



U.S. maximum pressure policy on Iran ‘costly’ failure **2**



Value of trades in Iranian stock market climbs 625% in 4 months yr/yr **4**



Iran, Syria friendly not yet finalized **11**



Rastak sings “They Say...” in honor of Armenian community in Iran **12**

Iran arrests head of U.S.-based terror group



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TPO determined to facilitate technical-engineering services export to Syria

TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said that his organization is determined to facilitate the export of technical and engineering services to Syria, TPO new portal reported.

Emphasizing the significance of the Syrian market for the export of Iranian services, Hamid Zadboum said that this issue is being investigated in two expert sessions of the TPO.

During a meeting between Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous and an Iranian delegation in Damascus on June 17, the two sides explored the ways to further develop economic cooperation between Iran and Syria which have been targeted by the U.S. sanctions.

Iran-Syria economic collaboration still continues in line with the guidelines of the leaders of the two countries, Arnous said in the meeting. **→ 4**

Ex-trade minister enumerates 10 ways to counter sanctions

TEHRAN — Yahya Al-e Es'hagh, the former trade minister who was also chairman of Iran-Iraq Chamber of Commerce, has enumerated ten ways to counter the United States' unilateral sanctions on Iran.

In an interview with Tasnim published on Saturday, Al-e Es'hagh said independence; multiplicity of resources to meet the needs; increasing resilience; active confrontation against sanctions; sup-

porting production; taking risks; countering corruption; coordination among government branches; using the region's economic and commercial capacities; and finally resistance economy are ten ways to counter the sanctions.

He said the government should manage the economy in a way that the country can rely on domestic production to meet its needs. **→ 3**

Iranian music has great potential for growth in Afghanistan: envoy

TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to Afghanistan Bahador Aminian says that Iranian music has a great potential to be represented in Afghanistan.

He made the remarks in his recent meeting with the Rudaki Foundation Managing Director Mehdi Afzali, the foundation announced in a press release

published on Friday.

"Iranian music has a good potential to be represented in Afghanistan, while the country can also host performances by top Iranian musicians. And, as observed previously, Iranian musicians have been warmly received by art aficionados and elites of the country," he said. **→ 12**

China-Iran agreement is mutually beneficial: scholar

By Amir Mohammad Esmaeili

TEHRAN — An American scholar based in Moscow believes that the comprehensive strategic partnership between Iran and China will be "mutually beneficial".

"There are many reasons to regard this as a very positive development that will be mutually beneficial for Iran and China. Therefore, both countries complement one another by helping their partner achieve some of their grand strategic goals: investment for Iran and revitalizing BRI for China," Andrew Korybko, a member of the expert council for the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People's Friendship University of Russia, tells the Tehran Times.

Korybko says the 25-year partnership "will in and of itself challenge U.S. hegemony even if the intention behind their partnership isn't explicitly to do that and is only officially about improving bilateral relations."

Korybko, who is author of "Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach To Regime Change," also believes that the U.S. maximum pressure on Iran has been unsuccessful as "American strategists greatly underestimated the Iranian people's resolve, intense patriotic unity, and willingness to put up with economic hardships in the interests of preserving their hard-earned national sovereignty."

The text of the interview with Korybko is as follows:

■ At night time on July 23, U.S. warplanes operating illegally in Syria conducted some dangerous maneuvering close to the Mahan Air flight. The Civil Aviation Organization of Iran called it "a clear violation of international law and the aviation standards and regulations." What is your analysis of this move?

A: The U.S. behaved very recklessly and could have caused a tragedy, though that might have been one of the reasons why it did this. America has an interest in "defending" its illegal military presence in Syria around al-Tanf, and this action drew global attention to that. Had the plane crashed as a result of this provocation, then the U.S. would have tried to find a way to blame Iran for that, which would have been a classic example of the aggressor presenting themselves as the victim and the real victim being presented as the aggressor. As it stands, this incident is meant to deter flights of any nature through the Syrian airspace that the U.S. controls, though it's unclear at this moment whether that goal will succeed. **→ 7**

Non-revival of Lake Urmia could cause \$1,000 billion loss

TEHRAN — Although Lake Urmia's revival will cost around \$1.5 billion, not implementing the revival plan would inflict a loss of \$1,000 billion to the country, Issa Kalantari, chief of the Department of Environment, has said.

In response to the opinion of some experts about the impossibility of reviving Lake Urmia, he said: "This was the first revitalization project in the world that was successful."

Referring to the human consequences of not reviving Lake Urmia, he said that if the lake was not conserved, the area would have to be evacuated leading to the displacement of over two million people, in addition to affecting 10 million people.

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive permanent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's

restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

The level of Lake Urmia reached about 1271.56 meters on July 21, equivalent to 3,004 square kilometers surface area and 4.19 billion cubic meters in volume, while at the beginning of Lake Urmia Restoration Program in 2013, the Lake's level was about 1270.32 meters, 1783 square kilometers in surface area and 1.14 billion cubic meters in volume, which indicates a 50 percent increase in the lake's surface area.

Achieving sustainable rehabilitation requires countless efforts, such as preventing the lake's water flow from entering the agricultural land. Lake Urmia's condition stabilized with a positive trend due to heavy rainfall, but there is a fear that this trend will be reversed by drought in the coming years.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve the Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level of 1274.10 meters.

Portland protests continue amid staged withdrawal of federal agents

by staff & agencies

The City of Portland has seen 63 consecutive days of protests, which started in late May.

Local and federal officials have agreed to withdraw law enforcement officials after local police completed a cleanup of "anarchists and agitators".

The increased violence follows weeks of protests against police brutality and racism that have erupted in Seattle, Portland and other US cities after the death of African American man George Floyd in police custody on 25 May.

However, many of the protests have turned into riots, complete with violence against police officers and civilians as well as acts of vandalism, arson and looting.

Meanwhile, the withdrawal of federal agents from frontline policing of demonstrations in downtown Portland significantly reduced tensions in the city overnight.

Protesters in support of Black Lives Matter once again rallied near the federal courthouse that became a flashpoint, and the scene of nightly battles amid the swirl of teargas, after Donald Trump dispatched agents to end what he called anarchy in the city after weeks of demonstrations.

'These are his people': inside the elite border patrol unit Trump sent to Portland

Read more

But in the absence of the federal officers, Thursday night's protest passed off without major incident or intervention by the police.

On Wednesday, Oregon's governor, Kate Brown, agreed with the White House that the state police would take over responsibility for guarding the courthouse after weeks of escalating protests. She said that "Trump's troops" were behaving like an occupying army in Portland and provoking unrest with heavy-handed tactics. **→ 10**

MBS may resort to bloody game to eliminate rivals after death of father : Saudi activist

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — King Salman of Saudi Arabia had surgery on July 23 to remove his gallbladder, days after being hospitalized on July 20, according to a statement from the royal court carried by the official Saudi Press Agency.

Days after Salman was hospitalized, renewing rumors about his health, the royal court announced that the 84-year-old monarch had undergone an operation.

Political experts believe that the sudden entry

of King Salman to the hospital is closely related to the efforts of his son Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) to seize the seat of government in the Kingdom.

Some analysts say that the Saudi royal court's announcement about King Salman's illness is nothing but a new "plot" hatched by Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman to accelerate the process of his inauguration as king of Saudi Arabia before the upcoming presidential elections in the U.S.

In this regard, the Tehran Times interviewed

Foad Ibrahim, the Saudi political analyst, to cast light on variables that determine the future of Saudi Arabia after the death of King Salman.

Ibrahim says that several key factors play a role in determining the fate of the throne in Saudi Arabia; the first is family consensus and tribal alliances.

"All Saudi kings have always tried to obtain consensus or at least a balanced degree of family agreement that makes him able to neutralize any internal power struggles," he explains. **→ 7**

Libya: Déjà vu Yemen?

By Munir Ali Saeed

In 2015 the Saudi regime created an alliance of mercenary nations to wage war on Iran. Where? In Yemen. Iran did not and does not have a military presence in Yemen. The Saudi alliance therefore faced Yemenis in Yemen.

Only two members of this alliance remain active: The Saudi and UAE regimes. Unless of course we include their arm suppliers, the U.S., Britain and France, who continue to make financial gains from Yemeni blood, the most recent being the British arms sale to Saudi Arabia, which has demonstrably used those and other Western weapons in the genocide in Yemen.

The Saudi-UAE war on Yemen with more than 20,000 airstrikes along with blockade, now in its sixth year, has resulted in killing tens of thousands, death by starvation of 85,000 children so far, destruction of the country's medical institutions, food storage, schools and transportation system. Supporting secession that threatens to split the nation of 30 million into never ending warring mini states. Creating and arming militias across the southern region of the country and bringing in foreign mercenaries into the country. The total occupation and control by the Saudis and UAE of Yemen's southern ports and islands. Eliminating the political role of the "Internationally Recognised" Yemeni government, whose restoration had, until recently, been the pretext used by the Saudi coalition's military intervention. The displacement, internally and externally of millions of Yemenis and turning most of them destitute.

Meanwhile, Iran stands across the Persian Gulf waters. Both, Saudi Arabia and UAE, whose mantra is to fight Iran, are unable to fire a single shot in its direction, fearing Iran's retaliation, which they know will be swift, destructive and decisive. **→ 7**

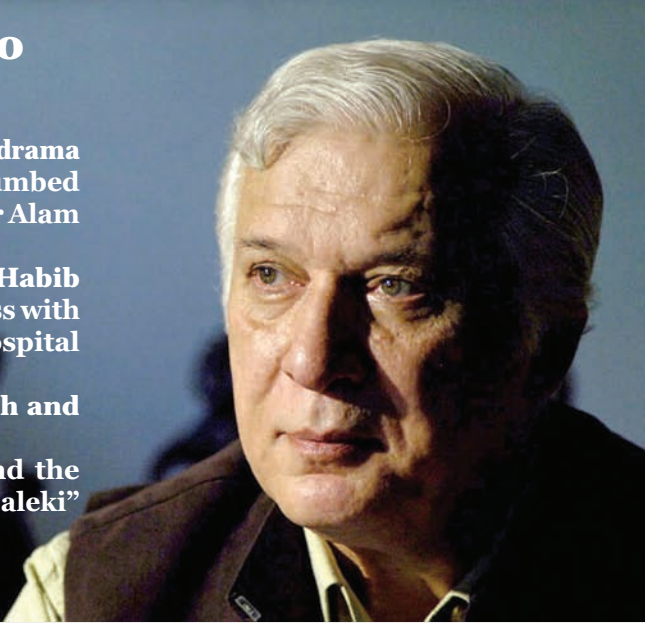
“Bride of Fire” director Khosro Sinai dies from coronavirus

TEHRAN — Khosro Sinai, director of acclaimed Iranian drama “Bride of Fire” and several documentary films, succumbed in his battle with COVID-19 and died at Tehran's Amir Alam Hospital on Saturday. He was 79.

Sinai's death was announced by his close friend Habib Ahmadzadeh, the author of the acclaimed novel “Chess with the Doomsday Machine”, who had reported his hospital admission last Wednesday.

Sinai had an operation in the hospital last month and afterwards was released.

“The Melody Which an Antique Hears”, “Beyond the Clamor”, “The Coldness of Iron”, “Haj Mosavvar al-Maleki” and “Hossein Yavari” are among his credits. **→ 12**



© File photo

Cause of Iranian judge's death to be announced in two weeks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Forensic Medicine Organization Abbas Masjedi Arani said on Saturday that cause of fugitive judge Gholamreza Mansouri's death, who was found dead in a hotel in Romania in June, will be announced in two weeks.

"Complementary actions of identification by genetic tests are being taken. After that, the dead body will be delivered to his family with the order of the judicial official," Arani told IRNA.

A report published by Nour News on July 22 said that Iran has received the body of Mansouri.



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

Tehran confirmed on June 19 the death of Mansouri who was accused of corruption and taking more than \$500,000 in bribes. Mansouri was found dead of apparent suicide at a hotel in Romania where he had been staying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

U.S. maximum pressure policy on Iran 'costly' failure: chief nuclear negotiator

(Press TV) — A former U.S. under secretary of state for political affairs, who was the chief negotiator in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, has criticized President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran as an instance of his "painful" and "costly" foreign policy failures.

In an article titled "The Total Destruction of U.S. Foreign Policy Under Trump," Wendy Sherman enumerated the failures of the Trump administration in the face of Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

"Trump's approach to Iran is another painful and costly example. Over three years after the Trump administration withdrew from the nuclear deal, Iran has more highly enriched uranium ..., more operating nuclear facilities, more sophisticated technology," she wrote in her article published by The Foreign Policy magazine on Friday.



"U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Iran envoy Brian Hook advertise this as a campaign of 'maximum pressure,' but their ultimate objective—which they insist is not regime change—remains a mystery," she added.

The U.S. unleashed the so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran in 2018, when it unilaterally scrapped the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Following its withdrawal, Washington targeted the Iranian nation with the "toughest ever" economic sanctions.

It is currently dialing up efforts to kill the JCPOA completely through pushing the remaining parties to the multilateral agreement to extend a UN arms embargo on Tehran.

Elsewhere in her article, Sherman, a professor at Harvard University, said Trump lacks any "discernible objective" in its foreign policy and is only focused on obtaining foreign help for his re-election.

"As a result of Trump's failures, the Middle East is further from peace and closer to the next Palestinian uprising than when he took office, the people of Cuba and Venezuela face a bitter future, the promise of African renewal is sidelined, and there is no real challenge to either Russia or China," she wrote.

"The only possible conclusion is that the objective in Trump's relations with other countries is not national security but Trump's security. Nothing else explains the vacuous and vain approach of a foreign policy without objectives, without strategy, without any indication that it protects and advances U.S. interests."

Rouhani speaks with Turkish, Iraqi, Azeri counterparts

Iran's president writes messages to leaders of Islamic countries on Eid al-Adha

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Friday made separate phone calls with his Turkish, Iraqi and Azeri counterparts on the occasion of Eid al-Adha and also wrote messages to leaders of other Islamic countries.

In separate messages to leaders of Islamic countries, the president congratulated the arrival of Eid al-Adha and expressed the hope that the leaders of Islamic countries can bring about growing unity and solidarity to the Muslim world with common will and efforts and take appropriate measures to control and overcome the coronavirus pandemic.

"Eid al-Adha is the manifestation of submission to the command of God and the manifestation of the great grace and mercy of God and the highest and purest level of obedience and servitude to the Creator and the glory of self-sacrifice and faith of the creature," Rouhani wrote in his messages, according to his official website.

Rouhani calls for closer Tehran-Ankara co-op

In his phone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Rouhani called for closer Tehran-Ankara cooperation in the face of the United States' cruel sanctions against the Iranian people.

"In such circumstances, friendly and neighboring countries such as Iran and Turkey should further expand their interaction and cooperation," he said.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to expand all-out friendly and brotherly interaction and cooperation with Turkey," he remarked.

The president also congratulated the Turkish government and people on Eid al-Adha and expressed hope that the two countries would continue to work together in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

He also expressed the hope that the efforts and cooperation of all countries in the region would lead to stability and peace throughout West Asia.

For his part, Erdogan offered congratulations on the Eid al-Adha and expressed the hope that the occasion would bring blessings for the people of the two countries and for all Muslims around the world.



He lauded the successful efforts of the Iranian government and people in the fight against COVID-19.

The Turkish president stressed the need to develop cooperation and exchange experiences in the fight against the deadly virus.

Pointing to the need to develop trade and economic relations between Iran and Turkey and accelerate trade exchanges in accordance with health protocols, he expressed the hope that a meeting of the Supreme Council for Strategic Cooperation between the two countries would be held in the near future.

Iran sees trade with Turkey as key in efforts to confront the U.S. sanctions that have sought to crumble the Iranian economy. 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 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.

Rouhani highlights need to expand relations with Iraq

In his phone conversation with Iraqi President Barham Salih on Friday, Rouhani highlighted the necessity to expand relations between Iran and Iraq and also speed up implementation of agreements.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to develop comprehensive relations with Iraq and is ready to cooperate and transfer its experiences to the country in fighting coronavirus," Rouhani said.

He also described a visit by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to Iran as "positive".

Salih also called Kadhimi's visit "positive" and called for increasing cooperation.

He noted that developing relations with Iran is a principle in Iraq's foreign policy.

Kadhimi visited Tehran on July 21-22 to discuss ties between Iran and Iraq. The Iraqi prime minister met with a number of high-ranking Iranian officials including Rouhani, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

During a joint press conference with Rouhani on July 21, Kadhimi said that his

visit to Iran was aimed at boosting ties.

Former Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi has said that Kadhimi's visit to Iran was in line with expanding foreign ties.

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

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

The former prime minister said Iraq is like "air way" for Iran.

Iran ready to transfer experiences, deepen ties with the Republic of Azerbaijan in fighting coronavirus

Speaking on the phone with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Rouhani also said that with the efforts of the officials of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan "we are fortunately witnessing good, friendly and developing relations between the two countries in recent years."

The president stressed the need for efforts to develop and strengthen Tehran-Baku relations.

Rouhani congratulated Aliyev, the government and people of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the arrival of Eid al-Adha, and expressed the hope that all Muslims around the world would enjoy the blessings of this holiday as a manifestation of Muslims' unity.

