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Leader: 'U.S. killed your guest at your home'

okhamenei.ir



ARTICLE

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China-Iran relations will have a broad and bright future

China-Iran relations are always one of the focuses of discussions in China, Iran, and the international academic community as well. As the discussions in Iran in the last weeks indicate, mainstream Iranian public opinion stands for building stronger relations between the two economically and strategically. Yet, despite the rather favorable foundations of the comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP), the two sides, particularly the Iranian side, will have to overcome some challenges.

China and Iran have every reason to establish and strengthen CSP. Both of the two have long histories of ancient civilizations and have the experience of being humiliated by the West in general in the last two centuries. And both of the two share the same kind of experience of being bullied and sanctioned by the U.S. in the last decades. These similarities have made the two psychologically closer to each other as the two could easily understand each other's concern for national independence, sovereignty, and the quest for legitimate rights.

The last couple of years have seen the CSP growing more and more mature in almost every field. China has been explicitly and resolutely supporting Iran's legitimate rights prescribed in the JCPOA, and opposing U.S. unilateral sanctions on Iran. And Iran was always ready to express resolute support for China's struggle for its legitimate interests regarding various issues related to sovereignty. China has remained the largest economic partner of Iran for many years, and Iran, one of China's major partners in the region, albeit sanctions. And people-to-people exchanges between the two have also increased greatly in the last five years.

The year 2020 particularly sees the two are helping each other in the COVID-19 fight. Mohammad Javad Zarif was the first Foreign Minister who expressed support for China in the COVID-19 fight, and Iran was among the first countries that have assisted China with medical materials. **→7**

ICCIMA to set up business office in China

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) plans to set up a business office in China, in collaboration with major Iranian trade companies, ICCIMA portal reported, quoting a board member.

As reported, Gholam-Hossein Jamili announced during a meeting with representatives of some large state-owned companies, saying that the focus of the office will be on the activities of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce.

In the meeting, which was also attended by the ICCIMA Deputy for International Affairs, and the Chairman of the Iran-China Joint Chamber, Jamili explained the ICCIMA's plans for developing the country's export and marketing activities in the face of the U.S. sanctions.

Jamili noted that the Resilient Economy Headquarters and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) have tasked the ICCIMA to set up

business offices in some export target countries and countries in the region.

The official also mentioned the Iran chamber's approach to expanding the country's export markets, providing services, exploiting existing capacities, and said: "Mobilizing facilities and creating a strong center for better trade and economic activities in China is what we are looking for."

"Undoubtedly, the involvement of large companies in this matter will make the pace of establishing Iran Chamber of Commerce offices faster and easier," he stressed.

Further in the meeting, Majid-Reza Hariri, Chairman of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, pointed to the difficult conditions of Iranian companies for activity in various countries, including China, and said that the establishment of this business office, which is the economic embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a solution to such problems and concerns. **→4**

U.S. protests: Trump to send federal forces to more 'Democrat' cities

By staff & agencies

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would send law enforcement to more U.S. cities, as a federal crackdown on anti-racism protests in Oregon with unmarked cars and unidentified forces angered people across the country.

Trump, a Republican, cited New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore and Oakland, California, as places to send federal agents, noting the cities' mayors were "liberal Democrats." Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot frequently blasts Trump on Twitter.

"We're sending law enforcement," Trump told reporters at the White House. "We can't let this happen to the cities."

State and local leaders in Oregon, as well as members of Congress, have called for Trump to remove Department of Homeland Security secret police forces from Portland, Oregon, after videos showed unidentified federal personnel

rounding up people and whisking them away in black minivans, Reuters reported.

"Not only do I believe he is breaking the law, but he is also endangering the lives of Portlanders," the city's mayor, Ted Wheeler, tweeted, having previously called the federal presence "political theater" in an election year.

Trump, trailing in opinion polls behind Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, in June declared himself "president of law and order" and threatened to send the U.S. military into cities after sometimes violent protests and looting in the aftermath of African American George Floyd's death in police custody in Minneapolis.

Federal agents last week began cracking down on Portland protests against police brutality and systemic racism, using tear gas to defend federal buildings and taking some activists into custody without explanation. **→10**

Iranian students win medal at Moscow Flower Show 2020

TEHRAN – The students of the University of Tehran won the third place in the 9th Moscow International Garden and Flower Festival "Moscow Flower Show Online 2020" and won the special prize of Smart Garden competition.

Davood Vafadari and Azimeh Ramezani, students of green space engineering of the University of Tehran, presented a project at Moscow Flower Show 2020, and in addition to winning a bronze medal for the Smart Garden Competition, received a special award for sustainability

concept, innovation and creative approach to promoting sustainable development.

It was especially praised by the jury of this international competition.

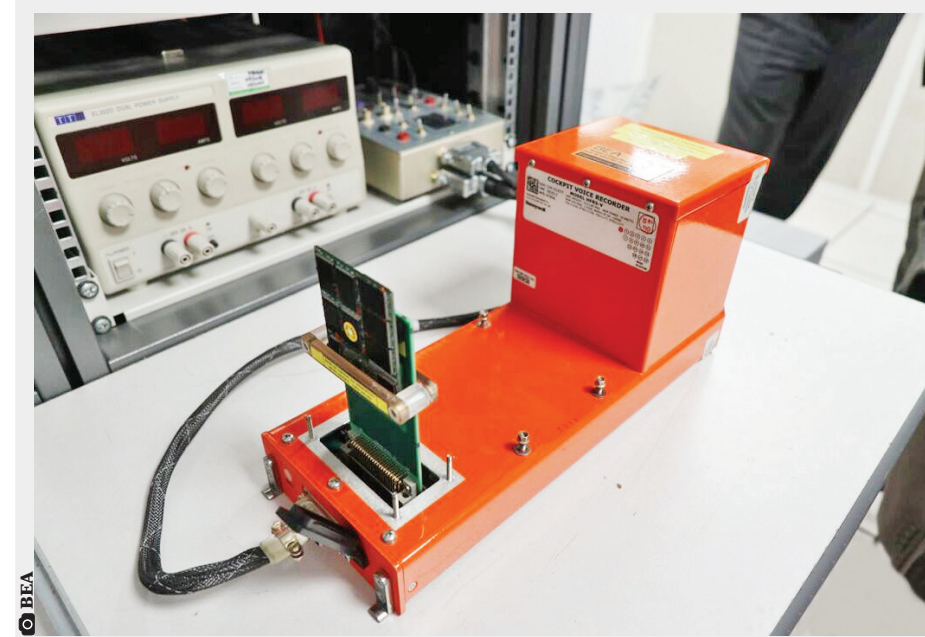
Held June 26 to July 5, the festival displayed virtual gardens and stands of leading companies in the field of landscape design, as well as business and educational programs from experts and professionals in the landscape industry.

This international competition with the special theme of smart and ecological garden

design was held among students and young professionals and coincided with the 9th International Exhibition of Flowers and Garden Design in Moscow.

Landscape architects, designers, horticulturists, professionals, students and anyone who appreciates the exquisiteness of the outdoors join the Moscow Festival of Gardens and Flowers.

Visitors will have the opportunity to dive into the immense diversity that landscape design, nature and art offer. **→9**



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Analysis of downed plane's black boxes underway in France: embassy

TEHRAN – The Iranian embassy in France announced on Tuesday that the preliminary analysis of the recovered data from the downed Ukrainian plane's black boxes is underway in the BEA laboratory in France.

According to the embassy, a team of Civil Aviation Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran in a joint effort with the French side began to decode the black boxes of the Ukrainian plane the prior day, Mehr reported.

On the first day of this joint technical cooperation, a delegation of Iranian experts and a group of French laboratory experts succeeded in recovering the FDR (flight data recording) section in the black boxes of the plane, it added. **→3**

Gigantic park of anthropology being built near Tehran

TEHRAN – Construction of a gigantic anthropological park, which turns the spotlight of everyday life, traditions, and rituals of a variety of Iranian tribes, has reached its final phase in Karaj, a city some 30 km westward Tehran.

"An anthropology museum is now under construction, which will complete the anthropological park of Alborz province. Mockups of many Iranian historical sites, villages, and tribal lands have also been constructed across the park," CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Fereydoun Mohammadi as saying on Sunday.

Abyaneh Village, Turkmen rural landscape, ethnic lands of Ardabil province, Fars province, countryside villages of northern Iran, and many architectural sites such as mosques, cisterns, wind towers, bazaars, and caravanserais are among replicas in the anthropology park, the official said.

Iran is a culturally diverse society, and interethnic relations are generally amicable. The predominant ethnic and cultural group in the country consists of native speakers of Persian. For both domestic and foreign travelers, tribal tourism is all about opening eyes to new places, traditions, cuisines, beliefs, and ways of life. Also called ethno-tourism, ethnic tourism or tribe tourism, it lays the ground for you to feel indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay.

There are many tourists from all over the world who tend to observe the lifestyle of these hardworking people and spend a few days watching activities such as milking, yogurt making, buttering, oiling, woolen, carpeting and much more. Many Iranian and foreign tourists are interested in sleeping in nomadic black tents. **→8**

Leader tells visiting Iraqi PM: ‘U.S. killed your guest at your home’

Ayatollah Khamenei warns Iran will certainly make ‘reciprocal strike’ on Americans for Gen. Soleimani assassination

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei received on Tuesday afternoon Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. In his talks with the Iraqi prime minister, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “Iran definitely opposes whatever undermines the Iraqi government.”

Underlining that Iran has never had and will never interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq, the Leader added that Iran wants a dignified, independent and united Iraq that its territorial integrity is protected.

“Of course, the American view of Iraq is exactly the opposite of ours, because the U.S. is, in the strictest sense of the word, an enemy, and it does not agree with an independent, strong Iraq with a majority government,” the Leader noted.

Ayatollah Khamenei went on to say, “For Americans, it does not matter who is the prime minister of Iraq; they are looking for a government like the government of Paul Bremer, the American ruler of Iraq in the early days of Saddam’s downfall.”

The Leader also said Iran does not interfere in Iraq’s relations with the United States but Tehran “expects that Iraqi friends know the U.S. well and realize that the presence of Americans in every country is a source of corruption and destruction.” Ayatollah Khamenei also said Iran expects Iraq to expel Americans from their soil.

The Leader added, “The Islamic Republic expects that the decision of the Iraqi government, nation, and parliament for the expulsion of the Americans be pursued because their presence is the source of insecurity.”

The Leader cited the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as an example of the U.S. crime which was the result of their presence in Iraq.

“They killed your guest in your house and openly admitted this crime and this is not a minor issue,” the Leader told the visiting Iraqi prime minister.

The Leader said Iran will surely take revenge of the assassination of General Soleimani.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran will never forget this issue and will definitely will make a ‘reciprocal strike’ to the Americans.”

He called the consensus created among Iraqi political factions during the formation of al-Kadhimi’s government a “decent move.”

The Leader added, “The Americans and their agents are always looking for a power vacuum in the region to create chaos and pave the way for their intervention, just as they did in Yemen and now everyone is witnessing the deplorable situation in Yemen.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also expressed Iran’s support for al-Kadhimi, saying that “reason, religion and experience require that the relations between Iran and Iraq be further improved in all fields.

“Of course, the expansion of Iran-Iraq ties has opponents, who are led by the U.S., but in no way should the U.S. be feared because it cannot do a damn thing.

“The Americans would make troubles and harassment, but the Iraqi government, regardless of this harassment, should firmly continue on its path and protect the people as its prop,” he pointed out.

The Leader also called Ayatollah Ali Sistani, a well-known source of emulation (Marja) in Iraq, a “great boon” to Iraq, noting the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) is also another great boon to the country that should be protected.

Russia makes utmost efforts to preserve nuclear deal: Lavrov

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Tuesday that Moscow makes utmost efforts to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

“We condemn the United States’ policy to annihilate the JCPOA and make the most effort to preserve the deal,” IRNA quoted Lavrov as saying in a meeting with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Moscow.

He noted there is still chance to save the JCPOA. Lavrov added that China and the European signatories to the deal are also making efforts to keep the agreement.

■ **Zarif calls Iran’s relations with Russia ‘strategic’** Zarif said upon arrival in Moscow on Tuesday that Iran’s relations with Russia are “strategic.”

“I stress that Iran-Russia relations are strategic. In the current situation in which there are developments at the international level, it is needed to hold talks between the two countries and also with other friends,” he told reporters.

He also said Iran plans to extend the 20-year agreement with Russia.

Iranian delegation to visit Ukraine over plane incident on July 29-30

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on Tuesday that an Iranian delegation is scheduled to visit Kiev on July 29-30 to hold talks over the Ukrainian plane incident in early January.

He told IRNA that the process of decoding the plane’s black boxes, which was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be finished in two or three days.

He said representatives from other countries are present where the decoding is being done. However, Baharvand said, the Iranian representative plays the pivotal role.

Iran has sent the black box of the Ukrainian passenger plane to France for decoding.

Baharvand said the black box was taken to Paris on Friday and would be deciphered on Monday.

The Ukrainian airliner was shot down shortly after taking off from Tehran’s Imam Khomeini airport on January 8, killing all 167 passengers and 9 crew members.

On January 11, the Armed Forces General Staff released a statement saying the Ukrainian passenger plane was mistakenly downed near the airport.

The incident happened a few hours after Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani. The airplane had been mistaken for an invading missile.

Leader says Iran expects Iraq to expel Americans.

Iran, Iraq eye \$20 billion trade

Iran welcomes Iraqi PM

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Heading **d e s k** a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi visited Tehran on Tuesday to discuss bilateral ties and hold talks on other pressing issues.

The Iraqi prime minister was welcomed at Mehrabad Airport by Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian. The private talks between al-Kadhimi and President Hassan Rouhani immediately began after the official welcoming ceremony was held on Tuesday noon.

During his two-day visit, al-Kadhimi was going to discuss how to strengthen ties between Iran and Iraq as well as their cooperation in a number of fields, the Iraqi prime minister’s media office said in statement published shortly after al-Kadhimi left Baghdad for Tehran.

Several senior Iraqi officials including Minister of Finance and Prime Minister Assistant for Economic and Energy Affairs Ali Abdul Amir Allawi, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, Petroleum Minister Ehsan Abdul Jabar, Health Minister Hassan Mohammad al-Tamimi, Minister of Planning Khaled Battal, Defense Minister Joma Enad, Electricity Minister Majed Hantoush, Transport Minister Naser Hussein, National Security Advisor Qassem al-Araji and Head of Trade Bank of Iraq Faisal al-Haimus are accompanying the prime minister on his first visit to a foreign country since taking office.

The prime minister’s visit to Iraq came on the heels of Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif’s trip to Iraq on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson for the Iranian government implicitly welcomed Iraq’s reported efforts to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia, saying that Iran supports any initiative to deescalate tensions in the region.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Tuesday, Ali Rabiei said, “As we had previously announced, we welcome any initiative aiming to resolve the disagreements among the region’s nations. This is a general rule. We support all our neighbors who have some offers for regional cooperation with other countries.”



■ \$20 billion bilateral trade

Rouhani and al-Kadhimi held a private meeting after the welcoming ceremony. Simultaneously, the Iraqi officials separately discussed issues of mutual interest with their Iranian counterparts. Rouhani and al-Kadhimi attended a joint press conference at the end of their discussions.

Rouhani said that Iran and Iraq are willing to increase bilateral trade to \$20 billion up from the current \$12 billion.

“The two nations are willing to increase the trade between the two countries to \$20 billion. The two countries are also determined to implement all terms of the agreements approved by the two governments in March 2019 in Baghdad,” Rouhani said at the joint

press conference.

The president noted that these agreements include economic infrastructure projects such as dredging Arvand Roud border waterway and completing the railway project connecting the Iraqi city of Basra and the Iranian city of Shalamcheh.

Rouhani also added that al-Kadhimi assumed office in “very sensitive circumstances”, however, trade ties between Iran and Iraq have witnessed a “good” improvement over the past few months of al-Kadhimi’s premiership.

■ Iran’s promise to Iraq

The president also discussed the novel coronavirus with the Iraqi prime minister and pledged to support Iraq in combating the virus.

The prime minister says, “We fought against terrorism and Takfiri groups, and Iran was the first country to stand by Iraq in this fight. We will not forget this.”

Iran says the main policy is to strengthen ties with neighbors

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that the Iranian administration’s main policy is expanding ties with neighbors.

“Today, the Iraqi prime minister visits Tehran and we host Mustafa al-Kadhimi. We hope we would have constructive and effective talks aiming at deepening relations between the two countries,” Rabiei said at a press conference.

He added, “He [Kadhimi] enters the country as the main strategy in our foreign policy is expanding ties with neighbors and the administration has also prioritized effective relations with neighbors.”

Kadhimi visited Tehran on Tuesday afternoon for a two-day visit. He held talks with a number of Iranian officials including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also visited Baghdad and Erbil on Sunday.

■ ‘A region without violence is beneficial to all’

Rabiei also said that Iran welcomes any mediation to

deescalate tensions in the region, noting that a region without violence is beneficial to all.

