



**11 individuals convicted for disrupting Iran's currency market** [3](#)



**Six U.S. mayors urge Congress to block Trump federal deployment** [10](#)



**Hadi Saei chosen as head of Iran's Athletes' Commission** [11](#)



**Venice Film Festival picks three movies from Iran** [12](#)

# IRGC stages massive military exercise

See page 3



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**Military exercise held in western parts of Hormuz Strait and Persian Gulf**



**ARTICLE**  
**Salman Parviz**  
Journalist

## INSTEX: Europe's fragile muscle flexing

After months of delay the E3 group of Germany, France and UK finally set up a company called Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) in January 2019. With headquarters in Paris, the company was supposed to enable non-U.S. dollar and non-SWIFT barter trade between the European Union and Iran in defiance of U.S. sanctions.

By late November 2019, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden issued a joint statement announcing becoming shareholders of INSTEX.

More than one year after the mechanism was founded, amid Covid-19 pandemic in Iran taking its toll, INSTEX conducted its first transaction in March which entailed trade of \$539,667 (500,000 Euros) of medicine by private Germany company to its Iranian counterpart. The names of the parties were not revealed nor how the financial transaction was completed, i.e. barter or euros or other means.

The special purpose vehicle (SPV) was established to be a prime example of EU's strategic autonomy from U.S. After the U.S. exited the Iran nuclear deal (also called JCPOA), EU declared its sovereignty regarding both commercial and political relations with Iran, insisting that it could continue trade under the framework of JCPOA. And so INSTEX was designed.

So far this vehicle has proven to be without an engine or driver and doesn't conform to the trade and investment promises made in return for dramatic reduction in Iran's nuclear program.

The U.S. continues to increase pressure on its European allies trying to dissuade global leaders from a kick start of a global INSTEX mechanism for trade. Republican U.S. Congressman, Bryan Steil is an outspoken proponent of U.S. sanctions. He introduced the Stop Evasion of Iranian Sanctions Act giving U.S. Secretary of Treasury critical tools to prevent European companies from "inappropriately trading with Iran through a backchannel known as INSTEX." [→7](#)

## U.S. fears Iran's influence on American public opinion

**TEHRAN** — A senior U.S. intelligence official has warned that Iran, along with China and Russia, is trying to interfere in the 2020 U.S. presidential election, but a U.S. expert tells the Tehran Times that American officials fear Iran's influence on the U.S. public opinion rather than its intelligence or cyber interference.

In a statement on Friday, William Evanina, the director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), warned the American public about "foreign threats" to the U.S. election, accusing China, Russia and Iran of pursuing efforts to sway the 2020 elections.

"Today, we see our adversaries seeking to compromise the private communications of U.S. political campaigns, candidates and other political targets. Our adversaries also seek to compromise our election infrastructure, and we continue to monitor malicious cyber actors

trying to gain access to U.S. state and federal networks, including those responsible for managing elections," the statement said.

Evanina added, "In addition, foreign nations continue to use influence measures in social and traditional media in an effort to sway U.S. voters' preferences and perspectives, to shift U.S. policies, to increase discord and to undermine confidence in our democratic process. The coronavirus pandemic and recent protests, for instance, continue to serve as fodder for foreign influence and disinformation efforts in America."

The intelligence official also warned that "at this time, we're primarily concerned with China, Russia and Iran — although other nation states and non-state actors could also do harm to our electoral process."

He generally addressed efforts allegedly done by the three countries to influence the U.S. election. [→2](#)

## Protests resurge across U.S. as clashes continue in Portland

*By staff & agencies*

Protests resurged across the United States, with clashes between activists and authorities erupting in major cities amid continuing unrest in Portland, Ore.

Meanwhile, the U.S. attorney general, William Barr, will defend the aggressive federal law enforcement response to civil unrest in America in a highly anticipated hearing, arguing that "violent rioters and anarchists have hijacked legitimate protests" sparked by George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police, the Guardian reported.

Barr will tell members of the House judiciary committee that the violence taking place in Portland, Oregon, and other cities is disconnected from the death of Floyd, which he described as a "horrible" event that prompted a necessary national reckoning on the relationship between Black men and

law enforcement.

"Largely absent from these scenes of destruction are even superficial attempts by the rioters to connect their actions to George Floyd's death or any legitimate call for reform," Barr will say of the Portland protests, according to a copy of his prepared remarks released by the justice department on Monday.

Barr will also touch on other controversies that have shadowed his tenure, including his handling of the investigation into Trump campaign ties to Russia, which he derisively refers to as "the bogus 'Russiagate' scandal".

According to his prepared remarks, Barr will try to differentiate recent protests in cities like Portland and Seattle and the demonstrations that erupted following the death of George Floyd in May. [→10](#)

## American academic believes Trump's 'law and order' campaign won't work

*By Mohammad Mazhari*

**TEHRAN** — Americans are concerned about the upcoming presidential elections in their own country. The reason for the worry is that Donald Trump may try to push the U.S. into abyss if he becomes certain that his defeat in the November election is definite.

The Americans' fear is due to their knowledge of his narcissistic personality.

It seems that Trump is preparing to refuse the results if he doesn't win, describing his possible

loss as a conspiracy orchestrated against him. In such a scenario, he is supposed to confront the conspiracy, reveal those behind it, and fight to the last breath, even if he pushed America into chaos.

In this regard, Anthony Pahnke the assistant professor of international relations at San Francisco State University tells the Tehran Times "right now, it seems that Trump is trying to mobilize people around a 'law and order' message in response to the ongoing protests against

police brutality and racism."

While polls suggest that Joe Biden now leads in three key states that Trump won in 2016, Pahnke says "there is still the chance that Trump could win in November". He adds, "Yet, it is not apparent that Trump's message is working."

On Biden's uncharismatic personality and its impact on his chance of election, Pahnke argues it is hard to say that charisma alone makes Biden look weak. [→7](#)



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## Dreamy cottages, floating trees and tranquility of wetland atmosphere

In a magnificent and serene atmosphere, Estil Lagoon, which is sandwiched between towering mountains and Caspian Sea coast, offers its visitors a relaxed memorable stay in cozy cottages with vistas of roiling clouds of steam, floating trees and lush green rice paddies.

Situated near the road that connects Astara to Rasht, the lagoon is a top tourist destination in Gilan province, northern Iran.

## Iranian virtual school to be launched for students abroad

**TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Education plans to hold online classes for Iranians abroad through a cell phone application, said Gholamreza Karimi, the head of the ministry's international affairs department.

There are not so many students in Iranian schools abroad, so it is planned to present some of the courses online and offline, he noted.

The second plan is to provide conditions for all Iranians abroad to be connected to the Iranian educational system virtually anywhere in the world, he highlighted.

Referring to the provision of virtual education for 500,000 to 600,000 students abroad, he said that "A number of teachers who have completed two years of service will return to the country, so the deployment is very limited and only countries with severe shortage of teacher may employ 40 teachers from Iran."

Iran has established 95 schools in 43 countries around the world, said Gholamreza Karimi, an official with the ministry of education, in March.

The schools are run under the supervision of seven offices in the United Arab Emirates; Kuwait; Qatar and Bahrain; Syria and Lebanon and Jordan; Turkey; the Indian subcontinent; and Europe, he explained.

Currently, 14,027 Iranian students are studying at the overseas schools, he added.

Meanwhile, 14 schools for foreign nationals, 11 schools special for Afghan nationals, 4 international schools, 11 non-government schools, and 9 schools affiliated with embassies are operating in the country, he concluded.



## U.S. violates Chicago Convention by harassing Iranian plane, lawyer says

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ahmad Momenirad, a professor of international law from the University of Tehran, has said that the United States violated the Chicago Convention by harassing an Iranian passenger plane in Syria's sky.

"The action taken by the United States' fighter jets in harassing the Iranian passenger plane is clear violation of the Chicago Convention, Montreal 1971 Convention and also regulations of ICAO [the International Civil Aviation Organization]," Momenirad told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday.

The professor noted, "It is mentioned in the introduction of the Montreal Convention that illegal actions against security of a country's plane endanger the people and properties, disrupt the airlines' work and undermine the people's trust on security of flights."

Momenirad noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Mahan airline and also the passengers can file complaint against the U.S. 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.

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.

Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday that the U.S. act in threatening the 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.

In a letter to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif published late Saturday, Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said Iran must legally pursue the 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," the national prosecutor remarked.

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

Montazeri 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.

The actions taken by the fighters will bring international responsibility for their respective governments and open the way for Iran to take legal action against the U.S. in the ICAO Council and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

## For first time, Iran releases name of martyrs killed by MKO terrorists during 1988 ops

**(Press TV)** — An Iranian human rights NGO has for the first time released the names of 1,503 martyrs killed by the anti-Iran Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group in western parts of the country some 32 years ago.

Citing a report by Habilian Association, the Nournews agency on Monday said the MKO terrorists and a large number of "fugitive prisoners" who were released on Islamic compassion had been called to Iraq from different countries in 1988.

These terrorists carried out several military incursions from Iraq against Iranian territory. The operations included three rather massive military attacks named Aftab (in Fakkeh region in the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan on March 28, 1988), Chelcheragh (in Mehran region in western Ilam Province on June 18, 1988) and Forough Javidan (targeting the western city of Kermanshah on July 25, 1988).

The recent list released concludes the people who were martyred by the MKO in these three military operations and other sporadic offensives in 1988 along the western borders of the country.

The MKO has conducted many assassinations and bombings against Iranian officials and civilians since the 1979 victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution. It notoriously sided with former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during his 1980-88 war on Iran.

Out of the nearly 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist assaults since the Revolution, about 12,000 fell victim to the MKO's acts of terror.

The terrorist outfit was on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations until 2012. Major European countries, including France, have also removed it from their blacklists. The anti-Iran terrorists enjoy freedom of activity in the U.S. and Europe, and even hold meetings with American and EU officials.

Iran's Foreign Ministry late in June lambasted both Europe and the United States for aiding and abetting the MKO terrorist group.

"Europe is home to this rogue entity & American taxpayers' money has funded the atrocities of this corrupt grouplet," it said.

The ministry added that as a result of their full support for the MKO, Europe and the U.S. "both have [their] hands in the massacre of innocent Iranians" by this terrorist organization.

Meanwhile, recent leaked images have shown social media influence campaigns conducted by the U.S.-backed MKO against Iran.

The images revealed for the first time part of the organization's secretive social media influence campaign targeting Farsi-, English- and Arabic-speaking users on social media.

In addition to the U.S. and Europe, the Paris-based MKO, regarded as the most abhorrent terrorist group among the Iranians, also receives huge support from Saudi Arabia.

The group throws lavish conferences every year in the French capital, with certain American, Western, and Saudi Arabian officials in attendance as guests of honor. These include former U.S. national security advisor John Bolton, U.S. President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, and former Saudi Arabian spy chief, Prince Turki al-Faisal.

# Deputy FM warns U.S. push to extend UN arms embargo on Iran will kill JCPOA

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand warned on Tuesday that the U.S. efforts to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran would spell the end of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, the Fars news agency reported.

Commenting on the regional tour of U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook, Baharvand said, "These moves are aimed at destroying the JCPOA and making the region turbulent."

"The Americans are well aware that Iran is a logical player, and it has never been a security threat to the region's countries," he said, calling on the regional countries to avoid being deceived by the U.S.

Hook has visited many countries, including Tunisia, Qatar and Kuwait, in a bid to muster



support for U.S. efforts to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran, which is scheduled to expire in mid-October. Iran has repeatedly

said that the extension of the arms embargo would inevitably lead to the death of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

## Iranian delegation to discuss crash compensation in Ukraine

*By staff and agency*

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Monday that an Iranian delegation will visit Ukraine on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss compensation for a Ukrainian jet shot down by Iran mistakenly in early January.

Kuleba said Ukraine would represent all countries and groups affected during the talks, Reuters reported.

"I cannot disclose final numbers of the compensation ... numbers will be the result of the consultations," he said.

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

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

The incident happened a few hours after Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation

for the assassination of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani.

The airplane had been mistaken for an invading missile. Iran has sent the black box of the passenger plane to France for decoding.

The Iranian embassy in France announced on July 21 that the preliminary analysis of the recovered data from the black boxes is underway in the BEA laboratory in France.

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

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



## Nouri al-Maliki strongly condemns assassination of Gen. Soleimani

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has strongly condemned assassination of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani and deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis by the United States.

Maliki told an Arabic news channel that he supports Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Iraq has announced that Baghdad and Tehran will sue the United States for assassinating Soleimani and Muhandis.

In a statement on July 20, Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council said the country regards the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani and Muhandis on its soil as a criminal act, Press TV reported.



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

"The investigation into the airport incident

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

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

"The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers had been informed of other details regarding the accident, and that the investigation procedures since the time of the accident continue in accordance with the Iraqi law," the statement added.

On January 3, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered drone strikes that killed Soleimani and Muhandis as well as eight other people.

Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alqasi-Mehr announced on June 29 that 36 individuals, including Donald Trump, have been identified in connection with the assassination and Interpol has been notified to arrest them.

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

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

## U.S. fears Iran's influence on American public opinion

**1 →** Evanina accused China of "expanding its influence efforts to shape the policy environment in the United States, pressure political figures it views as opposed to China's interests, and counter criticism of China. Beijing recognizes its efforts might affect the presidential race." He added that Russia is trying to weaken the U.S. and diminish its global role.

Evanina also claimed that "Russia continues to spread disinformation in the U.S. that is designed to undermine confidence in our democratic process."

With respect to Iran, the U.S. official claimed that "Iran seeks to undermine U.S. democratic institutions and divide the country in advance of the elections. Iran's efforts center around online influence, such as spreading disinformation on social media and recirculating anti-U.S. content."

Some analysts reject what U.S. calls Iranian "disinformation" campaign on social media, saying the word "interference" needs to be defined.

"First of all, we need to define the word 'interference'. What does it mean? If it means that some countries send their citizens to the U.S. to disrupt the elections by conducting cyber operations or rigging the elections, this type of interference is unlikely to occur," Amirali Abolfath, a U.S. expert, told the Tehran Times.

"However, almost every country in the world is capable of using, to some extent, media and other information tools to influence public opinion in the U.S.," Abolfath said,

adding that efforts to influence the U.S. public opinion are not limited to countries like Russia, China and Iran, but U.S. allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia are also trying to shape the public opinion in the U.S.

According to Abolfath, U.S. adversaries and allies alike convey their message to the American people. But there is a difference between the U.S. adversaries and allies' messages. The expert noted that some messages and statements of adversaries are much stronger than those of the allies. For example, Iranian statements and messages about denial of justice in the U.S. resonate powerfully with large groups of American people. Iran's messages about U.S. squandering taxpayers' money on endless wars in West Asia, is another strong message of Iran.

"These messages are being heard in the U.S. It doesn't matter where they come from. They resonate with the American people, whether they are coming from Iran or Cuba," Abolfath told the Tehran Times, noting that the U.S. administration is trying to prevent these messages from reaching the American people under the pretext of election interference.

Abolfath also touched on the reasons behind Donald Trump's fierce opposition to mail-in ballots, saying that high voter turnout in the November election could lead to Trump's loss.

"Trump is fearful of high [voter] turnout, because when people turn out in large numbers to vote, the liberals,

leftists and Democrats' chance of winning go up," pointed out Abolfath, adding that Democrats also believe that Trump opposes mail-in ballots because he fears higher voter turnout.

Trump has already implied that higher turnout would hurt him politically.

In an interview on "Fox & Friends" in late May, Trump alluded to proposals from Democrats in the coronavirus stimulus negotiations that would have vastly increased funding for absentee and vote-by-mail options.

"The things they had in there were crazy. They had things — levels of voting that, if you ever agreed to it, you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again," Trump said.

He didn't elaborate on the matter, but American analysts believe that a higher turnout could give Democrats a hope for winning presidential elections. In an article on July 22, The New York Times dangled the prospect of getting Trump out of office as the core reason for voter engagement.

"The intensity around ousting Donald Trump, which we saw on full display in 2018, has not waned one bit. That enthusiasm in coming out to vote is saying, 'I'm letting everyone know that I am showing up now — in a primary that's over and in a pandemic — to send a signal that I am going to show up in November,'" the Times quoted Amy Walter, the national editor of the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, as saying.

## Iran urges U.S. to end its illegal behaviors

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that the United States must end its "illegal" and "unusual" behaviors.

Responding to reporters in writing because he has contracted Covid-19, Rabiei said Iran will not just sit and watch the U.S. "unjustified moves".

He noted that the U.S. does not respect international law on security of flights.

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 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.

**■ 'South Korea should unfreeze Iranian assets'**

Rabiei also said that South Korea should revise illegal procedures and release Iran's frozen money and facilitate importing hu-

manitarian commodities to Iran when the country is fighting the coronavirus.