"Development of comprehensive relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan is important for us and I hope to see the implementation of mutual agreements in various sectors, especially the Rasht-Astara railway," said the president.

Aliyev also congratulated Eid-ul-Adha to the government and people of Iran, and described the relations between the two countries positive.

"Certainly, Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan will work together in the coming months, and they will take steps to further develop relations and cooperation," he stated.

He also lauded Iran's achievements in combatting coronavirus and called for developing cooperation between the two countries and benefiting from Iran's experience in this field.

Russian expert calls IRGC drills in Persian Gulf a warning to enemies

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Anatoly Tsyganok, the head of the Russian Center for Political-Military Studies, said on Saturday that recent drills by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in the Persian Gulf was a serious warning to the enemies of Iran, especially the United States.

In an interview with IRNA, Tsyganok said the maneuver showed Iran's power in the sea and air.

Iran has repeatedly announced that it is not looking for any disputes and tensions in the region, but it keeps militarily alert and ready to react to any aggression, the Russian expert added.

The IRGC ended on Thursday massive drills in the southern parts of Iran and the Persian Gulf which it had started on Tuesday.

"The exercises which were held with the participation of the IRGC Navy and Aerospace Force in the general area of Hormozgan province, the Persian Gulf and the west of the strategic Strait of Hormuz ended successfully with implementation of all plans and combined operational exercises on land, sea, and in the air and space," said a statement by the IRGC.

The IRGC Aerospace Force on Wednesday successfully launched a series of ballistic missiles from underground missile systems. It was for the first time that the IRGC launched missiles from under the ground.

On the second day of the exercises, codenamed Payambar-e Azam (The Great Prophet) 14, the IRGC Aerospace Force showcased parts of its capabilities in combating



hypothetical threats.

According to Tasnim, the IRGC's Sukhoi-22 fighter jets also destroyed targets on the Farur Island with winged bombs.

A broad range of smart bombs were dropped to detonate the hypothetical enemy's targets with great accuracy, as the targets had been designed on a much smaller scale than the actual size.

The IRGC forces also practiced a missile combat operation by firing the Hormuz and Fateh ground-to-ground missiles and a ballistic missile. The air defense units also exercised pinpoint firing at aerial targets.

A range of homegrown drones, including Shahed-181, Mohajer, and Bavar, launched a strike on the targets, while various types of sea-to-sea and coast-to-sea missiles were fired in the war game.

The IRGC troops also exercised offensive mine-laying operations and tactics to cut off the naval connections of the hypothetical enemy.

Satellite images taken by homegrown Noor (light) satellite, that was launched into space in April, were used to evaluate the situation in the war game zone.

On Tuesday, which saw the first day of the war game, the IRGC staged "all-out and multi-layer" strikes against the life-size replica of a Nimitz-class U.S. aircraft carrier, which the U.S. navy usually sails into the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz.

The IRGC's servicemen began the episode by destroying the mock carrier's accompaniment with coast-to-sea fire.

The national television aired footage showing the damage caused to the mock aircraft carrier following the operational juncture.

Elite divers then took action by delivering a "confusing blow" to the carrier's command bridge, namely the room from which the vessel is steered.

Also on Tuesday, the IRGC fired long-range ballistic missiles capable of destroying hostile vessels.

According to the spokesman of the war game, Brigadier General Abbas Nilforushan, anti-ballistic and anti-cruise missile defense operations were carried out in the war game.

The general also said the IRGC forces 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.

Ex-diplomat suggests Iran should force South Korea to unfreeze assets

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Fereydoon Entezari, a former Iranian ambassador to South Korea, has suggested that Tehran should take certain actions to force Seoul to release its money frozen illegally in South Korea.

In an interview with ISNA published on Saturday, Entezari said that the Iranian government should not show leniency towards South Korea's action.

"The money which has been blocked in South Korea belongs to the people of Iran. Currently, the people and the country need the money so much. So, we can apply a powerful and controlled diplomacy in this respect to make this issue a public demand and make the South Koreans fulfil it," he said.

The former ambassador added that direct talks will yield better result.

Entezari also suggested, "We can pursue the issue through international diplomacy including filing complaint in international bodies."

"If the mentioned strategies yield

no result, Iran can use its power in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf to deal with South Korea and make the country fulfil the Iranian people's (legitimate) demand," the former diplomat proposed.

Iran is escalating pressure on the East Asian country to release about \$7 billion of oil-export revenues, saying 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 official 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 illegitimate U.S. sanctions.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that South Korea should revise illegal procedures and release Iran's



frozen money.

He noted that South Korea is expected to revise illegal procedures and facilitate importing humanitarian commodities to Iran when the country is fighting the coronavirus.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Wednesday that Iran is waiting for South Korea's "tangible" and "remarkable" actions.

"We have had enough of South Korea's promises. So, we are just waiting for tangible and remarkable actions.

Naturally, no one in Iran is waiting for a cargo of half a million or two million dollars," he told IRNA.

He added, "We hope the Korean officials remember the volume of the Iranian people's money in this country and also non-existence of legal impediment to do business with Iran."

Yonhap reported that South Korea was set to hold virtual talks with Iran later Wednesday about expanding humanitarian trade like medicine exports, following the first such shipment to Tehran in May upon receiving a sanctions exemption from the U.S.

Mousavi said on Thursday that no country is entitled to ignore Iran's rights in favor of a third country.

"We informed them that the U.S. sanctions were unfounded and unilateral and no country must succumb to the U.S. sanctions," Mousavi said, according to Mehr.

"No country is entitled to ignore Iran's rights for a third country," he added.

Saudi-Emirati media voice concern over Iran-China agreement

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — As Iran and China are moving forward with their “extremely important” cooperation plan, Saudi and Emirati media outlets ring alarm bells over the deepening of ties between Tehran and Beijing that could undermine the U.S. pressure on Iran.

The 25-year cooperation plan between Iran and China has raised eyebrows in many countries in the region and beyond, even as the two countries have yet to sign the plan formally.

In fact, Iran and China still negotiate over the partnership plan, officially known as “Comprehensive Cooperation Plan between the People’s Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

However, the plan has been exposed to extensive discussion in regional and international media, including Saudi and Emirati news media organizations. At the official level, the Saudis and Emiratis haven’t taken an official stance on the plan, but their media outlets have managed to discuss the plan thoroughly in line with the interests of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

The Saudi and Emirati media’s coverage of the plan is more or less similar to what the Western media say. They both dangle the possibility that the plan will undermine the U.S. “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, which begun on May 8, 2018, after the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). They also express concerns over the deepening of ties between Iran and China in light of the confrontational policies of the U.S. against the two countries.

“The unease experienced by the major powers club under the pressure of the ‘Chinese rise’ concerns countries near and far, including those in the Middle East. The countries in the region sense that America is more preoccupied with the Asian rumbling than the problems in the Middle East. They sense that Russia has the power to obstruct, but lacks the means to resolve. Perhaps this is why concerned circles were focused on the comprehensive strategic partnership that was reached between China and Iran. Talk about the partnership began four years ago,



but it was kept under wraps. If true, the deal would see China invest 400 billion dollars in Iranian energy and infrastructure sectors. This will not be a cause for concern for America and Russia alone, but the entire region,” wrote Ghassan Charbel, the editor-in-chief of the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper, in an opinion piece.

The newspaper also published a lengthy news analysis report about the Iran-China plan on August 1, saying the cooperation plan, if finalized, would mean that China has decided to fully stand by Iran in the face of U.S. sanctions.

“If Beijing decides to comprehensively ‘open up’ to Iran, this will motivate Washington and other foreign policymakers to shed light on its policies. Historically, China has always had illegal networks that sell missile parts to Iran, and has allowed some agents and non-state firms to import Iranian oil. But with this agreement, the situation will turn into a governmental relationship and a full defense of the Tehran regime, and this will only contribute to Beijing’s international isolation in the coming months and years,” the Saudi newspaper claimed.

■ **‘Miserable new world order’**
Arab News, another Saudi newspaper, has sought to address the plan’s repercussions for the region in an opinion piece authored by

Hamdan al-Shehri, a Saudi political analyst and international relations scholar.

The Saudi analyst called the Iran-China strategic plan an “extremely important” agreement that “may pave the way for billions of dollars of Chinese investments to flow into the energy sector and other industries in Iran,” adding that these investments “would undermine the efforts of U.S. President Donald Trump to impose isolation on the Iranian government because of its nuclear and military ambitions.”

According to al-Shehri, the U.S. and the region will view Iran-China deal with concern, given “the deal’s ability to create a new reality in the region.”

“It will greatly complicate matters and provide Iran with weapons. Tehran represents a great danger and further developing its economy is a challenge for the international community,” claimed the analyst, adding that the deal is economically of great importance.

“The economic clause in the Sino-Iranian agreement means that the steady supply of oil at a fixed price means a lot to China, but it contradicts the policy of the U.S., which is seeking to achieve Iran’s collapse in its domestic arena under a suffocating economic embargo,” al-Shehri noted.

He also put the deal in a broader context of U.S.-China competition in the world, say-

ing that China “seemingly set itself a goal of challenging every American presence in the world.” Al-Shehri also said that the deal could “lead to a miserable new world order, not just a new Middle East based on spreading chaos and ruin.”

While the Saudi media outlets sought to portray the Iran-China plan as a very important development, some Emirati media outlets tried to downplay it.

The Emirati newspaper The National said in an opinion piece authored by Robin Mills, the chief executive of Qamar Energy, that the partnership plan “is not all that it appears to be.”

“China’s entire outbound foreign investment averaged about \$200bn annually from 2010 to 2019, and it is now feeling the strain of a slowing economy, the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. trade war. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the centerpiece of the BRI [Belt and Road Initiative], referred to in the Iran-China accord, has absorbed only \$62bn over fifteen years. So, the Middle Kingdom is unlikely to devote half of outward FDI to a single medium-sized country,” wrote Mills.

He added, “There is an emerging school of thought within China that its relations with the Middle East have already passed their peak, because of the slowing regional economy and the falling strategic importance of oil and gas. Under the pressure of American sanctions and coronavirus-battered demand, Chinese oil imports from Iran have fallen sharply, from about 630,000 barrels per day during 2017, to between 100,000 bpd and 200,000 bpd.”

Saudi and Emirati media outlets’ coverage of the Iran-China cooperation plan highlights a fact the Saudis and Emiratis refuse to articulate: that they oppose any kind of strategic cooperation between Iran and the world powers like China. When Iran settled its differences over the nuclear program with the West in 2015, they worked to dismantle the 2015 nuclear deal, which is now on life support. Now that Iran is about to sign comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP) with China, they once again voice concerns over Iran’s new policy of strengthening ties with the East.

Top MP urges firm action in case of arms embargo extension



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A ranking MP has urged the Rouhani administration not to falter if the UN arms embargo on Iran is extended.

“The administration should announce the measures it would adopt if the Iran arms embargo is extended,” Mehr on Saturday quoted Mojtaba Zonnour as saying.

Asked what the administration should do in case the

embargo is extended, Zonnour said the most important thing is to keep resisting the enemy’s pressure.

“The administration should not react from a position of hesitation,” said Zonnour, who heads the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

He further said the administration should convince the world of Iran’s righteousness and the other side’s wickedness.

The top MP further urged the administration to make the other side pay the price of extending the embargo by declaring what measures it would take if the arms embargo is extended.

“When the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran examine the costs and benefits, they definitely won’t dare to take the aggressive action,” Zonnour remarked.

The United States has stepped up calls for the extension of the UN arms embargo on Iran since April. The embargo is set to expire in October under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal.

On June 30, the U.S. was rebuked at the UN Security Council meeting, including by the five European countries on the council.

Tehran has firmly rejected Washington’s argument, stat-

ing that the U.S. is no longer a party to the nuclear deal ever since it withdrew from the multilateral agreement.

The U.S. abandoned the nuclear deal, officially referred to as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on May 8, 2018, and pursued a policy of “maximum pressure” on Iran to force it to negotiate a new deal but to no avail.

Last week, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mouavi said Washington is pressuring the permanent and non-permanent members of the UN Security Council to support the embargo’s extension.

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

Iran has told all members of the UN Security Council and its friends that the extension of the arms embargo would be “unacceptable”, he said.

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

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

‘Pure Iranians’ celebrate Chelleh Tamuz: U.S. State Dep.

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The U.S. State Department’s Farsi account on Twitter has congratulated Iranians on an ancient festival before being reminded by users that almost no one has actually heard of the festival.

“The regime does not want Iranians to remember the pre-Revolution culture but Iranians still celebrate tenth of Mordad or Chelleh Tamuz,” the State Department tweeted in Farsi on Friday.

“Pure Iranians have been celebrating the longest night of the year, or Yalda Night, and the longest day of the year, or Chelleh Tamuz,” it added.

The tweet was soon met with a storm of criticism for telling Iranians what festivals

to celebrate and also for trying to appeal to mostly Islamophobic supremacists who believe “pure Iranians” should fight the influence of Islam and Muslims on the Iranian culture.

Farnaz Fassihi, an Iranian-American journalist who covers Iran for The New York Times, said via Twitter that the State Department is “congratulating Iranians on an ancient holiday I’ve never heard of anyone actually celebrating inside or outside Iran.”

She further said, “Also problematic is State Dept. wording ‘pure, real Iranians.’ An attempt to divide Iranians along ethnic & religious sectarian lines? If you are Muslim you are not pure? If you are Turk, Kurd,

Arab, Baluch Iranian you are not pure?”

A few hours later, Fassihi wrote in another tweet that “Bots are coming out of the woods to claim they celebrate this holiday & threaten to prosecute those of us—journalists, academics, analysts, artists—who say we’ve never heard of this holiday nor know anyone who celebrates it.”

“Go figure,” she said. “Are bots advising State Dept.?”

Khodadad Rezaekhani, a lecturer at Princeton University, also mentioned that Chelleh Tamuz is not a nation-wide festival.

“I dunno who wrote this, but I am a historian of Iran & I can tell you that, yes Iranians celebrate Yalda (not for 1000’s of years, but

ok), but not anything like Chelleh Tamuz on the same scale. Some areas celebrate it regionally, but it’s not a nation wide celebration,” Rezaekhani wrote in response to the State Department.

Others also shared similar sentiments, mocking the State Department for its ignorance and arrogance.

“State Dept is basically congratulating folks about a festivity that nobody celebrates and a lot of people have barely heard of it?” wrote another Twitter user. “Is this how pompous the State Dept has become under Mike Pompeo? Oops sorry, Deep State Dept!”

“The cultureless trying to preach about culture,” another user responded.

Rouhani felicitates Swiss on National Day

TEHRAN (MNA) —Iranian President Hassan Rouhani congratulated the National Day of Swiss to his counterpart Simonetta Sommaruga.

In a message on Saturday to the President of the Swiss Confederation Simonetta Sommaruga, Rouhani congratulated the event, hoping for expansion of bilateral relations between the two countries in all fields.

“I cordially congratulate National Day of Swiss to you, the government and the people,” he said.

“I believe that by taking advantage of the diverse capacities of cooperation within the framework of the roadmap for relations, the friendly and historical relations between the two countries will expand even more,” he added.

Rouhani also wished his counterpart health and success and people of Swiss prosperity.

Iran arrests head of U.S.-based terror group

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian intelligence forces have arrested the ringleader of a terrorist group called “Tondar”.

“The surveillance of the unknown soldiers of Imam Zaman (Iranian intelligence forces) on a terrorist group based in the U.S. has led to the arrest of this terrorist group’s ringleader,” ISNA reported on Saturday.

The IRIB news reported that the ringleader, Jamshid Sharmahd, who headed an armed act of sabotage in Iran, is now in custody of Iran’s intelligence forces.

According to the report, Sharmahd was behind the 2008 terrorist attack that killed 14 people and wounded 215 others at the Hosseynieh Seyed al-Shohada Mosque in the city of Shiraz.

In recent years, Tondar terror group has been planning to carry out a number of big terrorist operation in Iran, it added.

Ex-trade minister enumerates 10 ways to counter sanctions

1 → “To counter the U.S. sanctions, we should use resources that the U.S. cannot control or exert influence to restrict Iran’s access to them,” added Al-e Es’hagh who was trade minister in the Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani administration.

He also said when the U.S. threatens Iran, “we should also threaten the U.S. in response.”

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history on Iran as part of his administration’s “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran.



The Trump administration has also stepped up calls for the extension of UN arms embargo on Iran. The administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of UN sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

Under the JCPOA backed by Resolution 2231, the UN must lift its arms embargo on Iran five years after the implementation of the nuclear deal. Despite its withdrawal from the JCPOA, the U.S. is pushing for the extension of the arms embargo, which is scheduled to expire on October 18.

Two border guards killed in clashes with terrorists in Sardasht

TEHRAN (FNA) — Two Iranian border guards were killed in clashes with terrorists in Sardasht region in West Azerbaijan Province in Northwestern part of the country.



“The Iranian border guards clashed with an armed group in the border regions of Sardasht County, during which two guards – Sargent Matin Saedi and Private Mehdi Maleki – were martyred and three others were injured,” Commander of West Azerbaijan Province Border Guards Brigadier General Hossein Khani said late on Friday.

He noted that the wounded guards are currently in good condition.

Earlier in May, two other border guards were killed in a clash with 20 terrorists in Sardasht on the border with the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

West Azerbaijan province shares 891 kilometers of borders with Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iraq.

