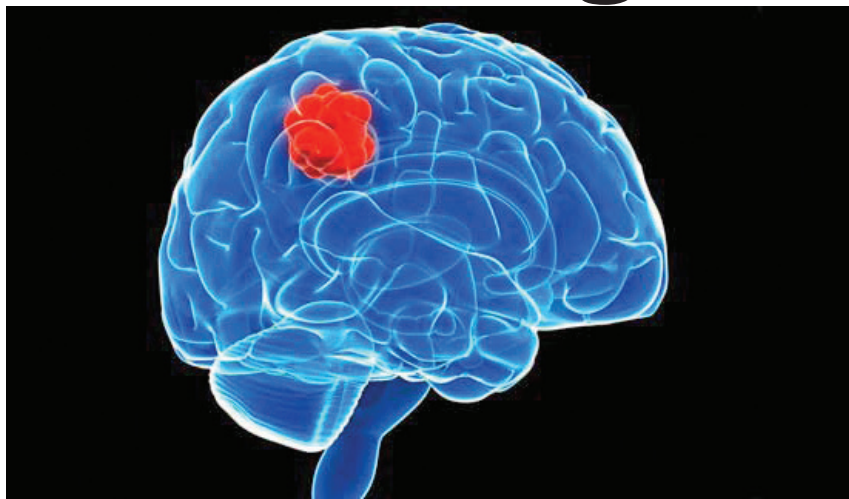
**TEHRAN** — Iranian researchers have succeeded to achieve technology for manufacturing a brain tumor treating device that was monopolized by a company in Israel.

Tumor treating devices are low intensity alternating electric fields, which are tuned to interfere with the division process of cancer cells, the system is a portable, light-weighted, battery-operated device.

Patients receiving need to wear four transducer arrays on their scalp, which deliver the fields non-invasively to the brain. The system is intended for continuous home use by patients.

Alireza Majid Ansari, research team leader, told the Tehran Times on Wednesday that the devices are used for the treatment of adult patients suffering from recurrent and newly diagnosed glioblastoma.

This is the result of the team's many years of research and work; the technology belonged by a company in Israel that served the United States and European companies,



he noted, adding, of course, the device is rented to patients.

"We have redesigned the device; its laboratory sample has been successfully developed

and is in the process of the clinical trial," he added.

There are many problems with treating brain tumors, as surgery is not easy for this

type of tumor, also, drug delivery to the brain is hard, and the brain and spinal cord are a great hurdle for brain drug delivery. On the other hand, brain radiotherapy is difficult because of its system and structure, he lamented.

This device uses MRI and CT scan information of the patient and accurately determines the dimensions of the tumor and its location, then an electric field is applied, he also said.

"Of course, the device is different from its foreign-made model, which causes allergic reactions for some patient, but we tried to solve the problem using nanotechnology," he highlighted, adding, it should pass the clinical trial to determine how efficiently works.

"Researchers are using this device to increase the life expectancy of patients; of course, the response varies from patient to patient, in some patients, the tumor disappears after several months of use, but in others, especially those who have had a relapse, it is recommended to continue using the device for a lifetime," he concluded.

## Fertility rate in Iran drops by 70% in 30 years: AEI

**SOCIETY**  
d e s k

**TEHRAN** — The fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history, Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) wrote in an article.

The article entitled "Fertility Decline in the Muslim World: A Veritable Sea-Change. Still Curiously Unnoticed" used statistical data from the populations of 49 countries and Muslim-majority geographies.

On average, the fertility rate in the Islamic world has decreased by at least 44 percent, while worldwide fertility rate has dropped by 32 percent. Also, the largest decrease in fertility during the last three decades, which includes a 70-percent decrease in fertility, has occurred in Iran. The decline in fertility rate in Iran over the past 30 years has been astonishing, as it has been one of the fastest and most dramatic statistics on fertility decline in human history.

Melinda Gates, an American philanthropist and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, recently wrote on her Twitter account that "The fastest decrease in the rate of childbearing per woman in the history of the world has happened in Iran!"

**Population growth drops to less than 1%**

Seyed Hamed Barakati, deputy health minister for family



and school population, said in May that Iran's population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

At the beginning of the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), the country's population grew by 2.5 percent annually, however, suddenly, population growth reached about 1.5 percent in the 1980s, he highlighted.

He went on to explain that 14 policies to support child-bearing and the family were announced by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in [the Iranian calendar year] 1389 (March 2014-March 2015), when he stressed that social, cultural and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

"But since 2 years ago, the marriage rate declined by

8 percent annually. With this trend, we will be one of the oldest countries in the world in the next 30 years, and this is dangerous in all scientific, social, cultural and economic fields," he lamented.

**Iran facing low birth rate**

According to the data released by the National Organization for Civil Registration, comparing past three years shows some 1,196,134 infants were born in the country whose births were registered last year, while 1,366,509 births occurred a year before it, and 1,487,913 births have been recorded in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), a difference of roughly over 100,000 per year.

A major contributing factor to this trend has been diminishing fertility rates in recent decades, further compounded by longer lifespans.

Moreover, socioeconomic factors led to fertility rate decrease and reproductive behavior in the country, including financial issues, urbanization, education, first marriage age, as well as increased access to family planning services along with increased time gap between the firstborn and marriage.

Between the Iranian calendar years of 1376 (March 1996-March 1997) to 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), the average age at first marriage for females increased from 19.8 to 23.0, and for males increased from 23.6 to 27.4.