Iran is escalating pressure on the East Asian country to release about \$7 billion of oil-export revenues, arguing that Seoul is buckling to pressure from its U.S. ally and illegally withholding funds needed to counter the coronavirus outbreak.

Iran is the hardest hit country by the coronavirus in West Asia.

In late June, central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati said Iran will take back its dollars from South Korea through legal and international methods.

The central banker also expressed hope that the South Korean government would abide by its commitments and not block access to those funds under the pretext of the U.S. sanctions.



# Judiciary: 11 individuals convicted for disrupting currency market

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaeili announced on Tuesday that 11 individuals were found guilty of disrupting the country's foreign currency market last week.

During his weekly press conference, Esmaeili said the defendants were sentenced due to smuggling foreign currency and gold, ISNA reported.

"The Judiciary, due to the current economic condition of the country, is determined in punishing those who commit such crimes," he pointed out.

Earlier this month, President Hassan Rouhani blamed Washington for "new plots" to harm Iran's economy by disrupting the country's foreign currency market.

To offset the impacts of U.S. sanctions intended to strangle the Iranian economy, Iranian industrialists should boost production and increase exports, Rouhani was quoted as saying.

The Iranian government is making all efforts to remove the obstacles in the way of production, the president said.

In recent months, Iran's Judiciary has shown determination to fight those who disrupt the Iranian economy.

Back in May, Esmaeili announced that



two of the defendants in corruption cases

The defendants, a husband and a wife, were involved in manipulating the foreign

exchange and gold markets and hoarding cars from Siapa Company.

"In a case that had more than 50 defendants, more than 40 people were indicted and 34 defendants were convicted in the court," Esmaeili said during a press conference.

"In this case, part of which was disruption of the foreign exchange market and another part was disruption of the auto industry and gold coin market; Vahid Behzadi, the son of Aboutaleb, and his wife Najva Lashidaee were sentenced to death for participating in disruption of the economic system through registering fake orders and an illegal exchange shop, and pre-purchasing more than 6,700 vehicles from Saipa Company and participating in money laundering amounting to 32,000 billion [rials]," he said.

The spokesman added that 24,000 Azadi gold coins and 100 kilograms of gold were found in their house.

Esmaeili also said former CEO of Saipa Mehdi Jamali was sentenced to seven years in prison; former deputy director of Saipa's marketing Reza Taghizadeh to 15 years; MP Mohammad Azizi to 61 months; Fereydoon Ahmadi to 61 months; and former head of Saipa's security Hossein Hashtroudi to 61 months.

## Analyst favors look to the East

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — An analyst has said Iran can define a new mechanism in the world without a need for Western countries by developing scientific, economic, social, defense, security, and cultural cooperation with East Asian countries.



"The world is not just limited to Western countries and the future of the world economy is moving towards East Asia, therefore I personally believe that our strategy for working with the East in the fields of politics, economy, security, and military affairs is a fundamental and long-lasting one," Mansour Haghighatpour said in an interview with Mehr published on Monday.

Haghighatpour, a former member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, further pointed to Iran's relations with Russia regarding political and security issues in the region, saying the Islamic Republic can also expand a similar cooperation with China.

By attracting one to two million Chinese tourists to the country, Iran can improve many domestic industries, he added.

He said, "The world is very big. The world is not limited to the West. Those who are inclined to the West are mistaken."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Haghighatpour said the victory of U.S. President Donald Trump's rival in the November elections would not be a positive development for Iran.

"We have been hit by both the Democrats and Republicans," he added.

The 2020 U.S. presidential election is scheduled for November 3, 2020. It will be the 59th quadrennial presidential election. Voters will select presidential electors who in turn will vote on December 14, 2020, to either elect a new president and vice president or reelect the incumbents Donald Trump and Mike Pence respectively.

Former Vice President Joe Biden became the presumptive Democratic nominee when Senator Bernie Sanders, the only other remaining major candidate in the Democratic primary, suspended his campaign on April 8, 2020. In early June, Biden passed the threshold of 1,991 delegates to gain the nomination at the 2020 Democratic National Convention.

## Post-coronavirus world order 'not entirely Western', Zarif predicts



**1→** "Throughout the history, the old order has collapsed and been replaced with a new one after widespread bloodshed. I believe that absolute Western approaches have failed to provide us with a true understanding of global events. The modern international order will not be totally Western anymore," he said, according to Press TV.

According to Zarif the U.S. is mistaken to think that the use of military power would lead to a lasting world order.

Washington's military interference has turned into "a norm" in the U.S.'s foreign policy, which is a "huge mistake", Zarif stated.

The chief Iranian diplomat said the U.S. adventurism has cost nothing but the lives of many Americans and the loss of eight thousand billion dollars from the country's

treasury and resulted in the spread of extremism and terrorism in West Asia.

He further noted that the United States has spent huge sums of money on military affairs in comparison with other countries, adding, "The U.S. sought to create a security situation in the world in order to be able to dominate the world through military spending."

U.S. President Donald Trump said in late 2017 that the United States had "foolishly spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East," stressing it was time they started working "in a bipartisan fashion" instead to "rebuild our country."

"At some point, and for the good of the country, I predict we will start working with the Democrats in a Bipartisan fashion," Trump tweeted. "Infrastructure would be a perfect place to start."

## IRGC stages massive war game, fires long-range ballistic missiles

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has fired long-range ballistic missiles capable of destroying hostile vessels during a war game in southern Iran.

According to the spokesman of Payambar-e Azam (The Great Prophet) 14 war game, the military exercise was staged in order to show the IRGC's power in fighting hybrid warfare and network-oriented combats proportional to the IRGC's offense doctrine.

Brigadier General Abbas Nilforushan said that the forces attending the drills make maximum use of telecommunication and optical devices as well as manned and unmanned equipment to exercise tactics for biological warfare, Tasnim reported.

Anti-ballistic and anti-cruise missile defense operations were carried out in the war game, he added.



The general also said the IRGC forces have used a series of "surprising equipment and weapons" in the drills, such as long-range ballistic missiles capable of hitting the intruding naval targets at a far distance.

The military exercise has been held in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan, western parts of the Strait of Hormuz, and the Persian Gulf.

Ground, aerial, naval and space oper-

ations were carried out during the joint exercise, which involved the IRGC Navy and the IRGC Aerospace Force.

Meanwhile, the war game was announced to be monitored for the first time by the Noor-1 Satellite.

The IRGC successfully put Noor into orbit on April 22. The Iranian satellite was launched with the three-stage satellite carrier Qassed (messenger) from a launch pad in Dasht-e Kavir, a large desert in central Iran.

**■ Enemies to pay price of their misdeeds, warns general**

Meanwhile, on Tuesday a senior IRGC general warned enemies that they will pay the price of their misdeeds toward the Iranian nation.

"Those seeking to show Iran as an unstable country, while the country is making all-out efforts to contain the coronavirus as well as the U.S. bullying, will definitely pay heavy prices for

their actions," Commander of Khatamal Anbiya Central Headquarters Major General Gholam Ali Rashid said on the sidelines of the military exercise.

"The occupation and corrupt governments that have tasted the bitterness of the power of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in response to their threats and bullying must pay further for their arrogant and threatening behavior toward the noble Iranian nation," he asserted.

Iran's Armed Forces hold routine military exercises throughout the year. Iranian officials have repeatedly said that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Back in February 2018, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities.

## We produce arms in accordance with foes' capabilities: IRGC chief

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hussein Salami said on Tuesday that Iran is producing weapons and military equipment according to the "real threat" facing Iran and the strengths and weaknesses of the enemies.

"Our equipment and weapons are developed in accordance with the real threat and the knowledge of the enemy's strengths and weaknesses; our defense doctrine is based on the production of domestic equipment, and in each drill our equipment's quality is being upgraded compared to the previous one. And the newly produced equipment is being tested and used on the real ground," the commander said at the sidelines of the IRGC's war game which began in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf on Tuesday morning.

The drills, codenamed Great Prophet (Payambar-e



Azam) 14, were launched on Tuesday morning with the participation of IRGC Navy and Aerospace forces in the general area of Hormozgan province near the Strait of Hormuz.

"Our policies to secure the vital interests of the dear nation of Iran are defensive, which means that we will not attack any country first, but operationally and tactically we act completely in an offensive way," the Fars news agency quoted Salami as saying.

He further said, "What was demonstrated today in this drill at the level of Air and Navy forces was all offensive."

During the Tuesday drills, IRGC forces practiced countermeasure against threats deriving from a U.S. aircraft carrier. The IRGC forces also used the domestically made Noor-1 Satellite to monitor the drills. The satellite was successfully put into orbit on April 22 by the IRGC.

## Outgoing Iranian envoy bids farewell to Omani FM official

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — The outgoing Iranian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman bid farewell to the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry of Oman Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi in Muscat on Tue.

In this meeting, the Omani side pointed to the amicable and strategic ties between Iran and Oman and expressed his thanks to Hojjatolislam Mohammadreza Nouri Shahrroudi

for his constructive role in strengthening bilateral ties.

For his part, outgoing Iranian envoy seized this opportunity to thank the government and people of Oman in cooperating and collaborating with him during his tenure in line with promoting and strengthening bilateral ties.

Shahrroudi referred to some of the most

important measures taken during his mission at the embassy and added, "presently, the amicable relation between the two countries is at the highest level."

In this meeting, the two sides, while expressing readiness for strengthening and expanding mutual ties, exchanged their views on the latest developments between the two countries and the region.



## Judiciary: U.S. brutal nature exposed by harassment of Iranian passenger plane

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Iran's Judiciary spokesman Gholam Hossein Esmaeili said the U.S. warplanes' aggressive move against Flight No. 1152 of Iran's Mahan Air was illegal and inhumane, adding that the hostile action proved the brutal nature of the United States.

The illegal and inhumane harassment of a Mahan passenger plane by the U.S. fighter jets was another example of the brutal nature of American terrorists, Esmaeili said on Tuesday.

"The Judiciary urges Iran's Foreign Ministry and the International Community to take a deterrent measure against this savage act through diplomatic and legal pursuits," he stressed.

Two U.S. fighter jets approached a Mahan Air Tehran-Beirut flight over the Syrian sky in a highly risky move and the captain of the Iranian passenger plane was forced to make a sudden change of direction and altitude, causing several injuries.

The captain of Mahan Air Flight No. 1152 later said the pilots of the two hostile planes have identified themselves as U.S. army pilots during a radio contact.

A video posted by a reporter of Iran's state-run TV who was aboard the plane showed an F-15 fighter jet from the window of the plane and comments from a passenger who had blood on his face.

In a later interview from Beirut, the reporter said three passengers have been wounded during "the U.S. planes' intentional move".

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi said Iran's Ambassador to the UN Majid Takht-Ravanchi has informed the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of the incident, and warned that "in case of any incident for this plane on the way back home, the Islamic Republic of Iran will take the United States responsible".

"A similar message has been sent to the Swiss ambassador to Tehran," the spokesman added. The Swiss embassy hosts the U.S. interests section in Iran in absence of formal diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Mahan Air told FNA later that several passengers wounded during the incident were taken to a hospital in Beirut and others evacuated the plane sound and safe.

It said the passenger jetliner refused to fly back to Iran.

The jetliner flew back home early Friday morning.

Minister of Road and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami said threatening of Iran's passenger plane by U.S. fighter jets is a terrorist move, and added that CAOI has filed a complaint at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Speaking to FNA on Friday about the hostile move of the U.S. fighter jets against the Iranian Mahan Airbus late on Thursday, Eslami said, "This is a terrorist act which has been carried out by the U.S. lawless and oppressive government. This is considered an international aggression typical of the lawless American government."

The Civil Aviation Organization of Iran called for urgent investigation by ICAO into the threat posed by the U.S. fighter jets to the Iranian passenger plane.

"Iran considers the U.S. fighter jets' threats as blatant instance of the violation of international law, regulations and aviation standards," the CAOI wrote in a communique on Friday.

Iranian Vice President for Legal Affairs Laya Joneidi also said disturbing a passenger plane is equal to the violation of indispensable international rules and regulations.

Causing of disturbance for a passenger plane amounts to violation of the inalienable principles of international rules, Joneidi wrote in a note on Friday.



## Worth of trades at IFB rises 33% in a month

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), increased 33 percent during the past Iranian calendar month (ended on July 21), IRNA reported.



The value of trades at this exchange has also risen 175 percent since the start of the current Iranian year (March 20). Meanwhile, IFX, the main index of IFB, rose 38 percent to stand at 19,544 points in the previous month, registering 197 percent rise since the year start.

As reported, 74,128 billion securities worth 184.567 trillion rials (about \$4.394 billion) were traded through 25.472 million deals at the IFB in the past month, registering 102 percent rise in the number while 920 percent growth in the value of trades compared to the same month in the past year.

IFB is one of the four major stock exchanges of Iran. The other three ones are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

The past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) witnessed a very fruitful performance for the country's stock market.

As TSE Head Ali Sahraei has announced, the value of trades at the Tehran Stock Exchange jumped 2.6 folds, while Return on Investment (ROI) reached 180 percent in the previous year.

While growth and development in the Iranian stock market have been started in recent years, the previous year was in fact a time of flourishing for the country's stock exchanges.

Different factors contributed to the past year's prominent success in the stock market.

One important factor was proper ground laid in the stock market and providing better conditions for traders.

The other factor was the status of parallel markets, such as those of foreign currency, gold coin, and housing in the past year that made making investment in the stock market an obviously better and more profitable choice for the investors.

And now despite the economic condition created by the coronavirus outbreak, the Iranian stock market is experiencing more growth in the current Iranian year.

In a press conference on June 22, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the amount of liquidity absorbed by Iran's capital market has reached 500 trillion rials (about \$12 billion) during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

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

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

## Exports from southwestern province up 116% in 4 months

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Iran's southwestern Kohgiluyeh-Boyer-Ahmad province has risen 116 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.



Behnam Ahmadi, the director general of the province's customs department, told IRNA that the province has exported 477,000 tons of commodities valued at \$805,000 during the mentioned four-month period.

The official mentioned Germany, Iraq, France, South Africa, and Switzerland as the main countries to which the province has exported commodities in the first four months of the present year.

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.

Last year, Khiabani had said that his ministry was planning to increase the value of Iran's non-oil exports to its 15 neighbors up to \$50 billion.

"Our goal is to be able to meet five percent of our neighboring countries' needs, which would amount to more than \$50 billion a year considering the total imports of all the 15 countries which is at least \$1 trillion annually," he said.

The official expressed hope that the mentioned goal would be realized before the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (which starts in March 2021), saying, "The Institute for Trade Studies and Research and also Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) are currently developing detailed plans to achieve this goal."

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

# HEPCO to manufacture equipment, machinery for mining companies

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Heavy Equipment Production Company (HEPCO) has signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with five major domestic mining companies to manufacture equipment and machinery for them.

The MOUs were signed on Monday with National Iranian Copper Industry Company (NICIC), Mobarakeh Steel Company, Gol Gohar Mining and Industrial Company, Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company, Mining Investment Insurance Company (MIIC), and Iran Mine House, said Khodadad Gharibpour, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

"In the first year of implementation of the mentioned MOUs, HEPCO will manufacture 200 road building machinery and in the second year another 700 machines will be manufactured, and in the future, the company will start manufacturing mining machines," Gharibpour said.

In the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) which is named the year of "surge in production" by the



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Iranian government is

strongly focusing on promoting domestic production in various areas and the

## 627,000 tons of basic goods unloaded at Chabahar port since Mar. 20

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Some 627,000 tons of basic goods have been unloaded at Iran's oceanic port of Chabahar since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), IRNA reported quoting Behrouz Aghaei, the director-general of Sistan-Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Department.

The imports of basic goods into the southeastern Chabahar Port in the current year has increased significantly compared to the previous year, according to Aghaei.

"This year, we registered the record of 800 loaded trucks leaving Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port in a single day; since one of the goals of this department is to increase the quality of maritime and port services, including facilitation of unloading and loading goods in this ocean port," the official said.

Having advanced equipment and round-the-clock efforts



of the workforce have made this goal achievable and we are witnessing the satisfaction of cargo and goods owners and the

significant growth of imports and exports through Chabahar port, he added.

According to Aghaei, with an annual loading and unloading capacity of 8.5 million tons, Chabahar port is a new destination for the import of basic goods in Iran.

The strategic port of Chabahar in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country's economic affairs.

Chabahar consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti, each of which has five berths.

India has awarded the development project of this port to India, and the South Asian country committed \$500 million to build two new berths in this port.

India has doubled the allocated funding for the development of the port in its national budget bill for 2020.

## Agriculture Ministry bodies ink MOU on sturgeon protection, reproduction

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute (IFSRI) and the country's Agricultural Services Specialized Holding Company (ASSHC) signed a memorandum of understanding for protection and reproduction of sturgeon, IRNA reported.