Iraqis have announced that part of al-Kadhimi’s mission in his tour of Tehran is to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which have been at loggerheads over Riyadh’s support for Trump’s anti-Iran policies and also Tehran’s fierce opposition to the Saudi-led war on fellow Arab country of Yemen.

The Iraqi prime minister was scheduled to visit Riyadh before his trip to Tehran. However, the trip was postponed due to the health of the Saudi king.

“We welcome any country that enters mediation with good intention. We believe a region without cruelty and violence is beneficial to all of us. It is the countries who can choose to be in a region with tension or not. The world of politics is not always fixed,” he stated.

He added, “We have announced our viewpoint. However, we prioritize the countries which stood against bullying in situation of sanctions. Iran will not forget the regional

countries which did not follow bullying of the United States and Europe.”

In an interview with IRNA published on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi reiterated Tehran’s long-held position that Iran is ready to hold talks with regional countries, noting there is no way but dialogue to bridge differences.

Mousavi said that Iran has announced its principled policies and it depends on Saudi Arabia how its wants to respond to Iran’s proposal for talks and cooperation.

He also said that Iran seeks peace, security and stability in the region.

Iran believes in regional talks without any foreign interference, he said.

Mousavi added, “The only way to restore security and even flourish regional economy is cooperation.”

He also said, “A powerful region is important for Iran. If we have a powerful region, we will have powerful countries and can cooperate.”

Former diplomat says Iran-China partnership will threaten U.S. hegemony

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Javad Mansouri, a former Iranian ambassador to China, has said that 25-year cooperation plan between Iran and China will threaten the United States’ hegemony.

“Iran and China’s closeness, as two independent countries, is a threat to the United States’ hegemony, and opposition to it reveals this fear,” Mansouri told the Mehr news agency in an interview published on Tuesday.

He noted that the U.S. is against progress in independent countries.

The former ambassador said Iran and China are two influential countries in Asia and can expand cooperation in various areas.

“There are many spheres for Iran and China to expand cooperation at the international level. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the two countries’ relations have expanded in a way that today, most of Iran’s relations are with China,” Mansouri explained.

He also said that China plays an effective role on the international stage and many countries are planning to expand ties with it.

“Countries in the world are analyzing that



China will play more important role in the future. So, they feel the necessity to have long-term cooperation with the country and plan for it.”

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that a long term cooperation plan between Iran and China is a “right” and “wise” decision.

“The United States and its allies’ opposition show that the decision to do long term and strategic cooperation with China is right and wise. The foreign opponents of

this strategic document are concerned about Iran’s progress and development despite the sanctions which challenge the hegemonic system and can also become a role model for other countries,” Gharibabadi said in a post on his Instagram page, ISNA reported on Saturday.

He noted that the U.S. seeks to keep Iran isolated and impede economic interaction with the country.

The ambassador also said, “Today, China is against the United States’ unilateral policies. It also has \$14.14 trillion gross domestic product and is the second-biggest economy in the world. This country has also many common positions with Iran on international issues and has also opposed anti-Iran decisions and actions in international organizations.”

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.

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 also said the strategic partnership is based on a win-win approach.

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

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

Nikki Haley, Donald Trump’s former ambassador to the United Nations, has expressed frustration over the impending partnership between Iran and China.

“The partnership ... would vastly expand Chinese presence in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways, and dozens of other projects,” Haley said.

The New York Times also recently ran an article confirming that Iran and China were nearing the conclusion of the roadmap in defiance of the U.S., saying the document foresees “a sweeping economic and security partnership.”

Iran has final say over who analyzes black boxes of Ukrainian plane

By staff and agency

Kathy Fox, the head of Canada’s Transportation Safety Board, has said that Iran has the final say over who gets to analyze the flight data recorders from the Ukrainian passenger jet accidentally shot down in January.

According to National Post, in an interview on Monday, she confirmed the long-awaited downloading of crucial flight data and cockpit voice recordings from the Jan. 8 crash was completed successfully in Paris on Monday. The safety board sent a team to Paris to witness the downloading of the data.

“It’s not clear to us whether some of that work is going to be done in France or whether Iran is simply going to take the data and go back and do it in their country,” Fox said.

Fox also made clear that she was able to say what she did publicly because Iran gave the necessary permission required under international aviation law to do so.

Under Annex 13 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the “State of Occurrence” — in this case, Iran — becomes the lead investigator for the crash because it happened in Iran.

But Iran could ask for help from another country or designate another country to lead the investigation, as was the case when Ukraine turned to the Netherlands to lead the probe into the shootdown of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 by pro-Moscow Ukrainian rebels over eastern Ukraine six years ago.

“ICAO permits countries to delegate. For whatever reason, Iran has chosen to lead it. They have the right to do that,” said Fox.

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

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

Iraq says Tehran and Baghdad to sue U.S. for assassinating Soleimani, Muhandis

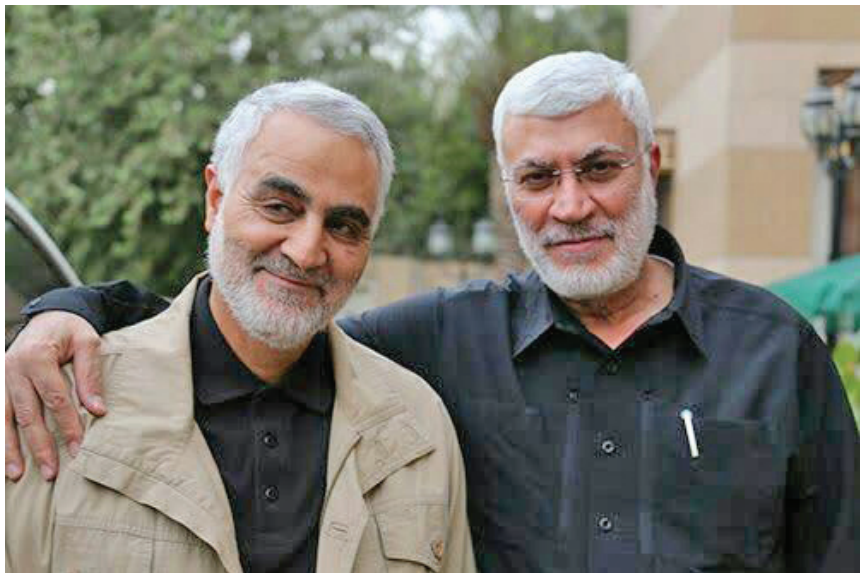
POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iraq has announced that Baghdad and Tehran will sue the United States for assassinating top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani and deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

In a statement on Monday, Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council said the country regards the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis on its soil as a criminal act, Press TV reported.

The council said it has coordinated its legal procedure with the Iranian Judiciary and the two countries will file a joint lawsuit against the U.S.

"The investigation into the airport incident began from the first moment and the Iraqi judiciary dealt with that incident as a criminal act that took place on Iraqi land where some of the victims are Iraqis," the council said in a statement.

According to the statement, the investigation took place according to the Iraqi Code of Criminal Procedure starting with inspecting the scene and meeting with some of the plaintiffs, including the legal repre-



sentative of the Iranian embassy.

"The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers had been informed of other details

regarding the accident, and that the investigation procedures since the time of the accident continue in accordance with the Iraqi law," the statement added.

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

In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a military airbase hosting U.S. forces in Iraq as part of its promised "tough revenge" for the U.S. terrorist attack.

Last month, Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alqasi-Mehr said 36 individuals had been identified in connection with the assassination.

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

Their arrest warrant has been issued and announced to Interpol, he added.

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

Iran interested in buying new Russian weapons: ambassador

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran's ambassador to Moscow has said Iran is interested in buying new Russian weapons to enhance its defense capacities, TASS reported on Tuesday.

"Indeed, it is so," Kazem Jalali said, answering a question if Teheran was interested in Russia's new weapons.

"We will hold consultations with Russia on what we need to enhance our defense capacities. The Russian government and the Russian people have always been by our side in times of trouble. Russia is our priority partner in this sense," he stressed.

Earlier, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova had announced that Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was scheduled to visit Moscow on Tuesday.

"Lavrov and Zarif will hold negotiations on Tuesday in Moscow," she told reporters on Monday.



Zarif's last official visit to the Russian capital of Moscow was in mid-June 2020.

In a tweet on Monday, Jalali said Foreign Minister Zarif will deliver President Hassan Rouhani's message to President Vladimir Putin during the visit.

He said that Zarif is making his 30th visit to Russia as the Iranian foreign minister and his third visit to the country in the past six months.

Apart from delivering Rouhani's message, the Iranian minister will also discuss the JCPOA, regional developments, and bilateral ties with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, added the envoy.

"As a supporter of the JCPOA, Russia has recently opposed the [anti-Iranian] resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors. Iran and Russia are united against inhumane and unilateral sanctions of the US," Jalali wrote.

Leaders of the two countries, he continued, are determined to cement bilateral ties to safeguard common interests and help to ensure regional security.

The visit comes as Zarif was in Iraq on Sunday, holding talks with high-ranking officials of the neighboring country including Iraqi president, prime minister, foreign minister, and parliament speaker among others.

Enrichment activities continue unabated at Natanz nuclear facility, MP says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Spokesman for the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said enrichment activities in the Natanz nuclear facility continues unabated at the previous level.

Abolfazl Amouei said the recent incident in the Natanz nuclear facility has not harmed the activities in the complex, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

On July 2, Iran announced an incident affected a shed under construction at the Natanz complex, but it caused no casualties and failed to stop the enrichment work at the facility.

A day later, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said the "main cause" of the explosion in the facility has been determined and will be announced at an appropriate time.

SNSC spokesman Keyvan Khosravi said that experts from different sectors started investigating "different hypotheses" about the incident at the site in central Iran immediately after its occurrence, and have determined its main cause.

"Due to some security considerations, the cause and manner of this incident will be announced at a proper time," he added.

Some reports suggested Tel Aviv's alleged role, but Israeli officials neither confirmed nor denied the regime's involvement.

Meanwhile, Iranian officials have said much of the speculation linking the incident to Israel is nothing but bluster which pleased Israeli leaders, warning Tel Aviv of serious consequences if it turned out to be true.

Amouei also said 1,044 centrifuges are enriching uranium in the Fordow nuclear facility.

According to the MP, a number of lawmakers traveled to Qom province and Na-



tanz on Monday to visit the nuclear sites of Shahid Ali Mohammadi and Shahid Ahmadi Roshan to review the latest developments and measures in Iran's nuclear activities.

Lawmakers stressed the need to cooperate with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOD) to maintain and develop a country's achievements in the nuclear energy field, he added.

The spokesman noted that currently, some 1,044 centrifuges in 6 cascades of first-generation centrifuges are enriching uranium to about 4.5 percent in the Shahid Ali Mohammadi nuclear site in Fordow.

Referring to the Shahid Ahmadi Roshan nuclear facility in Natanz, Amouei stated, "We observed first, second and fourth generation centrifuges in the nuclear site that were put in the enrichment chain. In our observations of the research and development (R&D) process on the new generations of Iranian centrifuges, we also saw some cases."

In their visit to the two nuclear sites, in addition to appreciating the unflinching efforts of nuclear scientists, MPs emphasized the need for safeguarding and preserving scientific achievements and capabilities of the country in this nuclear industry, Amouei underscored.

Twitter post against Iranian FM causes headache for British envoy to Iraq

TEHRAN (FNA) — A twitter post released by British Ambassador to Baghdad Stephen Hickey against the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's remarks during his recent visit to Iraq has provoked tough reaction from the side of social media users and politicians in the Arab country.

In a twitter post earlier this week, Hickey had welcomed Zarif's comments about Iran's interest in having a powerful and stable Iraq as its neighbor, but meantime, accused Tehran of supporting militant groups which who operate beyond the Iraqi government's control.

In reaction to his remarks, the Iraqi social media users blasted Hickey for interfering in their country's internal affairs and the #British_Ambassador_Should_Shut_His_Mouth became a trend in twitter.

Also, Iraqi politicians, including Na'im al-Aboudi, a member of the parliament's al-Sadiqoun Fraction, warned the British envoy not to cross diplomatic borders.

Meantime, Spokesman of Hezbollah al-Nujaba, a major Iraqi Shiite resistance movement fighting the ISIL, Nasr al-Shammari angrily reacted to Hickey's remarks.

He asked him if Britain allows Iraq to have 20 military bases in the European state or establish an embassy with 15,000 personnel.

Al-Shammari called on Hickey to stop lies and deceitful measures, be a representative of his own country (not the U.S.) and stop meddling with issues unrelated to him and his country.

Speaking to reporters in a joint press conference after meeting his Iraqi counterpart Fo'ad Hossein in Baghdad, Zarif underlined the need for the establishment of tranquility in the region, saying that



Tehran is interested in having a powerful and peaceful Iraq along its border.

"A powerful Iraq full of peace and tranquility with constructive and good relations with all its neighbors is equal to power, tranquility, stability and peace of ourselves and we welcome Iraq's effective role in the powerful and peaceful Persian Gulf region," Zarif said.

He added that presidents of the two countries have agreed to increase their volume of trade ties to \$20bln during President Rouhani's visit to Iraq, and said, "We are not so much far from that goal and we will certainly adopt joint measures to this end."

"Iraq is one of prioritized neighbors in our economic and trade relations," Zarif said.

He also referred to the U.S. assassination of top Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani and al-Muhandis, in January, and said it was a big harm to the war on terrorism in the region and Iran and Iraq will pursue the case in cooperation with each other.

"It is highly important to us to see that the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of our neighbors does not come under aggression by foreigners," Zarif stressed.

after 13 years of intensive diplomatic talks. The U.S. is no longer the participant in the deal as it withdrew unilaterally from the agreement on May 8, 2018.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of signing Iran nuclear deal said the U.S. contempt for diplomacy threatens the security in the U.S. and the world.

Zarif in a letter to Borrell once again referred to the cases of European countries' non-compliance to the Joint Commission for settlement in accordance with Article 36 of the JCPOA.

Foreign Minister's letter warned that any interference in the ongoing cooperation between Iran and the IAEA would be contrary to the provisions of the JCPOA and could have negative impacts on the existing cooperation under the safeguards agreement, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi earlier said.

Iran: U.S. persisting in violation of UNSC Resolution 2231

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi pointed to the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council's Resolution 2231, and said the U.S. is still violating the resolution without being punished.

"Today is 5th anniversary of unanimous adoption of UNSCR 2231, which endorses #JCPOA," Takht Ravanchi wrote on his Twitter account on Monday.

"2 years ago, the U.S. ceased its own words of 'participation' in JCPOA and relinquished all rights as participant," he added.

Takht Ravanchi reiterated that the U.S. is obliged to abide by the UNSC resolutions, yet remains in violation of 2231.

Iran and the six world powers- U.S., UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany- reached a nuclear agreement, aka Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on July 14, 2015,



Outsiders seeking to sell arms in Middle East: Iran's mission in Kuwait

(Press TV) — Iran's Embassy in Kuwait has hit back at the US envoy to the Arab country over her criticism of Tehran's regional role, saying the outsiders do not care about the Middle East's stability and are only there to sell their arms.

Tehran's mission in Kuwait City highlighted the significance of maintaining security in the region, saying this can solely be ensured through cooperation among the region's countries.

"No country is more sympathetic towards regional security and stability than the region's own countries," it said in a tweet.

Drawing attention to Washington's interventionist policies in the region, the Embassy said, "Those who have come from thousands of kilometers away are here to sell weapons and make money."

The tweet came in response to recent remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski, who reportedly described Iran's role in the region as evil.

The Iranian mission further blasted Americans for assassinating Iran's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

It is in fact those who killed popular anti-terrorism military commanders in the region who are playing an evil role in the region, the tweet said. "The children of this region will never forget such evil role."

On January 3, the U.S. assassinated General Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, al-Muhandis, and a group of their companions in Baghdad. The operation was ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Both commanders enjoyed deep reverence among Muslim nations over their endeavors in eliminating the U.S.-sponsored Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

The Iranian mission in Kuwait also slammed Washington for violating UN Security Council Resolution 2231 by leaving a 2015 multilateral nuclear deal between Tehran and world states, describing the move as an instance of unilateralism and evil role in the world.

"The evil role means that for the first time in the history of the United Nations, a permanent Security Council member violates the resolution adopted by the Council and punishes the states that have complied with it," the Embassy said.

On May 8, 2018, Trump announced his decision to withdraw the country from the nuclear deal, which was endorsed by Resolution 2231.

Washington has pressuring other signatories to quit the deal and abide by the sanctions the U.S. re-imposed on Iran after leaving the agreement.

South Korea irked by Iran's call for release of frozen assets

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — South Korea's foreign ministry called in Iran's top envoy in Seoul on to lodge a protest over Tehran's reported threat to take a legal step against the Korean county over the freeze of Iran's assets under Washington's pressure.

Koh Kyung-sok, director-general in charge of African and Middle Eastern affairs, voiced regrets to Iranian Ambassador Saeed Badamchi Shabestari, as Tehran's foreign ministry spokesperson has told Iranian media that the case could be referred to the International Court of Justice unless the assets are released.

