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Iran among high human development nations

The country's HDI grows by 38% in 28 years, UNDP says



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Zarif says had one-hour useful talk with Putin while in Russia

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says he has spoken with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the phone for an hour.

In remarks on Wednesday, Zarif said due to Putin's coronavirus protocol, he spoke on a secure line with the Russian president, IRNA reported.

He said he delivered President Hassan Rouhani's message, which was about the Iran nuclear deal and some bilateral issues, to Putin.

"It was a constructive conversation, and inshallah it will lead to good outcomes," the chief Iranian diplomat added.

Zarif said he had four hours of compact discussions with the Russians on Tuesday afternoon.

Accompanied by Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Zarif traveled to Moscow on Tuesday for talks with senior Russian officials, including his counterpart Sergei Lavrov. **→2**

5G technology makes debut in Iran

TEHRAN — An Iranian telecommunication company has launched the first center providing services based on the 5G technology in the country, ISNA reported.

5G stands for fifth-generation cellular wireless, and the initial standards for it were set at the end of 2017. It brings three new aspects to the table: bigger channels (to speed up data), lower latency (to be more

responsive), and the ability to connect a lot more devices at once (for sensors and smart devices).

The center was inaugurated in Tehran on Wednesday. President Hassan Rouhani has referred to the introduction of 5G technology as "good news" which brings "a significant digital reform" in the country.

Owj doc on Iran agriculture introduced at Center for Strategic Studies

TEHRAN — A documentary series on Iran's agriculture industry, which has been produced at the Owj Arts and Media Organization, was introduced during a session at the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) on Wednesday.

CSS director Hesameddin Ashena, director Ali Khosravi, producer Ahmad Shafiei and a number of experts attended the session.

The documentary named "Fruits Have

Remained on Trees" has been made in eight 25-minute episodes at Owj, a Tehran-based institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema.

"Those people who are behind this production are proponents of a school of documentary filmmaking that promotes talking to the officials through the language of pictures and films," said Ashena who is also an adviser to President Hassan Rouhani. **→12**

Identity plays central role in Persian Gulf states' foreign policy: expert

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Polina Anifotou, a PhD candidate of Iranian foreign policy, says the identity is the label affixed to this territory and has played a central role both in attempting to understand Persian Gulf states' foreign policy and in the useful planning for national and international policies.

She adds "The problem of the identities does not give us any hope for peace because there is cultural- historical and ideological antagonism between the successful multi-ethnic entity of Iran, with solid entities that do not produce any culture and have no real vision for its people as the Arab states."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Iran believes that the security order in the Persian Gulf must be achieved by the coastal states themselves. Based on this, Iran has proposed plans such as the "Regional Dialogue Forum" and the "Hormuz Peace Initiative". To what extent do you think these plans will be accepted by other countries in the region?

A: Iran through its history had always a pure and unique view about the region, its territory, its settlements and the historical and regimental changes in the neighborhood. This is a result of Iran as a "product" state of Persian Empire that left to Iran its heritage to know the map of Eurasia, Mesopotamia and Middle East (West Asia). Iran and its poets and historians described the populations of the region, their origins, and their traditions. For example in our days Tajikistan and Turkmenistan receive historical details of their land and population by Shahnameh and Rumi's poems. This situation cannot be anticipated by the Arab neighbors, that even from the religious perspective they have to study Iran as a culture, politics, ethnopsychology and references to Quran. Arabs after their decision not to follow Imam Ali, under the today challenge of Iran about the purity and authenticity of their religious existence, do feel competition with Iran from security perspective. When I say security, I both mean realistically as states and ideologically as a massive population depended its existence on Islam and Islamic laws as been interpreted not theologically but politically to serve interests as in the case of the House of Saud. **→7**

Why Zarif left Tehran for Moscow while Iraqi PM was heading to Iran

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's two-day visit to Tehran made headlines inside and outside Iran. It was the first foreign trip by al-Kadhimi since taking office in May. The Iraqi prime minister met many high-ranking Iranian officials including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, President Hassan Rouhani, Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

However, one senior official was remarkably absent from the talks that were held between Iranian and Iraqi delegations: Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

He was absent, because was not in Tehran. As the Iraqi prime minister boarded his flight in Baghdad at about 12:00 pm for Tehran, the chief Iranian diplomat's plane had already taken off from Tehran to Moscow.

Heading a big politico-economic delegation, al-Kadhimi arrived in Tehran on Tuesday noon to discuss a variety of bilateral issues such as expanding the volume of border trade and deepening political and security ties.

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 Juma Inad, Electricity Minister Majed Hantoush, National Security Advisor Qassem al-Araji and Head of Trade Bank of Iraq Faisal al-Haimus accompanied the prime minister on his first visit to a foreign country since taking office. **→3**

U.S. protests: Chaotic scenes in Portland as backlash to Federal deployment grows

By staff & agencies

The street demonstrations that have shuddered through Portland for 54 consecutive nights have drawn out a complicated mix of emotions and grievances.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf has said federal agents "will not retreat" in their efforts to protect government buildings in Portland.

"If you are a violent rioter looking to inflict damage to federal property or law enforcement officers, you need to find another line of work," he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump sent officers to Portland to protect federal property amid anti-racism protests.

But the mayor of Portland has called for them to leave the U.S. city.

There have been nightly protests against police brutality in Portland since the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, in

Minnesota in May.

In recent days, however, violent clashes between demonstrators and federal law enforcement officers have escalated.

■ **What did Chad Wolf say about the violence?**

Speaking during a press conference on Tuesday, Mr. Wolf said federal law enforcement officers in Portland were only targeting and arresting demonstrators who had been identified as being involved in "criminal activity".

He said the department respected the right of people to protest peacefully, but urged demonstrators to "please do so away from the violent activity taking place near the courthouse on a nightly basis".

On Monday evening, federal officers fired tear gas to disperse large crowds of protesters - some armed with hammers - who had gathered outside the city's courthouse and were throwing projectiles. **→10**

Study sheds new light on vestiges of burnt fabrics found in Persepolis

TEHRAN — The remains of burnt fabrics, which were found in the initial excavations of UNESCO-registered Persepolis in the southern province of Fars, were examined and studied during a 10-day project.

The small and various pieces of burnt fabrics, which have been kept in the treasure trove of the UNESCO-tagged site, were considered as remnants of the site's palaces' curtains, but the examination of the surface layer of this collection has shown they include

a variety of different fabrics and it seems they had different usages, ISNA quoted researcher Shahrazad Amin Shirazi as saying on Wednesday.

The project aimed at separating and identifying different parts of fabrics and prepares them for further studies and protections measures, the expert added.

She also noted that due to their nature, fabrics are considered to be among the most vulnerable objects and for this rea-

son, among the findings of archaeological excavations, they are much rarer and more limited than other objects, while the range of information that can be obtained by them is very wide.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province. **→8**

Iran's agricultural exports rise 6.8% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN — The value of Iran's agricultural exports increased 6.8 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced on Wednesday.

IRICA Deputy Head for Technical and Customs Affairs Mehrdad Jamal Orounaghi put the four-month agricultural exports at 2.706 million tons worth \$1.69 billion and said that the exports also show a 30-percent rise in terms of weight.

Last year, 2.074 million tons of agricultural products valued at \$1.582 billion had been exported during the first four months, the official added.

The acting head of Agriculture Ministry's Economic Affairs Department Shahrokh Shajari has put Iran's exports of the mentioned products at about 7.104 million tons worth \$5.8 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

In the previous year, over 6.941 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff products worth \$6.392 billion were also imported into the country, according to Shajari. **→4**

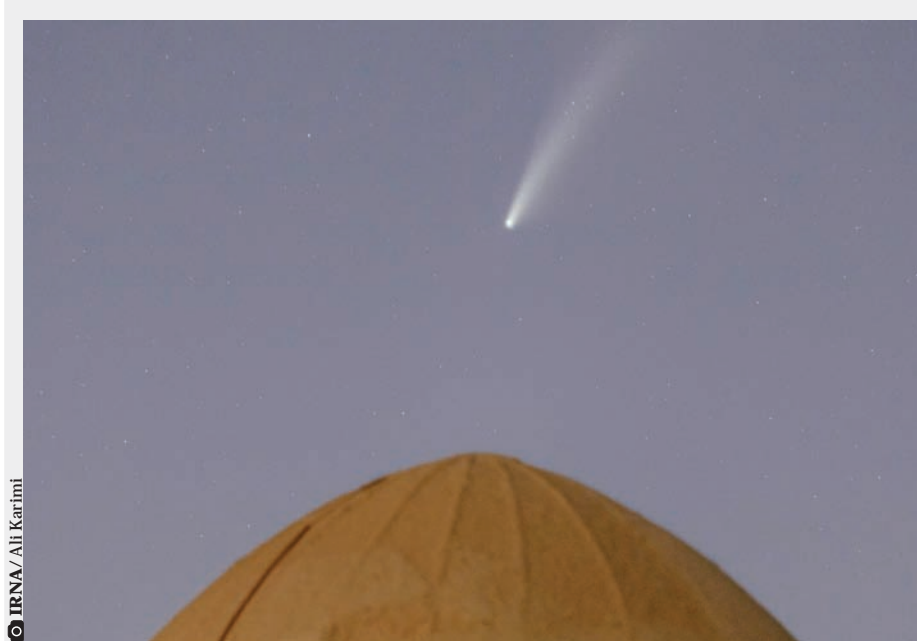
Condolences

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Ruhollah Rajaei, the editor-in-chief of the Persian daily Jam-e Jam. Our thoughts are with his family during these difficult times. May his soul rest in peace.

Tehran Times management and staff

Comet 'Neowise' shines over Iranian sky

Comet 'Neowise' was seen on Wednesday, July 22, in the night sky over the city of Arak, central Iran, much to the delight of skywatchers. Officially known as Comet C/2020 F3, it is the brightest to be seen in the Northern Hemisphere in 25 years. The comet disappears on July 23 and it won't be seen again for another 6,800 years.



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Rouhani: Iran after stronger ties with friends

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani says Iran is seeking to broaden its relations with its neighbors as well as other friendly countries.

"We hope to boost our cooperation with the neighbors including Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as all other friendly states such as China and Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea littoral states," Rouhani said during a cabinet session on Wednesday, Mehr reported.



The president also hailed Iran's constructive relations with China and Russia in the past years.

"In continuation of our diplomacy we have had fruitful talks with the Russian and Chinese sides in the past weeks to strengthen our relations," he remarked.

On Saturday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif made a one-day visit to the Iraqi cities of Baghdad and Erbil and held talks with senior officials of the country.

On Tuesday, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi arrived in Tehran for a two-day visit to discuss bilateral ties and hold talks on other important issues.

He met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, President Rouhani and other senior officials.

At a joint press conference with Kadhimi on Tuesday, Rouhani said Kadhimi's visit to Tehran will serve as a "milestone" in bilateral ties between the two neighbors.

"I am positive that this trip functions as a milestone in [the process of] development of the two friendly and brotherly countries' relations," he said.

Kadhimi, who assumed his country's premiership in May, had planned to visit Saudi Arabia on his first official trip, but he postponed the visit on account of Saudi King Salman's hospitalization for "some medical tests."

Rouhani said his administration was determined to take the volume of Iran and Iraq's annual bilateral trade to \$20 billion.

The president acknowledged that Kadhimi took over Iraq's premiership "in very sensitive circumstances." Nevertheless, his incumbency so far has witnessed "a favorable movement [forward]" in the development of the countries' bilateral trade, Rouhani added.

Russia backs Iran's membership in SCO

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has voiced his country's support for Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Speaking during a press conference with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif in Moscow on Tuesday, Lavrov said that



Moscow has been supporting Iran's membership bid to the SCO from the very beginning, IRNA reported.

The Russian foreign minister added that acceptance of Iran's request requires the unanimous vote by all the member states.

He noted that Moscow will do every effort in this regard. Zarif said that Iran enjoys all the privileges for full membership at the SCO.

He said that Russia sees no obstacle to Iran's full membership in the organization.

Iran has currently observer

status in the SCO.

Zarif visited Russia on Tuesday in his third trip to the country in the past six months.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi also accompanied him during the visit.

During the visit, Zarif talked with senior Russian leaders, including President Vladimir Putin and Lavrov, on different issues.

Zarif says had one-hour useful talk with Putin while in Russia

1 → During his meeting with Lavrov, Zarif said Iran-Russia relations are at their strongest in decades, adding that such sustainable ties will benefit both countries and guarantee global peace and security.

■ Zarif says delivered 'important' message to Putin

In a tweet late on Tuesday, Zarif said he delivered an "important" message from President Rouhani to President Putin.

Zarif said he had held extensive talks with Lavrov on bilateral cooperation as well as regional and global coordination, adding that Tehran and Moscow agreed to finalize a long-term comprehensive deal on strategic cooperation.

The top Iranian diplomat said both Tehran and Moscow had "identical views" on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with major world countries, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and highlighted the need for upholding international law.

The JCPOA was reached between Iran and six world powers — the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany — in 2015 in Austrian capital, Vienna.

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of the JCPOA and later adopted a "maximum pressure" policy against Tehran.

Although it is no longer a party to the deal, the U.S. is currently exerting pressure on the UN Security Council to extend an arms embargo against Iran, which will expire under the JCPOA in October.

Tehran has firmly rejected Washington's plans, stating that the U.S. is no longer a party to the nuclear deal ever since it withdrew from the multilateral agreement.

China and Russia have supported Iran's position.

Iraqi PM, Iranian parliament speaker hold talks, call for closer ties

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf held extensive talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on Wednesday morning.

"During the meeting, they discussed the enhancement of cooperation between the two countries in various fields. They also discussed the overall bilateral and regional developments and their effects on Iraq and Iran," according to a statement published by the Iraqi prime minister's media office on Wednesday morning.

Heading a big politico-economic delegation, the prime minister visited Tehran on Tuesday and Wednesday. He met several high-ranking Iranian officials including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, President Hassan Rouhani and Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani.

"The two sides discussed bilateral efforts to overcome the health and economic effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the challenges posed by the current economic crisis, as well as bilateral efforts to overcome them in a way that serves the interests of the Iraqi and Iranian people," according to the



Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi (L) held talks with Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf in Tehran on Wednesday.

same statement.

According to Tasnim, Ghalibaf said one of the Iranian parliament's main

priorities is to promote trade and economic relations with Iraq, as a strategic partner, and other neighbors.

Ghalibaf also condemned the U.S. assassination of top Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani in Iraq in early January, saying such a crime is not a simple issue and the assassination case must be pursued vigorously.

"We believe that the region will not achieve stability as long as foreign forces are present in the region," the speaker said, adding, "We also believe that a strong and developed Iraq would be a significant model for bilateral and regional relations."

The meeting between Ghalibaf and al-Kadhimi was held at the end of the Iraqi prime minister's visit to Iran. After the meeting, which was held at the Iranian parliament, al-Kadhimi left Tehran for Baghdad.

President Rouhani has called the visit a "turning point" in Iran-Iraq ties.

Speaking at a joint press conference with al-Kadhimi, Rouhani said that he was confident that the visit would be a turning point in developing Iran-Iraq relations as two friendly and brotherly countries.

"We are determined to increase the volume of trade between the two countries to \$20 billion," the presidential website quoted Rouhani as saying.

Zarif rejects as lie Bolton's quote from Putin

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has rejected claims made by former U.S. presidential advisor John Bolton who has said Russia was not interested in Iran's presence in Syria.

In his new book, "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir", Bolton claimed that Russian President Vladimir Putin told him during their meeting in the Kremlin in June 2018 that Moscow was not interested in Iran's presence in Syria.

Referring to the claim, Zarif said on Tuesday that Tehran does not believe such comments.

"We think it has nothing to do with the real state of things and the level of cooperation Iran maintains with Russia and Turkey in the interests of peace, stability and accord in Syria," he said, according to Mehr.

Zarif added that such stories were obviously meant to heighten interest to the book.

"But no one would ever believe these words either in Moscow or in Tehran," the chief Iranian diplomat stressed.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Russian For-

eign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Lavrov, in turn, said that Putin could have never said that Moscow doesn't need Iran in Syria because he is not in the habit of discussing such matters behind his partners' back.