Signed by the ASSHC managing director and the IFSRI head, on Tuesday, the MOU is aimed at expanding cooperation between the two parties for using each other's capacities and facilities for the conservation and reproduction of sturgeon.

As reported, in this memorandum, research cooperation and conducting joint research, as well as holding training workshops has also been emphasized.

The Persian sturgeon (*Acipenser persicus*) is a species of fish in the family Acipenseridae. It is found in the Caspian Sea and to a lesser extent the Black Sea and ascends certain rivers to spawn, mainly the Volga, Kura, Araks, and Ural Rivers.

According to Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei, the head of Iran Fisheries Organization, currently, sturgeon breeding is carried out in more than 20 provinces of the country.

The threats faced by this fish include excessive fishing with the removal of immature fish before they have bred, damming of the rivers, loss of spawning areas, and water pollution.

In the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the share of the Caspian Sea from 773,000 tons of fishery was 42,000 tons which constitute 5.4 percent of the whole country's fishery, and more than 94 percent of which is related to the Oman Sea and the Persian Gulf.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry, on Monday, unveiled new digital monetary services including electronic promissory notes, as well as some digital facilities and credits, IRNA reported.

## Coronavirus pandemic reduces Iran's exports to Turkey by 90%

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The coronavirus pandemic has decreased Iran's exports to Turkey by 90 percent, the chairman of Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce told ILNA on Tuesday.

Mehrdad Sa'adat said there is no reason for such drop rather than the coronavirus pandemic, adding that trade between the two countries has been fortunately increasing after reopening of the borders, and the traders are trying to compensate for the four-month drop in the bilateral trade.

"We are now witnessing some long lines of trucks at the border crossings waiting for entering Turkey", he added.

Sa'adat had told IRNA on June 27 that Iran's export to Turkey was continuing via the roads and railway.

He said, "The number of trucks waiting in Bazargan Border to enter Turkey indicates that Iran's export to its neighbor is increasing, adding that Iran's transit of commodities via Turkey has also risen noticeably after the reopening of this border."

In early June, land borders between Iran and Turkey reopened after more than three months.

On the first day of border reopening, 150 Iranian trucks entered Turkey, according to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Rouhollah Latifi said that the mentioned trucks entered Turkey via three land borders of Bazargan, Sero, and Razi.

Also, 35 Turkish trucks entered Iran as the borders reopened, Latifi announced.

The long-awaited measure came more than a week after Iranian and Turkish presidents discussed the reopening of air and land borders between the two countries now that the pandemic has slowed down.

Iran sees trade with Turkey as key in efforts to confront the U.S. sanctions that have sought to undermine Tehran's oil exports. Petrochemical products account for a major share of Iran's exports to Turkey although the U.S. bans have made it difficult to settle payments between businesses in the two countries.



Turkey also relies on Iran as a major market for its manufacturing goods, including industrial machinery and garment, while it also sends to Iran some sizable shipments of crops and fruits that are not cultivated in the country.

As announced by the IRICA spokesman, Iran and Turkey exchanged 6,300 wagons of commodities via railway during a 70-day period from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

According to Latifi, Iran's exports to Turkey via railway stood at 3,072 wagons of goods and its imports from the neighboring country reached 3,228 wagons during the mentioned period of time.

IRICA Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi held a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Riza Tuna Turagay, via video conference on May 5, to discuss reopening of trade borders with the implementation of health and safety protocols.

Readiness to exchange health protocols for reopening trade borders, importing goods from Sarisu trans-boundary market, implementation of the third phase of e-Tir electronic project in all customs offices of the two countries, online exchange of information and X-ray in shared borders were among the important topics of discussion in the said meeting.

Mir-Ashrafi urged Turagay to take all the necessary measures to ensure the reopening of the two countries' borders since the Turkish borders with its other neighbors were open at the time.

In late February, Turkey closed its border with Iran as a preventative measure against the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

## Finance Ministry unveils electronic promissory notes, digital facilities

The unveiling ceremony was held at the place of the ministry and had the Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand in attendance.

Speaking in the ceremony, Dejpasand emphasized the importance of digitalization, especially in the current situation in which the world is wrestling with the coronavirus pandemic, and noted that achieving a smart economy is a very important step in realizing the goals of the country's development plans.

The coronavirus pandemic has presented an opportunity for the acceleration of the digitalization process for various aspects of the economy, Dejpasand said.

He mentioned the pursuit of the smart economy as one of his priorities in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, saying: "The transformation of the information technology office into a smart economy center was implemented, to

achieve a smart economy."

The official announced the formation of a think tank in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs whose task is to follow up on the process of smartening the economy.

He also pointed to the formation of the Information Technology Council in his ministry and said that this council will help achieve the goals of smartening the economy through a strategic process.

According to the minister, smartening the economy will lead to saving paper consumption and reducing the physical presence of people.

If there is to be sustainable growth in the Iranian economy, we must, on one hand, increase the capacity for foreign investment and, on the other hand, increase our production capacity; a smart economy can help us seriously in both of these goals, Dejpasand stressed.



# ICOFC to set up pressure boosting stations for central fields

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) is going to implement a \$600-million project for setting up pressure boosting stations to ensure sustained gas supply to refineries in the country's central regions.

As reported by Shana, the mentioned project is aimed for the stable supply of feedstock to Parsian Gas Refinery in Fars Province, Fajr Jam Gas Refinery in Bushehr Province, and Ilam Gas Refinery in Ilam Province.

According to Mohammad Bahmaei, the ICOFC's investment and development manager, due to the natural decline in the recovery factor of gas fields and the fact that most of these fields are in their mid-life age, this program has been defined, which includes the construction of gas booster stations in Kangan, Tang Bijar, Homa, Tabnak, Naar, and Varavi fields.

In this regard, the necessary permits



have been obtained and negotiations are underway with contractors and domestic

equipment manufacturers for the construction of the mentioned stations under

Engineering Procurement, Construction and Financing (EPCF) contracts, Bahmaei said.

The official noted that for some of the mentioned fields like Homa, Varavi, and Tabnak, the contractors have been chosen, the contracts are signed and the executive operations have been started.

Established in 1999, Iranian Central Oil Fields Company is one of the five major subsidiaries of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

As the second-biggest gas producer in the country, this company has undertaken the production and development of most of the country's onshore fields located in Ilam, Bushehr, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Northern Khorasan, Khuzestan, Fars, Qom, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Lorestan and Hormozgan Provinces.

According to the ICOFC, the company currently supplies almost half of the country's gas demand.

## Overhauling drilling rigs by local experts saves Iran €60m

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — The head of Iran's Mostazafan Foundation announced savings of 60 million euros following the major overhaul of Sahar 1 and 2 floating drilling platforms by local experts.

According to ICANA, Seyed Parviz Fattah said: "These 8,000-ton platforms were rebuilt and overhauled by local experts and engineers in the face of U.S. sanctions, and the country's capable forces rebuilt all sensitive parts of the platforms, including pumps, drilling systems, structures and equipment."

According to the official, operation of the two offshore

drilling rigs resulted in at least 60 million Euros in hard currency savings for the country.

Referring to a contract between the foundation and the Oil Ministry with the aim of repairing and drilling a number of oil wells in the Persian Gulf, Fattah said the depth of these oil wells is up to 4,000 meters, but the rigs can drill up to 6,000 meters.

He stated that the Sahar 1 and 2 offshore rigs were worth a total of \$400 million, adding that the workforces operating on the rigs are young Iranian specialists and the parts are also domestically manufactured.



## End game for oil? OPEC prepares for an age of dwindling demand

The coronavirus crisis may have triggered the long-anticipated tipping point in oil demand and it is focusing minds in OPEC, Reuters reported.

The pandemic drove down daily crude consumption by as much as a third earlier this year, at a time when the rise of electric vehicles and a shift to renewable energy sources were already prompting downward revisions in forecasts for long-term oil demand.

It has prompted some officials in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, oil's most powerful proponent since it was founded 60 years ago, to ask whether this year's dramatic demand destruction heralds a permanent shift and how best to manage supplies if the age of oil is drawing to a close.

"People are waking up to a new reality and trying to work their heads around it all," an industry source close to OPEC told Reuters, adding the "possibility exists in the minds of all the key players" that consumption might never fully recover.

Reuters interviewed seven current and former officials or other sources involved in OPEC, most of whom asked not to be named. They said this year's crisis that sent oil below \$16 a barrel had prompted OPEC and its 13 members to question long-held views on the demand growth outlook.

Just 12 years ago, OPEC states were flush with cash when oil peaked above \$145 a barrel as demand surged.

Now it faces a dramatic adjustment if consumption starts a permanent decline. The group will need to manage even more closely its cooperation with other producers, such as Russia, to maximize falling revenues and will have to work to ensure relations inside the group are not frayed by any fratricidal dash to defend market share in a shrinking businesses.

"OPEC's job will be harder in the future because of lower demand and rising non-OPEC production," said Hasan Qabazard,



OPEC's head of research from 2006 to 2013 whose work now includes advising hedge funds and investment banks on OPEC policy.

One official, who works in energy studies in the oil ministry of a major OPEC member, said shocks to oil demand had in the past led to permanent changes in consumer behavior. He said this time was unlikely to be different.

"The demand does not return to pre-crisis levels or it takes time for this to happen," he said. "The main concern is that oil demand will peak in the next few years due to rapid technological advances, especially in car batteries."

In 2019, the world consumed 99.7 million barrels per day (bpd) - and OPEC was forecasting a rise to 101 million bpd in 2020.

But global lockdowns this year that grounded planes and took traffic off the streets, prompted OPEC to slash the 2020 figure to 91 million bpd, with 2021 demand still seen below 2019 levels.

### ■ Predicting the peak

Producing nations, energy analysts and oil companies have long tried to work out when the world would reach "peak oil", the point after which consumption starts permanently falling. But demand has climbed steadily each year, with occasional exceptions amid economic downturns.

Nevertheless, OPEC has been scaling back expectations. In 2007, it forecast world demand would hit 118 million bpd in 2030. By

last year, its 2030 forecast had dropped to 108.3 million bpd. Its November report is expected to show another downward revision, one OPEC source says.

OPEC officials declined to comment on its demand outlook or policy for this article. But officials have said history shows OPEC's ability to adapt to changes in the market.

Consumption forecasts vary outside OPEC. Oil companies have cut long-term crude price outlooks as demand prospects fade - slashing the value of their assets as a result.

Global consultancy DNV GL believes demand probably peaked in 2019.

Oil's percentage share of the global energy mix has steadily fallen in recent decades, from about 40 percent of energy used in 1994 to 33 percent in 2019, even as volumes consumed rose with more cars on the roads, rising air travel and a petrochemical industry that makes ever more plastics and other products.

That may now be changing, as more electric vehicles roll out of factories and airlines struggle to recover from the pandemic. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) does not expect air travel to reach 2019 levels until 2023 - at the earliest.

"Once aviation recovers by end-2023, demand will go back to normal — aside from the competition from other sources of energy," said a second OPEC official involved in forecasting, highlighting the difficulty of making predictions amid a global trend towards using more renewables and other fuels.

It leaves OPEC with a mounting challenge. Most members of the group, which sits on 80 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, rely heavily on crude. Oil prices, now hovering above \$40, are still well below the level most governments need to balance their budgets, including Saudi Arabia, OPEC's de facto leader.

### ■ New stresses

OPEC, whose output accounts for about a third of world supplies, is no stranger to

crises. It has managed supply shocks during the Persian Gulf conflicts in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s and found ways to cope when rival non-OPEC producers turn on the taps, like the U.S. shale oil industry in the past decade.

Most recently, when the coronavirus crisis pummeled demand, OPEC with Russia and other allies, a grouping known as OPEC+, agreed record output cuts of 9.7 million bpd, the equivalent of 10 percent of global supplies. Those deep cuts run to the end of July.

Yet, what comes next promises to be a new test of OPEC's mettle. Instead of dealing with one-off shocks, OPEC must learn to live with long-term decline.

"This trend will put a stress on the cooperation between OPEC members, as well as between OPEC and Russia, as each strives to maintain its market share," said Chakib Khelil, Algeria's oil minister for a decade and twice OPEC's president.

Some short-term challenges may come from within OPEC, as Iran and Venezuela, both hit by U.S. sanctions, seek to boost production or as output recovers in conflict-stricken Libya.

Others may come from outside, as the group tries to prevent U.S. shale production taking market share while OPEC seeks to curtail output in its efforts to support prices.

"Many challenges are ahead, and we have to adapt," said one OPEC delegate, who said the group's handling of past crises proved it was able to respond.

OPEC's former research head, Qabazard, said the group might have a little more time to adjust before demand peaked. But he said the deadline for OPEC to adapt was approaching.

"I don't think it will go higher than 110 million barrels per day by the 2040s," he said, adding that fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic had changed consumer habits for good.

"This is permanent demand destruction."

Despite the turmoil of 2020 in the crude oil market, Iraq has managed to increase its oil exports to China, its main customer, Hellenic Shipping News reported.

In its latest weekly report, shipbroker Banchemo Costa said that "oil prices began to recover after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies agreed to end a price war and make their biggest-ever production cut. The deal has helped oil prices to double in the past two months by withdrawing about 10 percent of global supplies from the market. Under the OPEC+ deal, Iraq is obliged to compensate for their over-production on May and June in the coming months. In the first half of 2020, OPEC's second-largest producer exported just 80.4 million tons (mt) of crude oil, according to vessel-tracking data from Refinitiv. This represents a net decline of -9.3 percent y-o-y, compared to the 88.7 mt exported in the same period of 2019, and -6.9 percent down from the 86.6 mt exported in January-June 2018".

According to Banchemo Costa, "on a monthly basis, January 2020 showed a -8.9 percent year-on-year drop to 14.1 million tons, and February showed a -11.5 percent drop y-o-y to 13.0 million tons, whilst March recorded a +2.0 percent gain y-o-y to 14.1 million tons. April was -5.7 percent y-o-y to 14.5 million tons, and May also showed a contraction of -8.9 percent y-o-y to 13.3 million tons. In June 2020 we saw output as low as 11.4 million ton,



shrinking -14.2 percent m-o-m from May 2020. This was -22.2 percent less than the 14.7 million t exported during June 2019, showing that Iraq improved its compliance with OPEC+ cuts".

"Crude oil exports from Iraq are shipped primarily to China, which also this year accounts for 35.8 percent of Iraq's total. Shipments from Iraq to China have increased by +27.5 percent y-o-y in 1H 2020, to 28.8 million t, from 22.6 million t in the same period last year. Also, Iraq boosted exports to Turkey, which went up by +11.3

percent y-o-y to 3.6 million t in the 1H2020. On the other hand, volumes to India from Iraq, decreased slightly by -5.4 percent y-o-y to 23.1 million tons, from 24.4 mt in 1H 2019. India accounts for 28.7 percent of Iraq's total crude oil exports this year. Exports to the EU (including the UK) shrunk by -43.2 percent year-on-year to 8.4 million tons. Volumes to South Korea and the U.S. weakened at 6.4 and 3.9 million tons, -25.0 percent and -47.2 percent y-o-y respectively. Looking back at last year, Iraq's total exports were 176.3 mt in the 12 months of 2019. This represented a flat change of 0.0 percent y-o-y, compared to the 176.4 mt exported in 2018, but +7.1 percent from 164.7 million t in 2017", Banchemo Costa said.

The shipbroker added that "during the whole of 2019, exports from Iraq to China expanded by +19.0 percent y-o-y to 50.1 million tons. Exports to India increased by +8.6 percent y-o-y in the whole of 2019 to 49.0 million tons. Volumes to the U.S. were down -36.1 percent y-o-y in 2019 to 15.3 million t. The vast majority of the crude oil exported by Iraq in 1H2020 (49.2 mt out of 80.4 mt) was shipped on VLCCs. A further 25.5 mt was shipped on Suezmaxes, only 2.7 mt on Aframax, and just 3.0 mt on smaller units. The vast majority of Iraqi crude exports are shipped from the port of Basrah (80.2 mt loaded in 1H2020, 99.8 percent of the total volumes), with sporadic cargoes from Khor Al Zubair (0.2 million t)", it concluded.

## China's fuel exports poised for a strong rebound this month and next

China's gasoline and gasoil exports are set for a strong rebound in July and August, industry sources told Reuters, as companies make the most of rising global fuel demand and higher prices to pare back growing fuel inventories.

Fuel exports from Asia's top gasoline and third-biggest gasoil exporter fell 50 percent in May and stayed weak in June. But now that an easing of coronavirus lockdown restrictions is boosting economic activity, fuel demand and prices, exports are poised to rise rapidly.



This will add supply pressure on the international fuel market, which has been struggling with subdued demand owing to the pandemic.

