



**Nation defeats enemy through unity, insight: IRGC** **3**



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**The Tehran Times offers condolences on the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Mohammad Baqir (AS)**

# First homemade mobile ATC tower unveiled



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## Threatening passenger plane unforgivable: Judiciary chief

**TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday that the United States' act in threatening an Iranian passenger plane is "not forgivable".

In a meeting with top judicial officials, he called on the national prosecutor general and the Judiciary's deputy director for international affairs to pursue the complaints of the passengers.

A passenger, who was aboard the Mahan Air Flight 1152, has sustained a spinal

cord injury during the U.S. fighter jets' harassment of the plane.

"The situation of this wounded person has been stabilized, but the severity of his injuries remains high," Tasnim quoted the director of Beirut's al-Rasoul al-Aazam Hospital as saying. The director also said that three wounded persons have been treated for broken legs and hands, but the condition of the person who sustained spinal cord injury is not well. ➔2

## Iran opposes Turkey's bid to inscribe "Islamic calligraphy" on UNESCO list

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (MCHTH) announced on Monday that it is opposed to Turkey's proposal to register Islamic calligraphy as its own heritage on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Iran has officially expressed its opposition to Turkey's proposal to register a

file named "Islamic calligraphy" during a UNESCO session in 2021, said deputy minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian.

"Each country can make an attempt to inscribe its calligraphy on the list, but using the adjective 'Islamic' refers to a territory wider than Turkey and this is contrary to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," he stated. ➔12

## Israel keeps two Palestinian female prisoners in isolation: Palestinian commission

**TEHRAN** — Two Palestinian women prisoners are currently behind bars in an Israeli jail in isolation and under extremely harsh conditions, a Palestinian commission says.

The Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs Commission, which is run by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the occupied West Bank, announced the grim

news on Sunday, identifying the pair as Fadwa Hamada and Jihan Hashima, the Palestinian Information Center reported.

The women are being kept in total solitary confinement in Jalamah detention center under harsh conditions, the commission said, adding that they are also watched by three security cameras and deprived of their basic needs and rights. ➔10



### ARTICLE

**Chang Hua**  
Chinese ambassador to Iran

## Understand the essence of China's diplomacy

The world has continued to change in profound ways. As COVID-19 rages on, the health of people around the world is under grave threat, economic globalization faces unprecedented headwinds, and the world economy is plunged into deep recession. Unilateralism, protectionism and bullyism are resurging. Deficits in governance, trust, peace and development are widening further.

Faced with all the uncertainties in international relations, where will China's diplomacy head? How will it influence the world? To answer these questions, it's necessary to understand Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy. Since President Xi Jinping became the top leader of China, he has formed a complete theory on China's governance, that is, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, with Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy as a very important component of it. Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy is the guiding tenets of China's diplomacy, as well as the top-level planning and the strategic blueprint for advancing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. The following points are critical to understanding Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.

First, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy is an effective response to the new developments of the world today. President Xi Jinping masters the laws of human development, especially the workings of globalization and global governance, and has keen insight into world development and China's interaction with the rest of the world. In recent years, he has developed a series of creative thoughts and views. For example, the thought of building a community with a shared future for mankind emphasizes upholding multilateralism and advocating international fairness and justice, which points out a right road to human development and progress. The core tenets of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy are the two initiatives of building a community with a shared future for mankind and forging a new type of international relations. The value orientation is putting people first. ➔3

## Iran produces anti-corona medicine "Tocilizumab"

**TEHRAN** — The drug "Tocilizumab", confirmed to be effective in the coronavirus treatment, has been produced in Iran and will be distributed in hospitals by the next two weeks, IRNA reported on Monday.

In addition to Remdesivir, Tocilizumab has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to help partially improve COVID-19, Heydar Mohammadi, an official with Food and Drug Administration said.

This drug has not yet entered the pharmaceutical market in the country and only a limited amount of it had previously been donated to China, which is still used in hospitals, he stated.

He went on to say that the subcutaneous injection of Tocilizumab or Actemra, which is used to treat rheumatism, is now produced by an Iranian pharmaceutical company, but the intravenous injection is used for COVID-19 patients.

Probably next week, the clinical trials and

tests will be approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and it will most likely be released and distributed in the hospitals during the next two weeks, he noted.

Iran previously produced the antiviral agent remdesivir for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

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

Remdesivir was studied in clinical trials for Ebola virus infections but showed limited benefit. Remdesivir has been shown to inhibit replication of other human coronaviruses associated with high morbidity in tissue cultures, including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2003 and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012. ➔9

## Police and protesters clash in violent weekend across the U.S.

*Staff & agencies*

Protests took a violent turn in several U.S. cities over the weekend, with demonstrators squaring off against federal agents outside a courthouse in Portland, Oregon, forcing police in Seattle to retreat into a station house and setting fire to vehicles in California and Virginia.

A protest against police violence in Austin, Texas, turned deadly when a witness says the driver of a car that drove through a crowd of marchers opened fire on an armed demonstrator who approached the vehicle. And someone was shot and wounded in Aurora, Colorado, after a car drove through a protest there, authorities said.

The unrest Saturday and early Sunday stemmed from the weeks of protests over racial injustice and the police treatment of people of color that flared up after the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Floyd,

who was Black and handcuffed, died after a white police officer used his knee to pin down Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes while Floyd begged for air.

**Police declare riots in Seattle and Portland amid U.S. protests**

Riots were declared by authorities in the United States cities of Seattle and Portland as months-long demonstrations against racial injustice have continued across the country.

The most recent night of unrest marked two months to the day that George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, died in police custody in Minnesota after a white officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes on May 25.

Saturday's demonstrations included a car driving through a crowd of protesters in Aurora, Colorado, a man fatally shot in Austin, Texas, and a court house set aflame in Oakland, California. ➔10

## The world is fortunate that Iran is dominated by clear-headed thinkers, says American analyst

**By Amir Mohammad Esmaili**

**TEHRAN** — Charles Dunaway, an American political commentator in Oregon, tells the Tehran Times that the world is fortunate that Iran is ruled by "clear-headed thinkers" who show patience and respond to Washington's hostile behaviors at the "right moment".

"The world is indeed fortunate that the Iranian government is dominated by clear-headed thinkers who have the patience to wait for the right moment and the right method to punish

the US for its belligerence," Dunaway says as two U.S. warplanes harassed an Iranian passenger airliner over Syria as it was on route from Tehran to Beirut on Thursday.

The political analyst says the move against the passenger plane was an "act of terrorism".

Dunaway also says that the Americans have been led by politicians and media for a long time and that is why most people "do not trust the media and do not trust their government".

The text of the interview with Dunaway is as follows:

Firstly, please let me ask your opinion about the recent U.S. illegal move in Syria. On Thursday night, U.S. warplanes operating illegally in Syria conducted some dangerous maneuvering close to the Mahan Air flight. The Civil Aviation Organization of Iran called it "a clear violation of international law and the aviation standards and regulations." What is your thought? ➔7



File photo

## Tilework artist Mohammad-Ali Elhaminia dies at 86

**TEHRAN** — Tilework artist Mohammad-Ali Elhaminia, considered the oldest surviving master who created designs for the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, has died. He was 86.

Elhaminia began learning the art of tilework when he was only 12. He learned the art with great masters such as Gholamhossein Bajestani and Gholamhossein Panahi Tusi.

He was only 14 when he became the student of master Khoshdast, the famous architecture of Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum and Library in Mashhad.

The tileworks in the central library of Astan-e Qods, Balasar Mosque, Allahverdikhan Dome, the Qods and Jomhuriye Eslami courtyards of the holy shrine feature numerous designs by Elhaminia.

His name has been inscribed on the tiles of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS).

## Over 30 Paleolithic sites discovered in eastern Iran

**TEHRAN** — More than 30 Paleolithic-era sites have been discovered during a recent archaeological survey in Ferdows county, eastern South Khorasan province.

The Paleolithic, also called the Old Stone Age, is a period in human prehistory distinguished by the original development of stone tools that covers c. 99% of human technological prehistory. It extends from the earliest known use of stone tools by hominins c. 3.3 million years ago, to the end of the Pleistocene c. 11,650 cal BP.

"The east of the Iranian plateau is one of the most unknown regions of Iran when it comes to the Pleistocene epoch. Its ambiguity is to some extent that it is difficult to find an area used to be home to a (human) settlement of that period.... The (recent) archeological study, however, is of high significance as it has determined more than 30 Paleolithic sites in Ferdows county," IRNA quoted Ali Sadraei, the head of the archeological survey, as saying on Monday.

Previous studies in the region suggest that during the Paleolithic period, eastern Iran was located between two possible late Pleistocene corridors of human dispersal into East Asia: one through the Sistan region and the other along the northern edge of the Iranian Central Desert (Dasht-e Kavir). Despite this potentially important geographical location, the unfavorable environmental conditions and the lack of permanent water sources have meant that archaeologists have paid little attention to this area.

Talking about earlier Paleolithic studies held in the region, Sadraei explained: "The history of Paleolithic studies in this region dates back to more than 7 decades ago, but following that time, few ones have been conducted in this area mostly in the shape of case studies that are not very helpful in analyzing complex issues in the Paleolithic times." ➔8



## Iranian government spokesman tests positive for Covid-19

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The office of Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Monday that the spokesman has contracted Covid-19 and that his planned press conference won't be held due to his disease, IRNA reported.

“Considering that government spokesman Ali Rabiei has developed some symptoms of Covid-19, the news conference, which was scheduled to be held on Tuesday, was canceled for the purpose of observing health protocols,” the spokesman's office said.



The office also said that Rabiei was admitted to hospital and now he is receiving treatment for the novel coronavirus. Rabiei has stayed at home since the last weekend, but then he was admitted to hospital after he tested positive for the virus.

According to IRNA, the general condition of Rabiei is reportedly good.

Meanwhile, Sima-Sadat Lari, Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman, announced that the novel coronavirus has killed 212 people in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of

fatalities to 15,912.

Speaking at a press briefing on Monday, she also confirmed 2,434 new cases of Covid-19, raising the total number of cases to 293,606.

According to the spokeswoman, the virus has infected 293,606 people in Iran so far, with 255,144 of them have been recovered from the disease.

## Threatening passenger plane unforgivable: Iran's Judiciary chief

**1 →** Raisi also noted that expulsion of the United States from the region will put an end to the U.S. evil deeds.

U.S. warplanes operating illegally in Syria conducted aggressive maneuvers close to an Iranian Mahan Air flight over Syria's al-Tanf region on Thursday. The plane was en route to the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

In a letter to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif published late Saturday, Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said Iran must legally pursue the United States' harassment against the passenger plane.



“Once again, the United States turned another page in its dark record against the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its fighter jets conducted threatening and dangerous moves close to Mahan flight number 1152 in Syrian airspace on Thursday, July 23,” he remarked.

The prosecutor said passengers and crew were hurt as the pilot was forced to abruptly drop altitude.

The national prosecutor said the U.S. act was contrary to international law and the Chicago and Montreal conventions.

“So, it is essential for the executive bodies, including Civil Aviation Organization and Mahan airline, to cooperate with the Syrian government and ICAO [the International Civil Aviation Organization] to implement articles 13 and 17 of the Chicago Convention and receive the report on the incident as soon as possible and take necessary legal action according to articles 44, 54, 55, 84 and 85 of the Chicago Convention,” he stated.

Laya Joneidi, the presidential aide for legal affairs, also said the action against the passenger plane is a violation of the principles of international law.

She said the actions taken by the U.S. fighters are a violation of Articles 3 and 44 of the International Civil Aviation Convention (Chicago Convention).

According to Joneidi, the explanations provided by the U.S. so far are unjustified and unconvincing, so the actions taken by the fighters will cause the international responsibility of their respective governments and will lead to legal action by Iran, including in the ICAO Council and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

## First Swiss deal with Iran via humanitarian channel has gone through: Swiss government

**ZURICH (Reuters)** — A Swiss pharmaceutical company has completed the first transaction under a new humanitarian trade channel with Iran, the government in Bern said on Monday.

The Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA) channel to bring food and medicine to Iran started trial operations in January, helping supply Swiss goods to the struggling population without tripping over U.S. sanctions.

“We would like to emphasize that the operationalization of the SHTA is progressing and that a number of companies have already been approved, more companies will follow. Further transactions should be carried out shortly,” the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) said by email.

Food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies are exempt from the sanctions that Washington reimposed on Tehran after President Donald Trump walked away from a 2015 international deal over Iran's nuclear program.

But the U.S. measures targeting everything from oil sales to shipping and financial activities have deterred several foreign banks from doing business with the Islamic Republic - including humanitarian deals.

SECO did not identify the Swiss drugmaker or give a value for the shipment, which it said involved a cancer drug used to treat iron overload caused by repeated blood transfusions.

The pilot deal in January shipped to Iran cancer drugs and drugs required for organ transplants worth 2.3 million euros (\$2.7 million). Geneva-based bank BCP and drugmaker Novartis took part in the pilot deal.

# Why U.S. planned to deceive Syrian air defenses into targeting Iranian plane

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The U.S. army's fighter jets intercepted a Mahan Air's flight over Syria to deceive the Syrian air defense systems into shooting down the Iranian plane or to create conditions for the plane to crash itself, Iranian experts and officials say.

Two U.S. fighter jets conducted dangerous maneuvering near Mahan Air's passenger plane over Syria on Thursday, forcing the pilot to suddenly lower the altitude, a move that shocked the passengers on board and led to many injuries. Iran has strongly condemned the U.S. move, calling it an “act of terror.”

On the other hand, the U.S. army's Central Command (CENTCOM) claimed in a statement that a U.S. F-15 fighter jet on a “routine air mission” over Syria conducted a “standard visual inspection” of the Iranian plane “at a safe distance of approximately 1,000 meters from the airliner.”

Iran has firmly rejected CENTCOM's claim, suggesting the U.S. warplanes were pursuing malicious undeclared goals during their interception of the passenger plane.

“Unlike what the spokesman of this organization [CENTCOM] said, the U.S. F-15 fighter jets was not on a routine air mission, and they intercepted the Iranian passenger plane by violating Lebanese airspace,” the Nournews agency quoted an unnamed Iranian official as saying on Sunday.

The official also said that the U.S. interception of the Iranian plane occurred while the plane was lowering altitude near Beirut's airport.

Iran also called into question the U.S. account of the incident.

### ■ 6 minutes of harassment

While CENTCOM said that only a single U.S. fighter jet had conducted the visual inspection, Iran announced that at least two fighter jets was involved in the Thursday incident. Citing informed sources, Press TV reported on Sunday that “U.S. warplanes” have harassed the Iranian plane “two times in six minutes during the Thursday terrorist incident.”



According to the Press TV sources, the first harassment occurred when the airliner was flying over Syria's al-Tanf region, a strategic border triangle shared by Iraq, Syria and Jordan. The U.S. has a garrison there.

“The second instance of harassment took place over Syrian-Lebanese border,” the network quoted the sources as saying.

It also said that the U.S. warplanes involved in the harassment took off from al-Azraq air base in Jordan, adding that the base is presumably the same base from which a U.S. drone took off to assassinate IRGC Quds Force Commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani near Baghdad's International Airport on January 3, 2020.

While the U.S. said its fighter jet was at a safe distance from the Iranian plane during the alleged inspection, Iranian media has said that the U.S. warplanes were so close to the plane that the pilot was forced to quickly lower the altitude to avoid collision with the warplanes.

“The pilot of the airliner was forced to drop altitude to avoid collision with U.S. warplanes over the Syria-Lebanon border,” the

informed sourced told Press TV.

### ■ Two TCAS alerts

Iranian officials say the U.S. main goal of harassing the passenger plane was to create conditions for a possible error.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said in a tweet on July 24 that the Iranian plane had received two traffic collision avoidance system (TCAS) alerts during the Thursday encounter with the U.S. warplanes.

TCAS alert is a system specifically designed to reduce the incidence of mid-air collisions between aircrafts.

“In a call with Mahan's operations officer, I followed up on the American terrorists' last night adventurism. The Americans lyingly say that they were flying in the standard and regular maneuvering path, but the pilot has received TCAS alert twice due to U.S. warplanes exceedingly approaching above and below the plane,” the speaker tweeted.

Ghalibaf further said, “The American terrorists attempted to achieve their ominous, planned goals by creating conditions for a possible error.”

The senior lawmaker warned, “Any crime

by the Americans will expedite the humiliating destruction of the region's arrogance, especially the ominous Zionist regime.”

### ■ American maliciousness

Ghalibaf didn't elaborate on the “possible error.” But Nournews speculated that the U.S. may have been trying to repeat the Russian Il-20 plane crash scenario, which was accidentally shot down by Syrian air defense systems in mid-September 2018.

In September 2018, Syrian air defenses mistakenly shot down the Russian military aircraft over Latakia province. Fifteen Russian troops were killed in the incident. Although the Syrian air defenses fired at the Russian plane, Russia blamed Israel for the incident, because Israeli fighter jets attacked Syrian facilities in Latakia province while the Russian plane was returning to Russia's Hmeimim airbase near the north-western city of Latakia.

Nournews said that the Americans may have sought to conduct a similar operation.

“It seems that the U.S. warplanes have maliciously flown close to the Iranian passenger plane to make the Syrian air defense systems [mistakenly] shoot it down,” said the news website.

According to the website, American fighter jets sought to hide behind the Iranian plane to deceive the Syrian air defense systems into targeting it, but the pilot's dexterity thwarted the American maliciousness.

It's not clear how the U.S. would have taken advantage of the plane crash if it had been shot down by the Syrian air defenses. But some analysts believe that the U.S. would have mobilized the public against Iran's influence in Syria.

“If this disaster had occurred, it's clear what would have happened between us and Syria. Some people would have said ‘you see, the Syrians killed our children and shot down our passenger plane. Therefore, we should withdraw our troops from Syria.’ In fact, this would have played into the hands of the U.S. and Zionist regime,” the Fars news agency quoted Seyyed Hadi Seyyed Afqahi, a West Asia expert, as saying on Sunday.