"[Bolton] had no grounds to quote President Putin [that Russia allegedly doesn't want Iran's presence in Syria] because Putin has never said anything of the kind," Lavrov told a news conference after talks with Zarif in Moscow, TASS reported.

"It is against our traditions and principles, the more so it is against President Putin's principles, to discuss such things behind the back of our partners. We are tightly cooperating with Turkey and Iran in Syria."

"I refrain from commenting on the habit of American retired officials to write memoirs in such a way that entails litigations and lawsuits," Lavrov noted. "Probably, it is part of what can be called a specific political culture had it not been a quite different thing than what we typically call culture."

Zarif visited Moscow on Tuesday to hold talks with



senior Russian officials on issues of bilateral and regional significance. Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi also accompanied Zarif during his visit.

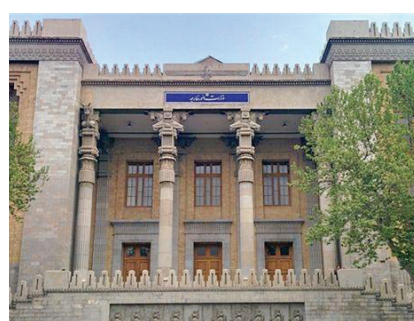
Foreign Ministry rejects South Korean news agency's claim on Iran's envoy

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Iranian Foreign Ministry rejected the news released by official South Korean News Agency (Yonhap) on summoning Iranian ambassador to Seoul, adding that the envoy has only been invited.

Iranian envoy to South Korea has not been summoned by the country's foreign ministry, but he has been invited, Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement.

The claim was based on an Iranian media's interpretation of a piece of news on the remarks of Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi; the statement noted, adding that Iranian Foreign Ministry's stances are published through valid sources, including the website of the Ministry.

The statement also said that the opinion of a media has nothing to do with the official stance of Iran's government



and Foreign Ministry.

Referring to Iran's funds blocked in South Korean banks, the statement reiterated that Tehran has put on the agenda to pursue the issue.

In relevant remarks in mid-July, Parliament's Vice-Speaker Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi castigated

South Korean government's freezing of Iran's oil revenues under the U.S. pressure, and added that Seoul's conduct is unethical and illegal.

Qazizadeh Hashemi issued an official warning on July 17 to the government of South Korea over its "unacceptable" and "unjustifiable" continuation of freezing Iran's funds in the country's banks.

Vice-Speaker of the Iranian Parliament said it is a source of regret and surprise that the South Korean government is blocking the Iranian nation's money under the U.S. pressure.

Qazizadeh Hashemi lashed out at Seoul's "rude" behavior and said it indicates South Korea is not committed to any ethical or legal principle.

South Korea is violating another nation's rights under the pressure of the U.S. bullies, he said, calling for the

Iranian Foreign Ministry's active pursuit of the release of the Iranian money.

Meanwhile, on July 15, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said his ministry will use every method to return frozen funds from South Korea, and noted that Seoul has been uncooperative on the issue.

Zarif said that the foreign ministry and Central Bank of Iran (CBI) have made many efforts to release the frozen money funds, adding that positive measures have been taken by some countries, like Oman and China, to return the money, but South Korea has done little.

Although South Korea is sure that the blocked money belongs to Iran, it claims there are problems in transferring the money due to illegal U.S. sanctions, he added.

Study: Why are intl. media so obsessed with 'ordinary' fires, blasts in Iran?

TEHRAN (Press TV) — A Twitter user has conducted a probe into Iranian media reports of fires and gas explosions that occurred in Iran from May to July 2019, and concluded that they were as frequent as similar incidents happening this year, in an attempt to downplay an ongoing media propaganda campaign attributing such incidents to acts of sabotage in Iran.

The research was conducted by Tiziana Corda, who introduces herself as a PhD Candidate at NASP (Network for the Advancement of Social and Political Studies) at the University of Milan and a foreign policy analyst specializing in issues related to Iran.

In a thread of tweets on Monday, she explained how she had conducted a comparative study of major fires and gas explosions in Iran between mid-May and end of July in 2019 and 2010, by digging into the archives of Iranian news agency IRNA.

Summarizing the results of her study, she said, "Excluding fires in green areas, from IRNA archive I recorded at least 97 fires/explosions in 2.5 months. Their seriousness varied a lot but, just like in 2020, also in 2019 there were explosions/fires at power plants, factories, hospitals, research centres, vessels, arms depots."

Corda also provided a link to the details of her research, in which she highlighted a massive media hype on incidents that were otherwise categorized as "ordinary" in Iran.

"Amid growing interest from international media in Iran's fires and explosions over the past few weeks, some analysts stressed the need not to overemphasize these events. Especially in the summer, especially in



a country with a record of (quite some) neglected infrastructure, these events are just ordinary," the research said.

Corda also described international media's "obsessive attention" to the latest incidents in Iran as "a bit inappropriate," adding that such events "occur frequently (unfortunately), so that those happening this year are not anomalies."

"Comparing 2020 with 2019, the only major difference lies in explosions at military or nuclear centers. Those hitting Natanz and Khojir some weeks ago were indeed worth investigating. But, apart from those, it would make little sense for the international media to continue covering obsessively every ordinary explosion taking place in the country, wouldn't it?"

Several Israeli and Western media outlets have been trying to attribute a chain of fires and gas explosions across Iran to Tel Aviv and its staunch ally Washington,

claiming that those incidents could be a shift in strategy in dealing with Tehran after the so-called U.S. "maximum pressure" campaign failed to make Iran surrender.

Israeli daily Haaretz reported recently that although most of the recent incidents in Iran are "related to a low level of maintenance of the country's infrastructure sites," they continue to attract international attention.

"Western media outlets attribute some of the incidents to a deliberate campaign of sabotage, sponsored by Israel and perhaps the United States — and are thereby indirectly spurring Tehran to initiate a response that would make it clear that it is determined to protect its interests," the report said.

Iranian officials have rejected almost all those attributions, saying the fires reported at different facilities across the country were not caused deliberately.

An investigation is, however, underway into an incident earlier this month that caused damage to a shed under construction at the Natanz nuclear complex in central Iran.

Tehran has not officially declared whether it was an accident or an act of sabotage, but said the main cause has been determined and will be announced at an appropriate time.

However, by adopting the Israeli regime's usually ambivalent tone, some Israeli officials have attempted to suggest that the incident was an act of sabotage and collect credit for Tel Aviv.

Iranian officials have said much of the speculation linking the incident to Israel is nothing but bluster, but have sternly warned Tel Aviv of serious consequences if it was found to have had a hand in it.

Why Zarif left Tehran for Moscow while Iraqi PM was heading to Iran

1→ Considering that the Iraqi foreign minister was visiting Iran, Zarif was expected to be in Tehran to hold talks with his Iraqi counterpart, because two days earlier he had been on a tour of Baghdad that included several meetings with Iraqi military and political officials, and that he may have been in need of following up on the understandings he reached in Baghdad.

But it seems that discussions in Moscow were so important to Zarif that he left Tehran on the same day the Iraqi prime minister was making a visit to Iran that Rouhani later called a "turning point" in Iran-Iraq ties.

■ Another 'strategic document'

Analysts believe that three reasons may have been behind Zarif's trip to Moscow.

First reason has to do with the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). At the end of his visit to Russia, Zarif said that the JCPOA was one of the most important issues he discussed in Moscow.

The JACO has been on life support since Donald Trump pulled his country out of it on May 8, 2018. The U.S. is also working to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran, which is scheduled to expire in October. While the European signatories to the deal — France, Germany and the UK — continue to send mixed signals on the arms embargo, Russia and China firmly oppose the U.S. efforts in this regard. Zarif has said that Russia has taken a "very appropriate stance" on the U.S. policies against the JCPOA. He also said that he delivered an "important message" from President Rouhani to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The top diplomat said both Tehran and Moscow had "identical views" on the nuclear deal.

Second, Zarif discussed extending a decades-long treaty between Iran and Russia, which is about to expire. The treaty was signed on 12 March 2010 between the two countries for a period of 10 years. But it was extended twice. Zarif said the treaty needs to be updated in a way that keep up with the developments that have been achieved in



Iran-Russia relations during the past two decades.

Iran and China are also negotiating to finalize the text of a comprehensive strategic partnership.

"Iran and Russia are pursuing a greater plan to draft a strategic document that could shape their relations for the years to come," Dr. Shuaib Bahman, a Russia expert, told the Tehran Times.

Bahman said that Zarif discussed many issues of mutual significance such as the JCPOA and regional developments during his visit to Moscow, but the main purpose of his visit was to draft this document.

Syria could well be the third reason behind the Zarif trip to Moscow.

"Regional issues such as Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen are very important to us, and we had the opportunity to hold talks in this regard," Iran's chief diplomat said at the end of his visit to Russia.

He also said that he had a "very good"

discussions with his Russian counterpart.

■ Media campaigns

Zarif and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a joint press conference during Zarif's visit to Moscow. The press conference was overshadowed by former U.S. national security advisor John Bolton's allegations on Iran-Russia cooperation in Syria.

In his new, controversial book titled "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir", Bolton claimed that Putin told him during their meeting in the Kremlin in June 2018 that Moscow was not interested in Iran's presence in Syria. This claim may have raised some concerns in Tehran. Even if it was not true, it could have played into the hands of some regional players, who are eager to drive a wedge between Iran and Russia in Syria, or at least use the claims made by Bolton to create a sense of Iranian-Russian disagreement over Syria through media campaigns.

But the Russian foreign minister told the

news conference after holding talks with Zarif that Putin could have never said that Moscow doesn't need Iran in Syria, because he is not in the habit of discussing such matters behind his partners' back.

"[Bolton] had no grounds to quote President Putin (that Russia allegedly doesn't want Iran's presence in Syria) because Putin has never said anything of the kind," the TASS news agency quoted Lavrov as saying on Tuesday. "It is against our traditions and principles, the more so it is against President Putin's principles, to discuss such things behind the back of our partners, we are tightly cooperating with Turkey and Iran in Syria."

Zarif said that he doesn't believe Bolton's claims either.

"We think it has nothing to do with the real state of things and the level of cooperation Iran maintains with Russia and Turkey in the interests of peace, stability and accord in Syria," Zarif said.

Analysts believe that Iran-Russia ties are so strong that allegations, like what Bolton said, cannot undermine them.

Bahman said that Iran and Russia have a very close cooperation in Syria.

"Iranian-Russian cooperation in Syria has continued unabated, and this annoys Arab and Western countries. That's why they launch media campaigns against Iranian-Russian cooperation. But these campaigns cannot harm Iran-Russia ties," he told the Tehran Times.

Some even believe that Russia is planning to expand its cooperation with Iran in regional issues.

"The U.S. hegemony in the region is being weakened. Instead, regional cooperation is being strengthened. World powers like Russia and China want to have a close cooperation with Iran. Because in issues like international peace and stability, free trade as well as combating terrorism, Iran has reached a position that world powers like China and Russia see the cooperation with Iran as a way to secure their interests," Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's ambassador to Iraq, told the Tehran Times.

Development of ties on top of Iraqi PM's visit to Iran: expert

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — International affairs expert Sabah Zangeneh has said that development of ties with Iran is on top of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's visit to Tehran.

He told IRNA in an interview published on Wednesday that Iran-Iraq relations are so intertwined that no side can sideline the other.

However, Zangeneh said, the United States has been seeking to weaken relations between Iran and Iraq. But, he added, it will not succeed.

Kadhimi arrived in Tehran on Tuesday. He met with President Hassan Rouhani and Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei among other officials.

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, National Security Advisor Qassem al-Araji and Head of Trade Bank of Iraq Faisal al-Haimus were accompanying the prime minister on his first visit to



a foreign country since taking office.

Rouhani said that Iran and Iraq wish 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 a joint

press conference with al-Kadhimi.

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.

For his part, al-Kadhimi told reporters that his visit to Tehran was aimed at strengthening ties between Iran and Iraq.

"The Iraqi people are eager to have cooperative relations with Iran on the basis of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs," Al-Jazeera news network quoted al-Kadhimi as saying.

The prime minister added, "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. That's why Iraq is standing by Iran so that it tackles its economic challenges. Iraq has become a market for Iranian goods."

'Iran-Oman ties expanded even in coronavirus pandemic'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Omani Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Masoud al-Sunaidi said on Wednesday that ties between Iran and Oman have been on the rise even during the coronavirus pandemic, which shows efforts on the two sides to strengthen relations.

"When the relations between countries

have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and have been reduced, Oman's relations with Iran have not been reduced and have even been expanded, which shows the two countries' efforts to boost ties," he said during a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Muscat Mohammad Reza Nouri Shahroudi. The Iranian diplomat praised efforts to

increase cooperation and relations.

Oman dispatched a batch of sanitary and medical items to Iran in May to help the country in the fight against the coronavirus.

The consignment, weighing some 40 tons, was comprised of medical equipment and medicine for preventing and curing COVID-19, ISNA reported.



FM says Iran-China partnership is transparent

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday that 25-year cooperation plan between Iran and China is transparent and there is nothing secret about it.

"If Majlis' approval is needed, the necessary legal actions will be done and the people will be informed about it transparently. All the stages have been announced and there is nothing secret," he told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

Zarif noted, "The people feel assured that neither this administration nor any other administration will give a handspan of Iran's soil and will not let exclusive use of a handspan of Iran's soil."

The foreign minister also said that the agreement is not finalized yet, however, the two countries are close to reach a deal.

Talking in an open session of the parliament on July 5, Zarif said, "The agreement was discussed in the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Leader of the Islamic Revolution [Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei]. We announced the issue to the people. In last year's visit, I took this agreement to China and it was announced. When China responded to our draft, we announced it and when China accepted negotiation with us, the issue was announced."

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.

President Hassan Rouhani has said the strategic partnership is based on a win-win approach.

Li Li, an associate professor at Southwest University (SWU) in China, tells the Tehran Times that Iran-China partnership deal is based on the principles of "mutual national interests", "fairness" and "reciprocity" and it "challenges U.S. hegemony".

Foreign media have launched a campaign against the partnership between Iran and China.

"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 avoidable. 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," Li says.

Jin Liangxiang, a senior research fellow at Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, also says China and Iran have every reason to establish and strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP).

Writing in the Tehran Times on Tuesday, Jin said, "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."

Iran receives body of dead fugitive judge: report

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A report published by Nour News on Wednesday says that Iran has received the body of fugitive judge Gholamreza Mansouri who was found dead in a hotel in Romania.



"Police of Romania has sent a report of 29 pages, however, pictures recorded by closed-circuit camera have not been sent which has caused doubts about the case," said the report.

Tehran confirmed on June 19 the death of Mansouri who was accused of corruption and taking more than \$500,000 in bribes.

Mansouri was found dead of apparent suicide at a hotel in Romania where he had been staying.

He was a co-defendant in a major financial corruption trial involving several senior judges accused of embezzlement and bribery.

"We are awaiting the official report of the cause of this incident and we ask Romanian authorities to officially inform us of the precise cause of this incident," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on June 19.

Iran's Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri has asked his Romanian counterpart to launch a serious investigation into the death of Mansouri.

In his letter which was published on June 22, Montazeri explained that Mansouri was wanted by Iran's Judiciary, which pursued his case through Interpol and got him arrested.

But he was announced dead by the Romanian government, he added.

The Bucharest prosecutor's office released a report on June 23 according to which Mansouri had been killed in a violence and also in haste.

The prosecutor's office said the cause of the death become clear after an autopsy.

It said Mansouri's death was due to a blow by a hard object which did not occur in a natural state, the report said, according to the Mizan online.

U.S. 'maximum pressure' against Iran failed: Washington Post

TEHRAN (Press TV) — The Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has failed to achieve any of the U.S. objectives, according to The Washington Post.

The Washington Post editorial published on Tuesday states that Washington unleashed its so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran in 2018, when it left the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



Following U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, Washington targeted Tehran with its "toughest ever" economic sanctions.