## Endangered species reproduce at Kani Barazan wetland



**ENVIRONMENT**  
d e s k

**TEHRAN** — Some endangered bird species were observed along with newly-hatched chicks at Kani Barazan international wetland in northwest of the country.

Kani Barazan wetland, located in Mahabad county, West Azarbaijan province, was once recorded as the first bird-watching site in the country.

Stretching to 927 hectares, the wetland consists of a freshwater lake surrounded by diverse plant communities and seasonal wetlands which become dry during summer and autumn.

The wetland is home to over 20,000 birds of 144 bird species, including, flamingo, little cormorant, great white pelican, stilt, sternidae, great crested grebe, graylag goose, lesser white-fronted goose, heron, common shelduck and etc. and a number of endangered species like white-headed duck.

The rangers spotted several endangered species of ferruginous duck and little cormorants with newly-hatched chicks, IRNA quoted Farooq Sokhanvar as saying on Wednesday.

The reproduction of birds and endangered species in the international wetland is good news for environmentalists in the city, therefore, monitoring is increased and the entry of violators into this wetland is more strictly controlled, he highlighted.

He went on to say that the volume of water stored in the wetland is 15 percent more than last year and the volume of water entering the wetland is four-tenths of a cubic meter per second.

In 2006, the wetland was declared as a hunting prohibited area and the first wildlife refuge in the West Azarbaijan province due to its unique ecosystem, he concluded.

## Scientists warn of rapid melting of Antarctica's 'Doomsday glacier'

Many climate scientists regard Thwaites glacier in West Antarctica as one of the most vulnerable and most significant glaciers in the world in terms of future global sea-level rise.

Its collapse would raise global sea levels by more than half a metre on its own, and subsequently release other major bodies of ice in West Antarctica, which together could raise sea levels by 2-3 metres. The ramifications for many countries, including most of the world's coastal cities, would be catastrophic.

For this reason, Thwaites is known as Antarctica's "Doomsday glacier".

Earlier this year a team of scientists observed, for the first time, the presence of warm water at a vital point underneath the glacier, which helps explain the reason behind the extent of its decrease, the Independent reported.

The Thwaites glacier is 74,000 square miles, roughly the size of the UK. The ice melt draining from Thwaites into the Amundsen Sea already accounts for 4 per cent of global sea-level rise but scientists are concerned its continued existence is hanging in the balance as the world warms.

"The big question is how quickly it becomes unstable. It seems to be teetering at the edge," Paul Cutler, programme director for Antarctic glaciology at America's National Science Foundation told the Financial Times this week.

"It is a keystone for the other glaciers around it in West Antarctica," he said. "If you remove it, other ice will potentially start draining into the ocean too."

Rob Larter, UK principal investigator for the Thwaites Glacier Project at the British Antarctic Survey, added: "It is the most vulnerable place in Antarctica."

Antarctica accounts for vast quantities of ice – around 90 per cent of all ice in the world – and unlike in the Arctic, most of the ice is out of the water and on land. The average thickness of the ice is 1.6 miles deep. At its thickest point, the ice sheet is almost three miles deep.

Current sea level is around 20cm (almost 8 inches) above pre-industrial levels and is blamed for increased coastal flooding.

For about 2,000 years until the late 1800s, global sea levels remained almost static with small fluctuations.

The burning of fossil fuels ramped up during the Industrial Revolution in the mid-18th century, increasing levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere. The greenhouse gas absorbs heat from the sun and traps it, heating the atmosphere and the planet.

Our rapidly-warming planet causes sea levels to rise on two fronts. Warmer temperatures melt ice sheets and glaciers, leading the run-off to flow into oceans. The ocean also absorbs excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions and warm water expands, taking up more space than colder water.

The annual rate of sea-level rise has roughly doubled since 1990.