"The official in charge called in the ambassador and expressed regrets over the inappropriate remarks," Kim In-chul, the South Korean ministry's spokesperson, told a regular press briefing, Yonhap news agency reported.

Iran's assets at two Korean bank accounts -- known to be worth up to U.S. \$7 billion in total -- have been frozen since September last year when Washington's sanctions waiver for South Korea's imports of Iranian oil expired.

Due to the economic challenges caused by U.S. unilateral sanctions and the fallout of the new coronavirus, Iran has been stepping up calls for South Korea to unlock the frozen assets at the bank accounts but Seoul has refused to do so under the U.S. pressure.

Analysis of downed plane's black boxes underway in France: embassy

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

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

Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne announced on Sunday that the black boxes have arrived in France for analysis.

In a tweet, Champagne said the black boxes were expected to be taken to France's BEA air accident investigation agency on Monday.

He added that Canadian transportation officials would be present during the analysis.

The remarks came after Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Baharvand announced that Iran has sent the black boxes to France.

Baharvand said the black boxes were taken to Paris on Friday and would be deciphered on Monday.

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

"At this stage, technical investigation has not yet been completed. If it confirms the fact of unlawful interference, it will be possible to proceed to the second phase of the negotiation process and more specifically discuss the volume of compensation. It's still too early to talk about something," Yenin told Ukraine 24 TV channel in an interview published on July 6.

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

Iran, India explore avenues of rail transport co-op

1 → Referring to the country’s Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) regarding the development of rail transport in Iran, Rasouli said: “In articles 24 and 25 of the Sixth Development Plan, the Leader has emphasized the benefits of the country’s rail transport development.”



Rasouli emphasized on the comprehensive development of economic cooperation between Iran and India and said the railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran are fully prepared to cooperate with the Indian railways in the field of freight transportation in the region and international corridors.

He announced the holding of a five-way summit between Iran, India, Russia, Ukraine, and the Republic of Azerbaijan on July 28 and said: “In this five-way summit, ways to develop cooperation between the five countries in various fields of transportation will be examined.”

The Indian ambassador for his part reminded that so far, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has met with the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani four times and this shows that the leaders of the two countries are very determined to develop comprehensive relations.

“India attaches great importance to the development of its relations with Iran, and our goal is to maintain and expand our relations, especially in transport,” he said.

Chazabeh Border with Iraq to be reopened on Thursday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Chazabeh Border with Iraq will be reopened on Thursday, a local official in Iranian southwestern Khuzestan Province announced.

Governor of Dasht-e Azadegan County Hamid Sielavi said that transit of commodities will be resumed through Chazabeh Border as of July 23, after a five-month lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks on Monday, adding that after holding some meetings between the provincial and Iraqi officials and resolving problems and bilateral obligations, including the observance of health protocols, the two sides agreed to reopen the border on Thursday.

In relevant remarks on July 11, Iranian Customs Administration spokesman Rouhollah Latifi said that border closure, due to coronavirus epidemic, remained only with two neighboring countries.

“Iran is doing trade exchange with all neighboring states, except for two countries”, Latifi said at the time.



“The remaining borders will reopen with observing protective and health instructions in coordination with two neighboring states”, he added.

“Four land border crossings of Sarakhs, Bajgiran, Lotfabad and Incheborun with Turkmenistan in Northeastern Iran are still closed, but, Sarakhs and Incheborun cross-border terminals are open as they have railroad connections as well, Latifi noted.

As for the Iraqi borders, he underlined that normal trade will be resumed at Sumar border market with Iraq in a few days”, Latifi said and expressed hope that Khosravi and Chazabeh border markets with Iraq would soon reopen after agreement on enforcing health protocols.

He further noted that the Iraqi government started reopening the border points step by step to fulfill its people’s basic needs.

Earlier this month, the head of Iraq’s Border Ports Authority Omar Al-Waeli announced that Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi had ordered trade exchanges with Iran to be resumed in Mandali and Shalamchah border markets.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ICCIMA to set up business office in China

1 → Regarding the need of different companies for information from the target market and the rules governing it, Hariri said: “One of the major duties of Joint chambers have always been to provide the information needed by companies from the market of the target country; this is one of the services that will be provided by the business office.”

‘Iran has capacity to export 15m tons of steel per year’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has the capacity to export 15 million tons of steel per annum, a board member of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) told IRNA on Monday.

Saying that the country’s annual steel production has reached 30 million tons, Reza Shahrestani stated that of this figure 15 million tons can be exported and bring \$7 billion of revenue for the country.

“Iran is now among the world’s top ten steel producers and in order to prove our capabilities in this due, we should have strong presence in the international markets”, he stressed.

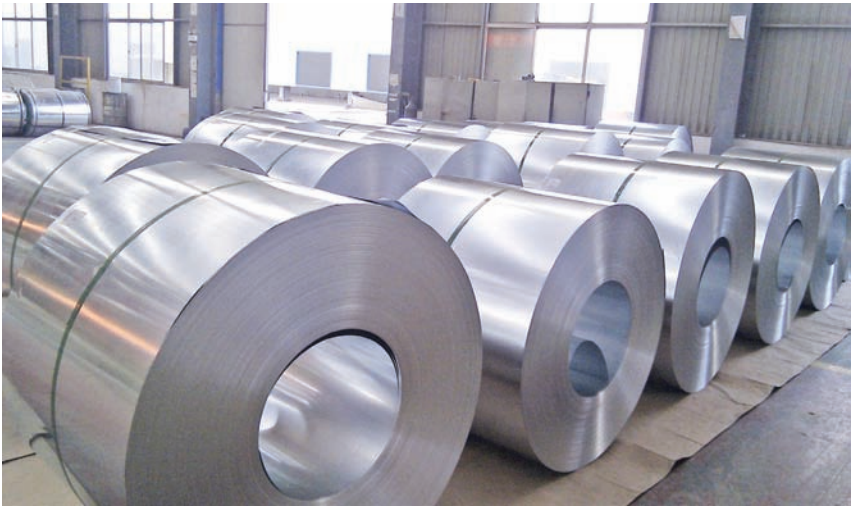
While the price of exported steel used to be \$400 per ton, the figure fell to \$350, but the price’s been recovering and has reached \$380, Shahrestani further announced.

As previously reported, Iran’s export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

The country’s major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in the previous year.

According to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, in the mentioned period over 20.226 million tons of steel ingots were produced by the country’s 10 major companies to register a five-percent rise year on year.

The mentioned companies also produced nearly 13.38 million tons of other steel products last year, six percent more than the preceding year.



In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since September 23, 2019.

Industry Ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

As Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced, Iran’s annual steel ingot production is planned to increase 3.2

million tons in the current Iranian calendar year, which began on March 20.

The country has defined 16 development projects in the steel sector to boost the output of steel products by 17.3 million tons in five years.

These projects are for constructing production units each with the capacity of 600,000 tons, while some other projects have been also defined to set up some units with under 500,000-ton capacity that together with the 600,000-ton capacity units will add 19.1 million tons to the country’s annual steel products output.

Citing the data indicated in the World Steel

Association (WSA)’s latest report, IMIDRO has announced that the production of crude steel in Iran has risen 14.1 percent in March 2020 from March 2019.

The WSA’s report, which is on steel production by 64 countries, put Iran’s steel output at over 2.8 million tons in March.

WSA has previously announced that Iran’s crude steel production climbed 30 percent in 2019 while the average global growth in this sector stood at 3.5 percent.

According to the global organization, Iran produced 31.9 million tons of crude steel in 2019, while the figure was 24 million tons in 2018.

The data and reports released by Iranian organizations also show that the country’s steel sector is still experiencing growth in output and export despite the U.S. sanctions.

In its outlook plan for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (2025-2026) Iran has envisaged production of 55 million tons of steel per annum, and to achieve this target the country requires to produce 160 million tons of iron ore concentrates.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has announced that production of iron ore concentrate in Iran reached 47.306 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

The country has extracted 64.274 million tons of iron ore during the past year, according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization.

Govt. to award 5 major highway projects to private sector

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister said the ministry is going to award the completion, construction, and implementation of five major highway projects across the country to the private sector, IRIB reported.

“To strengthen the presence of the private sector in the implementation of development projects in the country, the ministry will award the private sector some of its important highway development projects that play an important role in facilitating and reducing traffic in four important cities,” Amir-Mahmoud Ghaffari said.

According to Ghaffari, a working group comprised of Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), the Ministry of Justice, the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, and Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture

(ICCIMA), has already reviewed and approved the plans for awarding the mentioned projects.

“The call for contractors and investors for the mentioned projects will be published in the mass media soon,” the official said.

According to the deputy minister, the said projects are going to be awarded to eligible candidates under the framework of build–operate–transfer (BOT) deals, based on which a part of the required capital is granted by the government to the approved company and the rest is provided by the contractor.

Considering the significant decline of the country’s oil revenues, the Iranian government has been following new strategies for financing the country’s infrastructure projects.

Encouraging the private sector for contribution to the development projects has been one of the major policies that the government has been pursuing in this regard.



Therefore, the capable private sector has been participating in major development projects in a variety of sectors including oil and gas, electricity, petrochemicals and finally transportation.

TEDPIX may surpass 2.5m points by mid-September: expert

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — A capital market expert says that TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), is expected to climb to 2.5 million-2.7 million points by the end of Iran’s second quarter (September 21).

Referring to the new record registered by the index on Monday, Bahador Shams told IRNA that a noticeable amount of liquidity is leading to the stock market and many investors are seeking to make investment in this market. There is a high demand in the market, he

underscored.

TEDPIX hit a new record high on Monday, as it exceeded 1.9 million points.

The index gained 46,814 points to 1.911 million during the Monday trades.

It had hit the record high of 1.5 million points on June 30.

While the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) was full of success for the TSE, the market is also preserving its successful performance in the current year, and the noticeable point in this due is that the other

economic sectors are experiencing some declining trend due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We have been witnessing new record highs continuously posted by the exchange since the year start, and climbing to the peak of one million points, something almost unbelievable just some time ago, came true in early May.

In a press conference on June 22, the head of Iran’s Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the amount of liquidity absorbed by Iran’s capital market has reached 500 trillion rials (about \$12 billion) during the

first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

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

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

Iran considering establishment of free trade zone in Syria

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted a meeting on Sunday in which various aspects and prerequisites of establishing a free trade zone in Syria were discussed.

The meeting was attended by ICCIMA Deputy Head Hossein Selahvarzi, Chairman of the Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi, ICCIMA Deputy for Foreign Affairs Mohammad-Reza Karbasi, and the Economic Deputy of the secretariat of the Supreme Council of Iran’s Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones Ahmad Jamali, along with some businessmen and economic activists.

Speaking in the gathering, Jamali briefed the attendees about the measures taken so far for the establishment of the free trade zone in Syria and noted that: “One of the reasons for creating a free trade zone in Syria is that Syria is a mem-

ber of several international and regional organizations and treaties including Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Center for Investment Dispute Resolution (ICDR), World Bank (WB), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations (UN), and Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and this could also create valuable opportunities for the Iranian economy.

He also mentioned some of the opportunities and potentials in Syria, and said: “Industrial, transportation, communication and technology projects, environment, services, electricity, oil, and mining are all investment opportunities in this country.”

According to the official, Iran’s proposed zone for the establishment of the free trade zone is in Hamidiyeh Port,

which is 20 kilometers (km) far from Tartus, 240 km from Damascus, three km from Lebanon and 40 km from the Lebanese port of Tripoli.

In the meeting, some proposed models of cooperation including cooperation with Syria’s current free zones were also reviewed. In this case, the ownership and management will be with Syria, and the level of security will be higher.

In another model, namely the partnership model, Iran could participate in creating a new free zone with Syria. In a third model, Iran would establish a completely independent free zone.

Collaborating with second and third countries in establishing a free trade zone was also among the proposed models, in which case Iran can take advantage of these countries’ opportunities including transportation, export, and production.

FAO forecasts slight increase in area under wheat cultivation in Iran

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has estimated that the area under wheat cultivation in Iran will increase slightly in 2020, reliefweb.int published on Tuesday.

The planted area is estimated at about 6 million hectares, a slight increase from the 5.85 million hectares planted in the previous year, FAO said in a report.

Harvesting of the 2020 winter season wheat, the principal cereal crop, started in June and was completed in mid-July.

About onethird of the wheat fields are irrigated and the rest is rainfed, making production highly susceptible to rainfall variation. Although early season dryness prevailed in parts of the country up to December 2019, abundant rain amounts since January replenished soil moisture.

At the end of April, seasonal flooding due to



heavy rainfall affected 18 provinces, particularly in central and eastern parts of the country. Localized damages to crops (especially wheat, garlic and orchards) and significant damages to agricultural infrastructure were reported in Kerman, Khorasan, Qom, Khorasan Razavi, Yazd, Urmia and Golestan provinces. Floods damaged also about 10,000 km of roads. At the end of May, more flooding affected central

and northern provinces.

Although desert locust is a common pest in the country, breeding conditions in 2020 were particularly favorable due to abundant rains in the country. Seven provinces (Sistan-Baluchistan, Hormozgan, Bushehr, Fars, Khuzestan, Kerman and South Khorasan) in the southern part of the country, stretching from eastern Islamic Republic of Iran on the border with Pakistan to the southwestern border with Iraq, were affected. As of June 2020, seasonal infestations were declining due to control operations and migration to IndoPakistan summer breeding areas. More than 400,000 hectares were treated since January 2020, with almost onethird of the treatment carried out in May 2020.

The national authorities forecast the 2020 cereal harvest at a closetoaverage level 21.5 million tons, about the same as in the previous year. The wheat harvest is forecast at

an average level of 14 million tons, about 3 percent below the 2019 level.

In March 2020, the Government announced its plans to purchase nearly 75 percent of the domestic wheat production with the aim to eliminate the reliance on imports for domestic consumption. In 2019, the Government intended to locally purchase about 10 million tons of wheat, but only 8.8 million tons materialized.

The Government granted permission for the import of 3 million tons of wheat in January 2020. By March 2020, about 2 million tons were unloaded at the ports. The remaining 1 million tons was supposed to be imported by May 2020, before the domestic harvest.

Responding to the price increases of rice following Ramadan and the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, the custom duties on rice imports decreased from 25 to 10 percent on 4 June 2020.

'No blackouts expected for summer peak period'

ENERGY

TEHRAN — Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry, Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said on Tuesday that the country's power network is in a stable condition and no power outage is expected to occur during the summer peak period.

Mentioning the implementation of a program called "Zero 99" (a plan aiming for zero power outages in the summer of the current Iranian calendar year 1399), Rajabi Mashhadi said: "This program means passing the summer peak consumption period without blackouts."

According to the official, construction of 2,000 megawatts of new power plants, upgrading the production capacity of existing power plants, carrying out power plant overhauls and entering power plants with full capacity into the power grid and construction of transmission networks have been among the activities carried out in Zero 99 program.

He also referred to the implementation of incentive schemes for industries, farmers and the households and



commercial sector, and added: "The positive results of these programs are clear this year since despite the high

electricity consumption in the country, consumption growth has not yet reached one percent."

The official further noted that there have been no preplanned power outages so far, saying "Some occasional blackouts that we sometimes see are due to very high consumption, which may cause an accident in the network, which, of course, we will eliminate in the shortest possible time."

Last week, Iran's Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution Management Company, known as TAVANIR announced that the daily electricity consumption in the country reached 58,104 megawatts (58.1 gigawatts), registering the highest power consumption recorded in the history of Iran's electricity industry.

Meanwhile, Rajabi Mashhadi had said that 14 provinces were in the red zone for high electricity consumption and TAVANIR might be forced to cut some over-consumers from the grid.

"If consumers cooperate [and manage their consumption], we will get through the summer without any blackouts, otherwise we will have to impose some restrictions," Mashhadi told ILNA on July 18.

Zanganeh: 9 oil contracts to be signed with domestic companies

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said: "Soon, nine contracts for the maintenance and enhancement of oil production (EPC/EPD) will be signed with Iranian companies and the Oil Research and Technology Fund will be activated."

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony to sign a contract for completing the development of South Azadegan Oilfield on Monday, Zanganeh said the production capacity of petrochemical products and the Persian Gulf Star refinery would increase as well.

He said 25 million tons would be added to the country's petrochemical production capacity this year, adding this would be marked as the largest output growth in the history of Iran's petrochemical industry.

He said the second petrochemical leap of the country would reach fruition almost by 2021 and the sector's output would cross 100 million tons per year (mt/y) from currently 66 (mt/y).

The official further said that nine EPC/EPD contracts would be signed with local firms in the near future, adding the Oil Research and Technology Fund would also be activated.

He also touched on the Azadegan contract, saying the project would bring the joint field's productivity to 320,000 bpd from currently 140,000 bpd.

Moreover, 200 million cubic feet (mcf) of natural gas would be produced in the project which would be used to feed the NGL 3,200 plant.

"Our priority is the development of joint fields, the most prominent of which are the fields in West Karun region and the South Pars gas field," he said.