Iran can ensure regional stability: Maj Gen Kakar

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Commenting on IRGC’s latest war game in the Persian Gulf, an Indian security expert is of the view that a nation enjoying deterrence power like Iran can ensure regional stability.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC) launched ballistic missiles from “the depths of the Earth” on Wednesday during the last day of Payambar-e Azam 14 military exercises in the sensitive Persian Gulf waters.

The launches came a day after the Guards struck a mock-up of a U.S. aircraft carrier with volleys of missiles near the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for a fifth of world oil output.

To know more about the significance of Iran’s military achievements and the war game we reached out to Indian security expert and analyst, retired Major General



Harsha Kakar.

Commenting on the developments of Iran’s defense industry and military capabilities, Harsha Kakar said, “The Iranian domestic defense industry has been able to meet the needs of its forces. Its development in the field of missiles has enabled it to deter nations from attacking it.”

Referring to the role of Iran’s military in maintaining regional peace and security, he stressed, “A nation which possesses deterrence in the region, ensures regional stability. It displays that it has the ability to respond to any threat and the attacker would suffer a similar level of damage.”

Answering a question about the message of the IRGC’s recent war game in the Persian Gulf waters, the retired general noted, “AS stated above, the message is that Iran can defend itself, is not a pushover and would retaliate against U.S. bases and allies in the region.”

Value of trades in Iranian stock market climbs 625% in 4 months yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—The value of trades in Iranian stock market has risen 625 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, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand announced.



The minister also said that the value of four-month trades at this market has increased 145 percent since the beginning of the current Iranian year, IRIB reported.

Dejpasand put the value of initial public offerings (IPOs) in the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), at 137 billion rials (about \$3.261 million) during the first four months of the present year, and said the figure is nearly two and half times more than that of the whole previous year.

The official went on to say, "We try to save the liquidity attracted by the capital market and lead it toward production and development."

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

Hasan Qalibaf-Asl 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 also has 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.

While the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) was full of success for the TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange, the market is also preserving its successful performance in the current year, and the noticeable point in this due is that the other economic sectors are experiencing some declining trend due to the coronavirus pandemic.

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

The index hit the record high of 1.5 million points on June 30, and the record high of 1.9 million points on July 20.

Last week, a capital market expert said that TEDPIX is expected to climb to 2.5 million-2.7 million points by the end of Iran's second quarter (September 21).

Referring to the new record registered by the index on July 20, Bahador Shams told IRNA that a noticeable amount of liquidity is leading to the stock market and many investors are seeking to make investment in this market.

There is a high demand in the market, he underscored.

4 provinces to be connected to national rail network by Mar. 2021

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Amir-Mahmoud Ghaffari said on Saturday that the ministry plans to connect at least four provinces to the country's national railway network by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

"To increase the share of freight, passenger and transit transportation through railway, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development has put a special program on the agenda for the current year, which includes connecting at least four provinces to the rail network," ILNA quoted Ghaffari as saying.

According to the official, construction of 1,614 kilometers of railroads, as well as modernization, improvement and up-grading of the country's freight, passenger and locomotive fleets with 130.7 trillion rials (about \$3.11 billion) of funding are also among the projects that the ministry is pursuing in the current year.

The official noted that the Budget and Planning Organization (BPO) has so far allocated a total of 55.49 trillion rials (about \$1.3 billion) of the required funding for the implementation of the Transport Ministry's development program, and the negotiations are underway for supplying the rest.

Expanded transportation via railway is, today, one of the major pillars of sustainable development for all countries; and it is why the governments usually allocate noticeable funds and resources to the development of the railway.

In Iran, the development of the railway network has been among the top-priority plans of the governments in recent years.

Back in April, the Iranian transport minister said 1,200 kilometers of railroads are going to be constructed across the country during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 19).

Later in May, Kheirollah Khademi, the managing director of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), announced that seven prioritized railway projects with a total length of 1,660 kilometers will be inaugurated by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2022).

The country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) has envisaged that the railway will account for at least 30 percent of cargo transportation and 20 percent of passenger transportation in Iran. Such a target requires at least 850 trillion rials (about \$20.238 billion) of investment.

TPO determined to facilitate technical-engineering services export to Syria

I → Syria has a comprehensive plan to develop the agricultural and food industries to increase the stability of the Syrian people in the face of sanctions, he added.

Head of Headquarters for Developing Iran's Economic Cooperation with Iraq and Syria Hassan Danayeefer who was heading the visiting Iranian delegation, for his part, reiterated that his country is standing alongside Syria to counter economic sanctions.

He noted that the Iranian delegation's trip to Damascus took place to offer economic help, stressing the significance of joint coordination for overcoming all the obstacles on the way of economic collaboration.

Iran and Syria have been taking major steps for the expansion of their mutual trade ties. The two sides have exchanged numerous trade delegations and Iranian private companies are investing in various fields of the Syrian economy like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction projects.

Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi believes that the value of Iran's trade with Syria will reach



\$1 billion by the next Iranian calendar year 1400 (starts on March 21, 2021).

"Considering the plans we have on the agenda for expanding trade with Syria, the value of Iran's trade with the country is expected to reach \$1 billion by the next year," the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)

quoted Kashefi as saying in mid-May.

According to Kashefi, the two countries' private sectors have been carrying out trade activates in the form of a joint economic committee in the last 1.5 years, however, following the increase in the activities, Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce has been established and this is a big step for further expansion of

trade ties between the two countries.

The official noted that the purpose of the joint chamber is to increase the number of economic engagements between the two nations.

"Syria is one of our main trade markets and export destinations, especially in the future, and we have common interests with this country in various fields, which can support our economic relations," Kashefi said.

Syria is also very interested in boosting economic relations with Iran, and the two sides could take advantage of this opportunity, according to the official.

He further mentioned some of the joint chamber's plans for increasing trade between the two countries including holding an exhibition of Iran's capabilities in Syria in near future, increasing the exchange of trade delegations, and the establishment of an Iranian trade center in Syria.

Kashefi also called for the launch of a credit line with Syria to facilitate financial transactions, and noted that necessary measures are being taken in this regard.

"We also need the cooperation of the two sides' central banks for this purpose", he added.

Housing price rises 10% in Tehran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— According to a recent report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the housing price in Tehran city has risen ten percent in Tir, which is the fourth month of the Iranian calendar year (June 21-July 21).

The report put the average price of one square meter of a house at 209.1 million rials (about \$4,978) in the capital city, which was 10.4 percent, and 56.6 percent higher than the average price in its previous month, and in the same month in the past year, respectively, IRNA reported.

Meanwhile, the number of real estate deals has risen 193.3 percent in Tehran in the fourth month of this year compared to the same month of the previous year.

The housing market is experiencing inflation and rise in prices, both in terms of rentals and sales, but the rise in prices is not going to be like the last year's sudden surge, Hesam Oqbaei, the deputy head of Tehran Real Estate Association, said on May 2.

"Last year, when house prices experienced a 100-percent growth, rent prices rose by as much as 30 percent. Of course, this year we anticipate that rent growth will not reach inflation and will stay below the inflation rate," the official added.

According to Oqbaei, 37 percent of the country's urban population are tenants, who are from the low and middle classes of the society and their salary increase has been up to 22 percent, so if the rent prices were supposed to grow along with the house prices people won't be able to afford it.

Noting that the government planned to provide financial facilities for the low-class tenants last year, Oqbaei said: "Now is the time to grant financial facilities, because the transfer season has begun and it is time for the government's last year's proposal to become operational."

Oqbaei underlined the lack of balance in supply and demand as the main reason for the upward trend in housing



prices and said since there are not enough bank facilities available to homebuyers, more people will stay as tenants and the demand for house rents increases, so consequently rent prices will also rise in areas where there is an imbalance between supply and demand.

In late June, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand announced the establishment of the country's real estate stock exchange.

The minister had stated that the Economy Ministry was finalizing the issue with the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO).

Last week, a member of Iran's Securities and Exchange High Council announced that the country's real estate stock exchange will be established by the next four-six months.

Bahman Abdollahi told IRNA that the decision to set up the mentioned exchange by the next four-six months was made during a session of the council on Saturday.

The establishment of such exchange is in line with the government's policy of providing housing units for the underprivileged, and many efforts have been already made to prepare the required infrastructure in this due.

The head of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) had previously

announced that the exchange was due to be established in the middle of the previous Iranian calendar month (early July).

When established, it will be the country's fifth major stock exchange. The four other ones are TSE, Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

Deputy Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) says the establishment of the country's real estate stock exchange is going to promote transparency in this market.

According to Hossein Selahvarzi, establishing this stock exchange is going to be an opportunity for making the transactions in the housing market more competitive and transparent, and will gain people's trust for participation in mass construction projects.

In early July, speaking in a meeting with the officials from Iran's Mercantile Exchange, which is in charge of the establishment of the real estate exchange, Selahvarzi said: "We are studying various aspects of the project."

The official noted that the Real Estate Exchange Company is going to be established with an initial capital of 50 trillion rials (about \$1.2 billion), of which 50 percent will be offered to people in the form of underwriting, while 25 percent will be shared among government agencies and another 25 percent is given to private sector companies.

"Companies wishing to participate must submit their initial application; these companies will be allocated up to 2.5 percent of the total capital which would be 1.25 trillion rials (equal to nearly \$29 million)", he added.

Underlining the great capacities of this exchange, Selahvarzi said the capital market has the ability to define practical tools for financing the real estate market and large construction projects, and it will make people more confident in participating in the implementation of such projects.

Iran's quarterly exports through southeastern border to Pakistan up 26%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— The value of Iran's exports to Pakistan through the border in southeast of the country has risen 26 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), compared to the same period of time in the previous year, an Iranian provincial official announced.

Davoud Shahraki, the head of Industry, Mining, and Trade Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, in southeast of Iran, put the worth of quarterly exports at \$131.457 million, ILNA reported.

The official said that commodities valued at over \$528 million have been exported from Sistan-Baluchestan to Pakistan in the past Iranian calendar year, and put the value of Pakistani products imported to Iran via the province at \$162 million in the previous year.

Earlier this month, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced that Iran's three more border points with Pakistan were reopened.

"Exports and imports through the three trade borders (in Sistan-Baluchestan) with Pakistan are fully resumed," Rouholah Latifi said on July 6.

"As of today, the three markets of Rimdan, Koohak, and Pishin in Sistan-Baluchestan Province on the Pakistani border have been completely reopened, and trade with the country has returned to normal,"



the official said.

Pakistan's decision to reopen new border crossings with Iran came at a time when both sides had already reopened the Tافتان (Mirjavah) border crossing seven days a week to expand border trade between the two countries.

According to Latifi, although trade borders had been reopened, the passenger sector was still facing some limitations.

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani, in a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan on May 10, had said that the opening of the border markets of the two countries would lead to the development of Tehran-Islamabad trade relations.

During a meeting with Pakistan's new ambassador to Iran Rahim Hayat Qureshi on June 24, the president called for reopening of Iran-Pakistan borders and urged implementation of bilateral agreements.

Expansion of economic ties discussed between Iran, Georgia

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— During a meeting between Iranian Ambassador to Georgia Javad Qavam Shahidi and Georgian Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Natia Turnava, the two sides explored the ways for the expansion of Iran-Georgia economic relations.

During the meeting, the Iranian ambassador stressed the need for reviving the rising trend of economic cooperation between the two countries before the coronavirus

pandemic and even deepen the bilateral cooperation while observing the health protocols, Mehr news agency reported on Friday.

The envoy expressed concern over the decrease in trade between the two countries due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Georgian minister, for her part, said that coronavirus pandemic is one of the most important factors in reducing trade relations between the two countries, reiterating that returning to the successful condition of the past is also the

wish of the Georgian side.

In a meeting between Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and Head of Parliamentary Friendship Group of Georgia-Iran Shalva Kikenaveldezia, last November, the two sides discussed the expansion of trade ties.

They stressed removing of barriers in the way of banking relations and also bartering trade as ways of boosting trade between the two countries.

Downstream petchem sector, a pivot point for Iran's economy

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — They say when life gives you lemon make lemonade, and that is what exactly Iran has been doing with the U.S. sanctions. The significant development of Iran's petrochemical industry following the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions has become an exact definition of a "silver lining" that could be sought in every bad situation.

Facing the restrictions that the unjust U.S. sanctions brought about for the oil industry, its development has not been halted and, with a change in strategies, the Oil Ministry has been distancing itself from crude selling and is moving toward the production of products with more value-added.

One of the major areas for the realization of this goal has been the petrochemical industry, where a wide range of valuable products can be produced from Iran's vast oil and gas resources.

The petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the export of such products is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

So, pursuing a third leap in this sector, the country aims to boost its annual petrochemical production capacity to 100 million tons in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2021-March 2022) from the current 66 million tons.

While the leap in the petrochemical output is a big measure to boost Iran's non-oil



exports, it also plays a very significant role in the realization of the current Iranian calendar year's motto, which is "Surge in Production".

The development of the petrochemical industry's upstream sector has been underway for several years, and the Oil Ministry has been following comprehensive programs for developing this sector over the recent years as the development of the giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units.

The downstream industries, however,

need more attention to become able to keep up with the fast pace of development in the upstream sector.

In the year of the "surge in production", some positive measures have been taken by the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) and the Oil Ministry in this regard too, and great plans are underway for the expansion of the downstream sectors.

Earlier, the NPC Managing Director Behzad Mohammadi announced that the company is preparing a master plan for developing the downstream petrochemical industries.

Mohammadi said the development of petrochemical industries is among the top priorities of the Oil Ministry, and NPC is working on a master plan to boost the downstream sector.

Iranian parliament's Energy Committee has also been very keen on encouraging the Oil Ministry to accelerate the development of the petrochemical industry's downstream sector.

Mousa Ahmadi, deputy head of the parliament's Energy Committee said on Saturday that: "Undoubtedly, the downstream sector of the petrochemical industry plays a significant role in the country's economy, so more planning and investment should be done to develop and strengthen this sector."

In an interview with Shana, Ahmadi said that the petrochemical industry is moving in the direction of development and progress, adding: "Despite some restrictions imposed by [the U.S.] sanctions on the country's industries, including the petrochemical industry, the increase in the production of petrochemical products shows the industry's improvement."

If the leap in the petrochemical industry is accompanied by development in the downstream industries, it will not only create more job opportunities but also brings added value to the country, he noted.

Petrochemicals are a major source of revenue, accounting for the country's largest non-oil exports, he said, adding: "Fortunately, there is a lot of potential for the development of Iran's petrochemical industry that must be utilized effectively."

Texas oil still a mess despite Trump's pizzazz

By Frank Kane

As a freeze-frame of the U.S. presidential election, and the key role the energy industry will play when voters get to the polls on Nov. 3, President Donald Trump's speech in Texas was a fascinating case study.

You have to give it to him for theatrical pizzazz. In the heart of the Texas shale industry, he stood in front of a pile of oil barrels draped in American and Texan flags as well as the corporate logo of Double Eagle Energy, one of the biggest companies operating in the Permian basin.

"We were very close to losing a very powerful, great industry, and now we're back and we're just going to keep expanding," Trump said to loud cheers. He had a message to his political opponents: "Don't mess with Texas." The problem he faces is that by any conventional assessment of the U.S. oil industry, it is still far off the dominance it attained last year as the world's biggest oil exporter. The COVID-19 pandemic hit the entire energy world badly, but the U.S., and especially Texas, suffered especially gravely.

When West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the U.S. benchmark, neared a price of minus \$40 per barrel on Black Monday, April 20, whole swathes of the U.S. industry became uneconomic at a stroke. American oil output bottomed out at 9.7 million barrels per day (bpd) in June, compared with 13 million bpd in March before the OPEC+ agreement briefly fell apart and the full effects of the pandemic became apparent. The number of operating rigs earlier this month stood at around



250, compared with

800 in March. Some of the best-known names in the U.S. shale business, including pioneer Chesapeake Energy, have gone bankrupt. Since that low last month, there has been something of a recovery, with estimates that 10.9 million bpd of oil are now being produced in the U.S. But it is still way off the global energy dominance that Trump would like to see.

The reason it has recovered at all is because of the historic OPEC+ cuts, orchestrated by Saudi Arabia and Russia that ended the brief price war of March and April. Trump gave thanks to the two leaders of the oil alliance, and bizarrely also to Mexico, which did little except confuse and delay the deal.

Since then, WTI has recovered to around \$40 per barrel, with Brent, the global benchmark, nudging the \$45 level. Trump's problem is that while this is a

welcome turnaround, it is not enough. Below \$50 per barrel, American oil will simply not "keep expanding."

There is little the Americans can do about it. The oil price is being set by two factors totally outside their control. On the one hand, there is the rate of demand recovery from the shock of pandemic lockdowns. This is at best uneven, with no sign of the V-shaped recovery some had predicted for later this year. The best that can probably be hoped for is a more gradual U-shaped recovery, punctuated by further lockdowns.

On the other hand, there is the supply side of the equation, which is being set by OPEC+. The new regime at the 23-member alliance has been ruthlessly efficient in enforcing compliance to the new output levels. Just last week, Iraq — one of the laggards in meeting compliance agreements — said it was already 100 percent in line with its obligations, contrary to reports, and would stick by commitments to compensate for past shortfalls.