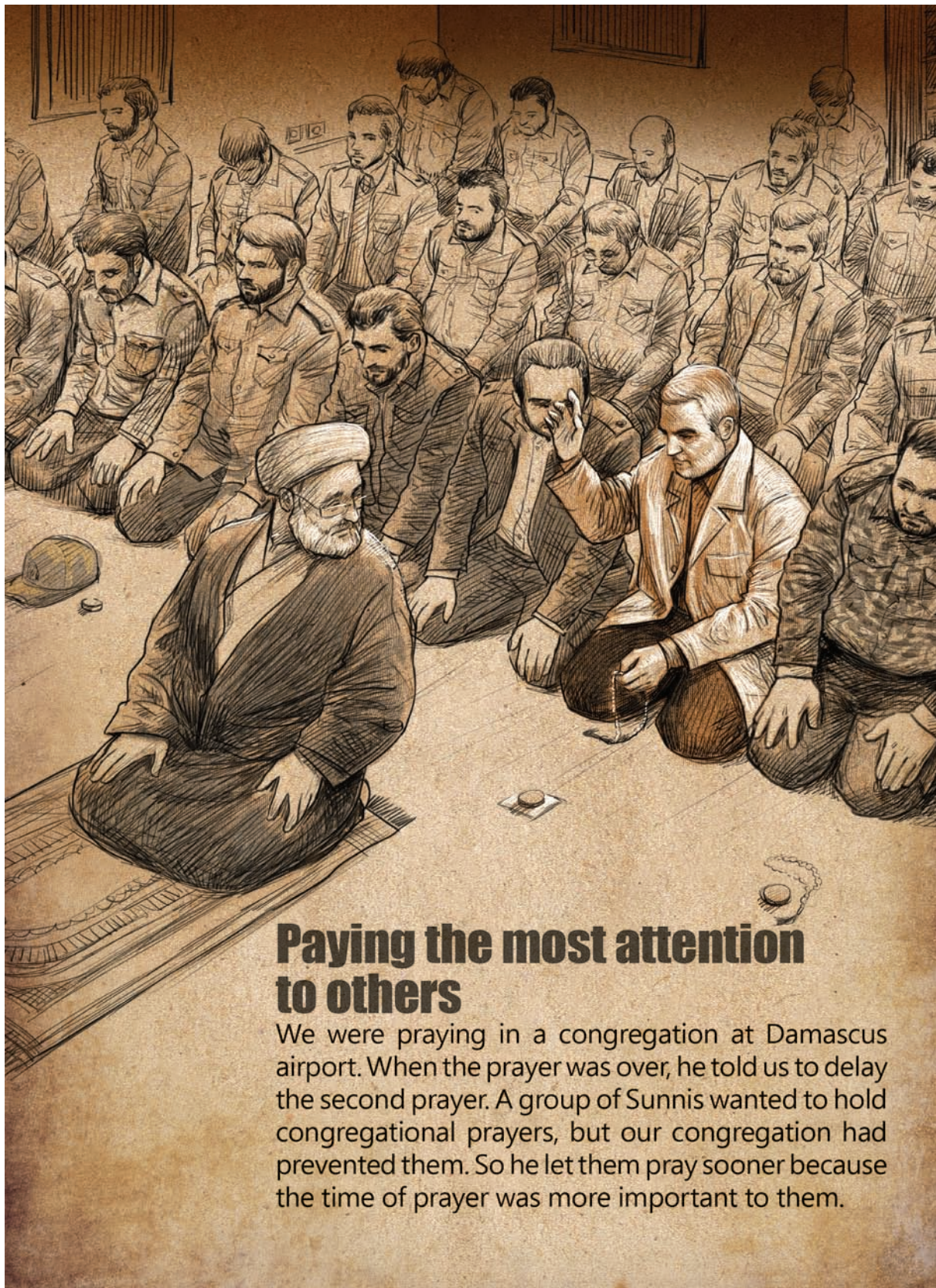
Scientists previously found the extent of the instability of the Antarctic ice sheet difficult to study but improved technologies are allowing greater insight into the changes in the ice on, and surrounding, the continent.

In January, a probe designed to search for alien life on Jupiter's Moon Europa was tested by scientists working at Thwaites.

The cylindrical robot was lowered down a 600m-deep hole just 35cm in diameter to measure the waters moving below the glacier's surface.

It measured temperatures and also the turbulence of the water – a means of testing the mixing of fresh meltwater from the glacier and salty water from the ocean. The turbulence allows scientists to understand the rate of melting and therefore the overall stability of the glacier.

The latest warning over Antarctica's melting glaciers comes amid a record heatwave on the other side of the planet in the Arctic.



## Paying the most attention to others

We were praying in a congregation at Damascus airport. When the prayer was over, he told us to delay the second prayer. A group of Sunnis wanted to hold congregational prayers, but our congregation had prevented them. So he let them pray sooner because the time of prayer was more important to them.



## UK denies U.S. president's Huawei remarks: "We all know Trump don't we"

British Health Secretary Matt Hancock has denied that U.S. President Donald Trump was responsible for the UK's 5G ban on Chinese technology giant Huawei.

On Tuesday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered Huawei equipment to be completely purged from Britain's 5G network by the end of 2027.

Hours later, Trump claimed that what London had done was because of his effort, saying, "I did it myself."

"We convinced many countries, many countries, I did this myself, for the most part, not to use Huawei, because we think it is an unsafe security risk, it's a big security risk," Trump said.

Speaking on Wednesday, Hancock said that the decision was a considered one in spite of attempts by some individuals to claim the credit.

"Well, we all know Donald Trump, don't we," he told Sky News. "All sorts of people can try to claim credit for the decision, but this was based on a technical assessment by the National Cyber Security Centre about how we could have the highest quality 5G systems in the future."

After Johnson ordered the ban, China censured the decision as "disappointing and politicized."

The Chinese telecoms giant's UK spokesman Ed Brewster said London had reacted to pressure from Washington rather than security concerns.

The Huawei official said, "Regrettably, our future in the UK has become politicized, this is about U.S. trade policy, not security."

China's ambassador to Britain Liu Xiaoming also denounced the decision as "disappointing and wrong," saying, "It has become questionable whether the UK can provide an open, fair and non-discriminatory business environment for companies from other countries."

The ban comes nearly two weeks after London described Huawei as a potentially hostile state vendor. Beijing has warned to retaliate, threatening to open a new front in the China-UK rift.

The U.S. accuses Huawei of providing Beijing with a way to spy on communications from the countries that use its products and services.

Washington has also accused the Chinese tech giant of a "decades-long" effort to steal trade secrets from American companies. Huawei has time and again denied the accusations.

The Trump administration has blacklisted the company to block it from getting any U.S. telecom equipment contracts and prevent the transfer of American technology to the Chinese firm.