Long-term China deal

Asked about the long-term agreement between Iran and China, Zanganeh said: "The discussion is on a general agreement and I can say with confidence that in the field of oil, neither the Chinese have asked us for a concession nor are we giving a concession. The subject is long-term cooperation in various fields, including field development, refining, petrochemicals, etc. We are ready for any other country except the Zionist regime that wants to have such cooperation with Iran. Even American companies are not barred from working as contractors or investors in our projects.... This [the Iran-China deal] will be a friendly and bilateral cooperation. Our current relationship with the Chinese is also good and without any tension."

Regarding the role that international companies can play in the development of Iran's oil industry, Zanganeh said: "Cooperation with foreign companies is not only important for raising capital; What we are looking for is mainly the absorption of technology to increase the recovery rate of reservoirs, and that interdependence can help expand our market presence, but it is not the case that if they do not work with us, we will die. During these years, we have shown that we carry out our work decisively and do not fall short."

Azadegan field is the largest joint oil field in Iran with 33 billion barrels of oil-in-place. Most of the oil reserves in the field, i.e. 27 billion barrels, are located in South Azadegan.

It is worth mentioning that the West Karun Exploitation and Desalination Unit and the Skid Mounted Processing Unit are the current plants for Azadegan oil refining. A central treatment export plant (CTEP) is being built to add to the field's processing capacity.



The total value of the contracts signed today between PEDEC and Petropars is \$1,261 million and IRR 11,830 billion.

The contracts will complete development of the joint field with 206 wells and 320,000 barrels/day of crude oil as well as 200 million cubic feet of gas per day.

The development of the South Azadegan joint field, which is located in the West Karun region, near the Iraqi border and about 80 km west of Ahvaz, began in 2014 when the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed a deal with a Chinese company. However after foot-dragging and failure of the Chinese firm to complete the project, NIOC expelled the company.

So far over 171 wells had been spudded in the field besides construction of 2 separators, 257 km of flow pipelines, 90 km of transmission pipelines and 23 km of communication pipelines.

ROI rate of Ilam polypropylene park over 30 percent

TEHRAN (Shana) — The CEO of Iranian Investment Petrochemical Group (Petrol) described construction of Ilam Polypropylene Park as economical, and said: "The rate of return on investment of this project is more than 30 percent."

Rasoul Ashrafzadeh stated on Monday, July 20, that development of value chain completion was one of the main policies of Petrol.

He said low volume of investment, sustainable employment, prevention of raw materials sales with the development of downstream industries, prevention of currency outflow from the country, employment of local specialists and development of the region were the goals of Ilam Polypropylene Park development.

Ashrafzadeh added that 6 zones had been considered in Ilam Polypropylene Park, noting: "94 different units can be built in the park for production of items like pipes, injection molds, films and sheets, pneumatic molds, protective coatings, fibers and other products."



The CEO of Petrol stated that the area required for the construction of the polypropylene park was 30 hectares.

The total capacity of this park will be 35,000 tons, which will create direct employment for 4,830 people and indirect employment of 9,000 people.

Ashrafzadeh further said that the volume of investment necessary for construction of Ilam Polypropylene Park would be IRR 12,000 billion by the private sector.

Petrol will have 20 percent stakes in the project, he added.

10 percent enhanced recovery rate in Azadegan oilfield possible: scholar

TEHRAN (Shana) — The head of the Petroleum Engineering Institute of the University of Tehran said: "Studies of the institute on Azadegan field have yielded valuable results, based on which it is possible to increase the recovery rate of this joint field by 10 percent."

Addressing a ceremony to sign a contract for completing the development of South Azadegan Oilfield on Monday, Mohammad Hassan Panjehshahi said: "One of the great things that was done during the reform period was investment in the country's top universities to strengthen upstream oil fields."

Panjehshahi said that the institute had carried out several actions in the past four years with the cooperation of its French partner, based on which the priority of injection in different reservoirs of Azadegan had been determined and the ability to increase the oil recovery coefficient by 10 percent had been concluded. "With this increase in recovery rate, the current recovery



rate, which is about 5 percent, will reach 15 percent."

He added that the cooperation of the Petroleum Institute with its French partner had continued under the sanctions, adding: "Increasing productivity by reducing drilling of low-efficiency wells, optimizing the location of wells, creating an integrated field database, proving a hydraulic relationship with Yaran field and technology transfer are other achievements of technological studies on Azadegan."

Persian Gulf oil producers to amass \$490 billion debt by 2023

Following to the oil price crash and the coronavirus crisis, the Persian Gulf Arab countries are set to accumulate as much as US\$490 billion in combined government deficits between 2020 and 2023, S&P Global Ratings said on Monday.

The six countries of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—include OPEC's largest producers Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait. Those countries have been hit by the double whammy of low oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic this year, which has strained their fiscal positions and reduced government buffers in their sovereign wealth funds.

The price crash and the reduced demand for oil in the pandemic have already forced the world's top oil exporter, Saudi Arabia, to triple its value-added tax (VAT) and suspend cost-of-living allowances as part of a new round of painful austerity measures to save the Kingdom's finances.

Last week, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said



that the price plunge and the production cuts would hit oil exporters in the West Asia and North Africa (MENA) hard, with the combined oil income for those countries

expected to plummet by US\$270 billion this year compared to 2019.

The sharp decline in oil prices earlier this year adds further headwinds to the economies of the West Asian oil producers, on top of shrinking economies due to the lockdowns to contain the pandemic, the IMF said in its latest update on the region.

The economies in the Persian Gulf alone are set to experience a combined contraction of 7.6 percent this year because of the oil price crash, a senior IMF official forecast at the end of June.

This is a sharp downward revision from an earlier forecast by the international lender, which saw the Persian Gulf economies experiencing negative growth of 2.7 percent.

"The oil sector will shrink sharply by around 7.0 percent and it will be accompanied by a drop in the non-oil sector also," Jihad Azour, director of the West and Central Asia department of the International Monetary Fund, said at a recent webinar.

What's next for oil and gas?

By Deborah Byers

Oil demand has been decimated by Covid-19, bottoming in April at 76 million barrels per day, down 25 percent from 102 million barrels per day in December 2019. As economies reopen and mobility increases, the shape of oil demand recovery remains uncertain. In many ways, the coronavirus pandemic has accentuated the challenges and transformation that the oil and gas industry was undergoing, which has allowed the industry to respond much faster.

Most oil and gas companies dusted off their 2014 playbook and have pulled fairly traditional levers from past commodity cycles for short-term survival, such as managing liquidity, reducing costs and scaling back operations. But this downturn is unlike past cycles because the price pressure will remain due to a longer-term trend toward decarbonization.

As companies move from survival mode to longer-term reinvention, a new playbook will be needed. Oil and gas executives need to take stock of the competencies that will define success post-energy transition, figure out the gaps and fill them. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and the industry will not respond in unison. Companies will go down different paths and the strategies that succeed will shape the future of the industry. The reshaping of the industry will occur over three phases: now, next and beyond.

The "now" phase is the immediate response to the crisis, and companies are either at or near the end of that phase. Oil and gas companies have had to simultaneously adjust to the operational challenges of doing essential business and the financial challenges of reduced revenue and cash flow. The market has stabilized as demand has gradually rebounded and producers have curtailed output, but there have been, and will be, casualties. Oil and gas oversupply and depressed prices have spurred bankruptcies and impairments, primarily in the U.S. upstream sector. More than 20 oil and gas companies in the US have already filed for bankruptcy in 2020.

Oil and gas bankruptcy sales

It may be tempting to dismiss this new wave of bankruptcies as just another chapter from the oil and gas playbook, but this round feels different. While there will be the predictable restructuring and shuffling of owners and management teams, many may simply cease to operate. Depressed prices and lack of access to capital for North America upstream and oilfield services companies will motivate more bankruptcies, asset sales and consolidation. Buyers will be looking carefully at the commodity markets, and a reduction in volatility could clarify valuations and drive deal volumes. Moving forward, investors are going to require a higher return. Producers will have to exercise capital discipline and focus on financial returns rather than volume growth.

Next: strengthen core and refresh strategy

Until a supply-demand balance is found, profitability will be challenged generally, and there may be periods of oversupply (and depressed prices) as producers with idle resources test the market. Moving from survival mode to the "next" phase, companies will need to refresh their strategy and strengthen their core. To do this, they will need to plan and support an operational reboot that focuses on technology and new ways of working. This time, the focus has to be on both cost efficiency and operational efficiency gain to produce more with less. It's becoming much more likely that getting fit for "\$40" may be the new motto.

In previous downturns, the focus has been on capital efficiency, capital preservation and cost reduction. It might be tempting to think that everything that can be done to bring costs down, improve productivity and create financial flexibility has been done. However, there is still significant potential for digitalization to improve efficiency up and down the oil and gas value chain.

Advances in digital hardware and software have made it possible for upstream operators to integrate the planning of various stages in the exploration and production process. Even though significant innovations have already been implemented, there are considerable opportunities to improve coordination by enabling systems to talk to each other, sharing a single version of the vast amounts of data that are collected in a drilling process. Mistakes are reduced, safety is improved, time is saved, and oil becomes cheaper to produce and deliver to consumers.

In the downstream subsector, the untapped potential for digitalization is immense. Other than the spread between crude oil and product prices (which can't be controlled), the most important factor in refinery profitability is unplanned downtime. A refinery that isn't running isn't making money. Remote monitoring, artificial intelligence and predictive maintenance can help get ahead of problems that can shut down a refinery, and they have the potential to be big moneymakers. Refining takes a lot of energy, and digitalization can optimize the use of heat and bring that cost down. The industry was headed this way, but now, with Covid-19 and the demand crunch, remote work and touchless access have twice the advantage.

Outside of digitalization, there are three other strategies that oil and gas companies can pursue to make the best of the present and secure their future. The first is to lock down revenue streams by vertically integrating and becoming their own customer. Big oil got into the refining business to create a market for crude oil, and there are opportunities all along the value chain. The second is cash conservation, which is more urgent than ever. An obvious answer is converting fixed costs into variable costs through shared services or outsourcing. A third strategy is to reduce capital investment without necessarily shrinking the business. A lighter, more agile balance sheet will yield higher returns. Leveraging incumbent know-how and logistical expertise to provide energy to an ever-changing global customer is one pathway to explore. Digitalization and consumer data analytics can be a big help here, enabling companies to monetize other companies' assets by coordinating their utilization and bringing the right product to market at precisely the right time. Energy as a service, similar to the evolution of software companies' business model, may finally have arrived as a potential new paradigm for some companies.

Beyond: embrace the energy transition

The "beyond" phase centers around how oil and gas adapts to the new energy world. The driving forces are the disruption of the economy by Covid-19 and the movement toward decarbonization. Both forces push in favor of lower oil and gas demand, and the oil and gas industry will have to respond.

Furthermore, governments across the world may feel the urge to stimulate the economy with infrastructure projects, which could involve renewable energy and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. There's a precedent for that. The U.S. 2009 stimulus package was leveraged into more than \$100 billion in investment in renewable power. If that happens today, the movement toward decarbonization will be accelerated.

Agility and adaptation are the essence of success. Many of the competencies that oil and gas companies cultivate should be applicable to new products in new business models. The energy transition will be the most massive capital reallocation in the history of mankind. It will be difficult to pull it off without using the balance sheet strength of today's oil companies.

Disruption is never easy to navigate, but it always creates opportunities. The energy transition was coming anyway, and, by the time energy demand recovers from Covid-19, it may be here.

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Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output

TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) -- Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone conversation with the Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak on Thu. with regards to the cooperation of the two countries within the framework of OPEC Plus.

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Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output

TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) -- Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone

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China-Iran partnership will defy U.S. hegemony: SWU professor

‘The Iran-China 25-year agreement constructs a reciprocal strategic partnership between the two countries’

➡ Mainstream media in the West especially in the U.S. have ample reasons to vilify Iran-China relations from their vested interests as they are tightly in the grip of the aggressive and warmongering neocon military-industrial complex and pro-Israeli Jewish lobbies.”

The text of the interview with Li is as follows:

■ Iran and China have drafted an economic and security partnership that would allow for billions of dollars in Chinese investments in energy and other sectors in Iran. What is your thought on the agreement?

A: I think this agreement is very significant and beneficial to both China and Iran. It marks a new phase in constructing a reciprocal strategic partnership between the two countries that is more wide-ranging and deep-going than the existing relationship of cooperation between China and Iran. The agreement features more extensive and robust cooperation on energy, infrastructure, telecommunication, finance, and security, all belonging in the areas of vital national interests of both countries. China promises to invest up to U.S. \$400 billion in the next 25 years in the aforementioned sectors in exchange for a stable and steady Iranian oil supply at a favorable price. In light of this, the new partnership can also be considered as an upgraded and more comprehensive version of cooperative relationship between the two nations.

It is a win-win package for the two sides and realistically the best deal Iran could expect to get from overseas under the draconian sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the West in general. If both China and Iran faithfully adhere to the agreement and carry out their promised obligations in earnest, the new partnership agreement, with its enormous economic and other benefits, will help advance the core national interests of the two countries mutually and consolidate their respective strategic positions on the global stage effectively.

■ The 25-year agreement would challenge the Trump administration's policy of maximum pressure campaign. In other words, Trump came into office wanting to weaken and isolate China and Iran, but it is the U.S. which is being mainly weakened and isolated. What is your thought?

A: The 25-year agreement, once carried out successfully with good faith and consistency, will definitely help Iran and China strengthen their respective capacities and enhance their resilience against U.S. policy of pressure and containment, and greatly enable Iran to better stand up against the actions of the Trump administration to intimidate, interfere, and undermine Iran's national sovereignty and security and ease the gravely deleterious and pernicious effects brought by the U.S. sanctions on Iran's economy and the wellbeing of the Iranian people.

Trump intends to weaken and isolate China mainly because he and his followers have come to perceive China factually as the foremost surging strategic challenger and adversary to the U.S. hegemony in the world; while his perception of and actions against Iran have predominantly been shaped by the hardcore pro-Israeli stance of Trump, his close aids inside the higher echelons of U.S. political circles, and his largely evangelical supporters in U.S. society over whom the Jewish lobbies hold a huge political clout and sway. Such hardline and irrational stance on the part of Trump and his cohorts and the resultant policy-making will certainly and grievously harm the national interests of the U.S. both economically and morally.

■ How do you assess the mutual interests of the agreement?

A: This agreement is a decisive and gigantic step forward for the two countries of China and Iran, which is about to usher in a new height and maturity of bilateral cooperation, bringing tremendous benefits to the two sides. The agreement stipulates closer cooperation in energy, infrastructure, economy and national security and entails about U.S. \$400 billion (RMB2.8 trillion) amount of Chinese investment to Iran in about 100 projects including port, railway, and airport construction, telecommunication networks, banking, and energy supply. The two countries are also poised to deepen their cooperation in the defense sector, such as conducting more joint military training and maneuvers, jointly developing weaponries, and sharing military intelligence and information. The agreement is based on the principles of mutual national interests, fairness, and reciprocity, and will help bolster and advance the strategic national interests of both countries.

It is reported that some scholars or specialists as well as former political leaders in Iran alleged that the deal is tantamount to putting Iran on sale to China as the Iranian oil export to China under the agreement is



Given significant geographic location of Iran that makes it a nexus in the corridor of China's BRI grand scheme, Iran is for China an irreplaceable partner that must be won over to its side

supposed to be cheaper than normal. But as a former senior Iranian diplomat has aptly observed, oil export amounts to the “lifeline” for Iran's economy and under the current circumstances, due to the stringent sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the West, all the paths were obstructed except the path to China. Therefore, at least until the lift of the sanctions, this agreement with China can be reasonably regarded as the optimal choice for Iran.

That said, it is also undeniable that judging from the actual contents of commitment by China and Iran, they do seem to be more or less lopsided and unbalanced in that while China will invest and assist Iran in multiple fields of modern industries, what the Iranian side offers seems glaringly monotonous, that is, only the oil export. Admittedly China leads Iran on economic and industrial development, but such contrast and comparison of mutual participations as reflected in the agreement still seem too one-sided to be genuinely salutary or wholesome to Iran. Here are two advices from your humble interviewee to offset or alleviate the imbalance through diversifying and enriching Iran's field in its cooperation with China and enlisting China's expertise to help Iran develop its own industrial and technological strengths in a long run:

First, Iran shall be encouraged to export goods besides oil to China and to invest and set up enterprises or joint ventures in China to produce and sell goods in areas of Iran's advantage or specialty such as light industries including textiles, utensils, ornaments,

energy resources, and other factors of national strength. Iran has also long been a main oil exporter to China; second, Iran is located in the far west wing of China and is considered as in a gatekeeping position to China in a geopolitical and geostrategic sense, whose stability and wellbeing are deemed to be of great significance in safeguarding the strategic security and stability of West China; third, Iran is antagonized to the U.S. and friendly to both China and Russia while the latter two, especially China, is being increasingly viewed as the foremost adversary and challenger by the U.S. in recent years, which means Iran and China face a common foe and have natural and common geopolitical interest in forming a close alliance to counter the U.S. and this fact gives Iran ever more important status in China's foreign policy.