However, the administration's "maximum pressure" campaign not only failed in its objectives, including renegotiation of the Iran nuclear deal, prevention of Tehran's growing influence in the Middle East, as well as "regime change", but also, unintentionally strengthened China's bilateral relation with Tehran.

The article stresses that the Trump's administration's policy resulted "in a powerful new blow to U.S. interests, in the form of an Iranian partnership with China that could rescue Iran's economy while giving Beijing a powerful new place in the region."

According to the Post article, "Trump's confrontational approach to China in recent months, including his refusal to continue work on a comprehensive trade deal, has given Mr. Xi [Jinping] little incentive to cooperate with Washington's geopolitical priorities. On the contrary, the Chinese leadership likely perceives a moment of critical U.S. weakness as Mr. Trump flounders amid a health and economic crisis and is moving to take advantage. It is expanding its presence in the South China Sea; it is crushing Hong Kong's autonomy. Allying itself with the foremost U.S. adversary in the Middle East opens yet another front."

The Post article concluded that the hostile U.S. policy towards China, exacerbated by the hostilities of Washington's trade war on the Chinese nation, was pushing Beijing to shield U.S. adversaries from Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign.

In addition, China would gain more by "demonstrating U.S. impotence" as Iran becomes immune to the U.S. "pressure campaign".

"Trump is mistaken if he believes 'maximum pressure' is getting him closer to a deal with Iran. The policy is not leading to Iran's capitulation or collapse, but entrenching U.S.-Iran hostilities and keeping the United States perennially at the cusp of war in the Middle East," according to another article published in the Foreign Policy.

The leading U.S. foreign policy magazine advised "Trump to ditch maximum pressure and rebuild the trust necessary for successful negotiations."

"International relations and the real estate market are not similar," it pointed out to the former realtor.

"Bullying and bluster do not win deals; mutual respect and 'win-win, compromise do," it concluded.

Iran’s agricultural exports rise 6.8% in 4 months on year

1 → Watermelons, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and shallots were the top five exported products in the previous year in terms of weight, while in terms of value, pistachios, apples, tomatoes, pistachio kernels, and watermelons were the five major export products, the official said.



Shajari further pointed to the major imported items in terms of weight, saying, corn, barley, soybean meal, soybean, and untreated sugar were the top five imported items, while in terms of value livestock corn, rice, barley, and soybeans were the top imported products.

Iran, Iraq stress expansion of customs co-op

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) and the Iraqi Finance Minister held talks on Tuesday, calling for strengthening customs and border cooperation between the two countries, IRIB reported.

In a meeting on the sidelines of a visit between Iraq’s Prime Minister Mostafa al-Kadhimi and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Mehdi Mirashrafi and Ali Allawi emphasized the reopening of Iran-Iraq borders and boosting customs cooperation.

During the meeting, the Iraqi minister underlined his government’s interest in joint cooperation and using Iran’s customs experiences, especially in the field of electronic procedures and automation.

Regarding his country’s borders with Iran, he announced the Iraqi government’s decision on reopening southern borders as soon as possible.

Regarding the technical cooperation between the two countries, Allawi called for sending Iraqi customs experts and staff to Iran to use the technical experiences of the Iranian customs.

The establishment of a joint trade gateway was also emphasized between the Iraqi minister of finance and the IRICA head.

Quarterly fishery exports stand at \$37.4m

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s value of fishery exports reached \$37.42 million during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Rouhollah Latifi put the weight of fishery exports at 23,462 tons, of which 606 tons valued at \$272,000 were caviars. Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

The official named Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, United Arab Emirates, China, Hong Kong, Russia, Thailand, Azerbaijan, Qatar, Kuwait, and Armenia as some of the export destinations of the Iranian fishery products during the three-month period.

He also put the country’s fishery imports at 3,305 tons worth \$6.979 million during the first quarter, and mentioned Singapore, China and India as the major exporters to Iran.

On June 10, Iran’s Veterinary Organization announced that the country has resumed exports of fishery products to the European Union (EU) member states.



As announced by the Iranian Agriculture Ministry, despite the U.S. sanctions that have created many problems for the export of fishery products, through the efforts made by the veterinary organization, the country succeeded to obtain again the license to export aquaculture and fishery products to the member states of the European Union.

Iran’s fishery output reached 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has announced.

Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The official noted that the output, which was more than the projected amount, was achieved through the help of research sectors as well as the ground laid by the private sector.

Referring to the high quality of Iran’s fishery products, the head of IFO said that these products were sold easily in the export markets.

In mid-January, the official had also said that new export destinations have welcomed Iran’s high-quality fishery products in the past Iranian calendar year.

New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have opened up for Iranian fishery products in the current year, Khoun-Mirzaei said.

“Based on the negotiations and agreements signed between Iran and China by the minister of agriculture, the Chinese fishery market has been opened to Iranian products. The Eurasian nations and South Korean markets have also welcomed Iranian fishery products and have the potential for exports,” the official explained.

According to the deputy head of Fishery Organization Hossein Ali Abdolhay, some 12 aquatic species are already bred in Iran and the figure is planned to reach 17 by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021).

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Iran’s Agricultural Parks Company (APC) Ali Ashraf Mansouri has recently announced that some 1,500 hectares of fishery parks are planned to be inaugurated in the country in the current year.

Domestic production of auto parts to save Iran €300m in a year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Domestic production of auto parts is estimated to save Iran €300 million during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), deputy industry, mining, and trade minister for industry affairs announced.

Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki said that the saving will be achieved through the ministry’s domestic production promotion expert desks between auto part manufacturers and car makers, IRNA reported.

The official also announced that deals worth €277 million were signed between auto part manufacturers and car makers in the previous year through three domestic production promotion desks.

In mid-May last year, the previous industry, mining and trade minister issued a directive on “strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts”.

Addressing two of his deputies, Farshad Moqimi, deputy for industrial affairs, and Mohammad-Baqer Ali, the board chairman of Iran’s Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO), Reza Rahmani put emphasis on using the highest potential of human resources for strengthening domestic manufacturing of auto parts which are currently imported to the country.

This movement should be all-out promoted to combat sanctions and also prevent from exit of foreign currency from the country, the minister noted.

He said the policy of domestic manufacturing of auto parts should be seriously followed up, and in this due the capable manufacturers should be seriously supported.

The ministry has also unveiled a 10-section plan in early February for improving the status of car makers, in which the two major car makers of the country have been ordered to support auto part manufacturers.

Mentioning this plan, Farshad Moqimi said: “Under the condition when the enemy



has put the country’s auto manufacturing industry under the pressure, we should try to reduce our reliance on imports in this sector specially imports of auto parts.”

Moqimi had also stressed that the regulations should be in a way that remove the barriers in the way of domestic production.

“When a regulation is set, it may remove a problem but creates another one. Taking this issue into account and also considering the special current condition of the country, some special approach should be taken when setting the regulations”, the official said.

Following the orders of Industry Ministry, domestic car makers started a research movement titled “Domestic Manufacturing of Imported Parts”.

The movement is aimed at creating the condition and opportunity for cooperation among domestic manufacturers, knowl-

edge-based companies and startups.

■ Current year’s 1st domestic production promotion desk meeting held

As announced by deputy industry minister, the current year’s first domestic production promotion expert desk meeting on auto parts has been held two weeks ago with the aim of saving the country €66 million.

In mid-January, the official noted that the industry ministry’s programs for the promotion of domestic production are going to save \$10 billion for the country in the next two years.

Meanwhile, as announced by the secretary of Specialized Manufactures of Auto Parts Association in late December last year, Iranian carmakers have prepared some incentive packages to encourage investment making by the auto parts manufacturers.

Arash Mohebinejad said that offering these

Chabahar to receive several mobile harbor cranes by Mar. 2021

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said India has ordered the necessary equipment for Chabahar port’s development project and the port will receive several mobile harbor cranes during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to Mohammad Rastad, India is currently pursuing the construction and installing of the necessary equipment in the port under the framework of a temporary operation contract, and after finishing this phase the main build-operate-transfer (BOT) contract will be activated.

Rastad further noted that the grain suckers, gate cranes as well as gantry cranes of Shahid Rajaei port were installed last year, and only the equipment that is related to the commitment of the Indian operator remained.

The official noted that most of the equipment that is already installed in the port are home-made.

Earlier this month, Indian Ambassador to Iran



Ghaddam Dharmendra told the Tehran Times that the Indian partners are using Iranian facilities in the port but they have placed orders for the necessary equipment from China, Italy, Finland, and Germany and hope that

the first delivery will be in October.

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

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

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

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

India is currently developing phase 1 of Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

TPO holds meeting of Commodity-Country Desk on trade with UAE

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) held a meeting of its Commodity-Country Desk on trade with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Tuesday, TPO website published.

Participated by TPO Head Hamid Zadboim, the meeting was aimed at discussing the ways for increasing exports of agricultural products to the UAE.

As announced by the director-general of TPO’s office of Arabian and African countries, the value of Iran’s exports to the United Arab Emirates has increased eight percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) compared to the first quarter of the past year.

Farzad Piltan said that Iran has exported commodities worth about \$1 billion to the UAE during the first three months of this year.

The official also said that Iran’s quarterly export of products to the UAE has experienced a 40-percent growth in terms of weight to stand at 3.4 million tons.

Iran and United Arab Emirates resumed bilateral trade exchange via sea, Fars news agency reported on June 5, quoting the ports affairs director of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO).

Ravanbakhsh Behzadian said that maritime trade between Iran and the UAE had been halted since the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic.

“According to the new health guidelines

and protocols, these business communications have resumed between the two countries,” he added.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government is pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20).

In May, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri called for developing non-oil exports as the only way for realizing the motto of the surge in production.

“The Foreign Affairs Ministry should provide the necessary bases for the development of [non-oil] exports by expanding and strengthening economic diplomacy,” he said in a meeting on reviewing ways of boosting economic relations with the neighboring countries and supporting

non-oil exporters.

Iran shares borders with fifteen countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

Emphasizing that 15 neighboring countries and countries such as China and India and Eurasian members should be targeted as the most important export destinations of the country, Jahangiri called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant agencies to strengthen economic diplomacy and focus on these export destination countries to provide the necessary infrastructure for the development of exports to these nations.

Tehran, Baghdad finalizing foreign currency agreement

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran and Iraq are finalizing a foreign currency agreement, based on which several billions of dollar will be injected into Iran’s market in the near future, an official with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said.

Hamid Ghanbari, who accompanied Foreign Affair Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a visit to Iraq on Sunday, said

the two sides held positive talks and agreed on expanding foreign currency and banking ties.

“During this visit, useful and constructive talks were held with the Iraqi side, the results of which will be finalized during the visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister and the accompanying delegation to Tehran,” Ghanbari said.

Almost a year ago, Iran and Iraq inked a banking agree-

ment and the CBI governor made a trip to Iraq almost a month ago.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi arrived in the Iranian capital Tehran on Tuesday noon.

The trip follows Iranian foreign minister’s visit to Baghdad and Erbil on Sunday.

Iranian advanced industries need over \$16.6b this year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Iran’s Advanced Industries Research and Development Fund (AIRDF) has said that the country’s advanced industries require 700 trillion rials (about \$16.66 billion) of funding in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021). IRNA reported.

“The amount of credit required by the country’s advanced industries this year is 700 trillion rials, but due to the country’s economic conditions and the fund’s limited capital and the government’s modified budget, this figure may not be realized,” Reza Naqipour-Asl said.

According to Nagipour-Asl, the fund has put various programs on agenda to fulfill the slogan of the year which is “surge in production”; one of this programs is to facilitate the payment of loans for knowledge-based companies that refer to the fund.

The official noted that the fund has no restrictions on the payment of facilities to advanced industries, and this year it should move towards guarantee-based supports of such industries so that, given the limited capital of the fund, at least by providing guarantees some of the problems of this sector can be resolved.

One other measure which can be taken

considering the fund’s limited resources this year is to provide expert services to the applicant companies; this is also on the agenda, he said.

Back in February, Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry announced that AIRDF provided a total of 58 loans worth 491.28 billion rials (about \$11.6 million) to the advanced industries in the first 11 months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019-February 19, 2020).

AIRDF holding is a subsidiary of Iran’s industry, mining, and trade ministry.

The industry ministry has been following several programs for promoting domestic



production and increasing exports in the current Iranian calendar year.

Coming under seven major axes, the ministry’s programs mainly focus on boosting production in various industrial sectors.

Iran bound to its energy commitments to Iraq: VP

ENERGY

TEHRAN — Iran's First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Tuesday that Iran is determined to fulfill its commitments regarding the supply of electricity and gas to Iraq even in the peak summer period, Shana reported.

"[In return], we expect Iraq to make the payments for these services," Jahangiri said in a meeting with a high-ranking Iraqi delegation headed by Iraqi Prime Minister Mostafa al-Kadhimi in Tehran.

The official noted that the two countries have several areas for developing mutual economic cooperation, saying: "Fortunately, the cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad has grown to an acceptable level in various sectors, including oil, gas and electricity, but there are still many other areas for the development of bilateral economic relations."

He said that the prerequisite for the development of economic relations is having banking and financial relations, and called for speeding up the implementation of banking and financial agreements.



The Iraqi Prime Minister for his part underlined the new Iraqi government's deter-

mination for expansion of all-out ties with Iran, saying: "Our government is ready to

activate the two countries' joint economic committee."

"The new Iraqi government took office amid the difficult economic and social situation and the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, but we managed to start having the support of all people including Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, as well as regional and neighboring countries," he said adding: "I hope we can overcome all the problems with each other's help."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi arrived in Tehran at the head of a high-level political and economic delegation on Tuesday evening to hold talks with senior Iranian officials.

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

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

First geothermal power plant in Iran to steam out of inactive volcano

TEHRAN (Press TV) —Iran expects to bring online its first geothermal power plant before the end of the current Persian year in March 2021, Press TV quoted an energy ministry director as saying.

Located at the foot of the massive Sabalan Mountain, the Meshkinshahr geothermal plant is being developed by Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) to produce five megawatts of electricity.

"The exploration of the first geothermal reservoir in Sabalan proper and Meshkinshahr district is one of the great achievements of the ministry of energy," project manager Soheil Porkhial said.

Based on discoveries made in the area, there is a potential to produce a minimum of 50 MW and a maximum of 500 MW of electricity around Sabalan, an inactive stratovolcano.

Geothermal power refers to the use of underground hot steam to drive turbines which in turn generate electricity. It is cheaper and more reliable than other renewable energy sources, such as thermal or hydro power.

"The cost of generating electricity in geothermal power plants is much lower than the cost of generating electricity in gas thermal power plants, which makes the use of this energy cost-effective," Porkhial said.

Greenhouse gas emissions in geothermal power plants are a small fraction of those produced in gas-powered stations and even far less in coal-powered facilities.

The project at hand had initially been approved as a 50 MW by drilling 18 steam wells, but due to budget constraints only seven well were spudded, making 5 MW of geothermal power available for the first time in Iran before the end of the Persian year.

Besides power generation, the geothermal energy will be used for heating purposes in the region's harsh winters and cooling in the summer, officials have said.

According to Porkhial, the exploration of high temperature water reservoirs started before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, leading to the discovery of four potential geothermal energy sites in Damavand, Sabalan, Sahand and other mountains in Khoy and Maku.

"Initially, all exploration work on geothermal resources was carried out by foreign experts, but now the entire operations are being done domestically, thanks to the country's knowledge-based potentials," he said.

"We have now reached complete self-sufficiency in exploration, making 3D modelling of reservoirs possible," he added.

Iran dominated the West Asia's renewable production capacity which rose 13 percent to 22,710 MW last year, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) says.

The country is in a race to introduce a mix of power generation to cut its use of fossil fuels, but US sanctions have clipped its wings.

Before Trump reimposed sanctions on Iran in May 2018, the Islamic Republic expected its installed renewable capacity to grow at least sevenfold over the next five years.

Norway's Saga Energy cancelled a \$2.9 billion deal to install 2,380 megawatts (MW) in renewable capacity in the oil-producing country.

British firm Quercus had signed a deal to help build the world's sixth-largest solar farm in central Iran, investing over half a billion euros, but it abandoned the project in fear of the US sanctions.