OPEC+ is pleased with the progress it has made since April, and is probably quite happy to keep the oil price around \$45 until the demand outlook clarifies. It is playing a long game, and one that does not suit U.S. shale.

The pandemic/oil nexus is at its most apparent in Texas. Rising infection rates have slowed re-openings, which in turn has reduced demand for oil for transport and industry. Trump's election opponent, Democrat Joe Biden, has been the beneficiary, leading the president in the polls in a state that has been Republican for decades. Despite all Trump's election rhetoric in shale country, he must be worried that come November, Texas will mess with him.

U.S. oil refining capacity may not fully recover from pandemic

Millions of barrels of oil refinery capacity might permanently close across the global energy complex after being lost when demand crashed during the coronavirus pandemic, Reuters reported on Friday, citing U.S. refiners.

Executives at Phillips 66 and PBF Energy, told investors some refining capacity currently offline could remain that way depending on the future course of the pandemic, while new capacity additions are likely to be delayed.

"Even in a good environment, these projects tend to get delayed, but in the environment we're in today they're likely to get delayed even more significantly," said Jeffrey Dietert, vice president of investor relations at Phillips 66.

Depressed demand for jet fuel could also cap refinery utilization rates across the industry, according to executives at PBF Energy, the fourth-largest U.S. oil refiner by capacity.

Demand for gasoline and distillates has recovered by 80 percent to 90 percent since the worst of the pandemic, but jet fuel demand has only rebounded 30 percent, according to the Energy Information Administration. Because refineries cannot make products like diesel without producing jet fuel as well, they will restrain output, PBF Chief Executive Thomas Nimbley said on Friday.

"I'm not convinced that we could get to full utilization in this industry if jet demand is where it is today," Chief Executive Thomas Nimbley said on an earnings call.

Running refineries at full tilt would



reduce the ability for refiners to contain the production of jet fuel.

Other independent U.S. refiners are running near 80 percent utilization, but PBF is still operating below that and will continue to do so until it sees demand return in key markets, Nimbley said.

Executives defended the company's acquisition of Shell's refinery in Martinez, California, despite reporting gross margins of only \$1 million in the second quarter in the West Coast.

"We had negative cracks in April, which severely impacted our earnings on the West Coast," Nimbley said. Gasoline demand rebounded in recent weeks in California, he said, and physical crack spreads were approximately \$13 in San Francisco and Los Angeles earlier this week.

Nimbley disagreed with the idea that California has too much refinery capacity. "I think we're going to be fine in California over the long haul," he said.

However, he noted that the pandemic will result in a permanent reduction in U.S. refining capacity.

PBF reported adjusted loss per share of approximately \$3.19, missing analysts expectations.

OPEC July oil output surges as voluntary cuts end

OPEC oil output has risen by more than 1 million barrels per day (bpd) in July as Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf members ended their voluntary extra supply curbs on top of an OPEC-led deal, and other members made limited progress on compliance.

According to Reuters, the 13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries pumped 23.32 million barrels per day (bpd) on average in June, the survey found, up 970,000 bpd from June's revised figure, which was the lowest since 1991.

OPEC and allies agreed in April to a record output cut as the coronavirus crisis hammered demand.

An easing of lockdowns and lower supply have helped oil to climb above \$40 from April's 21-year low of below \$16 a barrel, although concerns of a second wave are keeping a lid on gains.

"Upside potential will continue to be in short supply so long as the COVID hang-over lingers," said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM.

OPEC, Russia and other producers, a group known as OPEC+, agreed to cuts of 9.7 million bpd, or 10 percent of global output, from May 1.

OPEC's share, to be made by 10 members from October 2018 levels in the case of most countries, is 6.084 million bpd.

In July, they delivered 5.743 million bpd of the pledged reduction, equal to 94 percent compliance, the survey found. Compliance in June was revised up to 111 percent.

July's increase is the biggest since April, when OPEC briefly pumped at will before the latest supply cut was agreed.

To further support the market, Saudi



Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE had pledged to cut by an extra 1.18 million bpd in June only.

This helped to curb output last month to OPEC's lowest since 1991, excluding membership changes, based on Reuters surveys and OPEC figures.

The biggest rise in supply in July came from Saudi Arabia, which pumped 8.4 million bpd, up 850,000 bpd from June and close to its quota, the survey found.

The UAE and Kuwait also boosted output close to their targets. Iraq and Nigeria, which boosted compliance in June and were laggards in previous OPEC+ deals, did not make any further cuts in July, the survey found, with Iraq boosting exports. Both have pledged to make additional reductions in later months.

"The low prices are making life difficult for those OPEC countries that are required to cut their production additionally," said Eugen Weinberg, analyst at Commerzbank.

Iranian and Libyan supply held steady in July and Venezuelan output dropped further. All three are exempt from voluntary cuts because of U.S. sanctions or internal issues limiting output. Libyan output has plunged since January due to a blockade of ports and fields by groups loyal to eastern-based commander Khalifa Haftar.

Leader lauds South Pars achievements under U.S. embargoes

TEHRAN (Shana) — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has hailed the successes achieved in South Pars joint gas field during the U.S. sanctions.

The Leader referred to the great measures taken in South Pars as well as construction of the Persian Gulf Star refinery under the U.S. sanctions, and considered the practice of weaning the country's economy off petrodollars as the silver lining of the sanctions period.

According to leader.ir, Ayatollah Khamenei said on Friday in a live televised speech on the occasion of Eid al-Adha: "Although sanctions are a great crime, but people, especially youth, officials, scientists and politicians used the issue to bolster national self-reliance."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added: "Production of training jets and sensitive and delicate parts, launching of several thousand knowledge-based companies, construction of the Persian Gulf Star refinery by the IIRGC, major actions in South Pars, plans of the Ministry of Energy in the field of water and electricity, plans of the Ministry of Roads and amazing defense productions, all were made during the embargoes."

Ayatollah Khamenei described another effect of the sanctions era as the practice of separating the country's economy from oil, and said: "Because the country's oil is sold less, the separation of the economy from crude oil is happening naturally, which should be pursued by the government and parliament."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution in response to the important question "Can sanctions be cured?," said: "Sanctions are definitely curable; But the cure is not to retreat and succumb to the United States' wishes, because retreat leads the aggressor to advance."

OPEC+ plans to pump more crude into a precarious global oil market

By Grant Smith

From quiet skies over Europe to sparse traffic in America's biggest cities, a recovery in global oil demand is faltering amid the resurgence in coronavirus.

That poses a particularly delicate challenge for the OPEC cartel and its partners, who next week plan to resume some of the crude output halted during the depths of the pandemic.

While the alliance is eager to ramp up oil sales after successfully reviving prices, the relapse in the world economy means that extra supply is arriving at a fragile moment, and could send the market lower again.

"We're in quite a finely balanced place in terms of the scope to increase production," said Alex Booth, head of research at market intelligence firm Kpler SAS. "You have to have quite a bullish view on the demand recovery to be able to justify any significant increase."

■ A delicate balance

The OPEC+ alliance -- led by Saudi Arabia and Russia -- took a record 9.7 million barrels of daily output, or roughly 10 percent of global supply, offline when demand plunged over the spring. They intend to restart about 1.5 million barrels next month.

In theory, it's reasonable for the 23-nation coalition to open the taps a little.

Their stringent cuts have almost tripled international crude prices from the lows struck in late April, lifting Brent crude futures to \$43 a barrel. That's thrown a lifeline to countries reliant on energy sales to finance government spending, and companies like Exxon Mobil Corp. and BP Plc.

Global oil markets have swung into deficit after months of surplus, with demand exceeding supply in July by about 2 million barrels a day, according to Rystad Energy A/S, a consultant based in Oslo. That's paring some of the inventory glut amassed during the first half of the year.

The inventory decline for the quarter as a whole could be twice as steep, averaging 4.4 million barrels a day, even if OPEC+ revives production, according to the International Energy Agency in Paris.

■ Too soon

Yet there are signs the tightening of the market is beginning to slacken.

"The markets are gradually recovering, but there are two major uncertainties," Fatih Birol, the IEA's executive director, said in an interview. "One is the shape of the economic recovery globally, and in some of the key areas. And the second one is whether or not we are going to see a second wave of coronavirus."

The death toll has reached a record 150,000 in the U.S., where the economy suffered its sharpest downturn since at least the 1940s in the second quarter.

Gasoline demand remains well-below average despite even as the summer peak approaches, while data from TomTom Traffic Index show that road traffic in cities such as Los Angeles and Miami is less than half pre-pandemic levels.

In Asia, countries that successfully suppressed the first wave of infections, such as Hong Kong, are struggling to contain new outbreaks.

All of which is keeping inventories bloated. The world's largest independent oil storage company, Rotterdam-based Royal Vopak NV, says that it's almost run out of available space. Rystad predicts supply will exceed demand by 700,000 barrels a day next month, and by 2 million a day in September.

Prices are wilting in response. The rally that more than doubled Brent futures since late April has lost momentum, leaving the international benchmark stuck near \$40 a barrel. It was down 2.6 percent at 4:51 p.m. London time on Thursday following weak U.S. economic data. A discount on early deliveries, which OPEC sought to eliminate, has only deepened.

■ Surplus concerns

"OPEC's experiment to increase production could backfire as we are still nowhere near out of the woods yet in terms of oil demand," said Bjornar Tonhaugen, the consultant's head of oil markets. "The balances look to be heading towards a mini supply glut for the next three to four months."

Saudi Arabia says the impact of its own extra production will be neutralized as it burns the additional barrels at home, where demand for air conditioning surges during the summer. It is also pressing OPEC's habitual quota cheats, like Iraq and Nigeria, to refrain from increasing production now as a gesture of atonement.

If that doesn't work, OPEC+ could always rethink its current course. Key ministers from the coalition will hold a monitoring meeting on Aug. 18.

"If oil prices suddenly do tank to the low \$30s or something, that would not be tolerable for Riyadh," said Tonhaugen. "If there is this glut in the next month or two, we might see OPEC+ throttle back a little bit."

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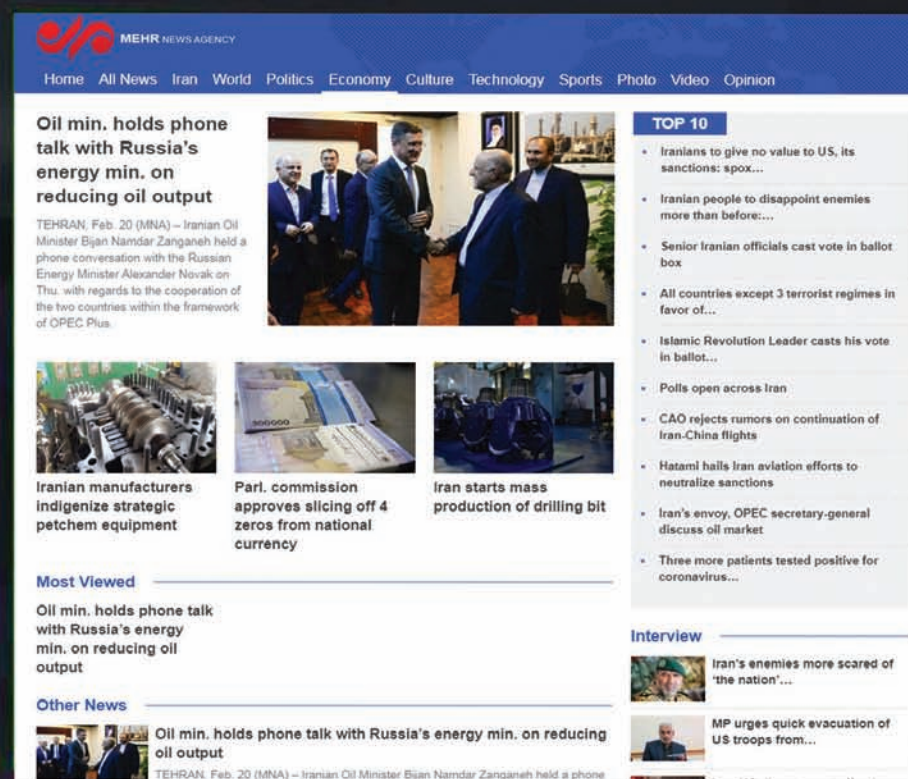
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China-Iran agreement is mutually beneficial: scholar

“Partnership will help China and Iran to achieve some of their grand strategic goals”

➡ Without seeking permission from the Damascus government, the U.S. has been operating in the Arab country since 2014 under the pretext of fighting the Daesh terrorist group. This is while the Axis of Resistance had defeated the Takfiri terrorists in late 2017. Regarding the facts on the ground, is its presence legitimate?

A: No, it's not legitimate, but Syria lacks the ability to expel the illegal U.S. military presence forcibly. Russia won't get involved to help it in this respect since Moscow's military mandate is only to fight against terrorism, and the country wouldn't want to take on such a responsibility as militarily confronting the U.S. in a third country and on that state's behalf since it doesn't think that the benefits of doing so outweigh the risks of a larger war by miscalculation. Iran is Syria's only ally that shares its desire to forcibly remove the U.S., though both countries also understand that the U.S. will respond very aggressively to any actions advancing this goal. That's why they've been patient and have pursued it gradually instead of making any dramatic moves.

Some experts argue that Iran can turn this challenge into an opportunity and establish a regional air force coalition by members of the Axis of Resistance in order to escort aircraft and maintain the safety of the region's airlines against aggression and insecurity. What's your take on it?

A: They'd have every legal right to do so, but the move would be extremely risky since it's unlikely that "Israel" would accept the Iranian Air Force regularly escorting civilian airlines so close to its "borders". More than likely, Tel Aviv would resort to brinkmanship by flying its jets dangerously close to Iran's, and civilian airliners just like the U.S. recently did, hoping to provoke a tragedy that could lead to the airliner crashing or a dogfight between the two air forces. "Israel" has already proven that it'll take action to interfere with Iran's legal military assistance to Syria in its war on terror by bombing what it alleges are weapons shipments to the IRGC and Hezbollah. So, it's expected that they'll react similarly in the scenario of the Iranian Air Force regularly escorting civilian airliners too.

In your view, what are the reasons behind this dangerous action by the American Air Force?

A: The U.S. wanted to remind the world of its illegal military presence in Syria and deter anyone -- including civilian airliners -- from "violating" the airspace that it controls.



“Had the (Iranian passenger) plane crashed as a result of this provocation, then the U.S. would have tried to find a way to blame Iran for that, which would have been a classic example of the aggressor presenting themselves as the victim and the real victim being presented as the aggressor.”

If it does so again and a tragedy transpires, then it can wage an intense information war blaming Iran for what happened, even if this is objectively false and unbelievable to anyone other than those who are already indoctrinated into believing American narratives without question. The high-profile attention that would be given to such a scenario would then serve as the ultimate deterrent against any "violations" of the Syrian airspace around al-Tanf that's under American control, thus satisfying the primary objective.

As an expert on hybrid warfare, do you think Trump's maximum pressure on Iran has been successful?

A: No, it hasn't, though no one should ignore the economic damage that it has caused and the potential that this has for provoking social unrest if the U.S. and its allies once again attempt to exploit it for Color

Revolution purposes. Thus far, the U.S. has failed because of the ideological solidarity of the Iranian people and their Resistance economy, both of which have inoculated it against the virus of regime change.

American strategists greatly underestimated the Iranian people's resolve, intense patriotic unity, and willingness to put up economic hardships to preserve their hard-earned national sovereignty. They hope that with time, Iran's socio-economic defenses will weaken, but that hasn't happened despite over four decades of pressure and the latest unprecedented moves of the Trump Administration over the past few years.

Iran and China have drafted an economic and security partnership that would allow for billions of dollars in Chinese investments in Iran's energy and other sectors. What is your thought on this agreement? Do you think

deepening China-Iran ties would challenge U.S. hegemony?

A: The exact details of this agreement have yet to be revealed, but from what's been reported, there are many reasons to regard this as a very positive development that will be mutually beneficial for Iran and China. Iran urgently needs massive foreign investment ever since the Western countries abandoned it over the past few years out of fear of America's threatened "secondary sanctions" despite there being no international legal impediment to their investments there since the 2015 nuclear deal, while China needs a reliable partner to help breathe new life into its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) that's been partially suspended as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Both countries, therefore, complement one another by helping their partner achieve some of their grand strategic goals: investment for Iran and revitalizing BRI for China. The expected outcome is that both will become stronger as a result, which will in and of itself challenge U.S. hegemony even if the intention behind their partnership isn't explicitly to do that and is only officially about improving bilateral relations.

Do you think that Iran's moves to deepen ties with the East, specifically China and Russia, will challenge U.S. hegemony?

A: To an extent, yes, but also no. To explain, they send the message that Iran will not submit to America's unipolar hegemony, but neither it's Chinese nor Russian multipolar partners are willing to directly involve themselves in defending Iran. However, they will sell its military equipment and make strategic investments in various megaprojects to improve its overall defensive capabilities. This support makes it less likely that the U.S. plans will succeed, but both countries are doing so not out of any ideological desire to challenge American hegemony like some might have thought, but purely in advance of their own interests. It's important to understand this to avoid having any false expectations about these two strategic partnerships. Iran is a very promising emerging marketplace that's really attractive to Chinese and Russian investors, and it also has impressive natural resources as well. Both countries hope to receive preferential access to them by supporting Iran in the military and economic spheres at the moment when it needs such help the most.