Refiners produced a record amount of fuel in June, after importing record volumes of crude for two months running, to satisfy growing demand as the Chinese economy gradually reopened after lockdown. While China's diesel appetite typically slows in the third quarter, refineries are making the most of higher oil prices above \$43 a barrel to get rid of excess fuel.

"With very significant inventory build-ups in recent months, we expect Chinese clean product exports to return to Q1 2020 levels (in the near term)," said Philip Jones-Lux, energy market analyst at JBC Energy. Gasoline exports CNC-GASLINE-EXP are expected to soar by 44 percent to about 1.1 million to 1.2 million tonnes (300,000-327,000 barrels per day) in July from June, according to consulting firm FGE and an industry source who tracks the fuel.

Volumes could rise further in August to a four-month high of 1.5 million tonnes, FGE added.

The record amounts of crude oil China imported in May and June, according to customs data, suggests the forecasts for gasoline and gasoil exports have room to be revised higher still. China received 47.97 million tonnes of crude in May and 53.18 million last month, bought on the cheap when crude prices fell below \$20 a barrel in April.

Meanwhile, gasoil exports CNC-DIESEL-EXP could jump by at least 15 percent in July to between 1.2 million and 1.3 million tonnes (290,000-315,000 bpd) from June, according to estimates from Refinitiv Oil Research and FGE respectively.

Exports could rise in August to 1.6 million to 1.65 million tonnes, FGE and energy consultancy Energy Aspects said respectively.

Still, the recovery in global fuel demand helping to underpin Chinese fuel exports could be capped by a second wave of coronavirus infections, which has prompted countries in Asia to impose fresh restrictions.

"Gasoline demand has improved to pre-pandemic levels in numerous countries, supporting the recent stock draws," said analysts at FGE.

"That said, the re-emergence of a second wave of COVID-19 outbreaks casts a shadow over the recovery in demand."

## Deutsche Bank ends funding for oil sands and arctic oil projects

Deutsche Bank is ending financing for new oil and gas projects in the oil sands and the Arctic region effective immediately, becoming the latest major bank to reconsider lending money to fossil fuel projects in sensitive areas.

According to oilprice.com, Deutsche Bank will no longer finance any new projects in the Arctic or the oil sands and will review all its existing business in the oil and gas industry, the bank said in a statement on Monday.

Deutsche Bank unveiled an updated Fossil Fuels Policy to set new limits on financing business activities that involve oil, gas, or coal, and pledged to end its global business activities in coal mining by 2025 at the latest "in order to help drive the transformation to a sustainable economy."



"In its current form, the Policy sets us ambitious targets and enables us to help our long-standing clients with their own transformation. It will allow us to play our part in protecting the climate and helping the EU to achieve its goal of being climate neutral by 2050," CEO Christian Sewing, who also chairs Deutsche Bank's Sustainability Council, said.

Last year, Deutsche Bank and 129 other banks — representing a third of the world's banks, worth a total of \$47 trillion in assets, committed to aligning their business to the Paris Climate Agreement, in the biggest pledge to climate sustainability from the banking sector yet.

Many banks, especially in Europe, have faced in recent years increased public and activist pressure to stop funding fossil fuel projects. Some of them have said they would stop providing project-specific financing for coal-fired power plants or exploration and production of oil sands and oil in the Arctic.

In the United States, Goldman Sachs said in December 2019 that it would decline to finance new Arctic oil exploration and production and new thermal coal mine development or strip mining. Wells Fargo and JPMorgan have also said they would stop financing new oil and gas projects in the Arctic.



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

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

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# INSTEX: Europe's fragile muscle flexing

## Trump isolating U.S. over JCPOA & Iran arms embargo extension

**1 →** In her letter to the former INSTEX President Per Fischer on May 7, 2019 the former U.S. Treasury Department undersecretary and one of the architects of U.S. "maximum pressure" sanctions, Sigal Mandelker clearly stated: "Engaging in activities that run afoul of U.S. sanctions can result in severe consequences, including a loss of access to the U.S. financial system."

Due to U.S. pressures, Europe has been reluctant even to export medicine, foodstuff and other humanitarian goods that are allowed under the sanctions. INSTEX, which is more about politics than economics, has no clauses for the trade of oil, export of which from Iran are supposed to reach "zero" as per the "maximum pressure" sanctions.

EU's fruitless efforts to salvage the JCPOA and the three European economies' failure on their pledge to protect the Iranian economy, has forced Iran to scale back its JCPOA commitments.

During a phone conversation on Monday (July 13) between French President Emmanuel Macron with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani, Macron described the INSTEX as positive, a mechanism that will eventually facilitate and increase Iran-Europe trade.

U.S. was initially part of the JCPOA signatories during former president Barack Obama's administration. But after Donald Trump's election in 2016, he acted according to one of his campaign pledges and exited from JCPOA in May 2018, imposing "maximum pressure" sanctions on Iran along with secondary sanctions that not only prohibit American companies, and citizens but also effect foreign entities and individuals.

The secondary sanctions show power of U.S. hegemony to legally and factually control financial transaction system. If a company doesn't operate in U.S. market, either its banks do, or its insurance companies or its reinsurance companies backing the insurance company.

To complement INSTEX, Tehran officially registered the Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI) just two months after INSTEX was setup. With board of directors of representatives of legal entities, including Refah Kargaran Bank, Agriculture Bank of Iran, Bank Pasargad, and Fardis Gostar Kish Informatics Services Company. STFI announced it provides payment settlement services to legal and natural importers/exporters as well as domestic and foreign banks. The company's objective was to



*Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (C) with Britain's former UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson (R), France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (L), Germany Foreign Minister Heiko Maas (2nd L) at the EU headquarters in Brussels on May 15, 2018. (Photo: YVES HERMAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES)*

build relations with its European counterpart and monetary channels in other countries. It was unclear what role did STFI play in the first INSTEX transaction in March.

### ■ Survival of JCPOA

The survival of the nuclear deal has been subject to tit-for-tat policies followed on both sides, and its future hinges on multilateral negotiations and diplomacy.

On January 5, Iran took a fifth and last step in reducing its commitments under JCPOA and said it would no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear program concerning the capacity and the level of uranium enrichment, as well as the volume of stockpiled uranium or research and development.

Despite Iran's fifth step, EU foreign ministers vowed in January to preserve the nuclear deal by ignoring Trump's call for them to quit the landmark 2015 agreement. EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell said that the EU is committed to preserving the JCPOA adding that "it is to our interest" to preserve JCPOA "as far as we can." Borrell was addressing a news conference after a meeting with the EU foreign ministers, where they discussed the situation in Iran, Iraq and Libya.

The IAEA's 35-national board of governors passed a resolution in June, calling on Iran to cooperate fully with it and let the agency

access two locations inside the country.

In a reaction to the approval of this anti-Iran resolution by the IAEA, the Iranian parliament in June urged the government to reconsider the implementation of the Additional Protocols of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission (NSFPC) decided to stop Iran's "voluntary" implementation of Additional Protocol to the NPT, reported Fars news agency quoting Sara Fallahi, a member of the commission. Fallahi added that such an approval "can also effect the future of the Iranian nuclear deal."

On the fifth anniversary of the signing of JCPOA on July 14 the Foreign Ministry tweeted that Iran remains committed to diplomatic engagement despite the setbacks reiterating that Iran "has been and will be a trusted partner to its neighbor & beyond." According to the tweet "JCPOA is the product of Iran's openness to engagement, but U.S. reckless exit from the deal has wreaked havoc on this multilateral accomplishment."

Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow, Kazem Jalali, expressed hope on July 13 that there is still a chance to save the nuclear deal which he described as a "win-win" situation, reported IRNA. He expressed hope that "there is still chance to save the JCPOA and political

and practical action of the remaining parties are required." Jalili noted that Russia and China have proven "politically" and "practically" that they are determined to preserve the deal.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying, announced Tuesday (July 14) China's firm support for JCPOA marking the nuclear deal's fifth anniversary, reports China Daily. Earlier on June 7, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General and UNSC, elaborating China's position in support of JCPOA.

### ■ Arms embargo

The U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on the UN Security Council on June 30 meeting held via video link to extend the arms embargo on Iran beyond the October 18, 2020 expiry date set out under the JCPOA.

The arms embargo applies to Iran's imports and exports of most kinds of weapons, including aircraft and tanks. Some limits on missile and nuclear technology will remain in place for a few more years, reports the New York Times.

The Trump administration had threatened that if the arms embargo is not extended, the U.S. will try to invoke a "snapback" provision of JCPOA to reimpose former (pre-JCPOA) UN sanctions on Iran, a move that is deemed invalid and illegal.

"Having quit the JCPOA, the U.S. is no longer a participant and has no right to trigger a snapback at the UN," said Zhang Jun the UN ambassador from China.

During a telephone conversation between Rouhani and Russian President Vladimir Putin, both parties slammed the U.S. for seeking to extend an arms ban against Tehran, calling for efforts to confront Washington's "unilateralism".

Representatives from Britain, France and Germany voiced their unease at both the extension of the arms embargo and flatly opposed to U.S. triggering snapback mechanism.

Head of the Center for Geopolitical Studies of Russia Leonid Ivashov said on Saturday that the U.S. insistence for extending Iran's arms embargo is against the nuclear deal and is part of the U.S. plan for selling more weapons to the region.

While Europe is running out of time to save JCPOA, Trump's move to extend arms embargo has set the stage for a clash with its allies and is another vivid example of U.S. isolation on the Iran issue.

## Israel's nightmare: The dissolution of the Palestinian Authority

By Adnan Abu Amer

Amid the anticipation of Israeli annexation of large parts of the occupied West Bank, there have been significant developments on the Palestinian political scene. It seems that there is an increasing likelihood that the Palestinian Authority (PA) will be dissolved, or at the very least, its powers greatly reduced.

In late May, Palestinian officials announced that they are ceasing security coordination with Israel in response to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's annexation threats. Shortly after, PA security forces withdrew from areas jointly monitored with Israeli forces in the north and east Jerusalem, including from the towns of Abu Dis, Bedouin, Qatana, and Beit Iksa.

Around the same time, the PA also announced that it would no longer accept transfers of funds from taxes Israel collects on its behalf, which goes towards paying for salaries and services in the West Bank and Gaza. It also stopped issuing permits for Palestinians living in the West Bank to cross into Israel.

This created confusion and led to chaotic scenes in front of Israeli liaison offices in the West Bank, particularly in Al-Khalil (Hebron), where thousands of Palestinians gathered to apply for permits. The PA stood by and did not intervene.

It has done little to stop the flow of workers, business people, and sick individuals crossing into Israeli territory every day despite the emergency situation surrounding the coronavirus's spread. In the past, the Palestinians' movement was always coordinated between Israel and the PA to ensure security and order. This development seems to indicate that the Israeli authorities are gradually establishing a direct line of communication and relations with the Palestinian population, sidelining the PA's mediatory role.

The authority was established in 1994 on the tail of the Oslo Accords and was supposed to be an interim body during the transition to an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's aggressive encroachment on Palestinian rights and path towards statehood over the past few years, as the Trump administration gave it full backing, have severely undermined the PA's political powers and



seem to be reducing it to a service provider - something Ramallah would not accept.

The PA has feared this scenario for a while - Israel weakening its power by establishing direct relations with the Palestinian public and eventually eliminating its political role. Recently, PA officials have voiced such fears and have warned that the PA will not be reduced to a local council or a charity.

At the same time, the PA has taken a number of security measures in preparation for the annexation. In June, reports in the Israeli media removed illegal weapons from its offices, fearing members of Hamas may try to take them and launch an armed assault on Israeli forces if tensions escalate in the West Bank.

These weapons have been collected from the civilian population during disarming operations since the end of the second intifada in 2005.

The PA is also in possession of 26,000 Kalashnikovs and pistols and dozens of armored vehicles under license from the Israeli authorities, which control the armament of the Palestinian forces as per the Oslo Accords.

According to Israeli TV channel Kan, the PA has made plans to hand over these weapons to Israel in the event of an escalation in the West Bank following the annexation. It plans to send them in trucks to the Israeli military base at

the Beit El Israeli settlement north of Ramallah and leave the Israeli army to assume full responsibility for the West Bank's security.

Meanwhile, there have also been reports that the Palestinian intelligence has received instructions to remove secret security documents from its offices.

Given that Israel has full knowledge of the PA's security operations - either because it hands over such information directly to the Israelis, or because the latter have their spies in its ranks - this move is likely intended to prevent the Palestinian people from laying their hands on such files, which could potentially implicate PA figures in collaboration with Israel. The last time the PA issued such orders was at the beginning of the second intifada in 2000.

The sidelining of the PA is not only a problem for Ramallah; it will soon be a problem for Israel as well. If the PA proceeds with dissolving its security apparatus, the onus of providing security in the West Bank will fall on the Israeli authorities, which hides many risks for them.

Israeli scholars have already warned of the consequences of sidelining the PA. In an op-ed for Israeli media outlet Ynet, Michael Milstein, the head of the Palestinian Studies Forum at Tel Aviv University, wrote that the present situation could turn into a "nightmare" for Israel.

According to Milstein, as the Palestinians establish direct relations with Israel, they will start seeking an improvement of living standards and services from the Israeli authorities and eventually demand citizenship, which would be another step towards a one-state solution.

Indeed, this realization may be one of the factors, along with Western pressure, which has caused the Israeli government to delay the announcement of the annexation. Wiser heads in Israel's conservative leadership may have prevailed, having recognized that their aggressive expansionism in recent years may have accelerated Israel's advance towards the dreaded but inevitable outcome of their desire to colonize all of Palestine - the establishment of one Israeli-Palestinian state with equal citizenship for all inhabitants.

(Source: Aljazeera)

## Spain goes on the offensive against UK over 'unjust' quarantine rule

The Spanish Prime Minister has condemned the British government's quarantine decision as "inappropriate" and "unjust".

Pedro Sanchez claimed in an interview with local broadcaster Tele Cinco that the places heavily dependent on British tourists such as the Balearics and the Canary Islands are safe destinations.

He added that the spike in the number of new cases in Spain this week were recorded in the north-eastern regions of Catalonia and Aragon which are less frequented by British tourists.

Echoing the Spanish PM's position, Conserv-

ative MP Chris Bryant, who chairs the all-party parliamentary group for Spain, said: "there are many, many regions of Spain which have much lower infection rates than many areas in the UK ... I think this has been terribly badly handled".

The Spanish PM also accused the UK of making an "error" by over-estimating the infection rate for the whole country.

In addition, Sanchez confirmed that the Spanish government is in talks with the British authorities "to try to convince them" to reconsider the unsuitable measures.

Meanwhile, the British Government is not

showing any sign of changing its mind over the issue.

To that end, Tory MP, Simon Clarke, proclaimed: "We respectfully disagree with the Spanish government's position on this". Clarke was adamant that there had been a "sharp increase" in Covid-19 cases in Spain.

In a further twist, the Telegraph (July 27) claimed that "quarantine for people arriving from Spain and other countries with high levels of Covid-19 will be cut to 10 days [provided they test negative] under plans being finalized by ministers".

But this account is contradicted by cabinet office minister Michael Gove who told the BBC's Good Morning Scotland that the news amounts to "speculation".

For his part, Clarke made the following unequivocal statement on the issue: "What I can say is that there have been thousands of new cases in Spain over recent days, therefore it's an entirely plausible scenario that people have returned to the UK carrying the virus ... Even if the risk is one that hasn't materialized, frankly it's one we need to close off."

(Source: Euronews)

## American academic believes Trump's 'law and order' campaign won't work

**1 →** "Right now, he is riding a general 'anti-Trump' sentiment. If the election were today, people would vote more for Biden because they don't like Trump instead of supporting Biden."

Regarding the stances of leftist figures like Bernie Sanders who fail to rise to echelons of power in American political structure, the American academic says that the failure of Sanders can be attributed to a lot of things. He says, "He did get major issues onto the political agenda, such as Medicare for all, that could be seen as a victory."

That he failed to become the Democrats' nominee "could be attributed to his campaign failing to make real inroads with the African American voters in the south," the professor maintains.

Pointing to failures by Klobuchar and Buttigieg to get young people to vote in the primaries, Pahnke says those two candidates decided to end their campaigns and support Biden.

Asked about rumors of possible election fraud in the November election, the American professor says, "I don't see fraud as an issue. It hasn't been in the past and most likely won't be this time."

According to the Washington Post, Biden on Thursday night warned donors that "President Trump will try to 'indirectly steal' the 2020 election by making a case against mail-in ballots, a voting method that many are expected to use to avoid exposure to the novel coronavirus during November's election."

However, Pahnke says, "If there is any problem with the elections, then it will be where states don't make it possible for people to vote by mail, which may depress turnout."

The U.S. law stipulates if election fraud is proven, he explains that States have different rules.

According to Pahnke, the law stipulates if election fraud is proven states have different rules.