## Dozens of organizations demand justice over Israel's extrajudicial killings

More than 80 Palestinian and international civil society organizations have written to a UN Human Rights Council body, censuring the recent extrajudicial killing of a young Palestinian man by Israeli forces and demanding accountability for the occupying regime over its "shoot-to-kill" policy.



In their appeal submitted to the UN Special Procedures, 83 groups from across 16 countries said the killing of Ahmad Erekat, a 28-year-old resident of West Bank village of Abu Dis, and countless other Palestinians must be understood within the context of the Tel Aviv regime's "widespread and systematic shoot-to-kill policy targeting Palestinians."

The Special Procedures are independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to address thematic or country-specific human rights issues.

Erekat was shot dead by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint near the city of Bethlehem on 23 June.

The regime forces denied him access to medical care and prevented a Palestine Red Crescent Society ambulance from reaching the scene, leaving the man bleeding to death.

Since then, Israeli authorities have been withholding Erekat's body, prolonging his family's suffering and denying him a dignified burial.

Israeli police claim that Erekat intended to commit a car-ramming attack, but his family members suggest it was an accident that happened while he was rushing through the checkpoint to pick up his sister ahead of her wedding.

A video of the incident shows that the unarmed Palestinian victim was actually raising his hands in the air, posing no threat to Israeli soldiers.

They estimated that Tel Aviv was withholding 63 Palestinians' bodies and at least 253 unidentified bodies languishing in Israel's so-called "cemeteries of numbers."

The organizations also urged the UN Special Procedures to "recognize Israel's systematic shoot-to-kill policy as contributing to the maintenance of Israel's apartheid regime of systematic racial oppression and domination over the Palestinian people as a whole, which, embedded in a system of impunity, prevents Palestinians from effectively challenging Israel's apartheid policies and practices."

The UN Special Procedures should work towards "the immediate opening, without any further delay, of a full, thorough, and comprehensive ICC (International Court of Justice) investigation into the Situation in the State of Palestine," read the appeal.

According to Ahmad's cousin and senior Palestinian Liberation Organization official Saeb Erekat, Ahmad was "executed, murdered in cold blood and [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu bears responsibility."

# China vows to retaliate after Trump signs Hong Kong sanctions bill

move comes after Trump signed a law and an executive order to punish China for its 'aggressive actions' in Hong Kong.

China has said it would retaliate after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered an end to preferential trade treatment for Hong Kong and signed legislation allowing sanctions over Beijing's enactment of draconian security law in the semi-autonomous city, according to Aljazeera.

In a statement on Wednesday, China's foreign ministry said it "firmly opposes and strongly condemns" the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, which unanimously passed the U.S. Congress earlier this month and approved sanctions on Chinese officials and banks over Beijing's clampdown in Hong Kong.

"China will make necessary responses to protect its legitimate interests, and impose sanctions on relevant U.S. personnel and entities," the ministry added, without elaborating.

The Chinese warning came amid mounting tensions with the U.S. - not just over Hong Kong - but also over trade, the global coronavirus pandemic, China's military buildup in the South China Sea, and its treatment of Uighur Muslims in the western region of Xinjiang.

On Tuesday, Trump stepped up the pressure to punish Beijing for what he called its "aggressive actions" in Hong Kong, a former British colony that was returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

### Trade surpluses, sanctions, travel bans

China had defied U.S. warnings earlier this month by imposing the national security law, which criminalizes offenses it broadly defines as subversion, secession, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces.

In response, the U.S. Congress unanimously passed the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, which targets police units and Chinese Communist Party officials responsible for imposing the new security law.

Mandatory sanctions are also required on banks that conduct business with the officials.

On Tuesday, Trump's executive order said the U.S. property of any person determined to be responsible for or complicit in "actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Hong Kong" would be blocked.

It also directs officials to "revoke license exceptions for exports to Hong Kong", and includes revoking special treatment for Hong Kong passport holders.

However, analysts say that completely ending Hong Kong's special treatment could prove self-defeating for the U.S. Hong Kong was the source of the largest bilateral U.S. goods trade surplus last year, at \$26.1bn, U.S. Census



Bureau data shows. According to the U.S. Department of State, 85,000 U.S. citizens lived in Hong Kong in 2018, and more than 1,300 U.S. companies operate there, including nearly every major U.S. financial firm.

The territory is also a major destination for U.S. legal and accounting services.

The Hong Kong government says this is likely to hurt the U.S. more than it will hurt Hong Kong, and indeed, if you look at the numbers, the U.S. has a bigger trade surplus with Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a re-exporting hub, which means that goods and services come through Hong Kong into the U.S. to avoid those trade sanctions or restrictions that China may have in dealing with the U.S.

The U.S. began eliminating Hong Kong's special status under U.S. law in late June, halting defense exports and restricting the territory's access to high-technology products.

## Israeli protesters call Netanyahu the "crime minister"

Mounted officers charge demonstrators who block Jerusalem light rail, use water cannons against protesters.

Israeli police used water cannons, and officers mounted on horses charged demonstrators to disperse several hundred people who blocked the Jerusalem light rail after midnight Tuesday, following a large protest outside Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence, The Times of Israel reported.

Several thousand people had gathered Tuesday evening calling on Netanyahu to quit over his indictment on corruption charges, as several separate social protests took place at the same time across Israel.

Some of the demonstrators attempted to break through security barriers at the scene and clashed with police. As the protest ended, hundreds moved downtown, where they blocked the light rail system, chanting "shame, shame" and "Bibi, go home."