MBS may resort to bloody game to eliminate rivals after death of father : Saudi activist

“What prevents unrest is not loyalty to the Saudi kingdom, but the ability to buy people's silence “

➡ He thinks that tribal alliances are determining, especially with tribes that played a role in uniting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and formed unity to protect the kingdom.

Pointing to King's charisma as another factor that makes a man closer to power, Ibrahim notes that the king plays a pivotal role in controlling and unifying the royal family.

He puts emphasis on the economic factor as another element that strengthens the position of the king. “What prevents popular unrest is not the people's loyalty to the system as it is rumored, but rather the system's ability to provide money to buy the silence of people and secure internal political stability,” he maintains.

After the spread of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud initiated the disbursement of \$ 32 billion in social benefits, a two-month salary payment, and increased funds for students and support for those in need.

Ibrahim, however, talks about American support as a pivotal factor that helps the king strengthen his throne's foundations.

He believes that no Saudi king can reach the throne without the support of the United States, and therefore the great princes are racing to present their children to the American administrations in order to obtain the president's "blessing."

"This was evident in King Fahd's case when he presented his son Abdul Aziz bin Fahd and Prince Nayef and his son Muhammad, King Abdullah, and his son Muteb, King Salman and his son Muhammad.

On the whole, the absence of any of these elements will lead to an uncertain situation in the kingdom.

Responding to a question about possible scenarios after the death of King Salman, Ibrahim envisions scenarios ranging from smooth power transfer, bloody power transfer, and anarchy.

In the first scenario, the Saudi dissident points to a normal and quiet transfer of power from King Salman to his son and crown prince, Muhammad, regarding that this scenario is still doubtful due to the circumstances in the country and the world.

According to Ibrahim, in the second scenario, because of fears about rebellion or alliances between a number of royal family wings or princes, Muhammad bin Salman may resort to a bloody elimination process against his rivals among the princes, and thus push the kingdom towards an exceptional stage and a sharp internal division.

The Saudi expert believes that this scenario is more likely in case President Trump loses the November elections.

In the third scenario, Ibrahim tells the Tehran Times that the absence of Salman, the possible loss of Trump, the absence of family consensus, and the weak economic performance (increased taxes, economic downturns, high unemployment, and poverty rates, etc.) would drive the country into chaos. "This scenario is also not excluded but rather is suggested



strongly in the light of facts that reveal the internal conflicts between the royal family wings, especially Muhammad bin Salman and his brothers on the one hand, and Mohammed bin Nayef, Ahmed bin Abdul Aziz and others on the other hand," Ibrahim explains.

While some political observers are of the opinion that Muhammad bin Salman can manage the kingdom after the death of his father, the Saudi critic says given his experiences in managing all country's affairs in the past three years (June 2017 - July 2020), Mohammed bin Salman lacks the tools of diplomatic management, and he is leading the country

“The results of Bin Salman's policies appeared in the crisis with Qatar, and the detention of former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri, arresting a number of Saudi princes in the Ritz-Carlton hotel, the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, the killing of opponents in prisons (Abdullah Al-Hamid, Saleh Al-Shehhi, and others), the oil war that led to the price collapse below ten dollars, and finally entering into a confrontation with the royal family,” he notes.

to political, economic and military disasters.

"The results of Bin Salman's policies appeared in the crisis with Qatar, and the detention of former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri, arresting a number of Saudi princes in the Ritz-Carlton hotel, the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, the killing of opponents in prisons (Abdullah Al-Hamid, Saleh Al-Shehhi, and others), the oil war that led to the price collapse below ten dollars, and finally entering into a confrontation with the royal family," he notes.

According to Ibrahim, if the same policies are followed, Muhammad bin Salman will be known as a man who pushed the kingdom into abyss.

"His ability to eliminate his rivals requires resorting to the utmost force and cruelty and destroying any family harmony. It will be the end of the Al Saud rule and transition from Saudization to Salmanization of rule, or from the Saud's sons to Salman's sons," Ibrahim emphasizes.

The Saudi analyst warns about increasing foreign interference in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in case of external support for the next king, especially by American and British rulers.

Asked about a possible coup against bin Salman by the Saudi army, Ibrahim notes that after the last serious coup attempt in 1969, the Saudi army has had no political role.

"The princes of the al Saud became aware of the inherent danger of the military establishment and decided to alter its identity, composition, and fighting doctrine," he states.

The Saudi political activist thinks Saudi army no longer exists, saying it has been distributed between land, naval, and air forces.

"Military commanders were no longer from tribes nor allied to the royal family, but even the air force that played a central role in the 1969 coup underwent fundamental changes. So out of every five pilots, there are three princes," according to Ibrahim.

He adds that Saudi fighting doctrine is designed to defend the Saudi throne and has nothing to do with Arab or Islamic causes like Palestine or others.

About possibility of radical changes in Saudi Arabia after King Salman's death, Ibrahim says if the following possibilities (Salman's death and the shifting balance of power) are handled rationally and logically, the only way to calm the internal conditions and contain the dormant anger in society, and returning the consensus to the royal family is to launch a bunch of fundamental political reforms.

"These reforms start with the release of political prisoners, organizing legislative and municipal elections and end up with political, social and media openness," he argues.

The Saudi analyst predicts that the new presumptive king may resort to some reforms, at least in the first stage, until he strengthens his grip on power and extends his control over the country.

"But the previous oppression that has always been used by the Saudi kings for decades will return, and this is what occurred during King Abdullah's term," he concludes.

Libya: Déjà vu Yemen?

➡ In Libya, Abdul Fatah El Sisi threatens the same predicament, funded by the Saudis and UAE, the financiers of every regional political upheaval, from Oman to Morocco and every country in between.

El Sisi declares a red line in Sirte and Al Jafrah, as if Libya is an Egyptian colony or under Egyptian trusteeship. He then threatens military intervention to fight Turkey. Where? In Libya! Despite the fact that Turkey does not have a military presence in Libya.

If El Sisi has the bravado, he knows where Turkey is in the Mediterranean Sea. But he will not dare, because he too knows that Turkey's response will be swift, destructive and decisive.

Consequently, the Egyptian army, if it proceeds to Libya, it will be faced by Libyans themselves. The Arab Egyptian army will be facing an Arab Libyan population. Libya will be turned, by Arab intervention, into killing fields between Arabs.

Years of externally funded and armed proxy wars in Libya have failed to install a military junta led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. Even support of major powers France and Russia have not been able to force the Libyan people to accept another brutal military dictatorship. The stage is now being set for a major military intervention that will replay the misery and destruction we witnessed in Yemen. The same forces that intervened in Yemen, with no vision, no exit strategy or in fact without strategy of any kind, other than death and destruction are about to repeat that blunder in another Arab country. Yemen was destroyed on the pretext of intervention aimed at restoring a "Legitimate Internationally Recognised Government". In Libya, we see the exact opposite. A full scale military intervention against the authority of a "Legitimate Internationally Recognised Government" in favor of a wayward military despot. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, supported by France and Russia, will actually destroy more Libyan lives by attempting to install a brutal military dictatorship to replace a civilian-led political process.

Like in Yemen, in Libya too, it will be another Arab military intervention that results in the death and destruction of Arab lives and livelihoods.

Like before, Arab regimes once again forcing more Arabs to flee their countries, in Yemen, in Libya and in Egypt. And where will most of them find refuge and safety? Many probably in Turkey which already has offered safety and refuge to more than 5 million Arabs who escaped the brutality of Arab despots and their Western arms suppliers. Arab regimes kill and banish Arab citizens then blame Turkey and Iran!

To our Egyptian brothers who might find themselves in Libya soon, killing and being killed by fellow Arabs, I remind them of this Arab proverb, roughly translated: "What you do in the evening in your neighbor's home will happen in the morning in your own home".

The judicious one understands.

Beijing conducts 'high-intensity' aerial drills in S China Sea amid tensions with U.S.

China has conducted "high-intensity" aerial drills over the South China Sea, as tensions escalate between Beijing and Washington in the strategic waterway.

China's Defense Ministry announced on Thursday that long-range Chinese bombers, the H-6G and H-6K, were among the aircraft that took part in the aerial exercises over the South China Sea, without specifying the exact location of the drills.

The Chinese jet bombers carried out "high-intensity training, and completed day-and-night training exercises in taking off and landing, long-range assault, and attacks on sea targets," Ren Guoqiang, the ministry spokesman, said at a virtual press conference in the capital, Beijing.

Ren added that the drills were part of the country's routine training and had "achieved the expected results."

The Chinese Defense Ministry stressed that the exercises had been pre-scheduled and aimed at boosting pilots' skills and capabilities to operate under various natural conditions.

The South China Sea is a gateway to major sea routes, through which about 3.4 trillion dollars' worth of trade passes each year. China claims the strategic waterway is its sovereign territory and has since 2014 built artificial islands on reclaimed reefs and installed military bases on them.

Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei have overlapping claims with China to parts of the sea.

The United States, which sides with Beijing's rivals in the maritime dispute, routinely sends warships and warplanes to the South China Sea to assert what it calls its right to freedom of navigation, ratcheting up tensions among the regional countries.

Earlier this month, Washington said Beijing's claims to most of the sea are illegal, ramping up support for Southeast Asian nations with claims to parts of it.

Australia has also rejected Beijing's territorial and maritime claims in the sea, saying there was "no legal basis" to several of China's claims. Canberra has, in the past, joined provocative maneuvers by the United States in the region.

U.S. must stop stirring up troubles in South China Sea'

At the press conference in Beijing on Thursday, Ren lashed out at the U.S. administration and said Washington must stop stirring up troubles in the South China Sea as China is determined to safeguard its sovereignty and security in the strategic waterway.

"China has indisputable sovereignty over the islands and reefs in the South China Sea and their adjacent waters, which is based on sufficient historical and jurisprudential evidence," the Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman said.

"We urge the United States to stop making erroneous remarks, taking provocative military actions in the South China Sea and sowing discord among countries in the region. The U.S. move to stir up troubles in the South China Sea will only make China all the more determined to ride the waves, safeguard its sovereignty and security more resolutely, and safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea more firmly," Ren underlined.

Ren also censured a statement issued by the U.S. Department of State earlier in the month, which accused Beijing of seeking a "maritime empire" in the South China Sea and destabilizing the region with its drills on the Xisha Islands.

"We firmly oppose this statement of the United States," Ren said. "The U.S. side disregards the historical context and objective facts of the South China Sea issue, flagrantly violating its commitment of not taking a position on the sovereignty issue of the South China Sea, making groundless accusations against China, sowing discord among countries in the region and dispatching two aircraft carriers for military exercise in the South China Sea."

The Chinese official said the U.S. statement "fully exposed the hegemonic mindset and double standards" of the administration in Washington. "The U.S. regards itself as the so-called 'arbiter' of the South China Sea issue, but actually it is a trouble-maker to disturb peace in the South China Sea, a saboteur of regional cooperation and a provocateur of country-to-country relations," Ren stressed.

(Source: Press TV)

Coronavirus gives kiss of death to once flourishing medical tourism in Mashhad

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — While the developing health tourism industry, which is one of the most important fields of Iran’s travel sector, was trying to prove its capabilities and capacities in attracting medical and health tourists to the country, the global coronavirus pandemic put a sudden stop to everything.



Many domestic experts believe that medical tourism in Iran is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency, however, all forecasts and preparations in this field have changed.

After Tehran, Mashhad has the most medical tourists in the country, but the coronavirus outbreak has cut the number of travelers visiting the city for medical purposes by 95 percent over the past few months, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Iran is one of the major destinations for health tourism in the region, and patients with 55 different nationalities, mostly from neighboring countries including Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are seeking to use Iran’s services and facilities in this field, the report added.

Last month, Esmail Khayyami, the health tourism manager of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, announced that due to the travel restrictions imposed by Iran and neighboring countries, the number of medical and health tourists visiting medical centers and hospitals in Mashhad has decreased significantly and new admission of non-emergency foreign patients hasn’t been done.

For the time being, 14 hospitals and three medical centers are offering special services to foreign patients in Mashhad, who are mostly visiting these centers for Open-heart surgeries, vascular surgeries, general surgeries, orthopedics, skin, hair and beauty services, dental services, as well as women’s and infertility services.

But according to the managers of some of these hospitals, the number of health tourists visiting these centers has dwindled to zero.

Iranian hospitals admitted nearly 70,000 foreign patients over the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018 – March 2019) and it made an economic contribution of around \$1.2 billion to the country, according to the medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health.

In April 2018, the rotating presidency of the International Health Tourism Conference of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was handed to the Islamic Republic for a three-year term.

Mohammad Jahangiri who presides over a national center for developing health tourism, said in May 2018 that Iran has the capacity to annually earn \$7 billion in medical and health tourism, though the sector now brings in only one-seventh or even lesser of the sum.

The Islamic Republic has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in [calendar year] 1404.

Before the coronavirus puts everything on lockdown, Mashhad played host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe to visit the imposing, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

Almost 40 million Iranian pilgrims and travelers visited the shrine city of Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province, during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 19).

Ancient relics of Iran: Vase with overlapping pattern and three bands of palm trees

(The Metropolitan Museum of Art) — Vessels carved of a gray-green stone in what is called the “Intercultural Style” were made in the greater Gulf area as well as in southern Iran. At the site of Tepe Yahya in Iran, workshops were found with vessels and the raw materials—chlorite or steatite—for their manufacture, dating to the mid-third millennium BC.

The stones were available in the nearby hills. Fragments of containers were also found at sites in the Gulf area. Vessels decorated in this style were found across the ancient Near East from Syria to the Indus Valley, evidence of the flourishing long-distance trade of the times.

This piece (ca. mid- to late 3rd millennium BC) has a tall shape with a flaring rim and is carved in alternating bands of an overlapping mountain-like pattern and date palm trees. The repertoire of motifs of the “Intercultural Style” includes vegetal, architectural, and abstract or naturalistic representations of people and animals.

Many excavated examples have been found in palaces and temples or in graves of the privileged classes in major urban centers, including Sumerian (Early Dynastic) Mesopotamia. The vessels may also have been valuable for their contents.



Nasir al-Molk amongst seven beautiful mosques in world: report

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Daily Art, a Warsaw-based online art magazine, has ranked Iran’s Nasir al-Molk Mosque, commonly known as “The Pink Mosque”, among seven beautiful mosques in the world on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, which was observed on Friday.

“This breathtaking mosque was commissioned in 1876 by the order of the Qajar ruler, Mirza Hasan Ali (Nasir ol-Molk) in the ancient city of Shiraz in Iran. Shiraz has a long and rich artistic tradition, and the Nasir ol-Molk mosque stands as one of its stunning examples!” reads a part of the article titled “Eid al-Adha — Seven beautiful mosques around the world”.

“Nasir ol-Molk Mosque is also known as the Pink mosque and it stands out for its incredible stained glass windows — a relatively rare occurrence in Islamic architecture. The exterior is covered with an array of colorful painted tiles while the beautiful stained glass forms an enchanting kaleidoscope effect on the interior that is echoed by more colorful tiles and the impressive Persian rugs covering the floor!”

The article also introduces the Great Mosque of Damascus in Syria, the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, and the Great Mosque of Xi’an in China.

Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, Egypt, the Great Mosque of Kairouan in Tunisia, and the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, are also on the list.

One of the most photographed mosques in



southern Iran, the 19th-century monument is in fact an amalgam of history, architecture, and arts. The name “Pink Mosque” is driven from abundant pink-colored tilework that dominates its courtyard and exteriors facade.

Nasir al-Molk has arrays of delicate mirror work and stucco work, which are interwoven with arabesque designs and tilework.

Filled with carved pillars and lavishly-created polychrome faience, the prayer hall appears gorgeous when it is lit up through the vast stained-glass windows.

Delicate stucco work, interwoven with arabesque designs and tilework dominated by the remarkably deep shade of blue, form a peaceful atmosphere for the visitors, in

particular when mirrored in the vast yet shallow pool in the courtyard.

Reflection of light through the stained-glass sheets, abundant carved pillars, and lavishly-created polychrome faience are amongst elements that enhance the beauty of the mosque’s prayer hall.

In case one is willing to get shots it is widely recommended to come as early as possible in the morning to picture the prayer hall when it is lit up through the colorful glass frames.

The mosque is named after the Qajar-era merchant Mirza Hasan Ali (Nasir al-Molk) who ordered its construction in close collaboration with designer Mohammad Hasan-e Memar and architect Mohammadreza Kashisaz Shirazi.

In-depth study starts on Iran’s UNESCO-tagged ‘village of troglodytes’

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A comprehensive study has been commenced on the UNESCO-registered Maymand in a bid to expand protective measures on this ancient manmade-cave dwelling where the then residents made a living about five or six millennia ago in what is now a village in the southeastern Kerman province.

It is a periodic study every corner of this man-dug troglodyte architecture is being monitored in order to recognizer possible flaws, places in need of restoration to better preserve and maintain the integrity and authenticity of this UNESCO site, Reza Riahi, the director of the World Heritage site, said on Thursday.

Riahi added that achieving a complete and comprehensive data of the appearance, static architecture, originality, ownership and determining the type of use of architectural spaces in Maymand village is “an essential”.