"For instance, some places require I.D., others allow felons to vote, while other states do not," he explains.

He maintains that "minimally, citizens who are over 18 can vote, while fraud cases are rare. There are cases where the same person votes twice or where people who should register do, in fact, register."

While American history shows that most cases of fraud have been committed by major political parties through vote buying, the biggest concern in terms of maintaining the integrity of the voting process will be in ensuring vote by mail, which works in many states and has been in existence since the Civil War, and local politicians moving or closing polling places.

About the impact of COVID-19 on electoral competition and how the candidates try to exploit it, the American analyst tells the Tehran Times, "This is hard to say, mainly because Biden is taking advantage of Trump's failed response to the virus. That Biden is doing so well, in this regard, is more due to luck than strategy."

He adds, "Trump may try to downplay the virus, and this may help him because it appears that more of his supporters also downplay the virus."

Commenting on possible Russia or China's attempts to meddle in the presidential election, Pahnke refers to reports that suggest Russia's attempts to influence people.

"Reports and studies show that Russia in particular attempts to influence people, principally via social media. But that these countries coordinate efforts through funding candidates, or placing actual ads in the media, is not happening," he further says.

"Alternatively, China targeted U.S. agricultural products, such as soy, limiting their purchases, which is a very clear attempt to hurt Trump's electoral base in the Midwestern United States," he says.

"Still, at the end of the day, Americans will evaluate information from where they get it and then vote; however, they choose," the American academic concludes.

## Mali's opposition rejects West African leaders' plan to end deadlock

On Tuesday, Mali's opposition coalition formally rejected a plan proposed by West African leaders for ending a political crisis, raising the prospect of more mass anti-government demonstrations in the coming weeks.

Tens of thousands of people answered opposition calls for protests in early June over contested local elections, perceived government corruption and incompetence. Police killings of protesters further inflamed anger against President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who the opposition insists should resign.

Heads of state of members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) proposed on Monday that the members of parliament whose elections were contested should step down and that by-election be held. It also called for a government of national unity and an inquiry on the deaths.

President Keita responded with a cabinet reshuffle late on Monday, naming six ministers to core positions, including Tiebille Drame as foreign minister and General Ibrahim Dahirou Dembele as defense minister. They are tasked with negotiating with the opposition to form the government of national unity.

But the plan was unlikely to be accepted by the M5-RFP opposition coalition, which has spearheaded anti-Keita protests and already flatly rejected an earlier version of the proposals from the bloc.

"The M5-RFP states with regret that the conclusions of the Heads of State Summit do not take into account the depth and gravity of the sociopolitical crisis that has Mali's future hanging in the balance," it said in a statement.

It said the proposals did not "correspond to the people of Mali's expectations and aspirations and violate the laws and constitution of Mali."

The coalition has said it would restart the protests on August 3 if their demands are not met.

(Source: Reuters)





## British embassy in Tehran resumes processing visas

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The British embassy in Tehran in a Twitter message late on Monday announced it has resumed processing visas for Iranian applicants.

“We are pleased to announce that the Tehran Visa Application Center reopened yesterday (Sunday) to provide British visa services. Visa applicants now need compliance with health protocols to keep themselves and the visa application staff healthy,” the message read.



The British ambassador to Tehran, Robert Macaire, on July 26 announced that the process of obtaining a British visa is transparent and fair. “You have to provide all the relevant documents and meet the required criteria. No broker is required to obtain a visa. All required information is online and all the appointments would be given every week.”

On March 1, dependants and some staff started evacuating from the British Embassy in Tehran due to coronavirus but the essential staff remained.

“In the event that the situation deteriorates further, the ability of the British Embassy to provide assistance to British nationals from within Iran may be limited,” Britain’s Foreign Office said as part of a travel advisory for Iran.

## Iranian police bust gangs of illegal excavators

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iranian police have recently busted two gangs of illegal diggers and antique dealers in southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and northern Golestan provinces.

Five illegal diggers, who were trying to find relics in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province were detained in this regard, said Amir Rahmatollahi, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, IRIB reported on Tuesday.



In another seizure that took place in Golestan province, the police recovered 12 Islamic-era objects and an illegal excavator was arrested, the official added.

He also noted that the culprits were surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus — a one-millennium-old brick tower — amongst its most famous.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

## Iran in detail: Xerxes’ Gateway in Persepolis

**(Lonely Planet)** — The bronze trumpets that once heralded the arrival of important foreign delegations (a fragment of which is on display in the museum) may now be silent, but it is still possible to capture the sense of awe on approaching the colossal main gateway.



Built during the reign of Xerxes I, who called this his Gate of All Nations, the pillared entrance is guarded by bearded and hooved mythical figures in the style of Assyrian gate-guards. The gateway bears a cuneiform inscription in Old Persian, Neo-Babylonian and Elamite languages declaring, among other things, that Xerxes is responsible for the construction of this and many beautiful wonders in Parsa. Centuries of graffitiists have also left their mark, including explorer Henry Morton Stanley.

# UNESCO-tagged Imam Square in Isfahan being restored

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A restoration project has been commenced on the walls of the east side of the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan, central Iran, CHTN reported.

As the walls have been damaged by the moisture over the years, and no dehumidifiers have been embedded in them, dehumidifying of the walls by removing the wall piers has been started, Fariba Khatabakhsh, director of the World Heritage site said on Tuesday.

Moisture in buildings and architectural structures provides suitable conditions for the growth of fungi and produces an unpleasant odor. It can also cause various damages to the building materials.

After fixing the problem, the damaged parts will be restored under the supervision of cultural heritage experts, she added.

The UNESCO-registered Imam Square has long been full of life thanks to being a prime destination for both domestic and foreign travelers.

Best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq.



(literary meaning “Image of the World”), the property is in Isfahan, central Iran.

At 512m long and 163m wide, it is one of the largest squares in the world.

## Qazvin Grand Hotel ready for new restoration project

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Buttrressing measures have been conducted on the historical Qazvin Grand Hotel, which was established in 1922 in the west-central Iranian city. The monument that covers about 3,000 square meters in area is now ready for the next phase of restoration.

“With the completion of a phase that reinforced the building of Qazvin Grand Hotel building, the restoration project will enter a new phase in mid-Mordad (Early August),” CHTN quoted CEO of the Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism Investment Group Co. (SEMEGA) as saying on Monday.

Over the past years, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has conducted a series of emergency restoration work on the hotel. However, a new phase of restoration was completed at the end of [the month] Ordibehesht (May 20), Esfandiyar Heydaripour added.

Known as Iran’s first “European-style” hotel, the dilapidated structure was put out to tender last year but attracted little interest. However, SEMEGA placed a bid during the second tender in February and won. SEMEGA’s reputation

for restoring old buildings without financial difficulty was integral to the fund accepting their bid.

The hotel’s location in the historical texture of Qazvin (152 kilometers northeast of Tehran) has been cited as one of the reasons behind the lack of interest among investors, as any possible damage to the historical texture during restoration could cost investors a small fortune.

It is one of the oldest hotels in the country, covering about 3,000 square meters. The three-story building enjoys unique architectural features, such as Corinthian order column capitals, wooden ceiling, elegant stuccos, and brickwork.

Inscribed on the National Heritage List in 2004, the hotel is the site of a historically significant event: It was in this hotel that Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, plotted the coup d’etat that ended the Qajar rule in Iran in the early 20th century.

Qazvin was once the capital of the Persian Empire under Safavids from 1548-98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct,



some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options. For most travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

## Badrud historical houses to help generate jobs, reverse migration

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A number of historical houses scattering across Badrud, an ancient town in Natanz county, central Isfahan province, are set to be restored in a bid to help the cultural heritage and tourism sector generate jobs and spur reverse migration in the region.

“Significant measures have so far been conducted concerning the renovation and restoration of historical houses in Badrud



as the result of constructive talks held between the provincial tourism department and private investors,” CHTN quoted a senior tourism official as saying on Tuesday.

“As the issues relating to cultural heritage, and tourism are becoming more highlighted in the region bringing a change in people’s attitudes about preserving historical buildings, many historical houses are being restored in close collaboration with the private investors in Bagh neighborhood

of Badrud, which has paved the way for the return of the welcoming atmosphere to that significant structures,” Hossein Yazdanmehr explained.

Badrud boasts exquisite houses such as Mohaqiq-al Dowleh House, a masterpiece of traditional Iranian desert architecture; Moezi House, both date back to the Qajar era; and Haj Jamei Ab Anbar (a traditional water reservoir) dating back to Pahlavi period.

## Visit select of ten historical monuments in Tehran

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** At first look, modern Tehran may seem chock-full of multi-story and high-rise buildings of all shapes, but there are many other beautiful structures of note.

Over the past decades and centuries, inhabitants of the Iranian capital built impressive houses, mansions and so on, used by and home to some of the most important figures and merchants, many of which still stand, providing some of Tehran’s major tourist attractions.

The following is a list of ten historical buildings scattered across the hectic metropolis that indeed worth to pay visit to. The sites have been selected by theculturetrip.com.

### ■ Abgineh Museum

The remarkable Glassware and Ceramic Museum is housed in a beautiful Qajar-era building constructed almost a century ago by Ahamd Qavam as his private residence and work office. It later served as the embassy of Egypt, before turning into a museum in 1976.

It gracefully blends European and Iranian architectural styles with a Russian staircase to connect the first and second floors. The ornate plaster, carved wooden columns, and crystal chandeliers make the interior of this building just as beautiful, if not more so, as the exterior.

### ■ Golestan Palace

Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2013, Golestan Palace consists of a group of royal buildings that once served as the seat of government during the Qajar era. It exemplifies a fusion of Persian and Western designs, with immaculate archways, mirrored halls and ceilings, and decorative tiles all placed within the confines of a lavish Persian garden. Words don’t do justice to the ancient Persian badgir, windcatchers, and exquisite varied mosaics bordering the rounded windows, which are among the many highlights.

### ■ Shams-ol-Emareh

Although it comprises part of Golestan Palace, Shams-ol-Emareh, or “Edifice of the Sun”, is a masterpiece deserving its own recognition.

The Qajar monarch Nasser-ol-Din Shah started with the idea to build a tower that gave a panoramic view of the city, and in 1867, construction was finished two years after it began. Twin two-tiered towers sit atop the structure with arched windows, intricate tile work, and an open hall in the center. Though it’s not possible to climb to the top, it’s easy to imagine Nasser-ol-Din Shah’s success in achieving his desired view.



A view of Shams-ol-Emareh (“Edifice of the Sun”), a masterpiece of the 19th-century Persian architecture located in the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace, downtown Tehran

### ■ Green Palace

One of the buildings of the Sa’ad Abad complex, which is located in northern Tehran, and perhaps its most beautiful is the Green Palace. Built at the end of the Qajar era and later remodeled by Reza Shah, serving as his residence for one year, before turning into a guest house. Brought from mines in the Zanjan and Khorasan provinces, the marble used to construct its exterior has a unique hint of green. Just as elaborately designed are the interiors, with a mirror hall and a Persian rug woven over a period of seven years, among their other ostentatious features.

### ■ Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

One of the largest art museum in the country, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art is an impressive concrete feat in itself. To design this building, architect Kamran Diba was inspired by integrating traditional Persian architectural elements with modernity.

This is particularly embodied in the four structures sitting atop the building, which resemble a modernized twist on the windcatchers of ancient Persia.

### ■ Te’atr-e Shahr (City Theater)

Completed in early 1970s, the City Theater deserves regard for its cylindrical design that combines both the traditional and modern.

The standing columns add geometric patterns to the roof, which are then filled in with ceramic tiles. The grand

entrance is made of wood, giving it a warm, earthy feel. It contains several stages and continues to be a top venue for the performing arts.

### ■ Masoudieh Palace

Masoudieh Palace is one of the most beautiful historical buildings of the Qajar dynasty. Built in 1879, this palace has witnessed many events, including the formation of the first ministry of education and the establishment of the first official library.

Among its characteristic traits are the plasterwork, mosaics, and gardens. Today, it’s a popular spot with visitors brunching in its cozy cafe with stained glass windows, before walking around to snap some photos of the picturesque edifice.

### ■ Cinema Museum

Cinema Museum of Iran at the Ferdows Garden (Bagh-e Ferdows) in northern Tehran houses a Qajar-era mansion surrounded by a well-manicured garden.

The most delightful feature of the monument may be its balcony, with walls and columns adorned in detailed floral plasterwork and arched wooden-framed windows.

There are exhibitions take you through Iran’s century-old film industry, and the surrounding cafés allow you to admire the building (and check out Tehran’s artsy crowd) a little longer as you sip on some tea.

### ■ Tamasha-gah-e Zaman (The Time Museum)

Sitting amidst a luxurious Persian garden, the Time Museum not only has an extensive collection of time-keepers, but the building itself is the epitome of authentic Iranian architecture.

This decades-old manor once belonged to Hossein Khodadad, a well-known Iranian merchant, but now serves as a museum to showcase numerous clocks and watches. The pastel-blue exterior boasts windows that resemble cream-colored lace, and the inside does not cease to dazzle with it decorated ceilings, plasterwork, and colorful orosi (stained-glass) windows.

### ■ Saray-e Roshan

On Naser Khosrow Street, one of the oldest streets in downtown Tehran, stands the bewitching Saray-e Roshan. Established in 1932 as one of the first commercial centers, this gothic-inspired building is strikingly unusual in the setting of Iran.

While the faces and statues, nearly nonexistent elsewhere in Iran, are more reminiscent of European architecture, the symbol of Zoroastrianism in the center, Ahura Mazda, gives it a distinctly Persian flavor.



# International Tiger Day: silent roar of Caspian tiger is regrettable

By Faranak Bakhtiari

**TEHRAN** — Tiger is an endangered species whose surviving population in natural habitats is less than 4,000 individuals, and preventing them from extinction and preserving its habitat is one of the greatest concerns of the international community for the protection of biodiversity.

Therefore, July 28 is designated as International Tiger Day to further emphasize the importance of protecting this valuable species because experts believe that if this remarkable animal could not be saved from extinction, what hope could there be for rescuing more unknown species?

Lions, leopards, and tigers are big cats that have always been a symbol of power, glory, and grandeur throughout history, and usually, the countries try to preserve them, but in the meantime, some factors such as urban development, poaching and illegal hunting, habitat degradation, food shortages, and climate change have led them to shrink and eventually become extinct.

The outstanding Caspian tigers once roamed over most of the northern provinces of Iran, have gone extinct half a century ago.

According to the available evidence, the last tiger in Iran was hunted in 1953 in Golestan National Park, but another report announced the observation of a tiger in 1959 in the same area.

In the early 1970s, the Department of Environment conducted a study to search for the Persian tiger in the forests of northern Iran, but during this period, researchers could not find any evidence of the tiger and declared its definite extinction.

Caspian tigers had been protected since 1957, with heavy fines for shooting, but it was too late for the majestic cat to make a recovery.

This situation was not ended in Iran, but the extinction has embraced two other subspecies of tiger, including the Bali and Javan, which became extinct in 1960 and 1979, respectively. There are 9 subspecies of tiger in the world, of which three are extinct.

The tiger needs large habitats to live and is less able to live in a small realm, which is getting smaller day by day due to the development of urbanization and human intervention in nature.

As tiger extinction accelerates around the world, July 29 has been designated World Tiger Day since 2010.

In the Iranian calendar year 1389 (March 2009-March 2010), two Siberian tigers were sent to Iran from Russia in exchange of two Persian Leopards; aiming to restore the Caspian tiger generation in the country, but after a while, the male one died due to an outbreak of glanders (an infectious disease occurs primarily by ingestion of contaminated food or water).

The female tiger was quarantined for five years on the charge of being infected with the virus, but with the help of wildlife



enthusiasts and the DOE after undergoing several medical tests, the animal was then moved to a suitable place in Tehran Zoo.

The DOE emphasis is on protecting species that now exist in the wild, but at the same time is preparing a plan called "conservation of cats" with the priority of two big cats and then small cats, and since the protection of cheetahs in the form of an independent international project is underway, they have set it aside and focused on the conservation of leopards and six small cats, as well as discussing feasibility studies for two endangered species of lions and tigers.

## ■ Is it possible to reintroduce Caspian tiger?

Kaveh Faizollahi, a zoologist who worked specifically on the tiger species, told IRNA that the tiger is a flexible species and tolerates a wide range of habitat and climatic conditions, so it is found in tropical areas of Asia to the ever-snow-covered areas of Siberia.

On the other hand, it has a relatively high reproductive rate and a short interval between its reproductions. It is not very problematic in food and can change its hunting technique depending on the type of prey and habitat. Despite, these features human development in West Asia made it vulnerable, he added.

The first feature of tigers that caused them to disappear was the tiger's dependence on the water resources and its presence near river basins, lake edges, and seashores, where the highest concentration of human population exists and the conflicts pushed them toward extinction.