## Iran says it supports Lebanon, warns Israel against ‘madness’

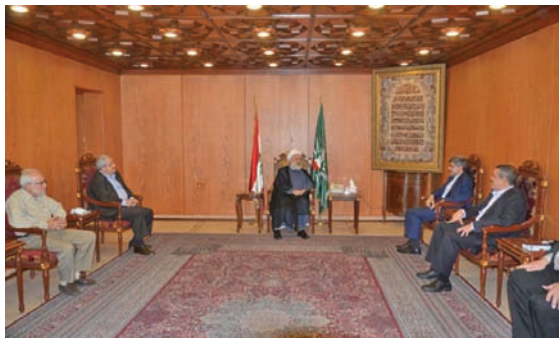
**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Jalal Firouznia, Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, has reiterated Tehran's “permanent and constant support” to Lebanon, warning Israel against committing “madness” against Lebanon amid heightened tensions between Israel and Lebanon.

“We live today with the memory of the July war; the Israeli enemy cannot forget the successive strikes, and the terrible defeat inflicted on it during that war. If Israel commits such madness or such an adventure, it will receive a harder blow in return,” the Lebanese National News Agency quoted the ambassador as saying on Monday.

He added, “The axis of resistance is stronger than ever, and we are convinced that more victories await this axis.”

Firouznia made the remarks during a meeting with the Grand Mufti of Lebanon Sheikh Abdel Latif Derian, which was held at Dar al-Fatwa in Beirut.

“My visit to the Grand Mufti had been an opportunity



to reiterate the Islamic Republic of Iran's permanent and constant support to Lebanon's brotherly government and people,” the diplomat said, adding, “We stress that we stand by Lebanon with all our capabilities in this sensitive stage, and

## No honesty in U.S. words and behavior, Iran says

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that there is no honesty in the United States' words and behavior.

The comments came as Zalmay Khalilzad, the United States' chief negotiator with the Afghan Taliban, claimed about Iran's lack of support for a U.S.-led attempt to get the Taliban militant group and the Afghan government to negotiate.

According to Press TV, Khalilzad claimed, “Iran has not been as supportive as it should be in the effort to get to intra-Afghan negotiations and an Afghan settlement largely due to our (the U.S.'s) relations with them.”

Mousavi said, “There is no honesty in the

United States' words and behavior towards our region, especially cooperation in Afghanistan. Iran does not consider the United States honest. We consider their [the U.S. forces] presence in the region, especially in Afghanistan, source of instability and insecurity.”

He reiterated Iran's position that Tehran fully backs intra-Afghan talks to settle long-running disputes.

“We reject any foreign interference in this respect. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran has capacities that can be used to help establish peace and stability in Afghanistan,” he said.

Iran's embassy in Kabul has issued a statement reiterating support for peace talks in Afghanistan led by the Afghan leaders.

The Iranian embassy in Kabul advised the U.S. officials to study Iran's position on Afghanistan precisely before making claims.

Also, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherianfard, the special envoy of Iran's foreign minister for Afghanistan, on Sunday said, “Iran highlights the necessity of establishing peace based on inter-Afghan talks led by the Afghan leaders.” Taherianfard also said, “We advise American officials that before making remarks about the views of the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran about the issues in Afghanistan and the region first study these positions carefully.”

### ■ 'U.S. peace does not guarantee security in Afghanistan'

Nozar Shafiei, an expert on international

we will spare no assistance or support that is requested of us.”

“Of course, this assistance is not limited to a particular category of the Lebanese people, but it includes Muslims and Christians of all backgrounds,” he explained.

Firouznia also visited Sheikh Ali al-Khateeb, the deputy head of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council, discussing with him Lebanese and regional issues.

During the meeting, the ambassador once again underlined Iran's support for Lebanon, saying that Iran “stands by Lebanon with all its capabilities.”

For his part, al-Khateeb thanked Iran for its “constant support for Lebanon,” underlining the need for the Lebanese government to quickly accept the Iranian initiative, which could shore up Lebanon's struggling economy.

Iran has previously presented an initiative to supply Lebanon with refined oil products in exchange for Lebanese pounds, but the Lebanese government has yet to decide on the Iranian initiative.

affairs, has said that the U.S. peace does not guarantee security and political stability in Afghanistan.

“The United States defines peace in Afghanistan within the framework of Washington's national interests. Such so-called peace process cannot guarantee security and political stability in Afghanistan,” he told IRNA in an interview published on Monday.

If peace in Afghanistan is based on the Afghan people's interests, Iran will support it, he noted.

However, he added that if peace process in Afghanistan threatens the Afghans, no country will support it.

## U.S. policy failed due to Iran's ideology, resistance economy

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Moscow-based political analyst Andrew Korybko believes that the U.S. maximum pressure policy has failed due to the “ideological cohesion of the Iranian people” and their “resistance economy.”

Andrew Korybko is a political analyst, journalist, and a member of the expert council for the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People's Friendship University of Russia. He specializes in Russian affairs and geopolitics, specifically the U.S. strategy in Eurasia.

His other areas of focus include tactics of regime change, color revolutions, and unconventional warfare used across the world. His book, “Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach To Regime Change”, extensively analyzes the situations in Syria and Ukraine and claims to prove that they represent a new model of strategic warfare being waged by the U.S.

In order to shed light on the recent developments in the Middle East, Mehr News reached the American-born, Moscow-based political analyst for an exclusive interview.

When asked to comment on the recent illegal move of the U.S. in Syria during which the country's fighter jets' harassed the Iranian airliner Mahan by conducting some dangerous maneuvering close to the passenger plane as it was flying over Syria's strategic al-Tanf region, Korybko said that the U.S. acted very recklessly and could have caused a catastrophe, adding that causing a catastrophe could have been as well one of the reasons why Washington did it.

“The United States has an interest in “defending” its illegal military presence in Syria and around al-Tanf, and this action has drawn global attention to those interests. If the plane had crashed as a result of this move, then the United States would have tried to find a way to blame Iran for it,” he added.

About the U.S. illegal presence in Syria, he said that Syria is unable to put an end to the illegal military presence of the United States on its soil.

“Russia will not intervene to help Syria,” he said, adding “because Moscow's military mission in that country is only to fight terrorism...Iran is Syria's only ally that wants to drive the United States out of Syria.”

About the possibility of a coalition in the region formed between Iran and the member states of the Resistance, he said that these countries have a legitimate right to form a coalition, but it is very dangerous to do so.

“Because Israel is unlikely to allow the Iranian Air Force to regularly escort civilian aircraft very close to its ‘borders,’ he added.

Most likely, Tel Aviv would want to push the two to the brink of war by allowing its fighter jets to fly closely to Iranian jets and passenger planes – just as the U.S. recently has done, in hopes that such a move would cause an accident that could lead to a plane crash or a fierce battle between the two sides' air forces, according to Korybko.

When asked to comment on the success of Donald Trump's

maximum pressure strategy against Iran, Korybko said that the strategy had not been successful.

“While one should not deny the resulting economic damage and the capacity of this policy to provoke social unrest, the United States has so far failed because of the ideological cohesion of the Iranian people and their resistance economy,” he maintained.

About the various aspects of Iran-China economic-security cooperation, he said that the cooperation is mutually beneficial for both countries: Investment for Iran and the revival of the Belt and Road Initiative for China.

When asked if the deepening of Iran's relations with the East, especially with China and Russia, would challenge U.S. hegemony, he said “while they [China and Russia] send the message that Iran will not surrender to U.S. unipolar hegemony, none of the Chinese and Russian multipolar partners are willing to directly defend Iran.”

He went on to add that in order to strengthen Iran's overall defense capabilities, these countries would sell military equipment to Iran and make strategic investments in the form of various megaprojects.

“This support makes it less likely for U.S. plots to succeed,” he said, adding that both Russia and China, contrary to some assumptions, will lend support to Iran to advance their own interests rather than out of some ideological inclination to challenge the United States.



# Iran says will respond to U.S. harassment of passenger plane at ‘appropriate time’

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran has announced that it will respond to the United States’ harassment of its passenger plane over Syria at “an appropriate time.”

“The Americans have been trying different types of piracy,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday during a press conference, Mehr reported.

“The dangerous action they took against our passenger plane was a terrorist threat which was against all legal and international principles,” he said.

Mousavi said the Foreign Ministry, with the help of Civil Aviation Organization, General Staff of Armed Forces and the Judiciary, will take all measures to make the U.S. regret its actions.

He explained that certain measures have been taken with this regard, including a protest lodged by Iran’s mission in the United Nations.

“After the final report is ready, we will further pursue the issue legally,” he said. “We will respond to them at an appropriate time.”

On Thursday night, U.S. warplanes operating illegally in Syria conducted aggressive maneuvering close to an Iranian Mahan Air flight over Syria’s al-Tanf region.

Mahan Air’s Flight 1152 had taken off from Tehran and was en route to the Lebanese capital Beirut when the incident happened.

Iran said harassing a passenger plane is a violation of the principles of international law.

“The harassment of the Iranian passenger plane by U.S. warplanes constitutes a clear violation of international law as well as aviation standards and regulations,” Iran Civil Aviation Organization said in a statement.

It also urged the ICAO to look into the issue as soon as possible.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday denounced the harassment of the passenger plane, calling on the international community to stop the U.S. “outlaws” before a disaster happens.

“[the] U.S. illegally occupies territory of another State and then harasses a



**“How can he (Trump) claim that he stands by the Iranian people while the U.S. president has taken measures against every single Iranian person with his maximum pressure, economic terrorism, and closing down the legal channels of importing medicine and equipment for chronically ill children?” Foreign Ministry spokesman asks.**

scheduled civil airliner—endangering innocent civilian passengers—ostensibly to protect its occupation forces. Audacity to compound lawlessness upon lawlessness. These outlaws must be stopped before disaster,” Zarif tweeted.

**■ Extension of arms embargo ‘unacceptable’: Mousavi**

During his Monday press conference, Mousavi was also asked to comment on Washington’s efforts to extend an arms embargo on Iran.

“We knew that the U.S. will spare no efforts in this path and everybody knows how Washington has pressured the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council.”

Iran has told all members of the UN Security Council and its friends that the

extension of the arms embargo would be “unacceptable”, he said.

The spokesman said Iranian officials do not think other countries would succumb to the U.S. bullying.

“We hope the U.S. pressure ends,” he said. “Iran is striving to secure its right.”

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and later adopted a “maximum pressure” policy against Tehran.

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

Tehran has firmly rejected Washing-

ton’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.

Amid the escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington, Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran, has tried to appeal to the Iranian people, claiming in a recent video that President Trump is beside the Iranian people and backs their fight for justice.

“This regime has completely lost its legitimacy,” the VOA Persian on Saturday quoted Hook as saying.

“Iranian people should know that President Trump, [Secretary of State] Mike Pompeo and I will always stand by them in their fight for justice,” Hook claimed.

**■ ‘Hook talks nonsense, wanders around hopelessly’**

Asked to comment on Hook’s remarks as well as his recent West Asia tour, Mousavi said the U.S. special representative talks a lot. “He talks nonsense, and on the other hand, he has resorted to wandering around hopelessly due to the U.S.’s conditions and his illusions.”

Calling Hook’s claim of solidarity with Iranian people “ridiculous”, the spokesman said, “The reality is that the U.S. president is against the Iranian nation.”

“How can he claim that he stands by the Iranian people while the U.S. president has taken measures against every single Iranian person with his maximum pressure, economic terrorism, and closing down the legal channels of importing medicine and equipment for chronically ill children?” he asked.

Mousavi added, “Is he standing by Iranian people when he has, like a bully, pulled out of the nuclear agreement and put pressure on the Iranian nation?”

He also pointed to the U.S. assassination of Iran’s top general Qassem Soleimani on January 3, saying, “The American [rulers] are those who cowardly martyred and assassinated the greatest national hero in the fight against terrorism.”

“There’s no doubt that Hook’s comments are baseless and unfounded,” he added.

## Kadhimi visit to Iran in line with cementing foreign ties, says ex-PM al-Abadi

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Former Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi has said that a visit by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to Iran on July 21-22 was in line with expanding foreign ties.



In an interview with Iraqi News Agency, Abadi said that the objective behind the visit was benefiting Iraq and using depth of its history and civilization to boost its foreign relations, ISNA reported on Monday.

He also said that Iraq is very important for Iran in countering the sanctions.

The former prime minister said Iraq is like “air way” for Iran. Kadhimi visited Tehran to discuss ties between Iran and Iraq. The Iraqi prime minister met with a number of high-ranking Iranian officials including President Hassan Rouhani, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

During a joint press conference with Rouhani on July 21, Kadhimi said that his visit to Iran was aimed at boosting 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 Jabbar, 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 accompanied the prime minister on his first visit to a foreign country since taking office.

## U.S. targeting Lebanon to make Axis of Resistance surrender: envoy

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Salah Fahs, the representative of Lebanon’s Amal Movement in Tehran, says Washington has waged an economic war against his country in order to force the Axis of Resistance to surrender.

In an interview with Tasnim published on Sunday, Fahs blamed the worsening economic crisis in Lebanon on the U.S. economic war.

“As you know, Lebanon’s economic situation has reached the worst point since a couple of months ago due to several reasons, above all because of the pressures that are imposed on Lebanon with the purpose of forcing the country and its resistance to surrender to the American and Israeli decisions,” he remarked.

He said the U.S. and Israel are pressuring Lebanon into giving in to the plots for creation of “substitute homeland” and “deal of the century” initiated by the Trump administration.

“The U.S. has now resorted to a harsh economic war against the Axis of Resistance, but we must withstand and stand up to it,” the representative said.

On certain Islamic and Arab states that have sided with the U.S. in the economic war against Lebanon, he warned such action would only aggravate their problems.

“The Resistance is very powerful under unity and cooperation with the Amal Movement and other supporters of resistance, and they (enemies) will not be able to fulfill their demands,” Fahs stated.

The representative also underlined that the Axis of Resistance will emerge victorious from the economic war waged by the enemies in the same way that it won the 2006 war and other conflicts in the past.

Lebanon has been facing the worst economic crisis in its modern history in recent months. Since the start of public protests against corruption in October 2019, the Lebanese pound has lost about 75 percent of its value.

Moreover, the most recent sanctions that the U.S. has introduced against Syria’s government, imposed under the Caesar Act, have targeted neighboring Lebanon as well.

## Iranian military attaché meets Iraqi interior minister

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian military attaché to Iraq Mostafa Moradian has met with Iraqi Interior Minister Othman al-Ghanmi.

Moradian attached importance to facilitating travel for the people of the two countries.

He also called for expanding ties.



For his part, Ghanmi said that Iraq is ready to expand relations with Iran and use experiences in areas of technology to fight organized crimes, drug trafficking and terrorism.

He also said that the borders will be reopened by observing the healthcare protocols.

## Nation defeats enemy through unity, insight: IRGC

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has issued a statement on the 31st anniversary of Operation Mersad, saying that the unity, collective insight and cleverness of the Iranian nation guarantee the defeat of the enemy’s plots.

Operation Mersad, 26–30 July 1988, was the last major military operation of the Iran–Iraq War, involving a successful counterattack against a July 1988 military incursion from Iraq, by a military force of about 7,000 members of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), who are known in Iran as Monafiqeen (hypocrites).

In the statement released on Sunday, the IRGC hailed the operation as one of the significant events during eight years of Iraq’s imposed war against Iran.

The history of the Islamic Revolution demonstrates that Monafiqeen have always acted as the enemy’s fifth column and have tried to create problems and obstacles for the Iranian nation and government.



The MEK was established in the 1960s to express a mixture of Marxism and Islamism. It launched bombing

campaigns against the Shah, continuing after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, against the Islamic Republic. Iran accuses the group of being responsible for 17,000 deaths.

Based in Iraq at the time, MEK members were armed and equipped by Iraq to fight against Iran alongside the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during a war which lasted for 8 years.

Earlier on Sunday, Chief of Staff of Iran’s Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri said in a statement on the occasion that Monafiqeen were crushed during Operation Mersad due to God’s grace and sacrifices made by Iranian people’s youths.

The general noted that Operation Mersad showed the Iranian people’s awareness and cleverness in the face of the enemies’ plots.

He also commemorated the fallen soldiers who lost their lives for the Iranian people during Iraq’s war against Iran as well as Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated by the U.S. earlier this year.

## Understand the essence of China’s diplomacy

**1→** Second, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy carries forward and elevates the fine tradition of the Chinese culture. Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy embodies a creative transformation and development of traditional Chinese values by drawing extensively from the Chinese culture and enriching it with a new spirit of the times and a commitment to human progress. China’s proposal of building a community with a shared future for mankind epitomizes long-cherished Chinese vision of promoting “common good” and “universal peace”. In developing China’s neighborhood diplomacy, traditional values of good neighborliness, benevolence, empathy and non-aggression have been incorporated. In the call for global governance reform, time-honored wisdoms of unity in adversity and harmony among all nations have been drawn. In the course of building global partnerships, the philosophy of advocating harmony without conformity and helping others to succeed while seeking one’s own success has been followed. In advocating the concept of greater good, the moral commitment of advancing shared interests with just positions and helping those in difficulty and in need is upheld. As an innovative effort to renew the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, President Xi Jinping put forward the momentous initiative of developing the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The initiative aims to turn the Silk Road, a

fruit of human civilization, into a new type of public good for international cooperation and common development, and has gained growing support and endorsement from countries around the world.

Third, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy carries forward and further develops the diplomatic theories of New China. Building on the diplomatic thoughts of successive generations of leaderships after the founding of New China, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy has further elevated and enriched the system of diplomatic theories of New China. Imbuing China’s foreign policy with the spirit of the times, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy raised China’s long-established philosophies on foreign relations including the independent foreign policy of peace, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and a new international political and economic order to a new historical level, aiming at a community with a shared future for mankind, a new type of international relations, and reform of the global governance system. Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy carries forward China’s policies and propositions toward the neighboring region and Africa, and put forward important principles of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” and “sincerity, real results, amity and good faith”, lending fresh impetus to China’s relations with countries and regions concerned. It upholds China’s

just position pursued since 1949 of opposing colonialism, hegemonism and power politics, and resolutely safeguards China’s legitimate rights, core interests and national dignity.