Dutch energy firm Global Renewables Investments (GRI) planned to build up solar and wind farms that could produce up to 1,700 MW of electricity, but it followed its European peers in leaving Iran.

Iran's plans to install 5,000 MW of renewables by 2022, according to officials. The country is a signatory of the 2015



Paris climate agreement committing 195 nations to limit their carbon emissions.

Six new solar plants will come online in Fars province in southern Iran Thursday, marking another watershed in the country's path to a decarbonized energy system.

Scientific studies suggest Iran can increase electricity generation from the renewables to up to 80,000 MW, of which around 80 percent can come from the solar energy.

Increase in renewable capacity can also allow Iran to free up a significant amount of natural gas burnt in thermal power plants and feed it to export pipelines.

Hydropower comprises the bulk of Iran's renewable capacity, nominally put at 12,000 MW. Hydroelectric plants, however, produced less for many years because of a protracted drought which caused dam levels to plunge. According to officials, Iran's hydroelectric power plants can produce at least 10,000 MW.

The country has an additional renewable production capacity of some 900 MW from other sources such as wind power, solar farms and burning of biomass and waste.

80% of goods supplied to NISOC are domestically made

TEHRAN (Shana) — The Managing Director of the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) said over 80 percent of the goods supplied for the company were procured by domestic manufacturers.

According to NISOC, Ahmad Mohammadi said: "Only five percent of the items needed by the company are provided from foreign direct purchases, which means a big step in the self-reliance of Iran's oil industry."

He considered startups and knowledge-based companies as new members of the oil industry family, and said: "With constructive efforts and interaction, we



have been able to find key and advanced goods and equipment for the oil industry, such as downhole pumps, drilling bits and rigs, some rotating machinery, precision instruments and chemicals."

Lordegan petchem to export 80% of sales

TEHRAN (Shana) — The CEO of Lordegan Petrochemical Company announced the launch of this complex in the very near future, and said: "It is predicted that 80 percent of the products of this company will be exported."

According to the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), Mohsen Mahmoudi, in the annual general assembly of Lordegan Urea Fertilizer Company, presented the performance report of this project, and announced its launch in the very near future.

The percentage of domestic and export sales quotas of the company would be determined and predicted by the relevant authorities but it would be 80% of the company's sales, he said.

The CEO of Lordegan Urea Fertilizer Company touched on the company's commitment to sell products only to China: "The company is not committed to exporting the products only to China in the financing agreements it has signed with China. The company may also have China as a buyer in its dealings based on its decisions, but it has no sole obligation to sell to China."

China's H1 solar panel output jumps 15.7 percent, industry body says

China produced 59 gigawatts (GW) worth of solar panels in the first half of the year, up 15.7 percent from a year ago, Reuters reported, quoting an official with the country's solar industry association.

Wang Bohua, vice-chairman of the China Photovoltaic Industry Association, told an online briefing that newly installed solar power capacity also inched up 0.9 percent in the first half, reaching 11.5 GW. The full-year increase is expected to reach 35-45 GW, he said.

China has been stripping new solar power projects of subsidy after a record 53-GW capacity increase in 2017 left the state with a payment backlog now in excess of 200 billion yuan (\$28.70 billion).

Many plants can now operate without subsidy, with 36 GW of the projects approved so far this year set to sell power to the grid at the same price as coal-fired plants, up 145



percent compared with last year, Wang said.

"The cost of solar products are falling more rapidly than expected," he said, noting that construction costs were now as low as 3.96 yuan per watt, a milestone reached three years earlier than forecast.

However, the coronavirus outbreak also had an impact on the costs of raw materials in the first half, he said.

Exports were also robust this year, he said, with shipments of completed solar module hitting 27.7 GW from January to May, down 1.8 percent on the year, though earnings fell as a result of the price decline.

Solar module exports to the United States reached \$310 million from January to May, Wang said, twenty times higher than last year, with trade hit by punitive tariffs.

China's total solar exports were worth \$6.5 billion over the first five months of the year.

Iraq increases oil exports in July, still above OPEC+ target

Iraq's crude oil exports have increased so far in July, according to shipping data and industry sources, suggesting OPEC's second-largest producer is still undershooting its pledge in an OPEC-led supply cut deal.

As reported by Reuters, southern Iraqi exports in the first 20 days of July averaged 2.70 million bpd, according to the average of figures from Refinitiv Eikon and two industry sources, unchanged from June's figures for

exports from southern Iraq.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, known as OPEC+, began a record supply cut in May to bolster oil prices hammered by the coronavirus crisis. Iraq is cutting output by 1.06 million bpd under the deal.

The July figures imply Iraq is still some way from fulfilling its pledges and is exporting far more than a July loading program indicated.

Iraq had told OPEC+ it would make up for over-production in May and June through larger cuts in later months.

The south is the main outlet for Iraq's crude, so its cut should show up in lower exports.

Exports from northern Iraq increased in July, according to tanker data and two industry sources. So far, northern exports are at least 450,000 bpd, they said, which would be up from 370,000 bpd in June.

The boost in northern shipments means Iraq's exports are up by 80,000 bpd so far in July.

In June, Iraq delivered about 88 percent of its cut, according to Reuters calculations based on OPEC data. If exports in July hold steady, adherence has fallen to 65 percent, based on Reuters calculations.

Iraq says it is in the country's interest to comply with the current deal.

New generation feedback sensors installed in Siri turbines

TEHRAN (Shana) — Experts at the turbine repair unit of the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) in Siri Island southern Iran, have replaced oil feedback sensors with new generation of the items that were made in Iran in Siemens SGT-200 turbines.

According to IOOC, the new generation of non-contact feedback types called LVDT which stands for Linear Variable Differential Transformer. In addition to solving the problems with the previous generation of feedbacks, the item has a much higher accuracy than the original model.

Due to the inherent differences between the two sensors, this replacement required changes to the mechanism control system, so in collaboration with the turbine repair unit and a knowledge-based company, the research work of this project was done for the first time and finally the prototype of the new generation was delivered to the turbine repair unit.

Big Oil can play big role in frontier markets' energy transition

Recent multibillion-dollar asset writedowns by BP and Shell, signaling that at least a portion of their portfolio did not represent future value, have come amid the rising tide of references to oil and gas as a sunset industry.

According to Financial Times, perhaps the exploration and production business has passed its apogee. But that does not mean oil and gas companies have lost their purpose as energy producers. The future of E&P companies may be different than the future of the E&P industry itself.

Larger E&P or Big Oil companies have important capabilities critical for the energy transition especially in developing countries. The E&P business is a unique, extraordinarily collaborative business and should have a significant role to play in developing large renewable investments in emerging and frontier markets.

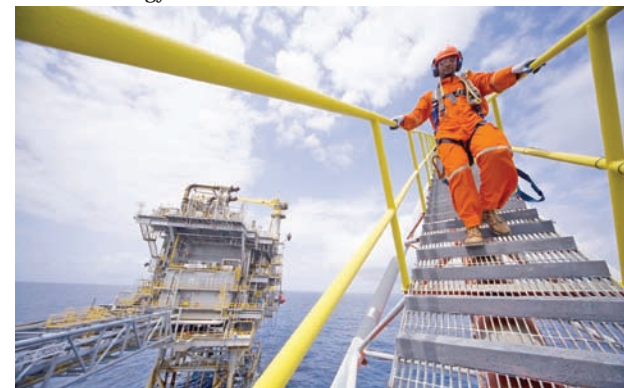
Over decades, global E&P companies have developed an ability to assemble partnerships with diverse groups of financial, technical and service companies. They are skilful in working with governments and regulatory agencies and, in fact, have helped spawn entire energy sectors in emerging markets.

Moreover, they have developed co-operative relationships with local and global NGOs to work on the issues ranging from the environment to indigenous peoples.

Larger E&P companies have demonstrated their ability to execute energy projects of scale — the sort that meets the needs of developing societies and populations. They have the flexibility and knowhow to operate in new areas. They can mobilize capital and are familiar with innovative technologies and commercial applications.

Most large E&P companies have announced their intent to reduce emissions even though there are important differences between companies.

Broadly, the European companies' strategic premise is they want to be leaders of the transition and must offer a sustainable investment proposition by producing increasing amounts of renewable energy.



They are engaging in offshore wind farms, green hydrogen and carbon reduction technologies in north-west Europe. They believe that participating in the renewables business will give them the social license to continue to operate as fossil fuel producers during the transition and have announced a net portfolio emissions target of zero.

The larger US companies believe the world will consume oil and gas for decades and they intend to be the lowest cost, lowest emissions providers of these fuels. Their renewables investments support their core business. Solar energy investments are being made in areas adjacent to the Permian Basin in the US.

Either way, their skills needed to develop large E&P projects can be used to develop large scale renewable projects in complicated, higher-risk settings.

Renewables projects in many frontier markets require multi-decade investing, and often the countries lack a sound regulatory environment as well as the commercial infrastructure for these assets to generate returns.

Other than in China and India, large-scale green investments are not being made in the developing world. Renewable technology investors avoid projects in most developing countries due to regulatory volatility, lack of transparency and vested interests of the incumbent energy providers.

But for governments with aspirations for large-scale, national energy projects, larger E&P companies have the financial, operational and strategic stamina to lead sector-wide development and infrastructure projects. They are also familiar with managing risks in this terrain and they can deploy their skills to make these investments work.

Several regions provide opportunities for large-scale, integrated E&P in the renewables arena. Investments could be married with ExxonMobil's development of oil and gas offshore Guyana. Similarly, with Total and Apache's project offshore Suriname in the same basin.

Large natural gas investments offshore Mozambique could incorporate a renewables component for operators Eni, Exxon-Mobil and Total. Offshore South Africa, Ghana, Cyprus, Brazil, Colombia and other areas have developments offering potential.

Easy? No, but these are the sorts of large-scale project challenges taken on by the E&P businesses of oil and gas companies for decades.

There is a new urgency for investments in renewables and a growing appreciation that we need to develop a different, comprehensive, global energy system in just 30 years.

Concerns about climate change and systemic crises have been heightened by the pandemic, mobilizing governments and nongovernment organizations to call for faster change in energy systems. Clearly, there is a strong convergence between those calling for a sustainable energy future and Big Oil's aspirations and capabilities.

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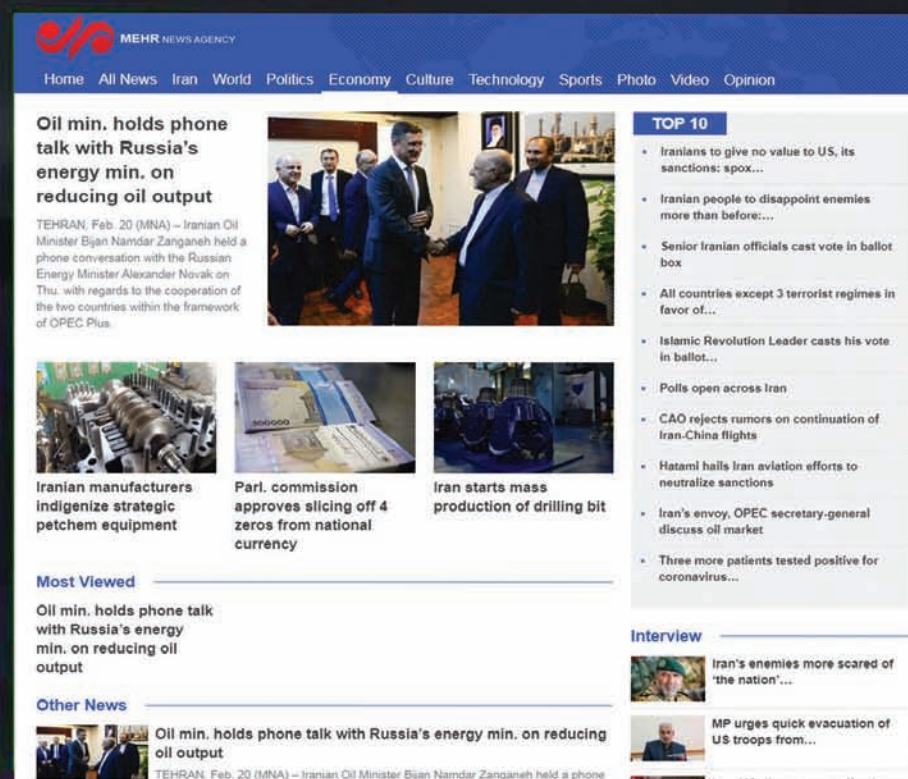
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Identity plays central role in Persian Gulf states' foreign policy: expert

➔ Thus, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf receive the notions of the Iranian foreign policy first and transmit them to the Arab League and to the Arab world. The problem is that even those states do not have a unified and direct policy towards Iran, and they do not know how to deal with any proposals coming from Iran. Bahrain used to be a province of Iran, until March 1970 that the two countries signed a demarcation agreement when Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi abandoned the claim as a result of secret Anglo-Iranian negotiations. Iran managed to stop the attack of Saddam in the 8-years war, and Iran had a clear strategy to face 1987, Saddam's decision to invade Kuwait in 1991, George H.W. Bush's decision to retaliate with Desert Storm and later not to assist the Iraqi intifada, and George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. All these indicate to Arab states that Iran has a vision in the region that cannot be accepted by the monarchies, as monarchies cannot allow a Shia and anti-monarchic, anti-system Iran to become a friend or a leading state that its ideology will influence their internal stability and religious limits.

From the other side Arabs still feel frightened about the declaration of Imam Khomeini for an Islamic Gulf, and the rationality of Islamic Revolution's governance, though I strongly believe that the Arab monarchies cannot trust Iran in any way. You see, in the late 70s all Arabs and USA were expecting a Red communist Revolution, and suddenly Islam changed not only the governance, but also the regime and the map of all the region. Arabs are aware that they cannot predict but also they cannot follow the developments inside Iran and its borders, and that creates a large unsafety.

Iran through Dr. Zarif had recalled Saudi Arabia to participating in a common peace plan. Furthermore, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, speaking at the United Nations General Assembly on 25/9/2019, elaborated on a regional peace plan called the "Hormuz Peace" initiative or "Coalition of Hope", while explaining Iran's regional and international positions, promoting solidarity, mutual understanding and peaceful relations, cooperation between countries in the region, respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, combating terrorism and extremism and ensuring energy security, freedom of navigation and free flow of oil are among the goals of the Hormuz Peace initiative.

Iranian vision and plans for the region even through universities and academy have not been successful and this has to do both due to the relations with the USA, and to ideology. By the time that Iran decided to follow the anti-West path and not to be controlled by global lobbies and institutions on which the Arab monarchies are based, Iran's suggestions will never be promoted. Of course, short time relations may occur but cannot change the whole geopolitical map that it is supported by the monarchies.

■ According to Cantori and Spiegel's theory, in the Persian Gulf we see two classifications in the region, "core" and "periphery". According to this theory, in the "core" of the Persian Gulf sub-system are the member countries of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, which are Arabic-speaking and Sunni, and "periphery" Iran, which is Shiite-majority and Persian-speaking. Based on this theory, which focuses on identity, the conflicts in the region do not seem to have an end (because the identity is constant). How do you think peace between these countries can be achieved despite the constant identities in the region? Are there any priorities that marginalize identity issues and achieve peace?

A: Persian Gulf is a pool for all the countries of its coasts and the global market, there is a regionalism and globalism in whatever has to do with the Persian Gulf. Each country of the coasts has its own national plans from the time that there is no pan-Arabism or pan-Gulf strategy from their part. It was last month in May- June 2020 when USA challenging Iran started calling the Persian Gulf as Arab Gulf, without the Arab states to follow it. Besides, the Persian Gulf is mentioned in the books of ancient Greek historians that they met Persians (Iranians) in this part of the world, giving the name of the Persian Gulf in order to guide their ships and maritime forces.