The second one is related to the prey, the natural prey they mainly fed on was deer, and they attracted to northern Iran probably because of the good population of red deer and roe deer.

However, with the population of deer declined, the tiger was inevitably feeding on

the wild boar, which has severe population fluctuations and is a temporary source of food.

The third item is hunting, tiger hunting intensified during their final periods living in Iran, due to the reduction of prey and hunting livestock.

Tiger cubs were also captured for illegal trade, in addition, land-use changes, superstitions, and using their organs in traditional medicine were among the other factors eradicated tigers.

"Certainly, there is no proper habitat for tiger in Iran. If there are intentions to revive the tiger population in Iran, or, in other words, to ensure a stable population of it, a natural habitat must be prepared, including, good vegetation cover, clean water, and enough bait.

Before restoring the Caspian tiger in the country, other species of red and roe deer must be increased; for example, 20 tigers in a hypothetical area may need a population of 10,000 large mammals, which may take several years to expand.

After that, the tigers must gradually enter the prepared area; If there is no wild tiger, the tigers kept in captivity should be used as a parent and re-wild their cubs.

The whole process is very difficult, costly, and time-consuming.

## ■ Will other wildlife species experience the fate of Caspian tiger?

Wildlife management expert, Bagher Nezami, said that there are almost no large mammals in the country whose population is not endangered. When it is said that a species is not endangered, it means that the level of endangerment of those species is better than others such as the Asiatic cheetah, but all large mammals in the country, including bears, leopards, and red

deer, are in a miserable condition.

Part of the direct protection of this species is to increase physical protection, that is, to increase the number and level of awareness and literacy of the rangers, and the other part is the proper and principled implementation of reproduction in captivity, he highlighted.

Nezami went on to say that breeding in captivity of the country's wildlife species is not very transparent and there is no specific program for it, noting "We started captive breeding for the Persian fallow deer 40 years ago and it has been very successful, but introducing the species to nature have not been so successful, so reproduction in captivity requires a long-term plan that is implemented step by step.

Reproduction in captivity is very complex for carnivores, and some believe that habitat protection is sufficient, but the fact is that when the population of a species reaches less than 100, reproduction should begin in captivity because habitat cannot be protected in general, he said.

Along with captive breeding, the factors of species extinction in the habitats should also be investigated so that we can finally protect the habitat and re-introduce the protected species to it, he also added.

An important issue is to pay attention to the demands, problems, and needs of people and local communities, because over the years many educational courses have been held, especially for Asiatic cheetahs, carnivores and environmental protection, but it has not been successful in conservation because the target group has been mostly urban and university communities and the local people have not been very involved, he explained.

One of the effective measures that can be taken in the protection of species is the insurance of livestock, agricultural lands and even individuals who have been damaged by species such as bears, wild boars, cheetahs, etc. because in many cases they are killed in conflicts with human, he said.

He also noted that insurance only compensates for losses, while we must take steps to ensure that local people benefit from protection. In order to earn the local community's protection, we can develop private sanctuaries and expand ecotourism and various types of tourism.

## WFP donates over \$232,000 to refugees residing in Iran

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The World Food Program (WFP) donated a total cash worth of \$232,282 and

274.4 million tons of fortified wheat flour, vegetable oil, and lentils to the refugees residing in Iran in the month of June, according to a report released by the WFP.

Additionally, WFP continues to support refugees' livelihoods through activities that aim at providing them with complementary skills in view of sustainable repatriation to their country of origin once the situation is conducive. WFP has been present in Iran since 1987.

General food distributions in refugee settlements are ongoing



with increased health and safety measures due to COVID-19. Cash-based transfers are also operational. 26.5 MT of home-schooling rations including UHT milk, biscuits, date bars, and seed kernels have been distributed to 7,000 children and 500 teachers since mid-April due to nation-wide school closures.

By providing supplementary rations and maintaining monthly assistance to refugees through a combination of cash and food, WFP is reducing the economic impact on beneficiaries caused by negative market developments, such as inflation and rising food prices.

Following the receipt of \$7 million from the Government of Japan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last consignment including 350,400 3-layer surgical masks and 739,000 N95 masks were handed over to Iranian Red Crescent Society to be used by Iranian health workers.

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) are the main cooperating and implementing partners of WFP in Iran. BAFIA is responsible for coordinating all matters related to refugees and international agencies. Biannual meetings take place between BAFIA, UNHCR, and WFP. Monthly operational coordination meetings are also held to monitor the refugee situation and discuss appropriate response actions.

Monitoring of the economic situation in the country indicated no shortage of food items during the reporting period. However, in April, the impact of COVID-19 on price levels for fresh food products started to be felt. Fruits (including sweet lemon, sour lemon, apple, and orange) and vegetables (including, tomato, potato, and pulses) recorded the highest price increase, reaching 19 and 14 percent respectively.

The country office is monitoring the development of the COVID-19 pandemic closely and is in consultation with the Government partners for further possible assistance to refugees and the Iranian community. With strict travel and camp access restrictions in place, WFP has had to resort to remote monitoring activities.

## Migratory river fish populations plunge 76% in past 50 years

Populations of migratory river fish around the world have plunged by a "catastrophic" 76% since 1970, an analysis has found.

The fall was even greater in Europe at 93%, and for some groups of fish, with sturgeon and eel populations both down by more than 90%, the Guardian reported.

Species such as salmon, trout and giant catfish are vital not just to the rivers and lakes in which they breed or feed but to entire ecosystems. By swimming upstream, they transport nutrients from the oceans and provide food for many land animals, including bears, wolves and birds of prey.

The migratory fish are also critical for the food security and livelihoods of millions of people around the world, while recreational fishing is worth billions of dollars a year. The causes of the decline are the hundreds of thousands of dams around the world, overfishing, the climate crisis and water pollution.

The scientists said the situation may be even bleaker than it seemed, as many declines began before 1970. Populations of sturgeon in the Great Lakes of North America, for example, have dropped by 95% from historic levels. Furthermore, suitable data has not been gathered on species in some of the world's most biodiverse rivers such as the Mekong, Congo, Amazon and Yangtze, where researchers fear there will be hundreds of fish extinctions in the coming decades.

The average fall in populations was 84% in Latin America, while there has been a 59% decrease in Asia-Oceania, although there is limited data there and not enough from Africa to determine any reliable trend. In North America, the fall was less dramatic, at 28%. This is probably because large declines occurred before 1970, but also as a result of a growing number of dams being removed.

"For migratory fish, there's nothing worse than a dam," said Zeb Hogan, at the University of Nevada and an author of the new report. He said the good news was that fish could return quickly: "Almost without exception, where dams have been removed, you see populations bounce back, often much more quickly than anyone anticipated."

A river restoration completed by the Penobscot River Restoration Trust partners in 2016 on the Penobscot River in Maine, US, led to river herring numbers growing from a few hundred to nearly 2m a year. The Dam Removal Europe coalition is working to free the continent's rivers from more than 100,000 obsolete barriers. But thousands of hydropower dams are being built in other parts of the world.

"Catastrophic losses in migratory fish populations

show we cannot continue destroying our rivers," said Arjan Berkhuysen, at the World Fish Migration Foundation. "This has immense consequences for people and nature across the globe. We can and need to act now before these keystone species are lost for good."

Michelle Jackson, at the University of Oxford, UK, who was not involved in the report, said: "The population declines are certainly very drastic, but I am not surprised. The outlook gets worse each time [there is a new report]."

She said migratory fish were often the driving force in food chains because they transport nutrients: "If these fish populations continue to decline, there will be far-reaching consequences for many species which rely on them."

The decline in migratory fish populations is higher than that for land and ocean animals, whose populations have fallen by an average of 60% in the last 50 years. "Freshwaters are disproportionately at risk to human pressures, since they are affected by everything happening in the surrounding catchment," said Jackson.

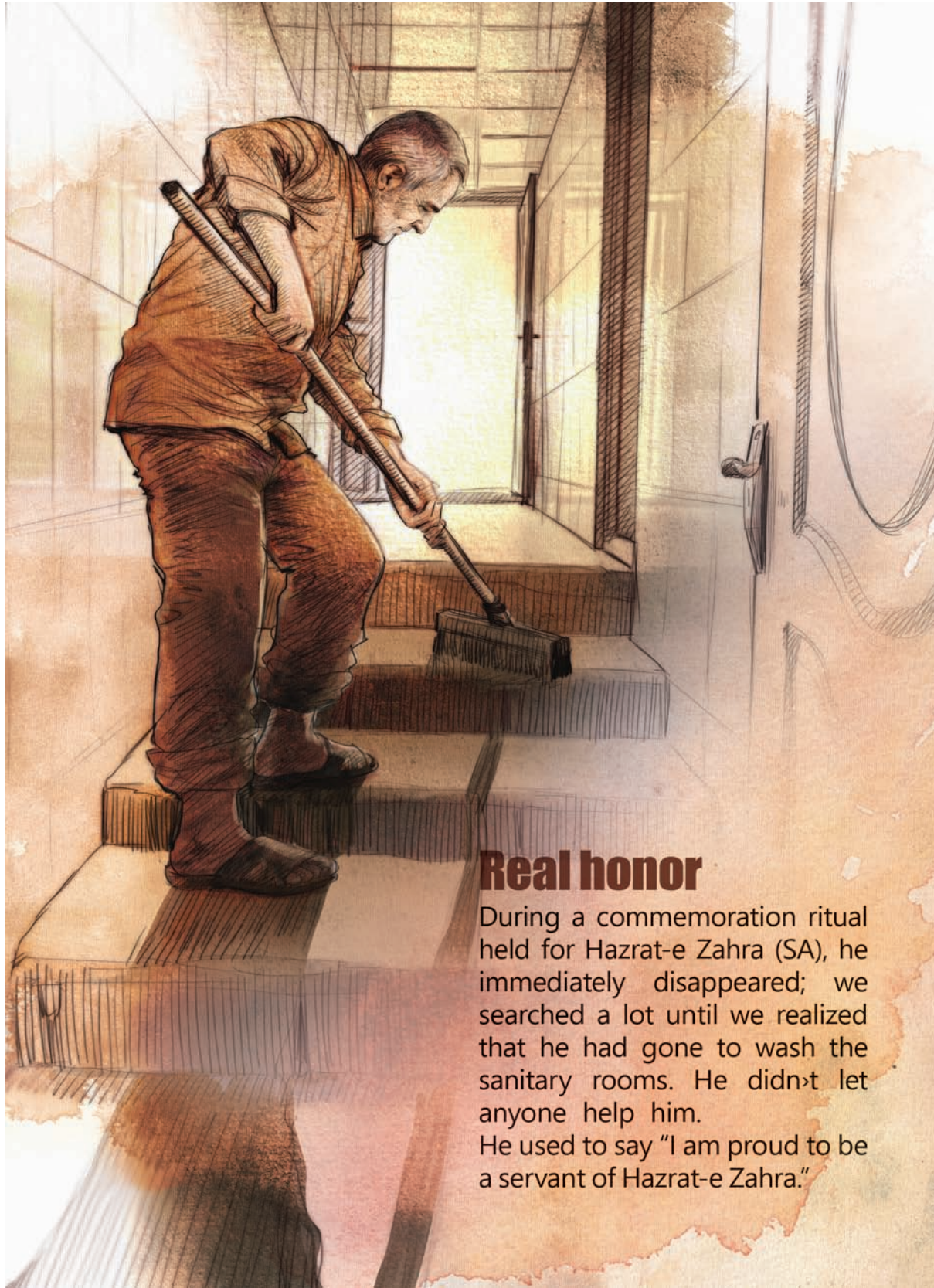
Previous research by Hogan found many giant river fish are on the verge of extinction, with populations from catfish to stingrays down by 97% since 1970. Other studies have shown only a third of world's great rivers remain free-flowing, while in Britain, for example, 97% of the river network has been interrupted by human-built structures.

The report, led by Stefanie Deinet at the Zoological Society of London, examined data from 1,406 populations of 247 species. There are 1,100 species that must migrate to survive. The researchers said much more data was needed for regions outside Europe and North America to go beyond the general trends presented in the report.

The analysis did show management plans for rivers and fishing helped curb the losses, with populations down 54% in such circumstances, compared with 87% for those that were unmanaged.

Migratory fish often use water temperature as a cue to start their journeys, but dams can significantly lower the temperature of river water. Global heating is also a factor, and can also change rainfall patterns. "So you get these very unnatural flows that can really have an impact on migratory fish," said Hogan.

"Not all dams are created equal," he added. "Some dams are more environmentally damaging than others and how you place, design and operate them is important." The damage to ecosystems and livelihoods must be taken more into account when building new dams, he said.



## Real honor

During a commemoration ritual held for Hazrat-e Zahra (SA), he immediately disappeared; we searched a lot until we realized that he had gone to wash the sanitary rooms. He didn't let anyone help him. He used to say "I am proud to be a servant of Hazrat-e Zahra."



## N.Korea’s nuclear weapons deter another war on country: Kim

North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un says the country now has “absolute might” thanks to its nuclear weapons, which he says guarantee the country’s security in the face of threats of war.

“Now, we’ve changed to a country which can defend itself reliably and unwaveringly against high-intensity pressures and military threats and blackmailing by imperialistic reactionaries and hostile forces,” Kim said on Monday.

He made the remark during a ceremony to mark the 67th anniversary of the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

“There won’t be any war on this land again and our national security and future will be guaranteed firmly and permanently because of our reliable, effective self-defensive nuclear deterrent,” Kim said.

## Malaysia’s Najib sentenced to over a decade in jail in 1MDB trial

Malaysia’s former leader, Najib Razak, was found guilty of corruption and sentenced to 12 years in jail on Tuesday in the first trial over a multi-billion-dollar scandal at state fund 1MDB that stretched to the Persian Gulf Arab states and Hollywood.

In a case widely seen as a test of the nation’s resolve to stamp out corruption and which could have big political implications, high court judge Mohamad Nazlan Mohamad Ghazali sentenced Najib to 12 years and a fine of 210 million ringgit (\$49 million) on a charge of abuse of power, Reuters reported.

Najib, 67, also received 10 years in jail on each of three charges of criminal breach of trust and three charges of money laundering for illegally receiving nearly \$10 million from SRC International, a former unit of the state fund.

“After considering all evidence in this trial, I find that the prosecution has successfully proven its case beyond a reasonable doubt,” Mohamad Nazlan said.

He ordered the jail terms to run concurrently.

The judge allowed a request by Najib’s lawyers to delay the jail sentence and the financial penalty, but asked Najib to post additional bail and report to a police station twice a month.

Najib had pleaded not guilty, and said he would appeal the verdict in Malaysia’s Federal Court if convicted. The verdict could potentially be partially or fully overturned by the higher court on appeal, though that could take years.

The nearly \$10 million in the SRC case is a fraction of the funds Najib is alleged to have misappropriated from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), the state fund.

Prosecutors say more than \$1 billion of 1MDB funds made its way into Najib’s personal accounts, over which he faces a total of 42 criminal charges. Najib had led the country for almost a decade before losing the 2018 election.

U.S. and Malaysian authorities say a total of \$4.5 billion is believed to have been stolen from 1MDB, a fund Najib founded to promote economic development, and used by his associates to buy art, a superyacht and fund the “Wolf of Wall Street” movie.

## Turkey pauses energy-exploration research in east Mediterranean

Turkey has said it will suspend research for oil and gas exploration off a Greek island amid tensions in the eastern Mediterranean.

Greece’s navy last week said it had deployed ships in the Aegean in “heightened readiness” after Turkey announced plans for energy exploration near the island of Kastellorizo.

In an interview with national broadcaster CNN Turk, spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said on Tuesday President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had requested that operations be put on hold.

A Turkish vessel, the Oruc Reis, planned to search for hydrocarbons “180 kilometres (110 miles) from the island of Meis (Kastellorizo in Greek)”, Kalin said.

“Despite this, our president said while the negotiations are continuing, let’s be constructive and hold for a while,” he said.

Kalin on Tuesday said Greece was an “important neighbor” to Turkey and added: “We are ready to discuss with Greece without any conditions.”

On Monday, Greek government spokesman Stelios Petsas said Turkey was withdrawing navy vessels from the area, adding that Athens remained ready to enter negotiations with Turkey “within the framework of international law and good neighborly relations”.

## Resistance News

### Haneyya: We turned down \$15-billion offer to end resistance

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN**— Hamas has turned down a US\$15 billion offer to end resistance, give up Jerusalem, and isolate Gaza from the rest of Palestine, Ismail Haneyya, the political bureau chairman of Hamas, revealed.

In an interview with a Qatari website on Monday, Haneyya said that the deal-package envisaged the launching of major infrastructure projects such as a sea harbor, an airport and others in the Gaza Strip.