Fourth, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy improves on and transcends traditional theories of international relations. In recent years, the traditional theories are increasingly unable to explain the contemporary world, and notions such as “might makes right” and “zero-sum game” are no longer compatible with the trend of the times. Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy envisions a community with a shared future for mankind, and an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world with lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity, and calls for a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. It rises above national and regional parochialism, transcends the traditional realist theory of international relations, and takes the moral high ground by focusing on the progress of humanity. The new visions proposed by President Xi Jinping on global governance, security, development, civilization, and the relationship between the greater good and one’s own interests respond to the universal aspiration of all countries for development and progress. Embodying the shared values of mankind as well as distinct Chinese features, they capture the greatest common denominator among

people of all nations in aspiring to a better world.

Under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, China is actively building a global partnership network, proactively advancing Belt and Road cooperation, spearheading the reform of the global governance system, and currently making every effort to support international cooperation against COVID-19, promoting the vision of building a global community of health for all. By these efforts, China lives up to its responsibilities and makes significant contribution to world peace, stability, development and prosperity. China’s efforts are aimed at safeguarding and improving the international order, promoting the well-being of all mankind, rather than replacing certain country.

Both China and Iran are ancient civilizations with a long history. Over more than two thousand years, the two civilizations have enriched each other through ties of the Silk Road. Today, the two countries both pursue independent foreign policy, advocate fairness and justice, support multilateralism, and oppose unilateralism and bullying in international relations. I believe that the development and growth of China and Iran as two emerging economies is an unstoppable trend of history. The China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership is sure to develop steadily and benefit the two peoples!



## IME's value of monthly trade increases 23%

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 23 percent during the past Iranian calendar month (ended on July 21), IME Public Relations Department reported.



As reported, 3.169 million tons of commodities worth 232 trillion rials (about \$5.52 billion) were traded at this exchange in the past month, indicating an eight-percent rise in terms of weight.

The oil products and petrochemicals floor of the IME witnessed trading of 2,034 million tons of products valued at 110.249 trillion rials (about \$2.62 billion) during the previous month.

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

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

## Trade between Iran, Uzbekistan rises 40% in 2019

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The volume of trade between Iran and Uzbekistan increased 40 percent in 2019, Iranian Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian announced on Sunday.

The official made the remarks in a meeting via video conference with Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Sardar Omar Zagov, Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) published on its website.

During the meeting, which was also participated by TPO Head Hamid Zadboum, the two sides agreed to start expert negotiations on renewing the preferential trade agreement in this week, and also on holding the meeting of Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Economic Committee in the second half of 2020.

Referring to the impact of coronavirus outbreak on reducing the volume of economic exchanges between the two countries in recent months, Nahavandian said that there are various ways to overcome the existing obstacles.

He pointed to Iranian experts' capabilities and experiences in the technical and engineering fields, saying that Tehran is ready to share its experiences with Tashkent in all fields.

Zagov, for his part, underscored that Iran is a major trade partner of his country, saying, "We are determined to promote cooperation between the two countries in various fields, particularly in the fields of economy and trade."

"We believe that geographical proximity and spiritual commonalities are a good opportunity that can be used to increase the level of economic relations between the two countries," he underlined.

Expressing pleasure over Iranian companies' activities in Uzbekistan, the official said that Tashkent welcomes the presence of Iranian investors and technical engineering companies in the economic and development projects and is interested in expansion of scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries.

During a meeting of Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Road Transportation Committee held via video conference, the Iranian and Uzbek officials emphasized the significance of boosting bilateral ties in transportation sector, IRNA reported on Saturday.

As reported, the meeting was attended by Iran's Deputy Transport Minister Abdolhashem Hassan-Nia and Uzbekistan's Deputy Minister of Transport Davron Dekhkanov, as well as Uzbekistan's ambassador to Iran, and the representative of Iran's Embassy in Uzbekistan.

Addressing the virtual meeting, the Iranian deputy transport minister said that expansion of economic relations between Iran and Uzbekistan has been always emphasized by the two sides' senior officials, and in this due, boosting transport ties between the two countries is seriously pursued by the Iranian Transport Ministry.

Hassan-Nia further announced his country's readiness to transfer knowledge and experience in the field of transportation to Uzbekistan.

The Uzbek official for his part emphasized the significance of holding such meetings in removing the problems in terms of transport cooperation between the two countries and expressed hope that such meetings will lead to laying a better ground for the expansion of bilateral ties.

Iran and Uzbekistan emphasized the expansion of relations in all economic areas during the two countries' 13th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tashkent in mid-December last year.

The meeting was chaired by the former Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani and Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Elyor Ganiyevand, and representatives of several renowned companies from both sides attended the event.

Speaking in the meeting, the Iranian minister pointed to the presence of 50 Iranian companies in the meeting and holding mutual trade conferences as well as Iran's exclusive exhibition in Tashkent as indications of the importance that Iran puts on mutual trade and economic collaboration with Uzbekistan.

"Over the past few years, major documents have been signed by the two countries in a variety of areas including trade, transportation, and joint investment, some of which have been already operationalized", he said.

Rahmani further expressed hope that holding such committee meetings would help the two sides to take major steps for boosting collaboration between the two countries' private sectors.

Later that month, the board chairman of Iran's Chabahar Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization announced that Uzbekistan has reached an agreement with Iran for transiting agricultural products and minerals to India through Iran's Chabahar Port.

According to Abdolrahim Kordi, the agreement was made during the Iran-Uzbekistan's 13th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tashkent.

"We reached an agreement with Uzbekistan's Navoi Free Trade Zone for cooperation in transiting agricultural products and minerals," he said.

"In the Iran-Uzbekistan Cooperation Document [which was signed in the end of the 13th committee meeting] three specific clauses were dedicated to cooperation between free zones, development of logistic hubs and joint ventures," Kordi added.

# First homemade mobile ATC tower unveiled

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami unveiled the country's first domestically-made mobile air traffic control (ATC) tower in a ceremony on Monday.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by senior officials including the transport minister, the Head of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company Siavash Amirmokri, as well as Defense Minister Amir Hatami, IRIB reported.

As reported, the mentioned tower has been designed and constructed by Iran Electronics Industries (known as SAIRAN), which is a state-owned subsidiary of the Defense Ministry. It is a diversified organization with operations in electronics, optics, electro-optics, communications, computer and semiconductors.

Speaking in the ceremony, Eslami underlined the significant of this achievement and said: "This is the starting point for utilizing the domestic capacities more widely in all aspects of transportation



Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami (L) and Defense Minister Amir Hatami cut the ribbon on the first domestically-made mobile air traffic control tower on Monday.

## PBO allocates over \$47m for development of Zanzan-Qazvin railway

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said on Monday that two trillion rials (about \$47.6 million) has been allocated for the double-tracking of Zanzan-Qazvin railway, IRNA reported.

Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht announced during a visit to the project on the sidelines of his one-day trip to the northwestern Zanzan Province.

"With the implementation of this project, the freight capacity in the east-west corridor of the country will increase by more than seven million tons," the official said.

Nobakht also added that this railway line will also reduce the travel time via Zanzan-Qazvin railway by

1.5 hours.

According to the official, using the allocated fund, the project will be completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2021).

The completion of this project, which currently has 65 percent physical progress, will also have a positive impact on passenger transportation from Tehran to Zanzan.

As reported, with the implementation of this project, the intersection of trains will be eliminated and it will increase the safety of travel and transportation.

The vice president and head of the country's Planning and Budget Organization arrived in Zanzan on Monday to visit and inaugurate several development projects.



## Weight of exports to African trade partners up 340% in a quarter

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's exports to its African trade partners in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) increased by 340 percent in terms of weight, Farzad Piltan, director-general of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries said.

According to Piltan, the value of exports, however, fell 60 percent in the mentioned three months, ILNA reported.

Iran exported nearly 50,000 tons of commodities in the previous calendar year's first three months, while the figure rose to 244,000 tons in the current year's same period, the official said.

He put the value of Iranian exports to the mentioned countries in the said three months at about \$60 million, down nearly 60 percent compared to the previous year's \$150 million for the same period.



The Islamic Republic annually exports about \$1 billion worth of goods directly and indirectly to Africa, while importing about \$100 million from the continent, Piltan noted.

Iran's exports include bitumen, iron and steel products, foodstuff, construction materials, carpets flooring, and raisins, as well as technical and engineering services, including the construction of refineries,

cooperation in power plant construction, water supply, tunnel construction, bridges and roads and the construction of reservoirs in African countries, he said.

According to the official, Ghana, Cameroon, South Africa, Somalia, Morocco, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan, and Libya have been the top 10 destinations for Iranian exports while South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Egypt are also the main exporters to Iran.

Iran also cooperates with some African nations in various areas such as mining, agriculture, or car production.

"The development of trade with African countries has always been a priority for the Iranian government. However, despite the implementation of various programs and agreements in recent years, we have not yet achieved the desired goals and the development of economic and trade relations

with Africa due to numerous problems at different levels," Piltan regretted.

Iran's Acting Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Hossein Modares Khiabani has said that the ministry has it on the agenda to export \$41 billion worth of non-oil commodities in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021).

According to the official, neighboring countries are the main target for the mentioned exports.

Khiabani noted that the government has paved the way for all productive units to export their products so that they would be able to supply their own machinery and raw materials.

"We have special programs for supplying raw materials, exporting and manufacturing of domestic products in the automotive, steel, food, home appliances and machinery industries," he said.

## Iran, Iraq resume trade via Mandali border

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Iraq resumed trade through Mandali (Soomar) border which had been closed for about five months due to the coronavirus pandemic, Mehr news agency reported on Monday.

Mazen al-Khuzai, the director of Mandali Region, announced the reopening of the mentioned border crossing, the Al-Malumah news site published.

Accordingly, dozens of trucks, passing from Iranian border, headed towards Mandali border, the official added.

Mandali border crossing is located in the vicinity of Soomar border marketplace, in the Iranian Kermanshah province.

While this border has been reopened, Iranian Customs Administration spokesman Rouhollah Latifi announced on Sunday that the reopening of Iran's Chazabeh border with Iraq, which was due to be on July 23, maybe done this [Iranian calendar] week (which ends on Friday), or next week.

Last week on Monday, a local official in Iranian southwestern Khuzestan Province announced that Chazabeh Border would be reopened on Thursday.

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

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



**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has proposed some solutions to the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry for facilitating the clearance of goods and preventing commodity pile-up

at the customs.

As Mehr News Agency reported, IRICA Deputy Head Mehrdad Jamal Orounaqi has proposed the said solutions in a letter to the Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand.

In this letter, Jamal Orounaqi has called for the reduction of the time for issuing clearance licenses to a maximum of seven days.

The need for clear classification and determining the priority basic goods (the commodities which should be cleared in the shortest possible time) by a single

supervisor body or organization was one of the major suggestions that were singled out in Orounaqi's proposal.

Back in August 2019, in a directive addressing IRICA, Dejjasand obliged the customs administration to take necessary measures for facilitating customs processes.

Following the Finance Ministry directive, in January 2020, IRICA obliged the customs departments throughout the country to take necessary measures for the facilitation of the clearance of basic goods.

The new instructions declared to the country's customs departments require the

representatives of the related organizations to act under the supervision of IRICA for conducting necessary controls and inspections.

In early February, Orounaqi announced that over 21 million tons of imported basic goods worth \$12 billion were cleared from Iranian customs since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019) up to February 8th.

The official noted that IRICA was providing special facilities for importers of basic goods to make them able to clear their commodities in the shortest possible time.



# Rouhani praises petchem industry for production boom

ENERGY  
desk

**TEHRAN** – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has expressed satisfaction with the country's petrochemical industry for increasing production in recent years, Shana reported.

Speaking in a meeting of the government economic coordination headquarters on Sunday, Rouhani expressed appreciation for the increase in the level of production in strategic commodities such as steel and petrochemicals, saying: "These goods were among imported commodities into the country years ago and have now become export opportunities for the country."

He mentioned the supply of goods at reasonable prices as one of the main programs of the government along with the production boom and said: "The process of pricing the goods should become more transparent by reforming the production and, distribution processes."

The president also expressed appreciation for the country's businessmen, exporters, entrepreneurs, and major economic players' cooperation and compliance with the government programs to move away from the oil-dependent economy toward a more productive one.

The official underlined the failure of the U.S. plan for crippling Iran's economy



through maximum pressure and said: "Today, after more than two years of sanctions, the government, with the cooperation of the people and economic actors, has succeeded not only in providing basic and essential goods for people but also in providing raw materials for the productive sectors, while being able to even accelerate the production."

In late December 2019, President Rouhani had stressed the significant role of the petrochemical industry in the country's economy in the face of U.S. sanctions, saying that it is at the forefront of the country's non-oil exports.

Earlier this month, National Petrochemical Company (NPC)'s Production Control

Manager Jalal Mirhashemi had announced that the output of Iranian petrochemical production units in the first 50 days of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 19) increased by six percent compared to the previous year's same period.

According to Mirhashemi, the country's petrochemical complexes are producing with the desired capacity, and many complexes have shown production growth since the beginning of the current year.

He said that Iran's petrochemical industry is ready to realize the "surge in production" intended for the current year, adding that in addition to launching and operating new projects, the existing idle capacity of some complexes will also be used with the measures taken.

The current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) is named as the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei.

The petrochemical industry is playing a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, so that based on official data, petrochemical exports constitute the second-largest hard currency earner in Iran after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already make up nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

## Sanctions could not hinder development of Iran oil industry: MP

**TEHRAN (NIPNA)** — A member of the Energy Committee of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) said: "Iran will not give up under any circumstances and despite US sanctions, it will develop its oil industry."

In an interview with Shana, Seyed Musa Mousavi stressed that Iran is developing its capacities in the oil industry, saying, "We will try to restore our share in the global oil markets whenever necessary."

"Iran's oil industry is currently on the path to development," he said. "It is influential in the global

arena, the developments of Iran's oil industry after the victory of the Islamic Revolution are not comparable with before, and Iran has had a significant leap in this industry."

He underlined the development of phases of the South Pars joint gas field, and added: "In the past few years, especially with the coming to power of the government of prudence and hope, different phases of the South Pars were put into operation, while sanctions were casting a shadow over the country."



## Iran gas industry to celebrate self-sufficiency in equipment supply

**TEHRAN (Shana)** —The Head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) announced the start of construction of 35 widely-consumed and strategic items in the gas industry with support from local knowledge-based companies.

According to NIGC, Hassan Montazer Torbati, referring to the increase in Iran's gas production capacity and registration of numerous records in the country's gas production, transmission, distribution, development and export chain, said: "Simultaneously with extensive planning to maintain gas production, gas industry development plans continue in the face of illegal sanctions and the spread of the coronavirus."

He stated that in the year of the Production Leap, extensive planning was made at NIGC in order to make maximum use of the power and potentialities of

Iranian manufacturers, contractors and industrialists.

The official further said that the company had devised and implemented a 4-step plan in order to localize key products and items in the gas industry.

Referring to the identification of technological, strategic needs of the National Gas Company in the refining, transmission and distribution sectors, the Deputy Minister of Petroleum for Gas Affairs said: "Currently, building 35 widely-used and high-demand items in the gas industry has been considered by NIGC with support from knowledge-based local firms."

He also announced NIGC's plans for domestic production of various chemicals used in the gas industry by knowledge-based firms, adding most of the chemicals were used in gas refineries.

## Oman explores opportunities for green hydrogen with renewables

Oman is exploring opportunities in the green hydrogen sector and for this purpose a committee has been set up under the leadership of Oman's ministry of oil and gas, Ewinda reported quoting a senior official at Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

Abdul-Amir Al Ajmi, External Affairs and Value Creation Director at PDO, said, "A committee, led by the ministry of oil and gas involving the ministry of technology and communication, companies operating in the oil and gas sector and academia, is currently studying opportunities in the green hydrogen sector".

"There is a big focus on hydrogen to power (opportunities) in Oman led by the ministry of oil and gas and facilitated by Ejaad," Ajmi said speaking at the Oman-Japan Investment Virtual Forum organised by Ithraa last week.

Ejaad is an Oman-based digital platform for academia and industry to collaborate on energy related research and development ac-

tivities. In January this year, Oman opened the Oman Hydrogen Center at the German University of Technology in coordination with Hydrogen Rise from Germany with an aim to facilitate the development of the hydrogen economy in Oman touted to be valued at \$20 billion by 2050.

Ajmi said hydrogen is also one of the legs that PDO is looking into after its transition to Energy Development Oman. In April this year, PDO announced its transition from a fossil-fuels based producer to a full-fledged energy company to cover investments in other areas including renewable and alternative energy resources.

Seeking investments from Japanese companies, Amri said, other projects planned in the alternative energy space include solar power storage, biogas, biofuel, wind power, concentrated solar power (CSP) and solar powered wellheads.

## Big Oil's worst-ever loss puts historic BP dividend cut in play

For the first time since the West's five energy supermajors were created in the early 2000s, all of them are expected to post a quarterly loss, Bloomberg reported.

Once a money-making machine, Big Oil is now relying on ever-increasing amounts of debt, raising the pressure on highly prized dividends. BP Plc may cut its payout for the first time since the Deepwater Horizon disaster a decade ago.

The sheer scale of global oil demand destruction — some 30 million barrels a day, or a third of regular usage, in April — sent energy markets into a second-quarter tailspin, from which they've only recently started to recover. Worst-in-a-generation oil prices combined with OPEC production cuts, collapsing refining margins and millions of barrels of unsold crude mean no facet of Big Oil's business has emerged unscathed.

The companies' unpredictable marketing divisions always have the potential to deliver surprise profits, as was the case for Norwegian producer Equinor ASA. But for some of the supermajors, billions of dollars of anticipated losses will be difficult for even the most skilled trader to offset.

"There really hasn't been anywhere to hide, even in the integrated model," said Noah Barrett, a Denver-based energy analyst at Janus Henderson, which manages \$294 billion. "Terrible quarter, but it's behind us now. The focus will be on how the recovery takes shape."

### Dividends

For BP, analysts from banks including Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Citigroup Inc. are expecting a cut in the payout of anywhere between 30 percent and 65 percent, a historic move for a company that has been a cornerstone dividend payer in the U.K.'s FTSE 100 Index for decades. It would reduce the amount of debt needed and free up cash for Chief Executive Officer Bernard Looney's high-profile strategy to eliminate almost all of the carbon emissions from the company's operations and the fuel it sells to customers.

The move would follow Equinor ASA and Royal Dutch Shell Plc, which cut its dividend for the first time since World War II earlier this year.