Given significant geographic location of Iran that makes it a nexus in the corridor of China's BRI grand scheme, Iran is for China an irreplaceable partner that must be won over to its side. Iran is expected to play a role as a major trading partner, cooperator, and recipient of China's surplus industrial capacity and technological transfers.

■ Western mainstream media have launched a propaganda campaign to undermine the strategic Iran-China relations. What is your take on it?

A: I think such propaganda campaign from the mainstream Western media that are extremely inimical to and feverishly demonize the strategic Iran-China partnership is all too predictable and hardly

in a spirit of mutual benefits and common defense against the Western interference and antagonism. Iran should also astutely discern and exploit the fragmented and factionalized domestic situation of the U.S. and other Western countries today, which are unique to the decayed and chaotic post-modern Western societies, to its own advantage by vigorously carrying out its own PR and propaganda campaign on the U.S. and other Western countries.

The power and influence of Jewish diaspora in the U.S. has reached their apogee at present, which is the primary factor driving and fueling the hostile and hateful U.S. policy in the last several decades to isolate and strangle Iran. It is observed that the Jewish power in the U.S. are behind many complex and severe problems in U.S. society today, such as radicalized and institutionalized leftism and anti-traditionalism, which has led to increasing polarization of U.S. society, dispossession of White people, and anti-White censorship and persecution, as exemplified by the latest BLM and Antifa riots that will inevitably create strong backlashes from the White majority in a long run. Iran should wisely leverage such widening schism and instability in the U.S. to its own advantage by supporting and coopting forces and their intellectual outposts opposing the Zionist neocon interventionism, such as Institute for Historical Review (IHR), Barnes Review, Counter-Currents and all healthy and friendly White nationalist voices under the banners of non-interventionism, traditionalism, and Pan-Aryanism and stressing and conveying the goodwill and innocence of Shia Islam vis-à-vis the terrorism-exporting Sunni sect of anti-Iranian Saudi Arabia in order to drive a wedge in the U.S. society and sway U.S. public opinion to sympathize with Iran as much as possible. In summary, besides forming closer economic ties with China to cushion against and offset the U.S. economic stranglehold, Iran also needs to make more self-initiated efforts on such fields as PR and intelligence and vigorously strive to promote a favorable image and understanding of Iran in the factions of U.S. society that are distrustful and wary of the official U.S. Iran policy.

■ Experts believe that deepening China-Iran ties will challenge U.S. hegemony. What do you think?

A: This is arguably a factual statement. China is the second largest national economy in the world and possesses vaulting ambitions and goals commensurate with its economic power. Iran is a major regional power in the West Asia with vast potentials in consideration of its large geographic expanse, huge natural resources, and a young and vibrant population. Both countries are now held in deep suspicion and animosity by the U.S. Thus, if a deepening China-Iran relation is alleged to challenge U.S. hegemony, so be it. The point is that both China and Iran have their natural and legitimate rights to develop themselves as sovereign nation and the U.S. global hegemony is unjust and abusive in many aspects, especially in West Asia in that the U.S. has chosen to needlessly and willfully antagonize itself with Iran for many decades from its own hubris, ignorance, and prejudice and based on spurious and specious claims about Iran's non-existent “menace” to the US while it kept groveling to and shoring up Israel to be the arrogant, unconscionable, and swashbuckling regional hegemon and siding with the devious, corrupt, and terrorism-exporting Saudi Arabia to unjustly isolate, revile and contain Iran and trample on Iran's legitimate rights for self-defense and self-development.

Like all other nations, Iran has every right to defend itself, build on its national strength, maintain its national security, and strive for its people's welfare for all the mounting pressure and sanctions from the U.S. If that means Iran chooses to gravitate further toward China and ally itself with the latter based on shared national interests in order to find a way out and free itself from the straitjacket imposed by U.S., who on earth is there to make irresponsible speculations or carping comments? After all, were U.S. hegemony a bit more benign, or had the U.S. not pressed so hard and viciously against Iran, Iran would certainly respond with sincere and conciliatory messages. The crux remains if the U.S. would move to change its irrationally and unreasonably hostile and antagonistic stance toward Iran, which, unfortunately, seems highly unlikely at present (hence Iran's cooperation with China), though working toward that state of sanity in a long run is worth trying by both Iran and enlightened element in the U.S. (hence the advice to Iran to cooperate with and assist the anti-anti-Iran forces in America despite its being a herculean task and requires a lot of hard, patient, and skilled work).

China-Iran relations will have a broad and bright future

➡ The Azadi Tower, a landmark monument in Tehran's Iranian capital, was lit up on the night of February 18, 2020, as part of a ceremony showing support for China.

Iran's assistance was reciprocated by China soon after Iran saw the outbreak of the COVID-19 in late February. China sent a group of medical experts to Iran on February 27, the first such delegation that China has dispatched since the outbreak of the pandemic sharing experience and expertise. China had also aided Iran with medical materials and facilities even when China was in shortage itself.

The future will see huge potential for cooperation between the two in their respective visions to promote their regional and international standings. China could be a major if the not most important partner in Iran's efforts to materialize its legitimate interests in JCPOA and build its role as a major regional power to maintain peace and stability in the region. Iran could be a major partner for China is pushing forward the BRI in the region across West Asia, Central Asia, and South Caucasus.

However, despite all these solid foundations of cooperation, the challenges in China-Iran relations are also numerous. On China's side, the challenges will mainly lie in how to overcome the technical problems as a result of U.S. sanctions, for instance, how to create channels to bring more and more investments from Chinese medium and small-sized enterprises.

But the toughest challenges actually come from the Iranian side. Iran's misperceptions about China are numerous, the most serious of which should be some Iranians' misperception of China as an old colonial power.

Iran had seen very bitter engagements with major international powers in the last two centuries. In the nineteenth century, Iran had fallen to be the sphere of influence of Tsarist Russia and Britain, and the most important policies of Iran were decided in the embassies of the two countries in Tehran. In 1953, Iran's nationalist government was toppled down by the CIA. In the post-revolutionary era, Iran had been economically sanctioned, politically isolated, and militarily threatened by the U.S. This kind of special history has deeply affected the mentalities of Iranians for generations. Even today, Iranians are still very alert about the intentions of outside powers.

China shares very similar history with Iran during its engagement with the West in the last two centuries, as China had also been humiliated by western powers in the same period of time, and had been sanctioned, isolated and threatened by the West, particularly by the U.S. in different periods of time since 1949. This kind of experience has also affected China's thinking and behavior regarding sovereignty issues deeply.

But besides the victim's mentality, history has served as a reminder for China not to do what it does not like to others, namely respecting other countries' sovereignty. Therefore, China has never interfered with the domestic affairs of other countries, has established non-interference as the principle of its foreign policy, and strongly opposed interference by other major powers.

Unfortunately, despite sharing with a similar history, China is also often mistaken as having the same kind of invasive and aggressive policy as colonial powers did. When talking about strategic cooperation, some Iranians are concerned that China might want to have military bases in Iran though China has never had a military confrontation with Iran in history, and has never had military bases abroad. When discussing economic cooperation, some Iranians are concerned that China might dominate Iran's economy with the growing cooperation between the two. But China is, maybe the only country that has clearly defined win-win policy in trade relations, and has clearly expressed that it never seeks unilateral gains.

In addition to the above-mentioned misperceptions about China, there is another detrimental factor in China-Iran relations, which is the politicization of China-Iran relations. The last decade has seen China has become Iran's largest business partner, which has served the interests of both Iran and China. But unfortunately, the development of China-Iran economic relations has also been raised by some Iranian politicians to challenge Iran's incumbent government's political standings, which has already become an obstacle in China-Iran relations. For stance, some politicians would always raise the question of whether the incumbent government sacrificed Iran's interests in cooperation with China though China has been under serious pressure and sacrificed a lot in cooperation with Iran. For instance, one of the reasons behind U.S. sanctions on Huawei is just because of its business with Iran.

All in all, China-Iran relations will be of broad and bright future, and relations between the two are well-founded as the two have no historical burdens and will be least likely disrupted by historical issues.

However, challenges out of some Iranians' misperceptions about China and the potential politicization of China-Iran relations could be real serious obstacles in the relations between two. How China-Iran relations will evolve will largely depend on how Iranian elites manage these kinds of challenges. Iranian scholars on China studies have frequently traveled to China, and they have profound knowledge and personal experience in engaging with China. They could take great responsibility in promoting understandings about China among Iranian audiences.



China-Iran relations will be of broad and bright future, and relations between the two are well-founded as the two have no historical burdens and will be least likely disrupted by historical issues.

Armenian cemeteries in southwestern Iran added to National Heritage list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Seventeen Armenian cemeteries in different villages in southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province have been inscribed on the National Heritage list, a provincial tourism chief has said.



The cemeteries belong to Armenians, who migrated to Isfahan and later to Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari during the Ottoman–Safavid War (1603–18), IRNA quoted Vahed Julaei as saying on Monday. Armenians who settled in this province, begun to develop the gardens and vineyards, which existed for hundred years before their arrival, the official added.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari has various unique traditions and rituals relative to the ‘tribal’ lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

The province is also a hub for making wool felt products, majorly of which exported abroad. It is home to some 500 crafters, in over 250 workshops, making handmade felt products.

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

By Pashmina Binwani

(Part 6/8)

Shiraz, the name sounds mysterious. The city is famous for its poets and treasure love of everything Persian. After days of meeting people and visiting mosques, the Nasir-al-Mulk mosque also known as Pink mosque blew me away by its architecture, lovely play of light and color and intricate mosaic work. It was nice to come in early, sit and listen to the silence in the morning.

It also got me thinking about how underrated Persian architecture is. In a world where western architecture is celebrated and modernized buildings are idolized, little has been said or celebrated about the architectural wonders during the Qajar dynasty. An important period where Persian architecture took off and the continuation of these elements was seen in its streets, bridge, bathhouse, and schools. Appreciating the architecture and traditional elements are one of the best things to do in Shiraz.



■ Visiting Iran’s little Amsterdam, Ghalat

Over here Iranians break free from the strict religious rules and indulge some carefree activities in Ghalat (ironically, in Hindi Ghalat means ‘wrong’). I, on the other hand, decided to explore the place and found some abandoned houses, a church and met cool people who had a lot to say about Iran and other prohibited substances. We hiked, explored ruins, and watched the Autumn leaves change color.

■ Losing myself in the era of the great Persian Empire, Persepolis

If there is one more reason to visit Shiraz, it is to see Persepolis and understand how this place existed some 2,500 years ago during the Achaemenid Empire. It was built on an immense half-artificial and half-natural terrace, where the king of kings created an impressive palace complex inspired by Mesopotamian models. Walking around the ruins is like traveling back in time, through the rich history of the ancient Persian empire. The statues and wall carvings are very well preserved and as stunning as a ruin can be.

■ Isfahan

The city that was once called ‘Isfahan Nesf-e Jahan’ which means ‘Isfahan is half the world’. It was one of the largest cities in the world and had been given the honor to be the capital of Iran twice. But here’s the place where you can find all the finest craftsmanship, cultural, arts, and education in one place.

It was known to be “the place” to get fine art pieces from around the world. Merchants from India, Georgia, and the Ottoman lands chose to build huge palaces with exquisite gardens in Isfahan both for its entrepreneurial opportunities, and its position at the strategic center of caravan trade in silk and silver.

It was also the place where I met a lot of people from Poland, China, Australia, France, and Switzerland. All on their adventures curious to see what role did the beauty of Iran play in itself.

■ All the picturesque shrines you’ll see

One of the most interesting and beautiful things to see in Kashan was the shrine of Hilal Ibn Ali, who was the son of Imam Ali (AS) and also the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The mausoleum building in itself has different entrances for men and women. As a female, I got to wear the chador (an outer garment and open cloak worn by women in Iran).

I found the architecture spellbindingly beautiful. The entrances were mirror-tiled and inside it was heavily decorated with mirror-tiled ceilings, stained glass windows, and chandeliers.

Hemmed on each side by the Islamic architectural gems such as blue-tiled minarets, arched arcades, domes and halls, and chambers, the mausoleum embraces intricate tilework, plasterwork, woodwork, which occupy the spaces on the interior and exterior sides.

Iran seeking to attract millions of Chinese travelers, ex-envoy says

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Tehran’s ex-ambassador to Beijing has said Iran is seeking to become a tourist destination for millions of potential travelers from China as the two countries are working on a 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan that includes boosting relations in the field of tourism.

Speaking in the TV program, Mehdi Safari said that the plan covers a wide range of issues such as energy, industry and mining, tourism, health, environment, security, and defense, Mehr reported on Monday.

Pointing to the fact that some 200 million Chinese tourists visit different countries annually, he said “according to this agreement Iran will become one of the tourist destinations for Chinese travelers so that Iran can attract one to two million Chinese tourists to the country.”

“This will create a transformation in Iran’s tourism industry and will create



Chinese travelers pose for a photo while standing at the courtyard of Chehel Sotoun, a 17th-century palace in Isfahan, central Iran.

jobs and a large market for the handicrafts industry of the country,” he added.

Last year, the Islamic Republic waived the visa requirement for Chinese nationals willing to visit the country. The decision was made to attract more foreign tourists to the country; however, it was a unilateral measure, because Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20). The country expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

‘Customized tourism’ essential in coronavirus era, expert says

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The promotion of “customized tourism” is essential as the coronavirus pandemic has nearly shut down the travel sector, Iranian professor Mohammad-Taqi Toghræi said on Monday.

Speaking to IRNA, Toghræi, who a faculty member of Isfahan University of Art, explained: “Custom or ‘customized’ tourism is a new model in the tourism industry [that works] based on the needs, demands, and wishes of a tourist, in which the tourist raises all the issues first and then an appropriate destination meeting all healthcare conditions will be offered.”

“In this case, tourists put all their orders for tourism, such as weather conditions, accommodation, and reception, electronically and virtually.... In this type of tourism, the number of tourists is decreased, but revenues will increase.”

Referring to social distancing and hygiene regulations which are prerequisites in the fight against the virus, the noted, “Custom tourism also causes the better

distribution of tourists in different tourism target areas and with the better observance of health instructions and social distance.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Toghræi explained: “According to the available evidence and information, coronavirus disease will be remaining for (relatively) a long time and will not disappear soon.... Considering the existing conditions, it is necessary that business methods be changed accordingly and reorganize with the new changes and constraints.”

Back in May, Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health announced new guidelines and instructions to ramp up the safety of travels in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has plunged the travel and tourism industry and economy in the global scene over that past couple of months as passenger traffic on airlines and hotel occupancy rates have fallen off a cliff compared to the same periods



previous years.

Some experts, however, expect the Islamic Republic to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Another mapping survey starts in archaeologically-rich Marvdasht plain

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The third archaeological season for demarcation, mapping, and documentation of Marvdasht plain has commenced in the archaeologically-rich area, which once the seat of power for the Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC) in southern Iran.

“Drawing a comprehensive archeological map of Parseh region and Marvdasht plain is one of the important projects that has been followed by the archeology group of [the UNESCO-registered] Persepolis over the past couple of years with the close co-operation of the provincial department,” CHTN quoted Hamid Fadaei, director of the World Heritage site, as saying on Monday.

The survey, supervised by Iranian archaeologist Vahid Barani, will also demarcate the third boundary layer over the UNESCO-tagged Persepolis and Marvdasht plain, Fadaei noted.

Chronology of ancient settlements, and amassing data on so-far unearthed relics (potteries, stone tools,...) are amongst other missions of the survey aimed to develop a data bank of the World Heritage, the official explained.

The ancient region, known as Pars (Fars), or Persis (q.v.), was the heart of the



Achaemenid Empire, which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenian army at Arbela in 331 and burned Persepolis.

Persis became part of the Seleucid kingdom in 312 after Alexander’s death. The Parthian empire (247 BC– 224 CE) of the Arsacids (corresponding roughly to the modern Khorasan in Iran) replaced the rule of the Seleucids in Persis during 170–138 BC. The Sasanid Empire (224 CE–651) had its capital at Isthr. Not until the 18th century, under the Zand dynasty (1750–79) of southern Iran, did Fars again became the heart of an empire, this time with its capital at Shiraz.

Over 2,500 tourism projects worth \$32b underway nationwide

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A total of 2,525 tourism-related projects worth 1.3 quadrillion rials (about \$32 billion) are being implemented across the country, said the head of the tourism ministry’s public relations and information center Alireza Bai, CHTN reported on Monday.

Although the coronavirus pandemic has brought the tourism industry into a standstill, the ministry is trying to keep it afloat for the post-corona era, the official added.

To develop the tourism infrastructure, the government tries to provide facilities, allocate budget and credits, issue necessary permissions and licenses for the projects, of which some are ceded to the private sector, he noted.

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has plunged the travel and tourism industry and economy in the global scene over the past couple of months as passenger traffic on airlines and hotel occupancy rates have fallen off a cliff compared to the same periods in previous years. However, some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus con-



tained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20).

Documentary to promote ancient city of Belad Shapur

HERITAGE **TEHRAN**— Iranian director and producer Omid Abdollahi has made a documentary on the ancient city of Belad Shapur, known by its current name, Dehdasht, in the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, CHTN reported.