“The project is being carried out by archaeologists and experts who are affiliated with the World Heritage site and currently the mapping, and the plan of the site is being renewed.”

The cultural landscape of Maymand was named a UNESCO World Heritage in 2015 as an exemplar system of

manmade cave dwelling that is believed to be practiced in the region to cope with its harsh climate.

Sandwiched between a desert and a mountain, Maymand has cold winters and exceedingly hot summers yet abundant with mulberry and blackberry trees. Living conditions in the village are considered as severe due to the aridity of the land, high temperature in the summertime and very cold winters.

It is believed to be one of human’s primary residences in the country as its history stretches far back in time to about 10,000 years ago. Some of its natural and manmade caves are still used for housing and shelter.

The houses in the continually inhabited village are carved like caverns inside the mountain. The internal spaces have corridors and pillars featuring a rural architecture. The houses are situated in four or five stories, one on top of the other.

Narratives say the early residents did not use hammer and chisel, but rather a type of local, pointed stone which was hard enough to carve images onto the rocks. This method of carving is still practiced in the region. Some of the stone engravings in the village date back to 10,000 years ago. The majority of inhabitants are semi-nomadic shepherds. They raise their animals on mountain pastures, living in



temporary settlements in spring and autumn.

The community has a strong bond with the natural environment that is expressed in social practices, cultural ceremonies, and religious beliefs. The local dialect contains words from the ancient Sassanid and Pahlavi languages. The dialect has been barely changed due to the remoteness of the village.

Sole Teymurid-era fluted dome in Yazd being restored to former glory

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A restoration project has recently been commenced on the dome of the tomb of Setti Fatemeh Khatun in the central province of Yazd, a local tourism official has said.

The Teymurid-era (1370-1507) structure, which has the only fluted dome in the country, is the tomb of Setti Fatemeh, the wife of Jalal ed-Din Amir Chakhmaq Shami, the governor of Yazd and a general of Shahrukh the Emperor of the Timurid Empire. She was also the sister of Goharshad, Shahrukh’s wife.

The plaster on the decorations and Quranic inscriptions inside the dome are being removed, ISNA quoted Majid Oloumi as saying on Saturday. Although all the inscriptions couldn’t be restored, the restorers try their best to preserve the originality of them, considering their artistic and architectural values, the official added.

Setti Fatemeh played a key role in the development of the city of Yazd along with her husband. She was known for her charity welfare works such as constructing mosques, cisterns, caravanserais, gardens and bazaars.

The tomb is located opposite of Amir Chakhmaq Complex on a square of the same name, a prominent complex, which is noted for its eye-catching rows of symmetrical sunken alcoves that are perfectly lit up following the sunset.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don’t miss” destination



by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

It is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by

the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities.

It survives today with its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

IKIA requires negative coronavirus test for passengers

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — All passengers coming to Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) will need to provide proof they have tested negative for coronavirus to gain entry, said a senior official with the airport.

All passengers coming to Imam Khomeini international Airport from August 5 must have proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test not more than 92 hours before boarding their flight to the Imam Khomeini international Airport, IKAC News quoted Mohammadreza Karimiyan as saying on Saturday.

As we started to reopen for international travel like many countries, we also require a negative COVID-19 test result from Passengers before boarding at Imam Khomeini international Airport, Karimiyan said.

One of the most important priorities at Imam Kho-



meini International Airport is control of this virus in the current situation so passengers with high temperatures

Bamou National Park, a paradise for wildlife watchers

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Dangling off the northwest edge of Shiraz and split into eastern and western parts by Shiraz-Isfahan Highway, Bamou National Park is one of Iran’s best places for wildlife watchers.

Along with the population explosion and expansion of Shiraz, this park began to shrink in size and was converted into a zoological park and then a national park in 1970, IIRIB reported.

Located on a high peak reaching 2,700 meters, Bamou National Park is spread over 40,000 hectares and includes three mountain ranges extending parallel from the east to the west. On these mountains are narrow plains where deer, ibex, rams, and wild goats abound.

Flamingo, wild duck, pelican, vulture, and tortoise also find it a suitable habitat. Studies have shown that there are 32 species of mammals, 91 species of birds, 19 species

of reptiles, and 3 species of amphibians in this region.

Among the bird species, 18 are protected while 6 are in danger of extinction. Spring begins before April in Bamou Park. One can see wide expanses of different flowers such as primrose, tulip, and anemone.

So far, more than 300 species of plants have been classified in Bamou Park, most of which have herbaceous and medicinal values.

In addition to the afore-mentioned ani-

mals, the park hosts carnivores like leopard, wolf, hyena, lynx, jackal and fox. There are also birds of prey such as the golden eagle and the buzzard, as well as a variety of other birds like partridge, in the region.

Since this park is close to scientific institutes, it has become a suitable center for zoological and botanical researches. A lot of people come to the area on weekends to enjoy the serene beauty of the place with their families and friends.

Life story of Iranian hero Rais Ali Delvari included in school books

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The life story of Rais Ali Delvari, a national hero who organized popular resistance against the British troops which had invaded Iran in 1915, has been included in school books.

With the aim of acquainting Iranian children with the national hero, Delvari's life story and his struggles for freedom were introduced to the latest edition of the fifth-grade school books, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

Rais Ali Delvari was born in 1882 in Delvar, a small village in the southwestern Bushehr province.

When he was just 24 years old, he became one of the forerunners of constitutionalism in southern Iran and began close cooperation with revolutionary circles and people aspiring to the constitution in Bushehr, playing a key role in the southern insurgency with



two main objectives: the surveillance of Bushehr, Dashtestan and Tangestan, the prevention of the expansion of foreign power within the Iranian borders and the defense of the independence of the homeland.

Until today, seminars and congresses have been held to commemorate and honor him, and every year in his birthplace his commemoration is held on the anniversary of his martyrdom. The house of Rais Ali Delvari in Delvar is now a museum and a television series.

Moreover, a statue of him has been placed in Tehran and a dam has been built in Bushehr that bears his name.

The anniversary of his murder that coincides with the twelfth day of the month of Shahrivar (September 2 this year), has been called "national day of the fight against colonialism".

Over 388 tons of narcotics seized in 4 months

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian police have confiscated nearly 388 tons of narcotics during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21).

With the permission obtained from the government, the police have established units in customs, as well as in border provinces where the smuggling of goods has been dealt with severely, and all these factors have led to good success in narcotics seizure, the deputy police chief Ghasem Rezaei explained.

Isfahan province has achieved good results in combating smuggling of goods, so that in the first four months of this year, the volume of narcotics confiscated has increased by 57 percent compared to the same period last year, he highlighted.

During the aforesaid period, more than 388 tons of narcotics were discovered, which shows an increase of more than 44 percent compared to the same period last year, he noted, Mehr reported.

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drugs, and to us, the health of youth is of great importance, and we are determined to fulfill it by fighting against drug use, he concluded.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against

narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Iran's drug control efforts led to the seizure of 266 tons of different types of drugs during the period of April-June 2020, a 20 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019.

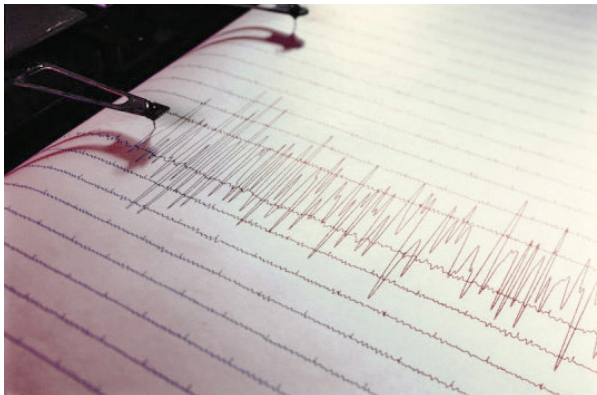
Drug use is a complex health and social problem worldwide, with half a million people dying each year as a result of drug abuse, he lamented, adding, drug use has entered a critical condition, and the international community is determined to tackle the global drug problem.

Hossein Rahimi, a police chief, has said three gangs of international drug trafficking have been disbanded



in the capital city of Tehran since the beginning of this year, and 27 dealers were arrested. Moreover, over 1 ton of narcotics was discovered and 163 international traffickers were arrested.

COVID-19 lockdown caused 50% global reduction in human-linked earth vibrations



The lack of human activity during lockdown caused human-linked vibrations in the Earth to drop by an average of 50% between March and May 2020.

This quiet period, likely caused by the total global effect of social distancing measures, closure of services and industry, and drops in tourism and travel, is the longest and most pronounced quiet period of seismic noise in recorded history.

The new research, led by the Royal Observatory of Belgium and five other institutions around the world including Imperial College London, showed that the dampening of 'seismic noise' caused by humans was more pronounced in more densely populated areas.

The relative quietness allowed researchers to listen in to previously concealed earthquake signals, and could help us differentiate between human and natural seismic noise more clearly than ever before.

Co-author Dr Stephen Hicks, from Imperial's Department of Earth Science and Engineering, said: "This quiet period is likely the longest and largest dampening of human-caused seismic noise since we started monitoring the Earth in detail using vast monitoring networks of seismometers."

"Our study uniquely highlights just how much human activities impact the solid Earth, and could let us see more clearly than ever what differentiates human and natural noise."

The paper is published in Science.

Measured by instruments called seismometers, seismic noise is caused by vibrations within the Earth, which travel like waves. The waves can be triggered by earthquakes, volcanoes, and bombs -- but also by daily human activity like travel and industry.

Although 2020 has not seen a reduction in earthquakes, the drop in human-caused seismic noise is unprecedented. The strongest drops were found in urban areas, but the study also found signatures of the lockdown on sensors buried hundreds of metres underground and in more remote areas.

Human-generated noise usually dampens during quiet periods like over the Christmas/New Year period and Chinese New Year, and during weekends and overnight. However, the drop in vibrations caused by COVID-19 lockdown measures eclipse even those seen during these periods.

Some researchers are dubbing this drop in anthropogenic (human-caused) noise and pollution the 'anthropause'.

Dr Hicks said: "This is the first global study of the impact of the coronavirus anthropause on the solid Earth beneath our feet."

To gather the data, researchers looked at seismic data from a global network of 268 seismic stations in 117 countries and found significant noise reductions compared to before any lockdown at 185 of those stations. Beginning in China in late January 2020, and followed by Europe and the rest of the world in March to April 2020, researchers tracked the 'wave' of quietening between March and May as worldwide lockdown measures took hold.

The largest drops in vibrations were seen in the most densely populated areas, like Singapore and New York City, but drops were also seen in remote areas like Germany's Black Forest and Rundu in Namibia. Citizen-owned seismometers, which tend to measure more localised noise, noted large drops around universities and schools around Cornwall, UK and Boston, USA -- a drop in noise 20 per cent larger than seen during school holidays. Countries like Barbados, where lockdown coincided with the tourist season, saw a 50 per cent decrease in noise. This coincided with flight data that suggested tourists returned home in the weeks before official lockdown.

Over the past few decades, seismic noise has gradually increased as economies and populations have grown.

The drastic changes to daily life caused by the pandemic have provided a unique opportunity to study their environmental impacts, such as reductions in emissions and pollution in the atmosphere. The changes have also given us the opportunity to listen in to the Earth's natural vibrations without the distortions of human input.

The study reports the first evidence that previously concealed earthquake signals, especially during daytime, appeared much clearer on seismometers in urban areas during lockdown.

The researchers say the lockdown quietening could also help them differentiate between human-caused noise and natural signals that might warn of upcoming natural disasters.

Lead author Dr Thomas Lecocq from the Royal Observatory of Belgium said: "With increasing urbanisation and growing global populations, more people will be living in geologically hazardous areas. It will therefore become more important than ever to differentiate between natural and human-caused noise so that we can 'listen in' and better monitor the ground movements beneath our feet. This study could help to kick-start this new field of study."

The study's authors hope that their work will spawn further research on the seismic lockdown, as well as finding previously hidden signals from earthquakes and volcanoes.

Dr Hicks said: "The lockdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic may have given us a glimmer of insight into how human and natural noise interact within the Earth. We hope this insight will spawn new studies that help us listen better to the Earth and understand natural signals we would otherwise have missed."

FAO, WFP support livelihoods for Afghan refugees in Iran

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) are working to improve the livelihoods of Afghan refugees living in Iran amid COVID-19 pandemic.

A greenhouse was established in refugee resorts in Semnan province aiming at new and sustainable living opportunities for Afghan nationals.



The greenhouse established in Semnan Settlement by WFP and FAO is still operational with precautionary measures to avoid the transmission of COVID-19. Refugees managed to harvest and sell the crops to provide a source of income for their families, WFP tweeted on July 26.

According to official government statistics, Iran currently hosts 951,142 refugees, 97 percent of whom live in urban areas, and the remaining 3 percent are residing in 20 settlements running by UNHCR's main government counterpart, the Interior Ministry's Office for Citizens and Foreign Immigrants.

A workshop will be held for 15 selected refugees interested in gardening, to provide them with the necessary skills to grow a variety of ornamental and edible plants in these greenhouses.

Greenhouse cultivation allows refugees to produce off-season products according to market demand.

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, FAO is leading global efforts to combat hunger, improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise living standards in rural populations, and contribute to economic growth.



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.



Helping war-disabled

He had devoted one day each month to help a war veteran with a 70 percent disability. So he went to the city of Najafabad in Isfahan province to provide services to him, from bathing to washing his clothes and cleaning his house.

He was in Syria when he heard about the martyrdom of the veteran, but asked someone to go to Najafabad, both to attend the funeral and to help holding the mourning ceremonies.

PMU official: U.S. only concerned about looting Iraqi oil

An official from Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces or Hashd al-Sha'abi says Washington only seeks to loot the Arab country's crude oil, stressing that U.S. officials are unconcerned about the Iraqi nation and their woes.

"The United States simply intends to exploit the needs of our people to achieve its own goals," Iraq's al-Ahad television network quoted Qais al-Khazali, leader of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, which is part of the PMU, as saying in a televised speech on the occasion of Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) on Friday.

He stressed that U.S. President Donald Trump is only thinking about how to take control of Iraqi oil fields and how to secure agreements in the field of electricity with the Iraqi government.

According to Press TV, Khazali then called upon the incumbent Baghdad government to quickly implement the framework agreement that the previous administration signed last year with German industrial conglomerate Siemens to upgrade the electricity grid of the power-strapped country.

The Trump administration is pushing for a deal between Washington, Baghdad and six Persian Gulf states to connect Iraq's nationwide power grid to that of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC).

UAE starts operations at Arab world's first nuclear power plant

In a first for the Arab world, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has begun start-up operations in the initial unit of its first nuclear power plant, the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) has said.

The Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant on the Persian Gulf coast west of Abu Dhabi, a major oil producer, is being built by Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO). The plant was originally due to open in 2017 but the start-up of its first reactor was repeatedly delayed.



ENEC on Saturday said its subsidiary Nawah Energy Company "has successfully started up Unit 1 of the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant, located in the Al Dhafrah Region of Abu Dhabi".

The ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, wrote on Twitter that nuclear fuel had been loaded into the first of four units of what he called "the first peaceful nuclear energy reactor in the Arab world".

"We are now another step closer to achieving our goal of supplying up to a quarter of our nation's electricity needs and powering its future growth with safe, reliable, and emissions-free electricity," ENEC's Chief Executive Mohamed Ibrahim al-Hammadi said.

The UAE started loading fuel rods into the reactor at Barakah in February, after regulators gave the green light for the first of the plant's four reactors, opening the way for commercial operations.

The Nawah Energy Company said at the time that Unit 1 will begin commercial operations after a "series of tests" leading to the start-up process.

During the process, the unit will be synchronized with the power grid and the first electricity produced.

When completed, Barakah will have four reactors with 5,600 megawatts (MW) capacity. The UAE has not disclosed the total planned investment in the project.

The UAE has substantial oil and gas reserves, but with a power-hungry population of 10 million, it has made huge investments in developing clean alternatives, including solar energy.

The nuclear plant is a regional first. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, has said it plans to build up to 16 nuclear reactors, but the project has yet to materialize.

Resistance News

Haneyya phones Abbas, discusses issues of mutual interest

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**— Head of Hamas's political bureau Ismail Haneyya on Thursday evening phoned Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas and exchanged with him congratulatory remarks over the Eid al-Adha occasion.

According to a statement released by the Hamas Movement, the two sides talked about political developments in the Palestinian arena and the Palestinian consensus on rejecting the U.S. deal of the century, the West Bank annexation plan and any step targeting the Palestinian rights.

They also agreed on the need to continue the joint efforts to bridge the gap between Fatah and Hamas on the way to achieving a comprehensive national unity.

Sheikh Salah: The nation will rise soon to defend Aqsa Mosque

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**— Sheikh Ra'ed Salah, head of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, has expressed his belief that the Muslim nation will stand on its feet again soon and rise up to defend the Aqsa Mosque.

"In such crucial moments, the holy Aqsa Mosque is calling loudly upon the Muslim nation, the Arab world and our Palestinian people: 'I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah,'" Sheikh Salah said in a letter on the occasion of Eid al-Adha.