Exxon Mobil Corp., Chevron Corp. and Total SA aren't expected to follow suit, though analysts at Goldman reckon a cut at Exxon "could enable a financially healthier company."

### Debt

Big Oil borrowed some \$80 billion during the quarter, giving it a whopping cash balance of \$194 billion to see it



through an intense period of losses as well as scheduled debt repayments this year and in 2021, according to Jefferies Financial Group Inc. But this will increase net-debt-to-capital ratios, a key measure of indebtedness.

European majors will remain more indebted than their U.S. rivals, but dividend cuts may bring some relief. Despite having low debt coming into the crisis, Exxon's borrowing is rising rapidly and over time will become a cause for concern, according to Morgan Stanley and Goldman. Exxon's net debt climbed by \$8.8 billion in the the quarter and will surge to \$78 billion by the end of 2022, Goldman said. Chevron's agreement to acquire Noble Energy Inc. this week includes the assumption of about \$8 billion of additional borrowings. That still leaves the company well-placed to pay its dividend, CEO Mike Wirth said.

### Refining

Refining is seen as the "hedge" part of the Big Oil integrated model. When crude prices are down, refining is often unaffected because of lower feedstock costs, but that's an "oversimplification," according to Paul Cheng, a New York-based analyst at Scotiabank. When no one's buying petroleum because of lockdowns to fight the global pandemic, all parts of the oil business suffer.

A simple measure of refining profit, known as a 3-2-1 crack spread — it assumes three barrels of crude makes two of gasoline and one of diesel-like fuels — slumped to its lowest level for the time of the year since 2010. Refineries have also been

running at reduced levels and changing their product mix due to a worse market for jet fuel compared with gasoline.

### Downstream disaster

Exxon, which has massive refining operations, will be affected the most by this trend. Chevron may also suffer from challenges to its operations on the West Coast, Cheng said.

### Earnings

Results will reflect a tumultuous quarter in which Brent crude averaged about \$33 a barrel, less than half the level a year earlier, but with a massive spread between the high and low points of some \$20. That throws further uncertainty into the mix for trading and derivatives.

"Our team has forecasted earnings for 72 quarters and 2Q20 seems the most difficult of them," Jason Gammel, a London-based analyst at Jefferies Financial Group Inc., said in a note to clients.

### Impairments

Shell and BP got the bad news out of the way in June by disclosing they would write down as much as \$22 billion and \$17.5 billion respectively in the second quarter as the pandemic hammered the long-term valuations of everything from oil to liquefied natural gas. Chevron took an \$11 billion hit in December related to its U.S. natural gas assets. Exxon is yet to take such an impairment.

The two U.S. majors may come under pressure from analysts to reveal more information on how they value their assets because they don't provide the same disclosures as their European peers. Climate-conscious investors want Exxon and Chevron to disclose their long-term forecasts for crude prices as the Covid-19 pandemic heightens uncertainty about the demand outlook for fossil fuels. The New York State Common Retirement Fund, California State Teachers' Retirement System and Ceres, a Boston-based coalition of investors with \$30 trillion of assets, this month called on them to provide such estimates, in part to avoid ending up with uneconomic assets.

Such write-downs aren't inevitable. Equinor, which reported earnings on July 24, stuck to its assumption for an oil price of \$77 a barrel in 2025, arguing that the current slump will permanently eliminate enough crude production and make markets tighter in the years to come.

Shell and Total report on July 30, Exxon and Chevron on July 31, and BP on Aug. 4.

## Egypt's giant oil pipeline toward Europe slows to a trickle

Egypt's Sumed pipeline was designed to pump 2.5 million barrels of Persian Gulf crude from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean every day. Since May, a slump in oil demand and OPEC+ oil production cuts seem to have combined to slash flows to about a quarter of that.

As reported by Bloomberg, acting as an artery in the global oil trade, the Sumed gets West Asian oil to the North African coast, allowing giant supertankers -- that would otherwise sit too deep in the water -- to continue to use the Suez Canal. From the Mediterranean port of Sidi Kerir, it can then be shipped to refineries across Europe and North America. The slump in flows reflects European fuel consumption that plunged by as much as 90 percent in some instances and, in response to that, the deepest output reductions in history by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allied producers.

In April, Saudi Arabia embarked on a production surge, pushing output to an all-time high and helping to drive down prices. That's visible in the flows through the canal.

Then output cuts agreed by OPEC and its allies came into effect in May. Saudi Arabia's production tumbled and Sumed flows almost certainly followed suit. The amount of crude poured into the Sumed fell to just below 700,000 barrels a day in June and July, down from about 1.3 million in April, according to tanker tracking data compiled by Bloomberg. Meanwhile, the amount leaving Sidi Kerir -- the Mediterranean end of the line -- increased. That would imply stockpiles there probably swelled.

There is almost 20 million barrels of oil-storage capacity at either end of the Sumed, meaning the movements of tankers at either end of the conduit won't necessarily correlate perfectly with flows through it. The industry's biggest tankers sit too deep in the water to navigate the Suez Canal fully loaded. They can either discharge all their cargo at Ain Sukhna and then return to the Persian Gulf for their next consignment, or they can unload part of it at Ain Sukhna and then sail through the waterway before refilling at Sidi Kerir.

The vast majority of crude entering the pipeline comes from Saudi Arabia, with Kuwait and Iraq contributing much less. As such, it's the loss of Saudi volumes that caused overall flows to slump. Despite talk of demand recovery, the implied pumping rate has shown no sign of improving in July.

The destruction of European lifting of crude from Sumed was particularly pronounced in June and there has been a slight revival in July. Demand may be helping. Data from the TomTom Traffic Index show congestion remaining well below normal levels in cities in Spain and Italy, key markets for Sumed crude, but a slow pick-up in run rates at the region's refineries is beginning to draw more crude from the pipeline.

Many of the world's oil pipelines have seen pumping rates tumble as demand fundamentals stay weak and OPEC+ extended its deepest output cuts through July. With those cuts set to be eased slightly in August, production is set to rise by as much as 2 million barrels a day. But with most of the increase to be consumed locally, the Sumed may have to wait a while before it feels the benefit.

## U.S. oil production wells up after Covid price crash

U.S. oil companies have increased production by 1.2m barrels a day over the past six weeks, as they restore wells shut earlier this year and start producing from others they left unfinished as prices sank, Financial Times reported.

Output bottomed out at 9.7m bpd in the second week of June but has since risen to 10.9m bpd as activity starts to pick up in the big shale fields of Texas, according to Genscape, a division of consultancy Wood Mackenzie that monitors energy flows. That figure is more than the UK's entire crude production of 1.1m bpd.

U.S. production should now stabilize at about 11m bpd through to the end of 2020, analysts said. That is well below the 13m bpd in March before the Saudi-Russian price war and coronavirus pandemic devastated U.S. oil prices.

"It's a slow, slow recovery, but it's happening," said Alexandre Ramos-Peon, a senior analyst at Rystad Energy, a consultancy.

Despite the restarting of wells shut around the time the U.S. oil price plunged below zero in April, drilling activity remains weak. The number of operating rigs was just 251 last week, compared with about 800 in January.

But oilfield services companies say activity is beginning to pick up as operators redeploy crews to bring drilled-but-uncompleted wells into production. Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, uses water, sand and chemicals pumped into a well to open small cracks that will release the oil or gas.

The rise in fracking will ease fears that production could slip into an even more severe downward spiral.

Shale is unusual in the oil business because a typical well produces prolifically for a year before output drops steeply and then settles into a modest and diminishing flow rate thereafter. That means thousands of wells must be drilled each year just to hold overall output steady.

The number of so-called frac crews carrying out well-completion work crashed to a low of 45 in May, just 10 percent of the levels a year earlier, according to Primary Vision, an oilfield data provider.

But the research firm said 62 frac crews were now operating across the country. Rystad estimated more than 400 wells would be fracked this month, up from a low of 325 in June.

U.S. shale basins hold more than 7,000 wells that have been drilled but await completion, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

That leaves a large inventory of wells for operators to bring into production. Even so, a sustained recovery in output would need more drilling, say analysts.

"The stock of uncompleted wells is like a savings account for the industry," said Ian Nieboer, a managing director at RS Energy Group, a consultancy. "It buys time — but even treading water to keep production flat will become difficult if drilling activity doesn't increase."

Last year more than 14,000 wells were drilled in the U.S., but fewer than half that number would be drilled in 2020, said Nieboer.

Rystad predicts U.S. production will grow by about 500,000 bpd in 2021, after hovering around 11m bpd for the remainder of this year. That is well below the growth rates of recent years.

"We would need to see fracking activity return to the thousands (of wells) in order to see such a production growth," said Ramos-Peon.

"Right now it's like a reset to the industry. Lots of bankruptcies, lots of disenchantment, less capex. But it's still profitable to continue growing at these prices."



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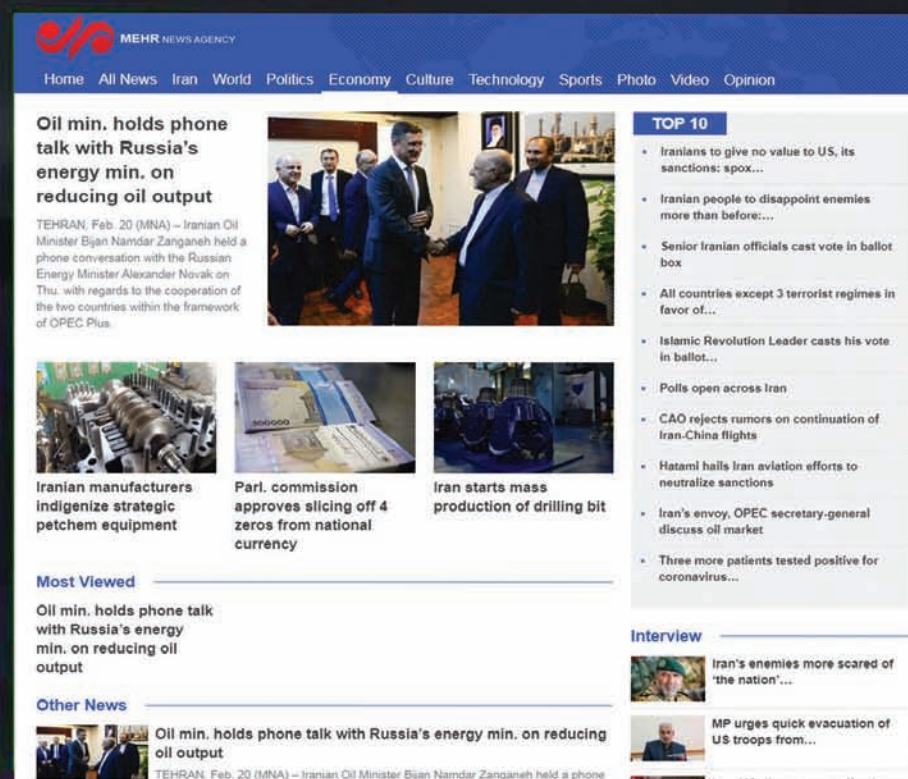
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# The world is fortunate that Iran is dominated by clear-headed thinkers, says American analyst

“U.S. foreign policy is led by dangerous neoconservative Christian Zionists like Pompeo and Pence”

**➔ A:** The Trump Administration, its foreign policy led by dangerous neoconservative Christian Zionists like Secretary of State Pompeo and Vice President Pence, continues to take actions in West Asia that are designed to incite Iran to strike out in retaliation. The aerial harassment of the Mahan Air passenger jet is the latest example. One need only consider what action would be taken if an Iran Air Force fighter threatened a U.S. airliner in the same way. We would not have U.S. media describing it as a ‘close call’, we would have calls for the U.S. to retaliate against this terrorist act, and probably within days there would be a strike against Iran.

This act of terrorism is designed as a provocation and intended to draw a violent response from the Iranian government that can then be used as a pretext for the all-out war that the U.S. and their Israeli partners in crime have been seeking for years. The world is indeed fortunate that the Iranian government is dominated by clear-headed thinkers who have the patience to wait for the right moment and the right method to punish the U.S. for its belligerence. We can hope that this November will bring a change of leadership to the United States that will reduce tensions in the region rather than continually exacerbate them.

■ Without any permission from Damascus, the U.S. has been operating in the Arab country since 2014 under the pretext of fighting the Daesh terrorist group. The U.S., however, continues its occupation even as Syria defeated the Takfiri terrorists in late 2017. Is U.S. presence in Syria legitimate?

A: As with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. justification for its illegal invasions shift as each rationale is proven false. The U.S. and NATO did not invade Syria in order to defeat Daesh. It was the U.S. and their allies in the region that funded, supplied, trained and inserted

**The dog-eat-dog neoliberal capitalism that drives this inequality (in the United States) is supported by both political parties so no matter who Americans vote for; the problem only gets worse.”**

the Takfiri terrorists into Syria, and on numerous occasions the U.S. has directly supported Daesh attacks with air power. The illegal intervention by the U.S. in Syria has been and still is designed to overthrow the government of President Bashar al-Assad and replace it with the Takfiri-dominated chaos that it brought to Libya. Weak governments, puppet governments, and failed states all benefit the Zionist project in Palestine.

The continued U.S. military presence in the region is not advancing U.S. national interests and some voices in the U.S. establishment are recognizing this fact. Whether they will be able to gain the political power to bring their ideas to fruition remains to be seen.

■ Please let’s back to our main topic. It seems that the United States is a contradiction. Its founding principles embrace the ideals of freedom and equality, but it is a nation built on the systematic exclusion and suppression of communities of color. From the start, so many of this country’s laws and public policies, which should serve as the scaffolding that guides progress, were instead designed explicitly to prevent people of color from fully participating. What are the reasons behind this?

A: The high-sounding words of Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence in 1776 were a valuable tool for enlisting popular support for the revolution. The American Revolution was initiated and carried out by the bourgeois merchant and planter class and they needed the support of ordinary colonists to win against the British. The Constitution of 1789 represented the first effort to establish a strong national government and it was riddled with compromises designed to satisfy the concerns of the slave states. Initially only white men with property could vote and even then, there were provisions like the Electoral College and the Senate that made sure that any incipient abolitionist feelings among Northerners would not be able to threaten the chattel slavery of Africans brought to this continent in chains.

Throughout our history, women and people of color have struggled to obtain



**“Many police officers are veterans of those wars and bring the techniques they employed on the streets of Kabul or Mosul into their work in Minneapolis or Portland,” the political commentator says of police behavior toward those protesting racism and injustice.**

the same rights and privileges as their white male fellow citizens and with only partial success. A brutal civil war promised to make Black Americans free but within a very few years, the same compromises with the Southern planter aristocracy led to the withdrawal of Union troops from the South and a violent return to quasi-slave conditions in the Jim Crow South. Again, in the 1960s, the civil rights movement brought about many improvements in the situation of African Americans, but as the retrograde political forces regained power, the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and failure to enforce civil rights laws have left us where we are today.

It is also important to recognize that the United States is a settler colonial enterprise. All the nation’s land was stolen from Native Americans and the most brutal genocidal methods were used by white settlers to take what they wanted. When the indigenous people were driven from all the land between the Atlantic and Pacific, the U.S. began imperial wars using the same techniques to invade and occupy the Philippines and Cuba and to steal much of Mexico. It is encouraging that because of the current unrest, more Americans are beginning to understand that part of our history and to see the brutality of other settler colonial projects such as that of the Zionists in Palestine.

■ What is important to learn from history of the slavery in the U.S. is the social construction of race, with the main objective of controlling the dominated groups and enforcing distance from them through multiple institutionalized laws and social norms. What is your take on it?

A: Race is a social construction since there are no significant biological differences between people based on their

maintaining the corporate capitalism that rules the United States.

■ The U.S. Constitution proclaims free and equal people, but everyone is aware this designation was not intended for enslaved Africans, but rather for the European settlers and their descendants. Many Blacks support the idea that individuals are not equal if there is a discrepancy in employment, food securitization, good schooling, housing, and healthcare. What do you think?

A: The elements of the Constitution that extend freedom and rights to African Americans are only contained in amendments adopted during and immediately after the Civil War, when the Southern states were either not represented or were under federal occupation. The courts largely refused to enforce these amendments for a hundred years and what gains Blacks have made in employment, education and housing largely came during the 1960s and 1970s. Once Ronald Reagan came to the presidency, those gains began to ebb away from lack of enforcement and lack of funding.

In the United States there are dramatic inequalities in wealth and income that leave millions of Americans of all races facing food shortages, lack of housing, inadequate health care, poor educational opportunities and employment, when available, at wages insufficient to support themselves and their families. The right-wing political forces have portrayed programs that would address these inequalities as entitlements primarily for Blacks. Once again, race is used to divide people who should work together. The dog-eat-dog neoliberal capitalism that drives this inequality is supported by both political parties so no matter who Americans vote for; the problem only gets worse.

**“It is also important to recognize that the United States is a settler colonial enterprise.”**

skin color or facial features. Before the rise of the plantation economy in the mid-1600s, Blacks enjoyed many of the same rights as whites and they worked and socialized together. Cheap labor and lots of it was required by the cotton farming that began to be prevalent in the South and when large numbers of African slaves were imported and set to work, it was necessary to justify their subservient position and the theory of racial superiority was developed. Race was also useful in creating an otherwise non-existent differentiation between poor whites and poor Blacks who otherwise might have made common cause against the white elite that oppressed them both.

Racism is still very prevalent, particularly among less affluent whites. It is still used to divide working people from one another. If working people of all races could unite, they might demand better wages, better social provisions from the government, a voice in management of businesses and government, and an end to wasteful overseas military adventures. That makes racism extremely useful in

**“It must be noted that most Americans do not trust the media and do not trust their government.”**

in Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles invented to fight IED attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. Is it any wonder they see citizens (particularly those of color) as the enemy?

It is possible that these protests will last long enough and gain enough momentum to actually drive serious systemic change in the country. Obviously, the entire establishment is determined to prevent that and it’s likely the movement will be co-opted before it can reach that point.

■ What is Black Lives Matter protest for? Can the roots of this movement be traced in American history? Are there any similar movements in American history?