Thus Cantori and Spiegel's theory does not really apply the fact that politics has to be territorially bounded and a sociocultural regional knowledge and regional geography are especially important in understanding today's asymmetric conflicts and local clashes in the Persian Gulf. The history and the past political choices of the third parties and especially of the U.S. in the area have indicated to us that the status geographies, cultural features, and social networks are foundational to every effort for peace and the local and cultural norms and perspectives of every situation need to



“Iran has a vision in the region that cannot be accepted by the monarchies.”

be examined before any action is taken. A good example of that is the war in Iraq in 2003 where the U.S. forces were engaged into actions next to the local psychology and they have underestimated the needs of the Iraqis and the power of united large groups that after the assassination of Hajj Soleimani in January 2020 demanded by a Parliament resolution the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, and today call to have a close relation with Iran. The third countries and many Western scholars are involved and they try to understand Persian Gulf issues and they do see Middle East without understanding its specific concepts that have to do with the population, culture and the historical past.

The history of Eurasia and especially the Greco-Persian conflicts and wars were the beginning of all philosophies that today are taught at the military academies, in seminars in the best universities in the USA; how is possible this region that gave birth to civilizations to act without taking into account the identity of its nations? The identity is the label affixed to this territory and has played a central role both in attempting to understand Persian Gulf states' foreign policy and in the useful planning for national and international policies, and in our case the problem of the identities does not give us any hope for peace because there is cultural-historical and ideological antagonism between the successful multi-ethnic entity of Iran, with solid entities that do not produce any culture and have no real vision for its people as the Arab states. Thus Arabs are under pressure not by Iran, but by the globalism that this corner of the world has great resources, the global market is dependent on oil, the stock markets, the capital control. Arabs need to comply with the needs of the markets than with the needs of the people that demand not to rely on materialism and export a peace

A: The energy reserves of Mediterranean are not easy to be used; the gas founded for example in Cyprus in order to be taken and transported to European markets will be very expensive, and environmentally not feasible. Also the political issues between Greece and Turkey, Cyprus and Turkey, Israel with Syria and Lebanon, the mistrust of Egypt to EastMed and other energy projects do not add any hope that these projects will be achieved. In Cyprus and Greece we had long analysis about EastMed, officials and academics believed that this project will provide the Greek world with self-sufficiency and will empower the Greek geostrategic positioning. Also, Israel that needs air and sea to run and train its forces used the project of EastMed that will carry the resources from Levant to the world, in order to approach Cyprus and Greece for commercial and defense alliances. In my opinion, the resources of Mediterranean Sea, it is difficult to be used in the near future. Also the geopolitical map is changing day by day. Iran with its collaboration with Syria and Lebanon is also active in the Mediterranean Sea, Russia is also in the Mediterranean Sea, the European Union is weak and the USA does not really know the historical and strategic environment of eastern Mediterranean.

■ The Eastern Mediterranean, on the other hand, has created blocs that we are witnessing in Libya. Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Russia support the Khalifa Haftar but Turkey backs the Libyan Government of National Accord. Will these blocs affect the relations of the countries bordering the Persian Gulf?

A: It is not clear which country is supporting Haftar; what is sure and should make us feel less insecure is that Algeria does not react militarily. Algeria is the "motherland" for Arabs; it is the country that mainly helps Palestinians and today

seems that it will move to support Khalifa Haftar militarily. What are the reasons for Greece's serious involvement in the Libyan developments?

A: Recently Turkey and Sarraj in the Libyan capital of Tripoli made a memorandum and a new maritime map to split Greek maritime space and isolate Greek space, totally against the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, abusing international law. According to this memorandum, many Greek islands will be within the so called "Turkish maritime space", or will be isolated from the Greek maritime space. The Greek Foreign Minister Mr. Dendias in the meeting with Mr. Haftar in Athens on the 27th of January 2020 was referring to this deal signed between Libya and Turkey to delineate a boundary between the two countries in the Mediterranean, giving Turkey and Libya access to an economic zone across the Mediterranean despite the objections of Greece, Egypt and Cyprus.

Thus, Greece was involved by supporting Haftar for the following reasons: i) Turkish expansionism is threatening Greece and Cyprus to the fact that Turkey abuses international laws and status quo, in opposition to agreements signed already in early 1920s for the border disputes between Greece and Turkey, ii) Greece has been the main spot for immigrants and refugees to the European Union states and cannot accept any more immigrants by a war in Libya, that Turkey will lead the refugees to Crete and other Greek islands, iii) the oil and gas resources south of Crete, between Greece and Libya have tremendous value and of course Greece does not accept Turkey to use Libya and raise doubts about these resources, iv) Turkey is circling Greece from Aegean Sea, Balkans and now from Libya using the Islamophobia of Europe, that cannot differentiate Islam from Turkish geopolitical ambitions in the region, and v) Greece has many concerns about the Turkish forces that occupy illegally Cyprus since 1974, and needs to face a future demographic expansion that will alter the power of Greece and Cyprus.

In reality Greece cannot challenge Turkey that much in Libya mostly due to the lack of a clear strategic vision, and cannot be involved seriously into a military confrontation.

■ What is your opinion about the position of Iran toward the issue Hagia Sophia, and how can this influence the relations with Orthodox Christians and Greece?

A: Hagia Sophia is the Saint Irene in Greek language, built in Constantinople (the Greek name of today Istanbul) between 532 and 537 on the orders of Justinian I and it is the biggest Orthodox church in the world and a religious symbol of return to all Greeks and Orthodox Christians that have been forced to leave Asia Minor since 1453, later in 1922 and in 1950s. There is a "non-stop" effort by Turkey to eliminate the ethnic and religious identity of Minor Asia and Black Sea from the Greeks, Kurds and other populations. Of course, in Iran there are churches, synagogues, mosques that co-exist peacefully and there is no effort to demolish religious temples and symbols. This is what Turkey has done in Minor Asia and in Cyprus all the years after wars. Cyprus' northern part is occupied illegally since 1974, churches and cemeteries have been turned into stables for animals, parking places, icons destroyed and graves of our families have disappeared. Turkey due to the lack of genuine national identity and state identity is following a policy of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation from ethnic cleansing to destroying monuments.

Iran needs to understand that Hagia Sophia is not an internal case for Turkey, as Karbala is not an internal case of Iraq and Mecca of Saudi Arabia. Hagia Sophia is a symbol of Orthodox Greeks, Russians, Arabs, Balkan people, Germans and Africans that do consider Hagia Sophia as a resistance church against the oppression of the West and Ottomans. Iran should not praise Turkey for turning Hagia Sophia into a mosque seeing this case as an anti-West reaction. Orthodox Christians suffered from the West in the same way Shia did. Besides the temples architecture and the colors of Byzantines times and Shia mosques are relevant, the beliefs and the ideology very close, and even Narjes (Narkisia) the mother of Imam Mahdi was Christian from the Byzantine times, thus presumably Greek. Iran needs to be extremely careful as a disputed reaction and support of Turkey will be opposed by the Syrian Muslims and Christians that face Turkey in Idlib, by the Orthodox nations of Mediterranean and even by the biggest orthodox power, Russia. Mr. Erdogan will continue to challenge the status quo in Caucasus, Mediterranean and in MENA that should not influence Iran's principles and ideas.

■ Greece has also recently taken a serious interest in developments in Libya, and it

Al-Kadhimi cannot convince Saudi Arabia and U.S. to reduce their hostility to Iran: Iraqi analyst

BY Mohammad Mazhari

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi visited Tehran Tuesday for talks with top Iranian officials. The talks primarily focused on bilateral ties and regional consultations in attempts to de-escalate tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The Kadhimi's visit to Tehran preceded by a trip by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to the Iraqi capital Baghdad in response to the invitation of his Iraqi counterpart, Fouad Hussein, for consultation with senior Iraqi officials.

Some political experts consider the visit as a turning point, which will have positive results for the two sides.

Hussein al-Dirani, an Iraqi political analyst, told the Tehran Times that the visit by the Iraqi prime minister to Tehran has political, economic, and security aspects that concern both countries.

Iraq's new prime minister visited Iran in his first official visit abroad since taking office more than two months ago. "We can say that he is going to visit two competing axes; the axis of resistance represented by the Islamic Republic and its allies, and the Saudi axis which is hostile to Iran and is consistent with U.S. policies," Dirani said. "Kadhimi has relations with the two axes," the analyst said.

Given his extensive relations with Washington, Kadhimi is not reluctant to play the role of a mediator between Iran and the U.S., especially as he believes that the chronic tension between Tehran and Washington negatively affects the Iraqi internal security, economic and political condition. "It is natural that he has a desire to play the role of mediator between Tehran and Washington. Without any doubt, he has strong affiliations with Washington and receives political, security, intelligence, and logistical support from the American administration," the Iraqi analyst noted.

"Washington did its best for him to be appointed as prime minister in Iraq, and I personally wrote in the first month of this year that he would be prime minister with American support and support by President Barham Saleh, who represents the Kurdish component in Iraq," he maintained.

Washington believes that Kadhimi is consistent with its goals and will collaborate to disarm Hashd Al-Shaabi, an Iraqi faction that challenges the American military presence in Iraq, stressed Dirani.

Hashd Al-Shaabi believes that U.S. troops, as an occupation force, must withdraw from the Iraqi territory based on the Iraqi parliament's decision that approved the draft for the expulsion of American forces from Iraq.

This is what Washington is seeking to block, yet the White House has failed to implement it, considering that the Iraqi faction is receiving support from Tehran, he further said.

U.S. officials argue that Tehran can pressure its allies in Iraq not to clash with the American forces, while "this is something that Tehran will not accept to ask its allies, not previously, not now, or in the future."

Answering a question about the success of Kadhimi in mediating between Iran and the U.S., Dirani said, "I do not expect Kadhimi to succeed in the mediation between the two sides, especially after the Americans persisted in their direct aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"He cannot reconcile the two sides; usually, in large files, the Sultanate of Oman has a better record because of its international negotiations experience," he maintained.

Referring to the recent events in Iraq, especially the attack on Hashd Al-Shaabi leaders and its consequences on Iranian-Iraqi relations, the political analyst said, "The Iranian side has important files to discuss with the Iraqi prime minister, including some security files."

Iranian officials have repeatedly said that Iraq's security and stability is a high priority. Iran was the first to respond to Iraq's call when terrorist organizations occupied large parts of the Iraqi territory. While Daesh was even advancing toward Baghdad, certain Arab countries neighboring Iraq, especially Saudi Arabia, were supporting terrorists militarily and financially.

"Iran sent its best military advisers to help the Iraqi army and the popular mobilization to liberate Iraq from Daesh, and a number of Iranians were martyred alongside their Iraqi brothers," the Iraqi analyst said.

"Iran is an important partner in defeating terrorist groups in Iraq, while other Arab countries are partners in supporting terrorism," he noted.

Dirani criticized the recent attack on the leaders of Hashd Al-Shaabi by the security forces associated with the Al-Kadhimi administration, believing it "almost led to a civil war", a war against those who fought terrorism in the country.

"This attack was at the request of the U.S. administration, and its implementation came to satisfy the American side and reassure it that the Iraqi government is serious in disarming Hashd Al-Shaabi," Dirani argued. "This weapon (Hashd Al-Shaabi) is loyal to Iraqi territory and rejects occupation."

Regarding his close ties with Washington and the accusations raised against Kadhimi, Dirani believes that "these accusations have not been raised in a vacuum, as the man has close ties with all the American intelligence forces."

In recent months, U.S. forces have shown open hostility toward Iran and all the factions of the resistance movement in Iraq, especially after they assassinated General Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike.

According to the Iraqi political analyst, Iraqi factions accuse Kadhimi of collaborating with the U.S. in the Soleimani assassination. "They have compelling evidence, and the documents that had been presented by the martyred commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (before his assassination) confirm that some people close to the prime minister were involved in attempts to assassinate him."

"I think that the Islamic Republic deals with the Kadhimi government, just as it dealt with the government of Saad Hariri in Lebanon; Tehran cooperates to the extent that secures stability in Iraq," he concluded.

"Kadhimi also maintains wide relations with the American administration and its intelligence service, as well as his strong ties with Prince Muhammad bin Salman, the de facto ruler of the Saudi kingdom," Dirani mentioned. "I do not think that Kadhimi has an influence on the American or Saudi side to reduce their hostile positions to Iran."

Old fishery buildings to turn into museum

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The old buildings of the fishery department in the northern Ashuradeh Island in Golestan province, neighboring the Caspian Sea, will be turned into a museum, a provincial tourism chief has said.

The buildings are being restored and the museum is expected to be inaugurated in the near future, Mohammad Nasiri said on Wednesday, CHTN reported.



The office for hunting sturgeons with a long history and being in a suitable position and having old buildings holds the potential to become a tourist hub in the region with the ability to introduce the history of fisheries and the sturgeon industry in the country, the official added.

He also noted that turning such old buildings into museums can lead to attracting more tourists, boost the local economy and increase the locals' income as well as provide a suitable environment for researchers in the field of fishing, maritime and aquaculture.

Ashuradeh, Iran's sole island in the Caspian Sea, is one of the main areas for fishing sturgeon, the species that provide caviar. Over 40 percent of Iran's caviar is produced near the island.

Ashuradeh was introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

The island is covered with raspberry bushes, thorns, and pomegranate trees, and is home to wildlife species of jackals, foxes, rabbits, and hosts a variety of native and migratory birds throughout the year.

Iranian consortium for incoming tours to visit Chabahar

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Members of the Iranian consortium for incoming tours have been invited to pay a visit to Chabahar with the aim of getting acquainted with the southeastern region's attractions.

"The consortium of incoming tours will travel to Chabahar this week to study the capabilities and capacities of tourism in Chabahar and to meet with the private sector authorities as well as tourism experts. This measure can be led to the increase of foreign and domestic travels and development of tourism in the Chabahar region," ISNA quoted Adnan Hosseini, the tourism director for the Chabahar Free Zone Organization, as saying on Tuesday.

The secretaries of incoming tour operators, which work with China, Armenia, the European Union, Oman, Iraq, Turkey, India, Pakistan, and Syria, will be present on this trip. And, they will have a meeting with the CEO of Chabahar Free Zone Organization to discuss ways to deepen cooperation.



Last October, the Free Zone Organization announced it was aimed to develop tourism infrastructure in order to attract more travelers to the port area, which is situated in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, saying "The private sector has invested 10 trillion rials (about \$240 million) to implement nine projects to boost tourism infrastructure, particularly for building hotels, recreational facilities, eateries and accommodation places across the region."

Home to natural and historical attractions, Chabahar could be named as one of the most underrated destinations in Iran. However, in recent years various measures have been taken to promote Iran's sole oceanic port as a safe and hospitable choice for both domestic and foreign visitors.

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

By Pashmina Binwani

(Part 7/8)

Perhaps one of the best detours we did on our way to Kashan was to visit the Maranjab desert and a nearby salt lake. It was made by an order from Shah Abbas in c. 1603 and located along the Silk Road, between the Khorasan and Isfahan provinces. The 400-year-old caravanserai was often a stop as an ancient motel during the Silk Road era.



An aerial view of the centuries-old Maranjab caravanserai in Isfahan province

The sky has zero light pollution and it was the stillness of the night that made it memorable, however, the 400-year-old caravanserai were often filled to the brim with families during the weekend, making the stay, not a great experience. But amidst the barren starlit sky, I found a company by meeting a French elderly couple - they talked about the general looks of disapproval when they told their friends back home that they were visiting Iran, as it is often the case with almost everyone I meet.

Study sheds new light on vestiges of burnt fabrics found in Persepolis

→ 1 The royal city of Persepolis, which ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as a revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

The terrace is a grandiose architectural creation, with its double flight of access stairs, walls covered by sculpted friezes at various levels, contingent Assyrianesque



A view of the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, which was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 330 - 550 BC)

propylaea (monumental gateway), gigantic sculpted winged bulls, and remains of large halls.

By carefully engineering lighter roofs

and using wooden lintels, the Achaemenid architects were able to use a minimal number of astonishingly slender columns to support open area roofs. Columns were topped with elaborate capitals; typical was the double-bull capital where, resting on double volutes, the forequarters of two kneeling bulls, placed back-to-back, extend their coupled necks and their twin heads directly under the intersections of the beams of the ceiling.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

The terrace of Persepolis continues to be, as its founder Darius would have wished, the image of the Achaemenid monarchy itself, the summit where likenesses of the king reappear unceasingly, here as the conqueror of a monster, there carried on his throne by the downtrodden enemy, and where lengthy cohorts of sculpted warriors and guards, dignitaries, and tribute bearers parade endlessly.