He added that those parties that tabled the plan asked in return for merging the Movement’s armed wing in the Palestinian police force after disarming it, giving up Jerusalem and administering the Gaza Strip separately.

The Hamas leader affirmed that his Movement would never accept the so-called “Deal of the Century” or any other similar plan.

“We want to end the siege on Gaza and to have a sea harbor and an airport and other projects but only as a right for its population and not in return for disarming resistance or certain political stands,” Haneyya emphasized.

He also declared that a national popular conference would be organized in Gaza in the near future in the presence of Mahmoud Abbas, the chairman of the Palestinian Authority.

The Hamas leader lauded the Qatari aid to Gaza and Palestine, adding that his Movement welcomes the Qatari role in bridging gaps between Hamas and Fatah factions.

Haneyya, meanwhile, opined that any change in the US administration in the upcoming presidential elections would have its impact on the Palestine cause and the Persian Gulf crisis.

# Hezbollah: Israel claim about border clashes aims to fabricate fictitious victories

## Lebanese PM slams Israel’s ‘dangerous military escalation’

*By staff & agencies*

Lebanon’s Hezbollah resistance movement says all Israeli claims about border clashes with the movement’s fighters earlier on Monday are fake and aimed to boost the morale of Israeli forces by fabricating fictitious victories.

Hezbollah’s Monday statement came after Israeli and Western media outlets claimed that the regime’s forces had thwarted an effort by Hezbollah fighters to infiltrate into the occupied territories through Shebaa farms along Lebanon’s southern border.

In the statement released by the resistance movement later in the day, Hezbollah rejected all Israeli claims about an effort to infiltrate the occupied territories, saying, “Everything that enemy’s media say about thwarting an infiltration from the Lebanese soil into the occupied territories is incorrect.”

The movement added that Tel Aviv’s claims about having killed or injured a number of Hezbollah fighters in air raids were also false and totally incorrect, Press TV reported.

“The occupiers’ claims are all aimed at fabricating spurious and fictitious victories for them,” Hezbollah said, adding, “Up to this moment, there has been no conflict or opening of fire started by the resistance [forces] during what happened today.”



es] during what happened today.”

The statement noted that all shootings came from only one side, which was the coward and anxious enemy.

The resistance movement added that it reserves the right to give a proper answer to Israel’s killing of its member Ali Kamel Mohsen, who was martyred during the lat-

## Nearly 3 billion animals killed or displaced by Australia fires

Nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced by Australia’s devastating wildfires in 2019 and 2020, according to a new report, with experts calling it “one of the worst wildlife disasters in modern history”.

The study, released on Tuesday by scientists from several Australian universities, said 2.46 billion reptiles, 180 million birds, 143 million mammals and 51 million frogs were harmed in the blazes that ripped through the country, al Jazeera reported.

While the report did not say how many animals died directly because of the fires, the prospects for those that escaped the

flames “were probably not great” due to a lack of food, shelter and protection from predators, said author Chris Dickman, a professor in ecology at the University of Sydney.

The fires ravaged more than 115,000 square kilometers (44,400 square miles) of drought-stricken bush land and forest across Australia in late 2019 and early 2020, killing more than 30 people and destroying thousands of homes.

It was the broadest and most prolonged bushfire season in modern Australian history, with scientists attributing the severity of the crisis to the impacts of climate change.

## Six U.S. mayors urge Congress to block Trump federal deployment

Six U.S. mayors, all Democrats, urged Congress on Monday to halt President Donald Trump’s deployment of federal forces to their cities, saying the move has escalated tensions at anti-racism protests spreading across the country.

The request came on the same day the U.S. attorney for Oregon announced the arrest of 22 people on charges stemming from clashes with federal and local police at the federal courthouse in Portland.

Federal agents dispatched to Portland, Oregon, have drawn national attention for whisking away demonstrators in unmarked cars, beating a U.S. Navy veteran and tear-gassing activist mothers and the city’s mayor.

“We call on Congress to pass legislation to make clear that these actions are unlawful and repugnant,” the Democratic mayors of Portland, Chicago, Seattle, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Kansas City, Missouri; and Washington, D.C., wrote in a letter to the leaders of both parties in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The appeal followed a surge in Black Lives Matter protests over the weekend, with an escalation in violence and the



appearance of white supremacists and an armed Black militia.

One person was shot dead at an Austin, Texas, protest on Saturday and two others were struck by gunfire at demonstration in Aurora, Colorado on Sunday.

In Seattle, police declared a riot and arrested 45 people during a protest over the deployment of federal agents to Portland and a standby force to Seattle. Protesters in

Los Angeles clashed with officers in front of the city’s federal courthouse.

Weekend violence in downtown Richmond was instigated by white supremacists posing as Black Lives Matter protesters, police said. A Black militia group marched through Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday demanding justice for Breonna Taylor, a Black woman killed by police who burst into her apartment.

After violence in Oakland, California, during a protest on Sunday, Mayor Libby Schaaf condemned “agitators” for vandalizing the downtown and giving Trump the “images he wants” to justify sending federal agents into U.S. cities.

Trump has said that federal forces are necessary to restore order to cities such as Portland, saying local officials have been unable or unwilling to intervene.

The 22 people whose arrests were announced on Monday were charged with various federal offenses stemming from protests on July 23, 24, 25 and 26, including assaulting federal officers and harassing and stalking federal employees.

The U.S. Marshals Service on Monday tweeted it was lining up personnel to send to Oregon.

## Protests resurge across U.S. as clashes continue in Portland

**→ 1** The attorney general will acknowledge to lawmakers that Floyd’s death struck a chord in the Black community because it reinforced concerns that African Americans are treated differently by police. But he will also condemn Americans who he

says have responded inappropriately to Floyd’s death through what he said was rioting and anarchy.

Civil unrest escalated in Portland after federal agents were accused of whisking people away in unmarked cars without prob-

able cause. The US agents, drawn mainly from border patrol, were dispatched to the city by Donald Trump ostensibly to protect the courthouse. But they have succeeded in inflaming the situation.

Washington DC was stunned in June when peaceful protesters were violently cleared from the streets by federal officers using teargas ahead of a photo op by Trump in front of a church, where Barr had accompanied him.

The attorney general has defended as necessary the broad use of law enforcement power to deal with the situation, but the department’s internal watchdog has opened investigations into use of force and other tactics by agents in both cities.

The hearing on Tuesday marks Barr’s first appearance before the House judiciary committee, bringing him face-to-face with a panel that voted last year to hold him in contempt and is holding hearings on what Democrats allege is politicization of the justice department under his watch. It comes during a tumultuous stretch in which Barr has taken a series of actions cheered by Trump but condemned by Democrats and other critics.

Barr makes reference in his prepared statement to that antagonistic relationship, saying that “many of the Democrats on this committee have attempted to discredit me by conjuring up a narrative that I am simply the president’s factotum who disposes of criminal cases according to his instructions. Judging from the letter inviting me to this hearing, that appears to be your agenda today.”

Beyond the federal response to the

demonstrations, Barr is also expected to be pressed in detail about his intervention in criminal cases arising from special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation.

The hearing will provide Barr with a forum to offer his most detailed account to date for his actions in the criminal cases, which he has said were taken in the interests of justice and without political pressure.

Those include the justice department’s decision to drop the prosecution of former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn (a request now tied up in court) and his firing last month of the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan, whose office oversaw investigations into allies of the president.

Barr also pushed for a more lenient sentence for Trump’s ally Roger Stone, prompting the entire trial team’s departure. That decision was at the center of a separate hearing before the same committee last month, when one of the prosecutors alleged that politics from justice department leadership had influenced the handling of the sentence.

In the past, Barr has said that Flynn, who pleaded guilty as part of Mueller’s investigation into lying to the FBI, should never have been charged and that the original sentencing recommendation for Stone – also charged in the Mueller investigation – was excessive. Barr’s opening statement does not delve into the details of the case, though he will insist that Trump has not attempted to interfere in those decisions and has “played a role properly and traditionally played by presidents”.

**Visual point of view**



© Tehran Times/ Abbas Goudarzi



# Plans underway to prepare Iran football for World Cup qualifiers

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian national football team are preparing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, and the plans are underway for the team to get ready at the proper time.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to consider fixture change.

Under the new guideline, Iran national team are scheduled to host Hong Kong on Oct. 8 in Tehran and meet Cambodia five days later in Phnom Penh.

Iran's last two matches against Bahrain and Iraq will be on Nov. 12 and 17 in Tehran.

According to the announcement of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), the national team will hold two friendly matches in September against Syria and Uzbekistan, respectively.

The match against Syria is scheduled for Sept. 3 in Tehran. The Persians will also meet Uzbekistan in Tashkent on Sept. 7.

Based on some reports, if the match with Syria is not finalized, Palestine will replace them. The match against Syria



(or Palestine) will be the first match of the Iranian national football team with Dragan Skocic at the helm as the new head coach of the team. Skocic has so far selected two assistants to help him in the national team,

namely Anton Usnik from Slovenia and ex-Iran national player Vahid Hashemian.

The Croatian Mladen Zganjer is working as the goalkeeping coach in the national team's technical staff.

Furthermore, Skocic is still waiting for the end of the Iran Professional League (IPL) season, since Persepolis coach Karim Bagheri is supposed to join the national team staff. IPL winners Persepolis have not yet agreed to let him leave. If not, another Iranian coach will be added to the national team staff.

The eight group winners of the World Cup qualification's group stage and four best runners-up will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the second round of the joint qualifiers will compete in a separate competition for the remaining 12 slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

The FIFA World Cup in Qatar will run from November 21 to December 18, 2022.

## Taremi named Rio Ave's Player of the Month

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Taremi was named the Rio Ave's Player of the Month for July.

The Iranian forward scored twice in the Primeira Liga last match against Boavista.



He had also netted a brace against Santa Clara last week.

Taremi was chosen among the Primeira Liga's top three goalscorers along with Benfica players Carlos Vinicius and Pizzi, netting 18 goals.

Rio Ave completed the Primeira Liga's top five in the ever-evolving tussle for the final qualifying spot for Europa League football, taking advantage of FC Famalicão's 3-3 draw to Marítimo to leapfrog the former with a 2-0 win against Boavista.

The Iran star has been linked with Portuguese giants Porto and Benfica.

## Ajax lead race to sign Brighton outcast Alireza Jahanbakhsh

Ajax have reportedly made contact with Brighton's Alireza Jahanbakhsh as the winger looks set to move on from a disappointing two-year spell with the Seagulls.

The Iran international joined the Premier League side from AZ Alkmaar in the summer of 2018 for a club record £17m.

While PSV Eindhoven are also interested in the 26-year-old, Ajax director of football Marc Overmars appears to have stolen a march on their Eredivisie rivals.

There has been no mention of how much Brighton would want in terms of a sale, but manager Graham Potter's recent comments suggest the south coast club would listen to reasonable offers.

Speaking about Jahanbakhsh's situation, the Brighton & Hove Independent quoted Potter as saying: "Of course he will be frustrated because he wants to play and I understand that.

"He's great and does his best all the time, but he wants to play more like any other footballer.

"So that's something we have to think about during the summer break, we have to do what's right for him and the club. But he is a good player and can help us.

"But again, from his perspective it is understandable that he wants to play more."

Jahanbakhsh has earned 50 caps for his country, scoring seven goals for the Persian Stars in the process.

(Source: onefootball.com)

## Esteghlal move up to IPL second place

Tasnim — Esteghlal football team defeated Pars Jonoubi on Monday and moved up to the Iran Professional League (IPL) second place.

The match had originally been scheduled for early July but was cancelled after Esteghlal players tested positive for COVID-19.

Esteghlal defeated Pars Jonoubi 2-0 and leapfrogged Sepahan and Tractor on goal difference.

Ali Karimi and Cheick Diabate were on target for the Blues.

In Ghaemshahr, Nassaji battled back from 2-0 down to beat 9-man Foolad 3-2.

Luciano Pereira Mendes and Moussa Coulibaly were on target for the visiting team but Foolad was reduced to 10-man after Vahid Heydari was sent off for his second yellow card in the 65th minute.

With 10 minutes remaining, Hamed Shiri pulled a goal back and leveled the score from the penalty spot in the 90th minute.

Foolad midfielder Mohammad Abshak was shown a straight red card in the added time and Mojtaba Mamashli scored the winner with a header just before the final whistle.

Persepolis on Friday won the IPL title with 62 points with four matches to go.

Esteghlal, Sepahan and Tractor all have 45 points.

## Al Sadd's Xavi on the road to recovery

Al Sadd head coach Xavi has said he is "fine" after testing positive for the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Xavi has been quarantined in Doha after catching COVID-19 and missed Al Sadd's 2-1 win against Al Khor in the Qatar Stars League on Saturday.

"I feel good, although isolated, logically. And I'm looking forward to training soon," he said in an interview with sports newspaper Marca.

Xavi, who has been repeatedly tipped to become head coach of former club Barcelona, said he is focused on steering Al Sadd.

"I do not hide, and I have always said, that my primary goal, when it happens, is Barca. It's my home and would be a dream," said Xavi.

"But now I am focused on Al Sadd, excited about the season."

The QSL resumed last Friday following the COVID-19 enforced suspension with defending champions Al Sadd in third place on 35 points, eight behind leaders Al Duhail with four matches remaining.

Xavi, who played for Al Sadd from 2015 to 2019 and then became head coach, also said he thought Qatar would host a "historic" FIFA World Cup in 2022.

"It will be an historic Cup, without a doubt."

He added that he was looking forward to seeing former Barcelona teammate Lionel Messi playing at the FIFA World Cup.

(Source: the-afc)

## Hadi Saei chosen as head of Iran's Athletes' Commission



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Two-time Olympic gold medal winner Hadi Saei has been chosen as head of Iran's Athletes' Commission on Tuesday.

In the election which was held in the Iran's Olympic Academy headquarters in Tehran, Saei was voted as the head of the commission with eight votes.

Two-time Paralympic gold medalist Zahra Nematollahi finished in second place with seven votes.

Also, fencer Mojtaba Abedini defeated table tennis player Afshin Norouzi and will serve as vice president.

Saei replaced former judo champion Arash Miresmaeili in the post for the next two years.

Hadi Saei, who was appointed as technical director of Iran Taekwondo Federation in January, is the most decorated Iranian Olympian.

The 43-year-old won Olympic gold in the men's 68 kilograms division at Athens 2004 and added a second title in the 80kg class at Beijing 2008.

He is one of only two Iranians to have won a pair of Olympic gold medals, alongside weightlifter Hossein Rezazadeh.

The 68kg bronze won by Saei at Sydney 2000 means he tops the country's all-time list, however.

His career also included two world titles and golds at both the Asian Games and Asian Championships.

The Iran's Athletes' Commission has been formed to elevate the athlete voice and to give athletes an equal say in the decision-making process.

## Iran's Afshin Ghotbi says Chinese football can be world-class

Afshin Ghotbi, the Iranian-American coach of Chinese Super League side Shijiazhuang Ever Bright, said the environment for football in China was perfect to help build a world-class national team.

Ghotbi is on his second stint with the newly promoted side, who start their campaign in the delayed and reformatted elite division on Sunday against Hebei China Fortune FC in Suzhou.

"The standard [in China] is evolving and will need time to reach its true potential," said the 56-year-old former Iran national coach, who has worked at the top level in USA, South Korea, Japan and Thailand.

"China has everything to develop as a top football nation in Asia and later on the global stage. The players have the physical qualities, winning mentality and ambition for success.



"With the massive population, economic power and the national pride, the conditions are perfect for development of football in China." Ghotbi coached Ever Bright between 2016 and 2018 and returned to the club last year

after a stint with Iranian side Foolad. He was assistant to South Korean national coach, Dutchman Guus Hiddink, during their run to the semi-finals of the 2002 World Cup.

He is now tasked with helping Ever Bright challenge the big names of Chinese football in the top division.

"We are a newly promoted team, and we will have to close the gap quickly to compete in the Super League," Ghotbi told the Post.

"We have worked tirelessly after our promotion on November 2, 2019 to construct a competitive selection. I am happy about our progress, and I look forward to the start of the competition."

Ghotbi said he was happy to return to China, and enjoys life in the mainland. "I have been working in Asia since 2001 and I have always been fascinated with the Chinese culture and people," he said.

"With the Iranian national team, I travelled to China twice for friendly matches, and I was involved with the pre-World Cup friendly South Korea versus China back in April of 2002.

"I live a simple life [here]. Football, football and more football. I spend most of my time preparing my team for competition. Of course, I make time to enjoy the delicious Chinese food."

The Chinese Super League kicks off this weekend with 16 teams being divided into two groups and matches being played in Dalian and Suzhou.

The top eight teams after a round robin qualify for the quarter-finals. The league has been forced to change the format, with the kick-off delayed by five months, because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

(Source: scmp.com)

## Sport week: Welcome to sitting volleyball

Sitting volleyball is a team sport featuring constant motion, communication and bursts of explosiveness. Two teams of six players are separated by a net and try to score points by grounding the ball onto the other side's court.