A: It is a mistake to see these protests as a unified movement. The primary thrust at this point seems to be ending racist policing and moving toward some kind of law enforcement model that does not require such a high level of violence. The official Black Lives Matter organization is primarily focused on encouraging people to vote for Democratic Party candidates for office. They have been effectively co-opted. The Democratic Party has not been a friend of Black Americans for a long time and few of the candidates they are running this year have a strong track record of support for the Black community.

There is another organization attempting to influence the demonstrations, the Movement for Black Lives. They are calling not only for an end to what they call the war on Black communities, but an end to the war on drugs, the death penalty, money bail and many other radical reforms.

Most of the people currently in the streets probably have no allegiance to either group but are simply showing solidarity with their Black neighbors and friends and supporting their calls for an end to systemic racism and racist

**“It was the U.S. and their allies in the region that funded, supplied, trained and inserted the Takfiri terrorists into Syria, and on numerous occasions the U.S. has directly supported Daesh attacks with air power.”**

policing in particular. One of the underlying problems that may be giving more impetus to these demonstrations is the complete failure of our political system to respond to the needs of citizens. Elected officials of both political parties listen almost exclusively to their campaign contributors and corporate lobbyists. The issues and concerns of ordinary citizens usually don’t get their attention. If there is enough unrest and it lasts long enough, the politicians will have to respond in some way other than military repression.

■ Some experts argue that Black Lives Matter is the largest movement in U.S. history. What do you think?

A: I don’t think it is a movement. There are no leaders, no agenda, no goals, no structure. If these materialize then it might well become a movement.

■ How do you assess the role of mainstream media in the protests? What about Facebook, Twitter and other social media?

A: US mainstream media are interested in two things - making money and maintaining their access to power. They will continue to highlight violence and property damage in the protests because that gets them more readers and viewers. Only the largest newspapers will do any serious investigative journalism to determine what is going on inside the protests, who is involved and why.

Social media is important in reaching those sympathetic to the protests and helping them gather more people in the streets. It’s also useful in conjunction with right-wing media such as Fox News, in marshaling opposition to the protests and using thinly disguised racist tropes to convince their white audience that the protesters are anarchists and criminals.

It must be noted that most Americans do not trust the media and do not trust their government. We have been lied to so often for so long about so many things that any credibility they may have once had is destroyed. That is a large part of the reaction to COVID-19 precautions such as mask wearing and social distancing.

## U.S. has long history of committing terrorism against civilian planes

BY Kevin Barrett

The U.S. military is apparently lying about its harassment of an Iranian passenger plane over Syria. The U.S. military spokespeople are saying that this apparent harassment by F15 warplanes didn’t really happen, they were just on a routine mission and it just sort of happened to go by 1000 feet away from the Iranian passenger plane for no particular reason, when in fact this was obviously deliberate harassment.

So why would they be lying? And is this bad for their reputation? I suppose...although the reputation of the U.S. government and its military for telling the truth has been shredded long ago. And so, I think the world pretty much expects lies from the American military, especially about these kinds of incidents.

But it is very disturbing, this kind of terrorism—because it is terrorism. Any targeting of civilians is the very definition of terrorism. And civilian airliners are obviously not military targets. And so, when they’re put in danger by this kind of threatening behavior by warplanes, that is an act of terrorism. It’s just as if Daesh militants were firing their rockets at civilian planes, that’s terrorism, even if they don’t hit the plane, even if their rockets are not capable of hitting the planes more than 10% of the time, risking the lives of civilian passengers is an act of terrorism.

And we just saw how bad this can get. Last year the Israelis caused a Russian Flight to get shot down, they deliberately did that apparently. The Israelis were using a Russian civilian plane to sneak into Syria, under the cover of that civilian plane knowing that their presence would trigger the anti-aircraft defenses and that led to the death of a bunch of Russian civilians on that plane. So, these kinds of reckless endangering terroristic actions against civilian targets are unfortunately fully in line with the standard practices of the Americans and the Israelis around the world and especially in the Muslim East region.

Now what this American F15 squad was doing there anyway is a good question. It’s totally illegal. The Americans have a big base al-Tanf which is in Syria. And the Americans have been specifically disinvited from Syria. They’re not allowed to have anybody in Syria. And yet they just invaded and established their own airbase in Syria, which is an illegal occupation. And from that base in Syria, they’re conducting terroristic attacks on civilians like this one which fortunately didn’t involve any loss of life.

But the U.S. has a history of causing loss of life with civilian airliners. For instance, the shootdown of the Iranian plane (Iran Air 655) at the tail end of the first Persian Gulf War, the Iran-Iraq war, that was clearly deliberate, and a message to Iran to accept the terms that Iran never would have accepted otherwise. So this kind of terrorism, deliberately killing civilian passengers on airplanes, is par for the course for the Americans. And likewise, the U.S. embargo on spare parts for civilian planes has led to a fair number of deaths in the Iranian civilian aviation industry over the decades.

So, this is completely unacceptable. But unfortunately, we don’t have any real international law capable of being enforced. The U.S. Empire still gives itself the right to invade anybody it wants, as it’s invaded Syria, to occupy anybody it wants, as it’s occupying Syria, and to continue to try to destroy the region on behalf of the Zionist settler colony.

And so that will change when the world balance of power changes, and it’s changing pretty fast. The U.S. Empire is definitely in decline. And the final sunset on the U.S. Empire is likely to happen within the next decade, or decade and a half. And when that happens, these kinds of acts of terrorism can be actually prosecuted and stopped.

Kevin Barrett is an American author, journalist and radio host with a Ph.D. in Islamic and Arabic Studies. He has been studying the events of 9/11 since late 2003. (Source: Press TV)

## Former Saudi finance minister imprisoned after tweet mourning dissident

The son of former Saudi deputy Finance Minister and writer Abdulaziz Al-Dakhil revealed that his father is currently being detained by authorities in a prison south of the kingdom’s capital Riyadh.

Al-Dakhil was detained last Ramadan, along with two others, for paying tribute to reformist Abdullah Al-Hamid, who recently died in prison, reported Middle East (West Asia) Monitor.

The son of the finance minister, Abdel-Hakim Al-Dakhil, announced that his father was detained at Al-Hair Prison after writing a tweet calling for freedom and justice.

Al-Dakhil’s tweet, posted on 25 April, eulogized imprisoned Saudi dissident Abdullah Al-Hamid who died in detention after suffering a stroke.

“Dr. Abdullah Al-Hamid, the man who was devoted to his homeland and to high values, morals and sincere citizenship, has passed on to his God,” read Al-Dakhil’s tweet. “But he did not leave the hearts of the faithful to the homeland of the believers, by providing advice without fear or shame, and without vested interest. May God have mercy on you, Abu Bilal.”

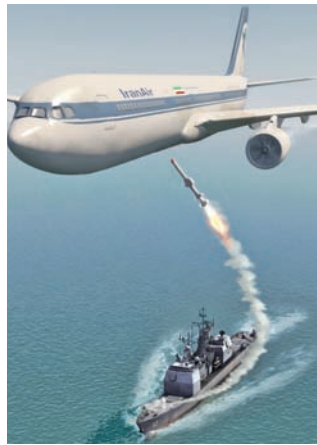
Al-Hamid, a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), was sentenced to 11 years in jail in March 2013.

He was convicted on multiple charges, including “breaking allegiance” to the Saudi ruler, “inciting disorder” and seeking to disrupt state security, according to Amnesty International.

Rights activists have decried medical negligence in Saudi Arabia’s secretive prisons, especially as the kingdom battles a Covid-19 outbreak, as reported by The New Arab.

The Prisoners of Conscience, an organization concerned with the affairs of detainees in the Saudi Kingdom, confirmed the arrests of three writers and activists, namely: Aqel Al-Baheli, Abdulaziz Al-Dakhil and lawyer Sultan Al-Ajmi.

(Source: The New Arab)





## Chabahar airport project a ‘major stimulus’ to attract tourists, investors

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Chabahar Free Trade–Industrial Zone Organization is planning to build an international airport which would be a major stimulus to attract both tourists and investors to the region in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.



Abdolrahim Kordi, the managing director of the organization, made the remarks during a meeting with the visiting members of the Iranian consortium for incoming tours with the aim of getting acquainted with the region’s attractions and travel potentials, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Back in January, Kordi announced that the industrial zone was going to invest 5.5 trillion rials (about \$131 million) supplied by domestic sources in the first phase of the mentioned project expected to be completed within two years.

The secretaries of incoming tour operators, which work with China, Armenia, the European Union, Oman, Iraq, Turkey, India, Pakistan, and Syria exchanged views on how to expand capabilities and capacities of tourism in Chabahar. They also held separate meetings with the private sector authorities as well as local tourism experts.

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.

## 18th-century mosque in Na’in undergoes restoration

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The 18th-century Abu Reyhaneh Mosque in the city of Na’in, central Isfahan province, underwent some rehabilitation works, a provincial tourism chief has said.

Various parts of the historic structure, especially its basement, had been damaged by moisture and natural factors over the past years, CHTN quoted Mahmud Madanian as saying on Monday.



The restoration project, which aimed at preserving, protecting, and strengthening the historical mosque, was carried out in collaboration with the board of trustees of the mosque, the official added.

Well regarded for its hospitable people, handicrafts, and ancient qanats (manmade subterranean aqueducts that bring water from the mountains), Na’in dates back to nearly 2000 years, which makes it one of the oldest continuously settled towns in the Iranian plateau.

Na’in is home to one of the oldest mosques in the country. Originally constructed in c. 10th century, Jameh Mosque of Na’in is was one of the first mosques built in Iran and is unusual in that it doesn’t conform to the usual four-iwan pattern of its time (for instance Jameh Mosque of Isfahan).

Na’in lies 170 km north of Yazd and 140 km east of Isfahan. Like much of the Iranian plateau, it has a desert climate, with a maximum temperature of 41 °C in summer, and a minimum of -9 °C in winter

During ancient times, the city was at the junction of a desert road that connected Tabas and Mashhad, it used to be an important crossroad on converging trade routes since Sassanid times.

Na’in was known for its ceramics and textiles; today it’s primarily known for fine hand-knotted carpets and for hand-loomed camel-wool cloaks, which are produced in the neighboring villages.

## Iran in detail: Eating

**(Lonely Planet)** — Iranian food is a highlight of travelling in the country, with considerable variety on offer. While you may often eat cheap meals on the run, remember that for many Iranians, eating is a social event in which food is only half the story. If you take time over the meal, to savor both the tastes on offer and the company you’re sharing it with, you’re halfway towards becoming a local.

**The basics:** Iran is an excellent place to eat out (or in, if you’re lucky enough to be invited to a meal in a local family home).

**Teahouses:** Traditionally where Iranians would go to socialise and eat, with tea, qalyan (water pipe) and food.

**Kebabis:** Simple kababis tend to be found around major meydan (squares) and serve, yes, kababs. Eat where the locals eat.

**Take-away:** Fast food is popular and begins (and often ends) with bread-roll ‘sandwiches’.

**Restaurants:** Found across the country; most serve ash-e jo (pearly-barley soup) and salad as standard starters

**At home:** Possibly the best food you’ll ever taste.

# Bisotun World Heritage registration anniversary to be celebrated online

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The 14th anniversary of inscribing the ancient site of Bisotun on the UNESCO World Heritage list will be celebrated during a festival which will be held online in the western province of Kermanshah on Friday, CHTN reported.

Located 30 kilometers east of the provincial capital Kermanshah, at the foot of the Zagros Mountains, Bisotun was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage list on July 13, 2006.

Bisotun is one of the province’s tourism symbols and capacities, and organizing such programs is the least work that could be done, while coronavirus outbreak has put everything on a halt, provincial tourism chief Omid Qaderi said on Monday.

A number of prominent artists of the province as well as the historical site’s experts and researchers are scheduled to attend the festival to promote and introduce this UNESCO-tagged site more properly, the official added.

Earlier this month provincial deputy tourism chief Ali Saber announced that visits to Kermanshah tourist sites plummeted during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20), compared to the same period last year as travel curbs were imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

He also said that the coronavirus disease has had a vast impact on the province’s tourism, and added, “The infection started



Details of the UNESCO-listed carvings of Darius at Bisotun, western Iran

spreading when we were expecting to meet a high season in tourism of the province. We had already planned to well host a large number of travelers.”

However, he expressed his hope that the province would witness a tourism boom after coronavirus.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting the king Darius I and several other figures.

The area was on the ancient trade

route linking the Iranian high plateau with Mesopotamia and contains remains from prehistoric times to the Median and Achaemenid eras.

The principal monument of this archaeological site is the bas-relief and cuneiform inscription ordered by Darius the Great shortly after he ascended to the throne of the Persian Empire in 521 BC.

The bas-relief portrays Darius holding a bow, as a sign of sovereignty and treading

on the chest of a figure who lies on his back before him. According to legend, the figure represents Gaumata, the Median Magus, and pretender to the throne whose assassination led to Darius’s rise to power.

Below and around the bas-reliefs, there are about 1,200 lines of inscriptions telling the story of the battles Darius waged in 521-520 BC against the governors who attempted to take apart the empire founded by Cyrus.

The inscription is written in three languages. The oldest is an Elamite text referring to legends describing the king and the rebellions. This is followed by a Babylonian version of similar legends. The last phase of the inscription is particularly important, as it is here that Darius introduced for the first time the Old Persian version of his res gestae (things done).

This is the only known monumental text of the Achaemenids to document the re-establishment of the empire by Darius I. It also bears witness to the interchange of influences in the development of monumental art and writing in the region of the Persian Empire. There are also remains from the Median period (8th to 7th centuries BC) as well as from the Achaemenid (6th to 4th centuries BC) and post-Achaemenid periods.

UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

## Over 30 Paleolithic sites discovered in eastern Iran

**➔ 1** In contrast, over the past decade, a series of extensive research has been conducted on Paleolithic settlements in the central Plateau of Iran and near the Zagros Mountain range, resulting in reliable and significant discoveries, he said.

“However, this atmosphere is completely different from that in the east and northeast of Iran. Possibly, eastern of the Iranian Plateau was free of human life in the Paleolithic Age.....while the geographical location and climatic diversity in [parts of] this area could be providing significant potential for attracting hunter-gatherer groups, some of whom being identified in [our recent] studies in Ferdows county.”

The archaeologist added that fresh the survey was conducted despite the unbearable heat through a completely surveyed manner, fruit of which was the identification of more than 30 sites dating back the Paleolithic period.

“The newly-conducted survey can be regarded as a cornerstone to the ongoing systematic studies hoped to deepen our knowledge of the Paleolithic era in this part

of the Iranian plateau.”

Last year, in one of the significant archaeological findings of Iranian history, Kaldar cave in western Iran yielded fresh evidence for its Paleolithic residents; including traditions of making [stone] tools related to Middle Paleolithic and Upper Paleolithic eras. Archaeologists excavated stone tools and a fragment of a fossilized skull, attributed to Homo sapiens. The cave has also yielded weapon fragments crafted by Neanderthals.

The onset of the Paleolithic Period, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, has traditionally coincided with the first evidence of tool construction and use by Homo some 2.58 million years ago, near the beginning of the Pleistocene Epoch (2.58 million to 11,700 years ago). In 2015, however, researchers excavating a dry riverbed near Kenya’s Lake Turkana discovered primitive stone tools embedded in rocks dating to 3.3 million years ago—the middle of the Pliocene Epoch (some 5.3 million to 2.58 million years ago). Those tools predate the oldest



confirmed specimens of Homo by almost 1 million years, which raises the possibility that toolmaking originated with Australopithecus or its contemporaries and that the timing of the onset of this cultural stage should be reevaluated.

## New eco-lodge unit comes on stream in Pasargadae

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A new eco-lodge unit near the UNESCO-tagged Pasargadae in Fars province, southern Iran, has recently been inaugurated, CHTN reported.

The seven-room Kuroshk eco-lodge, as the 141st unit in the province, has a capacity for hosting 20 people, Seyyed Mo’ayed Mohsennejad said on Monday.

The private sector has allocated six billion rials (about \$143,000) for the project, the official said, adding that a total of seven billion rials has been spent on the project.

Back in April, provincial tourism chief Mosayeb Amiri announced that a total of 25 eco-lodge units will come on stream in Fars province by the end of the current Iranian



year (March 20, 2021).

“We intend to escalate the number of eco-lodges in Fars as ecotourism-related accommodation is a way to develop tourism in lesser-known areas (of the southern province),” the official noted.

Situated in about 50 km north of Persepolis, Pasargadae embraces outstanding examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization.

Cyrus was the founder of the Achaemenid Empire which at its greatest extent stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers. The Persian king declared the world’s first charter of human rights, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder.

Despite the minimal nature of the ruins, they make a good introduction to the wonders of Persepolis, some 60km to the south. Best visited en route from Yazd or Isfahan to Shiraz, most people fit them into an extended tour from Persepolis with stops at Naqsh-e

Rostam and Naqsh-e Rujab.

The tourism ministry has set a target to help build 2,000 eco-lodges by 2021, believing such guest houses could cater to sustainable development and job creation in the countryside and rural areas.

Experts say each eco-lodge unit generates jobs for seven to eight people on the average so that the scheme could create 160,000 jobs.

The culturally-diverse country never disappoints visitors when it comes to eco-tourism, sightseeing and even tribal tourism as it is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

## Kashan carpets amongst most fabulous fine arts of Iran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Long a center for fine carpets, Kashan has almost one-in-three residents employed in carpet-making, with more than two-thirds of the carpet-makers being women.

The traditional skills of Kashan carpet weaving are passed down to people through apprenticeship under instruction from their ancestors. Apprenticeship is also the means by which men learn their skills of designing, dyeing, shearing, loom-building and tool-making.

“Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan” was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

The carpet-weaving process starts with a design, elaborated from among a series of established styles, including motifs such as flowers, leaves, branches, animals and scenes taken from history.

Woven on a loom known as a “dar”, the warp and woof are of cotton or silk. The pile is made by knotting wool or silk yarns to the warp with the distinctive Farsi knot, then held in place by a row of the woven woof, and beaten with a comb. The Farsi weaving style (also known as asymmetrical knotting) is applied with exemplary delicacy in Kashan, so that the back side of the carpet is finely and evenly knotted. The colors of Kashan carpets come from a variety of natural dyes including madder root, walnut skin, pomegranate skin and vine leaves.