Police then turned water cannons on the demonstrators and mounted police charged up and down the light rail tracks on Jaffa Street, sending protesters scattering to the side of the streets before regrouping.

Many then marched down Keren HaYesod Street, with some pushing garbage dumpsters and chain-link fences into the streets as makeshift barricades. Several dumpsters were set on fire.

Police said one officer was lightly wounded, and 50 protesters were arrested.

Asked why the normally peaceful protests had reached this level, demonstrator Elhanan Marks told The Times of Israel that "every morning, I read the paper, and it feels like a slap in the face. It's time for a change; still, no one's listening."

A Jerusalem resident who attended the demonstration and declined to be quoted by name said she was motivated by the government's poor response to the numerous crises in the country. But she said she saw little hope for change.

"For the first time, I'm starting to think that there might be no future for me here in Israel," she said quietly, crouching for shelter behind a low wall as torrents of water swept onto the sidewalk.

The Jerusalem demonstration was part of the



### Police said one officer was wounded, and 50 protesters were arrested.

ongoing "black flag" anti-corruption protests against Netanyahu, who is standing trial in a series of graft cases.

The demonstration Tuesday evening was led by anti-corruption activists who refer to Netanyahu as the "crime minister." Many held posters are saying, "You are detached. We are fed up," or declaring there is "No way," a politician under indictment can be prime minister. Demonstrators, defying orders to maintain social distancing requirements, chanted slogans, and blew horns outside Netanyahu's home.

Other placards carried by demonstrators read, "Netanyahu's corruption makes us sick" and "Netanyahu, resign."

### "For the first time, I'm starting to think that there might be no future for me here in Israel," a protestor said.

## Inside the America

## Philadelphia protesters sue city over tear gas, use of force

➔ 1 Kenney and Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw had previously apologized for using tear gas in the June 1 demonstration on the interstate, saying they relied on incorrect information. They also announced a temporary moratorium on its use in most cases. On Tuesday, Abernathy said his decision to resign was not related to the city's handling of the protests but added that the city needs more diverse voices "at every level of government."

Videos show Philadelphia police that day firing tear gas at dozens of protesters trapped on the roadway, forcing some to climb up a steep embankment and over a concrete wall and fence to escape.

The protests were among those that erupted nationwide after George Floyd died after a Minneapolis police officer put his knee on his neck for several minutes to pin him to the ground.

"In response to protests and a national conversation about police accountability and an end to a long history of police brutality, the Philadelphia Police Department reacted with more brutality," said lawyer Jonathan Feinberg, who was involved in the litigation and worked for the civil rights firm Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing, Feinberg and Lin LLP.

"Our firm dates back to 1971. We cannot recall a single episode in which the

Philadelphia police used munitions like this in a peaceful protest," Feinberg said.

Shahidah Mubarak-Hadi, a plaintiff, said her 3- and 6-year-old children were hurt after police fired tear gas at their home in West Philadelphia, where they were inside seeking refuge during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Officers violated our home's sanctity, without forethought, senselessly firing tear gas around our residence while we were inside," she said. "My children and I no longer feel safe in our own house."

They live near the 52nd Street business corridor, the heart of a predominantly Black neighborhood rocked by clashes

between police and protesters on May 31. The police response, lawyers, said in a press release, violated their clients' First Amendment right to free speech and assembly, Fourth Amendment ban on excessive force, and 14th Amendment ban on racially discriminatory policing.

"In what many witnesses described as a war zone in an otherwise peaceful, residential community, police officers in tanks traveled away from West Philadelphia's business corridor and down residential side streets for hours, chasing residents into their homes and indiscriminately firing canisters of tear gas at them," they said.

Other actions in the works include suspending an extradition treaty with Hong Kong, something Australia has already done, as well as ending legal cooperation agreements, taxation accords, and financial understandings that cover accounting rules for Chinese businesses that work in the U.S.

At the same time, the Trump administration has pressed ahead with travel bans for Chinese, Hong Kong, and Communist Party officials the U.S. believes are responsible for curtailing democracy in Hong Kong.

The administration has also gone after China by imposing travel bans on officials to repress minorities in Xinjiang and hinder foreigners' access to Tibet.

On Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the U.S. had decided to reject outright virtually all Chinese maritime claims in the South China Sea, a determination that could lead to increased tensions in disputed, critical international shipping lanes.



# Iranian wrestler Ghasemi to be awarded 2012 Olympic joint gold



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian freestyle wrestler Komeil Ghasemi will be awarded the 2012 Summer Olympics joint gold medal, the press service of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced on Tuesday.

Ghasemi and Russia's Bilyal Makhov won the bronze medals at the 2012 Olympics in men's freestyle wrestling in the under-120 kg category. The gold and silver medals at that time went to Uzbekistan's Artur Taymazov and Georgia's Davit Modzmanash-

vili respectively.

Taymazov was stripped of his gold last year after his reanalyzed samples tested positive for banned steroids.

The other finalist, Modzmanashvili, was also disqualified after the IOC found a banned substance in his samples, announced in January 2019.

Taymazov, who defeated Ghasemi in the men's freestyle 120 kg semifinals, had his results vacated for the second time in his career after being previously

stripped of his 2008 gold medal at 120 kg following a retesting of his samples in April 2017.

In a first for Olympic wrestling, two gold medals in one category will be awarded namely to Ghasemi and Makhov.