"The nation today is in a situation that is hurting all of us, but we are certain that it will soon rise and stand on its feet and every child, young man, man and woman in this nation will raise their voices with 'Labayk ya Aqsa,'

Iraqi premier calls early elections in June 2021

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi says he will hold early parliamentary elections next June, a year earlier than scheduled, doubling down on a promise he made when he came to power to meet a key demand of anti-government protesters.

"June 6, 2021, has been fixed as the date for the next legislative elections," the premier said during a televised speech on Friday, stressing that everything would be done in a bid to "protect and ensure the success of these polls."

In a statement shortly released following the speech, the United Nations mission in Iraq hailed Kadhimi's announcement, saying the move would promote "greater stability and democracy."

Mass protests swept over the capital Baghdad and the south of the country in October 2019, with young crowds demanding jobs, services, and urgent action against alleged rampant corruption.

Former Iraqi prime minister Adel Abdul Mahdi stepped down under the pressure of the rallies, which were sometimes marred by deadly violence.



The incumbent premier was nominated in April, months after the resignation of Abdul Mahdi, and took office following a political consensus in May, promising to deliver on

key protesters' demands.

Furthermore, Kadhimi has promised dialogue with protesters and has requested comprehensive lists of all those who have

U.S. cannot disarm Lebanon's Hezbollah through sanctions: Russian ambassador to Beirut

The Russian ambassador to Beirut says U.S. officials are under the illusion that they can disarm the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement through sanctions.

"Disarming Hezbollah is the primary purpose of U.S. sanctions... I do not think that such a goal would be achieved through this method. The United States will not manage to force Hezbollah into laying down its weapons. This is an illusion," Zasytkin said in an exclusive interview with Beirut-based Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network on Friday.

In late October 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump's administration imposed a new round of sanctions on Hezbollah, targeting individuals and international organizations that do business with the group.

"Over the past year, we have levied the highest sanctions ever imposed on Hezbollah, in a single year, by far. Just a few moments ago, I signed legislation imposing even more hard-hitting sanctions on Hezbollah to further starve them of their funds. And they are starving for them," Trump said during an event in Washington, DC, that marked the 35th



anniversary of an attack on U.S. marine barracks in the Lebanese capital of Beirut.

Zasytkin added, "We (Russia) have made efforts in Syria. This is not only beneficial to Syria, but also to Lebanon as it protects the country against the potential threat of terrorism.

Thousands march in Berlin to protest coronavirus curbs

Thousands of demonstrators rallied in Berlin on Saturday to protest against measures imposed in Germany to stem the coronavirus pandemic, saying they violated people's rights and freedoms.

The loose gathering, estimated by police at 15,000, included libertarians, constitutional loyalists and skeptics of the science behind policies to fight the pandemic. There was also a small far-right presence with some marchers carrying Germany's imperial flag.

According to Reuters, protesters danced and sang 'We are free people!' to the tune of rock band Queen's 'We Will Rock You'. Others marched with placards saying 'We are making a noise because you are stealing our freedom!' and 'Do think! Don't wear a mask!'

The protests followed a rallying call from Michael Ballweg, an entrepreneur and political outsider who has organized similar rallies in Stuttgart and is running to become mayor of the southwestern city. "Our demand is to return to democracy,"

said one protester who declined to give his name. "The mask that enslaves us must go."

He, like most of the protesters, was not wearing a face mask.

Germany has been less severely hit than some other European countries, with more than 200,000 infected by COVID-19 and nearly 1,000 dying from it. After initial success in curbing infections, they are starting to rise again.

Most people have respected measures that include wearing face masks in shops, while the government has just imposed mandatory tests for holidaymakers returning from high-risk areas.

But a vocal minority is chafing against the restrictions, saying they are crushing diversity of thought and doing untold social and economic harm.

"Only a few scientists around the world who follow the government's lead are heard," said protester Peter Konz. Those who hold different views "are silenced, censored or discredited as defenders of conspiracy theories".

Calm across Afghanistan as ceasefire holds on day two

Calm prevailed across much of Afghanistan Saturday as a ceasefire between the Taliban and government forces appeared to be holding on its second day, boosting hopes that the two foes could soon begin peace talks.

There were no reports of major clashes since Friday, and Afghans took advantage of it to continue celebrating the Eid al-Adha festival, AFP reported.

The three-day truce is slated for the duration of the Muslim festival and is only the third official pause in the nearly 19 years of war that has ravaged Afghanistan.

President Ashraf Ghani and the Taliban have both signaled that peace talks could begin straight after Eid, and there are widespread calls to extend the ceasefire.

"I think we are closer to peace talks more than any other time," said Kabul resident Ahmad Rashed as he visited an animal market in the capital.

"The sooner they start, more lives could be saved."

Muslims across the world buy sheep or cows to slaughter in an annual ritual during the Eid al-Adha festival.

"There have been no reports of any terrorist attacks in the past two days since the ceasefire began," Attaullah Khogiani, spokesman to the governor of the eastern province of Nangarhar told AFP.

Nangarhar has seen regular clashes between government forces and the Taliban, and also attacks claimed by the extremist Daesh group.

In the southern province of Kandahar, where the Taliban control swathes of rural terrains, there were no reports of fighting.

"There are no enemy movements or attacks by the Taliban," said Baheer Ahmad, spokesman to Kandahar governor.

Under a deal signed by the Taliban and the US in February, "intra-Afghan" talks were slated to start in March, but were delayed amid political infighting in Kabul and as a contentious prisoner swap dragged on.

UAE tells Turkey to keep out of Arab affairs

A United Arab Emirates official Saturday urged Turkey to stop interfering in Arab affairs, mockingly referring to the Ottoman empire which collapsed a century ago.

The backlash came after Turkey condemned what it termed "malicious" actions by the UAE in Libya, where the two countries support opposing sides in its grinding conflict.

Anwar Gargash, minister of state for foreign affairs, called on Turkey "to stop intervening in Arab affairs".

Turkey can no longer behave like "the Sublime Porte and

use the language of colonialism", he said, referring to the government of the Ottoman empire which ruled the Arab world for centuries, Daily Star reported.

"The Sublime Porte and colonialist illusions belong to the archives of history... and relations between states are not conducted with threats," Gargash wrote.

Turkey backs the UN-recognised Government of National Accord in western Libya, while the forces of eastern-based strongman Khalifa Hiftar are supported by the UAE, as well

as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Russia.

"Abu Dhabi does what it does in Libya, does what it does in Syria. All of it is being recorded. At the right place and time, the accounts will be settled," Turkey's Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said in an interview with Al-Jazeera television.

"It is necessary to ask Abu Dhabi, where this hostility, where these intentions, where this jealousy comes from," he said, quoted Friday on the Turkish defense ministry's website.

Visual point of view



Portland protests continue amid staged withdrawal of federal agents

→ 1 In contrast, the state troopers did not intervene even when the scale of the protest on Thursday night passed the point, as demonstrators shook the fence around the courthouse, at which in early demonstrations the federal agents generally fired teargas, stun grenades and baton rounds.

In the absence of confrontation, and with the state police remaining largely unseen inside the courthouse, tensions quickly eased. Without the federal forces to draw attention, protest organisers kept the focus on Black Lives Matters and reform of the Portland police.

Some in the crowd worked to avoid trouble by stopping demonstrators from lighting fires and shooting fireworks at the courthouse as they had done on previous nights.

Dan Thomas, an African American man, stood in the street shouting at

people not to cause a confrontation with the state police.

"Attacking the federal building is not Black Lives Matter. Leave it alone. You're playing into Trump's hands," he said.

One woman shouted: "Stupid ass white people only here for their own reasons."

Despite the concerns of many in the crowd that the Trump administration would not fulfil the agreement to pull back the federal officers, none were seen on the streets.

Trump tweeted that the agents would remain in Portland until Brown brings the protests led by "anarchists and agitators" under control.

"If she can't do it, the Federal Government will do it for her. We will not be leaving until there is safety!" Trump wrote.

Calderon declines to attend Persepolis's title celebration

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former **d e s k** Persepolis coach, Gabriele Calderon, declined to participate in the Reds' league title celebration in Tehran, due to the global crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Persepolis' directors have decided to invite the former coaches of the team, namely Branko Ivankovic and Gabriele Calderon, in title celebration after the Iranian giants clinched the 2019-20 Iran Professional League (IPL) season for the fourth time in a row with four matches to spare.

Ivankovic, while congratulating Persepolis fans and players, rejected the invitation because of his financial problems with the club's authorities.

Calderon also saluted the winning team and thanked the club directors for inviting him for the title celebration but declined to travel to Iran.

"I'm very happy because of this fourth



championship for Persepolis! And so proud of the invitation for the title celebration, I would really love to share my feelings with the member boards, the fans, and this fantastic group of players in this successful moment," Calderon posted on his Instagram account.

The Argentine coach refused to travel to Iran and referred to the coronavirus pandemic as an explanation for not coming to the Persepolis title ceremony.

"Unfortunately, the actual global situation caused by the Covid-19 makes it totally impossible traveling and being in crowded spaces so I am forced to decline it and congratulate all of you from the distance. CONGRATULATIONS CHAMPIONS!!!!"

Calderon, 60, parted ways with Persepolis in January after six months in charge due to the club failing to pay his salary.

The Argentinean has declared that he is ready to negotiate with the Persepolis football club over his unpaid salaries.

Zandi appointed Dynamo Dresden assistant

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ex-Iran **d e s k** national football team midfielder Ferydoon Zandi has been appointed as assistant of Bundesliga 3 side SG Dynamo Dresden.

The 41-year-old has become Markus Kauczinski's second assistant coach.

Zandi has signed a contract with SG Dynamo Dresden on Friday until June 30, 2021.

"Ferydoon Zandi has already gained experience in coaching in the past few years. He will now come to our team with motivation and passion," said Dynamos sporting director Ralf Becker.

Zandi has worked as an assistant coach for the second team of FC St. Pauli in the past four years.

"I am looking forward to the new job at Dynamo Dresden and would like to contribute my knowledge and experience as an assistant coach in the team," said Ferydoon Zandi.

The German-Iranian started his pro-



fessional football career at SV Meppen. He then played at home and abroad for SC Freiburg, 1. FC Kaiserslautern as well as Apollon Limassol and Olympiakos Nicosia.

In his father's homeland, he played at Steel Azin and Esteghlal before starting his career as a coach.

Zandi was a member of Iran national football team from 2005 to 2009 and represented the Persian in the 2007 Asian Cup.

He scored a free-kick goal against China in the 2007 Asian Cup.

Iran, Syria friendly not yet finalized

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — A friendly match between Iran national football team and Syria has not yet been finalized.

The match was due to be held on Sept. 3 but two federations have not reached an agreement so far. However, Iran will meet Uzbekistan in Tashkent.

The clash will be held at the Bunyodkor Stadium on Sept. 7.

Iran and Syria are preparing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

Iran are in Group C, five points behind Iraq.

The 'Persian Leopards' have four must-win matches ahead.

Deagan Skocic's team are scheduled to host Hong Kong on October 8 in Tehran and meet Cambodia five days later in Phnom Penh.

Iran's last two matches against Bahrain and Iraq - which are very crucial - will be against Bahrain and Iraq on November 12 and 17 in Tehran.



Syria also lead Group A with 15 points, eight points ahead of China.

The eight group winners 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.



Tabata delighted with Al Sadd return

Rodrigo Tabata is looking forward to a successful return with Al Sadd after rejoining the reigning Qatar Stars League champions.

"I'm extremely happy to return to the team and I promise everyone that I will give all that I can," said Brazilian Tabata to the Al Sadd website. "I hope that I can fulfill the expectations of the club administration and the fans who want a lot from me."

The 39-year-old attacking midfielder said his knowledge of the club and the players will help him adapt quickly.

"I played with most of the players when I was with the team back in 2014 and I know them well," he said. "They

also know my style and this means that I will adapt quickly.

"Al Sadd still have tough matches ahead, whether domestically or in the AFC Champions League, we should all put in a great effort," he said. "Al Sadd have good players, who also have great experience."

Tabata, who joined Al Sadd after the expiry of his contract with Al Rayyan, had his first training session with the club on Sunday.

The session was conducted by head coach Xavi, who made a return after recovering from the COVID-19 coronavirus.

(Source: Al Sadd)

Liverpool the toughest opponent I've ever faced - Guardiola

Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola has said Liverpool's team over the past two seasons has been the toughest opponent he has ever come across.

Liverpool won the Premier League title for the first time since 1990 in style, finishing 18 points clear of nearest rivals Manchester City this season.

Jurgen Klopp's side also won the Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and the FIFA Club World Cup last season.

"Yes, by a big margin, the toughest rival I have faced in my career was the Liverpool team of last year and this season," Guardiola told DAZN Spain.

"It dominates all the records. If you allow them to dominate you, they will cage you in the area and you don't come out. When you dominate them, they run finding spaces like

no one else does.

"They are very fast at going back. They are very strong in terms of strategy. Their players are mentally very strong. It's the rival that I've had to think more about how to beat them.

"If you ask me which team I've had more difficulty to decipher and deal with, that's Liverpool. The first few years when I arrive to England, Liverpool was a little smaller than it is now and Real Madrid was much stronger. Now, this Liverpool is the toughest that I've encountered in my career as coach."

City host La Liga champions Real Madrid on Aug. 7, holding a 2-1 advantage from their Champions League round-of-16 first leg.

"It's a very strong team, in every sense

and historically of course," Guardiola said.

"It has made me a better coach. With Jose Mourinho, with [Manuel] Pellegrini, with all the coaches they have had. They [Real Madrid] have done what they have done, to win three straight Champions League, to have taken away two La Liga titles from Barcelona when Barca had completely dominated this competition in this decade like no one else had done."

Guardiola added that he has a great respect for Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane.

"I admire the two versions, that of the player and the coach," the former Barcelona star said.

"The two. I think Zidane as a player was wow. I would have liked to have played with him. I had the misfortune to have to come up against him facing the French National team.



"I was still in the junior team when we competed at the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku. That was memorable for me because we were down 8-2 against Turkey in the tie-breaker, but we posted a comeback and won 20-18 to reach the final.

"My biggest achievement was with the senior team when we won gold at the Asian Championship and when we qualified to the final round of the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League."

The middle blocker only began playing in his teens, but he was a natural as volleyball runs in his blood. He did, however, have to overcome the obstacle of moving from a small city to a big city.

"I started playing when I was 13. My father used to play volleyball so he was a big influence on me. I played for three years before I turned professional.

"I study Physical Education at the university and apart from volleyball I like climbing and riding horses.

"I faced big challenges since I lived in a small city, but when I moved that's when I began to see a lot of improvements in my game.

"My best mentor is Saeid Marouf because he is a good captain. He guides the young players in the team by pointing out their weak points. I always enjoy playing with him."

Mojarrad undoubtedly lives up to his goals on and off the court and is considered part of a new wave of athletes in his country.

"I'm a fighter and I fight to the last breath to achieve my goals and win.

"I really believe that if you don't have a winning mentality then you will not really win. But when you believe in yourself and in your team then your efforts will bring success." (Source: FIVB)

Taremi a sensational striker Aston Villa could sign this summer

Aston Villa are a team in need - of serious firepower. If Villa are to sign two strikers, they will need to spend big and make a play for at least one of those forwards, who might fall slightly outside of the transfer philosophy of Johan Lange, Villa's new technical director.

When Villa were linked to Taremi the easy retort from the fanbase would be 'who?'

Eighteen goals for an impressive Rio Ave side have put paid to that question though, with Taremi finally delivering in a top European League after years of administrative nightmares destroyed his chances of a Turkish move years ago.

Jumping from Iran to Portugal's top-tier didn't clip Taremi's wings, either, and the powerful and dynamic center-forward has earned his way onto the transfer rumor mill.

His age (28) and history might dent his value in a crowded transfer market, but whomever makes the effort to land Taremi will find a striker looking to make up for lost-time in a big way.

Making just two assists, Taremi finds himself succeeding as the focal point of a team, but his reputation may land him in the same ground as Samatta, but being lauded as the best number 9 in Portugal is a big claim, and Taremi seems to have all the tools to make a big step up in the near future.

(Source: birminghammail.co.uk)

Hajsaft reaches agreement with Aris Thessaloniki: report

Iran international winger Ehsan Hajsaft has reportedly reached an agreement with Greek football team Aris Thessaloniki.

The Tractor midfielder will join Aris in the upcoming season. Hajsaft is not unfamiliar with playing in Greece football since he has already played at Panionios and Olympiacos.

He joined Tractor in 2018 and has scored eight goals in 46 matches for the Iranian top-flight football team.

Hajsaft is under contract with Tractor until next summer.

(Source: novasports.gr)

Siamak Nemati voted best midfielder at ACL2018 Team

Persepolis midfielder Siamak Nemati was voted the best midfielder of the 2018 AFC Champions League.

In a poll conducted by the-afc.com, 68 percent of participants voted for Neamti.

Esteghlal midfielder Farshid Esmaeili finished in second place in the poll with 30 percent.

Nemati played more than his part in what was Persepolis' best AFC Champions League performance to date and, in a game that is so often remembered for goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand's save to deny Xavi, it's easy to forget the midfielder's match-winning role.

The Tehran giant was one down against Al Sadd in the second leg of the semi-final when Nemati volleyed home with what proved to be the decisive goal of the contest. A red card in the first leg of the final meant his tournament did, however, end on a sour note.