**■ Sialk historical mound, the origin of traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan**

The historical monuments of this region have revealed that Sialk mounds date back to Hammurabi era. First, people living in the region were known as Kaso or Kasho, which were later changed to Kasayan and Kashan. Some historians believe that Harun al-Rashid’s wife, Zubaidah bint Ja’afar ibn-e Mansur ordered to build Kashan which is now famous for its traditional skills of carpet weaving.



An Iranian woman weaves a carpet with keeping an eye on a pattern attached in her carpet loom in Kashan

**■ Kashan, from the viewpoint of the tourists**

The great world travelers of all time who have traveled to this region have noticed that Kashan had been the center for the production of precious fabrics and cloth. Sir John Chardin and Anthony Shirley stated the inhabitant of Kashan weave some specific fabrics and cloth including plain silk fabrics, damask silk fabrics, or silk mixed with gold and silver.

In 1600, Cartwright praised carpet and rug weaving in Kashan and called this region the trading place for such goods. Writings and books in the 17th and 18th centuries showed that the traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan had been specialized for royal carpet initially ordered by Shah Abbas. The oldest Kashan carpets remained till today date back to the 17th century. It’s kept in Carpet Museum of Iran.

**■ Persian carpets in museums all over the world**

In fact, one can say this intangible cultural heritage of

Iran is the related to the arts and skills of producing textiles, braid, taffeta, velvet making and atlas fabric making that have gained the reputation as “Hormozi materials” all over the world for many years.

Today, some examples of “hunting-design carpet” are available at the Carpet Museum of Iran and the Metropolitan Museum of America. Nevertheless, there is no exact information whether these carpets were woven in Kashan, Isfahan or Tabriz.

Some researchers have reached the conclusion that a number of old Polish carpets are also woven in this region. The well-known carpet of Sheikh Safi Mausoleum has been a master of Kashan carpet weaving. This carpet known as Ardebil Carpet is now kept at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Also “Shah Abbasi carpet” embellished by coarse Shah Abbasi flowers is produced in this period.

**■ The skill of interweaving warp and weft for “Persian weaving”**

Carpet weavers generally make the warp and weft of Kashan carpet out of cotton, and silk is only used in very fine and delicate carpets. They use particular Kashan yarns called “urban” and “Esfahani” cotton threads for under-weft which is thicker than on-weft. At the first sight, one can notice the delicate and short wool and the velvety texture of Merino wool in the design of the carpet. In addition to Australian Merino wool, Kashan carpet weavers also use Khorasan, Kermanshah, Azerbaijan and Tehran wool threads.

Before weaving starts, the designers prepare some patterns comprising branches, flowers, leaves, animal hunting grounds and historical battle scenes. Then, the weavers start creating the Persian carpets using dyed yarn and silk. Persian weaving style, also known as the “asymmetric knot”, is a knot which has a distinct twist. One can see its equal knots on the back of the carpet.



# Unique biodiversity: five snake species endemic to Iran

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Many wild-life species in Iran are unknown to ordinary people. It becomes clear when a video of a spider-tailed horned viper goes viral on social media, and many people wonder whether this strange animal really lives in Iran. However, the world of reptiles is full of the unspoken and many reptiles of the country are unique in their kind.

In the following article, we get you acquainted with some of the wonders of snake species in Iran. What you read below is a brief description of the life and biological characteristics of some of the most unique snakes in Iran.

## ■ Montivipera latifii

The Montivipera species group consists of the venomous snakes with 5 known species and sub-species: Montivipera albicornuta, M.latifii, M.raddei raddei, M.raddei kurdistanica, and M.kuhrangica, which their taxonomic situation is very controversial. These species live in alpine meadows from 1800 to more than 3200 meters from SL.

The populations of these species are really fragmented and are posed to the serious danger of extinction because of humane activities. Because of the high risk of extinction, M.latifii is sited in Endangered category of IUCN Red List. The first step to applying the conservation plans is to know the exact taxonomic situation and precise distribution areas.

Montivipera latifii is found in Iran in the upper Lar valley in the Alborz Mountains. Unfortunately, the mountain plains that are home to this species are being severely degraded by overgrazing. Currently, the largest protected area of this species in Lar National Park has an uncertain future due to threats such as habitat destruction due to overgrazing and excessive tourist presence.

"This snake is one of the few snakes in the world that has two completely different designs of zigzag and linear and another design that combines the two," Khosro Rajabizadeh, a biodiversity expert at the University of Ghent in Belgium said.

Interestingly, babies are born with different designs from one mother, he added.

The total habitat of this species is not more than 150 km and in terms of width it may not be more than 20 to 30 km; because it is found only in the heights of the southern slopes of Alborz, he added.

Unfortunately, illegal hunting is a factor that has severely damaged the population of these vipers due to their venom. Alireza Shahrardipناه, a wildlife expert said.

There is no certain information of their population in Iran, which is a big problem that makes protection more difficult, he said, adding, the habitat of Latifi viper is more vulnerable than spider-tailed horned viper due to the presence of tourists, which indicates the need for serious protection.

## ■ Eastern Montpellier snake

"The eastern Montpellier snake (Malpolon insignitus) is a species of mildly venomous rear-fanged snake.

As you know, snakes often live individually and have no desire for group life; but this specie has a dominant male who selects a female in the breeding season, the male takes care of the female he has chosen; While the dominant male has several other males around him, those males are obedient to this dominant male.

Obedient males are those whose strength does not reach the dominant male but live near the dominant male. As a result, if the dominant male goes in conflict with another male, the obedient males help him. This is



true even in the case of human conflicts," he explained.

"Dominant males prey for their females, and obedient males do the same so that the females do not move too far from the eggs they lay. The female does not sleep on the eggs but stays close to the eggs anyway.

This species is very special among Iranian snakes and is the only snake that has this unique feature of group life during reproduction. Another characteristic of this snake is that it is very different from other snakes is that it marks not only its own female but also its own submissive males. This is done by secreting a type of pheromone from the nasal glands so that the group does not mix with the rest of the snakes," he said.

## ■ Eirenis

Genus Eirenis, are often small in size. So far, 22 to 23 species of this genus have been identified in the world, tens of species are distributed in Iran.

Rajabizadeh said that "One of the interesting features of Eirenis snakes is that they are often half a meter or even smaller in size. Research shows that these snakes evolved from the large Dolichophis snake; That is, snakes that are often over one meter to one and a half meters in size have shrunk over evolution. The emergence of Eirenis has greatly affected the biodiversity of these snakes because these snakes have greatly diversified. The number of species of the genus Eirenis is much higher than that of the genus Dolichophis; "At the same time, these snakes have found special adaptations."

Of course, the reduction in body size in the genus Eirenis has also brought some adaptations; For example, large Hierophis snakes, which are close to Eirenis snakes, often feed on warm-blooded prey, such as small rodents. Eirenis snakes, on the other hand, feed on cold-blooded prey such as arthropods. Arthropods have exoskeletons, so Eirenis have weaker jaw muscles but stronger, conical teeth than their larger ancestors. On the other hand, these snakes, unlike their ancestors who prefer surface life, like to live in the subsurface and empty spaces underground.

## ■ Spider-tailed horned viper

Being pushed toward extinction through poaching, the spider-tailed horned viper has been discovered in 2006. The venomous snake has a unique tail that has a bulb-like end bordered by long drooping scales that give

it the appearance of a spider, which is waved around and used to lure insectivorous birds to within striking range.

There are no accurate statistics of spider-tailed horned viper population, but it is spotted in the province of Ilam, Kermanshah, and Lorestan. To date, there have been no reports of spider-tailed horned viper being discovered in other countries.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has banned illegal trade of spider-tailed horned viper in August 2019.

First of all, you should know that the biological characteristics of this snake have been studied very little, but it is probably laying eggs. Although its distribution in the world is only in Iran, its reproduction in Iran has not been studied yet. So what we are referring to here is based solely on what we know so far. Now, perhaps, much more attractive features of this snake will be introduced to the world later. One of the interesting features of this snake is how it hunts birds, Rajabizadeh explained.

The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CITES CoP18 took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 17-28 August 2019, through which Iran's proposal to add rare spider-tailed horned viper on the Convention's Appendix II have been accepted.

Following the CITES mission designed to protect endangered species against illegal trade, and based on the international demand for such illegal trade, the CITES office in Iran set out to send a proposal to the Convention Secretariat to add spider-tailed horned viper on the Convention's list and thus prevent its illegal trade in early March.

Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction; trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.

So, any trade of the species is permitted only with the CITES's permission, and all 183 member parties are obliged to control the ports and prevent the trade of this viper.

Spider-tailed horned viper was declared endangered by the DOE in November 2018.

## ■ Cerastes gasperettii

Cerastes gasperettii, commonly known as the Arabian horned viper, is a venomous viper species found especially in the Arabian Peninsula and north to Israel, Iraq, and Iran. It is very similar in appearance to C. cerastes, but the geographic ranges of these two species do not overlap. No subspecies of C. gasperettii are recognized.

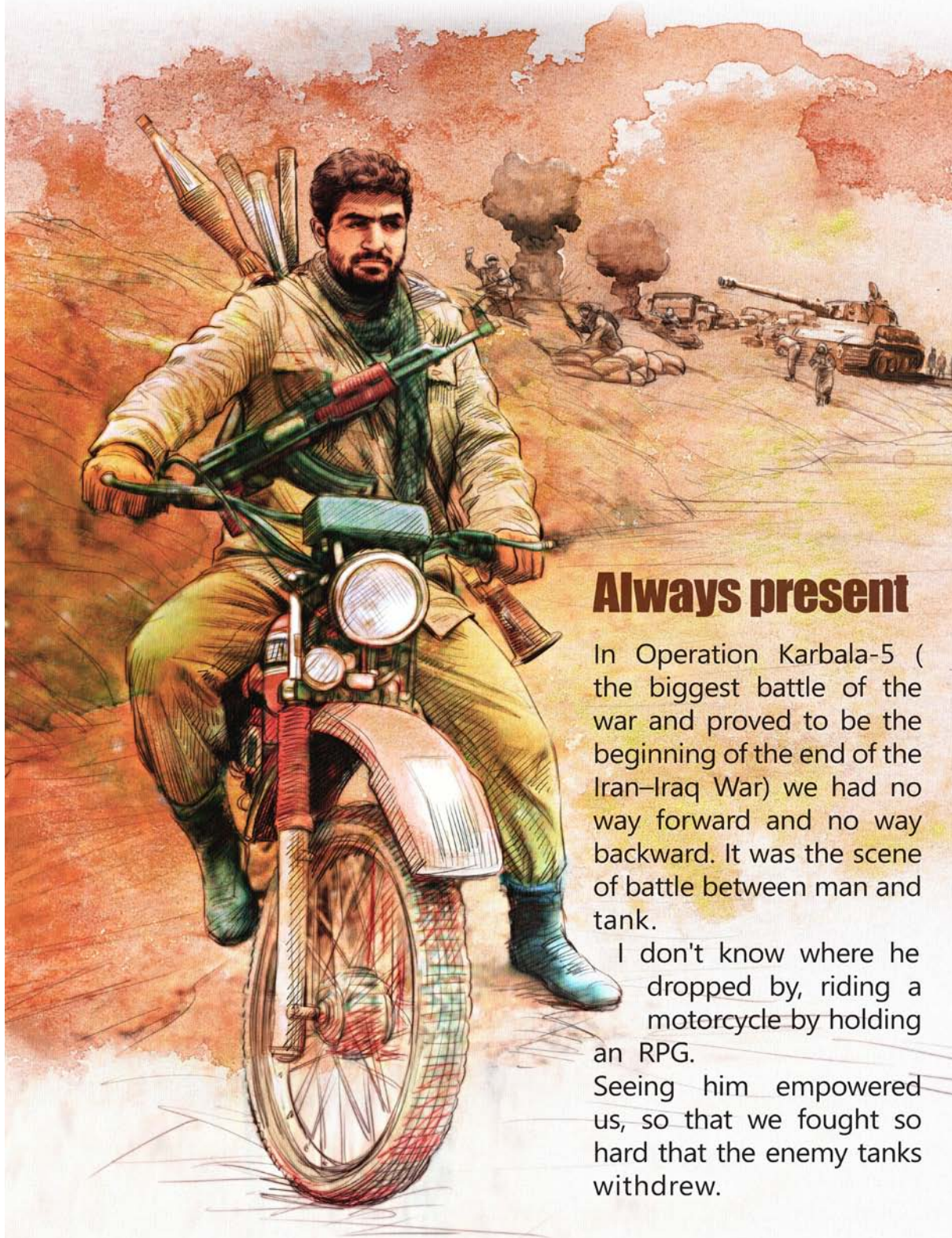
First, this snake lives in very tropical areas of our country, such as Ahvaz (Al-Baji region) in the sandy and earthen hills and has a limited distribution in Iran, Shahrardipناه said.

"The vegetation where this species is found is also very limited in diversity. Unfortunately, we are not very aware of its protection status in Iran because not much work has been done. Some specimens of this viper have two deformed horn-like scales on their heads, which is their unique feature, while others are hornless.

This snake is one of the species that has a high camouflage ability. It is completely colored similar to sand which helps camouflage it. On the other hand, the shape of the scales is also effective in hiding. The scales are prominent and the two bands start from the side of the nose and extend along the face to the cheeks, appearing like two lines on the head from above. The spots on his body are not perfect zigzags, but they are spots. In the camouflage mode, the pupil of the snake's eye and part of the horn are out of the sand, which has a different effect.

This snake is nocturnal and is not seen during the day due to the hot weather. Depending on its size, it chooses its prey and its diet consists of rodents and even lizards. One way to identify this snake is to leave a mark on the sandals. Because it moves in a zigzag pattern, but the wind quickly destroys the traces and makes it difficult to find.

This snake is laying eggs and the place where it lays eggs must be on a balanced level; That is, where it is neither too hot nor too deep. These snakes lay between four and eight eggs each time, depending on environmental conditions. Their venom is also strong, but because they are nocturnal and live in desert and warm habitats, they do not have much conflict with humans," he explained.



## Always present

In Operation Karbala-5 (the biggest battle of the war and proved to be the beginning of the end of the Iran-Iraq War) we had no way forward and no way backward. It was the scene of battle between man and tank.

I don't know where he dropped by, riding a motorcycle by holding an RPG.

Seeing him empowered us, so that we fought so hard that the enemy tanks withdrew.

## Kindness knows no border: German teacher builds school in Iranian village

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — A German teacher and tourist who came to visit Iran in the Iranian calendar year 1385 (March 2006-March 2007), decided to build a school with three classes in the rural areas of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, southwest of the country.

The name that Brend Rose gave to his daughter "Elizabeth" now shines on the door of a rural school in Iran. Elizabeth School is located in the village of Lama in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province.

As philanthropy knows no boundary, a tourist mountaineer turns into a school-building benefactor.

After traveling to the Zagros Mountains and getting to know Iranian people, Rose went to the Dena slopes in the Zagros Mountains. Lama is the closest village to the foothills of the Zagros in the city of Dena, so it became a tourist destination for Rose.

After three days of mountaineering in the beautiful nature of the Dena foothills, Rose was surprised by the hospitality of the locals. All the residents of Lama village welcomed him and hosted him in the best possible way during his stay of one week.

Rose, as much as enjoyed locals' hospitality suffered from the deprivation of these people, so he decided to contribute to the construction of a school. He donated 20,000 euros of the savings from his teaching salary.

Now Lama village and Elizabeth School are like his country, he still comes to visit the school and the locals. He praises the school and the villagers wherever he goes to show the real picture of Iranian people.

The remote village of Lama is now popular with Germans and Brend's students.

## ■ Thousands of classrooms built by charities

Hadi Zarepour, director general of provincial education department said that 2,700 classrooms in urban and rural areas of the eight cities of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province need to be reconstructed and retrofitted.

The number of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad schools in the three levels of education is more than 3,000, he noted.

So far, 1,585 classrooms have been built in this province with the participation of local and foreign school-building charities, Jabbar Kianipour, chairman of the association of school-building charities stated. Currently, 64 schools are being built in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, he added.

It is predicted that 25 schools out of these 64 schools will be completed and opened by September, he said.

## ■ Hearts bigger than bank accounts

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country. 20 to 30 percent of the country's schools are constructed by philanthropists whose hearts are bigger than their bank accounts.

In line with the document of the fundamental transformation of education, people who have a popular reputation are being invited as ambassadors to attract public participation for school construction, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools has said.

It has always been thought that only a certain number of people who can afford to build a school, but all the people can participate even by buying a brick through this scheme, he added.

He further explained that a system is set up in which under-construction projects are introduced and users can select each project and pay as much as they can to build the school.



## Hezbollah fighters carry out op against Israel in response to Syria aggression

Israeli military says it has ordered residents along Lebanese border to remain indoors after explosions and exchange of fire were reported between Israeli soldiers and Lebanese forces along Lebanon's southern border.

The Israeli army is also closing major roads and has asked residents to avoid unnecessary trips, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in Jerusalem al-Quds that the Tel Aviv regime is "in the midst of a complicated event."

Meanwhile, Reuters news agency quoted an unnamed Lebanese source as saying on Monday that Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement has carried out an operation against Israeli army in Shebaa farms area in response to Israeli attack in Syria in which a Hezbollah member was killed last week.

According to the Lebanese source, Hezbollah has fired a guided missile at an Israeli military vehicle in its operation, inflicting casualties on Israeli troops.

A reporter for the local Arabic-language al-Manar television network reported that Israeli forces were shelling an area of Kfarchouba village in the southern Lebanese province of Nabatieh.

Last Monday, Syrian media reported a new Israeli aggression in which Israeli forces fired missiles from the Syrian Golan Heights, killing a member of the Hezbollah movement.

The Israeli missiles flew over the Syrian Golan Heights where they conducted raids around the capital, according to a Syrian military spokesman, and that the Syrian air defenses thwarted most of the missiles before reaching their targets and inflicted only "material losses."

### ■ Hezbollah says ready to confront any Israeli aggression

Earlier, Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem has reiterated the Lebanese resistance movement's readiness to confront any Israeli aggression.

Speaking in an interview with al-Mayadeen TV channel on Sunday, Sheikh Qassem declined to clarify the movement's response to an Israeli attack that killed one of Hezbollah fighters in Syria last week.