For the wrestling world this is an unparalleled event, where gold and silver medals winners in the same weight category were stripped of their titles and the two golds were later awarded to third-place winners.

## Hooman Afazeli takes charge of Machine Sazi



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Hooman Afazeli has been appointed as Machine Sazi coach two days after he officially stepped down as coach of Pars Jonoubi.

He has been named as replacement of Reza Mohajeri in the Tabriz based football club with the aim of saving them from relegation.

Afazeli left Pars Jonoubi after disagree-

ment with the club's officials on Monday. The conflicts erupted after Esteghlal football team didn't travel to Jam last week since they claimed that more than 25 percent of their players had tested positive for COVID-19. He had said Pars Jonoubi's officials should not have accepted the Iran football league's decision to postpone the match.

Machine Sazi are five points clear of the drop zone with six games to play.

## Sohrab Bakhtiarizadeh new coach of Shahr Khodro



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Sohrab Bakhtiarizadeh will lead Shahr Khodro until the end of the Iran Professional League (IPL) season.

The 47-year-old trainer almost became head coach of Iran's U19 football team last week but his deal didn't finalize for unknown reasons.

Bakhtiarizadeh replaced Mojtaba Sarasiaei who stepped down from his role in

Mashhad based football club.

With six matches left to play, Shahr Khodro are third in the IPL table and have a chance of qualifying for the next year's AFC Champions League.

Bakhtiarizadeh has already worked as head coach in Naft Masjed Soleyman and Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Shahr Khodro will meet struggling Pars Jonoubi on Friday.

## Two Iranian coaches among AFC Asian Cup greatest coaches



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) nominated two coaches of Iran among the list of greatest coaches in the history of the AFC Asian Cup.

Mohammad Ranjbar (winner in 1972) and Heshmat Mohajerani (winner in 1976) are two Iranian coaches in the 10-man list.

In the 64-year history of the tournament, only 16 men

have won the AFC Asian Cup as a head coach.

The list also included Khalil al-Zayani of Saudi Arabia (winner of 1984 edition), Carlos Alberto Parreira of Brazil (winner in 1980 and 1988), Ange Postecoglou of Australia (winner in 2015), Zico of Brazil (winner in 2004), Philippe Troussier of France (winner in 2000), Jorvan Vieira of Brazil (winner in 2007), Alberto Zaccheroni of Italy (winner in 2011) and Felix Sanchez of Spain (winner in 2019).

## Four games a day confirmed for 2022 World Cup in Qatar

World Cup fans will be able to watch an unprecedented four games a day on television, spread out over 11 hours, during the group stage of the Qatar 2022 tournament after the schedule was confirmed on Wednesday.

With the relatively short travel distances for the venues in and around Doha, it could be possible for fans who travel to the 32-team tournament to attend multiple games each day.

The early games will kickoff at 1300 local (1000GMT) with the fourth match starting at 2200 local (1900GMT) and finishing just before midnight.

The tournament's opening game on Nov. 21, will be at the 60,000 capacity Al Bayt Stadium, with its distinctive 'tent' style covering.

The final on Dec. 18 will be held at the 80,000 Lusail Stadium, which, like Al Bayt, will also host a semi-final.

"The World Cup is always a festival of football, a real celebration for the fans who come on-site and watch. In



Qatar, with the compact nature, this is going to be amplified even more with 32 teams and 32 sets of supporters all in and around Doha," said FIFA Chief Tournaments

and Events Officer, Colin Smith.

FIFA will wait until the draw for the tournament is held in March or April of 2022 before assigning specific games to venues and time-slots. That will enable them to better align games with time zones for domestic television partners of the competing teams.

The tournament was switched from its usual June-July slot due to the heat in the Gulf state and is the first that will be held in the middle of the European season.

Nasser Al Khater, CEO of the Qatar World Cup organizing company, said plans for the tournament were well on schedule with 90% of the work finished on roads and infrastructure.

"When we talk about the stadiums, more than 85% of the work has been completed and really now, the last two years, we're focusing on our operation readiness and making sure we get the fan experience plans in place," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Afshin Mollaei elected as Iran's Sports for All federation president

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Afshin Mollaei has been elected as new president of Iran's Sports for All federation on Wednesday.

In the presidential elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Mollaei was elected for a four-year term till 2024 by receiving 26 votes out of 41 votes.

Fatemeh Abolghasemi finished in second place in the elections with 14 votes.

Farhad Nikoo Khesal bagged just one vote.

## Esteghlal, Persepolis handed transfer ban: report

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Media have reported that two Iranian football teams, Esteghlal and Persepolis, have been banned by FIFA from signing players for the next three transfer windows.

However, the two club's managers have denied the news and claimed that there is still time for the final verdict on their cases in FIFA to be announced.

The two Tehran giants will probably face banning from signing any new players due to their failure to pay the wages of their former foreigner players and coaches.

Bojan Najdenov, a Macedonian midfielder who signed a contract with Esteghlal in 2018 and played only four games for the Blues, had lodged a complaint against the club and won his lawsuit.

Esteghlal asked FIFA to pay the Macedonian player's wage by releasing a part of their blocked money in FIFA.

FIFA agreed at first with the request of the club, but now it is said that no payment has been made, and consequently, the Iranian club are banned by the football world governing body.