Despite resuming flights UAE not issuing visas for Iranians: report

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The United Arab Emirates is not issuing visas for Iranian nationals although its flag carrier Emirates has resumed flights to/ from the Iranian capital Tehran after some six months of halt over the coronavirus pandemic, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

On July 17, Ali Kashani, a senior official at the Imam Khomeini International Airport, announced that Emirates "resumed its flights to Tehran this morning after a six-month suspension", offering daily services to Iranian passengers "under specific circumstances."

At the same time [on July 17], Morteza Qorbani, the secretary of the Association of Air Transport and Tourist Agencies of Iran (AATTAI), announced that the UAE had resumed issuing visas for Iranian nationals as of Thursday [July 16] and said Iranians can apply for tourist visas, the report added.

However, inquiries from travel agencies concluded that the UAE had not responded to visa applications from Iranian citizens during this period. However, Iranian and UAE airlines have operated flights from Tehran to

Dubai, which were mostly used by people residing in the UAE, the news agency said.

"The Emirates bureau in Tehran also says that the state-owned airline operates two flights a week on Saturdays and Mondays on the Tehran-Dubai route, but it does not accept any responsibility for passenger visas. Other travel agencies are not currently applying for UAE visas due to the current situation (coronavirus pandemic)."

Ali Qorbani, an official with the AATTAI, confirmed the ISNA news, saying "The UAE has not responded to [visa] requests since it announced it had opened its air borders.... This way, the issuance of visas for Iranian citizens has practically been stopped."

"The UAE has not yet given an official explanation or reason for stopping the visa issuance, but according to some Dubai agents, the increase in the number of coronavirus patients in Iran may have been the reason for the issue."

On Wednesday, The National reported about exemptions allowed under canceled visa ruling, writing: "The majority of UAE residents returning to the country after



more than six months abroad will need to apply for a new visa, immigration authorities have said."

"Earlier this year, authorities declared that residency visas expiring after March 1 would be automatically renewed until the end of December given many government offices had been forced to close due to the coronavirus," the UAE website said.

Iran seeking UNESCO tag for traditional chew making

TOURISM **TEHRAN** - Iran is gathering records on its traditional chew making to register it on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, CHTN reported.

In this regard, the first coordination meeting for the registration of Saqqez, known as traditional chewing gum in western Iran, was held on Tuesday with the participation of provincial cultural heritage experts in Kordestan Province and members discussed and exchanged views on historical and indigenous documents for UNESCO's submission, the report added.



Dal village in Sarvabad County, Kordestan province has capable masters in traditional chew making and they have trained lots of people from other provinces, which have caused the spread of this technique to other parts of the country in the past decades, said provincial tourism chief Saber Vafai.

Saqqez is obtained from the sap of special pistachio trees. On average, 500 to 1000 grams of Saqqez is gained from each tree.

Saqqez is very valuable in western Iran and has several industrial and food uses, including the preparation of chewing gum, perfumes, insecticides, pharmaceuticals,

and plastics.

In many areas, Saqqez is used to treat animals' fractures as well as heal wounds.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), the name Kurdistan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains. It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

Yazd, Qom, Firouzeh to join national cities of handicrafts

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Yazd, Qom, and Firouzeh are planned to be named the national cities of jewelry, ring, and turquoise respectively, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

As a UNESCO-tagged city, Yazd has unparalleled potential in the field of handicrafts, and being recognized as a national city can help its jewelry field to be well introduced, said deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian.

Being registered as a national city of ring can promote Qom as a brand in this field of handicraft, she noted.

She also said that promoting Firouzeh as a national city of turquoise, which is one of the popular precious stones in Iran, can improve the region's tourism industry.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. It is teemed with mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

The city is known today with its traditional districts,



the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions:

Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

The country's second-holiest city after Mashhad, Qom is home to both the magnificent shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and the major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage at the holy shrine, the city is also a top destination for Shiite scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

Located in Khorasan Razavi province, northeastern Iran, Firouzeh has some high-grade turquoise mines in the country. Cutting precious stones is the main profession of the people in this city.

Various Iranian cities and villages have been named as national hubs of handicrafts.

Zanjan for filigree, Kashan for traditional textile, Iranshahr for needlework, Abadeh for wood carving, and the village of Fash for crafting indigenous musical instruments are among them.

Handicraft training courses aim to empower breadwinner women

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Welfare Department of Qarchak, a city in Tehran province, will hold training courses in three handicraft fields of kilim, painting, and leather works for women who are breadwinners of their families.

Online markets are planned to promote the women's handicraft productions, as due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country handicraft exhibitions and markets are closed, ISNA quoted Maryam Khodabandeh, a local tourism official, as saying on Tuesday.

In Iran, there are 3 million women-headed households, out of a total of 22 million families, and most of them can be found in less developed areas of the country.

Earlier this month, deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian said that Iran exported \$527 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 20).

Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and \$254 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, she added.

Back in May, Mahmoudian noted that due to the outbreak of coronavirus, suitcase exports of handicrafts were completely stopped since the month of Esfand (the last month of the year), and official exports of handicrafts experienced a steep decline.

Talking on the significance of

handicrafts in the country, she noted, "Iran globally ranks first in terms of having the topmost number of world cities [and villages] of handicrafts."

"Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages," she said.

Iran's handicrafts exports reached \$289 million in the year 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, based on data released by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-



precious gemstones were exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Iran among high human development nations

The country's HDI grows by 38% in 28 years, UNDP says

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran's Human Development Index (HDI) has increased by 38.3 percent between 1990 and 2018, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) announced in its Human Development Report 2019, listing the country in the high human development category.

The main premise of the human development approach is that expanding peoples' freedoms is both the main aim and the principal means for sustainable development. If inequalities in human development persist and grow, the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will remain unfulfilled. But there are no pre-ordained paths. Gaps are narrowing in key dimensions of human development, while others are only now emerging.

Inequalities in human development hurt societies and weaken social cohesion and people's trust in government, institutions and each other. They hurt economies and are a defining bottleneck in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Inequalities in human development are not just about disparities in income and wealth. The 2019 Human Development Report (HDR) explores inequalities in human development by going beyond income, beyond averages, and beyond today.

The report is organized into seven sections, the first section presents information on the country coverage and methodology for the 2019 Human Development Report. The next five sections provide information about key composite indices of human development: the Human Development Index (HDI), the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII), and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

The final section covers five dashboards: quality of human development,



life-course gender gap, women's empowerment, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic sustainability.

Iran in high human development category

The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

Long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy. The knowledge level is measured by mean years of schooling among the adult population, which is the average number of years of schooling received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older; and access to learning and knowledge by expected years of schooling for children of school-entry age.

Iran's HDI value for 2018 is 0.797, which put the country in the high human development category; positioning it at 65 out of 189 countries and territories.

Between 1990 and 2018, Iran's HDI

value increased from 0.577 to 0.797, demonstrating growth of 38.3 percent.

During the aforementioned period, Iran's life expectancy at birth increased by 12.6 years, mean years of schooling increased by 5.8 years and expected years of schooling increased by 5.5 years.

Moreover, Iran's Gross National Income per capita increased by about 59.5 percent between 1990 and 2018.

11.5% loss due to inequality in HDI distribution

The HDI is an average measure of basic human development achievements in a country. Like all averages, the HDI masks inequality in the distribution of human development across the population at the country level. The IHDI takes into account inequality in all three dimensions of the HDI by 'discounting' each dimension's average value.

Iran's HDI for 2018 is 0.797. However, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.706, a loss

of 11.5 percent due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices.

0.874 inequality in favour of men or women HDI

The Gender Development Index (GDI) is based on the sex-disaggregated Human Development Index, defined as a ratio of the female to the male HDI. The GDI measures gender inequalities in achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and command over economic resources. This means that the grouping takes into consideration inequality in favour of men or women equally.

The 2018 female HDI value for Iran is 0.727 in contrast with 0.832 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.874.

HDI gender-based inequalities

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions of HDI. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by women and attainment in secondary and higher education by each gender, and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for women and men.

The GII can be interpreted as the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GII dimensions.

Iran has a GII value of 0.492, ranking it 118 out of 162 countries in the 2018 index. In Iran, 5.9 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 67.4 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 72.0 percent of their male counterparts.

For every 100,000 live births, 25.0 women die from pregnancy-related causes; and the adolescent birth rate is 40.6 births per 1,000 women of ages 15-19. Female participation in the labour market is 16.8 percent compared to 71.2 for men.

WHO delivers 16 CT Scan machines to assist Iran in combating COVID-19

The World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered 16 CT scan machines to strengthen Iran's emergency response to COVID-19. CT scanning is a key component of the clinical diagnosis of COVID-19 patients. The units, worth more than \$4 million, were procured by WHO through support from the Government of Japan and the State of Kuwait.



"As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, WHO is supporting Iran's efforts to turn the course of the disease. By delivering vital equipment and medicines, training health workers, and raising awareness in communities, WHO works with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to serve the people of Iran," said Dr. Christoph Hamelmann, the WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Recently, the WHO also equipped Iran's COVID-19 hospitals with arterial-blood gas (ABG) analyzers—equipment essential for the assessment and monitoring of critically ill patients. Seventy ABG analyzers with the consumables have been procured and delivered so far, with support from the Government of Japan.

Since the start of the pandemic, WHO has supplied tons of personal protective equipment to Iran's health workers to help them provide safe care to communities across different parts of the country.

The Organization's multiple shipments of PCR test kits have also enabled Iran's laboratory network to continue to perform hundreds of thousands of diagnostic tests to early detect infected individuals.

As of 21 July 2020, a total of 278,827 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases have been reported in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the total death toll standing at 14,634. The country's national laboratory network has conducted 2,201,958 tests so far.



Without earth no birth!

Coronavirus: 138 healthcare workers in Iran lose lives

SOCIETY TEHRAN — COVID-19 pandemic has taken the lives of 138 healthcare workers so far in Iran, most of whom were doctors and physicians, Hossein Kermanpour, the director of public relations of Medical Council, has announced.

The healthcare workers who lost their lives in the fight against coronavirus are called martyrs of health.

Most martyrs were among the physicians amounting to 60 percent, and 20 percent of whom were nurses and the rest were other hospital staff.

Maryam Hazrati, deputy health minister for nursing said in May that some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country was at the forefront of coronavirus fight.

Over the past 24 hours, 2,586 new cases of COVID-19 were identified in the country, of which 1,934 were hospitalized. So, the total number of patients in the country reached 281,413, Sima Sadat Lari, Ministry of Health's spokesman said on Wednesday.

Unfortunately, during the last 24 hours, 219 patients lost



their lives, the total number of COVID-19 deaths in the country reached 14,853, she said.

She went on to note that fortunately, 244,840 patients have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

Deforestation has slowed down but still remains a concern: FAO



Although some 178 million hectares of forest has been lost worldwide over the past three decades, the rate of loss has declined substantially during this period, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said.

The finding comes in its latest Global Forest Resources Assessment report (FRA 2020), which aims to turn the tide on deforestation, or the conversion of forest to other uses such as agriculture.

"The wealth of information on the world's forests is a valuable public good for the global community to help facilitate evidence-based policy formulation, decision-making and sound investments in the forest sector," said Maria Helena Semedo, the FAO Deputy Director-General.

Forest area decreasing

The global total forest area stands at some 4.06 billion hectares but continues to decrease, according to the report.

FAO estimates that deforestation has robbed the world of roughly 420 million hectares since 1990, mainly in Africa and South America.

The top countries for average annual net losses of forest area over the last 10 years, are Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Angola, Tanzania, Paraguay, Myanmar,

Cambodia, Bolivia and Mozambique.

Sustainability at risk

However, there is good news as the rate of forest loss has declined substantially over the past three decades. The annual rate of deforestation was estimated at 10 million hectares between 2015-2020, compared with 12 million during 2010-2015.

The area of forest under protection has also reached roughly 726 million hectares: nearly 200 million more than in 1990.

Still, there is cause for great concern, according to FAO. Senior Forestry Officer Anssi Pekkarinen, the report's Co-ordinator, warned that global targets related to sustainable forest management are at risk.

"We need to step up efforts to halt deforestation in order to unlock the full potential of forests in contributing to sustainable food production, poverty alleviation, food security, biodiversity conservation and climate change while sustaining the production of all the other goods and services they provide", he said.

Forests: for people and the planet

The FRA report has been published every five years since 1990. For the first time ever, it contains an online interactive platform with detailed regional and global analyses for nearly 240 countries and territories.

"These newly released tools will enable us to better respond to deforestation and forest degradation, prevent biodiversity loss and improve sustainable forest management," said Ms. Semedo, the FAO deputy chief.

The UN agency believes forests are at the heart of global efforts to achieve sustainable development that benefits both people and the planet.

Protecting forests is critical as millions worldwide depend on them for their livelihoods or for food.

Forests also contain thousands of different tree, mammal and bird species, among other life forms, and they help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Therefore, information about forests, such as the report, play a vital role in conservation.

Impact of kindness

For a photo op, he got out of the car; another group made him get off the car for a second time.

For a third time, a woman whose hijab was no appropriate asked to take a photo with him.

He got out and took a picture with her.

She then said, "I couldn't believe you agree to take a photo with me; from now on, I will try to fix my hijab."



Syria to UNSC: Liberating Golan from Israel national priority

Syria's permanent representative to the United Nations, Bashar al-Ja'afari, has reiterated the Arab country's right to liberate the Golan Heights from Israeli occupation, adding that restoring Syrian sovereignty to the territory remains a priority for the Damascus government.

"The Israeli regime has occupied Arab lands, including the Syrian Golan Heights, for the past 35 years in a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and rules of the international law," Ja'afari said at a UN Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East via video call.

The Syrian official slammed the Tel Aviv regime for its "systematic" violations of international law and human rights in the occupied territory, including restriction of the locals' movements, demolition of houses and destruction of natural resources.

He noted that Washington's support for the Tel Aviv regime and its settlement expansion policies have reached an unprecedented level, and were embodied in decisions by U.S. President Donald Trump to recognize Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel in December 2017 and endorse "Israeli sovereignty" over the Golan Heights in March 2019.

Bahrain's top cleric says opposition movement keeping up with its cause

Bahrain's most prominent Shia cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim says the opposition movement in the kingdom would keep up with its cause until the people's rights are recognized by Manama.

The top cleric said in a statement carried by Bahrain Mirror on Tuesday that people in Bahrain are expressing their opposition to the regime by peaceful means.

He condemned the regime's continued crackdown on opposition, saying the government's prisons are filled with political activists and prisoners of conscience, and that its courts are still issuing "unjust" verdicts against them.

According to Press TV, the cleric noted that the relation between the government and the nation is "not normal" because of the government's stance, adding that the solution is to establish a just relationship between the two sides through dropping death sentences issued against opponents and releasing political detainees.

Bahraini protesters demand that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing everyone to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's Parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3 the same year.

Qatar Airways seeks \$5bn compensation from blockading quartet

Qatar Airways has launched international arbitration seeking at least \$5bn from four Arab countries as compensation for blocking it from their airspace and removing it from their markets.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt have essentially banned the airline since June 2017 when they cut all ties with Qatar and imposed an air, land and sea blockade on it over accusations of supporting "terrorism". Doha denies the charges outright and says the quartet aims to infringe on its sovereignty, al Jazeera reported.

Qatar Airways said in a statement on Wednesday the measures specifically targeted the carrier with the aim of closing its operations in the four countries, destroying the value of its investments and causing widespread damage to its global operations.

"The decision by the blockading states to prevent Qatar Airways from operating in their countries and flying over their airspace is a clear breach of civil aviation conventions and several binding agreements they are signatories to," Akbar al-Baker, Qatar Airways CEO, said.

"After more than three years of efforts to resolve the crisis amicably through dialogue yielded no results, we have taken the decision to issue Notices of Arbitration and pursue all legal remedies to protect our rights and secure full compensation for the violations," he added.