"Let the Israelis have their own estimations and calculations in this regard," he said.

Hezbollah announced the death of Ali Kamel Mohsen, one of its members, in an Israeli airstrike in Damascus on July 20 and promised retaliation.

Sheikh Qassem also played down recent Israeli threats, saying there were "mere chest-beating."

His remarks came after Israel's minister of military affairs Benny Gantz warned Syria and Lebanon that they would be held responsible for any attacks against Israel coming from their territory.

"We don't want any unnecessary escalations, but anyone who tests us will be met by a very high capability to take action, and I hope we won't need to use it," Gantz said.

Sheikh Qassem dismissed the prospect of an all-out war with Israel in the next few months.

"Israel's political confusion and low expectation from war outcomes as well as U.S. President Donald Trump's quagmire eliminate the possibility of an imminent eruption of the war," he said.

But he promised Tel Aviv will be delivered yet another defeat if it launched an aggression.

"If Israel decides to go to war with us, then we will confront them, and the 2006 [Second Lebanon] War will be the model for our response," Sheikh Qassem said.

The Israeli military went into high alert near the Lebanese border, amid concerns that Hezbollah would conduct a retaliation attack.

Gantz made his threats during a visit to the border between the occupied territories and Lebanon on Sunday, where he said the Israeli regime was "prepared for all possibilities".

Shortly later, an Israeli spy drone crashed inside Lebanon, according to an Israeli military spokeswoman.

In his interview, Sheikh Qassem also touched on the U.S. harassment of an Iranian passenger plane over Syria, saying Washington wants to wreck a strategic pact between Iran and Syria.

The move by the U.S. warplanes was similar to Israeli tactics in the past, when Israel's aircraft used civilian planes as a shield to draw fire from Syrian air-defense systems.

## Resistance News

### Israeli army launches incursion into Gaza

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** **TEHRAN**—The Israeli occupation army on Monday morning carried out a limited incursion into the besieged Gaza Strip.

Local sources said that several Israeli army bulldozers rolled a few hundred meters into Rafah in the southern area of the Gaza Strip.

Large areas of Palestinian farmlands were razed in the operation which was carried out under heavy firing of live ammunition and tear gas canisters.

No injuries were reported.

## Israel keeps two Palestinian female prisoners in isolation: Palestinian commission

→ 1 "Since we were transferred to Jalamah isolation jail, we have been wearing the same clothes. They have not brought our things. We were given one blouse each and a single tube of toothpaste with a worn and broken brush," the Commission quoted the prisoners as saying.

"When we go out to see the lawyer, our legs are shackled and they do not provide us with [protective] masks. Our families have also not been allowed to visit us for months," they added, Press TV reported.

Late last year, a number of Palestinian rights groups, including the Palestinian Prisoners Society (PPS), revealed in a joint statement that the number of Palestinian detainees currently being kept behind bars in Israeli detention centers stands at around 5,000, including 50 women and 200 children.

Approximately 350 of these inmates are under the so-called administrative detention, which is a sort of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate Palestinians for up to six months, extendable an infinite number of times.

# UAE money destroying Yemen's Ta'izz: Pro-Hadi commander

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is destroying the Yemeni city of Ta'izz, a source says, after clashes erupted between the Emirati-sponsored Tareq Mohammed Abdullah Saleh's forces and the self-proclaimed Riyadh-backed government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Clashes erupted last weekend in Ta'izz between the two sides after the Saudi-backed militants tried to impose restrictions on the UAE-sponsored mercenaries in the southwestern city.

The Middle East Eye said in a report on Sunday that impoverished Yemenis in Ta'izz are joining the ranks of Tareq - the nephew of the late Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh who is accused of leading a deadly crackdown on 2011 protests against his uncle - "for one reason: Emirati money".

He established the National Resistance Forces (NRF), which is primarily made up of former members of the Yemeni Republican Guard, at the western coast around the port city of Mocha, Press TV reported.

According to the report, the group has expanded to Ta'izz, recruiting new mercenaries every day due to the high salaries it offers.

The prospect of higher salaries has prompted thousands of pro-Hadi militants to join the NRF. Most of them now live in the town of al-Turbah which lies on the strategic main road between the Ta'izz and the port city of Aden.

### ■ Violent protests

In response, the so-called military police in Ta'izz, which are loyal to the Islah party that represents the Hadi's self-proclaimed government in the city, deployed reinforcements



to impose restrictions on the movement of Tareq's militants in al-Turbah.

As a result, the NRF and their supporters staged protests in al-Turbah last weekend, demanding the withdrawal of the new military camps, most of which are linked to Islah forces, in the area.

Clashes between NRF supporters and the Islah-backed forces stopped on Sunday, but sporadic fighting broke out again.

According to a new report by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, the Saudi-led war has so far claimed the lives of around 56,000 Yemenis.

The Saudi-led war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN has already said that a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in dire need of food, including

8.4 million threatened by severe hunger. According to the world body, Yemen is suffering from the most severe famine in more than 100 years.

A number of Western countries, the U.S. and Britain in particular, are also accused of being complicit in the ongoing aggression as they supply the Riyadh regime with advanced weapons and military equipment as well as logistical and intelligence assistance.

Ahmed, a military police member, told MEE that not only Tareq's supporters, but all the UAE-backed sides, took part in the recent protest and clashes in al-Turbah.

"It is the UAE's money that is destroying Ta'izz and the whole country. The UAE succeeded in dividing Ta'izz's army by its money. Nowadays, we can see new brigades supporting the UAE."

He noted that the UAE-backed armed groups "exploited the poverty of Yemenis, and some needy people join UAE-backed forces for the sake of money".

Ahmed further said that many residents of Ta'izz oppose the presence of NRF fighters in their villages, but are afraid to speak out.

Both the UAE-sponsored mercenaries and the Saudi-backed militants loyal to Hadi serve the Riyadh-led military coalition and have been engaged, since March 2015, in a bloody war on Yemeni people, with the aim of bringing the government of Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah movement.

The UAE has been accused of attempting to occupy Yemen's strategic Socotra Island to secure what it perceives to be its geopolitical interests in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

## China seizes U.S. consulate in Chengdu, retaliating for Houston

China took over the premises of the U.S. consulate in the southwestern city of Chengdu on Monday, after ordering the facility to be vacated in retaliation for China's ouster last week from its consulate in Houston, Texas.

The seizure capped a dramatic escalation in tensions between the world's two biggest economies that began when employees at China's Houston consulate were seen burning documents in a courtyard last Tuesday, hours before Beijing announced that it had been ordered to leave the facility, Reuters reported.

The U.S. consulate in Chengdu, in Sichuan province, was closed as of 10 a.m. (0200) on Monday, and Chinese authorities had entered the building from the front door, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

On Friday, Beijing announced that it had asked the United States to close its Chengdu post, and gave the Americans 72 hours to vacate, the same amount of time China was given to leave its Houston mission, which was shut on Friday.

"We are disappointed by the Chinese Communist Par-



ty's decision and will strive to continue our outreach to the people in this important region through our other posts in China," a U.S. State Department spokesperson said in an email to Reuters.

## Police and protesters clash in violent weekend across the U.S.

→ 1 In Seattle, authorities declared a riot following large protests in its Capitol Hill neighbourhood, with police deploying flash bangs and pepper spray to try to clear a weeks-olds "occupied protest zone" that stretches for several blocks. Police had previously cleared the area after two fatal shootings there earlier this month.

On Twitter, police said they had made at least 45 arrests and were investigating "possible explosive damage" to the walls of the city's East Precinct police station.

Earlier on Saturday, protesters in the city broke through a fence where a youth detention facility was being built, with some people setting a fire and damaging a portable trailer, authorities said.

Thousands of protesters had initially gathered peacefully near downtown Seattle in a show of solidarity with fellow demonstrators in Portland, Oregon, where tensions with federal law enforcement have boiled over in recent days.

The Trump administration announced last week that federal agents were being deployed to Seattle, as well as Chicago, Kansas City and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

### ■ Judge stays pepper spray law

The clashes also came shortly after U.S.

District Judge James Robart, on Friday, granted a request from the federal government to block Seattle's new law prohibiting police from using pepper spray, blast balls and similar weapons.

The law, passed unanimously by Seattle's city council, was set to go into effect on Sunday. "In the spirit of offering trust and full transparency, I want to advise you that SPD officers will be carrying pepper spray and blast balls today, as would be typical for events that carry potential to include violence," Seattle Police Department (SPD) Chief Carmen Best announced before Saturday's protest.

About 174 miles to the south, tensions remained high in Portland, Oregon, which has become the scene of a highly controversial crackdown by federal agents deployed to the city by the Trump administration, in what the White House described as a mission to protect federal buildings and monuments.

Amid pushback from local officials, the inspector general of the U.S. Justice Department on Thursday opened an official investigation into the federal agents' actions, but a federal judge in Oregon on Friday rejected a legal bid by the state to stop the agents from

detaining protesters.

Early on Sunday, authorities declared a riot amid clashes in which federal agents fired tear gas and protesters toppled a fence erected around a federal court house that has become the central focus of the demonstrations.

Police, who closed the area, also said protesters had thrown fireworks at federal law enforcement, who have been accused of using excessive force and of detaining protesters in unmarked vehicles far from federal sites.

Also on the west coast, in Oakland, California, protesters set fire to a courthouse, damaged a police station and assaulted officers after a peaceful demonstration intensified late on Saturday, police said.

### ■ Protests across the country

In Aurora, Colorado, a vehicle drove through a group of protesters as they walked on Interstate 225 on Saturday in a protests calling attention to Elijah McClain, an unarmed black man who died after police put him in a chokehold in the suburb last year.

Police said a protester fired a weapon during the incident, striking at least one person who was taken to a hospital in stable condition. No one else was immediately

reported injured. Authorities said the vehicle was towed and they were investigating.

Meanwhile, amid protests in Austin, Texas, a man was fatally shot on Saturday, police spokesperson Katrina Ratliff told reporters.

A witness told the Austin American-Statesman that the incident occurred after a vehicle honked, turned down a road and then sped toward protesters. A man, who the witness said was carrying a rifle, then approached the vehicle and was shot by the driver, who sped away.

Initial reports indicated "the victim may have been carrying a rifle," Ratliff told reporters, adding that the suspect was detained and was cooperating with police.

In Louisville, Kentucky on Saturday, a group of heavily armed Black protesters marched to demand justice for Breonna Taylor, a Black woman killed in March by police officers who burst into her apartment.

Scores of demonstrators, members of a Black militia dubbed NFAC, carried semi-automatic rifles and shotguns and wore black paramilitary gear as they walked in formation to a fenced off intersection where they were separated by police from a smaller group of armed counter-protesters.

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## Germany has rejected Trump's bid to bring Russia back into the G7

Germany has rejected U.S. President Trump's proposal for Russia to be re-admitted to the "Group of Seven" meeting of leading economies.

Russia had been a member of the intergovernmental group — which comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the U.S. — as an eighth member until its expulsion in 2014 after Putin annexed the Crimean Peninsula and backed a rebellion in eastern Ukraine.

Heiko Maas, Germany's foreign secretary, said there was no prospect of re-admitting Russia until it had resolved the situation in eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

"The reason for Russia's exclusion was the annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine," he told the German-language Rheinische Post newspaper in comments reported by Reuters. "As long as we do not have a solution there, I see no chance for this."

Trump said in June it was "common sense" for Russian President Vladimir Putin to be invited to the G7.

"It's not a question of what he's done. It's a question of common sense," the president told Fox News on June 3.

"The problem is many of the things that we talk about are about Putin, so we're just sitting around wasting time because then you have to finish your meeting and somebody has to call Putin or deal with Putin on different things. And I say have him in the room," he said.

Maas admitted that Russia remains an important part of the G7 summits.

"We also know that we need Russia in order solve conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Ukraine," he said.

But he said that adding Russia to the G7 format was not necessary, given that Russia remains part of the G20, a larger group of leading economies.

### Visual point of view





# AFC President congratulates Persepolis on winning IPL title

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Sheikh Salman Bin Ibrahim Al Khalifah has extended his felicitations to Persepolis football club over winning Iran Professional League (IPL).

In a letter sent to Iran Football Federation, the AFC president congratulated the Iranian team for claiming the IPL title for the fourth time in a row.

On Friday, Persepolis defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-1 and lifted the trophy with four matches to spare.

“On behalf of the Asian football family, I would like to congratulate Persepolis and Iran Football Federation for winning the title for fourth successive time,” Sheikh Salman wrote in a congratulatory message.

“It’s a great pleasure and I would like to thank Persepolis FC and your associ-



ation for helping to spread the positive message of football.

“My congratulations go to the players, the coach, the administration, the entire technical team and medical staff as well as the fans for this great achievement,” he added.

It was quickest title wins in the history of IPL.

Persepolis are the most decorated football team in the competition, winning the

title six times.

The Reds started the 2019-20 IPL under stewardship of Gabriel Calderon but the Argentine left the Iranian giants in January after financial problem with the team’s officials.

Former Persepolis defender Yahya Golmohammadi was named as new head coach for his second stint and led them to win the title for the fourth successive time.



## Antwerp complete signing of Alireza Beiranvand

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Belgian top flight football club Royal Antwerp have completed the signing of Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.

The 28-year-old goalie joined Antwerp a couple of months ago but failed to travel to Belgium due to the flight restriction.

In mid-June, the measures taken by the European Union (EU) due to coronavirus pandemic canceled his trip. The visa problems had also made the situation more complicated.

Beiranvand finally arrived in Antwerp in July and successfully underwent a medical.

The Iran star has penned a three-year contract with

Antwerp.

On Friday, Persepolis claimed Iran’s league title for the fourth time in a row. Hard-nosed Beiranvand actually had a significant impact on the team’s success during the past years.

Beiranvand became well-known for his ability to save penalty kicks.

In the 2018 FIFA World Cup, he garnered global attention when denying Cristiano Ronaldo his fifth goal of the tournament with a save from the penalty spot.

Beiranvand has also played a key role in Iran national football team over the past years, especially when defensive-minded Carlos Queiroz was in charge.

## Ex-Iran coach Mohajerani shows support for Mazloumi

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Heshmatollah Mohajerani, a former head coach of Iran national football team, has shown his support for Parviz Mazloumi, newly appointed head coach of Iran U19 football team.

Mohajerrani, an iconic figure in Iranian football, won four straight Asian Youth Championship titles from 1973 to 1976, before winning AFC Asian Cup in 1976 with Iran national team and led the team to the quarterfinals of the 1976 Summer Olympics and also to their first FIFA World Cup in 1978.

The appointment of Mazloumi as



the head coach of Iran U19 team, three months before the start of the 2020 AFC U19 Championship, has been criticized by some experts and also football fans.

However, Mohajerani believes that Mazloumi can succeed the team in the upcoming competitions because of his experience in the Iranian football.

“Mazloumi has coached several teams in Iran football and has left a good record. He can be effective in the U19 national team because by working with big players and using young players in his former teams he has gained sufficient experience to exploit the youth players’ full potential,”

Mohajerani said.

Mazloumi, 65, parted company with Esteghlal in 2016, and after that did not work in any team before being appointed as the Iran U19 head coach in the last week.

“Iranian coaches should be given the opportunity to find a path to success through their knowledge about the potential of Iranian football,” Mohajerani added.

Iran will take part in the 2020 AFC U19 Championship in Uzbekistan in October, where the Persians are drawn in Group A along with Indonesia, Cambodia, and Uzbekistan.

## Jahanbakhsh’s goal among 2019-20 EPL Season memorable goals

The 2019-20 Premier League season, which began in August 2019 came to an end after 352 days on July 26, Sunday.

There were several memorable goals scored throughout this 11-month long season, the longest in history, and Sportstar picks the top-five of the lot, in no particular order.

■ **MOUSSA DJENEPOL: SOUTHAMPTON VS SHEFFIELD UNITED - SEPTEMBER 14, 2019**

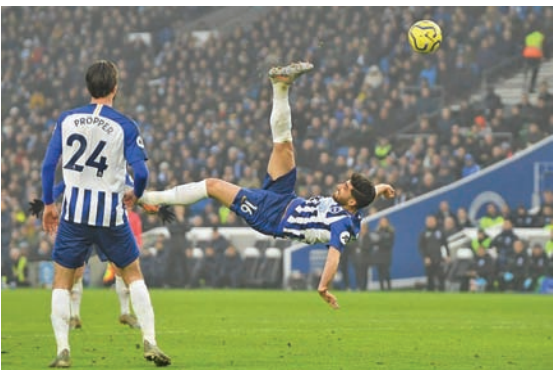
Sheffield United has been pretty formidable at home this season. So it was always going to be difficult for a travelling Southampton side to gain any points from this fixture. But a Moussa Djenepo wonder goal helped led the Saints to a hard-fought victory.

The first-half was goalless as both teams were cautious. In the 53rd minute, Sheffield forward Oliver McBurnie had a goal disallowed by VAR due to offside. Thirteen minutes later, Djenepo received the ball in midfield from Sofiane Boufal, dribbled past three players and scored the winner in style.

■ **KEVIN DE BRUYNE: MANCHESTER CITY VS NEWCASTLE UNITED - NOVEMBER 30, 2019**

Newcastle United hosted Manchester City in November last year. The match had ended in a 2-2 draw. Raheem Sterling opened the scoring for the defending champion. Jetro Willems equalised for the Magpies just three minutes later as the sides headed into half-time at 1-1.

In the 82nd minute, full-back Benjamin Mendy had attempted to execute a cross into the box but the ball



was cleared away by the Newcastle defence. The rebound fell to Kevin De Bruyne who controlled it with his chest, let it bounce in front of him and smashed it past Martin Dubravka on the volley to give his side the lead.

■ **SON HEUNG-MIN: TOTTENHAM VS BURNLEY - DECEMBER 7, 2019**

This is arguably one of the greatest goals ever in the Premier League history. Korean forward Son Heung-min ran from one end of the field to the other with insane pace and scored with a neat finish. Tottenham Hotspur had beaten Burnley 5-0 at home in December 2019.