Regarding the Persepolis, it was the same, and they were supposed to pay the \$23,000 to their ex-midfielder Fernando Gabriel and another \$10,000 to the Reds' former assistant coach Serten Cuk, by their blocked FIFA money.

The Reds club must also pay \$1183000 to their former head coach Branko Ivankovic.

## Persepolis, Foolad match delayed

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — A match between Persepolis and Foolad teams in Matchweek 25 of Iran Professional League (IPL) has been postponed for two days.

The match was scheduled for Thursday but Iran Football League Organization announced that it will be held on Saturday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Several Foolad players tested positive for COVID-19 and were quarantined afterward.

A 14-day quarantine period for Foolad players will finish on Friday and the match will be held on Saturday.

## Majid Jalali reappointed as Gol Gohar coach

**Tasnim** — Majid Jalali has been reappointed as head coach of Iranian football team Gol Gohar.

The 63-year-old coach, who was named head coach of Gol Gohar as Vinko Begovic's replacement in October, stepped down from his role on Sunday following poor results in Iran Professional League.



Now, the Sirjan-based club have announced that Jalali has returned to the club after two days.

With six matches remaining, Jalali has a tough task ahead to save Gol Gohar from relegation.

Gol Gohar lost to struggling Paykan 2-0 on Friday and moved down one place to 15th place in the table.

## Brazilian Babu lauds Iran Volleyball Super League

**IRNA** — Brazilian player Victor Babugia Araujo "Babu", who has recently joined Iranian volleyball club Shahdab Yazd, has praised Iran Volleyball Super League.

The 24-year-old middle blocker is the only foreign player in the Iranian league this season.

"I have to say a breathtaking competition will be ahead of us in the current Iran Volleyball Super League. I promise to do my best," Araujo said in a video message.

"I feel like I am at my home, with a friendly atmosphere. Iran's league is among the high-quality leagues, that's why I have opted to join Shahdab," he added.

"Shahdab are going to finish on the podium in the season. The support of our fans is very important," the Brazilian concluded.



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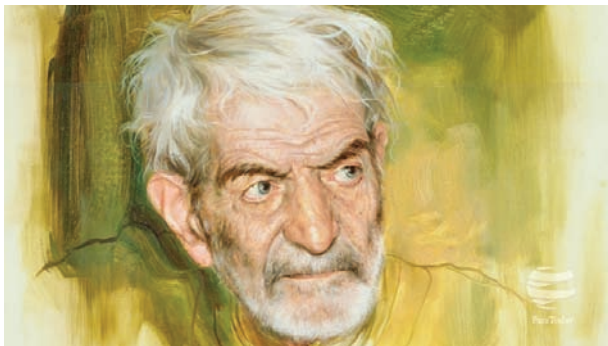
**GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

If you fail to attain your desire, do not blame others, and accept your fate in any case.

Imam Ali (AS)

Azerbaijani scholar Fariz Akhmedov novelizing poet Shahriar’s life story

→1 Akhmedov asked Iran for collaboration on the translation of his book into Persian. Rabiei also asked for more cooperation among the libraries of the two countries in different fields such as publications of books and magazines, and holding courses for the employees of Nakhchivan State University and the National Library and Archives of Iran.



A portrait of the Iranian poet Mohammad-Hossein Behjat Tabrizi – Shahriar.

Akhmedov said that the library needs a collection of books in Persian for the students and the academics. The expansion of cultural ties was the other topic also discussed at the meeting. Shahriar, who also composed works in Azerbaijani, was mainly influenced by the works by the celebrated Persian poet Hafez. He published his first book of poems in 1929 with prefaces by Persian literature scholars Mohammad-Taqi Bahar, Saeid Naficy and Pejman Bakhtiari. “Heidar Babaya Salam” is Shahriar’s most famous Azerbaijani poetry collection, which highlights his birthplace, the village of Heidar Baba.

“Sunstorm” hits Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of d e s k “Sunstorm” (A Time Odyssey) co-written by Arthur C. Clarke and Stephen Baxter has recently been published by Tandis Publishing House in Tehran. Shadi Hamedikhah and Puria Nazemi are the translators of the book.

Returned to the Earth of 2037 by the mysterious and powerful Firstborn, Bisesa Dutt is haunted by memories of her five years spent on the strange alternate Earth called Mir, a jigsaw-puzzle world made up of lands and people cut out of different eras of Earth’s history.

Why did the Firstborn create Mir? Why was Bisesa taken there and then brought back just a day after her disappearance?

Bisesa’s questions are answered when scientists discover an unnatural anomaly in the sun’s core—evidence of alien intervention more than two thousand years ago. Now plans set in motion by inscrutable observers light-years away are coming to fruition in a sunstorm designed to eradicate all life on Earth in a bombardment of radiation. As the apocalypse looms, the differences on Earth threaten to undermine every counter-effort. And all the while, the Firstborn are watching.

C. Clarke was an English writer, notable for both his science fiction and his nonfiction. His best known works are the script he wrote with American film director Stanley Kubrick for “2001: A Space Odyssey” (1968) and the novel of that film.

Baxter is an English hard science fiction author. He has degrees in mathematics and engineering.



Front cover of the Persian translation of the book of “Sunstorm” co-written by Arthur C. Clarke and Stephen Baxter.

Iranian stunt performers can be groundbreakers in this profession: stuntwoman

A R T TEHRAN — d e s k Stuntwoman Atefeh Sahrai, who has collaborated in acclaimed movies such as “A Hairy Tale” and “Murphy’s Law”, has said that Iranian stunt performers can introduce new methods and technics in this profession.