The documentary, which is produced in three languages of English, German and Persian, aims at introducing the ancient city as one of the tourist attractions and travel destinations for domestic and foreign tourists, Abdollahi said on Monday.

The city, which is one of the top tourist sites of the province, was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 1985.

The documentary was filmed in about nine months



and it is scheduled to be broadcast from different channels of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Abdollahi added.

He also noted that the 55-minute documentary tries to depict the tourism potential of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad’s historical and natural sites by showing different and lesser-known areas of the province.

Belad Shapur was built at the time of Shapur I, also known as Shapur the Great, (reigned 241 CE–272), the second king of the Sassanid Dynasty.

Despite all the destruction that took place in this historical city in different eras, with an area of more than 45 hectares, it is currently considered as one of the largest historical structures in the country in terms of size and number of historical buildings.

Gigantic park of anthropology being built near Tehran

➔ Varied natural setting of the country never disappoints visitors when it comes to tribal tourism as the culturally-diverse country is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as

Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others. Language, music, indigenous cuisine, clothing, songs, anecdotes, crafts, live performances, and local rituals such as celebrations and wedding ceremonies have always spurred many to experience life among the tribes.

Over the past couple of years, the

trend has gained a lot of support and attention in the country by both the government and the private sectors, as well as sightseers and local communities. Each month, several tribal festivals are held across the country. Moreover, tens of collective tours bring visitors to experience life among the tribespeople.



‘One Health’ approach needed to link human, animal and planetary health, Iran suggests

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The environmental dimensions should be integrated into the ‘One Health’ approach, strongly linking human, animal, and planetary health, deputy director of the Department of Environment (DOE) said, adding that key intergovernmental organizations and governments have strong commitments towards the protection of ecosystems.

Narges Saffar, chief of the DOE’s international affairs department, made the abovementioned remarks in a statement at the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development held on July 7-16, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

The statement reads as follows:

Since then, COVID-19 has seen the drivers of prosperity and the mechanisms achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs), become disconnected. Global trade routes, financing flows, and the movement of people around the globe for business, tourism, and study have been disrupted. We believe that transparent and clear data on the causes and impacts of COVID-19 will ensure that we can, as a global community, commit to addressing these issues together and build back better.

This is important to identify how to improve in the future in order to make entry points as real “accelerators” for the implementation of the SDGs.

On the other hand, infrastructure



systems are drivers of economic growth and enable access to basic services and economic opportunities that improve livelihoods and well-being. Rebuild our economy builds a positive future.

In the post-COVID-19 context, infrastructure investments are likely to play an important role in the socio-economic recovery and government stimulus packages such as creating jobs. So, it is important too that

infrastructure investments can be used to achieve national sustainable development objectives and Policy- and decision-makers can help to shape the good practice guidance framework by providing input and feedback as to how it can be of use in enabling sustainable infrastructure investments.

The third and final point is related to the international community, who has the opportunity to strengthen the integration

of environmental dimensions into the ‘One Health’ approach, strongly linking human, animal and planetary health. Undoubtedly key intergovernmental organizations and governments have strong commitments towards the protection of ecosystems,

The current fragmentation of environmental multilateralism, including climate change architecture, which is incompatible with the interdependencies between global environmental problems. The environment should not be relegated to a secondary status in the multilateral system.

The theme was “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

The HLPF annual meeting is the core United Nations platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In the 2020 HLPF, participants debated where we stand on the SDGs in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They reflected on how the international community can respond to the pandemic in a way that puts us back on track to achieve the SDGs and accelerate progress during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

Some 47 countries carried out voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the 2020 HLPF.

Bushfire devastation leaves almost 50 Australian native species at risk of becoming threatened

Nearly 50 Australian native species not currently listed as threatened could be at risk as a result of the continent’s devastating bushfire season, according to a study drawing on the work of more than 20 leading scientists.

The researchers identified 70 animals that had much of their habitat affected by bushfire, including 49 that were not currently protected under national environment laws but should be urgently assessed.

If all were found to be at risk it would increase the number of Australian land and freshwater animals recognised as threatened by 14%, the Guardian reported.

The publication of the peer-reviewed study in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution followed the Morrison government on Monday releasing an independent review of the laws, known as the Environment Protection and Conservation Biodiversity (EPBC) Act.

The interim review led by Graeme Samuel, a former competition watchdog head, found Australia’s environment was in an unsustainable state of decline and the laws were not fit to address current and future environmental challenges.

Samuel recommended the introduction of national environmental standards that set clear rules for conservation protection while allowing sustainable development, and the establishment of an independent environmental regulator to monitor and enforce compliance.

The environment minister, Sussan Ley, agreed to develop environmental standards, but rejected the call for an independent regulator and said she would immediately start work on an accreditation process to devolve responsibility for most environmental approvals to the states and territories.

One of the Nature Ecology study’s authors, Prof James Watson, said the laws could be effective but only if protections

were enforced. The act, which has been widely criticised for failing to stem a developing extinction crisis, largely leaves decisions to the discretion of the environment minister of the day.

The researchers found three species – the Kangaroo Island dunnart, the long-footed potoroo and Kate’s leaf-tailed gecko – had more than 80% of their habitat affected by fire. Unprotected animals that required assessment included the gecko and the short-eared possum.

Watson, from the University of Queensland’s School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, said the country needed to protect the “large, intact places” that have not burned or been logged or cleared for development.

“They are critical for the survival of these species,” he said. “If we don’t, we’ll run out of time and lose these species in the next fire, or the one after that.”

Most polar bears to disappear by 2100, study predicts



Scientists have predicted for the first time when, where and how polar bears are likely to disappear, warning that if greenhouse gas emissions stay on their current trajectory all but a few polar bear populations in the Arctic will probably be gone by 2100.

By as early as 2040, it is very likely that many polar bears will begin to experience reproductive failure, leading to local extinctions, according to a study published in Nature Climate Change, the Guardian reported.

The study examines how the bears will be affected under two different greenhouse gas emissions scenarios. The researchers found that under a business-as-usual emissions scenario, polar bears will likely probably only remain in the Queen Elizabeth Islands – the northernmost cluster in Canada’s Arctic archipelago – at the end of the century. And even if greenhouse gases are moderately mitigated, it is still likely that the majority of polar bear populations in the Arctic will experience reproductive failure by 2080.

Scientists estimate that there are fewer than 26,000 polar bears left, spread out across 19 different subpopulations that range from the icecaps of Svalbard, Norway, to Hudson Bay in Canada to the Chukchi Sea between Alaska and Siberia. Polar bears are unable to find enough sustenance on land and rely on sea ice from which to hunt. They often stake out seal breathing holes in the ice, waiting hours for a blubbery meal to break the surface. But as that sea ice declines because of climate change, so, too, will the polar bears.

“It’s been clear for some time that polar bears are going to suffer under climate change,” said Péter Molnár, a biologist at the University of Toronto Scarborough, and lead author of the study. “But what was not fully clear was when we would expect major declines in the survival and reproduction of polar bears that could ultimately lead to their extirpation. We didn’t know whether that would happen early or later in this century.”

Polar bears draw on energy reserves built up during the winter hunting season to make it through lean summer months on land or time spent on ice in unproductive waters. Though the bears are used to fasting for months, their body condition, reproductive capacity and survival will eventually diminish if they are forced to go too long without food. In Alaska’s southern Beaufort Sea population, biologists have already seen polar bear numbers drop 25–50% during low ice periods when the bears have been forced to fast for too long. And in western Hudson Bay, one of the southernmost polar bear habitats, the population has declined by roughly 30% since 1987.

To figure out when bears might reach their critical physiological limit, Molnár and his colleagues estimated how thin and fat polar bears can be and modelled the animals’ energy use to derive the threshold number of days they can fast before cub and adult survival rates decline. Then they combined those

thresholds with the projected number of future sea ice-free days to determine how populations will be affected in different parts of the Arctic.

“Even if we mitigate emissions, we are still going to see some subpopulations go extinct before the end of the century,” Molnár said. This includes the polar bears in the vulnerable, southernmost ice areas of western Hudson Bay, Davis Strait, and southern Hudson Bay. “But we would have substantially more populations persisting by the end of the century, even with reduced reproduction, compared with a business-as-usual emissions scenario.”

The study examined 13 of the world’s 19 polar bear subpopulations, accounting for 80% of the total population of the species. Bears inhabiting an area known as the Archipelago ecoregion in the Canadian Arctic were not included as the geography of the area – islands and narrow channels – made it too difficult to predict future ice extent.

Of those studied populations, polar bears in southern Hudson Bay and Davis Strait in Canada are “very likely” to experience reproductive failure by 2040 in a scenario of unmitigated emissions. Polar bears in much of Alaska and Russia will be in serious trouble by 2080. And by 2100, it’s inevitable that these populations will experience reproductive failure, leading to extinction if countries don’t drastically reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases.

“It’s important to highlight that these projections are probably on the conservative side,” said Steven Amstrup, chief scientist for Polar Bears International and a co-author of the study. The models, he explained, may assume a better-than-reality body condition of the bears at the start of fasting periods. And the team used a cautious baseline estimate for how much energy a bear uses to maintain its body condition. “The impacts we project are likely to occur more rapidly than the paper suggests.”

Unlike other species threatened by hunting or deforestation, polar bears can only be saved if their habitat is protected, which requires tackling climate change at a global level. Previous research has shown that even if we reduce greenhouse gas emissions tomorrow, it will still take another 25 to 30 years for sea ice extent to stabilise because of all the carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere. It’s important that the public understand the urgency of the issue, Amstrup said. But a timeline for possible extirpation was also an important tool for managers in northern communities living alongside polar bears.

“It shows where we would expect to see increased human-bear conflict,” said Andrew Derocher, a biology professor at the University of Alberta who heads the Polar Bear Science Lab and is unaffiliated with the study. Not all Arctic communities have programmes in place to deal with more polar bears in their localities. And there is a moral question of whether humans should help struggling bears.

“With something like polar bears, where you’re not going to get their habitat back, it’s not clear we’re going to try to hold on to these populations everywhere. If we start to see a large number of bears on land dying of starvation, what kind of interventions would we get into?”

Derocher said polar bear managers needed to work out whether they would provide supplementary feed for the bears, or relocate them to regions that still had ice.

“You look at the fallout from one video of a starving bear. Well, imagine going to Churchill, Manitoba – a hub of polar bear tourism – and seeing 50 bears walking around like that. The public outcry is going to be intense and managers need to be thinking about what their policies are going to be now.”

20 Iranian knowledge-based companies in GITEX 2020

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Twenty knowledge-based companies and accelerators from Iran will participate in the 40th Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX) which will be held in Dubai on December 6 to 10, 2020.



In this regard, the Innovation and Prosperity Fund is preparing 20 selected teams to be sent to the GITEX exhibition of the Future Stars section, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Companies are evaluated in terms of having the final product produced, export capacity, and being knowledge-based, according to the National Innovation Fund.

After fulfilling the necessary conditions, they enter the training camp and participate in related workshops for one month to conduct international interactions, familiarize themselves with international rules and regulations, during which time their brochures, catalogs, and promotional clips are prepared in English.

In addition to presenting their products and abilities at the GITEX, the selected teams can also participate in fundraising events and competitions at the exhibition.

GITEX 2020 will be held in 26 Exhibiting Sectors, some of which are e-commerce, artificial intelligence, robotics, health, global smart cities, future transportation, blockchain, privacy and cybersecurity, digital and social media.

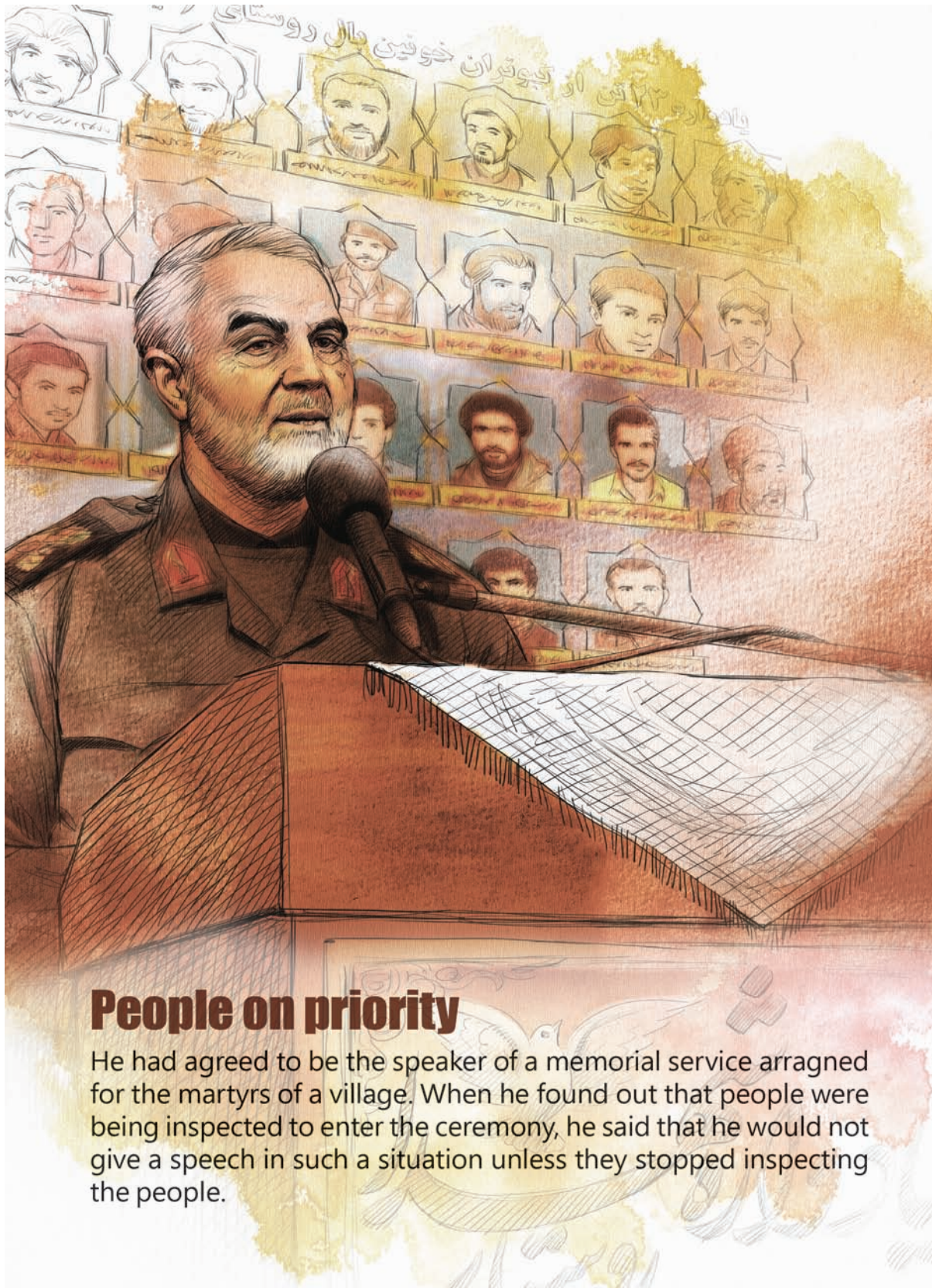
GITEX is an annual consumer computer and electronics trade show, exhibition, and conference that takes place in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates at the Dubai World Trade Centre. Its exhibitions in West Asia have attracted numerous participants, most notably in 2009 when Microsoft released Windows 7 with 150,019 people present.

The show was first launched in 1981 as GITE.

Iranian students win medal at Moscow Flower Show 2020

!→ The organizers even offer educational and entertainment programs for children and families too.

One of the main features open to everyone is the garden design competition. It is an excellent opportunity to expose trending design ideas in front of an international panel of experts and to exchange ideas on how to create little oases in the growing metropolises. The main categories available to choose for the competition are Garden show, City garden, interior yard, pocket format, vertical and fresh ideas for gardens.



People on priority

He had agreed to be the speaker of a memorial service arraigned for the martyrs of a village. When he found out that people were being inspected to enter the ceremony, he said that he would not give a speech in such a situation unless they stopped inspecting the people.

Sudan’s Bashir on trial over 1989 coup that brought him to power

Sudan’s former President Omar al-Bashir, who was overthrown last year by the military in the face of mass protests against his rule, has gone on trial in the capital over his role in a coup that brought him to power more than 30 years ago.

Al-Bashir, †who has been jailed in Khartoum since his removal, †faces†charges of undermining the constitution, violating the Armed Forces Act and fomenting a coup in 1989 against the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi.

According to al Jazeera, before any statements or evidence could be given on Tuesday, the trial was adjourned until August 11 to reconvene in a bigger court to allow more lawyers and family members of defendants to attend.

Some lawyers had complained their colleagues had not been able to get into Tuesday’s session.

Other defendants include 10 military personnel and six civilians, including his former vice presidents, Ali Osman Taha and Bakri Hassan Saleh, as well as former ministers and governors.

They are all accused of having plotted the June 30, 1989, coup during which the army arrested Sudan’s political leaders, suspended Parliament and other state bodies, closed the airport and announced the putsch on the radio.