The lead was 2-0 when the goal happened. A long ball during a Burnley attack was intercepted by Tottenham defender Jan Vertonghen. Son collected it and made a

slow run forward. He suddenly increased his pace to evade two opposition players and dribbled past two others with same speed and was one-on-one with the goalkeeper in no time. His calm finish was the icing on the cake.

■ **ALIREZA JAHANBAKSH: BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION VS CHELSEA - JANUARY 1, 2020**

An acrobatic goal is always special. Brighton & Hove Albion’s Alireza Jahanbakhsh did exactly that. Frank Lampard’s Chelsea was an in-form team and it was leading 1-0 till the 84th minute of the match.

That was when Brighton won a corner. The cross from the right was received by centre-back Lewis Dunk with his head. The ball wasn’t goal bound but out of nowhere Jahanbakhsh jumped high in the air and executed the bicycle kick as a hapless Kepa Arrizabalaga saw the ball reach the back of the net.

■ **FABINHO: LIVERPOOL VS CRYSTAL PALACE - JUNE 24, 2020**

This was a long ranger among many from Liverpool midfielder Fabinho. His side was already leading 2-0 against Crystal Palace at an empty Anfield stadium. Left-back Andy Robertson was unsure whether to go for a cross into the box or pass the ball back.

He instead chose to give the ball to Fabinho, who received it, took a touch to set himself up and let one fly from long. The ball found the back of the net as flying Palace keeper Vicente Guaita, who dived to his left, was unable to make the save.

(Source: Sportstar)

## Bayern chief fumes as Lewandowski misses out on Ballon d’Or

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has criticized the cancellation of this year’s Ballon d’Or.

The annual award is handed out to the best men’s and women’s player but was cancelled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Bayern Munich’s Robert Lewandowski was considered a front-runner for the award, having scored a remarkable 34 goals for the Bundesliga titleholders, and Rummenigge was disappointed with the decision to not honor the sport’s best players this season.

“I believe Robert Lewandowski is playing a fantastic season and he performed maybe the best season in his career,”

Rummenigge said at a news conference on Monday.

“Unfortunately, France Football cancelled the Golden Ball which we are not very happy [with] and in the end it’s not very fair, not just Bayern but also for Robert Lewandowski who might have won.

“I believe it’s very important that in a season that, except the French league, [the other leagues] performed through to the end of the season, it has to be possible to give the Golden Ball to the best footballer in the world and of course, I believe in those circumstances Robert would have a good chance to win it in the first time in his career.”

The award is run by magazine France

Football and it cited the “lack of a sufficiently level playing field” as the reasoning behind cancelling this year’s ceremony for the first time since 1956.

In a statement announcing the decision, the organizers said that not enough games had been played to hand out the award.

“Protecting the credibility and legitimacy of such a prize also means guaranteeing its irreproachability over time,” it added.

Rummenigge also said that he doubted a salary cap would be brought in this year with agents continually pushing for higher and higher wages even amid the coronavirus pandemic.

However, he said he hopes UEFA’s Financial Fair Play (FFP) model will be

updated to reflect the current state of football.

“We have to modify financial fair play because in the past 10 years, football changed dramatically in the financial behavior,” Rummenigge added.

“And so we have to find different tools than maybe 10 years ago. I believe that is possible.

“I believe we have to find a modified FFP rule, which at the end is accepted by all stakeholders: that includes the players, the agents, and of course, last but not least, the clubs, because we have to live in a fair and serious way to convince that financial fair play is a helpful tool for everybody.”

(Source: Soccernet)

## Latvian weightlifter Rebecca Koha converted to Islam

Latvian weightlifter Rebecca Koha announced that she has converted to Islam.

With the announcement of her conversion to Islam, the athlete has deleted from social networks all the pictures that were related to her life so far.



“Dear friends, my followers and everyone else! I have made a big decision in life. I am happy and grateful for it and I think I am doing the right thing. The only thing I ask is respect – if you have nothing good. This is a special day for me because I became a Muslim. I believe that a new and beautiful chapter in my life can begin,” the 22-year-old athlete said.

Rebecca Koha asks others not to send her and also not to share in public photos showing Koha’s hair or other parts of the body – arms, legs, neck.

In early May, Koha announced her engagement with Qatari discus thrower Moaz Mohamed Ibrahim.

(Source: en24.news)

## Vladimir Alekno nominated for Iran volleyball hotseat

**Tasnim** — Vladimir Romanovich Alekno has been nominated to take charge of Iran national volleyball team.

Iran volleyball team have been without a coach since parting ways with Igor Kolakovic in March.

Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) Mohammad Reza Davarzani had said the federation is going to hire a big coach since Iran are looking for a medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Now, Davarzani says the federation has negotiated with former Russia coach Alekno.

The 53-year-old coach has most recently worked as head coach of Zenit Kazan.

In the Olympic Games, Iran have been drawn in Pool A along with Japan, Poland, Italy, Canada and Venezuela.

Pool B consists of Brazil, the U.S., Russia, Argentina, France and Tunisia.

## Malaysia to host AFC Champions League Groups G and H

The Football Association of Malaysia has been confirmed as the host Member Association for the 2020 AFC Champions League East Zone Group G and H matches which will take place from October 17 to November 1, 2020.

Malaysia will also host the Round of 16 which will see teams from both groups battle on November 4, 2020, two Quarter-final matches on November 25, 2020 and one Semi-final tie three days later after submitting their interest to host ahead of the designated deadline.

All matches in the knockout stages will be played in single match ties, as well as the Final which is scheduled to be played in the West region.

The centralized venue for the AFC Champions League Groups E and F as well as the remaining knockout stage matches are yet to be confirmed. The AFC had earlier confirmed Qatar as the centralized venue host for the group and knock-out stage matches in the West region.

(Source: the-afc)

## Vardy wins Premier League Golden Boot

Jamie Vardy won the Premier League Golden Boot despite not scoring in Leicester City’s 2-0 defeat against Manchester United.

Vardy, 33, becomes the oldest player to win the award. He scored 23 goals and was given a close run by Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang who scored twice in Arsenal’s 3-2 win against Watford to finish on 22.

Danny Ings, who scored in Southampton’s win against Sheffield United, also finished the campaign on 22.

“It’s a wonderful individual achievement,” Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers said. “We wouldn’t be where we are without his quality and goals.

“He’s a joy to work with, has a great mentality and has such quality. It’s a huge accolade and we’re all delighted for him.”

Last season Aubameyang, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane shared the honor after scoring 22 goals each.

Raheem Sterling was just behind on 20, while Salah finished on 19.

Meanwhile, Ederson edged Nick Pope to win the Premier League Golden Glove award with 16 clean sheets to 15.

Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson earned a clean sheet in his side’s 5-0 win over relegated Norwich while Pope was unable to shut-out Brighton in a 1-1 draw.

City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, who equalled the league assist record in a single season, praised Ederson for picking up the prize.

“If you end up the season with that many clean sheets it means you’ve done quite well,” he said.

“In the five years I’ve been here our defence has been criticised a lot, but I think we do fairly okay. We lost some points this year. He’s been great since he’s been here.”

(Source: ESPN)



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Enmity produces rancor and destruction.

Imam Ali (AS)

## IIDCYA launches prize to honor top children’s writers, artists

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Sunday it has established a prize to honor top Iranian writers and artists on various occasions.



IIDCYA Appreciation Prize.

“Those people who have played a key role in establishing IIDCYA centers over the 55-year history of the institute are also included,” IIDCYA Public Relations and International Affairs Department director Hamed Rahnama said.

Nominees for the Appreciation Prize are selected by special units, and they are assessed by committees and councils in the secretariat for the medal and a council of IIDCYA assistants, and finally the IIDCYA Board of Directors selects an honoree.

“There is no limit on how many artists or writers can be honored in a year, and the medal can also be awarded posthumously,” Rahnama said.

Plaques bearing the biographies of honorees will be set up at IIDCYA centers around the country, and the IIDCYA History Museum will showcase a bust of each winner.

## “The Promise” appears in Iranian bookstores

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** — “The Promise” written by American children author Nicola Davies and illustrated by Laura Carlin has been published in Persian by Madresheh Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Heshmat Sadat Mirabedini.

The book is about a young girl who tries to snatch an old woman’s bag on a mean street in a mean, broken city.



Front cover of the Persian translation of “The Promise” by American children author Nicola Davies.

a male blackbird with his golden-yellow eye ring and sooty black feathers,” she notes.

“My first job was studying geese in Scotland, my second was hand-rearing jackdaws and my third was watching humpbacked whales from an uninhabited island in Newfoundland! In the last two years I’ve returned to studying animals and have been helping out on a long term study of sperm whales, sailing in the Sea of Cortez, and the Caribbean off the island of Dominica,” she adds.

“I’ve seen all sorts of animals, all over the world, chameleons in Madagascar, turtles in Seychelles, walruses in the Arctic, bat-eared foxes in Kenya, saltwater crocodiles in Australia. But I still love the animals that are within reach of my home in Wales, the ravens and red kites, the grey seals and the choughs, the roe deer and foxes, even the blackbirds that nest in my tiny garden,” she mentions.

Carlin has illustrated many children’s books, most notably “The Iron Man” by Ted Hughes, and her own book “A World of Your Own”.

These two books won the children’s book illustration award at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava in 2015.

# Iran opposes Turkey’s bid to inscribe “Islamic calligraphy” on UNESCO list

**→ 1** “Turkey’s title for the file carries the word ‘Islamic’ and Iran has officially expressed its opposition to this title, because Islam is not limited to Turkey and moreover, the origins of Islamic calligraphy should be traced back to Iran,” he noted.

Earlier in June, Mostafa Purali, a senior official with the MCHTH announced that Iranian calligraphy is seeking to be registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

He said that UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will announce its decision about the file during its session in 2022.

“The writing system in use in Persia



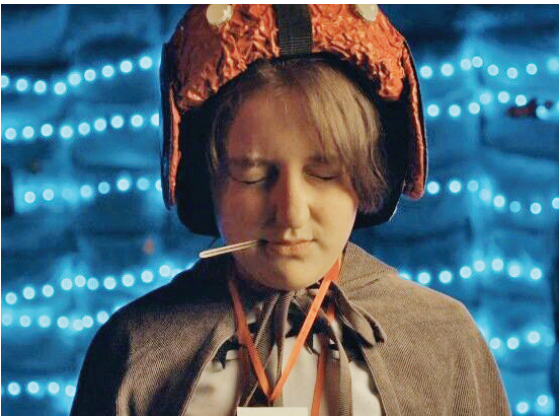
A calligraphy work inscribed in thuluth, an Islamic style of calligraphy, by Iranian calligrapher Mohammad Tarifi features a hadith from Imam Hassan (AS).

since early Islamic times grew out of the Arabic alphabet,” Iranica writes.

“Comparison of some of the scripts developed on Persian soil, particularly Persian-style Kufic with the Pahlavi and Avestan scripts, reveals a number of similarities between them, and this has led certain modern researchers to surmise that when the Persians adopted the Arabic writing system, they may have made changes in the letter shapes and style of writing under the influence of their old national scripts and inherited tastes.

“Distinctive Persian features appear mainly in the taliq, shekasteh-taliq, nastaliq and shekasteh-nastaliq scripts.”

## Filmmaker Ali-Mohammad Egbaldar on Australian Muslim Film Festival jury



“Better than Neil Armstrong” by director Alireza Qasemi.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Ali-Mohammad Egbaldar has been selected for the jury of the Muslim Film Festival in Australia.

The festival will take place in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane during September.

“Better than Neil Armstrong” by Alireza Qasemi from Iran will also be competing in the festival, the Gilan Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance announced on Monday.

“Better than Neil Armstrong” scored a big success at the Southport International Short Film Festival in England by winning two major awards from the English event in late June.

The awards for best film and best drama went to the movie.

According to jury member Tony Jordan, the British television writer, the movie received the awards for its originality and high imagination.

The film is about four kids who start their journey to the Moon with the mission of finding a mysterious place called “Redland”, but the gates of the place are being guarded by a mischievous snake.

The sci-fi “Better than Neil Armstrong” brought Qasemi the Best Live Action Short Film Director’s Award at the 18th Pune International Film Festival in India during January.

He received the award “For a very touching story that unravels with assured command over the medium in many respects,” the jury said in their statement during

the closing ceremony of the festival in Pune.

The short film went on screen at the 13th Trenton Film Festival in the U.S. state of New Jersey in March. It also competed in the Lakeshorts International Short Film Festival in the Canadian city of Toronto in April.

In addition, “Brotherhood”, a co-production between Canada and Tunisia by Canada-based Tunisian director Meryam Joobeur, which received the grand prize in the international competition of the 36th Tehran International Short Film Festival in Tehran in November 2019, is another entry to the Muslim Film Festival.

The film is about the tensions within a Tunisian family when their older son, who has been away for several years, returns home with a new Syrian wife who wears a full niqab, igniting his father’s suspicions that his son has been fighting for ISIS.

The Muslim Film Festival will be running for four weekends screening independent films made by Muslims, or telling stories about Muslims anywhere in the world, by anyone Muslim or non-Muslim!

## Teer Art Fair 2020 goes online

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The third edition of the Teer Art Fair, an art exhibit co-founded by the Dastan Basement Gallery and Asar Gallery, opened on Monday with this year’s exhibition going online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The fair was scheduled to be organized in early July, however, the pandemic forced the organizer to postpone the event, and ultimately they decided to hold it online, Teer Art director Maryam Majd said in a press release.

She hoped that the fair would take place with a live exhibition, if current conditions improve, and said “Nothing is predictable these days.”

This year’s fair aims to create an

appealing atmosphere for some of Iran’s most active art galleries to put contemporary Iranian artworks on display for art collectors and enthusiasts alike.

For the 2020 edition, the galleries have been chosen by a selection committee composed of Odile Burlaux, the curator of Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Roxane Zand, the Senior Director and Deputy Chairman of Sotheby’s in London; and Ebrahim Melamed, the renowned Iranian art collector.

Zand sits on the Advisory Council of the Pictet Art Prize, the Development Board of the University of the Arts London, and has been appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant for Greater London for her services to the art and culture of



A poster for third edition of the Teer Art Fair.

West Asia. She is also arts editor for the Encyclopedia Islamica.

At Sotheby’s, she has played an

instrumental role in developing and contributing to the sale of Arab and Iranian art, and has conducted a number of charity auctions.

Burlaux is curator at Musée d’Art moderne de Paris. She is in charge of the video collection of the museum and a member of the acquisition committee for contemporary art.

She has organized a touring exhibition based on the video collection of the museum Entre- Temps, L’artiste narrateur, in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, St-Petersburg Shanghai, Chengdu and Taipei from 2009 to 2014 and a video exhibition based on the collection Virtuality as Reality at the Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa in 2019.

## Transylvania Intl. Film Festival to screen movies from Iran

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Three movies by Iranian filmmakers have been selected to be screened at the Transylvania International Film Festival, which will open Cluj-Napoca, Romania on Friday.

“A Hairy Tale” by Homayun Ghanizadeh will be screened in the official competition of the event.

In the film, Danesh is in love with both cinema and Homa, a well-known actress. Kazem is in love with both the movie “Casablanca” and his barber shop’s certificate. Shapur is in love with both canned tuna and politics. The city is full of beggars while an earthquake may happen soon. Every now and then, the body of a dead woman, with head shaved, is found near the sea. As Inspector Kiani says: It’s a messy situation!

“Just 6.5” has been selected to screen in the Supernova section.

Directed and written by Saeid Rustai, the film shows the city brimming with drug addicts, many of whom are homeless. Samad, a member of anti-narcotics police, is looking for

a drug kingpin, Nasser. After several operations, Samad manages to track him down at his penthouse. Later, when Nasser is executed and Samad is promoted, the policeman starts to wonder if all these arrests and executions have any effect on the society.

“The Unseen” directed by Behzad Nalbandi will be screened in the documentary competition.

When foreign dignitaries are expected in Tehran, the local authorities dedicate themselves to an “urban beautification” process which includes the rounding up of unsavory characters - drug addicts and prostitutes - from the streets. The men are released after a few days, but the women are kept as wards of the state in perpetuity. They are sent to holding centers on the outskirts of the city where no records are kept by the social workers.

This animated documentary attempts to give a voice to homeless women taken off the streets against their will, stripped of their rights and kept incarcerated until their death.



Saber Abar acts in a scene from “A Hairy Tale” by Homayun Ghanizadeh.

## “The Impossible Boy” published in Persian

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** — New Zealander children’s book writer Leonie Agnew’s “The Impossible Boy” has been published in Persian by Afarinegan Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Farideh Khorrami.

“The Impossible Boy” is a spell-binding and exciting new novel from Agnew, author of the award-winning “Conrad Cooper’s Last Stand”.

The book is about Vincent Gum who finds six-year-old Benjamin moments after an explosion and leads him through wrecked city streets to the children’s shelter.

Vincent isn’t interested in hanging around to babysit, but by the time they arrive he knows that Ben, with his crazy ideas and weird imaginary games, won’t

survive ten minutes there without someone to look out for him. For one thing, something sinister lurks in the dormitory cupboard, waiting to get out.

Vincent is tough and smart. He can walk through walls and make a dead tree flower. But to the rest of the world he’s invisible, non-existent. That’s because, in his moment of need, Ben invented him.

When Ben is befriended by a gang of streetwise orphans, Vincent begins to worry. What will happen to him if Ben decides he no longer needs an imaginary friend? Will he cease to exist?

And without Vincent, what will happen to a boy with an imagination so powerful he can bring his worst nightmare to life?

Agnew has written stories all her life but used to hide them from the public eye,

often writing at night, under the covers and with invisible ink (no pen stains allowed on the sheets). The first story she allowed to become public, “Super Finn”, won the Storylines Tom Fitzgibbon Award in 2010.

“Super Finn” went on to multiple awards in the 2012 New Zealand Post awards, the Junior Fiction award, the Best First Book award, and the Children’s Choice award. It was also a finalist for the LIANZA Esther Glen Finalist last year.

Since then she has written two more novels, “The Importance of Green” and “Conrad Cooper’s Last Stand” (winner of the 2015 Esther Glen Medal).

In 2015, she was chosen as the winner of the Master of the Inkpot Competition run by prestigious UK children’s publisher David Fickling Books for her manuscript “The Impossible Boy”.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Leonie Agnew’s “The Impossible Boy”.