Resistance News

Over 200 Jewish settlers defile al-Aqsa Mosque

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— Scores of Israeli settlers on Wednesday stormed al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem amid heavy police presence.

Local sources reported that 228 Israeli settlers forced their way into al-Aqsa Mosque in the morning and performed Talmudic rituals near Bab al-Rahma prayer area.

Large police forces accompanied the settlers as they carried out provocative tours inside the compound and prevented Palestinian worshippers from approaching the eastern side of the Mosque.

Restrictions were tightened on the Palestinian worshippers entering the site, and many of them were ordered to stay outside during the settler break-in.

Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian farmland in Nablus

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— A horde of Israeli settlers on Tuesday afternoon torched large areas of Palestinian land in Madama village in the West Bank district of Nablus.

Eyewitnesses reported that the fire destroyed dozens of olive trees owned by Palestinian citizens in Madama and neighboring villages.

They said that Israeli occupation forces deliberately hindered the work of Palestinian civil defense crews who rushed to the scene to put out the fire and fired tear gas canisters at them.

Madama residents said that a few days ago, the same Israeli settler group, who come from Yitzhar Settlement, seized a water well in their village and set up a pump to steal water from it and transfer it to their houses.

Settler violations are almost a daily occurrence in the West Bank, and Madama village in Nablus is one of the hardest-hit areas.

Israel's anti-government protests deepen Netanyahu's problems

Dozens of Israeli demonstrators have been arrested after chaining themselves together and briefly blocking the entrance to Parliament, as protests against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government grow louder.

The gathering in West Jerusalem on Wednesday was called to protest against an upcoming vote to grant the government sweeping authority to bypass the Knesset - Israel's parliament - in enacting measures to combat the rapid spread of the new coronavirus. At least 34 protesters were arrested.

It came the morning after a night of intense street protests, in the latest outpouring of discontent with Netanyahu and his government over the handling of the pandemic. Public anger has been compounded by corruption allegations against the long-serving prime minister, who went on trial in May for bribery, fraud and breach of trust - charges he denies.

Demonstrations outside the prime minister's official residence have become a weekly occurrence, with police increasingly taking harsher measures against demonstrators. Last month, they arrested a retired Israeli air force general, setting off an uproar.

The protests have since drawn a younger crowd and have grown more



defiant. In the past week, thousands of Israelis have participated in some of the largest anti-government demonstrations in nearly 10 years.

Netanyahu has come under growing criticism for holding office while on trial for corruption, pushing for seemingly anti-democratic measures under the guise

of combating the virus and mismanaging a deepening economic crisis.

The government has also been accused of issuing contradictory guidelines that have only further stoked the anger of everyday citizens.

On Tuesday night, a large coalition of protest groups combined to march through

the streets of Jerusalem from Netanyahu's residence to the Knesset. They beat drums, banged on pots and blared on trumpets while calling on the prime minister to resign.

"It's humiliating and insulting. You pay social security and taxes for thirty years and then have to beg (the authorities) in order to make ends meet. I'm here to protest, so that this evil government quits," Doron, a 54-year-old protester, was quoted as saying by Reuters news agency.

He said he has been on unpaid leave for three months.

Israel in May lifted a partial lockdown that had flattened the infection curve. But a second surge of COVID-19 cases and ensuing restrictions have seen Netanyahu's approval ratings plunge to below 30 percent and unemployment soar to 21 percent.

"The concern now is that it's too late in terms of testing to catch up with the sheer scale of the second wave," said Al Jazeera's Harry Fawcett, reporting from Tel Aviv.

"Israel's missed opportunity on testing and contact tracing is now seen as a wider political failure to tackle the pandemic."

An economic aid plan announced by Netanyahu last week, which would see hundreds of dollars handed out to every Israeli household, was widely condemned by economists and has hit a snag in Parliament.

U.S. orders closure of China's consulate in Houston

The United States has ordered the closure of China's consulate in the city of Houston, a move Beijing called "an unprecedented escalation" that will sabotage relations between the two countries.

In a statement on Wednesday, Morgan Ortugas, spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of State, said Washington directed the consulate's closure "in order to protect American intellectual property and Americans' private information". She did not elaborate further.

According to al Jazeera, in Beijing, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry said the U.S. gave the Chinese side a deadline of three days to close the mission in the Texas city.

"The unilateral closure of China's consulate general in Houston within a short period of time is an unprecedented escalation of its recent actions against China," Wang Wenbin told a regular news briefing.

"We urge the U.S. to immediately revoke this erroneous decision. Should it insist on going down this wrong path, China will react with firm countermeasures," he said.

China "strongly condemns" the "outrageous and unjustified move, which will sabotage China-U.S. relations", he added.



Washington's order comes as the two countries clash on a wide range of issues, from trade to the coronavirus pandemic and China's policies in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and the South China Sea.

The U.S. has long accused China of stealing intellectual property and technology, an allegation that is one of the core issues in the trade war between the world's top two economies. Beijing denies the accusation, but committed to

Poll: Biden, leading Trump by eight points, also has a big advantage with undecided voters

U.S. Democratic candidate Joe Biden leads President Donald Trump by eight percentage points in support among registered voters, and the former vice president appears to have a significant advantage among voters who are undecided, according to a Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll.

The July 15-21 poll found that 46 percent of registered voters said they would back Biden in the Nov. 3 election, while 38 percent would vote for Republican Trump. The remaining 16 percent are either undecided, plan to support a third-party candidate or may not vote.

Both Biden and Trump campaigns have focused much of their time on reaching out to this third group of potentially persuadable voters, which could swing a close election in either direction, Reuters reported.

Reuters/Ipsos polling in 2016 found that support was evenly split that summer between Trump and then Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton among registered voters who had not backed

a major party candidate. On Election Day, Trump won a majority of voters who said they decided in the final week.

This year, the poll found that 61 percent of undecided or third-party registered voters said they would support Biden if they had to choose, while 39 percent would vote for Trump.

Seventy percent of undecided or third-party registered voters say they disapprove of Trump's performance in office and the same number said they think the country is headed on the wrong track. And 62 percent said they thought the US economy was headed in the wrong direction.

This group also appears to be deeply concerned about the novel coronavirus, which has killed more than 141,000 Americans and forced millions out of work as businesses closed in an effort to slow the spread of the virus.

About 8 in 10 said they were personally concerned about the spread of the virus. When asked about the most important factor driving their decision to



vote, 34 percent - a plurality - said they were looking for a candidate who has "a robust plan to help the nation recover."

Another 24 percent said they were looking for someone who can "restore trust in American government" and 12 percent said they wanted a candidate who is "strong on healthcare."

Registered voters have consistently ranked Biden as the better candidate when it comes to all three.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll also showed that only 38 percent of the public supports Trump's handling of the coronavirus, including 20 percent of undecided or third-party registered voters.

Trump, who played down the crisis and did not appear publicly in a mask until July 12, pushed to reopen businesses well before health experts said it was safe.

Trump appeared to shift his tone this week and restarted regular briefings on the pandemic Tuesday, encouraging Americans to wear a face covering if they could not keep socially distant.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll was conducted online, in English, throughout the United States. It gathered responses from 4,430 American adults, including 3,744 registered voters, and 595 registered voters who had not supported a major-party candidate.

It has a credibility interval, a measure of precision, of about two percentage points for the entire group and five points for the undecided or third-party voters.

U.S. protests: Chaotic scenes in Portland as backlash to Federal deployment grows

Wolf also denied claims that the security officers had no identification and insisted they were wearing insignia showing they were police.

"These officers are not military, they are civilian police officers," he said, adding that they were required to restore order following "violent criminal activity every single night for 52 nights" and in response to "a lack of action from city officials".

"We will continue to take the appropriate action to protect our facilities and our law enforcement officers," he said, adding that federal agents will leave Portland when the violence stops.

What's been happening in Portland?

The last week has seen a violent escalation between protesters and federal agents, deployed two weeks ago by Trump to quell civil unrest.

A report from Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) this week contained detailed accounts of witnesses who had seen federal law enforcement officers dressed in camouflage emerge from unmarked vehicles, grab protesters without explanation, and drive off.

Wolf said on Tuesday that federal officers had arrested 43 people in Portland since 4 July.

At the weekend, fencing erected around the federal courthouse to protect the building was dismantled by protesters just hours after it was put up.

The prosecutor's office in Oregon said on Twitter that the fence aimed to "de-escalate tensions" between protesters and law enforcement officials and asked people to leave it alone.

Officers also declared that a riot had taken place outside the Portland Police Association building, which was set on fire.

What has the Trump administration said?

In a tweet on Sunday, U.S. President Trump defended the actions of the federal government.

"We are trying to help Portland, not hurt it. Their leadership has, for months, lost control of the anarchists and agitators," he said.

Earlier in the week, the president said officers in the city had done a "great job".

"Portland was totally out of control, and they went in, and I guess we have many people right now in jail," he said



on Monday. "We very much quelled it."

Trump has threatened to send federal law enforcement officers to control protests in other major U.S. cities, including Chicago and New York.

The mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, has said he will take the president to court if he goes ahead with his threat.

Identifying talents is the main key to Iran’s rise: Ramin Tabatabaei

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ramin Tabatabaei, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Basketball Federation (IRIBF), says that he main key to the country’s rise has been their dedication to identifying talents at a young age.

“In 80s and 90s, the best performance of Iran’s senior national team was placing fourth in Asia and the team used to be placed mostly among top 6-12 teams,” Tabatabaei said in an interview with FIBA.

“From 2003, a new generation was introduced to the basketball world,” Tabatabaei explained. “With the talent identification programs and great support, they could achieve more. Also, with good efforts and financial supports to continue the program, youth teams were formed and could both provide support for the seniors and attract enough attention and support from IRIBF to improve.”

“Having a strong domestic league in three levels - Professional, 1 and 2 - with many foreign players and highly knowledgeable coaches as well as teaching and educational programs for domestic coaches have all greatly contributed to a more dynamic league and discovering and flourishing the potential of elite players,” he added. “Not only leagues but also national competitions have kept basketball



players active throughout the year.”

“The same pattern for the leagues have applied to running leagues for other age ranges such as U18 and U16 professional leagues which direct these talents in the right path of progression.”

The main key to Iran’s rise has been their dedication to identifying talents at a young age. It is something that they have done well and are committed to

continue doing.

“IRIBF has tried to first identify and then use the best practices, skills and experiences in modern basketball, also to advance the league and attract sponsors, and with increasing number of more than 50 teams in U18 and U16 leagues, increase the popularity of basketball in the country and also help boost up the fundamental skills in these age categories,” explained Tabatabaei.

“Despite the limitations, sanctions and weak infrastructures in basketball which may have created issues to run all that we desire, we have tried to use the resources in the best possible way. We have great players in our U18 and U16 teams who have admirable achievements in Asian youth competitions. They have participated in many camps and international competitions and ranked among the top performers.”

“Obviously, there are super talented people in some eras who can go the distance and become legends like Samad and Hamed,” Tabatabaei said. “They will stay in the history of the country’s basketball forever and may not be easy to replace. What IRIBF has always tried to do was to run country-wide talent identification programs to find the best talented players. By using the experience of these legends along with their best coaches and trainers, we train the younger generations to learn from the bests players alongside the best in order to become the best.”

“The network of talent identification has tried to work with full potential and lead as many talented players into these networks. Not to replace the legends, but to create more and more like them in different generations.”

Iran volleyball league salted to begin Sept. 5

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The 2020-21 Iran Volleyball Super League will begin with participation of 14 teams on Sept. 5.

Director of Competition and Events of Iran volleyball federation Shahram Azimi had previously announced that a total of 12 teams would take part at the new season but the competition will be held with 14 teams according to the new decision.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) Secretary General Milad Taghavi said that two more teams have expressed their interest to participate in the league.

“We are going to begin the league competition on September 5 with stringent health protocols due to a coronavirus outbreak. A total of 12 teams have declared their readiness so far and two more teams will be added to the league,” Taghavi said.

Iran national volleyball team are without a head coach since parting company with Igor Kolakovic in March. Taghavi said the federation will wait to find the best possible option.

“Given the fact that all Asian com-



petitions in the current year have been postponed due to the massive global Covid19 outbreak, we have enough time to find the best option for the National Team and don’t want to rush the decision,” he added.

The Iranian Super League (ISL) is a professional volleyball league in Iran at the top of the Iranian volleyball league system. It was founded in 1975 as the Pasargard Cup, but after the Iranian Revolution it was renamed to the first Division. In 1997 the league system was revamped and the Iranian Super League was established.

Paykan Tehran has won the most titles in the new Super League with 12 titles.

Branko Ivankovic hails Yahya Golmohammadi ahead of title-winning match

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Branko Ivankovic, former head coach of Persepolis football club, says that defending the title at the Iran Professional League (IPL) for the fourth straight season was an exceptional and challenging task that the Reds managed to do.

Persepolis are so close to winning the IPL title as they are 15 points ahead at the top of the table, with five weeks remaining. The Reds will be champions with a match against Naft Masjed Soleyman on Friday.

Branko, the current head coach of Oman national team, was a revelation at Persepolis in his four seasons at the club, winning three consecutive IPL league, and seven titles in all competitions. Many people consider him as the creator of the Persepolis Dream Team.

“Wherever I’ve worked, I’ve tried to leave my mark so that the next coach who comes after me can succeed with a good team that he already has,” Ivankovic said.

The 66-year-old manager, in an interview with Iran-e Varzeshi, offered his congratulation to the Persepolis fans and the club for their early title-winning. He also hailed Persepolis head coach, Yahya



Golmohammadi, his former player at the Iran national team.

“Yahya is an outstanding coach. I’ve worked with him, and he was one of my best players,” Branko said. “Now, as a manager, he has been working very well for several years and is one of the key factors in Persepolis’s success. So, a special congratulations to Yahya. He is one of the best Iranian football coaches and has a bright future ahead. The coaches such as Yahya, will shape the future of a country’s football as well,” He added.

The much-decorated Croatian coach, who is currently in his home town in Croatia due to coronavirus pandemic and flight restrictions, praised the character of the current squad of Persepolis.

Iran kick off preparations for Bahrain 2020

MNA — Islamic Republic of Iran’s U16 national team have hit the ground running ahead of the AFC U16 Championship Bahrain 2020.

The young Team Melli are undergoing a training camp in Tehran, under the supervision of head coach Hossein Abdi.

Iran, who have not missed a single edition of the AFC U-16 Championship Finals since 1996, will be aiming to make amends after failing to advance past the group stage of the 2018 Finals.

In the Bahrain 2020 Qualifiers last September, Iran impressed as they won all their matches with 19 goals scored and only one conceded to top Group C.

The 2020 AFC U16 Championship Finals is scheduled for November 25-December 12, where Iran will have tournament host Bahrain, two-time champions DPR Korea and Qatar for company in Group A.

The top four teams will qualify for the FIFA U17 World Cup Peru 2021.



Khatam Ardakan reach agreement with Montenegrin Rajko Strugar

FNA — Khatam Ardakan Volleyball Club have reportedly reached an agreement with Montenegrin setter Rajko Strugar.

The Iranian club is going to sign the 25-year-old player on a one-year contract.

Khatam Ardakan, headed by Farhad Nafarzadeh, prepare for the 2020-21 Iran Volleyball Super league.

The league is slated to begin on September 5.

Another Iranian volleyball club Shahdab Yazd have already signed Brazilian middle blocker Victor Babugia Araujo “Babu”.

Persepolis goalkeeper Radosevic doesn’t care about clean sheets

Tasnim — Persepolis goalkeeper Bozidar Radosevic says that he doesn’t care about clean sheets since the victory is more important than his personal success.

Clean sheets are often how goalkeepers are judged, but the Croatian goalie insisted that three points in the tally are all that matters.

Radosevis has made 11 appearances in the current season and has kept 10 clean sheets.

“At the end of the day it is about the results. I do want a clean sheet, but if we are going to win a game 4-3 then we are still going to get three points and that is all that matters. I will be happier for scoring four goals than conceding three goals. It is about the team, not about clean sheets,” Rado said.