(Source: the-afc)

IRIVF president Davarzani satisfied with last year's performance

Volleyball.ir — Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) Mohammad Reza Davarzani is satisfied with the federation's performance in the past year.

The federation's General Assembly was held on Saturday in the Olympic Academy in Tehran.

It was due to be held on July 29 but postponed due to the outbreak of the second wave of coronavirus.

"Last year, we earned a big achievement in the FIVB U21 World Championship and won the title for the first time ever," Davarzani said.

"The 2019 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) was successfully hosted by Iran in Ardabil and Urmia in Week 3 and 4 and we also hosted the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in Tehran. The FIVB Beach Volleyball 3-star event was also held in Bandar Abbas," he added.

Iran has already shown interest in hosting FIVB Volleyball Boys' U19 World Championship but Davarzani said they have changed their mind.

"We wanted to host the competition but withdrew from the race. However, we will host the Asian Men U20 and U18 Championships in Tehran and Shiraz, respectively," he said.

Davarzani emphasized once again the Olympic Games are very important for Iran and the federation will announce the name of National Team head coach at the proper time.

Iran Volleyball Super League will begin in early September and Davarzani believes that the league will strengthen the National Team.

"We are going to begin the league competition on Sept. 5 with stringent health protocols due to a coronavirus outbreak. In my opinion, a strong league will result in a strong national team," Davarzani concluded.

Tractor held by Paykan: IPL

Tasnim — Tractor football team were held by Paykan in the Iran Professional League (IPL).

In Tabriz's Yadegar-e Emam empty stadium, the two teams played out a goalless draw. It was a disappointing result for both teams.

Tractor needed to win the home match to cement its place at the second place and Paykan had to win the game to escape from the relegation zone.

In Abadan, Sanat Naft and Shahr Khodro shared the spoil. Mohammad Ghazi gave a lead the visiting team in the 81st minute but Issa Ale Kasir levelled the match in the injury time.

Saipa edged past Machine Sazi thanks to Armin Sohrabina's late goal in Tehran.

And in Isfahan, Zob Ahan and Naft Masjed Soleyman drew 1-1. Hossein Ebrahimi scored for Masjed Soleyman in the 26th minute and Masoud Ebrahimzadeh equalized the match in the 50th minute.

Iran's Aliasghar Mojarad showed promise in 2019. He now aims to make a big impact with the Iranian team, but also for youth in his country as he continues to establish his role promoting education.

Last June, Mojarad was chosen as a schools ambassador by the Ministry of Education of Iran. Minister Mohsen Jahi Mirzaei presented him with a plaque at a ceremony held in his hometown of Bojnord in North Khorasan.

The 22-year-old ambassador will help raise funds to build schools and provide learning opportunities for underprivileged children in his country.

"In my new role as ambassador, I will try to help children exercise their fundamental right to education and eventually enable them to shape their own future," Mojarad said.

"My goal is to create awareness and raise funds to build schools in the most marginalized areas."

Mojarad looks forward to the responsibility, utilising the huge platform he has in his country to create positive change.

His leadership abilities are also an indication of his future with the Iranian team, fostered in the country's junior teams.

"My first official tournament was the 2014 Asian Boys' U19 Volleyball Championship in Sri Lanka. I was selected as best middle blocker and from that time on I made a lot of improvements in my game.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you gain a blessing, do not refuse it by cool and poor thanks.

Imam Ali (AS)

“Bride of Fire” director Khosro Sinai dies from coronavirus

→1 He was also the director of the documentary “Talking with a Shadow” about Iran’s foremost short story writer, Sadeq Hedayat, who was influenced by world literature, especially European literature, and had read the works of Kafka, Poe and Dostoyevsky.

In 2008, Poland decorated Sinai with the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit for his documentary “The Lost Requiem” (1970-1983) about the story of the wartime exodus to Iran of thousands of Polish citizens after being released from the Soviet labor camps of Siberia during World War II.

“Bride of Fire”, his feature drama starring Hamid Farrokhnejad, won the Crystal Simorgh for best screenplay at the 18th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran.

Sinai is survived by his widows Farah Osuli and Gizella Varga Sinai, two top painters, and his son Sam and daughters Alma, Yasmin and Samira.

Dickens’s last complete novel “Our Mutual Friend” published in Persian

CULTURE DESK TEHRAN — A new Persian translation of British novelist Charles Dickens’s last complete novel “Our Mutual Friend” has been published by Negah Publications.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Abdolhossein Sharifian.

“Our Mutual Friend” centers on an inheritance. Old Harmon’s profitable dust heaps - and its legatees, young John Harmon, presumed drowned when a body is pulled out of the River Thames, and kindly dustman Mr. Boffin, to whom the fortune defaults.

With brilliant satire, Dickens portrays a dark, macabre London, inhabited by such disparate characters as Gaffer Hexam, scavenging the river for corpses; enchanting, mercenary Bella Wilfer; the social-climbing Veneerings; and the unscrupulous street-trader Silas Wegg.

The novel is richly symbolic in its vision of death and renewal in a city dominated by the fetid Thames, and the corrupting power of money. “Our Mutual Friend” uses text of the first volume edition of 1865 and includes original illustrations, a chronology and revised further reading.

Dickens wrote such beloved classic novels as “Oliver Twist”, “A Christmas Carol”, “Nicholas Nickleby”, “David Copperfield”, “A Tale of Two Cities” and “Great Expectations”.

He is remembered as one of the most important and influential writers of the 19th century. Among his accomplishments, he has been lauded for providing a stark portrait of the Victorian-era underclass, helping to bring about social change.

Dickens enjoyed a wider popularity during his lifetime than had any previous author. Much in his work could appeal to the simple and the sophisticated, to the poor and to the queen, and technological developments as well as the qualities of his work enabled his fame to spread worldwide very quickly.

His long career saw fluctuations in the reception and sales of individual novels, but none of them was negligible or uncharacteristic or disregarded, and, though he is now admired for aspects and phases of his work that were given less weight by his contemporaries, his popularity has never ceased.

Iranian music has great potential for growth in Afghanistan: envoy

→1 Aminian pointed to the high position of Persian literature and poetry in Afghanistan and emphasized the need to reinforce cultural exchanges with country.

Afzali also talked about the great potential of the Rudaki Foundation in the music field, and said that the largest responsibility of the foundation is to promote Persian language and literature.

He added that the foundation is ready to team up with groups from Afghanistan to organize mutual cultural events.

He also said that Iranian musicians enjoy a good reputation in Afghanistan and can hold joint performances in the country.

Afzali said that the foundation is determined to increase its relations with the Persian-speaking countries by holding more joint cultural activities.

Rastak sings “They Say...” in honor of Armenian community in Iran

ART DESK TEHRAN — Prolific Iranian ensemble Rastak has recorded a single named “They Say...” in honor of the Armenian community in Iran.

The song, which is based on an Armenian melody, is part of a project named “Borderless at Home” the ensemble initiated to reprise songs from the neighboring countries.

“They Say...” is the sixth track of the collection, which will be released on Sunday.

Rastak was established in 1997 by a group of music students in Tehran to highlight Iranian folk music.

It has given numerous performances in Australia, Canada and several countries in Europe.

“Leilu”, the fifth track of the project, was released in May. The single is based on a song from Kormanj, a group of Kurdish nomads who live mainly in Khorasan Razavi Province and North Khorasan Province.

At that time, Rastak announced that it would hand out a portion of the money raised by the single in bonuses to medical workers on the coronavirus frontline as a way to thank them.

Earlier the band released “Leili Jan”, a popular folk song from Afghanistan.

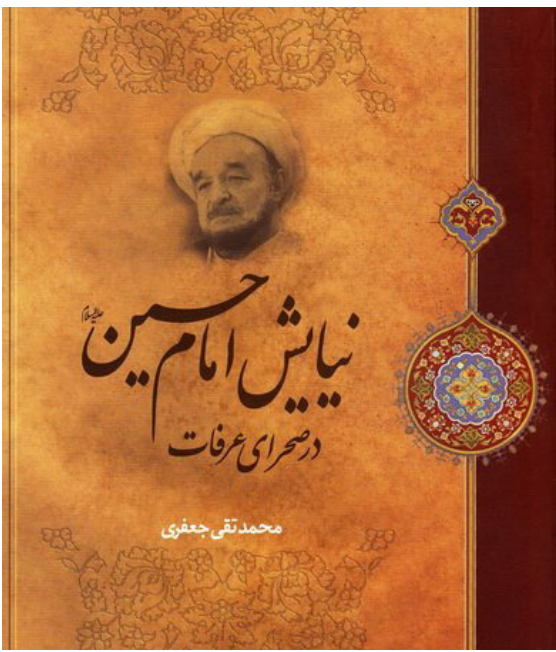
“The focus of the project is on non-Iranian people and it enjoys some certain dimensions that are expected to be welcomed,” bandleader Siamak Sepehri, who is also a tar virtuoso, previously said.



A poster for Rastak’s single “They Say...”.

“Fortunately, we have had positive reactions from our non-Iranian audiences during various performances, and these reactions caused us to produce those songs that represent some affinities between Iranians and other nations,” he added.

Allameh Jafari’s interpretation of prayers of Imam Hussein (AS) published in Urdu



Front cover of the book “The Prayers of Imam Hussein (AS) at the Arafat Desert” as interpreted by Iranian religious scholar Allameh Mohammad-Taqi Jafari.

CULTURE DESK TEHRAN — Iranian religious scholar Allameh Mohammad-Taqi Jafari’s interpretation of the prayers of Imam Hussein (AS) in the Arafat Desert has been published in Urdu in Karachi, Pakistan.

“The Prayers of Imam Hussein (AS) in the Arafat Desert” have been translated into Urdu by Pakistani scholar Syed Kausar Abbas Musavi and published by Iran’s Cultural Center in Pakistan.

Duaye Arafa is a Shia Muslim prayer first uttered by Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia. It is read and chanted by Shia Muslims every year on the second day of the Hajj, day of Arafah, in the Arafat desert.

The book was unveiled in an online program attended by Iran’s cultural attaché in Pakistan Bahram Kian, and several Pakistani scholars.

Kian said that Iran’s cultural office was planning to publish the book but it was not possible due to the outbreak of coronavirus, calling it a valuable book for the Muslims.

Jawad Haider Hashmi, a scholar from the Department of Islamic Studies of the University of Karachi called the book a very precious task.

Author Muhammad Ali Syed also attending the ceremony said that the book is a precious gift that helps promote the culture of praying in the country.

He noted that these books also help encourage the youth to learn more about the habit of praying in the world of today.

Mohammad-Taqi Jafari, known as Allameh Jafari, was

a contemporary Iranian scholar, philosopher, speaker, jurist, Rumi expert and commentator on the Nahj-ul-Balaghah.

His mother gave him some preliminary lessons, the Holy Quran and the first rudiments of elementary school.

After his primary studies in religious sciences in Tabriz, he went to Tehran for years to continue and after three years of religious studies he moved to Qom and then to Najaf; he later returned to Iran.

Among his great efforts are his reconciliation of the Shia theological school with the university and with the ancient and modern sciences.

Knowing the languages of both the theological school and the university seminary, he has left a work of interest in both fields. After pouring over jurisprudence, philosophy, art and Islamic aesthetics in half a century of scientific activity and research, he has composed more than 100 volumes and treatises.

His most renowned works are his 15-volume “Interpretation and Criticism of Rumi’s Masnavi”, and his unfinished, 27-volume Translation and Interpretation of the Nahj-ul-Balaghah of Imam Ali (AS).

The Nahj-ul-Balaghah (“The Peak of Eloquence”) was compiled by Seyyed Razi (d. 1015). It has been translated into many languages, including English, French, Russian and Spanish.

These two major works by Allameh Jafari contain his principal thoughts and ideas in the fields of anthropology, sociology, moral ethics, philosophy and mysticism.

Afghan writer’s book “Atashgah” on Soviet war published in Iran

ART DESK TEHRAN — Ahmad Modaqeq, the Afghan author of the acclaimed novel “Russian Songs”, has published in Iran his new story “Atashgah” about the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

The book tells the story of a teenage boy Habib who lives with his family in the Balutak region. Like other people in the region, his family is suffering from the oppression of Ayyub Khan, the ruler of the region who lives in a fortress near Atashgah Mount. Khan imprisons Habib’s



Front cover of Afghan writer Ahmad Modaqeq’s book “Atashgah”.

father and he is engaged in struggles to save his father.

As the Soviet Union, Russia waged a 10-year war in Afghanistan throughout the 1980s. A number of local rulers had to cooperate with the Soviets during the war.

The target group of the book published by Saad is teenage readers.

Modaqeq’s novel “Russian Songs” was honored at the 11th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards, Iran’s most lucrative literary prize, in 2018.

The story of “Russian Songs” is set during the 1980s when the Afghan people fought against the Soviet invaders.

“In our policy to promote the Persian language and to reinforce the cultural ties among the Persian-speaking nations, we plan to honor Ahmad Modaqeq whose book has been published by Shahrestan Adab,” Mehdi Qezeli, the director of the literary awards, said at that time.

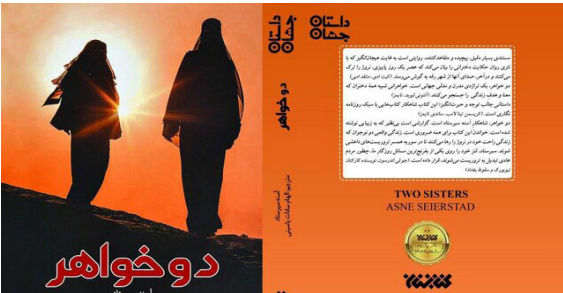
“The Angels under the Rain” and “The Butterflies around the Tent” are among the credits of the 36-year-old writer.

Asne Seierstad “Two Sisters” comes to Iranian bookstores

ART DESK TEHRAN — Norwegian bestselling author Asne Seierstad’s book “Two Sisters: A Father, His Daughters, and Their Journey into the Syrian Jihad” has been published in Persian in Tehran.

Elham Sadat Yasini is the translator of the book published by Ketabestan.

“Two Sisters” tells the unforgettable story of a family divided by faith. Sadiq and Sara, Somali immigrants raising a family in Norway, one day discover that their teenage daughters, Leila and Ayan, have vanished – and are enroute to Syria to aid the ISIS terrorists. Seierstad’s riveting account traces the sisters’ journey from secular, social democratic Norway to the frontlines of the war in



Cover of the Persian translation of Norwegian bestselling author Asne Seierstad’s book “Two Sisters”.

Syria, and follows Sadiq’s harrowing attempt to find them.

Employing the same mastery of narrative suspense she brought to “The Bookseller of Kabul” and “One of Us”, Seierstad puts the problem of radicalization into painfully human terms, using instant messages and other primary sources to reconstruct a family’s crisis from the inside.

Eventually, she takes us into the hellscape of the Syrian civil war, as Sadiq risks his life in pursuit of his daughters, refusing to let them disappear into the maelstrom – even after they marry ISIS fighters.

“Two Sisters” is a relentless thriller and a feat of reporting with profound lessons about belief, extremism and the meaning of devotion.

Iran Cinema Celebration avoids gala over pandemic

ART DESK TEHRAN — The Iranian House of Cinema will not be holding the 22nd edition of Iran Cinema Celebration like previous years, while it plans to spend the costs for its members instead.

Ramin Heidari Farqui, Director of the Higher Association of Iranian Cinematic Arts and Techniques, an affiliate with the Iranian House of Cinema, announced in a press release published on Saturday.

“Based on the current condition of the country battling the coronavirus outbreak, the House of Cinema’s Board of Directors believe that the house is not ready to pay for the celebration and prefers to ameliorate the financial problems of its members,” Faruqi said.

The Iranian House of Cinema organizes the celebration annually to commemorate Iran’s National Day of Cinema on September 12.

He added that the current situation is

not predictable and it seems there cannot be a celebration as in past years, even when social distancing and health protocols are observed.

“We all know that it is not possible to get together and enjoy the happiness of a celebration, but all members agree to try a new method in voting and announce the winners,” he added.

In a meeting held recently, the organizers decided to announce the winners online since the voting will also be online.

“Our cinema needs encouragement, it needs happiness. Cinema requires news and attention, and we must try to promote cinema. We shall make our best efforts to find a creative method and will not permit this great cinematic event to be forgotten,” he noted.

“However, we are trying to find a new method to do voting and we might think about holding a symbolic celebration with lower costs,” he concluded.



A collection of awards for the Iran Cinema Celebration.

Iranian House of Cinema director Manuchehr Shahsavari had said.

“We are passing through days filled with sorrow, and considering our deep patriotic feelings, we decided to hold the celebration with good film judgment but avoid any sizeable ceremony,” he had explained.

“This was a difficult decision for us because we were supposed to enjoy a good day but this is a group decision,” he had said.

Actor Ali Nasirian, the president of the 20th edition of the Iran Cinema Celebration, had also hoped that the celebration would be held in the best way possible filled with kindness and friendship.

“We must avoid any unfriendly behavior. These types of celebrations are held to promote peace and friendship,” Nasirian had said.

Cinematographer Turaj Mansuri, the secretary of the policy-making council of Iran Cinema Celebration, also had said that the main goal was to reduce expenses.