U.S. Protests: Trump to send federal forces to more ‘Democrat’ cities

→ 1 iThey grab a lot of people and jail the leaders. These are anarchists,i Trump said of federal agents sent to the historically liberal city to quell often unruly protests.

Despite a national outcry over the tactics, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials on Monday said they would not back down and would not apologize.

The state of Oregon and the American Civil Liberties Union have sued the Trump administration for unlawfully detaining Oregon residents, and some Republicans spoke out against its tactics on Monday.

iThere is no place for federal troops or unidentified federal agents rounding people up at will,i tweeted U.S. Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky.

The Chicago Tribune reported that Homeland Security was making plans to deploy around 150 agents in the city this week where police defending a statue clashed with protesters on Friday.

Pompeo and Johnson discussed China’s actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang

†U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson discussed China’s actions in Hong Kong and its treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang, according to a British summary of the discussion.

iThey spoke about shared global security and foreign policy issues, including China’s actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, the situation in Iran and the Middle East Peace Process,i Downing Street said.

iThe Prime Minister and Secretary of State also underlined their commitment to negotiate a strong UK-US Free Trade Agreement that benefits the economies of both countries.i

Johnson and Pompeo underscored the importance of the U.S.-led Five Eyes intelligence alliance. Johnson also raised the death of 19-year-old Briton Harry Dunn who was killed in a road collision with a U.S. diplomat’s wife. Reuters reported.

iThe Prime Minister reiterated the need for justice to be done for Harry Dunn and his family,i Downing Street said. iHe said there was a strong feeling among the people of the UK that justice must be delivered.i

Resistance News

OIC calls for int’l pressure for release of sick prisoners

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— he General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has called on the UN, the Red Cross and all international parties to pressure the Israeli government to release the Palestinian prisoners with chronic health problems.

According to a press release on Monday, the OIC General Secretariat called for necessarily protecting the rights of all Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and pressuring Israel to stop its violations against them.

OIC expressed deep concern over the Palestinian prisoners’ health conditions in Israeli jails after some prisoners were reportedly infected with coronavirus.

It accused Israel of persisting in taking arbitrary measures against the prisoners and depriving them of their basic rights, including their right to appropriate medical treatment, holding the Israeli government fully responsible for their lives.

IOF kidnaps several Palestinians from W. Bank homes

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) at dawn Tuesday carried out raids on homes and kidnapped several Palestinian citizens in different areas of the West Bank.

According to local sources, the IOF stormed al-Jalazon refugee camp and kidnapped three young men from their homes.

They were identified as Jihad al-Badawi, Mustafa Abu Shanab and Mohamed Ghawanmeh.

In Bethlehem, the IOF stormed Beit Jala town and kidnapped a citizen and his son.

During the same campaign in Beit Jala, they handed two residents, including a kid, summonses for interrogation from the Shin Beit.

They also raided a turnery in the industrial zone of Beit Jala belonging to a local resident and handed him a summons from the Shin Bet.

Another 15-year-old citizen identified as Ahmed Taqateqa was handed a similar summons during an IOF campaign in Beit Fajjar town, south of Bethlehem.

In al-Khalil, the IOF stormed ash-Shuyukh town and kidnapped a young man called Ismail al-Halayka.

Biden urges Muslim Americans to help him defeat Trump



Among those who signed the letter are Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and Indiana Rep. Andre Carson, all Democrats. Omar, one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress, served as a high-profile surrogate for Bernie Sanders before he exited the pres-

idential race in April - making her support for Biden potentially helpful as the former vice president seeks to mobilize Muslim voters this fall.

«Muslim American voices matter to our communities, to our country,» Biden said. «But we all know that your voice hasn’t always

U.S. holds naval exercises with allies in Asia amid China tension



The United States is conducting two military exercises in Asian waters this week involving allies Japan, Australia and India, the U.S. navy said on Tuesday.

The exercises come as military rivalry between the United States and China is intensifying and days after the United States said China’s claims of sovereignty in the disputed South China Sea were illegal.

According to Reuters, the United States has long opposed China’s expansive territorial claims on the South China Sea, sending warships regularly through the strategic waterway to demonstrate freedom of navigation.

China opposes such exercises and said the U.S. rejection of its claims in the South China Sea raised tension and undermined stability in the region.

The USS Nimitz and the USS Ronald Reagan were deployed to the South China Sea twice this month but this week, the Nimitz was in the Indian Ocean for exercises with the Indian navy, the U.S. navy said, in the latest sign of growing cooperation between the forces.

Rear Admiral Jim Kirk, commander of the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group, said in a statement that Monday’s drills with the Indian navy helped improve the interoperability of their forces.

iWhile operating together, the U.S. and Indian naval forces conducted high-end exercises designed to maximize training and interoperability, including air defense,i the U.S. navy said.

India’s relations with China have also been strained after a deadly clash on their disputed border in the Himalayas last month, prompting calls in India for closer security ties with the United States and its allies including Japan.

The drills were carried out near India’s Andaman and Nicobar islands, off the north end of the Malacca Straits, one of the world’s busiest shipping routes for trade and fuel, an Indian source said. India has a military base on the islands.

The U.S. navy said the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group was in the Indian Ocean in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Russia meddled in Scottish vote, unclear on Brexit: UK parliament

Russia meddled in the 2014 Scottish referendum, and the British government failed to ask for a deep assessment of possible Kremlin-directed interference in the Brexit vote, according to the British parliament’s intelligence and security committee.

“There has been credible open source commentary suggesting that Russia undertook influence campaigns in relation to the Scottish independence referendum in 2014,” said the report, which was finished in March 2019 but shelved until Tuesday.

According to al Jazeera, it said there were open-source indications that Russia sought to influence the Brexit campaign but that the United Kingdom’s government had not sought deep evidence of meddling.

The report cast Russia as a hostile power which posed a significant threat to the UK and the West across a range of fronts, from espionage and cyberattacks to election meddling and laundering dirty money.

“It appears that Russia considers the UK one of its top Western intelligence targets,” the report said.

The report, which was leaked before its publication time by the Guido Fawkes website, said the British government failed to delve deeply enough into possible Russian meddling in the 2016 Brexit referendum.

■ ‘Anti-Russian hysteria’

The Kremlin said Russia has never interfered in another country’s electoral processes. Russia has repeatedly denied meddling in the West, casting the United States and the UK as gripped by “anti-Russian hysteria.”

When discussing the UK referendum, the UK parliamentary report is heavily redacted, and there was a classified annex that was not published, but the lawmakers called for a proper investigation.

“In response to our request for written evidence at the outset of the Inquiry, MI5 initially provided just six lines of text. It stated that ‘*, before referring to academic studies,”

EU reaches historic deal on pandemic recovery after fractious summit

European Union leaders clinched an historic deal on a massive stimulus plan for their coronavirus-throttled economies in the early hours of Tuesday, after a fractious summit lasting almost five days.

The agreement paves the way for the European Commission, the EU’s executive, to raise billions of euros on capital markets on behalf of all 27 states, an unprecedented act of solidarity in almost seven decades of European integration.

Summit chairman Charles Michel called the accord, reached at a 5.15 a.m. (0315 GMT), a pivotal moment for Europe.

Many had warned that a failed summit amid the coronavirus pandemic would have put the bloc’s viability in serious doubt after years of economic crisis and Britain’s recent departure.

World shares climbed to their highest since February and the euro briefly hit its strongest since March on news of the deal.

iThis agreement sends a concrete signal that Europe is a force for action,i a jubilant Michel told reporters.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who spearheaded a push for the deal with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, hailed it as truly historic.

Leaders hope the 750 billion euro (\$857.33 billion) recovery fund and its



related 1.1 trillion euro 2021-2027 budget will help repair the continent’s deepest recession since World War Two after the coronavirus outbreak shut down economies.

Germany Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said that, with the agreement, the chances of a cautious, slow recovery i in the second half of this year had increased enormously.

While strong in symbolism, the deal came at the cost of cuts to proposed investment in climate-friendly funds and did not set conditions for disbursements to countries, such as Hungary and Poland, seen as breaching democratic values.

In an unwieldy club of 27, each with veto power, the summit also exposed faultlines across the bloc that are likely to hinder future decision-making on money as richer northern countries resisted helping out the poorer south.

the redacted version reads.

“It is nonetheless the Committee’s view that the UK Intelligence Community should produce an analogous assessment of potential Russian interference in the EU referendum and that an unclassified summary of it be published,” the report said.

The committee cast Russia - rapidly losing its superpower clout after the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union - as a source of corrupt money that had been welcomed in London, the world’s premier international financial capital.

“The UK welcomed Russian money, and few questions - if any - were asked about the provenance of this considerable wealth,” the report said. “The UK has been viewed as a particularly favourable destination for Russian oligarchs and their money.”

“It offered ideal mechanisms by which illicit finance could be recycled through what has been referred to as the London ‘laundromat,’” the report said.

Egypt’s parliament approves troop deployment to Libya

→ 1 Egypt, alongside the United Arab Emirates and Russia, backs eastern-based military commander Khalifa Haftar, who abandoned an offensive on the capital last month after Turkey stepped up support for Tripoli.

Cairo has flown air strikes on armed groups in Libya since the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 plunged the oil producer into chaos.

It has also supported Haftar, an ex-Gaddafi general, since 2014 when he assembled a force in eastern Libya, according to UN reports. But sending ground-combat troops would be a major escalation.

Egypt’s House of Representatives, packed with supporters of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, approved the plan after a closed-door session where deputies discussed “threats faced by the state” from the west, where Egypt shares a porous desert border with war-torn Libya.

Stephanie Williams, acting head of the UN support mission in Libya, on Monday called for an “immediate ceasefire ... to spare the 125,000 civilians who remain in harm’s

way and for an end to the blatant violations of the UN arms embargo”.

Her comments came following her meeting on Sunday with the president of neighbouring Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

■ ‘Putschist Haftar’

Turkey, meanwhile, demanded an “immediate” end to the support for Haftar in Libya after trilateral talks held in Ankara between Libyan, Turkish, and †Maltese† officials on Monday.

“It is essential that all kind of help and support given to putschist Haftar - which prohibits ensuring Libya’s peace, tranquility, security, and territorial integrity - ends immediately,” Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said.

Haftar’s backers should “stop supporting an unrealistic and wrong project”, the UN-recognised Government of National Accord’s (GNA) Interior Minister Fathi Bashaga said.

An Egyptian intervention would further destabilise oil-rich Libya.

Egypt’s president warned in June that any attack on Sirte or the inland al-Jufra airbase would prompt Cairo to intervene



militarily, purportedly to protect its western border with Libya.

The GNA denounced Egypt’s threat of military intervention in the North African nation, labelling it a “declaration of war”.

Qatar’s state minister for defence affairs met on Monday with the Turkish defence minister and Libya’s minister of interior to discuss the latest developments in Libya, Qatar’s defence ministry said.

Sirte lies 800km (500 miles) from the Egyptian border with Libya’s most important crude export terminals in between.

Cairo sees the city as a “red line” and has called for talks between Libya’s rival factions.

gotten recognized or represented.»

Emgage Action has titled the event «Million Muslim Votes,» underscoring its emphasis on boosting Muslim turnout in November.

«Joe Biden’s presence serves not only to galvanize Muslim Americans to cast their ballots, but to usher in an era of engaging with Muslim American communities under a Biden administration,» Alzayat said by email before the summit.

The pro-Biden letter from Muslim American elected officials decried a number of Trump’s domestic and international policies, including his administration’s travel ban and his pullout from the Iran nuclear deal.

«A Biden administration will move the nation forward on many of the issues we care about,» the letter said, citing racial justice, affordable health care, climate change and immigration.

The Muslim American officials also praised Biden’s agenda for their communities. Among other goals, Biden has vowed to rescind the travel ban affecting Muslims «on Day One» if he is elected.

In his address, he pledged to include Muslim American voices in his administration, if elected, and to speak out against human rights abuses against Muslim minorities around the world.

Olympics’ postponement a blessing for Sohrab Moradi

S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iranian weightlifter Sohrab Moradi says that the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics could be a blessing in disguise for him.

The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics, from this July to next year, disappointed so many athletes but it was a blessing for Moradi who underwent back surgery after suffering injuries in the training.

The Olympic gold medalist has not yet booked a berth in 2020 Olympics and must participate in another qualification.

“I have not stopped my training since it could be a setback. I’m getting back to my best. Weightlifting differs from other types of sports and you cannot halt training since your preparation suffers,” Moradi said.

Moradi badly injured his spine then dislocated a shoulder. He has participated in several Olympics qualifications so far and now needs to take part in another one to win his place at the Tokyo.

“I wait for the IWF’s new timetable to get



rid of all confusion. I need to partake at one event and will book my place if I lift 400kg in total. I am optimistic about the future,” Moradi added.

“The Iran Weightlifting Federation officials have been keeping in touch with me and monitor my conditions and I think it is very inspiring,” he claimed.

Moradi, who lifted a combined 403kg to win 94kg weightlifting gold at the Rio Olympics, claimed a gold in the new Olympic weight category of 96kg at the 2018 World Championships in Turkmenistan, a few months after winning Asian Games gold at his previous weight of 94kg.

Moradi broke the world’s longest standing record which was set in 1999 by the Georgian-Greek lifter Kakhi Kakhiashvili during the World Championships in Athens. Kakhiashvili had lifted 188kg at the time and his record remained intact for 19 years until Moradi bettered it by one kilogram in the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Iran to use VAR from next season: FFIRI acting president

S P O R T S T E H R A N — The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) acting president Heydar Baharvand has said that the federation is planning to implement the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system in the Iran Professional League (IPL) from the next season.

In recent weeks many mistakes in the league matches have led the clamor for the change in footballing decisions and using the VAR system.

The football federation has not yet been able to use this system due to financial and infrastructural problems in the current season.

Baharvand confirmed that the implementation of VAR can help the Iranian football, however he insisted that setting up the system is a time-consuming process.

“Implementing the video assistant system requires a process which needs not only the FFIRI’s approval but also

FIFA’s confirmation.

“Development work is currently underway and we hope to be able to use the VAR from the next IPL season,” he said.

The FFIRI had promised to implement the VAR system in the second half of 2019-2020 IPL season but failed to deliver its promise. Now again, the FFIRI acting president has made the same promise for the second half of the next IPL season.

“Due to the time-consuming process of setting the system, we hope to use it in the second half of the season next year,” Baharvand added.

In some leagues around the world, the system has already been used, while in other leagues the system still is in an experimental phase.

Asia and Oceania are using the system too. The Video Assistant Referee uses in China’s Super League, South Korea’s top two divisions, and Australia’s A-League.



Klopp urges Liverpool fans to stay away from Anfield

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has told the club’s supporters the Premier League trophy is for them but has asked them not to congregate outside Anfield on Wednesday and instead wait for the correct time to celebrate their historic title.

Klopp’s Liverpool will be presented with the Premier League trophy on Wednesday after their match at Anfield against Chelsea.

It will be the club’s first title in 30 years and though Klopp is preparing for a wave of emotions as he watches Jordan Henderson lift the Premier League trophy, he has asked supporters to listen to the Merseyside Police’s advice and stay away from Anfield due to restrictions to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

“I really hope the fans know that it’s 100%

for them,” Klopp said. “It’s for you. We won this league before lockdown but brought it over the line after lockdown. If we stick together, we can do anything.

“It’s a different situation to anything we’ve ever faced. I promise we’ll have this party that everybody deserves -- probably at the first available opportunity -- but we can do it only if everybody behaves appropriately. I understand it’s a personal challenge. Stay at home, celebrate in a safe place and keep it in your mind we will all be together when it’s possible again.”

Klopp said waiting to get his hands on the Premier League trophy has been like the build up to Christmas Day, adding it will be one of the “greatest days” of his life.

“It’s a milestone for this team -- it’s an

important day, but not the last -- we’ll be in very good spirits, 100%,” Klopp said.

Klopp did not play down the significance of the trophy presentation, but with Chelsea lying in wait on Wednesday night, he was adamant his players will be prioritising getting a win over Frank Lampard’s top four chasing side before turning attention to celebrations.

“I’m not willing to make the trophy lift smaller,” Klopp said. “[But] I trust the players 100%. I am in the competition mood. It’s not as if nothing will happen around the game, we know that but we have to put the blinkers on.”

With Chelsea already spending big on Hakim Ziyech and Timo Werner, Lampard’s side have set their stall out for a title challenge next season, but Klopp would not be

drawn on whether he will look to invest in his Liverpool squad as they seek to defend the league next term.

“I’m completely happy with my squad -- it was last year when everybody asked us to sign him and him and him,” Klopp said.

“We try to make right decisions constantly. We do what’s possible for us and what we’re able to do.

“The main difference between us and other teams this year was consistency. I don’t know if you can buy that on the transfer market. We cannot buy just because other teams buy. We can buy if we have the money and need for it. We will have a lot of tests next year -- some of these things can be decided in the transfer market but not all.”

(Source: ESPN)

Iran plan to host Intl. futsal tournament on Kish Island

M N A — Iranian Football Federation is planning to organize an international futsal tournament on Kish Island with the participation of countries from Asia and Europe.