Sitting volleyball has many similarities to its able-bodied version, but of course, with a few modifications to the FIVB rules.

**How it works**

While teams in the able-bodied version are separated by a raised net (2.43m and 2.24m from the top of the net for men and women's competitions, respectively), sitting volleyball is played from a lower net (1.15m for men, 1.05m for women). The court dimensions in sitting volleyball are also smaller (10m x 6m).

The main difference between the two versions is that sitting volleyball, as its name implies, is played from seated positions. The athlete's pelvis must be in contact with the ground, and service blocks and attacks are allowed. However, a brief loss of contact with the floor is occasionally permitted, if the ball is played in an extreme defensive manoeuvre, while the ball is in the back court and below the height of the net.

It is played in a best-of-five set format with the



first four sets comprising 25 points each (winner of each set needs least on two-point lead), while the fifth set is decided on 15 points.

**History**

Sitting volleyball originated in the Netherlands in 1956 as a combination of volleyball and sitzball, a German sport with no net but seated players.

At first, "standing volleyball" (for athletes with a mobility impairment and can be played standing up) appeared at the Toronto 1976 Paralympics as

a demonstration sport. Standing volleyball, along with sitting volleyball, officially became part of the Paralympic program at Arnhem 1980. The Netherlands took the first gold medal in sitting volleyball, while Israel captured gold in stand-up volleyball. Seven countries participated in the sitting volleyball in Arnhem 1980, and five in standing volleyball.

Women's competition was added for Athens 2004 — with six nations participating in the women's side — while men's standing was removed. The Chinese women had won every Paralympic gold since Athens 2004. But the USA ended that streak in 2016 at the Rio Paralympics.

On the men's side, Iran and Bosnia-Herzegovina have gone back-and-forth between gold and silver since Sydney 2000. The Iranian men have been the dominating force, amassing six gold medals and a silver since the Seoul 1988 Games. Having been runner-up to Iran, Bosnia and Herzegovina landed their first gold medal in Athens 2004. They tried again at the 2016 Games but could not overcome Iran in four sets.

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympics were postponed to 2021, and sitting volleyball is expected to feature eight teams in each of the men's and women's competitions.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Real Madrid forward Diaz tests positive for COVID-19, says club

Real Madrid forward Mariano Diaz has tested positive for COVID-19, the Spanish champions said on Tuesday, casting doubt on his participation in their Champions League tie at Manchester City next week.

Real said in a statement that tests were conducted on the squad on Monday and that though Diaz was in "perfect health", he would be self-isolating at home.

Real, who trail Manchester City 2-1 from the first leg of their last-16 tie before

the pandemic suspended the competition in March, are set to play the Premier League side in the second leg on Aug. 8 at the Etihad.

The Champions League knockout stages from the quarter-finals onwards will be played as single legs in Lisbon.

Spain has seen a surge in COVID-19 positives with thousands of new cases reported on a daily basis in the past week, taking its tally up to over 296,000 cases.

Britain has imposed a 14-day quarantine for travellers from Spain but British media reported that elite sports teams travelling into the country will be exempt.

Over the weekend, Spanish side Fuenlabrada confirmed they had 28 positive cases at the club, including a few cases in Madrid where the team is based, costing the second division club a shot at promotion to La Liga.

(Source: Reuters)





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**GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

The envy of a friend is a sign of the weakness of his friendship.

*Imam Ali (AS)*

## Persian scholar Badrozzaman Qarib dies at 91

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Persian language and literature scholar, writer and linguist Badrozzaman Qarib has died at the age of 91 apparently of COVID19, the Academy of Persian Language and Literature announced on Tuesday.

Qarib was a permanent member of the academy and famous for her research work on a dictionary of the Sogdian language.



*Iranian scholar Badrozzaman Qarib in an undated photo.*

In a message published on Tuesday, the director of the academy, Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, expressed his condolences over the demise of the great scholar.

"The scholar belonged to a noble family. She was internationally famous for her comprehensive research on ancient Persian languages," he said.

Born in 1929, Qarib got her Ph.D. in ancient languages from the University of Pennsylvania. She was a graduate of Persian literature from the University of Tehran.

She had studied Persian and history with great scholars such as Mohammad Moin, Ehsan Yarshater and Ebrahim Purdavud, where she found her deep interest in ancient Iranian languages and continued her studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

Qarib was an expert on the Sogdian language. Sogdian is one of the Eastern Middle Iranian languages once spoken in Sogdiana (northern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) before the Islamization of the area in the 10th century.

Sogdians were traders along the Silk Roads and founded many diasporas along the routes, with the result that the bulk of its material was discovered in Turfan and Dunhuang in western China.

The Sogdian language was written in three scripts, Sogdian, Manichean and Syriac. While only religious texts were written in Manichean and Syriac scripts, other kinds of texts, both religious and secular, were recorded in Sogdian script, which was a kind of a national script, although it ultimately originated from Aramaic script.

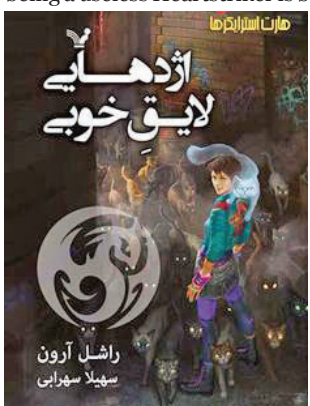
Qarib's noteworthy credits are a dictionary of the Sogdian language into Persian and English, "Structural Analysis of Verbs in the Sogdian Language", "Silent Languages" and "Sogdian Studies".

## "One Good Dragon Deserves Another" published in Persian

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A new Persian translation of American author Rachel Aaron's story "One Good Dragon Deserves Another" has been published by Tandis Publishing House.

The book has been translated into Persian by Soheila Sohrabi. The book is the second volume of the Heartstriker's series. It is about Julius who after barely escaping the machinations of his terrifying mother, two all-knowing seers and countless bloodthirsty siblings, the last thing he wants to see is another dragon.

Unfortunately for him, the only thing more dangerous than being a useless Heartstriker is being a useful one. Now that he's



*Front cover of the Persian translation of "One Good Dragon Deserves Another" written by American author Rachel Aaron.*

got an in with the Three Sisters, Julius has become a key pawn in Bethesda, the Heartstriker's gamble to put her clan on top.

Refusal to play along with his mother's plans means death, but there's more going on than even Bethesda knows.

Heartstriker futures are disappearing, and Algonquin's dragon hunter is closing in. Now, with his most powerful family members dropping like flies, it's up to Julius to save the family that never respected him, and prove once and for all that the world's worst dragon is the very best one to have on your side.

Aaron is also the author of "Nice Dragons Finish Last", the bestselling writing productivity book. She has also written "Fortune's Pawn", the first book in the rollicking fun Paradox Science Fiction trilogy.

She was born and raised in Atlanta, but she currently lives a lovely, nerdy, bookish life in Athens. She writes full time, all the time.

Aaron loves reading fantasy, romance and science fiction. She also enjoys video games, anime, manga, hanging out at conventions and epic things.

# Venice Film Festival picks three movies from Iran

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian movies "Sun Children", "Careless Crime" and "The Wasteland" have been selected to be screened at the Venice Film Festival as the organizers announced the lineup for the 77th edition of the Italian event, which will take place on the Italian Lido from September 2 to 12.

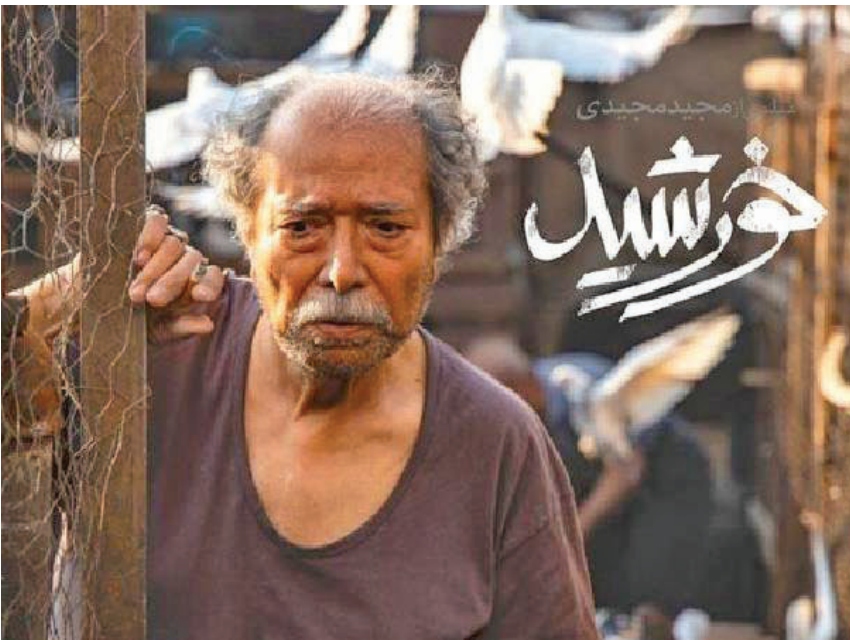
Directed by the world-renowned filmmaker Majid Majidi, "Sun Children", also known as "The Sun", will be screened in the official competition.

The drama about child labor in Tehran won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February.

"The Wasteland" by Ahmad Bahrami will be competing in the Orizzonti section, which is dedicated to films that represent the latest aesthetic and expressive trends in international cinema.

It is about an old brick manufacturing factory that is going to shut down, and all matters to the factory supervisor is to keep his lover unharmed.

The section will also screen "Careless Crime" by Shahram Mokri.



*A poster for director Majid Majidi's drama "Sun Children".*

Forty years ago, during the uprising to overthrow the Shah's regime in Iran, protestors set fire to movie theaters as a way of showing opposition to Western culture. Many cinemas were burned down. In one tragic case, a theater was set on fire with four hundred people inside, most of whom were burned alive. Forty years have passed and, in contemporary Iran, four individuals also decide to burn a cinema down. Their intended target is a theater showing a film about an unearthed, unexploded missile.

Iranian filmmakers are frequent visitors to the Venice Film Festival.

Iranian drama "No Date, No Signature" won Vahid Jalilvand the best director award in the Orizzonti section at the 74th Venice International Film Festival in 2017.

The film's star Navid Mohammadzadeh also received the award for best actor in this category.

The Venice festival will be the first major international film event to be held physically since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

Several major festivals such as Cannes and Telluride were canceled over the pandemic.

## Arab publishers acquire rights to children's book from Iran



*Front covers of two IIDCYA books, which will be published in Arabic in Lebanon and Syria.*

**→1** Hassanzadeh has received nominations for international awards, including the Hans Christian Andersen Award. "Hasti", "Call Me Ziba" and several other books by the writer have been translated into several languages.

Rights to six books by Tehran-based French writer and illustrator Claire Jobert have also been sold.

The books are "In Search of God", "God's Cookies", "Goodbye, Old Raccoon", "The Little Mouse's Prayer", "The Stories of the Little Green Lizard" and "The Most Trustworthy Friend".

Jobert was born in Paris in May 1961. She was brought up in a Christian family. She converted to Islam at the age of nineteen and immigrated to Iran when she got married.

She illustrates her stories herself. With a cursory look at her works, one can easily perceive her preoccupation with issues such as faith and religion, identity, children's relations with their surroundings, etc. Most of the writer's works are for primary-age children.

She is also interested in doing research on children's literature and philosophy for children. She writes both in Persian and French and has published some French books in Lebanon and France, but her preference is to write in Persian.

The Tamass Literary Agency also said that a number of publishers from other Arab countries, including Iraq and Jordan, are currently negotiating to purchase rights to books from the IIDCYA.

## Iranian children honored at Spanish art contest

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian children Aylin Najafi and Anisa Mohammadbagerzadeh have been honored for their paintings at the 2018-2019 Peace and Cooperation and CTBTO Global Scholar Art Campaign, Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Tuesday.

The Peace and Cooperation Foundation, an NGO in Madrid that promotes the movement of non-violence and creativity to build a world of solidarity, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna organized the competition on the theme of "For a Safer World".

The contest was organized in three categories and Mohammadbagerzadeh's work received an award in the Drawings



*Painting by the 11-year-old Iranian girl Aylin Najafi was honored at the Peace and Cooperation and CTBTO Global Scholar Art Campaign.*

for Students Aged 5 to 7. Zhasmin Kenesbai from Kazakhstan,

Alvaro Cobos Palacino from Spain and Leung Hon Yin from China were the other winners of the section.

Najafi was awarded in the Posters for Students Aged 8 to 12 section.

Mohammadbagerzadeh and Najafi are the members of the IIDCYA branch in the northwestern Iranian city of Ardebil.

Plamena Krasimirova Krasteva and Petya Dimitrova, both from Bulgaria, and Mahmoud Mostafa Negm from Egypt were also honored in this section.

Numerous children received awards in the Murals for Students Aged 13 to 17 category. Ermina Kalogirou from Cyprus and Jana Swanepoel from Namibia were among them.

Tara Bozovic, Milojka Simicevic and Mladen Simicevic from Montenegro, and Jasmina

Nozic, Edita Zdrle, Lajla Kudovic, Danis Bakos, Adna Cosic, Rizah Mustafic, Melika Dzajic Nejra Bobolan and Enisa Nuhic from Bosnia and Herzegovina were also awarded.

An award ceremony was held on June 27, 2019 at the Hofburg in Vienna during the CTBTO Science and Technology Conference.

The organizers also produced a 2020 calendar featuring twelve top submissions to mark the achievements of the young artists.

In addition, a virtual art gallery with more than 200 artworks is available on CTBTO Flickr album.

The CTBTO and Peace and Cooperation organized the competition to increase public awareness of the threat from nuclear explosives in the world, and to promote children working together for a safer world.

## Organizer says drive-in cinema not welcome in Iran

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The director of the drive-in movie theater project in the provinces of Tehran and Alborz, Manuchehr Safarkhani, has said that the project has not been welcomed by filmgoers and will probably be halted by the end of August.

"Lack of cooperation of film distributors, people's depression in battling with the coronavirus crisis in the country, and the current social and economic condition of the country, have all led to the termination of the project," Safarkhani said.

"If reluctance continues in this way, by the end of August the project will be stopped, because it is a costly project," he added.

"At the present time, the Engelab Sports Complex in Karaj, the Takhti Sports Complex and Eram-e Sabz Entertainment Complex are active as places that can host filmgoers in the drive-in cinema project, but it has not been well received. Of course, a lack of good advertising could also be one of the reasons behind this unwillingness," he noted.

He also said that the project first began with two films: Ebrahim Hatamikia's latest movie "Exodus" and Mohammad Kart's directorial debut "Butterfly Swimming", and both were warmly received by people.

"However, the distributor of Peyman Qasemkhani's comedy 'Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army' did not engage in good cooperation," he said.

"I believe cinema can be successful when everyone collaborates. Cinema needs support, with good advertising



*Filmgoers enjoy a movie at a drive-in cinema in Tehran. (Tasnim)*

to inform more people. When all are thinking of themselves, however, everyone will face loss and damage. The media have always been supportive but more cultural work is required to win people's trust. People need some happiness these days more than anything else," he explained.

He also added that the screening of foreign films during the drive-in movie theater project was not successful, either.

"Filmgoers want to watch films they have no access to in movie theaters. The foreign films are available either

## NLAI director Ashraf Borujerdi, Australian Ambassador Lyndall Sachs meet in Tehran

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** — National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) director Ashraf Borujerdi and the Australian ambassador to Iran, Lyndall Sachs, met in Tehran on Monday.

Bilateral cooperation between the national libraries of the two countries and the role of the national libraries in developing cultural diplomacy and communications were discussed during the meeting.

Borujerdi said that the national libraries act as a good venue for dialogues helping

to establish joint understanding.

She pointed to the relation of the national library with other countries and said, "One of the main goals of the library is to create a venue to organize book fairs and exhibits to display rare copies of manuscripts."

The NLAI organizes dozens of master classes on the restoration of manuscripts every year, during which experts from different countries take part and exchange views, she added.

"After the rapid spread of coronavirus in Iran and in the world, what is of high significance is the issue of digitizing the sources. We know that Australia enjoys rich sources of books and its national library is a good reference," she said.

She said that the national library has been established to provide a basis for learning more about other cultures and develop cultures.

The NLAI is home to over 40,000 copies of rare manuscripts dating back to 700

years, she asserted.

The ambassador also said that the National Library of Australia is considered a reference library for its valuable books.

She hoped that Australia would have a special section in the National Library and Archives of Iran to display books on literature and sources on Australia.

She said that through cultural activities, the two countries can help develop cultural diplomacy, and the national libraries of the countries can play a key role in this way.