She is a co-founder of Carbon, a stunt performing group most of whose members have worked with Arsha Aqdasi, the renowned Iranian stuntman who has collaborated in a number international projects including the James Bond 2012 adventure “Skyfall”.

“Along with some stunt performers, I worked with Mr. Arsha Aghdasi and the collaboration brought us great experiences and I learned a lot from him,” Sahrai told the Persian service of ILNA on Wednesday.

“We split from Mr. Aghdasi’s team and established our own group, Carbon, which is composed of the youngest stunt performers of the country, and is being led by Amir-Mohammad Rezai, Iran’s youngest stuntman who has collaborated in over 20 film projects and holds a collection of records,” she added.

Sahrai called herself first Iranian stuntwoman who is working as a designer of fight scenes in action movies and said that the leaders of the stunt performing groups play a key role in attracting the view of the owners of a project to the importance of the job the stunt performers do in their groups.

Despite the high risk of stunts in movies, stunt performers are paid low salaries in Iran, Sahrai lamented and added, “Project managers do not care about the high risk of these stunts.”

She said that there are few stunt performers in Iran who have the potential to be turned into superstars. “Acting needs its own special skills,” she concluded.



A scene from director Hodayun Ghanizadeh’s movie “A Hairy Tale”, in which stuntwoman Atefeh Sahrai collaborated.

Iran’s Dramatic Arts Center launches initiative “Street Theater Iran” for COVID-19 era

A R T TEHRAN — Iran’s Dramatic Arts Center has launched an initiative named “Street Theater Iran” that intends to help theater and troupes survive during the COVID-19 pandemic across the country.

Interested applicants are asked to submit their works to the designers of the program, which will be held in several categories.

The top selected works will have several performances in their own cities. The program will be held in collaboration with

the Kordestan Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance, which organizes the Marivan International Street Theater Festival every year in the northwestern Iranian city.

The program will replace the festival in Marivan this year due to the outbreak of the novel virus across Iran.

Theater troupes in Tehran and several other provinces resumed street performances in June after all cultural activities had been shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic for over three months.



A theater troupe performs a play in Karaj, Alborz Province.

Movies from Iran to compete in Hiroshima animation festival

A R T TEHRAN — Three Iranian movies d e s k will be competing in the 18th edition of the Hiroshima International Animation Festival, which will take place in the Japanese city from August 20 to 24.

Among the films are “Am I a Wolf?” by Amir-Hushang Moein and “Crab” by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi, both produced at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.

“Am I a Wolf?” tells the story of a group of children who perform the familiar story of the wolf and the yearlings in school as a puppet show. The nanny goat grieving for its yearlings and the angry wolf in its solitude face each other.

“Crab” is about a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his school’s theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role

of a crab.

In addition, “Divinity” (“Malakout”) by Farnush Abedi will also be screened in the biennial event. It is a horror film about a pianist, who has lost one of his hands and can’t play the piano anymore. Doctors decide to transplant a dead criminal’s hand to his body. The pianist with his new hand starts killing people.

The festival offers many special programs including retrospectives of masters and talented filmmakers, feature animations, high quality student works, animations for peace, for children, as well as seminars, symposiums, workshops, exhibitions and an educational film market.

Furthermore, the festival provides free spaces, such as “Frame In” for animation students and “Nexus Point” for animation professionals, to screen their works, make presentations and exchange ideas.



“Divinity” by Farnush Abedi is among the Iranian movies selected to screen at the 18th Hiroshima International Animation Festival in Japan.

Melbourne festival picks two films from Iran

A R T TEHRAN — The 2020 d e s k Melbourne International Film Festival has picked the Iranian films “Just 6.5” by Saeid Rustai, and “Sunless Shadows” by Mehrdad Oskui, the organizers have announced.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival will go online in the Australian city from August 6 to 23.

Starring Payman Maadi and Navid Mohammadzadeh, “Just 6.5” is about a police group under the leadership of Samad who has been assigned to arrest Nasser Khakzad, a major drug trafficker in Tehran.

The film was a big winner in several festivals, including the 32nd Tokyo International Film Festival in November 2019, and received two major honors at the event.

Rustai won the award for best director and Mohammadzadeh was crowned best actor for his portrayal of Khakzad.

“Just 6.5” will be competing in the Melbourne festival’s Drama Section with several other movies including “Farewell



Payman Maadi acts in a scene from “Just 6.5” by Iranian director Saeid Rustai.

Amor” directed by Ekwa Msangi from Angola, “The Fever” by Maya Da-Rin from Brazil, “First Cow” by Kelly Reichardt from the U.S. and “Identifying Features” by Sin Senas Particulares from Mexico.

The documentary “Sunless Shadows” is about a group of adolescent girls serving their sentence for the grave crime of murdering their father, their husband or another male family member in an Iranian juvenile detention center.

Oskui won the Silver Horn for the director of the social film “Sunless Shadows” at the 60th Krakow Film Festival in Poland in June.

“Sunless Shadows” will be competing in the Documentary Section with several other movies including

“Speak So I Can See You” by Marija Stojnic from Serbia, “State Funeral” by Sergei Loznitsa from the Netherlands and Lithuania, “Welcome to Chechnya” by David France from the U.S. and “9 to 5: The Story of a Movement” by Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert from the U.S.