The 2020 AFC Futsal Championship is scheduled to be hosted by Turkmenistan in November, and Iran as the defending champion has started preparing for the competition.

Negotiations are currently underway with Kuwait, Iraq, Belarus, Ukraine, and several other European countries to take part in the tournament due for September or October.

Six teams may participate in the tournament including Iran national senior and U20 futsal team.

This year’s AFC Futsal Championship will be the 16th edition of the AFC Futsal Championship, the biennial international futsal championship organized by the Asian Football Confederation for the men’s national teams of Asia.



A total of 16 teams take part in the tournament, originally scheduled to be played in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan between February 26 and March 8.

However, the AFC announced on February 3 that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tournament had been postponed following consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

On March 9, FIFA and AFC announced that the tournament was postponed to August 5-16, but in July, the tournament schedule was moved again to November 4-15.

Same as previous editions held in the same year as the FIFA Futsal World Cup, the tournament acts as the AFC qualifiers for the World Cup. The top five teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup in Lithuania as the AFC representatives.

Olympics: A year to go, rearranged Tokyo Games still shrouded in uncertainty

T O K Y O (Reuters) — Tokyo 2020 organizers will host celebrations marking the one-year countdown to the Olympics on Thursday but with the postponed Games still shrouded in uncertainty they are sure to be more muted than the first attempt 12 months ago.

On July 24 last year, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach presided over a glitzy ceremony in the Japanese capital and declared Tokyo the best prepared host city he had ever seen.

Even six months ago, when fireworks exploded over a giant, luminous set of Olympic rings in Tokyo Bay, organizers were still bullish that their huge financial investment would deliver an unforgettable Games.

Just two months later, however, plans that had been almost a decade in the making were shredded as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the IOC and Japanese government to take the unprecedented decision to postpone the Olympics for a year.

Since the postponement in late March, all 42 venues for the Games have been secured and the competition schedule announced,

with the opening ceremony set to take place at the 156.9 billion yen (\$1.44 billion) National Stadium on July 23.

Beyond that, though, questions remain about almost every aspect of hosting what Bach calls the most complex event on this planet.

The head of the IOC’s Coordination Commission John Coates has said rearranging the Games meant focusing on the most haves in a simplified event.

In response, Tokyo 2020 Chief Executive Toshio Muto said over 200 simplification measures were under consideration.

-----**FINAL BILL**

What has yet to be decided is how much rearranging the Games is going to cost the Japanese taxpayer.

The IOC have said their share of the costs will be some \$800 million but organizers have repeatedly refused to put a number on the final bill for Japanese stakeholders.

The Games were already set to cost over 1.35 trillion yen before the postponement and increased expenditure might further alienate a public already turning their backs on an Olympics they once embraced en-

thusiastically.

A recent poll conducted by Kyodo News found that fewer than one in four favored holding the Games as scheduled next year.

A third believed the Olympics should be postponed again ó which Bach has warned is not an option ó with another third wanting the Games cancelled outright.

In addition to costs, three major issues dominate any conversation on the rearranged Games ó athlete safety, spectators and sponsorship.

Organizers have said all efforts will be made to ensure the 11,000 athletes will be able to travel safely to Tokyo and compete in world class surroundings.

As expert after expert has pointed out, however, it is difficult to see how this can be accomplished without the development and global distribution of an effective COVID-19 vaccine.

The same is true of the desire to have thousands of spectators in the stadiums to cheer on those athletes.

Loss of ticket revenue would be a major blow to the organizing committee and that



would be compounded if they cannot keep on board the record-breaking number of Games sponsors.

A poll conducted by Japanese public broadcaster NHK last month found two-thirds of Tokyo 2020’s corporate sponsors were undecided on whether to continue their support.

The challenges facing Olympics organizers are unprecedented but under questioning from athletes, fans and sponsors, they know they need to find some answers soon.

Saint-Etienne eye Mehrdad Mohammadi

French football club Saint-Etienne have reportedly shown interest in signing Iranian winger Mehrdad Mohammadi.

Mohavvadi terminated his contract with Desportivo Aves after the Portuguese team failed to pay him his wage in the past three months.



The 26-year-old player joined Aves last year from Sepahan.

Mohammadi scored eight goals and delivered five assists in 28 appearances in Aves.

Now, he has terminated his contract with Aves.

The French media have reported that Mohammadi will join Saint-Etienne in the next season.

Yvan Neyou also is Saint-Etienne’s radar.

(Source: Footmercato.net)

Iranian referee Shahmiri to officiate at Olympic Games

Volleyball.ir — The FIVB Refereeing Commission has announced that Iranian referee Farhad Shahmiri will officiate at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The age limit for an international referee is 55 years, volleyball.ir reported.

Shahmiri, who has turned 55, was supposed to officiate at the 2020 Olympic Games for the last time, but the Games were postponed due to coronavirus outbreak.

Now the FIVB Refereeing Commission has announced that the Iranian referee is eligible for the Games which will be held next year.

Shahmiri has already whistled in the two previous Olympics in London and Rio de Janeiro.

The volleyball tournaments at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo will be played between July 23 to August 8.

A total of 24 volleyball teams and 48 beach volleyball teams will participate in the tournament.

Persepolis forward Alipour linked with Russian team: Report

Tasnim — Iranian media reports suggest that Persepolis striker Ali Alipour has been linked with a move to a Russian team.

The name of the Russian team remains unknown.

Alipour had been previously linked with Belgian team Zulte Waregem and Rio Ave of Portugal and now the Russian team has expressed interest in signing the player.

Alipour has scored eight goals for Persepolis in the current season.

Persepolis are challenging with financial problems and it is not unlikely that to negotiate with the Russian team.

Caixinha to coach Saudi Arabia’s Al Shabab

Six-time Saudi Arabia Pro League champions Al Shabab have announced the appointment of Portuguese Pedro Caixinha as head coach.

The 49-year-old has signed a two-year contract and makes a return to Riyadh 14 years after being an assistant coach at Al Hilal.

The former goalkeeper hung up his gloves in 1999 and after different spells as an assistant coach in Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Greece and Romania, he had his first job as a head coach in 2010 when he took charge of Uniao Leiria in Portugal.

Caixinha had great success in Mexico with Santos Laguna and Cruz Azul while he also spent two years with Al Gharafa in Qatar. He also had a short stint in Scotland with Rangers.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran announces lineup for FIDE Online Olympiad

M N A — The Iranian Chess Federation has announced the lineup of the national team that is going to participate in the 2020 FIDE Online Olympiad.

Given the successful holding of different chess competitions online since the outbreak hit the world, FIDE also decided to hold an online Olympiad from July 22 to August 30.

The Iranian national team includes Parham Maghsoodloo, Ehsan Ghaem Maghami, Mohammad Amin Tabatabaie, Pouya Idani, and Arian Gholami in men’s category and Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, Mobina Alinasab, Anahita Zahedifar, Anousha Mahdian, and Motahare Asadi in women’s category.

The Online Olympiad is a national team event in which all federations affiliated to FIDE have the right to participate. The teams for each match will consist of six players: two Open, two Women, one Open Under-20, and one Girls Under-20. Each team can also have up to six reserve players, one for each position.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The worth of a person is equal to his aspiration; his integrity to his chivalry; his courage to his self-respect, and his chastity to his sense of honor.

Imam Ali (AS)

Sam Savage's "Cry of the Sloth" published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of American author Sam Savage's novel "The Cry of the Sloth" has been published by Markaz Publications in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Pupeh Sadeqi. Living on a diet of fried Spam, sardines, cupcakes and Southern Comfort, Andrew Whittaker is slowly being sucked into the morass of middle age. A negligent landlord, small-time literary journal editor and aspiring novelist, he is—quite literally—authoring his own downfall. From his letters, diary entries and fragments of fiction, to grocery lists and posted signs, this novel is a collection of everything Whittaker commits to paper over the course of four critical months.

Front cover of the Persian translation American author Sam Savage's novel "The Cry of the Sloth".

Beginning in July, during the economic hardships of the Nixon era, readers witness their hero hounded by tenants and creditors, harassed by a loathsome local arts group, and tormented by his ex-wife. Determined to redeem his failures and eviscerate his enemies, Whittaker hatches a grand plan. But as winter nears, his difficulties accumulate, and the disorder of his life threatens to overwhelm him. As his hold on reality weakens and his schemes grow wilder, his self-image as a placid and slow-moving sloth evolves into that of a bizarre and frantic creature driven mad by solitude. In this tragicomic portrait of a literary life, Savage proves that all the evidence is in the writing, that all the world is, indeed, a stage, and that escape from the mind's prison requires a command performance. Savage was an American novelist and poet. He was a native of South Carolina living in Madison, Wisconsin. He received his bachelor and doctoral degree from Yale University where he taught briefly, and also worked as a bicycle mechanic, carpenter, commercial fisherman and letterpress printer.

Islamic academy assigned to gather information helping organizations adapt to Quranic science

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy has been assigned to gather information helping governmental organizations adapt to Quranic science.

The academy, which works under the auspices of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Office of the Qom Seminary, has launched a section named "Quranic Institutionalization Department" to pursue the task.

The portal of the department was launched on Tuesday. It can be found on <http://qs.isca.ac.ir>.

"One of the tasks an Islamic society needs to do is to explore and outline the teachings the society requires to form its systems based on Quran," the academy said in a statement.

"These studies will lead to designing, rearranging, reforming and improving the economic, political, social and cultural systems and microsystems based on Quranic teachings and concepts," it continued.

The portal provides information about the latest studies on the Holy Quran for Quranic institutionalization.

The Quranic Institutionalization Department was established based on guidelines from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

"What we understand from the Quranic teachings is that Islam expects Muslims to set up the Islamic system in a perfect way," Ayatollah Khamenei has said earlier.

Addressing Islamic scholars, the leader also said, "[Quranic] institutionalization is your main and greatest task. This is a complex and difficult undertaking. Don't let the secular, Western liberalist, ultranationalist, or leftist and Marxist patterns instill themselves within you."

Five more trucks to join IIDCYA's mobile theater project

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran's Interior Ministry has provided the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) with five more trucks, which will join the institute's mobile theater project.

The institute launched the mobile theater program in 1973 with a truck traveling to remote cities and villages where young artists and actors of those days and the veterans of today gave performances for children and young adults.

The old truck was retired two years ago and two other trucks were replaced.

These new five more trucks are due to be delivered to the institute within the next two months where more children and young adults can sit and watch the plays and films produced by the IIDCYA. The mobile theaters are not only a stage for plays and puppet shows, but



This combination photo shows the first mobile theater of the IIDCYA (R) as well as one of the new, modern ones.

are equipped with modern technology to screen films for children and young adults.

The institute hopes that the mobile theaters carry days of hope, health and happiness to the Iranian cities and villages after the hard days of coronavirus.

IIDCYA also initiated a bookmobile project years ago for promoting reading among children and young people in Iran's remote villages.

The mobile library program was nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) several times.

In May 2019, the Japanese translator of Persian children's books, Kiko Aiko, traveled to Iran and accompanied a group of trainers from IIDCYA in a trip by bookmobile to learn more about the cultural activities of the organization.

The bookmobile went to Esmaeil Gerayeli Primary School in Khuzankola, a village located about 60 kilometers northwest of Tehran.

Cartoons can help convey tips for dealing with coronavirus: artist

A R T **TEHRAN** — Cartoonist Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai who is also the director of the Art Bureau's Visual Arts Office has said that cartoons can help transfer tips for dealing with COVID-19.

"If we can make use of cartoons to display messages such as social distancing during the pandemic, this would be more influential than orders or advisories," Shojaei-Tabatabai said in a press release published on Tuesday.

"Cartoon is an international language and the irony it bears within itself can be the best medium for representing topics on coronavirus," he added. "People are going through hard times these days because of the pandemic, and if we can make good use of cartoons and transfer tips and topics on the new virus, we can help decrease the ordering aspects and display useful and healthy tips instead through cartoons," he said.

"The jokes with different issues with the central theme of coronavirus can be more influential," he remarked.

Shojaei-Tabatabai, who is the secretary of Iran's We Defeat Coronavirus International Cartoon Contest, added, "Iran was one of the first countries that organized an international cartoon contest on coronavirus."

Over 4200 cartoons have been submitted to the contest from different countries such as Turkey,

China, India, Indonesia and Russia.

He added that European cartoonists have had active participation in the contest, adding that the Egyptian cartoonist Doa Al-Adl, who has been named one of the 100 most inspirations and influential women of 2016, was one of the contestants, indicating the high value of the contest, which was organized by Iran's Art Bureau in collaboration with the Health Ministry.

He added that they are planning to showcase the participating cartoons for the public across the city, because the artworks can act as healthy tips and messages in these coronavirus days.

Turkish cartoonist Eray Ozbek presided over the international jury of the contest, which was composed of cartoonists Spiro Radulovic from Serbia, Nikola Vorontsov from Russia, Liuyi Wang from China and Marcio Leite from Brazil.

The jury for the national section consisted of Mohammad-Hossein Nirumand, Bahram Azimi, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai and Salman Mohazzabieh.

Out of all the submissions, about 2000 cartoons have been posted on the [irancartoon](http://irancartoon.com) website.

Iran participated in the contest with 436 cartoonists standing on the top. Turkey came next with 82 artists, and then India with 75, Indonesia with 70, Brazil with 48 and Russia with 30.

The organizers have not released an exact date for the closing day and awards ceremony yet. Iran's



A cartoon by Iranian cartoonist Alireza Pakdel selected to compete in Iran's We Defeat Coronavirus International Cartoon Contest.

Health Minister is expected to attend the closing ceremony which will go online.

"I Am Here!" at Shanghai Intl. Film Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — One more film was added to the Iranian lineup as director Abbas Amini's drama "I Am Here!" joined the feature films scheduled to compete in the official section of the 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF).

At the height of the demonstrations during the Abadan shipyard workers' strike, Amir's body is found in a canal in circumstances that leave much open to doubt.

Ebrahim, Amir's brother must now not only look after his aging mother, but also Salwa, his brother's young and beautiful widow.

The employer's lawyer offers the

family cash if they agree not to sue the shipyard, but Ebrahim's mother and the striking workers are against any deal. Ebrahim, not wanting to be trapped between the two contending parties, cannot decide, but Salwa has other ideas.

The DreamLab Films is the international distributor of the film starring Afshin Hashemi and Shirin Esmaeili.

Five other Iranian movies have also been selected to screen in various sections of the Shanghai festival, which will take place in the Chinese megalopolis from July 25 to August 2.

"Crab" by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi will



Afshin Hashemi acts in a scene from director Abbas Amini's drama "I Am Here!"

be contending for the Golden Goblet Award in the short film section.

"Najibeh" directed by Mostafa Gandomkar and "The Badger" by Kazem Mollai will be competing for the Asian New Talent Award.

"Just 6.5" directed by Saeid Rustai and "Old Men Never Die" by Reza Jamali have been selected to be screened in the SIFF Highlights – Viva La Festival.

The 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival was first scheduled to be held from June 13 to 22, but it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event will be held both offline and online in a bid to minimize the impact of the pandemic.

Tehran exhibit to display early days of 1979 Islamic Revolution

A R T **TEHRAN** — A selection of photos putting the spotlight on the early days of the 1979 Islamic Revolution will go on display in an exhibition opening Friday at Tehran's Nabshi Center.

The photos have been taken by Iranian photojournalist Mohammad Sayyad for the exhibition named "Photo by M. Sayyad".

The very early days of the revolution depicting the crowd pouring into the streets to watch the victory of the revolution are among the highlights of the exhibit.

The photos cover several stages of the revolution, the very early days in 1979, and other photos depict the events happening in the country a few years later in the 1980s.

The collection also contains images from the frontlines during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The exhibit will be running until the end of summer at the gallery located at 51 Khosro Alley, Villa St.

Earlier in August 2019, the Nabshi Center showcased a selection of Sayyad's photos in an exhibition titled "Land of Confusion".

The exhibit put its spotlight on the miseries of the Iraqi Kurds under Saddam Hussein who were forced to immigrate to Iran.

During his career spanning nearly five decades, Sayyad has recorded different vital events, including the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. He also collaborated with the Associated Press News Agency for several years.



A poster for the exhibition named "Photo by M. Sayyad" by Iranian photojournalist Mohammad Sayyad.



A Taormina Film Fest's poster for "The Alien" bearing an image of Iranian actor Bakhtiar Panjei.

"The Alien" star Bakhtiar Panjei named best at Taormina Film Fest

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian actor Bakhtiar Panjei has been crowned best for his role in "The Alien" ("Namo") at the Taormina Film Fest in Italy.

Panjei portrays a teacher who is dispatched along with his family to a remote area.

The festival took place in the Sicily commune from July 11 to 19.

Directed by Nader Saeivar, "The Alien" had its world premiere at the Forum section of the 70th Berlin International Film Festival, which was held from February 20 to March 1.

Over 40 movies were screened in the official competition of the Taormina Film Fest.

In addition, the festival also hosted twelve documentaries, eleven independent European productions and four special events.