Persepolis are scheduled to meet Naft Masjed Soleyman on Friday and will win the title even with a draw against the team.

“We are very close to win Iran Professional League (IPL) for the fourth time in a row. We know that how Naft Masjed Solyman are strong but we are ready to defeat them,” the Croat added.

Radosevic is Persepolis’s main custodian after Alireza Beiranvand joined Belgian team Antwerp.

“I am very satisfied with what I have done in the past three matches. But we have five matches ahead. Persepolis also need to win their two matches in Hazfi Cup to defend their title,” he concluded.

Ex-Espanyol coach takes charge of Qingdao Huanghai

Former Sevilla and Espanyol boss Pablo Machin was named head coach of Qingdao Huanghai on Wednesday, just three days before the Chinese Super League (CSL) kicks off.

The 45-year-old replaces fellow Spaniard Juanma Lillo, who left newly promoted Qingdao last month to become Pep Guardiola’s assistant at Manchester City.

With Lillo at the helm and veteran former City star Yaya Toure in midfield, the club from China’s northeast won last season’s China League One title to gain promotion to the CSL. The 37-year-old Toure has also since left.

Machin takes charge following an unsuccessful spell at basement La Liga side Espanyol, where he won four of 15 matches before being removed in December last year.

Machin managed Girona from 2014 to 2018, then left to take over at Sevilla, but left in March 2019 after just nine months in the job.

Qingdao are in action on the opening day of the CSL season on Saturday, when they face Wuhan Zall behind closed doors in Suzhou.

The CSL is kicking off more than five months late because of the coronavirus pandemic.

(Source: AFP)

Tokyo 2020 preparing to deliver Games with COVID-19: CEO Muto

TOKYO (Reuters) — Tokyo Olympics organizers are preparing to host the Games next year even if the global coronavirus pandemic hasn’t eased substantially, organizing committee chief executive Toshio Muto told Reuters on Tuesday.

The Tokyo Olympics had been scheduled to start on Friday but were put back to 2021 because of the pandemic.

Since then, organizers have scrambled to rearrange an event that has been almost a decade in the making whilst trying to ensure next year’s Olympics are safe for athletes, officials and supporters.

Muto said that although organizers hoped the threat posed by the virus could be reduced, nobody knows what the situation will be when the Games start on July 23, 2021.

Organizers are assuming coronavirus will remain a major problem.

“It is rather difficult for us to expect that the coronavirus pandemic is contained,” Muto told Reuters. “But if we can deliver the Games in Tokyo with coronavirus, Tokyo can be the role model for the next Olympic Games or other various international events.”

Muto said he hoped Tokyo 2020 could be the benchmark in a post-pandemic world.

“By delivering the Games successfully in Tokyo we strongly hope that can create a legacy that is in the history of mankind.”

The delay to the Games will incur additional costs for organizers.



The International Olympic Committee has already estimated that the postponement will cost them \$800 million but the Japanese side has been less forthcoming in giving exact figures.

Muto said the final figure wouldn’t be known until December but hoped that bringing on new sponsors, despite the grim economic forecast, would help bridge the gap.

“I know that businesses are in dire circumstances because of coronavirus but still there are companies who are coming forward to say they want to sponsor the Games, which we appreciate very much,” Muto said.

On Wednesday, Tokyo 2020 announced that Tokyo Skytree, the tallest tower in the world, is joining as a new Games sponsor.

Muto said he hoped all of Tokyo 2020’s current sponsors

would extend their contracts until the start of the Games next year, although this will come at a cost.

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.

“We are hoping that there will be additional contributions (from existing sponsors) in terms of sponsorship fee because of the postponement of a year,” Muto said. “We would appreciate a lot if they agree to this.”

Muto did not give the names of any other new sponsors.

SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

The Games were already set to cost more than 1.35 trillion yen before the postponement, and increased spending might further alienate a public already sceptical of an Olympics they once embraced.

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

Muto said meetings would be held starting in September, with members of the Japanese government and the local Tokyo Metropolitan Government on how best to rebuild support for the Games.

“By making a nationwide effort to implement all possible, conceivable measures to battle coronavirus, the people of the world will be able to come to Tokyo with a peace of mind,” he said. “Once we create such an environment, I think people’s opinions will change.”

Pierre-Gabriel assaulted, car set on fire

Brest defender Ronael Pierre-Gabriel was assaulted and had his car destroyed only weeks after signing for the Ligue 1 club.

Pierre-Gabriel, 22, signed on a season-long loan from Bundesliga club Mainz on July 7 but was involved in a serious incident on Monday evening.

On Tuesday, as Brest statement on social media read: “Last night, in the Brest neighborhood, Ronael Pierre-Gabriel was the victim of an assault and suffered injuries before his car was burned down and completely destroyed.

“Brest strongly condemn this event and give its full support to Ronael.

“In a place where these events are few and far between, it’s regrettable to see these types of incidents happen to a boy who only arrived two weeks ago in Finistère and had no issues with anyone.”

The club also said it would be the last time they would comment on the issue and have left the situation to the authorities.

Pierre-Gabriel made eight appearances for Mainz this season but failed to feature for the first team after the Bundesliga restart following the suspension caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

(Source: ESPN)

Tokyo chief says fans are essential: Kyodo

TOKYO (Reuters) — Tokyo 2020 President Yoshiro Mori told Kyodo News in an interview that he disliked the idea of holding the Games in empty venues without fans.

The Tokyo Olympics were due to start this Friday but because of the COVID-19 pandemic the International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government took the unprecedented decision to postpone the Games until 2021.

Since then, organizers have been looking at various options that would allow the Games to go ahead next summer.

IOC President Thomas Bach said last week that spectator reductions might

be an option.

Mori, a former Japanese prime minister, said he was eager to avoid this scenario.

“We shouldn’t make spectators go through hard times. Sporting events are all about the whole country empathizing,” Mori said in an interview with Kyodo News on Tuesday.

Mori added that he thought Bach’s comments were “assuming the worst-case scenario”.

Tokyo 2020 organizers will hold meetings with the Japanese government and local Tokyo Metropolitan Government in September to work through various scenarios.

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If you realize that what is recommended cause damage to what is obligatory, leave the former aside.

Imam Ali (AS)

Owj doc on Iran agriculture introduced at Center for Strategic Studies

➔ He pointed to figures the documentary gives about a great amount of fruit tree crops that were not picked and went rotten in Iran last year and said, “A comparative study is needed to find a solution for this problem.”



A poster for the documentary series “Fruits Have Remained on Trees”.

Director Khosravi said, “We made this documentary to show how important agriculture is.”

“It would be a great achievement if this documentary can cause the officials to consider the importance of the agriculture industry,” he noted.

National library publishes Helen Loveday’s “Islamic Paper” in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of Helen Loveday’s book “Islamic Paper: A Study of the Ancient Craft” has been published by the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI).

The book has been translated into Persian by Zahra Zarghami.

This book is the result of research into the nature and characteristics of Islamic paper, gleaned through the systematic analysis of over 100 dated samples.

Descriptions of the physical characteristics of papers originating from Persia, Syria and Egypt from the 12th to the 19th century provide a means by which papers are compared and contrasted.

To place this research into a historical context, the book begins with an overview of the development of papermaking by hand in the Islamic world and examines the impact and spread of the craft throughout Persia and the Middle East, noting its success in relation to other contemporary writing materials and its failure to compete with imported Western papers.

A history of Islamic papermaking, writing materials prior to the advent of paper, papermaking in the Islamic world, the transition from papyrus and parchment to paper, sources of early paper samples, the decline of papermaking in the Islamic world, the nature of paper and its production, and the nature, properties and characteristics of paper are among the topics discussed in the book.

Helen is a leading figure in the field of paper conservation, with busy studios in central London and Cambridgeshire. She is an accredited member of the Institute of Conservation, with over 25 years experience working for and helping clients in the UK, and internationally.

She is also a lecturer in Chinese and Japanese art at the University of Geneva and curator of the Baur Foundation, Museum of Far Eastern Art, Geneva. She has written extensively on Asian art and translated a number of books.

The National Library of Iran was established in 1937. The library has been merged with the Islamic Revolution Cultural Documentation Organization (IRCD) to form the National Library and Archives of Iran.

It is home to collections of rare manuscripts and documents, and reference books.

Iranian songs echo appreciation for health workers in coronavirus era

A R T **TEHRAN** — A number of musicians have released music videos during the home quarantine to insert hope and encourage people in the battle against coronavirus, while they have also tried to express appreciation for the efforts made by the healthcare staff.

During the very early days of the spread of coronavirus in the country, the number of the music videos was greater and musicians made increased efforts to release additional videos.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra released a music video from Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 “Ode to Joy” it produced along with 148 world musicians in May.

After the Noruz Holiday, a group of children and young adults presented their home performances to the medical staff. They performed the song “O, Iran.”

Members of Iran’s National Orchestra invited people to watch the videos of famous hits “Sabokbal” and “Romantic Passion” in their houses during home quarantine also in May.

Each musician recorded a video of her/his performances of composer Hossein Dehlavi’s “Sabokbal” and Morteza Neydavud’s “Romantic Passion” in an innovation by the Rudaki Artistic Cultural Foundation. The two videos were produced based on the videos recorded by each musician.

Promoting the motto “We Stay Home in Order to Go on Stage Sooner”, the first performance was released online in April.

Maestro Loris Tjeknavorian also released a piece on coronavirus that he composed in three movements during the home quarantine.



This combination photo shows several music videos released in home quarantine.

The 12-minute composition named “Corona” is composed of three movements named “Assault”, “Death” and “Life”.

The composition has been sampled by Ehsan Beiragdar and mixed by Omid Nikbin, while Yarta Yaran has collaborated as a

photographer.

A music video inspired by Persian poet Sadi’s famous poem “The Sons of Adam Are Limbs of Each Other” was also released in May with the voice of Iranian vocalist Alireza Qorbani in collaboration with several Italian singers and overseas musicians during the pandemic.

Pop singer Qassem Afshar who was not very active over the past years released the piece “Nurse” by composer Mohammadreza Cheraghali to express appreciation to the nurses.

Pop singer Alireza Assar released a music video honoring healthcare staff and preformed his song “Omidvaran” on his personal page.

“It has been about two years that I have been in close contact with the health care and medical staff, and I have closely witnessed their utmost efforts and how hard they work,” Assar said.

He also expressed his sympathy to the families of those who have lost their lives due to the coronavirus.

Vocalist Salar Aqlili along with musician Fazel Jamshidi and actor Parviz Parastui, who are members of the nationwide #Moshahonar movement, released a song named “Mate” in April during the home quarantine for the coronavirus pandemic.

They joined the movement launched by hundreds of Iranian artists to entertain people during the quarantine.

However, now that the country has seen a big rise in COVID-19 cases, something that has depleted the energy of health care workers, there is an urgent need to produce more encouraging works these days.

Iranian director sees Shanghai fest chance to promote his debut film “Najibeh”



A poster for Iranian director Mostafa Gandomkar’s debut film “Najibeh”.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mostafa Gandomkar said on Wednesday that the 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF) is a great chance for him to promote his debut feature film “Najibeh” at a first-class global event.

The movie and “The Badger”, another Iranian film directed by Kazem Mollai, will be competing for the Asian New Talent

Award at the festival, which will take place in the Chinese megacity from July 25 to August 2.

Najibeh is a poor elderly woman who wants to commit a crime because she needs to go to prison for a while. To accomplish her goal, she needs an aid, so she tries to get help from her friend.

“I was really happy when I heard my movie had been accepted by the festival,” Gandomkar told the Persian service of ISNA.

“However, my happiness was not only for the film’s entry to the event, but I was happy that the festival can be a chance for me to promote my movie, which has been disregarded in Iran,” he added.

He called the Shanghai festival one of the top ten film events in the Asia and noted, “Najibeh” has been selected to be screened in the festival’s Asian New Talent category and this in itself will act as a great factor for marketing the film.”

Gandomkar said that his film is an independent production and added, “Filmmakers of independent projects usually put their spotlight on social, economic

and political issues of their present times and disregard can neutralize such films.”

He also noted that due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country and economic recession, the independents’ projects have been faced with more problems.

“Coronavirus is the most important problem of our society at present and we expect the government to help tackle the disease.”

The 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF) is also scheduled to screen five other Iranian movies.

Director Abbas Amini’s drama “I Am Here!” will be compete in the feature film category, while “Crab” by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi will be contending for the Golden Goblet Award in the short film section.

“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 festival was initially 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.

ZagrebDox to screen “Sunless Shadows”, “Anticlockwise” from Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Two documentaries from Iran “Sunless Shadows” by Mehrdad Oskui and “Anticlockwise” by Jalal Vafai will go on screen in the 6th edition of ZagrebDox.

The two documentaries will be competing in the international competition section of the festival which was due to take place from March 15 to 22, but it has been postponed to a later time and will go online.

“Anticlockwise” is about the life of Vafai’s father as a democratic reformist.

“Sunless Shadows” is about a group of adolescent girls that serve their sentence for the grave crime of murdering their father, their



A scene from “Sunless Shadows” by Mehrdad Oskui.

husband or another male family member in an Iranian juvenile detention center.

The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) honored “Anticlockwise” with the award for best mid-length documentary in November 2019, and Oskui received the best director award for his documentary.

Vafaei is a film director born in Hamadan in 1982. After working in various films as an assistant director and an editor, he debuted as a director and producer with his film “Anticlockwise” (2019).

Oskouei is an Iranian filmmaker, producer, photographer and researcher born in 1969

in Tehran. He has studied film direction. His films have been screened at numerous festivals both at home and abroad to great critical acclaim, making him one of the major Iranian documentary makers.

In 2010, Oskouei received the Dutch Prince Claus Award for his achievements. He is a founding member of the Institute of Anthropology and Culture and has sat on several international film festival juries.

His film “The Last Days of Winter” was released in France in 2013 to both critical and public acclaim. His film “Starless Dreams” was also screened at 2016 ZagrebDox.

Persian novel “Corona Age” recounting love story in hospital born

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian novel titled “Corona Age” that features a love story in a society battling coronavirus has recently come to Iranian bookstores.

Ketabestan is the publisher of the novel penned by Seyyed Hesameddin Rayegani, who also published his debut novel “Equivocation” a few months ago.

Rayegani has blended some facts about medical staff during the COVID-19 era with his imagination to create the novel.

“The story of the book is set in the first two months

after the coronavirus hit the country,” Rayegani wrote in an introduction to the book.

He spent days in Masih Daneshvari, Besat and Baqiyatallah, Tehran’s major hospitals for COVID-19 patients, gathering information to write his novel.

In a preface to the book, the publisher also wrote that it has published the novel to thank the medical staff as coronavirus frontline workers.

It has also told the readers, “Read this book; afterwards, whatever you do, you cannot NOT observe medical advices!”

Coronavirus has given some writers in Iran food for thought.

Ali-Asghar Seidabadi wrote “Hannah, Our Hero” that teaches children how to take care of themselves during the coronavirus pandemic. The book was also translated into Croatian, Turkish, English, Italian, French and German.

Earlier in March, the Institute for Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) released a book titled “Studies on the Social and Cultural Aspects of Coronavirus in Iran” that contains over ten articles by the scholars of the ISCS.

UK, Turkish festivals pick Iranian animation “Locked”

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian animation “Locked” by director Ahmad Khoshniyyat will be competing in the Link International Film Festival in UK, and 18th International Environment Short Film Festival in Turkey.

The Link International Film Festival will go online from July 24 to 26, and the Turkish

festival, which was scheduled for April, has been postponed to a later time.

“Locked tells the story of a man locked in the world of darkness who is seeking freedom from a stone statue, which has always been asking for a strange deal. The failure of the deals make the man finds a different way to confront the stone statue,”

the director has said.

Khoshniyyat calls the animation a surreal work, which he made based on recurring dreams he experienced in his young adulthood. As such, he considers it a totally personal work, and those adults who are more familiar with philosophy will like it and will be able to understand it better.



A scene from Iranian animation “Locked” by director Ahmad Khoshniyyat.